

Performance of North Eastern Region Community Resource Management Project for Upland Areas (NERCORMP) in Assam – A Study Based on Respondents' Perspective

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ABSTRACT North Eastern Region Community Resource Management Project for upland Areas (NERCORMP) is standing as an important livelihood management project in North Eastern Region of India under International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and North Eastern Council, Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER), Government of India. Present study was conducted in order to see the performance of NERCORMP based on respondents' perception during 2014-15. Study showed that because of NERCORMP intervention, income and expenditure for beneficiary respondents remained much higher than non-beneficiary respondents considered from adjoining non-project villages. After exposure with various project components people in the study area were seen to change their cropping pattern in order to increase their income. Although "shifting cultivation" is considered as one of the most common livelihood management option, area under it declined over the years. Not only that, beneficiary respondent showed more interest on cultivation of many other plantation crops in project areas. Performance was more visible in respect of calculation of six different types of asset. These assets were calculated based on various statements prepared for each type of asset. So far from the respondents' direct perception or conception about the project, it can be calculated that by and large beneficiaries were satisfied for most of the project activities except a few. Most of the beneficiaries referred that their income, saving, expenditure were increased because of project intervention and on the other hand their liability declined.

INTRODUCTION

There are number of livelihood related projects in the country for the benefit of below poverty population, some are available for a specific period and some are almost continuous in nature. Among them, North Eastern Region Community Resource Management Project for upland Areas (NERCORMP), a project funded jointly by International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and North Eastern Council, Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER), Government of India has appeared as a big intervention for improvement of livelihood in North Eastern Region of India in the last part of 20th century. The project started its operation

in six districts of three North Eastern States during 1999 viz. (Karbi Anglong and Dima Hasao districts (old NC Hill) from Assam; West Khasi Hills and West Garo Hills districts from Meghalaya and Senapati and Ukhrul districts from Manipur). NERCORMP is implemented by North Eastern Region Community Resource Management Society (NERCORMS) located at Shillong, Meghalaya as Regional Office and through district level society at respective districts. At present, the project is in its third phase and extension of the programme has already been initiated in Arunachal Pradesh including three districts viz. Tirap, Changlang, Longding and Manipur including two more districts viz. Churachandpur and Chandel from 2014. The overall objective of NERCORMP is to improve the livelihood of vulnerable groups in a sustainable manner through improved management of their resource base that would restore and protect

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the environment. Since 1999, NERCORMP has been operationalising its activities in all the project districts without any interruption. It is a holistic approach under the NEC, GOI and is implemented by the respective district offices covering a large number of villages from the above States. There are reports that NERCORMP is one of the most successful livelihood improvement projects in NE Region of India. Keeping in view all above it was decided to study the performance of NERCORMP on livelihood improvement emphasising mostly from the beneficiaries' point of view.

Objectives

The general objective of the study is to assess the performance of NERCORMP in Assam based on respondents' perception about the programme. In addition to that beneficiary respondents were evaluated based on some socio-economic parameters viz. income, expenditure, saving and on the basis of available status of asset creation.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Present study was undertaken at Nagaland University, Nagaland, India. Study was conducted in both the implementing districts of Assam viz. Karbi Anglong and Dima Hasao. Both the districts possess certain peculiarity so far the topography, climatic condition, socio-political structure etc. are concerned as compared to any other district in Assam. Total 144 number of respondents as beneficiary of NERCORMP were selected for final data collection from 32 Self-help Groups (SHGs) and 16 Natural Resource Management Groups (NaRMGs) (SHGs and NaRMGs are community based grass-root level organisations sponsored and constituted by the project) from both the districts. Primary data were collected through structured schedule during 2014-15 from all the sample respondents. In addition to simple percentage and frequency analysis, t-test was also used in order to get valid and logical conclusions. Further, indices were also developed with appropriate scoring technique in order to see the status of asset/capital creation by the respondents. Asset/capital creation was studied based on six different aspects viz. Human asset, Physical asset, Natural asset, Financial asset, Social asset, Food security as-

