

**CHOOSING 'NOT' TO PARTICIPATE – EVIDENCE FROM  
DROUGHT PRONE AREA PROGRAMME (DPAP) IN  
CHITRADURGA, KARNATAKA**

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*It is pointless to expect development agencies to 'correct' their mistakes in any meaningful sense. Rather, we should expect 'failing' projects to receive renewed funding precisely because they are succeeding in a broader sense, in depoliticising such key issues as the distribution of land or the extension of bureaucratic power in contested zones of governance. What seems like failure is success by another name. (Kumar and Corbridge, 2002, p.94)*

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The attempt of the State to transform the governance structure of the watershed programmes implemented by the Ministry of Rural Development through the *Common Guidelines* (GOI, 1994) has been characterized as being *revolutionary* in nature by Shah (1999) for three reasons: devolution of decision-making and financial allocation directly to the district and then to the village level; creation of a partnership between the Government, Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and communities and evolution of flexible mechanisms regarding the technical and financial norms. The attempt of the Government has been to usher in an institutional set up which hitherto was dependant "almost entirely on the top-down bureaucracy with very little participation of village communities" (GOI, 1994, p.1). These changes are part of the wider trends occurring wherein there is a move towards 'depoliticisation' of development through the crafting of single purpose user committees (water user committees, watershed development committees, health committees, forest protection committees, etc)<sup>1</sup>. In this paper, we have a limited purpose and examine the evidence on the constraints that farmers face in participating in the programme of somebody else- 'the government'.

The paper is organized as follows. In Section one, we discuss the typologies on participation and state our normative position. In section two, we locate the enquiry in the wider debate and the emerging critique of the participatory development discourse and the *tyrannical*<sup>2</sup> nature that it is assuming. In Section three, we examine the historical 'failure' of the Drought Prone Areas Programme (DPAP), which provides a backdrop to understand the historical baggage under which current programme constraints are encountered. In section four, we introduce the study area and specify the methodology adopted for the field enquiry. In section five, we present the evidence and in

the last section, we conclude by raising certain policy issues in the context of our findings and the wider discussion on the possible ways in which the watershed development programmes should be designed and funded.

Before, we discuss the typology, it is important to specify as to *why* we are interested in looking at participation. The commitment of a major 'player' the development scenario, the World Bank to *community based development* and *community driven development*<sup>3</sup> projects was \$ 7 Billion in 2003<sup>4</sup>. In the Watershed context, in India an initiative of the Planning Commission (Perspective Plan Document) estimates that Rs.76,000 crores is to be spent over a 25-year period. The nature of the financial allocation is quite high which warrants us to take a step back and examine the evidence in terms of the attempts that are being made under the participatory development 'rhetoric'.

#### **TYPOLGY TO EXAMINE PARTICIPATION IN THE WATERSHED CONTEXT**

The typology of Cohen and Uphoff (1980) provides a useful start to discuss participation<sup>5</sup>. The three dimensions of participation outlined are: *what* kind of participation is under consideration, *who* is participating in it and *how* is participation occurring?. With respect, to *What*, they are: (a) Participation in decision making (b) Participation in implementation (c) Participation in benefits and (d) Participation in evaluation<sup>6</sup>. Decision-making could be distinguished into (a) initial decisions, which relate to identification of local needs and how these would be approached by the project. This is a very critical stage as discussion should centre on issues related to (i) Whether a project should start (ii) where it should be located and crucially (iii) paths by which they will participate and the contributions they are expected to make.

Participation in the watershed context is usually defined as 'communities' being involved in the analysis of the soil and water conservation problems and 'jointly' arriving at strategies to alleviate them. The aspects critical for such processes it is argued are the ability of members to participate 'as community' or to have 'collective' voice (Kerr, 2002)

Our argument is that the problematisation of participation by seeing it in terms of the all-inclusive notional concept of 'community' is problematic for the

following reason. The ‘community’ consists of heterogeneous individuals and their perceptions and incentives to be involved in participatory process of planning, implementation and cost sharing differ based on various factors. The interaction of the ‘individual’ – the farmer with a variety of stakeholders ultimately results in some collective decision-making. The ‘participation’ of the individual farmer therefore needs to be understood in a disaggregated manner, which would enable us to understand the differential roles that various stakeholders play and viewpoints that emerge before collective decisions emerge. The typology of Agarwal (2001) is useful in categorizing differential processes of participation and this categorization has guided the analysis of our data.

Table 1: Typology of Participation

Form/Level of Participation	Characteristic Feature
Nominal Participation	Membership in the Group
Passive Participation	Being informed of decisions ex post facto; or attending meetings and listening in on decision making without speaking up
Consultative participation	Being asked an opinion in specific matters without guarantee of influencing decisions
Activity specific participation	Being asked to (or volunteering to) undertake specific tasks
Active Participation	Expressing opinions, whether or not solicited, or taking initiative of other sorts
Interactive (empowering) participation	Having voice and influence in the group’s decisions

Source: Agarwal (2001, p.1624).

### **NORMATIVE POSITION**

The normative stand of us is that participation in itself is important, only to the extent that it facilitates the realization of ‘desirable’ outcomes. We hold that the intrinsic value of participation as an empowering exercise is a ‘second-best’ solution and the logical outcome of ‘better’ participation would be realization of desirable outcomes. If this does not happen, the ‘value’ of participation is ‘limited’ in nature.

## **PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT DISCOURSE – RHETORIC VIS-À-VIS REALITY**

The central importance of community based development is based on the principle that a more inclusive process of planning and implementation can lead to better outcomes in terms of the efficiency of the intervention in achieving its desired goals. This facilitates a greater possibility that the communities sustain the intervention since they have played an integral part in planning and implementing the programme. Better “participation is expected to lead to better designed projects, better targeted benefits, more cost effective and timely delivery of project inputs, and more equitably distributed projects with less corruption and other rent seeking activity” (Mansuri and Rao, 2004, p.6).

The empirical constraints involved in achieving such idealized objectives are the following based on the review of Mansuri and Rao (2004)<sup>7</sup>. First, the basic constraint is that individuals have opportunity costs in exercising ‘voice<sup>8</sup>’ as there are implications in terms of the time lost or the financial loss incurred due to such participation. Second, mainstreaming participation is used simply as a means of cost-effective delivery or low-cost maintenance rather than as a vehicle for social transformation. Third, it is argued that it would be naïve to expect participatory exercises to transform the attitudes and implementation style of authoritarian bureaucracies<sup>9</sup>.

We examine some of the insightful studies, which have examined these issues, in particular the ‘constraints’ involved in the efforts undertaken by ‘participatory’ projects. Mosse (2003) examines the constraints involved in moving towards participatory modes of operation in The Kribhco Indo-British Farming Project (KRIBP) a donor funded project of a large public sector organisation. The processes of planning based on the Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) exercise was not based on the idealistic concept of it representing the ‘local’ needs, but instead this information generated through such ‘exercises’, only ended up representing the views with greater power and authority (Mosse, 1994). This ‘monolithic’ representation of local needs only hid the disparity of thinking by a variety of local actors. The ‘misrepresentation’ of reality and preferences does occur. The simplistic

inference the project staff drew from the Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) exercise was that the long-term loss of fertility along with deforestation was a major cause of declining agricultural productivity. However it was not realised in the initial stages of the project that the practical interest in soil erosion arose from the more urgent need for off-season labour, which the project offered. Later enquiry revealed the more important issues related to – wage labour, indebtedness and the relationships of dependence and the advance sale of migrant labour. Mosse argues that had an earlier realization of this issues had taken place, possibly the intervention strategy could have been *different*. The important message that comes across is that PRA exercises, perse play a limited role and a critical reflection and further understanding of the problem needs to be done by understanding a variety of factors.

