Gender Participation and Constraints Analysis for Implementation of Tribal Sub Plan in West Bengal

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ABSTRACT

Tribal Sub Plan (TSP), a strategic policy initiative to secure overall development of the STs, was first introduced in the Fifth Five Year Plan. The main focus of TSP is substantial reduction in poverty and unemployment of the STs and also creation of productive assets in their favour to enhance livelihood opportunities on a sustainable basis. This study was conducted in Jalpaiguri district of WestBengal to measure gender based participation and evaluate various constraints for sound implementation of TSP and also to suggest suitable strategies for its smooth functioning. Male respondents were found to be more engaged in TSP activities than female respondents and the difference is found to be significant. Economic constraint was found to be the most significant followed by promotional, infrastructural and social constraints. Delay in getting loan as economic constraints, inefficient field workers as promotional constraint, poor communication facilities as infrastructural constraints and lack of family encouragement as social constraints were found to be severe. Promotion of diversification in farm and nonfarm activities, promotion of tribal co-operatives and provision of better educational facilities were suggested as strategy for smooth functioning of TSP.

Key word: *TSP; Constraints; Gender; Participation; Strategy;*

The issue of tribal development has been engaging the attention of the Government, planners, administrators and political leaders since the beginning of the plan era. The Tribal Sub Plan strategy introduced during the Fifth Plan is basically still valid, though its implementation has been weak. Six TSP Five Year Plans have been completed. Still, the status and the stage of tribal development with particular reference to the efficacy of the strategy followed remains an enigma. As *Planning Commission (2003)* reported that "programmes of tribal development are likely to run into dead and without institutional and infrastructural support." It needs to be re-oriented to improve the quality of life of the tribals especially with regard to poverty eradication and restoring basic livelihood resources with sustainable eco system. *Haseen (2004)* found that apart from the fact that mostly, the TSP flow is notional, and the programmes are not specifically attuned to cater to the felt needs of the tribals. Proper inter-sectoral prioritization is also not being attempted. TSP is an agglomeration of loosely knit sectoral departmental plans without any focus on the thrust areas. It has, therefore, been suggested to the State Governments and Union Territories concerned to operate the model which has already been adopted in Maharashtra, though its working has not been tested objectively. According to this model, the entire Tribal Sub-Plan funds are placed at the disposal of State Tribal Welfare Departments which is responsible for inter-sector prioritization and allocation of funds to various Departments.

It was found that TSP formulation has become routinized and no purposive evaluation is made to measure its impact on poverty reduction. It is often an exercise in mere quantification of notional funds devoid of any quality appraisal. People's participation is conspicuous by its absence in formulation and implementation of TSP. In this regard, *Misra (2006)* opined that the real difficulties so far centered on implementation of projects were that the sophisticated plans could not gauge the situation from field situation point of view. The field functionaries who link the planning and field operation should be provided with

housing, transport and social amenities for ensuring efficiency in extension activities. The present study was conducted to analyze the different constraints in sound implementation of TSP and to suggest suitable strategies for its smooth functioning.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Malbazar and Madarihaat blocks in Jalpaiguri district of West Bengal. Total 120 respondents (60 male+60 female) were randomly selected as the respondents. To measure gender based participation of TSP beneficiaries interview schedule was developed by listing the six most important people participation activities under TSP (which are actively implemented in Jalpaiguri district). The participation index score for each respondent was calculated with the following formula:

$$\text{Participation index} = \frac{\text{Scores obtained by the individual}}{\text{Maximum score possible (18)}} \times 100$$

A list of constraints was generated through consulting with literature, position holders of TSP and selected respondents. Twenty most probable constraints were selected to be incorporated in the semi structured interview schedule. This interview schedule was administered to individual farmer to rate them on four point continuum from most severe, severe, not severe to not at all. The farmers' response scores were converted into ranks for one-way analysis of variance using a non-parametric test, Kruskal Wallis Test to ascertain the most important constraints among the five groups as perceived by beneficiaries. To find out the important constraints within each category, rank was given to each component based on percentage.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

It is evident that participation of women respondents in various activities under TSP was less as compared to men respondents (Table 1). The main reason behind this is full involvement of women in household activities and livestock rearing. So they are getting very less time for full involvement in income generating activities under TSP. In many cases, they are occasionally involved in income generating activities like involvement in SHG based on availability of free time.

