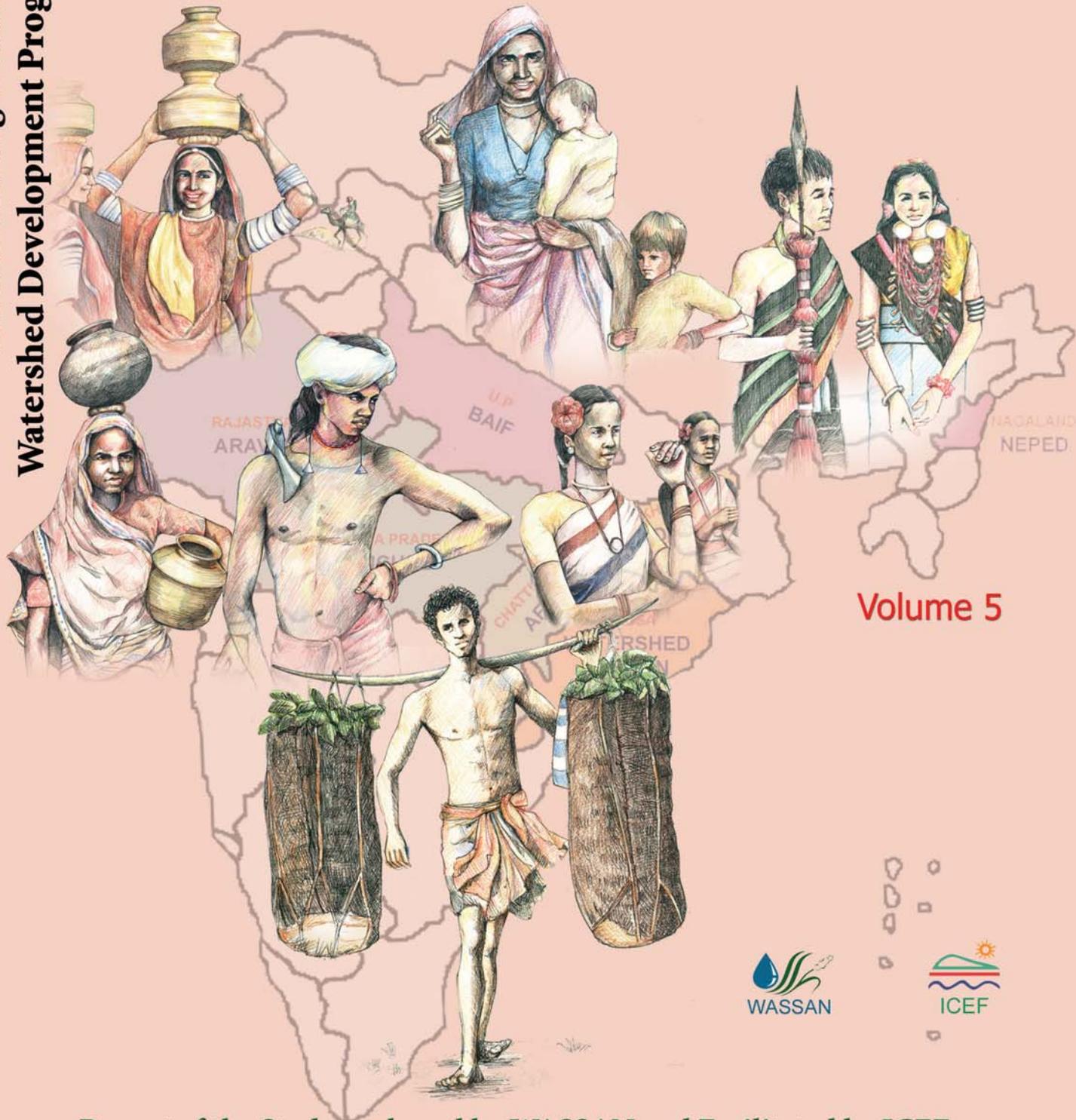Understanding Processes of Watershed Development Program in India

Making them Better
Gap Analysis, Enabling &Disabling Factors And Recommendations

Volume 5

WASSAN

ICEF

Report of the Study anchored by WASSAN and Facilitated by ICEF

Understanding Processes of Watershed Development Program in India

Making them Better

Gap Analysis, Enabling &Disabling Factors and Recommendations

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Understanding Processes of Watershed Development Program in India

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Volume 1 : Birds Eye View of Processes: Status across States, Facilitators and Donors
Volume 2 : Process Index
Volume 3 : Indepth View of Critical Themes: Institutions, Finances and Equity
Volume 4 : Policies and Possibilities: Compilation of Good Practices
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Acknowledgements

Understanding Processes in Watershed Development Projects in India is an interesting experience for me. It gave an opportunity to visit and see different villages in different parts of the country; interact with the villagers and understand their life; develop friendship with facilitating agencies (government and non government) and understand their efforts and finally to put them together in the form a report….

I do not claim to have made a perfect job this gigantic task. "Understanding" of processes means developing clear insights into the culture, history of voluntary action, roles of state, civil society organizations, communities in development processes and making sense of watershed projects in the local context. Study teams made their best efforts to grapple with the above issues and captured the processes at the field level in different states.

The study is largely conceived as a local initiative, to set an agenda for action at the field level in each state. Thus the role of study partners in the study is very important not only in conducting the field study but also in taking the agenda forward. I sincerely thank all of the study partners for their active engagement, support and interest in the agenda of strengthening processes in watershed development projects. I particularly thank the coordinators of the study teams Yogesh Agarwal, Abhishek, Sanjoli (ARAVALI, Rajasthan); Rashmi, Hargovind Singh (AAK, Utter Pradesh); S Srivastava, Devangan, Ravi Kumar (AFPRO, Chattisghad); Yoganand, Alak (PRADAN, Jharkhand); K G Vyas (NCHSE, Madhya Pradesh) Bhasker Reddy, LN Padhi, Ravnder Guada, Prabhaker Nanda, Mr Das, Kalpana, Bijoy, Prabhakaer Nanda (Orissa Watersehd Development Team, Orissa); Dr Supong, Lotha (Directorate of Agriculture, Government of Nagaland). Without their support, the study could not have taken place.

B N Yugandhar, Member Planning Commission was the inspiration to the process study. He always thought that the strong participatory processes could address several key concerns of the current watershed projects. He believed that developing a set of tools that could systematically diagnosis the watershed processes is an important requirement of the project. I hope this study meets some of his expectations. I thank him for his support and guidance from time to time, during the course of the process study.