Kumar and Corbridge (2002) examine the constraints faced by the Eastern India Rainfed Farming Project (EIRFP) in achieving its objective of improving the livelihoods of the rural poor by strengthening the social network of poorer households. The study quite tragically found that the project in fact lead to a weakening of the existing social networks of the poor. The project infact lead to an enhancement of the social capital of the richer villages and encouraged their dependence on the project staff and infrastructure. The staff chose to work with the elites since their support was required to meet the given ‘targets’, the elite domination of these groups was only a continuation of the ‘capture’ which they had already done of the Forest Committee, Grain bank and the Panchayat. Many of these better-off households put pressure on the project to supply them with inputs (improved seeds, check dams, etc) thereby adding to the network of social capital available to the better-off farmers. The formation of the SHGs dominated by the better-off was not met with any resistance from the poorer households as “they did not expect to participate directly in the organisation of the groups and most were unsurprised if not always pleased, to find themselves playing second-fiddle to better off villagers. A majority of these households did not expect to gain worthwhile benefits from the project and they were reluctant to commit time and energy to group activities” (ibid, p.86). More than 50% of the villagers in the sample villages were not members of the EIRFP groups. While attempt was made to

organise village-wide on natural resource and developmental issues, these groups did not sustain due to the cynicism that began to emerge about their utility. Therefore the staff went about organizing smaller 'homogenous' groups involved in limited range of activities such as paddy dehusking ,etc. The outcome of the intervention is that there is a greater likelihood that there is greater dependence of the better-off villages on the EIRFP, while the existing social capital of the poor are weakened and the capacity for village-wide collective action is weakened by the success of the project groups.

Baviskar (undated) examines the Rajiv Gandhi Watershed Mission (RGWM) in Madhya Pradesh and bases her critique drawing from the work of Ferguson (1990) which saw 'development as an anti-politics machine'. Her critique of the project was that in the selection of villages, the mission, rather than selecting those villages where the ecological degradation was the most, chose those villages where the villages were ready to be willing partners to the State. This meant that villages, which have a history of organizing themselves and protesting against the State, were left out (organized by the Khedut Mazdoor Chethana Sangh). Baviskar argues that in fact these 'left-out' villages are better 'endowed in terms of public participation, transparency and accountability to create democratic viable democratic institutions for decentralized watershed development" (ibid, p.12). In terms of the intervention, most of the work occurred in the valley where the better off farmers were located. The ridge to valley concept of treating from the upper reaches onwards were compromised because it was considered 'problematic' for the following reason: Most of the land in the upper reaches were encroached land and the farmers were skeptical of any government intervention as they saw it as a first step which would eventually lead to them loosing the defacto rights that they enjoyed over the land. Rather than working in such 'risky environments', the easy option of working in the valley was resorted to – It was also convenient as 'results' and 'success' could be shown.

The 'participatory' nature of the working of the watershed committee only meant that the Vice-President of the committee got a contractor to construct a tank in the village- "For him, the Committee structure is a formality, its

processes cosmetic. A perfunctory nod at ‘community participation’ is all that is necessary before getting down to the *real* business at hand, getting the tanks constructed and the profits shared” (ibid, p.21). The implementation of the programme involves voluntary labour being provided by the community; but the labour provided as ‘voluntary’ is unknown to the villagers – “many of them complain that watershed work does not pay as much as other public works. This indicates that they perceive watershed work as yet another form of labouring for the state, and they have no sense of ownership vis-à-vis the project” (ibid, p.21)

The brief review<sup>10</sup> clearly indicates the enormity of the constraints in the participatory development ‘project’ and the need to proceed cautiously’ as there are implications in terms of the time lost or the financial loss incurred due to such participation<sup>11</sup>. Second, mainstreaming participation is used simply as a means of cost-effective delivery or low-cost maintenance rather than as a vehicle for social transformation. Third, it is argued that it would be naïve to expect participatory exercises to transform the attitudes and implementation style of authoritarian bureaucracies<sup>12</sup>.

The above discussion clearly indicates the enormity of the constraints in the participatory development ‘project’ and the need to proceed cautiously and observers who have begun to raise the question whether participation is the ‘new tyranny’? (Cooke and Kothari, 2001). This is based on the argument proposed by various authors in the above volume that participatory processes undertaken ‘ritualistically’ have turned out to be ‘manipulative’ in nature and has ‘harmed’ those it was supposed to empower. The questions examined are – (a) do participatory facilitators override existing legitimate decision-making processes? (b) do group dynamics lead to participatory decisions that reinforce the interests of the already powerful and (c) The third question relates to the nature of the participatory method itself. Our study is an effort in examining the above questions and attempts to distinguish the rhetoric from the reality in the participatory development ‘project’ that we examine.

We now proceed to examine the historical antecedents of the DPAP programme, which provides us the backdrop before we examine the evidence emerging from our field sites

### **HISTORICAL 'FAILURE' OF DROUGHT PRONE AREAS PROGRAMME (DPAP) 1973-74 TO 2002)**

#### **A brief picture of state *inertia*<sup>13</sup>**

The DPAP was initiated in 1973 covering 947 blocks of 155 districts in 13 states. The programme is a centrally sponsored scheme with the expenditure being shared equally by the Centre and the States. The objectives of the programme are to (a) minimise the adverse effect of droughts on production of crops and livestock and productivity of land; (b) optimally utilise natural resources like land, water, vegetation, etc. ultimately leading to drought proofing of the area (c) restore ecological balance and (d) improve the economic and social condition of the resource poor section and the disadvantage section inhabiting the area.

By April 1995 a total area of 74.6 million ha has been treated under the programme. The financial implication of this intervention is Rs.2195 crore. The results however have not been satisfactory and the Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General<sup>14</sup> states that the “drought conditions and ecological conditions had shown no perceptible improvement” and the “drought prone areas had increased from 55.3 million hectare in 1973-76 to 74.6 million ha in April 1995”. However in defense, the Ministry of Rural Areas and Employment stated in January 1999 that this increase was due to a refinement in the criteria adopted for identifying a drought prone area and as a reason the programme was extended to 74.6 million ha and it also stated that the meager allocation meant that efforts to drought proofing was restricted to only a few confined pockets and there was a need for enhanced allocation to ensure effectiveness of the programme. However, the CAG report found that this explanation by the ministry untenable as “the impact of the DPAP was not monitored and the Ministry had no information on the magnitude of the drought proofed area after a quarter of century of the implementation of the

programme” while do recognising that insufficient fund allocation was a contributory factor for the poor results.

