



Tropentag, September 20-22, 2023, hybrid conference
“Competing pathways for equitable food systems transformation:
Trade-offs and synergies”

Is community participation necessary for the success of development programmes? Key lessons from Pakistan

AYAT ULLAH, MIROSLAVA BAVOROVÁ, GIRI PRASAD KANDEL

Czech University of Life Sciences, Prague, Fac. of Tropical AgriSciences, Dept. of Economics and Development, Czech Republic

Abstract

Active and effective participation of local communities in the planning and implementation of projects is critical to achieving sustainable forest landscape restoration. The objective of this study was to examine the activities undertaken by the Forest Department to promote community participation in forest landscape restoration and to identify the factors that influenced household level of participation in the Billion Trees Afforestation Project (BTAP) in Pakistan. Data were collected from households through surveys and from forest department officials through in-depth interviews, while descriptive statistics and ordered logit model were used to analyse the data. The study found that households with a high level of participation in BTAP received more landscape restoration and livelihood benefits compared to communities with medium and low level of participation. The results of the ordered logit model show that households' decisions to participate in the BTAP at a higher level depend on education, awareness of BTAP participation policies and procedures, and membership in community-based organisations (CBOs), while political tensions and elite capture lead to low level participation decisions. The results of the in-depth interviews show that the important factors that prevented community members from participating at higher level in the BTAP included nepotism, irregular rainfall, lack of knowledge and skills development programs, unattractive land tenure policies, ineffective communication networks, and delays in providing salaries to community members. We recommended that the government and other stakeholders need to understand these factors that influenced households' high level of participation in afforestation projects to improve the success of landscape restoration initiatives and rural livelihoods.

Keywords: Billion trees afforestation project, forest landscape restoration, participation of local communities, projects planning and implementation