Several members of WASSAN team took responsibilities for conducting and completing the study - conceptualization, field work, comprehending field data for analysis, preparing reports and giving feed back and project management. I thank the entire team of WASSAN. Among the team, I particularly thank Neelesh K Singh, N K Sanghi, Ravindra, K Suresh, Ramesh, Sirkanth, B Rama Chander, Surendrantah, Pavan, Bakka Reddy, Sridevi, Srinivas, Narasimha, S Raju, Malati, T Ravi, for their support and cooperation in different stages of the study. I specially thank N Chandra Sekhar and Radha Shree for providing necessary support in data compilation, which was the toughest part of the report preparation.

FOREWORD

India – Canada Environment Facility (ICEF) was established in 1992 consequent to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Governments of India and Canada. ICEF was set up with the mandate of enhancing the capacity of Indian organizations to undertake environmentally sustainable development and management of land, water and energy resources, providing support for programs that specifically address the inter – relationships between poverty and environmental degradation, community participation and for public awareness of environmental issues.

In keeping with the importance of watershed management as an integrated approach for arresting environmental degradation, improving livelihoods and sustaining ecological balance, and its potential for boosting the national economy, ICEF has supported several watershed development projects all over the country, from Nagaland in the east to Gujarat in the west, and from Uttaranchal in the north to Kerala in the South. These projects provided replicable models for sites with vastly diverse topography environmental challenges and cultural regimes. In several cases follow up initiatives were funded by ICEF to strengthen community processes in the post watershed development phase of projects completed earlier. The projects were implemented in partnerships with government departments, institutions and NGOs.

ICEF projects gained considerable success in transforming their areas and influencing similar practices in the region and elsewhere, largely due to the participatory processes followed, which bonded all the key stakeholders and elicited from them self motivated participation. The project for Strengthening Participatory Processes in Watershed Development Program in India, supported by ICEF and implemented by Watershed Support Services and Activities Network, (WASSAN), Hyderabad seeks to synthesize processes followed across projects and create synergies and best practice guidelines to help policy makes and practitioners alike. It focused on the way watershed projects are planned, implemented and managed by communities, and captured the roles of the various actors. The study also provides an opportunity for several key players in the sector to conduct a "reality check" to constantly update themselves with the field level realities.

The process study conducted with the support of ICEF is an innovative study in several ways – the focus of the study is on "processes" of the watershed projects, unlike many studies which focus on "impacts"; it is also conducted by a variety of actors – NGOs, government officials, academicians, resource organizations and others; it covered several states and involved several organizations; the observations were shared and analyzed collectively by the study teams.

The study also captured the roles performed by several actors in this process. Comparisons were made possible with the help of "Process Index" which is an interesting and useful contribution of the study. The concept of "Process Index" has high potential and wider applications. Policy makers can take a serious note of such instrument which can establish the health of processes of any large scale development project.

I commend the efforts of WASSAN and its partners in documenting and disseminating the wealth of experience and lessons the project has garnered. I am sure that it will lead to better practices and enhanced results for the benefit of the millions who depend on effective watershed management for improving their quality of life. These reports call for urgent action to improve policy support for helping communities to manage their own resources.

M. Satyanarayana, IFS
Director
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About the Study and Reports

"**U**nderstanding Processes in Watershed Development Projects in India" is an attempt to bring focus on the processes of the watershed development projects. It is an attempt to provide feed back to the policy makers, donors and field level facilitators on the processes at the field level. It is an attempt to assess, diagnose and compare process at field level in different projects. The main purpose of the study is to strengthen the participatory processes in watershed development projects and its policies.

The study was conducted in seven states of India – Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Chattisghad, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh and Nagaland. In each state, a local nodal agency anchored the study. A detailed methodology consisting of several tools was designed together by WASSAN and its partners. Through these methodologies and tools, experiences and responses of several actors in the field were gathered and carefully documented. A total of 55 watersheds were profiled in the seven states. 30 projects were from Government of India supported and Line Department facilitated projects; 15 projects were from Government of India supported and NGO facilitated projects; 3 projects were funded by bilateral projects; 7 projects were funded by International NGO Donors and facilitated by local NGOs.

Each state team prepared a report profiling the watershed processes of the state. Processes from all watersheds from all states were consolidated by all nodal agencies together. Based on this process data, the process analysis of the watershed development projects was conducted. The process data generated from the field work has rich contents, depth and numerous dimensions. To justify the objectives of the study and present various dimensions of watershed processes, the report is presented in six volumes. This note gives a brief profile of each of these volumes.

Volume 1 : **Birds Eye View of Processes: Status across States, Facilitators and Donors:** This volume presents the basic features of the process study – objectives,methodology, sample, conceptual framework and basic analysis of the processes. The project management cycle of the watershed projects was taken as the basis for conducting the process analysis (Phases, Key Events and Clusters of Key Events). The "process data" is presented for every key event, as per the project management cycle. A "Two-Dimensional" analysis was conducted to reflect the variations of processes in various states (Dimension 1- Regional influences) and various projects (Dimension 2 - Donor and Facilitator combinations). At the end of process data analysis, processes are classified into "most common processes" and "rare processes". Specific conclusions and further analysis of process is not done in this volume.

Volume 2 : **Process Index:** In this volume, the process data is further analyzed to make it "comparable". An attempt was made to "quantify" processes of each key event, based on the nature of process practiced in that watershed. The "non-participatory" processes get low scores, while "participatory" process get high scores. Based on this scoring, "Process Index" was developed for every key event of the watershed project. This "Process Index" was used to assess the health of processes at each cluster of key events, compare one type of project with another (a project in UP funded by Government of India and facilitated by line department could be compared with another project in Rajasthan, funded by International NGO and facilitated by local NGO). The application of Process Index is discussed in this volume in terms of diagnosing, measuring, monitoring and identifying the solutions to the weak processes. This analysis combines three dimensions of the process data – Process followed in a Key Event; Region in which the project is located and Facilitating Agency (Donor and Facilitator combination). So this analysis is called "Three Dimensional" analysis of watershed processes.

