

Analyzing Constraints in Conflict Management in Wasteland Development Project

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ABSTRACT

The study was aimed to analyze the constraints encountered by Pragathi Bandu Self Help Group (SHG) members while implementing the Wasteland Development project. The present study was conducted in purposively selected Shimoga district of Karnataka state during 2013. Two taluks namely Shimoga and Bhadravathi were selected. From each taluk the villages having maximum number of Pragathi Bandu SHG members were selected. Total 36 Pragathi Bandu SHGs formed by SKDRDP were considered for the study. From each SHG, three members were randomly selected thus, making a total sample size of 108. The results revealed that all Pragathi Bandu SHG members expressed political influence, was major problem in resolving conflicts and majority (90.7%) of the respondents suggested to create general awareness about the essentiality of formation of SHGs for wasteland development activities.

Keywords: Problems, resolving conflicts, shgs (self help groups), suggestions, wasteland development project,

INTRODUCTION

Conflict has become inseparable part and parcel of our lives and we experience conflicts as we experience joy or sorrow in our day to day life. The concept of conflict resolution is a relational approach to solve conflicts. Many situations require the skill to resolve conflicts effectively and productively. Pragathi Bandu groups formed by Shree Kshetra Dharmastala Rural Development Project (SKDRDP) are unique male-member SHGs that implement Wasteland Development activities and are no exception to conflicts. Due to the presence of multiple stakeholders in Wasteland Development Project, the conflicts are bound to occur from opposing interests such as competition over scarce resources, differences in perceptions and attitudes.

The Pragathi Bandhu Self Help Groups (SHGs) are said to have great potential in accelerating the pace of the rural development, hence it was considered worthwhile to analyze the problems encountered by SHG members to resolve the conflicts and their suggestions to avoid or overcome the conflict to implement the Wasteland Development Project.

METHODOLOGY

The present study was conducted in purposively selected Shimoga district of Karnataka state during 2012-13. Out of seven taluks, two taluks namely Shimoga and

Bhadravathi were selected purposively based on the maximum number of Pragathi Bandu SHGs formed by Shree Kshetra Dharmastala Rural Development Project (SKDRDP) to implement Wasteland Development activities. From each selected taluks namely Shimoga and Bhadravathi, the villages having maximum number of Pragathi Bandu SHGs were listed and three villages from each taluk were selected by using the same criteria. All the thirty six Pragathi Bandu SHGs formed by the SKDRDP in the selected villages were purposively considered for the study. From each SHG, three members were selected randomly thus, making a total sample size of 108 respondents for the investigation. *Ex-post facto* research design was adopted for the study. The required data was collected through personal interview method using structured, pre-tested interview schedule which was analyzed by using frequency and percentage.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Table 1 revealed that cent per cent of the Pragathi Bandu SHG members expressed political influence was major problem in resolving conflicts among while carrying out wasteland development activities. Majority (94.4%) of the respondents expressed caste system in the village followed by lack of motivation and initiation from village leaders (84.2%). Further, 78.7 per cent of respondents expressed non-availability of inputs followed by lack of co-operation and co-ordination from others (66.6%) and illiteracy (38.9%) were also cited as

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problems in resolving conflicts. Inadequate loans from the financial institutions and ineffective leadership (33.3%) were expressed as problems by about one third of the respondents.

The reason behind this was the political intervention and influence of politicians on certain conflicting issues. The caste system is the next most important problem which turned the disagreements into violent clashes between the two caste groups.

Few village as who had negative attitude towards the project were non co-operative with the SHG members while carrying wasteland development activities. Illiteracy, non-availability of inputs, inadequate loans from the financial institutions, lack of leadership, poor communication and lack of transparency among the members were other major problem faced by members.