set and finally the overall asset creation (Dolli 2006). At the same time, 60 non-beneficiaries were also selected from both the districts preferably from adjoining non-project villages that gave the total sample size 204. The concept of beneficiary and non-beneficiary respondents were used here in order to see the real difference between them. In some cases, the status existed before project starts and the status after the project are compared to see the performance of the project.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Performance of a project can be evaluated based on different parameters. A project can fulfil all the requirements in terms of utilisation of money, but it may not be successful in fulfilling the objectives framed out at the time of preparation of the project. Hence a systematic analysis is required to check whether project could fulfil its objectives along with the utilisation of money or not. Keeping in view the above, some of the pertinent issues were considered here to assess the performance of NERCORMP in Assam. Table 1 shows the income and expenditure pattern of the selected beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries. In order to know the income and expenditure pattern more specifically, respondents were classified as marginal, small, semi-medium, medium, and large based on the land holding status. In Karbi Anglong district among the beneficiary respondents, 69.4 percent were marginal category (< 1 ha) against 30.6 percent as small farmer category. There was no farmers in the category of semi-medium, medium and large category. Average yearly income in the district recorded as Rs. 1,42,550/- by the marginal groups and Rs. 1,09,184/- by the small group of beneficiaries. It also indicated that marginal group of beneficiaries contributed the maximum portion of net income (84%) against sixteen percent only by the small group of beneficiaries. Return per rupee of expenditure realised was 1.85 in case of marginal groups against 1.35 for small group of beneficiaries. As a whole in the district, average yearly income recorded as Rs. 1,32,355/- with return per rupee of expenditure at 1.69. So far expenditure is concerned, beneficiaries under small land holding groups contributed 31.6 percent of total gross expenditure against their contribution as gross income of 25.2 percent. In Dima Hasao district, average yearly income recorded

Table 1: Comparison of income and expenditure among the beneficiary and non-beneficiary respondents based on category of respondents

Category of respondent	Karbi Anglong district					Dima Hasao district							
	Category of respondent					Category of respondent							
	No. of respondent	Gross income (Rs.)	Gross expenditure (Rs.)	Net income (Rs.)	Average income (Rs.)	Return over exp.	No. of respondent	Gross income (Rs.)	Gross expenditure (Rs.)	Net income (Rs.)	Average income (Rs.)	Return over exp.	
Beneficiary Respondents													
Marginal	50	7127500	3849340	3278160	142550	1.85	Marginal	6	595320	403840	191480	99220	1.47
	69.4	(74.8)	(68.4)	(84.0)				8.3	(4.4)	(5.0)	(3.6)		
Small	22	2402050	1778140	623910	109184	1.35	Small	60	11296720	6811620	4485100	188278	1.65
	30.6	(25.2)	(31.6)	(16.0)				83.4	(84.0)	(84.4)	(83.4)		
Semi-medium	0	0	-	-	-	-	Semi-medium	5	1297430	758300	539130	259486	1.71
	0	0	-	-	-	-		6.9	(9.6)	(9.4)	(10.0)		
Medium	0	0	-	-	-	-	Medium	1	260250	97900	162350	260250	2.65
	0	0	-	-	-	-		1.4	(2.0)	1.2	(3.0)		
Large	0	0	-	-	-	-	Large	0	0	-	-	-	-
Total	72	9529550	5627480	3902070	132355	1.69	Total	72	13449720	8071660	5378060	186802	1.67
	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)					(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)		
Non-beneficiary Respondents													
Marginal	13	469900	439700	30200	36146	1.07	Marginal	19	525400	497400	28000	276653	1.05
	(43.3)	(41.1)	(41.2)	(39.7)				(63.4)	(56.8)	(58.1)	(40.1)		
Small	17	674300	628400	45900	39664	1.07	Small	10	358850	323100	35750	35885	1.11
	(56.7)	(58.9)	(58.8)	(60.3)				(33.3)	(38.8)	(37.8)	(51.3)		
Semi-medium	0	0	-	-	-	-	Semi-medium	1	41000	35000	6000	41000	1.17
	0	0	-	-	-	-		33.3	(4.4)	(4.1)	(8.6)		
Medium	0	0	-	-	-	-	Medium	0	0	-	-	-	-
Large	0	0	-	-	-	-	Large	0	0	-	-	-	-
Total	30	1144200	1068100	76100	38140	1.07	Total	30	925250	855500	69750	33167	1.08
	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)					(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)		