The mean score obtained by male and female respondents separately on participation in different activities under TSP is displayed in Table1.From the table it is evident that there was considerable difference in mean scores among the two gender. Tribal women were mainly involved in household activities, kitchen gardening and in collection of minor forest products. So women participation in income generating activities under TSP was less compared to male.

Table 1. Distribution of Male and Female Respondents by Mean Score of Participation in Activities under TSP (N=120)

Activities	Male	Female
SHG participation	1.16	1.05
Participation in vocational training	1.56	1.12
Market linked fish cultivation	0.88	0.83
Receiving credit for self employment	1.23	1.1
Joining of LAMPS activities	1.78	1.5
Infrastructure development activities	1.48	1.04

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents based on Participation Index Score

Item		Female		Male	
Range		34.2294		38.7963	
Standard Deviation		9.71135		10.84867	
Range		16.67-55.56		16.67-61.11	
Categories		No.	%	No.	%
Very Low	(16.67-25.56)	14	23	6	10
Low	(25.36-34.45)	21	35	19	31.6
Medium	(34.45-43.34)	11	18	12	20
High	(43.44-52.23)	13	22	15	25
Very High	(52.23-61.12)	1	100	60	100

Categorization of male and female respondents into very low, low, medium, high and very high has been done on the basis of participation index score (Table 2). It has been found that under very low and low category percentage of female respondents was more than the male respondents. Whereas the number of men respon tdents were higher in medium, high and very high category as compared to women respondents. These figures clearly indicate that in TSP activities men participation is more as compared to women participation.

Table 3. t- test Value to Test the Significance of the Mean Difference of Male and Female Respondents on Participation in TSP Activities (N=120)

Categories	Mean	SD	t-value (calculated)
Male	0.3407	0.093745	2.555*
Female	0.3880	0.10849	

*The difference is significant at 0.05 per cent level of confidence. Hence, significant difference was found in male and female participation in TSP activities. Male participation in TSP activities was significantly higher than female participation. So, income generating activities under TSP should also focus on women employment opportunities.

Four sets of different constraints were enlisted and farmer's response on their severity was solicited. The Table 4 given below shows the calculated value of Kruskal-Wallis statistic and its level of significance.

Table 4. Computed Value of Kruskal-Wallis Statistic for Constraints in Effective Implementation of TSP

Category	Values
K(Observed value)	245.939
K (Critical value)	9.488
DF	4
p-value (Two-tailed)	< 0.0001
Alpha	0.05

As the computed *p*-value is less than the significant level at five per cent ($p < 0.01$) it can be inferred that there was significant influence of different constraints to effective implementation of TSP. To explore it further, multiple comparisons procedure was adopted to identify the major constraints for the effective implementation of the programme. Table 5 shows the mean of rank corresponding to each of the statements and also the grouping rank.

Table 5. Comparison of Constraints in Effective Implementation Based on Mean Ranks

Constraints	No.	Mean of Ranks	Groups
Social Constraints	120	222.172	A
Infrastructural Constraints	120	268.852	B
Promotional Constraints	120	344.709	C
Economic Constraints	120	464.922	D

It can be seen that Table 5 the mean rank corresponding to economic constraints was the highest and hence it was the major constraint to the effective implementation of the programme and was not on par with any other constraints. This finding is also in line with the findings of *Teklehaimanot (2010)* who reported that economic constraints is most significant in empowering and enhancing rural livelihood in India. Hence, it can be concluded that economic constraints was perceived to be the most severe and significant by the respondents of TSP. Promotional constraints are also severe but less than economic constraints. Infrastructural constraints were moderately severe. Social constraints have less significance to implementation.