The Mid Term Appraisal by the Planning Commission for the 1997-2002 period (GOI, p.250-251) states in very clear terms the contributory factors for the poor performance. We cite a few of the points as outlined in the report.

- “Little participation of local people. Field staff have no incentive to pursue Participatory approaches”
- “Insecurity about the availability of funding at the grassroots level; there is no guarantee that the funds would be released in time by the Government of India (GOI) or other funding agencies. Pressure to spend substantial resources by a fixed deadline”. The CAG report further states that the delay ranged from one to fourteen months in seven states. The release of funds was postponed to the end of the financial year (March) for 1996-97 in 36% of the funds released.
- Limited time permitted for preparatory and group formation activities. Strict Orientation to achieve physical targets leaves field staff little time to promote social organisation.
- Limited human resource capabilities. Government staff have sometime subcontracted all work related to participatory processes to NGOs without developing any internal capacity.
- There is little impact assessment or evaluation of physical progress after the scheme is runs for a couple of years. It is taken for granted that once the money has been spent, physical progress automatically results. It is quite likely that soil conservation structures may not last for more than a few years<sup>15</sup>, or plantation may not survive.
- Common Guidelines prescribe that those who benefit from works on private land should contribute 10% of the total cost and 5% for works on common lands but in practice it has been difficult to collect these charges in full or the recovery is shown on paper but adjusted by the contractor in his bill. In the case of Karnataka, the CAG report states that between 1991-92 to 1997-98, Rs.19.20 lakhs was not recovered on the work executed on the private lands.
- The CAG report notes that although the intention of the programme was to get the work executed by employing local labour so that full benefits of the wage employment reached the local labourers and not through the employment of contractors, it was found that work costing Rs. 4.38 crores was executed through the contractors in seven states.

We now proceed to examine the evidence emerging from our study sites.

### Study Area

Chitradurga district falls under the Central Dry agroclimatic zone, which comprises 17 taluks of the districts of Chitradurga and Tumkur. The total geographical area is 19,98,509 ha and the Gross cropped area is 10,91,69 acres. The major crops grown in the district are: Ragi, Rice, Jowar, Pulses and Oil seeds. The district falls under the Krishna basin and two major rivers Vedavathi and Tungbhadra drain the district. The mean annual rainfall for the 1901 to 1990 period is 565.mm. Molkalmur taluk was selected for the study as it presented the possibility of examining both DPAP and Karnataka Watershed Development Agency (KAWAD) projects in the same field setting. The profile for the II phase DPAP villages is as follows. The projects in the II phase were selected as they were the earliest available to examine projects implemented as per GOI (1994). Although projects in the I phase were supposed to be implemented as per GOI (1994), the district level and taluk level authorities admitted that there was no attempt to follow these Guidelines during the I phase.

Table 2: Profile of the II phase villages - DPAP (1999-2003)

Sl. No.	Name of the Village	Number of Households	Total Area (ha)	Water-Shed Area (ha)	Dry land (ha)	Irrigated (ha)	CW <sup>1</sup> (Ha)	NAC <sup>2</sup> (Ha)
1	Bommadevarahalli	210	1,029.94	307.00	568.03	4.86 <sup>3</sup>	92.46	34.92
2	Rajapura	180	1,059.07	360.47	762.75	28.32	70.91	34.56
3	Devasamudra	428	1,476.43	526.52	408.61	177.83	356.21	77.15
4	Vithalapura	51	379.98	375.34	54.33	25.97	25.97	2.94
5	Venkatapura	301	374.38	370.01	219.28	88.04	40.18	26.88
6	Oorthalu	81	563.03	501.28	342.24	301.04	27.95	43.32
7	Muthugarahalli	208	1,543.49	496.64	426.58	30.0	26.49	153.23

Source: DPAP project documents (Number of Households and Watershed area), rest from GOI (1991).

<sup>1</sup> Culturable Waste (including Gauchar and Groves);

<sup>2</sup> Area not available for cultivation

<sup>3</sup> This data from GOI (1991) clearly is an under-estimate.

### Sampling procedure

The study involved the data collection from five DPAP villages. The sampling procedure was as follows. First, a meeting was held with the WDC chairman and the members and the purpose of the study was explained. Later a transect was undertaken from the upper reach to the lower reach of the micro watershed. A map of the watershed area was used wherever it was available to guide us during the transect walk and in the later discussions for identification of sample households. The transect was undertaken with a few Watershed Development Committee (WDC) members or a few farmers who were 'willing' to spare their time to walk with me. The strata for the study was:

- (a) Upper Small
- (b) Upper Medium
- (c) Upper Large
- (d) Lower Small
- (e) Lower Medium
- (f) Lower Large

Small is defined as those farm households, having less than 5 acres. Medium is defined as households owning between 5 to 10 acres and large are those households having more than 10 acres. 1 acre of irrigated is considered to be equivalent to 2 acres of dry land.

The sample households selected for the study for the five villages are as follows.

Table 3: Sample distribution of households across reach and land holding

Strata	Devasamudra	Venkatapura	Vithalapura	Bommadevarahalli	Muthugurahalli	Total
Upper Small	6	4	6	5	5	26
Upper Medium	6	4	5	6	5	26
Upper Large	4	5	2	4	5	20
Lower Small	4	6	7	8	9	34
Lower Medium	5	4	5	4	4	22
Lower Large	5	6	4	5	2	22
Total	30	29	29	32	30	150

Before, we proceed to examine the findings, the below provides a snap shot picture as to how the programme has been received ‘differentially’ in the villages.

Table 4: Locating the differential village level ‘responses’ to the watershed intervention

Name of the Village	Characterization of the village
Devasamudra	‘Head’ end village; local power structures are centralized in the village; attempt has been made to appropriate the maximum resources within the village; in ‘tail’ end villages, resources get spent – ‘adjusted’ based on some sort of ‘patron-client relationship’; conflict between the Panchayat (controlled by the Congress) and the Watershed Development Committee (controlled by the Janata Dal); decision on (a) whether the land has to be treated, (b) what sort of treatment to be done, to a large extent, is influenced by whether the farmer’s alliance is to the Congress or the Janata Dal.
Venkatapura and Vithalapura	‘Tail’ end villages- lobby to ensure that there is only one WDC and not WDCs in each village so that resource ‘appropriation’ by Devasamudra can be minimized. WDC members representing the tail end villages lobby (with the MLA at the ‘hobli’ (unit of administration below the taluk level) and Agricultural Assistant) to ensure that the power exercised by the influence of Devasamudra WDC members is minimized.
Bommadevarahalli	Strong indigenous ‘corporate’ organisation of the Temple Committee, which is involved in various activities. Although there is this strong indigenous set up, government is in the realm of the ‘other’ and the designated person ‘ <i>Sarkarada Manusha</i> ’ represents largely any ‘interaction’ that needs to be undertaken with the ‘ <i>Sarkara</i> ’ (Government)
Muthugarahalli	‘Passive’ village, decisions taken by the Agricultural Assistant, the WDC chairman is a ‘rubber stamp’ to the AA, certain amount of ‘elite capture’ takes place (ex: Boulder removal being done in Lingayats plots while not in others which is not an authorized activity under the DPAP programme)

## **Preparation of Master Plan and Action Plan Document**

The basic flaw in the planning process has been that the activities relating to SHG formation<sup>4</sup> were made only after the 'action' plans were prepared and submitted. The Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) exercise as envisaged by the architects of the Common Guidelines in terms of a 'learning sharing and contestation' exercise did not take place. If anything which had a semblance of a PRA exercise, the following took place- The Agricultural Assistant undertook the transact with the 'assistance' of the 'key person' in the village. The person could be a NGO staff (who is shortlisted to get a contract for the 'software' part of the work) or a farmer who potentially became an 'assistant' to the Agricultural Assistant (AA) in the village.