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percent to total

the lowest (Rs. 99,220/-) by the marginal groups and it increased by the increase of size of land holding and the highest average yearly income recorded as Rs. 2,60,250/- by the medium group of beneficiaries. As number of respondents were more in small land holding groups, their contribution to gross income/net income as well as gross expenditure was also more. Return over expenditure was recorded above 1.0 for all the categories of respondents and it increased by the increase of land holding size. Average yearly income was comparatively higher (Rs. 1,86,802/-) in Dima Hasao district than Karbi Anglong (Rs. 1,32,355/-) district but return over expenditure was higher in Karbi Anglong district (1.69) against 1.67 for Dima Hasao district. Jayachandra and Naidu (2006) in a study on dairy cooperatives also reported an increase of income; however rate of increase in case of marginal farmers was more in comparison to small farmers. Chauhan and Kundu (2005) in Intensive Cattle Development Projects of Haryana State reported that the average net income of the beneficiary households was 3.77 times higher than the non-beneficiary households.

In case of non-beneficiary respondents, average yearly income recorded a bit low that is, Rs. 38,140/- and Rs. 33,167/- respectively for Karbi Anglong and Dima Hasao district. However, return over expenditure indicated more than 1.0 for both the districts.

After popularisation of NERCORMP in the districts and after exposure with various components, people in the project area were seen to change their cropping pattern in order to increase their income. Table 2 depicts the changes of cropping pattern among the beneficiary respondents after initiation of project activities. Shifting cultivation or 'Jhuming' was one of the major livelihood management activities among the people of both the hill districts of Assam and 'Jhuming' is still being practised like earlier times. In Karbi Anglong district, after initiation of NERCORMP project number of households practising 'Jhuming' as a livelihood management activity slightly declined to 98.6 percent from hundred percent before project started. Of course area under 'Jhuming' declined to 24.6 ha from 34.93 ha before the project started activities. Whereas, number of households practising *panikheti*, plantation crops, banana, orange, areca nut etc. increased significantly after the project activities. Accordingly area under crops also

increased for all these types of crops in the district. On an average in the district, area under different crops increased to 71.48 ha from 44.97 ha available just before the project started. This increment of area was 58.94 percent. Similarly in Dima Hasao district, number of households practising 'Jhuming' as viable livelihood management strategy declined to 94.4 percent from hundred percent just before project started. However, area under 'Jhuming' in the district declined to 38.67 ha from 71.2 ha. Similarly, for all other crops also percentage of households practising 'Jhuming' increased after project started. Overall in the district, area under crop increased to 145.6 ha after the project from 87.97 ha before the project started its activity and this increment percentage was 65.52 percent higher than the Karbi Anglong district. Singh et al. (2010) also reported changes on land use pattern and cropping pattern because of intervention of watershed development programme in India.

Comparison of Assets Created by Beneficiary Respondents

The performance of NERCORMP was studied by considering 6 different types of assets/capital that are acquired by the respondent beneficiaries. The six different types of assets that were considered in the present study are human asset, physical asset, social asset, natural asset, financial asset, food security asset and on the basis of availability of these assets finally overall asset creation was measured. Table 3 depicts the comparison of asset created by the respondents before and after project intervention in both the project districts based on the indices developed for that. Human asset before project started stood at 53.5 percent that increased to 72.9 percent after the project intervention in Karbi Anglong district with t-value of 50.6 that was significant at one percent level. Similarly, Dima Hasao district also showed similar trend. Physical asset, natural asset, social asset, food security asset and overall asset also increased after the project intervention in both the districts, however natural asset was found to be non-significant. On the other hand, financial asset creation was found negative as well as significant in both the districts after the project intervention. As financial asset includes two different components viz. saving and debt of the respondents together, it became negative. In one way

