



Tamil Nadu Afforestation Project



Contributing to environmental and livelihood improvements for local communities with participatory afforestation

[External evaluator]

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Rating

Effectiveness, Impact	a	Overall rating A
Relevance	a	
Efficiency	a	
Sustainability	a	

Project Objectives

To prevent the degradation of forests, regenerate already degraded ones, conserve biodiversity, and increase forest productivity by implementing a sustainable afforestation (tree-planting, extension activities, etc.) with community participatory efforts in Tamil Nadu State, thereby contributing to a better environment and poverty reduction in the region.

Outline of the Loan Agreement

- Loan amount / disbursed amount: 13,324 million yen / 13,286 million yen
- Loan agreement: February 1997
- Terms and conditions: 2.1% interest rate; 30-year repayment period (including a 10-year grace period); general untied
- Final disbursement date: May 2005
- Executing agency: Tamil Nadu Forest Department, Government of Tamil Nadu
- Website URL: <http://www.forests.tn.nic.in>

Cumulative number of new businesses participants under the livelihood improvement activities by VFC (as of 2005) (unit: person)

Type of business	Men	Women	Total
Incense	257	1,771	2,028
Bamboo baskets	544	1,599	2,143
Coconut cord	445	574	1,019
Dairying	20,625	24,459	45,084
Bee-keeping	426	249	675
Poultry	1,568	1,090	2,658
Animal husbandry	4,186	3,726	7,912
Woven palm	1,055	2,071	3,126
Tailoring	1,082	5,611	6,693
Utensil and furniture rental	161	179	340
Others	55,338	48,914	104,252
Total	85,687	90,243	175,930

Source: Tamil Nadu Forest Department, Government of Tamil Nadu

Effects of Project Implementation (Effectiveness, Impact)

Under this project, some 160 million trees were planted in a total area of 457,454 ha which outperformed the initial target of 470,500 ha. This afforested area accounts for 19.8% of the total forest area of the state standing at 2,304,400 ha in 2005, making some contribution to increasing the state's forest coverage.

Through this project, Joint Forest Management (JFM), a participatory forest management, was implemented. JFM initiatives included the afforestation planning that accommodates community needs through the village forest committees (VFCs) set up by local residents for the consultation with the state forestry department, the executing agency, and other operation and maintenance of the forest area managed by VFC. It is observed that this project had the effect of improving the environment by reducing pressures on the forests from illegal logging or grazing. In addition, it is estimated that the project also made some contribution to poverty reduction, as some 170,000 people or about 40% of the total VFC membership (some 460,000) started businesses under the livelihood improvement activities, including microfinance via the VFCs (see the table below).

Therefore, this project has largely achieved its objectives and its effectiveness is high.

Relevance

This project has been highly relevant with India's national policies and development needs at the times of both appraisal and ex-post evaluation. In Tamil Nadu State, the regeneration of degraded forests was given the highest priority in the planning stage. This recognition remains relevant at the time of the ex-post evaluation, and special emphasis is placed on sustainable forest management through JFM and the diversification of income sources for forest-dependent people.

Efficiency

The project period was much longer than planned (161% of the planned period), and the project cost slightly exceeded the plan (110% of the planned cost). However, a major reason for those was the additional undertakings associated with changes in the project scope. Therefore the efficiency of the project is high.

Sustainability

The sustainability of the livelihood improvement activities is unclear. However, the training for forest department officials, VFC members and NGOs has remained in place in Phase II of this project, and no major problems have been observed in the capacity of the executing agency nor its operation and maintenance system; therefore sustainability of this project is high.

Conclusion, Lessons Learned, Recommendations

In light of the above, this project is evaluated to be highly satisfactory. A major in its success was the temporary financial support at the early stages of the project, when the yields of forest products were small and funds for livelihood improvement activities were in short supply.