The transact lead to the identification of treatment plans for the entire designated watershed area and the preparation of year-wise action plan. The AA solely made this exercise based on his one-two days visit to the village and one-week of number crunching in his calculator, in between his trips to the line departments for data collation. Having done so, the Master plan was finalized and submitted to the Zilla Parishad in Chitradurga. This was periodically 'ratified' in the WDC, which only involved the signature being taken of decisions already made by the Agricultural Assistant. These findings reiterate the findings from other states (See Kolavalli and Kerr, 2002) but our evidence shows that the situation is far worser.

### **Village-wise evidence on the processes after the preparation of the Master Plan**

#### ***Bommadevarahalli- 'Contestation' on the planning of the treatment;***

The village chosen for the study comes under the Thamanahalli Gram Panchayat and a significant proportion of the land is in the upper reach. A large part of the lower reach is in Rajpapura village. In 1999, the officials from the Assistant Director of Agriculture (first PIA) visited the village and after the

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<sup>4</sup> However feeble the attempt, explained in the next section.

conduct of a village meeting the treatment commenced. The treatment was largely done based on 'technical feasibility' without the involvement of the farmers in planning the treatment in their respective plots. The outcome of this was that there was a collective realization that the bunds constructed were not appropriate. This was informed to the staff who realised that the apprehension of the farmers was correct. This led to the breaking down of the earlier structures and reconstructing them as per the required way suggested by the farmers. Later, the Agricultural Assistant informed that the Contour bunds too were broken down by the farmers.<sup>16</sup>

It is important to understand the inter-village dynamics. When the meeting was held in the neighbouring Thaminahalli village, around fifty farmers (apparently all the 'elite' did go to the meeting) came from Bommadevarahalli and around forty farmers from Rajapura.<sup>17</sup> In that meeting it was decided that the treatment should begin from Rajapura (lower reach) as the plots of many farmers were located in the village. Therefore the ridge-valley concept was compromised as it was "collectively" decided that the work should start from the lower reach. When queried about this to the Agricultural Assistant, he says that the mistake was not his as the planning when the earlier Agricultural Assistant was in charge. There are interesting dynamics as to why, the compromise of the ridge-to valley approach has been 'beneficial' to the staff. This meant that check dams were constructed at the initial stages of the intervention. This meant that the nexus between the earlier Agricultural Assistant and the MLA based in the *hobli* (unit below the taluk level) could ensure that 'rent seeking' could take place. Later on when the Project Implementation Agency (PIA) was shifted to the newly created District Watershed Development Office (DWDO), the present Agricultural Assistant and the Agriculture Officer took a transact and decided, that the programme had to be shifted back to start from the upper reach (which was in Bommadevarhalli).

### ***Devasamudra-Venkatapura-Vithalapura***

The Agricultural Assistant frankly stated that the selection of the villages was based on the "political pressure" exerted on him. This was substantiated

further with discussion with the Z.P. member and her husband (who for all practical purposes was the defacto member). Disputes arose on two counts when the first meeting was held in Devasamudra.

First, when it was announced that two WDCs would be formed comprising the following combination of villages-Devasamudra and Vithalapura, Venkatapura and vithalapura; there was opposition from the farmers representing the tail end villages. This opposition was based on the logic that a single WDC would give them enough leverage to minimise the resource appropriation of the politically stronger Devasamudra village.

The second issue of contestation was on the decision made by the district and taluk level authorities that the Panchayat President could not be the WDC Chairman. This was opposed by the Panchayat Chairman and his 'coterie'. Having not succeeded in his attempts, he made an attempt to 'coopt' the farmers by paying the mandatory membership fee for each of the farmer for membership in the Watershed Association. Apparently he paid Rs.10,000 as membership fees for 300 farmers. This strategy was not effective he stated as the ZP member's husband countered by paying an equal or greater share of the membership fees. So in effect the 'control' of the WDC was not with the Panchayat President but the 'defacto' ZP member. The implications of such 'control' exercised are evident in the later processes explained in the later sections in the paper.

### **SELF HELP GROUPS**

The process of being a part of the SHGs is a 'learning' and in some sense, empowering exercise for the members. By collectively managing the credit activities, this provides some sort of a 'ground' wherein higher-level objectives in terms of building up other village level organizations could be embarked upon (Fernandez, 1994). The basic flaw in the intervention process has been that the process of building rapport and the initiation of Self Help Groups is considered as the 'software' part of the intervention and "NGOs were supposed to have comparative advantage to do this"<sup>18</sup>. This work was 'contracted out' to them. This was contradictory to what the Guidelines

envisages. These processes initiated by the government staff, which was supposed to be a 'learning experience' (initiation of SHGs, conduct of PRA exercises). But all this has not happened, the effort was in terms of getting the 'real thing done' - fulfillment of work targets prepared in the action plans.

Even the 'second – best' option of contracting the work to NGOs which was exercised, was plagued with problems, as there was no commitment on the part of the district level authorities to ensure that these efforts are supported adequately. The NGOs were basically one-two men teams. Effort has been put by the organisation SAHANA in the four villages of Devasamudra, Venkatapura, Vithalapura and Bommadevarahalli in terms of initiating SHGs. However no proper follow up was undertaken, as the NGOs were not paid regularly for their efforts. This meant that some of the SHGs have become defunct (one of the reasons is that these groups which are formed with the expectation of getting "loans" lost interest when they realised that their chances of getting the loans were low). In at least two of the above four villages, efforts were put in terms of 'creating' 'area groups' which basically consisted of households following a particular occupation – pottery for example. However these area groups remain only in "paper" (in the NGO records) as further efforts were not put in terms of training, facilitating the evolving of income enhancement strategies<sup>19</sup>.

Only 8.5 percent of the respondents belonged to those SHGs initiated by the NGOs which were providing 'support' to the programme, with the majority (91.5) being a member of other initiatives independent of the watershed intervention (see Table 5). Although it is clearly evident that the effort put in organising these groups has been 'limited' in nature, the more serious issue pertains to the lack of effort of the Government staff to 'engage' with already existing organizational capital to create some sort of 'interest' in the programme (Table 6). The lack of this effort has implications in terms of the later processes, which is explained in further sections in the paper.