Table 2: Status of change of cropping pattern among the beneficiary respondents

Name of the crop	Karbi Anglong district				Dima Hasao district			
	No. of household practiced		Area under crops (ha)		No. of household practiced		Area under crops (ha)	
	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After
Jhum (Rice)	72 (100.0)	71 (98.6)	34.93	24.6	72 (100.0)	68 (94.4)	71.2	38.67
Pani kheti	15 (20.8)	55 (76.4)	2.27	11.07	17 (23.6)	49 (68.1)	2.4	25.47
Plantation	31 (43.1)	67 (93.1)	3.03	14.47	25 (34.7)	54 (75.0)	2.87	15.8
Banana	0 (0.00)	29 (40.1)	0	1.67	24 (33.3)	41 (56.9)	2.07	7.5
Orange	7 (9.7)	35 (48.6)	0.43	2.68	6 (8.3)	32 (44.4)	0.53	5
Litchi	4 (5.6)	15 (20.8)	0.23	1.1	7 (9.7)	15 (20.8)	0.6	2.53
Vegetable	55 (76.4)	65 (90.3)	2.61	4.83	42 (58.3)	62 (86.1)	3.57	7.8
A. Nut	8 (11.1)	29 (40.3)	0.53	2.1	21 (29.2)	40 (55.6)	2	6.7
Zongta	14 (19.4)	41 (56.9)	0.63	2.63	21 (29.2)	46 (63.9)	1.2	5.77
Mulberry	0 (0.0)	3 (4.2)	0	0.43	2 (2.8)	3 (4.2)	0.27	0.93
Ginger	8 (11.1)	49 (68.1)	0.3	3.17	16 (22.2)	42 (58.3)	1.27	3.4
Gameri	0 (0.0)	24 (33.3)	0	1.8	0 (0.0)	35 (48.6)	0	10.57
Pine	0	5 (6.9)	0	0.93	0 (0.0)	12 (16.7)	0	15.47
Total			44.97	71.48			87.97	145.6
Percentage increase of area after the project				58.94				65.52

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percent to total

Table 3: Comparison of assets created by the beneficiary respondents

Name of district	Different types of asset (index %)											
	Human asset			Physical asset			Natural asset			Social asset		
	Be-fore	After	t-value	Be-fore	After	t-value	Be-fore	After	t-value	Be-fore	After	t-value
Karbi Anglong												
Mean	53.5	72.9	50.6**	51.6	56.8	3.9**	52.6	53.6	0.88 ^{ns}	53.2	73.3	27.2**
SEM	0.23	0.41		0.33	1.2		0.34	0.92		0.37	0.59	
Dima Hasao												
Mean	52.8	71.8	33.8**	51.9	56.6	3.4**	52.9	53.8	0.375 ^{ns}	52.8	72.2	31.4**
SEM	0.23	0.64		0.39	1.36		0.39	0.96		0.29	0.53	

Note: ** - significant at 1% level, ns – non significant

saving increased in case of most of the respondents after intervention of project and in the other way debt decreased (positive in nature), that resulted in a negative impact on financial asset.

It can be concluded that after intervention of NERCORMP, people were more aware about extraction/utilisation of resources that led to significant increase of asset level viz. human asset, physical asset, social asset and food security asset and finally a significant increase of overall asset position for respondent beneficiaries. In the similar line, Biradar et al. (2011) also reported the increase in overall capital acquisition index in Bellary and Bijapur districts of Karnataka in Karnataka Watershed Development Project beneficiaries that was significant at one percent level. Swain (2015) opinion was on the same line in Odisha State. Rebecca et al. (2011) were also in the opinion of positive impact of MGNREGA on creation of some important assets among the beneficiaries in the State of Madhya Pradesh. Sharma (2004) also reported the development of components of human capital through provision of micro finance programme in Andhra Pradesh.

Respondents' Perception

The performance of any project largely depends on conception and perception by the beneficiaries about the project in different project activities. Hence, altogether 11 number of criteria were identified that are very much relevant to different project activities of NERCORMP to take the respondent's views viz. selection of beneficiary/household, selection of village, selection of work/activities, selection of NaRMG members, execution of work, supervision of work, quality of work executed, quality of NERCORMP personnel, support from Government agency, support from local organisation/NGOs and benefit to the villagers. These questions were asked to the respondents to give their ranking in 5 different ways viz. 'very good', 'good', 'satisfactory', 'poor' and 'very poor'.

Based on the respondent's views on the above, Table 4 was prepared. It shows the details of performance of NERCORMP by rating at block, district and state level in the perspective of respondents. In Karbi Anglong district, 36.1 percent respondents ranked 'very good' for selection of beneficiary/household as against 38.9 percent as 'good', twenty-five percent as 'satis-

factory'. For selection of beneficiary/household no one ranked as either 'poor' or 'very poor'. Out of 5 ratings, the most preferred rating was 'good' for 10 nos. of criteria except the criteria 'support from Government agency'. The second most preferred rating was 'satisfactory' for all the 11 nos. of criteria. On the other hand in the district, for criteria no. 9 (support from Government agency), the most preferred rating was 'poor' (52.8%) followed by 'satisfactory' (47.2%). Otherwise, no beneficiary has given any preference to 'poor' and 'very poor' for any of the above criteria. The record 36.1 percent respondent ranked 'very good' for criteria no.1 'selection of beneficiary/household' followed by 22.2 percent for criteria no. 2 'selection of village'. Of course, there were some other criteria also, where beneficiary preferred/ranked 'very good', but as a very small percentage.

