

INSTITUTION BUILDING

The watershed development project has great potential and scope to empower socially disadvantage sections of the community. Considering the needs and priorities of these sections, special activities were designed to reduce their drudgery. This was involved in a skills upgradation programme. People's organizations hold the key in ensuring the right integration between sustainable development and social equity. Such organizations have representations from socially backward communities and women with separate special interest groups. Within group interactions across group interactions and representation in village level institutions provide a platform for the disadvantaged groups to become a part of mainstream development. It is also important to note that it was properly ensured that these groups obtain equal opportunities to access the resources developed at the community level.

In order to implement effectively, under the umbrella of State Level Nodal Agency (SLNA) various institutional mechanisms are formed. They are:

- viii. Watershed Cell cum Data Center (WCDC)
- ix. Project Implementation Agency (PIA)
- x. Watershed Development Team (WDT)
- xi. Watershed Committee (WC)
- xii. Neighbourhood Groups
- xiii. Self Help Groups (SHGs)
- xiv. User Groups (UGs)

i) State Level Nodal Agency

A dedicated State Level Nodal Agency (SLNA) is constituted by the State Government with Agricultural Production Commissioner as the Chairman and Rural Development Commissioner as the Vice Chairman. SLNA is having an independent bank account. The SLNA sanction watershed projects for the State on the basis of approved state perspective and strategic plan as per procedure in vogue and oversee all watershed projects in the state within the parameters set out in these Guidelines.

ii) Watershed Cell cum Data Center (WCDC)

In district, a separate dedicated unit, called the Watershed Cell cum Data Center (WCDC) is established, which oversees the implementation of watershed programme in

the district. WCDC has a separate independent account for this purpose. WCDC function in close co-ordination with the District Planning Committee. WCDC is a separate unit with full time Project Manager and 3 to 4 subject matter specialists on Agriculture/ Water Management / Social Mobilisation/ Management & Accounts appointed on the basis of their qualification and expertise on contract/deputation/transfer etc.

iii) Project Implementing Agency (PIA)

The Block Panchayat having the major area under the programme is selected as the Project Implementing Agency (PIA) by the State Level Nodal Agency (SLNA) for Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP) in Kerala. The PIAs are responsible for implementation of watershed project. In Thiruvananthapuram district, for the IWMP – 1, the Vamanapuram Block Panchayat is being selected as the Project Implementing Agency.

The Project Implementing Agency (PIA) provides necessary technical guidance to the Grama Panchayat for preparation of development plans for the watershed through Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) exercise, undertake community organization and training for the village communities, supervise watershed development activities, inspect and authenticate project accounts, encourage adoption of low cost technologies and build upon indigenous technical knowledge, monitor and review the overall project implementation and set up institutional arrangements for post-project operation and maintenance and further development of the assets created during the project period.

The PIA, after careful scrutiny, shall submit the Action Plan for Watershed Development Project for approval of the DWDU/DRDA and other arrangements. The PIA shall submit the periodical progress report to DWDU. The PIA shall also arrange physical, financial and social audit of the work undertaken. It will facilitate the mobilization of additional financial resources from other government programmes, such as MGNREGS, BRGF, SGRY, National Horticulture Mission, Tribal Welfare Schemes, Artificial Ground Water Recharging, Greening India, etc.

iv) Watershed Development Team (WDT)

Watershed Development Team is an integral part of the PIA and is set up by the PIA as per the directions of SLNA. WDT has seven members, broadly with knowledge and experience in agriculture, soil science, water management, social mobilization and institutional building. WDT functions in close collaboration with the team of experts at

the district and state level. The expenses towards the salaries of the WDT members are charged from the administrative support to the PIA. WDT guides the Watershed Committee (WC) in the formulation of the watershed action plan. WDT assists Gram Panchayat / Gram Sabha in constitution of the Watershed Committee and their functioning. WDT also assist in organizing and nurturing User Groups and Self-Help Groups. WDT undertakes engineering surveys, prepare engineering drawings and cost estimates for any structures to be built. Monitoring, checking, assessing, undertaking physical verification and measurements of the work done are also done by WDT.

v) Watershed Committee

It is a committee that is constituted by Grama Sabha to implement the watershed project with technical support of WDT in the micro watershed area. This committee is registered as a sub group of the Grama Panchayat. The Grama Sabha of the Panchayat selects the chairman of the watershed committee with the secretary who will be a employee nominated by the Grama Panchayat, preferably the Village Extension Officer. The Watershed Committee (WC) will comprise of at least 9 members, half of the members shall be representatives of SHGs and User Groups, SC/ST community, women and landless persons in the village. One member of the WDT shall also be represented in the Watershed Committee (WC). Where the Panchayat covers more than one village, they would constitute a separate subcommittee for each village to manage the watershed development project in the concerned village. Where a watershed project covers more than one Gram Panchayat, separate committees will be constituted for each Gram Panchayat.

The Watershed Committee was formed in all the six micro watersheds of IWMP-1 project area. The IWMP-1 is a cluster of 13 Grama Panchayats coming under 4 Block Panchayats. 6 main Watershed Committees and 4 sub-watershed committees are formed at Panchayats keeping all parameter of Watershed Committee keeping the gender sensitive issues intact. Watershed Committee members are briefed about the project objectives and a workshop is also conducted in this regard at every Panchayat.

