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**People's participation in watershed management programmes:
Evaluation study of Vidarbha region of Maharashtra in India**

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Abstract

People's participation in watershed management programmes is an important strategy of government of India for making watershed programmes successful. Participation of local beneficiary farmers is mandatory in planning, implementation and maintenance of watershed development projects as per common guidelines issued by Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India. National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) has launched holistic watershed development programmes on 2nd October, 2006 to help farmers in the six distressed districts of Vidarbha region of Maharashtra in India. Therefore, there is a need to know the level of participation by the local people in government sponsored watershed management programmes. The study was conducted during 2011 – 2012 in this Vidarbha region of Maharashtra to measure the extent of people's participation in NABARD Supported Holistic Watershed Development Programme (NSHWDP). In this paper a detailed structured three-point-continuum schedule was developed by the investigators regarding various aspects of participation by local people in soil and water conservation for watershed management programme. People's Participation Index (PPI) was also designed to compute the extent of people's participation. Data for this study was gathered through personal interviews from farmers of six selected districts in Vidarbha region of Maharashtra. Findings of this study indicated that the extent of people's participation in planning was 63.7 per cent, in implementation was 57.7 per cent and in maintenance was 75.1 per cent. It shows that the extent of people's participation in NSHWDP in the six distressed districts of Vidarbha region of Maharashtra was moderate during watershed programme planning and implementation phases, whereas, high level of participation was exhibited during maintenance phase.