So far Dima Hasao district is concerned, the most preferred rating was 'good' again for 9 nos. of criteria, except the criteria no. 9 (support from Govt. agency) and criteria no. 1 (selection of beneficiary/household), where most preferred rating was 'poor' and 'very good' respectively. In this district also, record 44.4 percent respondent (higher than Karbi Anglong) preferred 'very good' for criteria no. 1 (selection beneficiary/household) followed by 'selection of village' by 20.8 percent, selection of work/activities by 11.1 percent. Some respondents in the district even ranked 'very good' in some other criteria also, but there percentage was very less like Karbi Anglong district. For criteria no. 9 (support from Govt. agency) a record of 70.8 percent respondent in the district (higher than Karbi Anglong) ranked 'poor' followed by 26.4 percent as 'satisfactory' and 2.8 percent as 'good'. The most significant in the district is that there were some respondents who even ranked 'very poor' for criteria no. 1.

As a whole in the State, almost similar type of picture was visible. Most preferred rating was 'good' for 9 nos. of criteria except criteria no. 1 (where most preferred was very good) and for criteria no. 9 (where most preferred was poor). The second most preferred rating was 'satisfactory' for all the 9 nos. of criteria.

To know the performance of NERCORMP based on respondent's conception and perception comparative ratings were prepared based on total score and average score for each and every 11 criteria considered for the study and

Table 4: Performance of NERCORMP as suggested by the respondents

Name of the criteria	Karbi Anglong district				Dima Hasao district				Total						
	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Poor	Very poor	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Poor	Very poor	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1. Selection of beneficiary/ household	26 (36.1)	28 (38.9)	18 (25.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	32 (0.0)	24 (44.4)	15 (33.3)	0 (20.8)	1 (1.4)	58 (21.5)	52 (36.1)	33 (22.9)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.7)
2. Selection of village	16 (22.2)	40 (55.6)	16 (22.2)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	15 (20.8)	43 (59.7)	13 (18.1)	1 (1.4)	0 (0.0)	31 (11)	83 (57.6)	29 (20.1)	1 (0.7)	0 (0.0)
3. Selection of work/activities	3 (4.2)	47 (65.3)	22 (30.6)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	8 (11.1)	46 (63.9)	18 (25.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	11 (7.6)	93 (64.6)	40 (27.8)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
4. Selection of NaRMG members	0 (0.0)	51 (70.8)	21 (29.2)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	3 (4.2)	50 (69.4)	19 (26.4)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	3 (2.1)	101 (70.1)	40 (27.8)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
5. Execution of work	2 (2.8)	57 (79.2)	13 (18.1)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	3 (4.2)	58 (80.6)	11 (15.3)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	5 (3.5)	115 (79.9)	24 (16.7)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
6. Supervision of work	0 (0.0)	45 (62.5)	27 (37.5)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	43 (59.7)	29 (40.3)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	88 (61.1)	56 (38.9)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
7. Quality of work executed	0 (0.0)	48 (66.7)	24 (33.3)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (1.4)	40 (55.6)	31 (43.1)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.7)	38 (61.1)	55 (38.2)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
8. Quality of NERCORMP personnel	0 (0.0)	54 (75.0)	27 (37.5)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	3 (4.2)	41 (56.9)	28 (38.9)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	3 (2.1)	95 (66.0)	55 (38.2)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
9. Support from govt. agency	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	34 (47.2)	38 (52.8)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (2.8)	19 (26.4)	51 (70.8)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (1.4)	53 (36.8)	89 (61.8)	0 (0.0)
10.Support from local organisation/ NGOs	2 (2.8)	48 (66.7)	22 (30.6)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	3 (4.2)	45 (62.5)	24 (33.3)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	5 (3.5)	93 (64.6)	46 (31.9)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
11. Benefits to the villagers	2 (2.8)	47 (65.3)	23 (31.9)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (2.8)	46 (63.9)	24 (33.3)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	4 (2.8)	93 (64.6)	47 (32.6)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percent to total