Volume 3 : **Indepth View of Critical Themes: Institutions, Finances and Equity:** There are several themes of special interest in watershed projects. Of these important and interesting themes were analyzed in this volume: Institutions, Financial Aspects and Equity Issues. Process dimensions of the above three themes and other related data was systematically analyzed from the sample watersheds. Several tools were used to analyze the data on the above issues and draw lessons (Adequacy analysis, frequency distribution, Analysis of PRA data, etc). The main conclusions of the analysis are presented at the end of each section. Limited experiences indicate the feasibility of integrating strong institutional processes; equity based approaches and financial prudence in watershed development projects. However, they could only establish the possibilities. It is important to develop such enabling conditions when the project is implemented on a large scale. The integration of above concerns in watershed projects is also largely a result of concern, commitment and orientation of the project facilitating agencies. Without this basic ingredient, it is difficult to expect watershed development projects to be sensitive to concerns like participation, equity, gender and transparency. The choice of sensitive and capable facilitating agencies and policy framework of watershed projects are equally important in ensuring the integration of important concerns in the watershed projects.

Volume 4 : **Policies and Possibilities: Compilation of Good Practices:** Each village is a bundle of stories. Each person could add a new dimension to the watershed experiences. While conducting the field work, study teams gathered some interesting stories, anecdotes and experiences. They establish the possibility of an idea, an approach, and a new way of looking at the same old project. This volume consists of all such interesting experiences from several watersheds. These stories try to fill the gaps in the process analysis of previous chapters. This volume adds life to the entire set by bringing human dimension to the watershed projects and its processes. Initial idea was to integrate these experiences in to the previous volumes itself. But this gives very little space for narrating the basic idea and does not justify the inclusion in other volumes. This volume is a bunch of flowers, exhibiting the color of watershed processes and their successes. There are also few thorns, which indicate the future challenges.

Each story is an independent experience and allows the reader to start anywhere. However, it is important to note that the main purpose of these stories is to briefly narrate the possibility and establish the evidence of the experience. The stories do not give an exhaustive picture or a "complete" picture of the experience. This feature of this volume could be interpreted as both strength as well as weakness of the volume.

Volume 5 : **Making them Better: Gap Analysis, Enabling &Disabling Factors And Recommendations:** This volume conducts a detailed and systematic analysis of processes. Gap analysis is conducted for each key event of the project management cycle. The designed and desirable processes are narrated followed by processes followed on the ground (most common and rare). These are analyzed to give a picture of critical concerns and implications. The enabling and disabling factors behind the processes were also mentioned. These insights are drawn from several sources – process (soft) data, hard data, discussions with the facilitators on the selected themes, case studies, policy changes in the state/ districts, etc. Based on such a thorough analysis of processes, recommendations are proposed for making the watershed process better. As a principle, all recommendations were proposed based on "evidence" on the ground. The evidence could be from a small number of watersheds or even a single watershed. The main idea was to pick up the "real experience" and "up scale" the lessons and principles through policy reform. While making the process improvements, the need for revisiting the watershed approach itself was recognized. An attempt is made to make a distinction between "watershed project" and "watershed approach". An indicative list of complementary project is mentioned, as part of recommendations. A set of necessary instruments is proposed to ensure that processes get adequate support in the watershed projects and approach. These instruments are – project management tools, plurality of institutions and critical support systems.

For easy reference and are classified into different categories to indicate the nature of action required and given in *Volume 6 :* **Recommendations at a Glance**

Introduction

Main objectives of the process study "Understanding the Processes in Watershed Development Projects in India" was to

☆ Strengthen the participatory processes in the watershed development program in India by providing feed back on the "way the projects are implemented on the ground" to all concerned – policy makers, practitioners, project administration teams, donors and academicians.

☆ Develop strategies for making the watershed development programs more community controlled and managed, equity and gender focussed, technically appropriate with institutional mechanisms in place for environmentally sound farming systems and sustainable livelihoods.

This report is in six volumes. In Volume 1 the process data was recorded and compared. Methodologies of assessing the processes were evolved through Process Index and given in Volume 2. In depth analysis of special themes such as equity, financial management, institutional space was conducted and presented in Volume 3. Volume 4 captures some of the innovative and good practices. These four volumes provide a "reflection of the reality" and an honest and unbiased feed back of the processes in different types of watershed projects in different states. In this volume, an attempt is made to "theorise" the field level practices and processes and make some suggestions for future action (changes in processes, new support systems, monitoring, capacity building, funding support, etc). Volume 6 gives the summary of recommendations in one place. Several of these suggestions call for a new policy framework for watershed approaches. The suggestions that emerged from the process analysis are broadly categorised into two parts, which are explained here.

Part - 1

Entrenching Participatory Processes of Each Cluster of Key Events

Key events and clusters are part of the given policy framework (guidelines of governments). The strengths and weaknesses of the existing policy framework determine the quality and nature of these processes. In Part 1, the existing policy framework is not challenged while conducting the analysis. However, the possible opportunities for redefining the policy framework are identified through this exercise. The following analytical structure is followed for each cluster of key events:

1. Designed and Desirable Processes

The guidelines of watershed development projects have already defined the processes of a cluster of key events. These defined processes are supposed to be followed at the field level. These processes are reiterated in the form of "Designed and Desirable Processes". These desirable and designed processes were already presented for every cluster of key events in Volume 1 also.

2. Gap Analysis

Gap Analysis is carried out to state the differences between the designed/ desirable processes and the actual processes on the ground. This analysis is made in three steps:

2.1. Classification of Processes

In this analysis, the observed processes are classified into "most common processes" and "rare processes". The most common processes are those processes which are observed in majority of the watersheds (say about 40% and/or more watersheds) while the rare processes are observed in very limited number of watersheds. These processes were again labelled as "desirable", "OK" and "Not Desirable" processes, depending on the nature of each process. The processes were quantified in limited number of cases only.

2.2. Critical Concerns

Processes were analyzed to give deeper insights and critical concerns were explained.

2.3. Implications of the Gaps

The processes are classified into most common and rare processes. Answers to the question "so what" are presented under this heading. The possible implications of these processes are mentioned.

3. Influencing Factors (Enabling and Disabling Factors)

The reasons/ factors behind the processes of each cluster are presented under this heading. These factors could be enabling or disabling the participation of communities. To avoid repetition and for brevity these factors are presented in bullet form (in majority of the cases).

4. Recommendations

Based on the above analysis, recommendations are proposed for improving the processes at the field level. Recommendations are also presented in bullet form for brevity.

