

Minor irrigation – impact of watershed programme on the living conditions of the farmers of Kurnool (Dt.)

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ABSTRACT

India is being an agrarian country depends a great deal on the natural resources for production of food and economic development of the rural areas. The best way through which a society can progress is by increasing the productivity of the economic activities, raising the productivity of irrigated and rain fed agriculture combined with soil and water conservation techniques is essential for faster development during the recent years, Water has become a matter of important subject for the National Level Planning and Plan Formulation, which led to the establishment of National Water Resources Council as a National Apex Body.

KEY WORDS : Watershed approach, Rainfed area, Watermanagement, Participatory approach

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INTRODUCTION

In the post green- revolution period, the thrust of Indian Agriculture is an enhancement of agricultural productivity through sustainable practices. To achieve this end, one of the major initiatives undertaken by the Government of India was the implementation of a National Level Programme for the development of rain fed areas through the watershed approach. The watershed approach aimed at augmentation and stabilization of production and productivity, minimizing the ecological degradation, optimization of water resources reduction in regional disparity, opening up on greater opportunities for employment of rural poor in the rain fed areas. Watershed, a natural entity in itself, combines forest management and land use management. It is a hydrologic and physiographic unit which offers a very good base for planning and implementing soil conservation, water harvesting, a forestation and environmental protection programmes. Watershed is defined as “a natural hydrological entity that covers a specific area expansion of land surface with in boundaries the entire rainfall-run off ultimately passes through a specifically defined stream. From the scientific perspective, a watershed is defined as the drainage areas of a stream. Water development and management should

be based on a participatory approach, involving users, planners and policy makers at all the levels (Giridhar, 2007).

The study was under taken in Kurnool district, which is hot and drought prone area with a very low estimated annual rainfall of 670 mm, out of total rainfall received only 10 per cent to 15 per cent is utilized for agriculture and rest is going to waste through stream into sea and evaporation. The date shows that there is scanty rainfall which insufficient for the cultivation of principal crops. The major portion of the land has become barren due to shortage of water and irrigational facilities. In view of the above it is essential to study the impact of watershed programme on the living conditions of the farmers in Kurnool district. There has been a less concentration by the researchers to study the various aspects of watershed programme which bring the changes in income and employment generation of farmers in the watershed areas to asses the socio-economic transformation.

It is interesting to note about the total geographical area, net area sown, barren and uncultivable land. Land put to agriculture and total cropped area was mentioned during 2006-07, 2007-08, 2008-09 in Kurnool district, along with the source of irrigation under Registered Aycuts, actual area irrigated in the district is also worth note. Apart from

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