The watershed committee has a pivotal role to play during and after the project implementation period. The Watershed Committee has a separate bank account to receive funds for watershed projects and will utilise the same for undertaking its activities.

vi) Neighbour Hood Groups

Neighbour Hood Groups are formed in every micro watershed combining 40 to 50 households living as clusters. The overall planning, coordination, management and maintenance of the activities pertaining to the area are implemented through this Group. These families are further subdivided into clusters of 7-8 houses and a person is selected to represent this cluster in the Neighbour Hood Committee ensuring the proper representation on different sections. The details of wards, households and NHGs in the project area are given below:

Table: Details of Panchayat, ward and NHGs

No.	Name of panchayat	number of wards in full	number of wards in part	number of households	number of NHGs
1	Pullampara	10	2	4447	85
2	Nellanad	9	6	4901	84
3	Kallara	11	5	5639	105
4	Pangode	2	4	1298	22
5	Manickal	4	6	2121	47
6	Nanniyode		1	40	1
7	Vamanapuram		1	12	-
Vamanapuram block		36	25	18458	344
8	Mudakkal	4	5	2422	47
Chirayinkeezhu block		4	5	2422	47
9	Vembayam		2	296	7
10	Panavoor		3	205	4
11	Aanad		1	12	-
Nedumangad block		0	6	513	11
12	Mangalapuram		1	52	1
13	Pothencode		1	-	-
Pothencode Block		0	1	52	-
Total		40	37	21445	403

vii) Self Help Groups

Self Help Groups are self motivated, small homogenous groups organized together through highly successful of credit and thrift activities. Self Help Group initiative especially for women helps touplift their livelihood. The Watershed Committee shall constitute SHGs in the watershed area with the help of WDT from amongst poor, small and marginal farmer households, landless/asset less poor agricultural labourers, women, shepherds and SC/ST persons. These Groups shall be homogenous groups having common identity and interest who are dependent on the watershed area for their livelihood. Each Self Help Group will be provided with a revolving fund of an amount to be decided by the Nodal Ministry

SHG initiative in this project was being organized by having a focused group discussion between various homogenous communities of women based on their livelihood separately. Each group discussed their basic problems with their facilitators. The major problems identified are:

- a) Lack of proper credit facilities due to low intervention of formal financial credit institution.
- b) Excessive exploitation of weaker section by money lenders
- c) Lack of attitude for saving among poor people due to complex and rigid conventional financial institution structures.
- d) Lack of small micro-loans without collaterals and high interest rates.
- e) Lack of knowledge on credit, thrift activity and banking.

With a view point of these problems it was planned to organize these women to into a group consisting of 5 to 20 in each groups. It was planned to have some capacity building training regarding SHG activities. It was also proposed to have some livelihood activities which will promote women empowerment. This included Bakery units, Garments making, Mushroom Production, and Vermicompost activities with forward and backward linkage. This will ultimately lead into better human development in the village.

viii) User Groups

User Groups are normally formed to manage an activity or asset created under the programme on a long term basis. The Watershed Committee (WC) shall constitute User Groups in the watershed area with the help of WDT. These shall be homogenous groups of persons most affected by each work/ activity and shall include those having

land holdings within the watershed areas. Each User Group shall consist of those who are likely to derive direct benefits from a particular watershed work or activity. The Watershed Committee (WC) with the help of the WDT shall facilitate resource-use agreements among the User Groups based on the principles of equity and sustainability. These agreements must be worked out before the concerned work is undertaken. It must be regarded as a pre-condition for that activity. The User Groups will be responsible for the operation and maintenance of all the assets created under the project in close collaboration with the Gram Panchayat and the Gram Sabha. The user group collects user charges from their members, oversee the works and manage the benefits

Some of the points which were considered while forming a user group in the villages of the IWMP-1 project are:

- a) In case of, Land Leveling, Farm Bundling, Roof Well Recharge, Kitchen Garden, Demonstration Plot, Contour Trench, Ring Bund, Soil Bund, Staggered Trenches, etc all the beneficiaries of the individual and community activities who are involved are made user group members.
- b) In case of a check dam or Gully Plug, all the beneficiaries of the individual check dam where involved as user group members.

Focused group discussion will be conducted to between the user groups to discuss the above conditions and to select potential members. It was decided that each group would formulate certain internal rules and have a feeling of ownership with community spirit. Membership was on voluntary and democratic.

The following types of User Groups were planned to be formed in the villages of the Vamanapuram IWMP-1 watershed

Sl. No	Name of User Group	Major Task
1	Animal Husbandry Group	Bringing of new AH technology Management of New Cattle and their improvement
2	Gully Plug	Equitable sharing of Soil Management
3	Land Leveling	Equitable sharing of soil Management
4	Farm bund Group	Equitable sharing of resources Assuring of proper work

5	Gully Plug	Equitable sharing of soil and Water Management Development of community land for fodder development
6	Well Recharge	Equitable sharing of Water Management to up ground water table
7	Check Dam	Equitable sharing of Water Management to up ground water table and Built up water Storage Capacity
8	Plantation	Develop Forest area and Fuel Material
9	Horticulture	Increase Livelihood
10	Kitchen Garden	Purpose of Livelihood
11	Mushroom	Increase Livelihood
12	Bee keeping	Increase Livelihood
13	Demonstration Plot	Demo to Village People Modern Agriculture system and High Production
14	Fodder Bank & Cultivation	Bringing of More Fodder available in Village for village animal and their improvement.
15	Floriculture	Improve and purpose of livelihood
16	Vegetable Farming	Improve modern technology and purpose of livelihood
17	Fishery	Improve modern technology and purpose of livelihood