the result is presented in Table 5. The scores were given as 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 for very good, good, satisfactory, poor and very poor respectively. Out of 11 criteria in Karbi Anglong district, criteria no. 8 (quality of NERCORMP personnel) topped the list (with total score of 297 and average score of 4.13) followed by selection of beneficiary/household with total score of 296 and average score of 4.11 and then selection of village (with total score of 288 and average score of 4.0). Support from Government agency with total score of 178 and average score of 2.47 ranked the lowest in the list of 11 criteria so far performance indicators are concerned. In case of Dima Hasao district, selection of beneficiary/household topped the list with total score of 302 and average score of 4.19 followed by selection of village (with total score of 288 and average score of 4.0) and execution of work (total score of 280 and average score of 3.89). Like Karbi Anglong district, criteria no. 9 ranked the last in the list of 11 criteria with total score of 167 and average score of 2.32. It can also be viewed that in the criteria no.1 to 5, scores remained higher in case of Dima Hasao district as compared to Karbi Anglong district, whereas from criteria no. 6 to 11, scores remained higher for Karbi Anglong district as compared to Dima Hasao district. As a whole in the state also criteria no. 1 occupied the 1st rank followed by criteria no. 2 and then criteria no. 8. Similarly, criteria no. 9 ranked the last in the list of 11 criteria selected for the study.

Table 6 shows the response of the respondents on some vital socio-economic issues viz. number of livestock, income level of the beneficiary, expenditure pattern, liability status, empowerment of women because of NERCORMP. In Karbi Anglong district, so far income, expenditure and empowerment of women are concerned, above ninety percent respondents responded positively that is, increase in level of income, expenditure and empowerment of women after the project. There was no respondent who responded as 'decrease' for these 3 criteria, of course there was some percentage of respondents who responded as 'no change' for these 3 criteria/issues. For saving, almost eighty-five percent respondents responded positively against fifteen percent for 'no change'. So far livestock status is concerned, only 22.2 percent reported as 'increase level' against 77.8 percent as 'no change', of course there was no one who

reported as 'decrease' level of livestock after NERCORMP. Again so far liability is concerned, 83.3 percent reported as 'decrease' in the district against 16.7 percent as 'no change' and 'NIL' for 'increase level'.

So far Dima Hasao district is concerned, all the respondents (100%) reported 'increase' level of income, savings and empowerment of women after the intervention of NERCORMP. There was no response at all towards 'decrease' level and 'no change' for the above three parameters. In case of livestock level, twenty-five percent respondents only viewed as 'increase' as against 1.4 percent as 'decrease' and 73.6 percent as 'no change'. In case of expenditure pattern, 86.1 percent viewed as 'increase' level against 13.9 percent as 'decrease' level and 'NIL' to 'no change'. Again in case of liability, 98.6 percent reported as 'decrease' level against 1.4 percent as 'no change' and 'NIL' to 'increase' level.

As a whole in the state also, almost similar trend was visible. Response of the respondents as 'increase' in case of livestock was comparatively reported as very low (23.6%) as against a high level in case of other issues viz. income, expenditure, saving and empowerment (>90%) as reported by the respondents. A very high percentage of respondents (91%) reported 'decrease' level of liability after intervention of project as against nine percent for 'no change'. In this regard, study made by Roy and Singh (2010) on empowerment of beneficiaries of MGN-REGA, Singh et al. (2010) on effectiveness of watershed development programme, Arora et al. (2013) on MNREGS, Nalini et al. (2013) on impact of SHGs on rural economy, Sahu et al. (2012) on ATMA, Swain (2015) on poverty alleviation programme, Reddy et al. (2016) on MGNREGA etc. could be referred.