Table 5: Membership of Self-Help Group

Strata	Not a member (%)	Member of some SHG (%)
Upper Small	46.2	53.8
Upper Medium	65.4	34.6
Upper Large	50.0	50.0
Lower Small	47.1	52.9
Lower Medium	59.1	40.9
Lower Large	50	50
Average	52.7	47.3

Table 6: Membership- Type of Group

Strata	NGO providing 'software' support to the watershed programme (%)	Others <sup>20</sup> (%)
Upper Small	7.1	92.9
Upper Medium	0	100.0
Upper Large	10.0	90.0
Lower Small	11.1	88.9
Lower Medium	11.1	88.9
Lower Large	9.1	90.9
Average	8.5	91.5

#### **ATTENDANCE OF THE FIRST MEETING IN THE VILLAGE BEFORE THE INITIATION OF THE WATERSHED DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (WDC)**

The initial meeting was held in only three of the five villages, the meeting was not held in Venkatapura and Vithalapura villages<sup>21</sup> as all the meetings were centralized in Devasamudra. Only 23% of the farmers stated that they had attended the meeting. In terms of reach, their distribution is almost equal, while upper reach farmers represented 53%, lower reach was 47%. It is important to understand the attributes of these few farmers who attended the meeting in comparison to the entire sample of DPAP farmers. The average land holding of these farmers was 8.08 acres as compared to the average land holding of the entire sample farmers, which was 9.95 acres, the average area of irrigated land owned was 1.81 acres as compared to the average for

the total sample of farmers, which was 1.07 acres. The average years of schooling was 5.45 years as compared to 4.43 years for the entire set of farmers. While only 27 percent of the farm households had at least one member engaged in agricultural labour, the average for the entire set of households was 45 percent.

The comparison of the total land holding and the irrigated land holding of those farmers who participated in the meeting vis-à-vis average for the entire sample of households shows that there is not much difference in the case of total land holding and therefore, the farmer who did not choose to attend the meeting is largely representative of the wider group. In the case of irrigated land, contrary to what one would expect, the extent of irrigated land owned by the farmers who did not attend the meeting is higher (1.81 acres as compared to 1.07 acres), one would normally expect that the better irrigated farmers to have a better incentive to attend the meeting because of the 'potential' benefits that they could garner from the intervention. However this has not been the case, which only reflects that a greater amount of irrigation land owned need not necessarily mean a "better" interest in the programme<sup>22</sup>.

The distribution of farmers who attended the meeting is skewed, with a significant proportion of the farmers belonging to the politically 'vibrant' environment of Devasamudra (41%), followed by the tail-end village of Venkatapura (22.72) and the attempt of a few of the farmers has been in terms of the attempt made to 'reduce' the resource appropriation by Devasamudra and to engage in some counter-lobbying activities to influence the Agricultural Assistant (either independently or through the MLA).

Let us now examine the causative factors as to why the farmers did not attend the meeting.

In Bommadevarahalli, only one farmer attended and not unsurprisingly, it is the 'key person' in the village, the '*Sarkara Manusha*', who represented any engagement with the Government as the *Sarkara* was in the realm of the 'other' especially in the context of the Watershed intervention. This conscious

disengagement with the state apparatus at the 'individual' level is a interesting decision that the village community took largely based on a 'unwritten norm' that any engagement would not be necessary at the 'individual' level as the '*Sarkarada Manusha*', in some sense represented a collective representation of individual interest in the programme. (Example: in decision relating on where the earthen bund had to be constructed, how to ensure that such a construction would not lead to a fight between the neighbouring farmers). The '*Sarkarada Manusha*' belonged to the Nayaka caste to which 75% of the respondents belonged and had land in the lower reach which was entirely dry (13 acres)<sup>23</sup>.

In the 'tail-end' villages, while there were a few 'active' farmers, three in the case of Venkatapura and five in the case of Vithalapura who actively participated in attending the meeting, a significant proportion (79.3% in Venkatapura and 89.3% in Vithalapura) did not attend the meeting (Table 7). In Venkatapura, this was because they were not aware that such a meeting was held (41 %) or they were too busy with their primary concerns relating to the normal duties associated with agricultural work (27.6%) and due to 'other' reasons. This 'other' reasons related to very conscious decision not to get engaged in the 'active and dirty' politics. This was either because they were not interested or because they could not afford to get involved due to their weak bargaining power (which was either due to their poor economic status or due to their political affiliation being to the 'wrong' party while the powers to be influence were of the 'opposite' political party<sup>24</sup>). The 'representation' of these farmers was considered as 'sufficient' to express their concerns, although some farmers later did feel that these members could not play a meaningful role. Similar was the response of the other tail-end village, Vithalapura (55.2% being unaware of the meeting, 17% being busy in Agriculture work).

In the 'passive' village of Muthugarahalli, majority of the farmers were not aware of the meeting (67%) because nobody informed them of the meeting or they simply choose not to get engaged in 'wider' happenings in the village, in some cases because the hamlet in which they resided (Messarahatti) was a

kilometer away from the village or simply because they were not interested in such meetings which do not hold any significance to them<sup>25</sup>.

In the ‘tail-end’ villages, while there were a few ‘active’ farmers, three in the case of Venkatapura and five in the case of Vithalapura who actively participated in attending the meeting, a significant proportion did not attend the meeting. In Venkatapura, this was because they were not aware that such a meeting was held (41 %) or they were too busy with their primary concerns relating to the normal duties associated with agricultural process (27.6%) and due to ‘other’ reasons.

Similar was the response of the other tail-end village, Vithalapura (55.2% being unaware of the meeting, 17% being busy in Agriculture work). In the ‘passive’ village of Muthugarahalli, majority of the farmers were not aware of the meeting (67%) because nobody informed them of the meeting or they simply choose not to get engaged in ‘wider’ happenings in the village, in some cases because the hamlet in which they resided (Messarahatti) was a kilometer away from the village or because they were not interested in such meetings which do not hold any significance to them.

Table 7: Attendance of the first meeting in the village

Strata	Not aware of the meeting (%)	Aware, but did not attend as busy in Agricultural work (%)	Aware, but did not attend for other reasons (%)	Attended (%)
Upper Small	53.8	11.5	15.4	19.2
Upper Medium	69.2	3.8	7.7	19.2
Upper Large	40.0	30.0	5.0	25.0
Lower Small	61.8	8.8	5.9	23.5
Lower Medium	54.5	13.6	9.1	22.7
Lower Large	36.4	27.3	4.5	31.8
Count	81	22	12.0	35
Average	54.0	14.7	8.0	23.3

Table 8: Attendance of the meeting – Village wise distribution across the strata

Village	Not aware (%)	Busy in Agri work(%)	Other reasons for not attending (%)	Attended (%)
Devasamudra	33.3	16.7	6.7	43.3
Vithalapura	55.2	17.2	3.4	24.1
Venkatapura	41.4	27.6	10.3	20.7
Muthugrahalli	66.7	0	6.7	26.7
B.D. Halli	71.9	12.5	12.5	3.1

**(e) Awareness about the existence of WDC Chairman**

The disheartening finding is that 66.7 percent of farmers were not able to identify as to who the WDC chairman was. Expectedly, this proportion is higher among the small farmers as compared to the medium and large farmers in both the upper reaches (Table 9). There is a clear pattern that emerges in the inter-village analysis with a very high proportion of farmers in the politically stronger (76.7%) village of Devasamudra being aware of the existence of the WDC chairman as compared to the ‘passive’ villages, where it is as low as 23.3 % for Bommadevarahalli and 15.6% for Muthugarahalli. The ‘tail end’ villages fall in between these two, with Vithalapura at 75.9% and Venkatapura at 62.1% (Table 10).

