Pak. J. Agri. Sci., Vol. 42(3-4) 2005

IMPACT OF THE SOCIAL MOBILIZATION EFFORTS ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT THROUGH THE REHABILITATION OF SALINE AND WATERLOGGED LAND IN TEHSIL SHORKOT, DISTRICT JHANG

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Pakistan is a country with enormous potential, which is being exhausted due to heavy economic drawbacks and least utilization of its natural and human resources. These factors can be attributed towards increasing poverty among the rural community. Social mobilization is the cornerstone of participatory approaches in poverty reduction and rural development programs. At present a number of projects are being undertaken for the reduction of rural poverty in the saline and waterlogged areas of Pakistan. In 1998, the project entitled "Pakistan Community Development Project for the Rehabilitation of Saline and Waterlogged Land" was launched with the assistance of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), along with the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID), and the Government of Pakistan (through its appointed lead agency, International Waterlogging and Salinity Research Institute (IWASRI). One of the key mandates for these foreign donors was to ensure that the project works for the poverty reduction and raising of living standards of the people suffering from losses. The project was operating at three sites in the Punjab namely; Pindi Bhattian (District Hafizabad), Sahiwal (District Sargodha) and Shorkot (District Jhang). The present study was present was conducted to evaluate the social mobilization services provided under bio-saline project in the rural areas of tehsil Shorkot, district Jhang. For conducting the study, a list of Salt Land User Groups (SLUGs) was obtained form the respective site office, from which the population for the present study was determined. Out of sixteen project villages, six villages were selected randomly and 20 respondents from each village who were the members of SLUGs were selected at random. Thus, making a total number of 120 respondents for the study. The data were collected through an interview schedule. The results revealed that an overwhelming majority (98.3%) of the respondents reported that social mobilization procedure and strategies were adequate. The results further reveal that a vast majority (91.7%) of the respondents was not involved in project activities.
Key Words: Impact, social mobilization, water logging, salinity

INTRODUCTION

In Arid and semi-arid regions all round the world, large parts of irrigated areas area threatened by salinity and water logging problems, Pakistan is no exception to that. In its irrigated areas, this twin menace is responsible for taking out production 5.8 million hectares of prime agricultural land, for which the farmers now receive very little or no returns. Where farm sizes are small, the impact pf water logging and salinity is continuous and disastrous. One thing that is not disputed amongst the people involved in salinity management is that there is no single effective solution of this problem. It must not be expected engineering and reclamation approaches are the only solution for the rehabilitation of saline areas, or that these partial solutions will result in immediate land rehabilitation and restoration to previous crop yields. Such land degradation problems need many years to develop and good farm practices to restore them to improve production. Some areas, however, remain too badly effected to be cost effectively reclaimed, so will remain unproductive (Qureshi, 1993). Salt-effected soils can be managed by reclamation, but due to less availability of good quality water, low soil permeability, and high cost of amendments, this approach is not feasible on large scale (Qureshi, 1993). An expenditure over 90 billion rupees (approximately 3 billion $ US) has been incurred to control water logging and salinity through large engineering projects, yet the problems is still existing while scarcity of fresh water was further aggravated the situation. It is worth mentioning that integrated approach to irrigation and drainage management and saline agriculture is required to combat the problems of salinity/sodicity. A quick, inexpensive, and beneficial way is to exploit the salt effected soil by using salt tolerance species i.e. biological approaches or "Saline Agriculture". Qureshi and Barrett-Lennard (1998) found that water logging and have very adverse social and economic effects on communities in Pakistan, causing poor living standards in effected areas, health problems for human and animals, the crumbling of mud and brick houses and difficulties in transport. Many people are forced to migrate to other areas. Ali *et al.,* 1999 described that excess salts in soluble, exchangeable, and sparingly soluble forms characterize salt-effected soils. Excess sodium in salt affected soils is replaced by calcium added mostly in the form of Gypsum.