This volume of the process study provides an important instrument for strengthening watershed development projects in the country. The observations, analysis and recommendations are expected to provide agenda for several actors, including civil society organizations, government departments, academicians, donors, project managers, resource organizations and policy makers.

Part - 2

Redefining the Watershed Approach

In this part, the existing policy framework of the watershed projects is challenged. Based on the analysis of processes in Part 1, several opportunities, gaps and critical concerns are identified. These concerns are used to re-define the framework of the watershed approaches in India. As part of this analysis, the following two sets of components are proposed.

☆ Redefining the Watershed Approaches
☆ Necessary Conditions

Additional dimensions, complementary projects and rights perspectives in watershed approaches are considered to be part of the "redefined" watershed approaches. The necessary conditions are identified to "entrench the participatory processes in the watershed approach. Defining project management cycle, promoting of plurality of institutions, critical support systems, etc. are considered to be part of the "necessary" conditions of watershed approaches.

Part 1

Preparatory Phase

Entrenching Participatory Processes in Watershed Development Projects

Introduction

The main purpose of this phase is to:

☆ Make sure that deserving and appropriate villages are selected for the project

☆ Bring awareness among Community on watershed project and introduce the new culture of participatory development process in the village.

☆ Understand the village socio economic and political situations (Base Line survey)

For achieving this, the Project Authority/Project Implementation Agency has to take up the following activities or key events:

☆ Apply criteria to select villages

☆ Conduct Awareness camps and build rapport with Community

☆ Get a formal consent (resolution) from the Grama Panchayati/ Grama Sabha

☆ Implement Entry Point Activities

☆ Conduct Base Line surveys

A. Cluster of Key Events - Knowledge of Villagers on Selection Process of their Village

1. Designed and Desirable Processes

Criteria are defined for selecting the villages (e.g. problem villages) in various guidelines. Apart from following these criteria for prioritisation, it is important to verify whether the people in the village/ Grama Panchayati are willing to take initiative and provide leadership to the project at village level.

Once villages are selected, the next step would be introducing the philosophy of the project to the community. The processes at this stage must aim at meeting different interest groups; and making them aware of resource management issues and needs. This involves informing community about project principles and conditions to be fulfilled from the community side

such as equity, women representation and community contribution. Awareness programmes and cultural activities are to be organised for educating villagers on the project. This will lay foundation towards broader participation of community in evolving norms and conflict resolution mechanisms to translate project design into action.

It is equally important that PIA initiates dialogue with local institutions such as Gram Panchayat, existing community based organisations and local leadership. During this process, Grama Panchayati and other institutions would discuss among themselves and develop consensus on the required commitment from their side to the project. Grama Panchayati also has to give a formal resolution indicating their commitment to the project.

As part of this process, Entry Point Activities (EPA) will also be initiated. It is a means of building rapport between community and PIA. EPA will help in better understanding of community level collective actions. In identification of EPA, preference should be given to activities that have relevance for the majority in the village, asset building that have specific advantage to the poor and potential to reduce drudgery of women. People will have to demonstrate their ability in mobilizing voluntary labour and promoting collective action. PIAs which did not work in villages prior to watershed shall use this as first step in their community mobilisation. Planning and implementation of EPA will set standards of participation and transparency of the project and establish the project philosophy in the village.

2. Gap Analysis

2.1. Classification of Processes

Knowledge of Villagers on Selection Process of their Village	
Most Common Processes	**Rare Processes**
✭ Community thinks that PIAs brought watersheds to villages (OK)	✭ PRI role in mobilizing watershed for the village was observed only in GoI GO projects. (Desirable)
✭ PIAs have relation with Community prior to watershed programmes. This is relatively higher in case of NGO funded and implemented projects (Desirable)	✭ Collective action of the village (in forest protection) was considered as eligible criteria by District/ Block level project officers while sanctioning the project to the village. (Desirable)

2.2. Critical Concerns

Selection of the village is largely the responsibility of the DRDA/ project authority at the district level. The Guidelines (1994) gave clear directions regarding this issue. DRDA/ Project Authority has to adopt the following steps for selecting the villages:

The DRDA/ Project Authority is responsible for developing appropriate selection criteria and evolve process for selecting the eligible villages for the project.

✰   Assess the level for resource degradation

✰   Assess the willingness of the villagers to take part in the village development through watershed projects

✰   Assess the history of community action in the village and existing capacities of institutions and social capital of the village.

✰   Assess whether any facilitating support is available to the village in consideration.

After following such assessment processes, the DRDA/ Project Authority is expected to finalize the villages selection. It is obvious that this assessment process requires considerable field level action and interactions with the community. During this assessment process, the villagers would obviously come to know about the details of the watershed development project and why their village is a suitable candidate for the project, when compared to any other village. However, this process is followed in limited number of watersheds.

Based on the experiences of village selection this process could be classified into three categories.

✰   Supply Driven Approach

✰   Recommended by Facilitating Agencies

✰   Demanded by Local Leadership

Supply Driven: In large number of watersheds, the knowledge levels of the community on the selection processes of villages clearly indicate "Supply driven" approach. This approach is particularly visible in case of GoI funded projects. The project is "pushed" on to them, without their involvement. This approach has severe implications on the nature of processes and involvement of local leadership (particularly Grama Panchayati) in the project.

Since DRDA/ Project Authority did not adopt any clear processes for selecting the villages, the communities were not aware "why and how their village was selected" for watershed development project. There was no opportunity for them to express their willingness or suitability to the projects. Villagers are not aware of the details of the project till somebody "announced" about this to them.

The local leadership (community/ Grama Panchayati) also did not play any role in the selection process of the village. The selected villages also did not have any facilitation support till the project was sanctioned to them. In fact, 45% of the facilitating agencies started work with the villages only after the project was allocated to that village.

It is very clear that these processes were not "inclusive" and "demand driven". This process of selecting the village made the villagers "passive recipients" of the project.

Recommended by Facilitating Agencies: Facilitating agencies in INGO NGO projects had long partnership with the villagers before the project was initiated. They made a clear assessment of the suitability of the village and "recommended" to the donor for support. Obviously, this suitability is in terms of the degradation of the natural resources, willingness of the villagers to

take responsibilities of the project. In this case, the earlier practices such as contributory approach to development, role of local institutions were continued in the watershed development projects also. The community and facilitating agency could negotiate with each other and arrive at a set of non-negotiables. As result of this commitment, several important considerations (E.g.: gender, equity, etc.) could be internalized within the watershed development framework. The role of facilitating agency is very critical in such a process.

