Stakeholder perception and learning from projects: Multi actor agricultural projects

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Abstract: *The objective of this research is to study, first how the multiple participants operating at various levels of an agricultural project interpret its nature and outcomes and second, their journey of learning and transformation. This research builds on the hypothesis that different individuals perceive a project and get involved in it due to varied reasons. Moreover, the coming together of multiple actors enhances learning and gives rise to new knowledge. This research studies an agricultural research project working in East India Plateau. The perspectives of the multiple stakeholders of the project, coming from different disciplines, culture, life experiences and educational backgrounds have been studied with a transdisciplinary approach. In addition, to gain an integrated understanding of these diverse perspectives, systems thinking has been explored in this study. Data has been collected in the form of narratives, from 45 project participants chosen by purposive qualitative sampling. The project stakeholders interpreted the nature and outcomes from the project uniquely; it was acknowledged that a process to communicate these perspectives can turn the weaknesses of multi-actor approaches to strengths. All the stakeholders reported to have undergone learning which helped them better understand the profound impacts project had on them. However, a linear process of evaluation and monitoring hardly captures the subtle shifts in learning and development of capabilities in project stakeholders, capabilities which enhances their sense of agency and changes their worldviews which they further utilize to impact themselves and others.*

Keywords: *Agricultural projects, multiple perspectives, nature of projects, evaluation of outcomes, learning, transformation, systems thinking*