Table 9: Identification of the WDC Chairman-five villages across strata

Strata	Cannot identify the chairman (%)	Can identify the chairman (%)
Upper Small	84.6	15.4
Upper Medium	61.5	38.5
Upper Large	50.0	50.0
Lower Small	76.5	23.5
Lower Medium	68.2	31.8
Lower Large	50.0	50.0
Count	100	50
Average	66.7	33.3

Table 10: Village-wise Identification of the WDC Chairman across strata

Village	Cannot identify (%)	Can Identify (%)
Muthugarahalli	86.7	13.3
Bommadevarahalli	84.4	15.6
Vithalapura	75.9	24.1
Venkatapura	62.1	37.9
Devasamudra	23.3	76.7

### **Contribution**

The norm as per the GOI (1994) is that farmers are supposed to pay 10% of the costs for the treatment in the private land. The taluk has been facing crop failures for the past three years preceding the intervention. When the staff got a sense from the elite, that farmers would be unwilling to pay the required contribution, there was no serious attempt made to ensure that contribution was collected. Therefore the evidence does not seem to be surprising. 92 percent of the farmers were never asked for their mandatory 10 percent contribution towards the costs. Only a certain section of the farmers were asked if they would be willing to contribute. These were the farmers in the 'medium' (11.5%) and 'large' farmer category (10%). Surprisingly, none of the farmers from the lower reach were asked and there is some evidence at least in terms of their stated preference that there was a willingness to pay some contribution for the treatment undertaken in their plots, if somebody had asked them. This was stated by 4.5% of the respondents in the Lower medium strata and an equivalent proportion among the Lower Large strata.

The 'easy way' for the staff was the "adjustments" that took place in the form of compromise that has taken place in the quantum and quality of work. These compromises ensured that such 'savings' made could be shown as farmer's contribution. Having got a sense from the 'elite' of the village that the farmers would not be paying the contribution, the Devasamudra WDC took the stand that the work should be done without any contribution from the farmers<sup>26</sup>. We do have evidence of similar 'adjustments' taking place in DPAP projects in other states wherein the usual *modus operandi* is to budget for higher costs, while the actual costs are lower and the balance would be 'shown' as contribution and the rest could be pocketed (Chootray, 2004). The

other 'cruel' mechanism is to underpay the wage labourers and show the money 'saved' as farmer's contribution (see Kolavalli and Kerr, 2002, p.235).

Table 11: Reasons for not paying the contribution

Strata	Nobody asked me (%)	Asked we told that we could not pay (%)	if they had asked us, we would have contributed (%)
Upper Small	92.3	7.7	0
Upper Medium	88.5	11.5	0
Upper Large	85.0	10.0	5.0
Lower Small	97.1	0	2.9
Lower Medium	90.9	4.5	4.5
Lower Large	95.5	0	4.5
Count	138	8	4
Average	92.0	5.3	2.7

Table 12: Village-wise Reasons for not paying the contribution

Village	Nobody asked me (%)	Asked, we told that we could not pay (%)	If they had asked us, we would have contributed (%)
Bommadevarahalli	87.5	9.4	3.1
Muthugarahalli	96.6	3.4	0
Vithalapura	93.1	3.4	3.4
Venkatapura	96.6	3.4	0
Devasamudra	93.3	3.3	3.3
Average	92.0	5.3	2.7

#### **(f) Decision making on the Treatment**

The findings for the five villages on the aggregate are that 30% of the farmers were never consulted, while 24% of them were consulted and consent was taken. In 36% of the cases, the farmer made a request, while active lobbying was done by 10% of the farmers

The disaggregated strata wise inference (Table 13) clearly shows that the proportion of households, which were not consulted, was higher among the Small farmers in both the Upper and lower reaches (38.5 and 35.3% respectively), while the proportion is the least among the larger farmers (20 and 18% respectively for the farmers in the upper and lower strata). This proportion is lower in the case of 'large' farmers either because they themselves are actively involved in lobbying to get the desired treatments. This is more so the case of lower reach farmers (18.1) than the upper reach (10%). These farmers largely took the initiative to meet the Agricultural

Assistant and request the required treatment. For, the Agricultural Assistant too, such farmers were more 'easily' accessible whenever he decides to visit the village, while it is more difficult to meet the 'small' farmers whose livelihoods depend not only in terms of the crops that they cultivate, but also in terms of the wage employment for which they frequently have to go to the neighbouring villages. The disaggregated village wise analysis is on predictable lines, with the proportion of 'no consent' treatments highest among the 'passive' villages of Bommadevarhalli, which has the highest proportion of households falling under this category (53.1%), followed by Muthugarahalli (43.3%), while the politically 'dominant' Devasamudra has the least proportion of households (10%). The proportion in the tail-end villages falls between the two extremes with Venkatapura having 17.2% of households, while Vithalapura is 24.1% (Table 14).

Table 13: Decision making on Treatment in the plot- across the stratas

Strata	Treatment done without consultation (%)	Farmer's consent taken (%)	Farmer stating his request (%)	Farmer undertaking 'proactive' action (%)
Upper Small	38.5	15.4	46.1	0
Upper Medium	34.6	23.1	26.9	15.4
Upper Large	20.0	35.0	35.0	10.0
Lower Small	35.3	20.6	32.3	11.8
Lower Medium	27.3	36.4	31.8	4.5
Lower Large	18.2	18.2	45.5	18.1
Count	45	36	54	15
Average	30.0	24.0	36.0	10.0

Table 14: Decision making in the plot for five villages across the stratas

Village	Without consultation (%)	Farmer's consent taken(%)	Farmer stating his request (%)	Farmer undertaking proactive action (%)
Bommadevarahalli	53.1	21.9	21.9	3.1
Muthugarahalli	43.3	40.0	16.7	0
Vithalapura	24.1	24.1	31.0	20.7
Venkatapura	17.2	10.3	55.2	17.2
Devasamudra	10.0	23.3	56.7	10.0
Average	30	24	36	10.0

The causative factors for plots being treated without consent of the farmer being taken in is a combination of two factors:

(a) Lack of initiative on the part of the Agricultural Assistant to 'generate' interest in the intervention

The Agricultural Assistant did not put the required effort in either building up rapport with the existing Self Help Groups (SHGs) and building a platform to initiate efforts towards constitution of the Watershed Association and later on the Committee. Nor did he make an effort in building up rapport with individual farmers. The mode of operation solely consisted of working out 'mechanisms' (hiring of machinery largely and to a limited extent labour) to implements the treatment as per the Master Plan document and to aid his efforts in the field, he had the 'Key Persons' and the a few of the elite in the village to meet during his infrequent visits to the village. However, one has to understand the constraints under which the Agricultural Assistant works and the reasons for his lack of effort.