Table 1: Problems faced by Pragathi Bandu SHG member in resolving the Conflicts while carrying out Wasteland Development activities.

n=108		
Problems	Number	Per cent
Political influence	108	100.0
Illiteracy	42	38.9
Lack of motivation and initiation from village leaders	91	84.2
Caste system in village	102	94.4
Ineffective leadership	36	33.3
Lack of cooperation and coordination from others	72	66.6
Inadequate loans from financial institutions	36	33.3
Lack of technical knowledge	19	17.6
Non – availability of inputs	85	78.7

The data in Table.2 revealed the suggestions given by the respondents to resolve conflicts while carrying out wasteland development activities. Majority (90.7%) of the respondents suggested to create general awareness about the essentiality of formation of SHGs for wasteland development activities followed by communication of wasteland development activities to all the stakeholders to avoid speculations (83.3%), ownership and access rights to resources developed by group should be properly spelt out and given to only the group members with proper rules and regulations (77.7%), NGO should see that the programme incentives are sufficient and made available to all (76.8%), other SHG members should not be allowed to do the development works in wastelands (74.0%), equal per cent of respondents suggested that NGO should train the group members and others concerned in assessing conflicts (64.8%) and collaboration with local institutions and leaders to resolve conflicts (64.8%). Further, 62.9 per cent of the respondents expressed NGO

has to monitor the Wasteland Development activities in the project area to avoid possible conflicts and 61.1 per cent expressed to identify the past conflicts and how it was manage them successfully. It was to interesting to note that 53.7 per cent of the SHG members had suggested that NGO should enable the participants to understand the whole concept of wasteland development during group formation phase. The possible reason for the first suggestion might be due to lack of awareness about the SHGs and its project activities to the villagers. The reason for the second most important suggestion might be the confusions about wasteland development activities due to poor communication with all the stakeholders of the project. Communication and capacity building are the possible areas which could be used to resolve the conflicts. The suggestion indicate that before implementing the project the NGOs should create general awareness about the essentiality of formation of Self Help Groups (SHG) for Wasteland Development Project in the villages. Thus, it facilitates to resolve conflicts and misunderstanding if any about the Pragathi Bandu SHGs at initial stage itself. Ownership and access rights to resources developed by group should be properly spelt out and given to only the group members with proper rules and regulations. The results were in line with the findings of Subba Rao (2001).

Table 2: Suggestions given by Pragathi Bandu SHG members to avoid or overcome conflicts while implementing wasteland development project.

n=108		
Suggestions	Number	Per cent
Create general awareness about the essentiality of formation of SHGs for Wasteland Development activities.	98	90.7
NGO Should enable the participants to understand the whole concept of Wasteland Development during group formation phase.	58	53.7
Communication of Wasteland Development activities to all the stakeholders to avoid speculations.	90	83.3
Other SHG members should not be allowed to do the development works in wastelands	80	74.0
Ownership and access rights to resources developed by group should be properly spelt out and given to only the group members with proper rules and regulations.	84	77.7
NGO should see that the programme incentives are sufficient and made available to all.	83	76.8
Determine the past live conflicts and manage them successfully.	66	61.1
NGO has to monitor the Wasteland Development activities in the project area to avoid possible conflicts that could develop and resolve.	68	62.9
NGO should train the group members and others concerned in assessing conflicts for its easy resolution.	70	64.8
Collaboration with local institutions and leaders is essential to resolve conflicts.	70	64.8

CONCLUSIONS

The problems identified and the suggestions given by Pragathi Bandu SHGs emphasize the need for taking necessary steps by NGOs, department of forestry, revenue department, rural development department, panchayat raj and village level institutions to avoid or resolve the conflicts in wasteland development projects. One important problem often neglected is messing with local politics and its influence on healthy functioning of SHGs. So, adequate strategies should be developed so that local politics will not hamper the functioning of SHGs. Further, implementing agencies or NGOs should provide appropriate information regarding the project activities to create general awareness about the need for formation of SHGs and enable the participants to understand the whole concept of Wasteland Development during group formation phase itself. Hence, the agencies involved must build positive relationship and confidence in the minds of villagers and consider their suggestions to solve the problems in a rational way.

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