

Assessment of On-farm Employment Generation through Natural Resource Conservation Activities in the Semi-arid Region

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ABSTRACT

A watershed development programme in the backward and disadvantaged district of Karnataka (Chitradurga) was implemented in a participatory mode with 'demand driven' planning. Various kinds of soil and moisture conservation activities were carried out to treat the non-arable as well as arable lands with measures like construction of field bunds and waste weirs; treatment of drainage lines (DLT) through construction of rock fill dams, *nala* deepening; planting of forest tree and fruit seedlings, etc. A bulk of the budget (58%) was utilized for various land based activities covering engineering works, plantation and production enhancement activities including livestock improvement. Different engineering works alone created nearly 3623 mandays temporary employment, while plantation activities generated about 2375 man days. At the then prevailing wage rates for unskilled labour, nearly `8.78 lakhs worth of employment was generated. The cumulative effect of resource conservation activities on crop cultivation would definitely enhance regular labour absorption at the farm level. The above information clearly indicates that participatory planning and implementation can lead to the generation of significant employment opportunities in various natural resources conservation activities in the dry region.

Key words :*Bunds*, Employment generation, Horticulture, Natural resource conservation, Watershed.