Each of the sets of constraints discussed above have been studied in detail by collecting information on specific constraints under each set, based on farmers' perception of severity of constraints to successful implementation of programme.

Table 6. Perceived constraints in effective implementation of TSP (N=120)

Constraints	%	Rank
Economic Constraints		
Lack of own capital	7.5	III
Inadequate loan from financial agencies	5.83	IV
Complicated procedure of getting loan	15	II
Delay in getting loan	20	I
Inadequate income generation	1.67	VI
High cost of production technology	5	V
Promotional Constraints		
Ineffective extension agent	30	I
Programme not consistent with needs	22.5	II
Lack of improved technology	2.5	IV
Inadequate technical guidance	1.64	V
Lack of needed assistance	9.17	III
Infrastructural Constraints		
Poor communication facilities	20	**I**
Insurance facilities are not available	0	-
Lack of regular supervision	15	II
Social Constraints		
Lack of religious and caste support	0	-
Lack of family encouragement	0.83	I
Norms and religious values excluded women from participation	0	-

It can be inferred from Table 6 that delays and complicated procedure in getting loan was found to be the most severe among 'economic constraints'. Lack of education and negligence by employees of financial institution were the major causes of these constraints (based on perception of respondents). Small capital possession by most of the respondents sometimes inhibit facilities under TSP. Insufficient loan under TSP was also found to be one of the important economic constraints. High price of technologies (HYV, fertilizers, fish meal etc) and generation of less income also hinder effective implementation.

The least efficient field workers were found to be the most severe 'promotional constraint'. Most of the

respondents reported that field workers were mainly involved in maintaining records rather than informing people about different facilities of programme and way to obtain it. An incompatible activity of TSP with felt need of respondents is another severe constraint. Insufficient assistance in income generating activities (fish production, self employment through credit under the scheme) also hinders sound implementation.

Inadequate direct contact with respondents can lead to misunderstanding among beneficiaries about the TSP programme. Irregular supervision of TSP functionaries was also found to be an infrastructural constraint.

It can be inferred that inadequate support from families in involvement of TSP activities was only social constraint for sound implementation. In some tribal society, family encouragement is less to the activities like business and vocational training rather than agriculture and allied sectors. Whereas rules of norms and values in tribal society found to be not at all barrier for effective programme implementation.

Strategies for effective implementation of TSP activities : Based on focussed group discussion with respondents and constraints of effective implementation, strategies for smooth functioning of TSP were developed. These strategies are listed below:

- Promote the diversification of agriculture and non-farm sectors to create job opportunities. Train tribal women in kitchen gardening, childcare, food preservation, handicrafts and other house based activities.
- Dedicated and adequate field workers from tribal community are needed for mobilization of community to take facilities of development programmes and for proper assistance in income generating activities.
- Literacy rate in tribal area should be increased. Teaching to tribal people in their own language at least in primary level.
- Form and stabilize the tribal co-operatives to take up dairy, sericulture, fisheries, handicrafts, horticulture, agro-food processing and post harvest technologies based on locally available opportunities.
- Strengthen the TSP strategy with an institutionalized mechanism for compliance and monitoring. Making TSP funds non-divertible and no lapsable workable system is essential.
- Encourage women's organizations working among tribals and ensure the formation, stabilization and bank linkages of SHGs to promote viable micro-economic activities with substantial support in terms of credit and market.
- Increase of short term loan facilities with low interest rate under TSP.

CONCLUSION

From the results of analysis of different constraints coming in the way of the effective implementation of the tribal oriented programme it was obvious that all the enlisted constraints were important in one way or other. However, still those related to the economic aspects had a major role in creating obstacles to successful execution of the programme in the state. The suggested strategies, if followed in letter and spirit, will definitely help in effective implementation and smooth functioning of TSP programme in West Bengal.

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