From the above it can be concluded that by and large beneficiaries were satisfied for most of the project activities except a few either at district or at state level. However, for criteria 'support from Government agency' as a whole, majority ranked as 'poor', this seems to be thought upon very seriously by the project authorities. On the other hand, out of two districts, ranking on 'very good' on some of the issues was more in Dima Hasao district compared to Karbi Anglong district. As per the views and response collected from the respondents, it can be further stated that selection of villages as well as household/beneficiaries for implementing the NER-

Table 5: Status of ranks given by the respondents

Name of the criteria	Karbi Anglong district			Dima Hasao district			Grand total		
	Total score	Average score	Rank	Total score	Average score	Rank	Total score	Average score	Overall rank
1. Selection of beneficiary/household	296	4.11	2	302	4.19	1	598	4.15	1
2. Selection of village	288	4.00	3	288	4.00	2	576	4.00	2
3. Selection of work/activities	269	3.74	5	278	3.86	4	547	3.80	5
4. Selection of NaRMG members	267	3.71	7	272	3.78	5	539	3.74	6
5. Execution of work	277	3.85	4	280	3.89	3	557	3.87	4
6. Supervision of work	261	3.63	9	259	3.60	9	520	3.61	10
7. Quality of work executed	264	3.67	8	258	3.58	10	522	3.63	9
8. Quality of NERCORM personnel	297	4.13	1	263	3.65	8	560	3.89	3
9. Support from government agency	178	2.47	10	167	2.32	11	345	2.40	11
10. Support from local organisation/NGOs	268	3.72	6	267	3.71	6	535	3.72	7
11. Benefits to the villagers	267	3.71	7	266	3.69	7	533	3.70	8

Table 6: Overall response of respondents on some socio-economic parameters because of NERCORMP

Name of criteria	Karbi Anglong			Dima Hasao			Total		
	Increase	Decrease	No change	Increase	Decrease	No change	Increase	Decrease	No change
1. Livestock	16 (22.2)	0 (0.0)	56 (77.8)	18 (25.0)	1 (1.4)	53 (73.6)	34 (23.6)	1 (0.7)	109 (75.7)
2. Income	65 (90.3)	0 (0.0)	7 (9.7)	72 (100.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	137 (95.1)	0 (0.0)	7 (4.9)
3. Expenditure	66 (91.7)	0 (0.0)	6 (8.3)	62 (86.1)	10 (13.9)	0 (0.0)	128 (88.9)	10 (6.9)	6 (4.2)
4. Liability	0 (0.0)	60 (83.3)	12 (16.7)	0 (0.0)	71 (98.6)	1 (1.4)	0 (0.0)	131 (91.0)	13 (9.0)
5. Savings	61 (84.7)	0 (0.0)	11 (15.3)	72 (100.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	133 (92.4)	0 (0.0)	11 (7.6)
6. Empowerment of women	65 (90.3)	0 (0.0)	7 (9.7)	72 (100.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	137 (95.1)	0 (0.0)	7 (4.9)

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percent to total

CORMP in both the districts of the state was upto the mark that is, respondents were mostly satisfied.

CONCLUSION

Because of NERCORMP intervention it can be appropriately stated that income and expenditure for beneficiary respondents remained much higher than non-beneficiary respondents considered from adjoining non-project villages. After exposure with various project components people in the study area were seen to change their cropping pattern in order to increase their income. Although “shifting cultivation” is considered as one of the most common livelihood management option, area under it declined over the years. Not only that, beneficiary respondent showed more interest on cultivation of many other plantation crops in project areas. Performance was more visible in respect of calculation of six different types of assets. These assets were calculated based on various statements prepared for each type of asset. So far the respondents’ direct perception or conception about the project, it can be calculated that by and large beneficiaries were satisfied for most of the project activities except a few. Most of the beneficiaries referred that their income, saving, expenditure were increased because of project intervention and on the other hand their liability declined.

RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the results of the present study, the following few recommendations may be made for overall improvement of such type of livelihood improvement projects operational not only in the study areas but also in other parts of the North Eastern India.

1. Based on comparable differences between beneficiary and non-beneficiary respondents on various issues, it can be concluded that NERCORMP has been doing tremendous work for the benefit of the rural tribal people in study area. So implementation of such type of projects can be initiated in other areas also.
2. As existing phase of NERCORMP is supposed to be complete its operation by 2016-17, funding agency like IFAD and NEC may consider another phase for NERCORMP in

Karbi Anglong and Dima Hasao districts covering some more areas keeping in view the existing socio-economic condition of the districts. Naturally present study may appear as a guideline or impetus to implement the subsequent phases.

3. Based on experiences and success of NERCORMP in North East India, Government may think to initiate the process for development of NERCORMP as an independent permanent body under North Eastern Council for monitoring and development of livelihood improvement projects in North East India.

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