The local project officers made an assessment of collective action of the villagers (voluntary protection of village forest lands) and appreciated them. They recommended to the DRDA/ Project Authority on the suitability of the village. However, the lessons from such collective action were not transferred to watershed development projects (unlike the previous category), as this process requires considerable facilitation. The facilitating agency and the villagers need to develop a common understanding on the non-negotiables of the projects and commitment towards them.

Demand Driven Approaches: The selection process was "demand driven" when the following events took place:

✩ Local leaders (peoples' representatives, Grama Panchayati representatives, politically active persons) approached the DRDA/ Project Authority for watershed development projects.

✩ Villagers approached DRDA/ Project Authority for support in natural resource management related activities.

However, in this approach there are both positive and negative experiences. When people's representatives "got" the project to the village, they continued to play a dominant role during the entire project period. They provided little scope for others, particularly to resource poor families. When the community as a whole approached, the role of leadership was not very "authoritarian". In this category of process, it was observed that the facilitation support to such villages was not explicitly "pro-poor" or "pro-participatory". As a result, the leadership of the village continued to play the same role and did there was no opportunity to transform them.

2.3. Implications of the Gaps

A demand driven selection process gives an opportunity for both the villagers and project authorities to negotiate with each other. The roles and responsibilities and obligations of each group could be established in a clear manner. When the projects were thrust on the villagers, the community could be disinterested in the project. The project becomes the baby of the project authority and the community will not own it.

3. Influencing Factors

Knowledge of Villagers on Selection Process of their Village	
Enabling Factors	Disabling Factors
☆ Previous partnership between a facilitating agency/ NGO with the village	☆ No due weightage to criteria of guidelines (collective action and institutional capacities).
☆ Initiatives of concerned government officers to explore and assess local collective action	☆ Systematic approach for village selection not followed by project authority.
☆ History of collective action in the village	☆ Selection process unduly influenced by the local/ district level people's representatives.
☆ Vibrant local social capital	☆ Absence of collective action at the village level and/or weak social capital at the village level
☆ Strong Local Leadership	☆ Ignorance about the project and its selection process at the community level

4. Recommendations

From the above gap analysis, the following lessons can be learned for making this process more transparent and participatory.

☆ Selection of watershed projects should be demand driven.

☆ Pre-selection Phase:

  ✳ Provide for pre-selection phase of watershed development projects. During this phase the project authorities should organize communication campaigns to generate awareness about the non-negotiables, selection criteria and salient features of the watershed development project.

  ✳ The campaign should explain the preliminary activities that the communities should do for qualifying themselves for the watershed project. Based on the responses from communities, the watershed project could be sanctioned to them.

☆ Create clear roles for local leadership, including Grama Panchayati in the selection process.

☆ Assess history of collective action and strength of social capital before sanctioning the watershed development projects.

☆ Ensure facilitation support to villages. Orient the village leadership on the nature of participatory philosophies.

☆ Provide for rejection of the unsuitable villages.

B. Cluster of Key Events - Awareness generation and Reaching Out to Women:

1. Designed and Desirable Processes

(1994 MoRD: Chapter IV para 54, 70, 77; WARASA, MoA: Chapter 2 Para 14 Chapter-3, Para 50)

Before commencement of the developmental activities, PIAs should generate awareness among the community members through repeated meetings, street plays, folk songs, etc. on the spirit of watershed programme. Summary version of the guidelines in local language should be distributed. Use of audio visual media to increase awareness should be encouraged. Government officers are expected to interact with Grama Panchayati members and other villagers. During this process, it is important to reach out to the women and resource poor families and explain the details of project to them. In order to establish strong foundation for the implementation of watershed programs, initial focus will have to be on strengthening the social and institutional base in watershed villages.   In this regard, awareness generation process plays an important part.

2. Gap Analysis

2.1 Classification of Processes

Awareness generation and Reaching Out to Women	
Most Common Processes	**Rare Processes**
☆ Organising Grama sabha/ village meetings, exposure visits and other communication campaigns (Desirable)	☆ Audio visual shows, display board in public places (Desirable)
☆ Variety of methods and tools (by NGO PIAs) (Desirable)	Facilitating awareness activities specially, for the poor and women (Desirable)
☆ Not making special efforts to reach out/ target women (Not desirable)	☆ Villagers themselves demanded the PIA to organize awareness camps (Desirable?)
	☆ Sports competition, cultural events (Desirable)
	☆ Household campaign and regular community meetings (Desirable)
	☆ Special efforts by facilitating agencies to reach out to women (Desirable)

2.2. Critical Concerns:

The experiences from sample watershed projects on awareness generation could be classified into the following categories. There are different levels of sensitivity to equity concerns across projects/ states:

No Efforts: 17% of GoI GO projects made no efforts at all for awareness generation. The project activities were directly initiated without preparing the communities. These projects neglected women and their priorities.

Mechanical/ Casual Efforts: DRDA/ Project Authorities made efforts to generate awareness across all watershed projects in the district. They developed uniform approach and engaged communication teams (folk artists and other media). These events were also "one-time-events" during the entire project period. The messages by such campaigns were general and did not address any specific needs of the communities. The critical content/ message of the projects (wages, opportunities for poor, institutional arrangement, financial aspects and other issues) were not part of these campaigns. As a result, the communication campaigns were not able to empower the communities. Such campaigns also took a casual approach about targeting women and poor families.

Systematic and Special Efforts: Facilitating agencies made special and systematic efforts to communicate the philosophy of the project. Multiple tools/ methodologies were used by the facilitating agencies. They made special efforts to reach out to the women and resource poor families. Several key players were invited to be part of this process, including government officers and local leaders. Important issues like non-negotiables, finances, institutional arrangements, project components, wage issues were part of the message. Facilitating agencies repeated these campaigns in the villages. Such efforts empowered the communities to demand better benefits from the project.

2.3. Implications of the Gaps

When the facilitating agency did not make any efforts to generate awareness about the projects, the community remained largely ignorant and inactive. The project was largely in the control of the facilitating agency.

When the facilitating agency made serious efforts to generate awareness, they were able to empower the community and they actively participated during the entire project period. The awareness campaigns also gave an opportunity for the facilitating agencies to communicate the non-negotiables and ensure that communities understood them. This approach facilitated an "inclusive approach" for poor and women in the watershed development projects.

