

Study of local level forest & trees related household/ villages of one state, focusing on the process of village level institutions evolution in such cases

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The study focuses on the traditional coping practices adopted by the communities to climatic stress – drought. The objectives of the study are to understand the role of traditional coping measures by the communities' w.r.t tree and forest due to drought, identify the policy initiatives taken by various stakeholders in response to drought and analyse the gaps and suggest mechanisms to increase the coping capacities of household and communities through existing or widening up various policies and programmes of government.

Rajgarh District of Madhya Pradesh was selected for the study; Two villages Nalajhiri and Banskho in the Rajgarh block were selected for the study. Nalajhiri village has about 168 households consisting of multi caste belonging to Brahmin 30-35hh and Scheduled Caste (ST) 30-35 households and others about 100 households. The main occupation is agriculture, animal husbandry and wage labour. The major climatic stress- drought, irregular rainfall, hailstorm. The forest is mixed deciduous forest with major species Lendia, Kaim, Tendu etc.

Banskho village has about 150 households of Bhilala community (STs). Their occupation is agriculture and wage labourers and average landholding is about 1 acre, unirrigated land. Maize, jowar is grown in kharif season. The average production is 4-5 quintal in normal year. With annual income Rs12,000, most households are below the poverty line. Banskho is a panchayat, it has a Primary School and the Primary Health Centre is at Suthaliya.

The impact of Climatic stress was seen in the area of scarcity of water, the wells dried up and fetching drinking water was a major problem. Second area was crop loss/damage due to changing climate and wild life. The degradation of forest has two effects, wildlife move to agriculture areas in search of food and migration for labour work (permanent, seasonal). The community response to drought situation was that migration was enhanced, people had to borrow from money lenders and distress selling of cattle took place.

The village forest committee was formed in 1998 and 440ha was given for protection. The activities carried out with the help of forest department-electricity to the temple, culvert, Shishusala bhawan. The 300 ha forest area was treated under Regeneration of Degraded Forest (RDF) scheme and on 50 ha, plantation (irrigated) was carried out. For the community, livelihood generation activity was carried out by the department.

The steps facilitating adaptation are to strengthen policies for food security, forests and infrastructure development. Appropriate allocation of funds should be done for National Development Programme Implementation. The Institutional mechanisms need to be strengthened as instruments of adaptation at local level. The financial arrangement of funds for adaptation is desired. Mainstreaming of climate change concerns and hence adaptation in the planning process is desired. Instituting an integrated approach to understand the inter-sectoral linkages affecting the physical and socio economic vulnerabilities at local levels is needed.