

GEO-A-SEC-B-4-03-TH-TOPIC -3

Drought Prone Areas Programme (DPAP)

Drought Prone Areas Programme (DPAP) is the earliest area development programme launched by the Central Government in 1973-74 to tackle the special problems faced by those fragile areas, which are constantly affected by severe drought conditions. These areas are characterized by large human and cattle populations which are continuously putting heavy pressure on the already degraded natural resources for food, fodder and fuel. The major problems are continuous depletion of vegetative cover, increase in soil erosion and fall in ground water levels due to continuous exploitation without any effort to recharge the underground aquifer.

Though the programme had a positive impact in terms of creating durable public assets, its overall impact in effectively containing the adverse effects of drought was not found to be very encouraging. In addition, many of the States had also been demanding inclusion of additional areas under the programme. With a view to identifying the infirmities in the programme and also for considering the case for inclusion of additional areas under the programme, a High Level Technical Committee was constituted in April 1993 to critically review the contents, methodology and implementation processes of all area development programmes and suggest suitable measures for improvement.

The Committee in its Report submitted in April 1994 had attributed the unsatisfactory performance of the programmes to the following major factors-

- Implementation of programme activities over vast areas in a sectoral and dispersed manner.
- Inadequate allocations to the programme and programme expenditures thinly spread over large problem areas.
- Programme implemented through government agencies with least or no participation of the local people.
- Taking up of a vast array of activities, which were neither properly integrated nor necessarily related to the objectives of the programme.

Based on the recommendations of the Hanumantha Rao Committee, comprehensive Guidelines for Watershed Development, commonly applicable to Drought Prone Areas Programme, Desert Development Programme and Integrated Wastelands Development Programme were issued in October 1994 and were made applicable with effect from 1.4.1995. Subsequently, based on the feedback received from States, Project Implementation Agencies and others concerned, the Guidelines were revised in September 2001. The overall productivity of land and the water table have increased and there has been a significant impact in checking soil erosion by water and wind. The programme has also helped in overall economic development in the project areas,

Objectives:

The basic objective of the programme is to minimize the adverse effects of drought on the production of crops and livestock and productivity of land, water and human resources thereby ultimately leading to the drought proofing of the affected areas. The programme aims at promoting overall economic development and improving the socio-economic condition of the resource poor and disadvantaged sections inhabiting the programme areas through creation, widening and equitable distribution of the resource base and increased employment opportunities. The objectives of the programme are being addressed in general by taking up development works through watershed approach for land development, water resource development and afforestation/pasture development. The recent impact studies sponsored by the Ministry have revealed that with the implementation of watershed projects under Drought Prone Areas Programme.

Strategy:

The common Guidelines for Watershed Development provide for a uniform strategy in the implementation of all area development programmes. The main features of this strategy are:

- * Area development programmes to be implemented exclusively on watershed basis.
- * Programme activities to be confined to the identified watershed of about 500 hectares and to be executed on a project basis spanning a period of four to five years.
- * Watershed project to be, as far as possible, co-terminus with village boundary.
- * Direct participation of the people in planning and development of watershed areas and maintenance of assets in the post project period.
- * Panchayati Raj Institutions have the right to monitor and review the programme at district, block and village levels. They can also function as Project Implementation Agencies if they so desire.
- * Voluntary agencies to be given effective role in the implementation of the programme particularly in motivating people, community organisation and training.

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