3. Influencing Factors:

Awareness generation and Reaching Out to Women	
Enabling Factors	**Disabling Factors**
✫ Commitment of the facilitating agencies to generate awareness about the watershed development projects.	✫ Values of facilitating agencies, which did not believe in empowering the communities through information sharing and developing transparency in projects.
✫ Basic orientation and sensitivity of the facilitating agencies towards values such as gender, equity and transparency.	✫ Preference to implementation of works
✫ Influence of donors who insisted on systematic efforts to reach out to poor and women.	✫ Facilitating agencies mechanically followed the instructions of the project authorities and organized one time events without much impact.
✫ Budgetary support to the facilitating agencies to organize sustained communication campaigns for a considerable time (not one time events) with various methodologies and tools.	
✫ Support of resource organizations (mainly media groups)	
✫ Responsive local leadership	

4. Recommendations

✫ DRDA/ Project Authority should ensure that facilitating agencies make serious and systematic efforts for generating awareness on the key aspects of the watershed development projects.

✫ The facilitating agencies should be oriented on the meaning, scope, potential and purpose of communication campaigns.

✫ Information is power. Provide for "Rights Based Communication Campaign" and repeated exercises for empowering the communities.

✫ Focus should be on "resource literacy". Systematic and meaningful communication campaigns should be organized in a professional manner. The expected behaviour changes should be integral part of the communication campaign and message. Two way communication campaigns should be encouraged.

✫ Follow up of communication campaigns is a must. Adherence to messages/ philosophy of the projects is an important requirement.

✫ Special efforts should be made to reach out to women and resource poor families. Messages of communication campaigns for this target group should be relevant to them.

☆ Stereo typed communication campaigns in the name of district level campaigns should be avoided.

C. Cluster of Key Events - Grama Sabha Resolution

1. Designed and Desirable Processes

Gram Panchayat should be involved in watershed implementation. This means facilitation of Gram Panchayat to pass a resolution by convening Gram Sabha. The WDT will facilitate a resolution from the Gram Panchayat assuring people's contribution and expressing the willingness to take over, operate and maintain the physical assets that would be created as part of the watershed development project and share the benefits of CPR with the weaker sections of the society.

(1994 MoRD: Chapter II Para 25(c, d); Chapter IV Para 56-57; WARASA, MoA: Chapter II Para 30,31; Appendix - II).

2. Gap Analysis

2.1. Classification of Processes

Grama Sabha Resolution	
Most Common Processes	**Rare Processes**
☆ Resolution not obtained, more so in GoI GO projects. (Not desirable)	☆ Obtained resolution in the first meeting itself (Not desirable)
☆ Formal resolution (Desirable)	☆ Getting a separate resolution for entry point activity (OK)
☆ Resolution was after several meetings with in a period of five months (Desirable)	☆ Resolution obtained even though it was not mandatory (Desirable)
☆ Resolutions included either 'benefits of watershed program' or 'rules and regulations' (Desirable)	☆ Resolution included issues like agreement on permanent agriculture, compliance with guidelines, etc. (OK)

2.2. Critical Concerns

The resolution by village/ Grama Panchayati/ Grama Sabha is an important step in establishing the role of Grama Panchayati. The resolution is a symbol of the commitment of Grama Panchayati towards the non-negotiables of the watershed development projects. Facilitating agency is expected to organize several meetings and discussions to orient the Grama Panchayati and villagers on the important aspects of the watershed development project. Based on this information, the Grama Panchayati and Grama Sabha are expected to take an informed decision on their roles and responsibilities. The observations from the sample watersheds indicate the following trends.

Facilitating agencies considered village resolution to be an administrative requirement to be completed as soon as possible. Even this "formality" was not fulfilled, in about 46% of watershed projects. When they got a resolution, it was obtained without much deliberations and thinking at the community level. In all such projects, an opportunity was lost to integrate the Grama Panchayati with watershed development processes. Facilitating agencies knowingly or unknowingly marginalized the Grama Panchayati. Such practices also reinforced the impression that watersheds institutions are "parallel" institutions to the Grama Panchayati.

There is a notion that NGOs are against Grama Panchayati and PRI system. All the institutions established by NGOs are perceived as "parallel" institutions. While several NGOs argued that these institutions of communities around a common interest are necessary for deepening democracy. Interestingly, majority of NGO facilitated projects (73% of GoI NGO projects and 71% of INGO NGO projects) got the resolutions from the Grama Panchayati in a systematic manner, while majority of the GoI GO projects (60%) ignored the same.

2.3. Implications of the Gaps

The role of Grama Panchayati is marginalized, when the formal resolution of Grama Panchayati/ Grama Sabha is not taken. This created an artificial conflict between (watershed) project based institutions and governance institutions. Over a period of time, the existence and relevance of people's institutions (created for management of watershed resources) was questioned. Governance functions and executive functions were merged and role of people's institutions got marginalized.

3. Influencing Factors

Grama Sabha Resolution	
Enabling Factors	**Disabling Factors**
✫ Belief of the facilitating agencies on the PRI system and adherence to the guidelines.	✫ The DRDA/ Project Authority did not insist on the resolution from the Grama Panchayati.
✫ Belief of the facilitating agencies on the principles of transparency and participation.	✫ Lack of sensitivity of the facilitating agencies on the role of Grama Panchayati and participatory institutions.
	✫ Weak PRIs at the field level.

4. Recommendations

✫ Facilitating agencies should be oriented on the importance of village level deliberations and resolutions before the project is formally started.

✫ The capacities of facilitating agencies should be developed so that they could facilitate a transparent and participatory process of getting the village resolution.

✮ Develop role clarity of different institutions such as Grama Panchayati, existing institutions of communities and facilitating agencies in the context of watershed development project. Firm up decisions on non-negotiables of the projects (contribution, priority to development of CPRs, rights over CPRs to poor families, etc.) at this stage.

✮ DRDA/ Project Authority should distinguish between the participatory process based resolution and mere resolution on paper. DRDA/ Project Authority should give importance and priority to the genuine resolutions of the communities.

✮ The representatives of DRDA/ Project Authority should also participate in these events.

E. Entry Point Activity (EPA)

1. Designed and Desirable Processes

The PIA uses the 5 % works component to take up EPA that the watershed community finds as priority to them. This is important to establish credibility of the WDT and develop a rapport with the village community. It is also important as the community should gain experience in implementation in a transparent and accountable manner.