First, we examine in the case of the Agricultural Assistant (AA) who is responsible for the head end (Devasamudra) and tail end villages (Venkatapura and Vithalapura). When queried on the awareness of the Hanumantha Rao Committee Report (GOI, 1994), the Agricultural Assistant frankly admitted that he had limited knowledge of it and the only 'orientation' before the initiation of the project was in terms of a circular, which they received and was discussed in a staff meeting<sup>27</sup>. The expectation that bureaucrats would 'reform' by discussing a circular in a staff meeting is too 'ambitious' and the evidence from elsewhere clearly shows that concerted efforts are required (See Thomson, 1995). A practical constraint in visiting the village, was the travel that had to take place. The Agricultural Assistant stayed in the neighbouring taluk and travel to his place of work involved a commuting of around 60 kilometers<sup>28</sup>. The sanctioned travel allowance was Rs.70/- per month, which was barely sufficient for a single trip back and forth. This trips to these villages to be made with additional responsibilities of two villages where National Watershed Development Programme for Rainfed Areas (NWDPR) was

being implemented along with two additional phases under the II phase of the Drought Prone Area Programme.

The constraints of the Agricultural Assistant in the case of Bommadevarahalli were far greater as he was responsible for watershed projects in 10 villages which were implementing projects under various modalities. He stated that since four months his Traveling allowance was not paid. The work was stressful in nature as the lack of 'proper measurement' meant that he was liable to get suspended. This puts additional pressure on the Agricultural Assistant. This is because he has to factor in this supervision of the district level authorities while he 'adjusts' the measurement in order to 'adjust' the amount required to meet the required contribution norm.<sup>29</sup>

The farmer's lack of interest is a combination of various factors. The taluk has been suffering crop failures since the past three years. Under such a situation, a programme, which did not create wage labour, was not of interest to the farmers, a frequently stated response across all the villages was the 'unnecessary' use of machinery. This has been stated in all the villages surveyed<sup>30</sup>. A 'mode' level factor is the lack of conditionalities or "no negotiables" not being there<sup>31</sup>. When farmers could get their land treated without attending meetings, without making a contribution, without knowing who the WDC Chairman or Agricultural Assistant was, why would they take the 'trouble' of going through all these processes, which the architects of the national guidelines expect them to do (GOI, 1994). The staff also find this as non-problematic as they have alternative mechanisms – 'adjustments' to meet the requirements of the national guidelines. Since the auditor does not undertake a verification exercise, to see what is happening in terms of the guidelines, the targets are met, the projects get completed and the staff get busy with the 'new' project- the SUJALA Watershed Project<sup>32</sup> funded by the World Bank or various other projects, underway.

## **CONCLUSION**

The evidence presented in this paper indicates the differential response of the farmers across the villages and across the strata based on land holding and reach. However, an overall assessment does indicate the conscious decision of a large section of the farmers not to get involved in the processes. This in any sense did not bother the Agricultural Assistant who had mechanisms to 'adjust' and show that there was participation (meeting of the 10% contribution norm). Given such a scenario, the logical question to ask would be what are the 'outputs' (Quantum and quality of treatment) and outcomes (Crop productivity, livestock holding, groundwater recharge and migration). The preliminary inference of the data on the quality of the treatment indicates that various "adjustments" had taken place and there have been compromises in the quality and quantum of treatment. A detailed discussion on this issue is beyond the scope of this paper, but we only suggest that are far reaching implications of "poor" processes<sup>33</sup>. A clear lacunae in the implementation strategy has been the lack of concern to factor in that under a situation of continuous crop failures, the immediate concern of labour generation should be met. A Food for Work (FFW) programme would have been an ideal intervention strategy not only to create "interest" in the programme but also generate much needed wage labour.

## **POLICY IMPLICATIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE CURRENT POLICY DISCOURSE**

The policy initiative in terms of the funding envisaged for the Watershed programmes in the country involve a total outlay of Rs. 76,000 crores to be spent over a 25 year period which would lead to a treatment of 63 million ha. This is as per the Perspective Plan prepared by the Planning Commission. The Government intends to do this by merging various employment guarantee schemes in the dry land and by shifting a part of the allocation from irrigation and water resource. However, the evidence in the context of an important programme – the Drought Prone Areas Programme (DPAP) has been extremely unsatisfactory. This is based on two important policy documents- (a) Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) on the programmes of the Ministry of Rural Areas and Employment and (b) Mid term appraisal for the 1997-2002 of the Planning Commission. The evidence from our field sites

substantiates the findings of the above policy documents and documents the lacunae in the programme and provides certain causative factors for such a situation to exist.

Since the Planning Commission is well aware of the lacunae in the programme (as outlined in section two of the paper) the question that remains is how does one proceed further in terms of design of the programme. We do not intend to get into any discussion on the problems associated with the newer set of Guidelines (Hariyali)<sup>34</sup> but only examine the discourse relating to design in the context of our findings. Joy and Parajape (2004, see Section 8.3, p.120-126) have suggested mechanisms to restructure the programme, which needs to be seriously considered by the policy makers. It is pointed out that the current time span of projects to five years is not sufficient and there is need for increasing the project duration to a range of seven to ten years. It is envisaged that the programme would proceed from one phase to another based on the condition that funding for each phase would be tied to the performance of the previous phase. An assessment would be carried out after the end of the period and that would decide as to how much proportion of the assistance would have to be treated as a loan vis-à-vis how much as a grant based on the performance criteria (that needs to be evolved). It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss the nitty-gritty's of the components of each of the phases, however based on our findings, our concern relate to the need to build in strong conditionalities on the various 'components' of participation for each of the phases<sup>35</sup>.

Considering that droughts are going to persist in the near future to, the current modes of implementation are quite 'naïve' and 'insensitive' to the concerns that farmers have. If such, sensitivity does occur, Food For Work (FFW) programme would emerge as a major 'mode' of implementation strategy (particularly in such distress situations) to address the concerns raised in this paper. If serious thought on these issues does not take place, we would end up replicating and scaling up 'failures' and not 'successes'. The implications of this is not only the loss of Rs.76,000 crores to be spent over the next twenty five years but also of the lost opportunities for us to demonstrate that dry land development programmes *do* deliver.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> These attempts to 'depoliticise' development is rightly argued to be based on the unrealistic and flawed assumption that these groups are apolitical in nature, a critique of this 'second wave' of decentralization is beginning to emerge (Manor, 2004).

<sup>2</sup> Borrowing from Cooke and Kothari (2001).

<sup>3</sup> Manzuri and Rao (2004) distinguish the two terms. While Community-based development refers to projects where beneficiaries are included 'actively' in the design and management of the projects, Community-driven development refers to projects wherein communities have 'direct' control over key project decisions, including management of investment funds.

<sup>4</sup> The influence of this influential donor along with other multilateral agencies in 'educating' national and sub-national governments all over the world to initiate such projects is well known. See Harris (2001) for a critique of the World Bank version of Social capital, which ignored the arguments of Bourdieu and 'chose' to use the Putnamian 'version'.

<sup>5</sup> Their warning in the early 1980's has come true – "Participation is often endorsed unambiguously on normative grounds, even if the empirical basis. There is a real *danger* that with growing faddishness and a lot of lip service, participation could become drained of substance and its relevance to development programmes disputable" (Cohen and Uphoff, 1980, p.213 emphasis, mine).

<sup>6</sup> In this paper, the attempt is limited as we only examine the 'processes' cumulating in the decision making on the treatment in the farmer's plots.