UNDP (2004) concluded that the formation and nurturing of effective, strong, and viable development-oriented community organizations is the heart and soul of the social mobilization approach followed by SAPAP. While forming the organizations the project teams ensure that the poor participate as subjects and not as objects of the development process. NRSP (2003) concluded that social mobilization is based on acknowledging that the community is the center of all development activities. It is only informed and engaged community members who can plan and undertake sustainable roots development. The present study was designed to evaluate the social mobilization services provided under bio-saline project in tehsil Shorkot, district Jhang.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study was conducted in tehsil Shorkot, District Jhang. Six villages were taken randomly for the study. From each selected village 20 farmers were selected at random. The data were collected with the help of an interview schedule and analyzed by using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Distribution of the respondents according to perception about social mobilization procedure and strategies

Procedure & strategies	No.	%
Adequate	118	98.3
Inadequate	2	1.7
Total	**120**	**100.0**

The data given in above Table 1 reveal that an overwhelming majority of the respondents (98.3%) reported that social mobilization procedure and strategies are adequate. Whereas, remaining minute percentage (1.7%) of the respondents expressed inadequate procedures and strategies of social mobilization.

Table 2. Distribution of the SLUG members according to involvement in project activities

Involvement	No.	%
Yes	10	8.3
No	110	91.7
Specification		
Identification of the problem	10	8.3
Planning of the project	4	3.4
Execution of the project	–	–
Monitoring/evaluation	–	–

The data presented in Table 2 reveal that majority (91.7%) of the respondents were not involved in project activities and remaining 8.3% respondents were involved in project activities in which 8.35% of the respondents were involved in identification of the problems and 3.4% in planning of the project. None of them was involved in execution of the project and monitoring/evaluation. The result shows that only minor percentage of the respondents was involved on the basis of their experiences, knowledge, and valuable suggestions.

Table 3. Distribution of the respondents according to satisfaction about the performance of project staff

Satisfaction	No.	%
Yes	116	96.7
No	4	3.3
Reasons of not satisfaction		
Bias/personal favor	3	2.5
No proper utilization of funds	2	1.6
No equal treatment	3	2.5
No practical work only showing of efficiency	1	0.8
Changing in the staff/no permanent staff	6	5.0

The data presented in Table 3 shows that majority (96.7%) of the respondents were satisfied with the performance of project staff and only 3.3% of the respondents were not satisfied due to certain reasons. About 5% of the respondents were not satisfied with the performance of project staff due to changing in the staff/no permanent staff. Whereas, bias/personal favor and no equal treatment by the project staff with the same percentage 3% given by the respondents, remaining 1.6% of the respondents responded that no proper utilization of funds and remaining 0.8% claimed and blamed that no practical work only showing of efficiency changed our satisfaction regarding the performance of project staff.

CONCLUSIONS

An overwhelming majority of the respondents (98.3%) of the respondents reported that social mobilization procedure and strategies are adequate while remaining minute percentage (1.7%) of the respondents expressed inadequate. Majority (91.7%) of the respondents were not involved in project activities and remaining 8.3% respondents were involved in project activities in which 8.35% of the respondents were involved in identification of the problems and 3.4% in planning of the project. None of them was involved in

execution of the project and monitoring/evaluation. The result shows that only minor percentage of the respondents was involved on the basis of their experiences, knowledge, and valuable suggestions. Majority (96.7%) of the respondents were satisfied with the performance of project staff and only 3.3% of the respondents were not satisfied due to certain reasons. Approximately 5% of the respondents were not satisfied with the performance of project staff due to changing in the staff/no permanent staff. Whereas, bias/personal favor and no equal treatment by the project staff with the same percentage 3% given by the respondents. About 1.6% of the respondents responded that no proper utilization of funds and remaining 0.8% claimed and blamed that no practical work only showing of efficiency changed our satisfaction regarding the performance of project staff.

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