(1994 MoRD: Chapter IV, Para 70; WARASA, MoA: Chapter IV, Para 51, Chapter VI Para 153)

2. Gap Analysis

2.1. Classification of Processes

Entry Point Activity (EPA)	
Most Common Processes	**Rare Processes**
✮ EPA activities were decided by Grama Sabha or villagers or watershed committee (Desirable)	✮ PIAs and Sarpanch/ Village leader had decided EPA activities (Not Desirable)
✮ Village Community played major role in executing the EPA activities (Desirable)	✮ Secretary of WC and GP implemented EPA activities (Not Desirable)
✮ Contribution in the form of Shramdaan (Desirable)	✮ Poor quality of work/ assets under EPA (Not Desirable)
✮ Assets created under EPA are in good condition (Desirable)	✮ Material Contribution (Desirable)
✮ The use of assets created under EPA are accessible to all (Desirable)	✮ Some people were excluded from use of assets created under EPA (Not Desirable)

	✩ Contribution in cash. Contribution in time by village leaders for supervisions/ quality control (Desirable)
	✩ Assets under EPA are able to generate incomes (Desirable)

2.2. Critical Concerns

Generally government supported projects are perceived as "non-participatory" interventions. Communities tend to think that they have minimum role in such projects. It is very important to establish the culture of participation in the government supported projects. Entry Point Activity gives an opportunity to the facilitators, local communities and local leadership to understand the basics of participatory development project and related processes.

When such processes are not operationalized in the initial phase of the project, it is difficult to motivate the communities and leadership to follow the participatory principles of the projects such as – collective planning and decision making, genuine contribution, taking responsibility of executing the works, etc.

31% of the sample watersheds did not get an opportunity to experience the basics of participatory development process. Their learning opportunity was curtailed by the facilitating agencies. In remaining cases also, the domination of facilitating agency or/and local leadership was visible in 40% of watershed projects. Genuine community involvement was promoted only in 29% of projects.

2.3. Implications of the Gaps

Entry Point Activity is an opportunity to initiate a new culture of collective action. When this opportunity is not used, the communities tend to follow non-participatory processes. Entry Point Activities when implemented in right spirit could initiate a new process of development.

4. Recommendations

✩ Budget provision for entry point activity should be retained in the watershed development projects. This budget should be part of "works component". The nature of entry point activities could be confined to natural resource management.

✩ DRDA/ Project Authority should orient the facilitating agencies on the importance of the entry point activity and process of executing the same. The purpose of the entry point activity is many fold.

✩ Develop rapport between the communities and facilitating agencies.

✩ Inculcate the participatory development processes among the communities and facilitating agencies

✰ Demonstrate non-negotiables of the watershed development project, before the entire project is launched.

✰ DRDA/ Project Authority should have a monitoring mechanism for ensuring that the entry point activity is properly planned and executed.

F. Baseline and Benchmark Survey

1. Designed Processes

Before starting the major activities such as institution development and planning exercise, a bench mark survey is to be conducted by facilitating agency. The information collected from the villagers through PRA exercises should be verified with secondary data available with various Government departments. These surveys should be completed within six months of the commencement of the project so that they can be used as input for the Watershed Development Plan and creating institutions. The PRA exercises should lead to diagnosis of the important problems and a common understanding of the village community's priorities. Identification of poor families is an important task during this activity.

2. Gap Analysis

2.1. Classification of Processes

Baseline and Benchmark Survey	
Most Common Processes	**Rare Processes**
✰ Initial data was collected through interviews with village leaders followed by household survey and PRA (Desirable)	✰ Camp in the village by PIA staff for conducting bench mark surveys (Desirable) ✰ Hiring services of resource persons/ organizations for conducting bench marking surveys (Desirable)

2.2. Critical Concerns

Several methods are employed to conduct the base line surveys. Participatory tools such as PRA; one way enquiry such as questionnaire, technical surveys were part of this process. However, there is absence of connectivity between one type of survey and another.

The study teams could see reports of base line surveys in only limited number of cases. Each report has a different format and content. There is also the issue of consistency among different projects in terms of content of the base line survey reports. In limited number of watersheds, DRDA/ Project Authority supplemented the data from satellite imageries and other sources. However, such support systems are not completely integrated in the base line survey methods and reports.

The processes for conducting base line survey and situation analysis need to be a joint exercise with the communities and facilitating agencies. However, such exercises were conduced only in limited number of watersheds. In large number of cases, the communities remained as "suppliers of information". They also did not know how this information was analysed and used.

Base line/ bench mark surveys are expected to provide basis for institution development; action planning; monitoring and measuring the impacts of the project. However, such connectivity is established only limited number of cases (mainly INGO NGO projects). In remaining cases, the activity of bench mark survey was completed as a formality.

2.3. *Implications of the Gaps*

When the base line survey was conducted without any meaning and rigor, it hardly had any implications on the watershed development plan.

In limited number of cases, the bench mark data was regularly referred to and used for making appropriate interventions. The changes in the values of basic indicators were compared with the corresponding values at the time of base line survey. The data generated during base line survey was collectively analysed by the community and facilitating agency. Such exercises led to considerable involvement and empowerment of the community.

3. Influencing Factors

Baseline and Benchmark Survey	
Enabling Factors	**Disabling Factors**
☆ Professional attitude of the facilitating agency towards the project management principles	☆ The low priority given by project authorities
☆ Influence of donors on the need of quantifying data on certain parameters and indicators	☆ Inability of the facilitating agencies to see the relevance between bench mark surveys and project management (plans, execution and monitoring).
☆ Professional support available to the project facilitating teams for conducting bench mark surveys	

4. Recommendations

☆ DRDA/ Project Authority or state level authorities should evolve methodology, process and content for conducting baseline/ bench mark surveys. The local level exercises should be supplemented with the data/ information from outside (satellite maps and other sources).

☆ The focus should be on joint analysis of information by communities and facilitating agencies. Such joint exercises should set the agenda for action in terms of institution development; planning; choice of interventions and target groups. They should also facilitate reflections among the communities and facilitating agencies.

☆ DRDA/ Project Authority should evolve appropriate mechanisms to ensure that the base line surveys are professionally conducted. Such reports/ systems should be systematically used through out the project period for monitoring and evaluating the impacts of the projects.