<sup>7</sup> The study is based on the review of both impact evaluation literature using statistical or econometric techniques and ethnographic literature or case studies based on anthropological methods like participant observation and focus group discussions.

<sup>8</sup> Appadurai (2004) drawing upon the insightful contribution of Hirschman (1970) argues that there has been a tendency to see cultural affiliation largely in terms of 'loyalty' and there has been little attention to 'exit' and 'voice'. It is explained that the since poor do not exercise 'voice', the resulting development is skewed against the favour. So the critical question that needs to be asked is as to how to ensure that the 'voice' of the poor is heard.

<sup>9</sup> This is based however on the qualifier that concerted efforts do lead to the required results but more strategic attempts have to be made (See Thomson, 1995).

<sup>10</sup> See Mansuri and Rao, 2004 for a detailed review of the literature.

<sup>11</sup> Appadurai (2004) drawing upon the insightful contribution of Hirschman (1970) argues that there has been a tendency to see cultural affiliation largely in terms of 'loyalty' and there has been little attention to 'exit' and 'voice'. It is explained that the since poor do not exercise 'voice', the resulting development is skewed against the favour. So the critical question that needs to be asked is as to how to ensure that the 'voice' of the poor is heard.

<sup>12</sup> This is based however on the qualifier that concerted efforts do lead to the required results but greater efforts and more strategic attempts have to be made (See Thomson, 1995).

<sup>13</sup> The brief description is only to give an indication of the 'nature' of the problem regarding DPAP and interested readers can refer to the CAG report and the Mid-Term Evaluation Report of the Planning Commission for the nitty gritty of the problem.

<sup>14</sup> [www.cagindia.org/reports/civil/1999-book3](http://www.cagindia.org/reports/civil/1999-book3) accessed on 7th March, 2005. The report of the Comptroller and Auditor General (GOI, 1998) includes a review of the programmes of the Ministry of Rural Areas and Employment including the DPAP and is a severe indictment of the programme. The Audit was conducted in 60 districts of 14 states, including Karnataka from April 1998 to June 1998.

<sup>15</sup> The CAG report states that "in Chitradurga and Kolar districts, 792 structures like Check Dams, vented dams, etc, constructed at Rs.1.83 crore during 1990-96 were damaged reportedly due to non-maintenance".

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<sup>16</sup> The Agricultural Assistant frankly admitted that the Contour bunding was broken down by the farmers, as it was "inconvenient" to them. This shows the poor level of consultation that has taken place before the treatment. Similar has been the situation in Muthugarahlli where farmers chose to break the Contour bunding.

<sup>17</sup> A key person who represented the elite from Rajapura was Rajapura Gowda. This person's 'claim to fame' has been all the money he made implementing the Ganga Kalayana Yojane (Scheme for Digging of open wells for SCs/STs).

<sup>18</sup> Interview with the Taluk Agriculture Officer (Team leader of the Watershed Development Team), Mr. Vijaykumar on 3<sup>rd</sup> March, 2004.

<sup>19</sup> Interview with Umesh Reddy, Team leader, SAHANA on 1<sup>st</sup> June, 2004 who admitted that lack of financial support prevented him from taking any further initiative.

<sup>20</sup> These SHGs are started by the Department of Women and Child Development (Stree Shakthi), through World Bank support (Swashakathi) and other NGOs, which are operating, independent of the watershed intervention.

<sup>21</sup> Although the meeting was not held in their respective villages, five farmers from Venkatapura and three farmers from Vithalapura did attend the initial meeting held in Devasamudra. Later, some of these farmers became the members in the WDC.

<sup>22</sup> The econometric testing of hypotheses is underway and preliminary results have been obtained. This would be presented in the second draft of the paper.

<sup>23</sup> This engagement with the State apparatus by the *Sarkarada Manusha* was based on two considerations – (a) the 'small' money that he used to receive at the end of a hard day's walking with the Agricultural Assistant<sup>23</sup>. (b) 'big' money – This was received a couple of times from the Agricultural Assistant and ranged around Rs. 2000-Rs.3000 (In an instance for a pilgrimage taken to Tirupathi in Andhra Pradesh. A more important and strategic reason was that the Key person had political aims – The Panchayat elections was scheduled to be held by the end of the year (2004) and he wanted to use his 'popularity' and 'reputation' to contest the elections. But all this engagement did come at a personal cost as he was not able to concentrate on his farming and although was a 'large' farmer, 3 members of his household were engaged in agricultural labour actively. Interesting he was not a member of any 'formal' local organisation – SHG or the Watershed committee, but was very active in village affairs and infact the Temple Committee in one of their meetings had called him to give an account of the work related to plans of desilting of a tank in the village.

<sup>24</sup> This is a crucial variable on which data would be collected in the next round of the field visit. The Political affiliation of the farmers in the head end and tail end villages has a large bearing on (a) Decision to treat or not and (b) extent of treatment. This realization has occurred to us post-facto after the data collection in the first round. Such a need to 'learn' from the field and go back has implications in explaining and some sense, 'constructing' reality in a more realistic manner (Rao, 2002).

<sup>25</sup> The 'Capacity not to aspire' argument of Appadurai (2004) is quite insightful to explain this. We elaborate on this in the second draft of the paper.

<sup>26</sup> While he took such a stand he expected the Agricultural Assistant to come to the village every day during the programme implementation phase to ensure proper implementation.

<sup>27</sup> An understanding on issues related to participation, was stated to be realized only after the Sujala Project (funded by the World Bank) was initiated.

<sup>28</sup> The norm of GOI (1994) that he should stay close to the village where he operates has been obviously ignored.

<sup>29</sup> The Agricultural Assistant had recently suffered typhoid and had to be bed ridden for six months. Tragically, a few months later, after the interview was conducted, he died.

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<sup>30</sup> While in Bommadevarahalli, the 'sarkara' in the realm of the 'other' and there is an informal norm that there is no need to engage with the government

<sup>31</sup> This in contrast to KAWAD project wherein although in theory based on the Guidelines, there is a "strict" norm that the contribution has to be paid, there are various 'adjustments' that do occur in various forms (Preliminary inference from five KAWAD villages in the same taluk).

<sup>32</sup> Apparently the supervision norms were quite 'strict', and was a greater source of 'pressure' as upper accountability had to be ensured.

<sup>33</sup> Regarding outcomes, one cannot do a straight forward attribution as the reference year for the study has been a 'bad' year (rains failed). The reference year of the study 2003 kharif continued the crop failure pattern, which started from 2000 onwards. In contrast the year of comparison to examine the 'pre intervention' outcomes is a 'good' rainfall year (1999). To handle this problem, an additional question administered was the output the farmer expected in a 'normal' rainfall year. I invite critical comments and suggestions on this issue.

<sup>34</sup> See [www.wassan.org](http://www.wassan.org) for discussion related to various watershed Guidelines.

<sup>35</sup> In this context, an important contribution to the debate is the contribution of Shah (2005), who has worked out certain 'modalities' under which the existing subsidy regime in the watershed context needs to be reworked. Another work under the emerging literature on market-based instruments in the watershed context is the study conducted by WINROCK, see Sengupta, et.al (2003).

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