☆ Provide professional support for such activities through out the project period.

☆ Provide budgets for seeking professional help for conducting base line surveys. The support organizations providing such professional help should build the capacities of the facilitating agencies, rather than taking this task as a "turn key" assignment.

Establishing Village Level Institutions

Introduction

This chapter examines the process related issues of establishing village level institutions in the watershed development project. The main purpose of all activities in this phase is to

✿ Establish village level institutions such as user groups, self help groups, watershed association and watershed committee.

✿ Ensure that resource poor families and women are organized into common interest groups

For doing this, the Project Authority/Project Implementation Agency has to take up the following activities:

✿ Identify the existing institutions in the village

✿ Identify poor families and organize them into groups

✿ Form user groups and SHGs

✿ Form Watershed Association and Watershed Committee

A. Identification of existing institutions in the village

1. Designed and Desirable Processes

Each village would have some formal and/or informal institutions. Facilitating agencies need to make sincere efforts to explore and assess the institutions in terms of their relationship with the watershed programs. These existing institutions could provide lead in the watershed context.

2. Gap Analysis

2.1. Classification of Processes

Identification of existing institutions in the village	
Most Common Processes	**Rare Processes**
✿ Existing group members became WC members, some of them organised EPA & other works (Desirable)	✿ Some of the existing members did not participate in Watershed Program. PIAs did not know how to involve

	existing institutions in the watershed project (Not Desirable)
☆ No organized groups prior to the project (OK)	☆ Members of existing institutions implemented the entry point activities (Desirable)

2.2. Critical Concerns

It is important to link the selection process of villages with the existing institutional base of the village. Existing social capital of the village is expected to provide "lead" in the initial phases of watershed.

The existing institutions should imbibe the participatory philosophy that is envisaged in the watershed development projects. This has to be a facilitated exercise by the facilitating agency. Entry Point Activity is an opportunity in this direction. However, such efforts were not seriously made in several watersheds.

In some cases the members of existing institutions became functionaries of watershed committees, but they did not represent the mandate of their parent group.

2.3. Implications of the Gaps

Creating role to the existing institutions is an important function of the facilitating agency. When the existing groups are not adequately involved, the opportunities for institutional convergence are lost. This takes away considerable time, energy and efforts of the facilitating agencies to create institutions afresh.

3. Influencing Factors

Identification of existing institutions in the village	
Enabling Factors	**Disabling Factors**
☆ Previous relationship between the villages and the facilitating agency	☆ Low priority given by the facilitating agency to the institutional processes
☆ Facilitating agencies already created these institutions before the watershed project was launched in the village.	☆ Negligible capacities of existing institutions in the village
☆ Inclusive approaches of the facilitating agency in institutional development	☆ Absence of other projects in the village that created institutions previously

4. Recommendations

☆ DRDA/ Project Authority should have clear process of assessing the capacities of the existing social capital. Preference should be given to those villages, which have strong institutional base.

✭ The facilitating agency should develop an action plan for building the capacities of the existing institutions and creating effective roles for them.

B. Formation of New Groups

1. Designed and Desirable Processes

Each SHG/ UG should be homogenous having a common identity such as agricultural labourers, women, shepherds, scheduled castes/ tribes, farmers or a common purpose/ activity. For each work/ activity, the concerned WDT member will identify a group of people who may be affected most, either beneficially or adversely. The WDT members should take appropriate action to constitute, in consultation with the village community/ gram sabha, user groups for each work or activity to be undertaken in the watershed.

(1994 MoRD Chapter IV, Para 70, 75 - 77, WARASA MOA Chapter IV, Para 53 - 59).

2. Gap Analysis

Formation of New Groups	
Most Common Processes	**Rare Processes**
✭ User groups were not formed or formed only on paper (Not Desirable)	✭ Formation of User Groups on the basis of hamlets and based on the close relationship (Desirable)
✭ User Groups were formed by PIA/ WDT around activities (OK)	✭ Farmers came together and formed themselves into a group with the support of PIA (Desirable)
✭ User Groups evolved during the course of time/ process (Desirable)	✭ Defaulters of the existing groups were formed into new groups (OK)
✭ Temporary User Groups were formed along with existing groups (OK)	

2.2. Critical Concerns

User Groups are considered to be an important institutional instrument in natural resource management. Such an institutional arrangement is grossly neglected in majority of watersheds. The facilitating agencies and DRDA/ Project Authority concentrated mainly on "executing" works. Institutions such as user groups were mainly perceived as means for completing activities. As a result, the institutional base of the watershed at primary level was rendered weak. Majority of GoI GO projects (63%) gave low priority to form user groups. It is important to note that majority of the projects were also implemented by the Government agencies.

The isolated experiences of creating vibrant user groups were not well documented and shared with larger groups. The general process of "activity based institutions with an aim of completing

activities" got more support and popularity. Eventually, this process itself was interpreted as "user group".

The capacity building strategies also did not identify this gap in the watershed processes. Hence this issue was not addressed through appropriate capacity building inputs on formation of user groups and their roles in watershed development projects.

2.3. Implications of the Gaps

This low priority on user groups also alienated the primary users of natural resources from management of the same. The decisions on resource management were largely taken by "non-users" including facilitating teams/ DRDA/ Project Authority and village leadership. This process gave little scope for users to integrate "production interests" of resource management. On the contrary, this gave ample opportunities to promote "contractual interests" of the project managers (village leadership, facilitating agencies and DRDA, Project Authority) in the watershed development project.

3. Influencing Factors

Formation of New Groups	
Enabling Factors	**Disabling Factors**
	☆ Facilitating agencies have limited understanding on the concept of user group formation.
	☆ Both facilitating agencies and project authorities gave low priority to the institutional arrangements in general and to user groups in particular.
	☆ The concept of user group has not yet evolved in a clear cut manner.

4. Recommendations

☆ The role of user groups is beyond completing activities. The main agenda of user groups is to manage watershed resources and enhance their productivity for ensuring better livelihoods. The institution development process should aim at building core capacities of the user groups to achieve the above aspects in a meaningful and sustainable manner.

☆ DRDA/ Project Authorities need to evolve appropriate systems for monitoring and building capacity of facilitating agencies to ensure that user groups are formed and are functional with a long term perspective.

☆ Fund for watershed activities should be released only after the user groups are formed and are functional.

☆ Adequate capacity building support should be provided to form and strengthen user groups.

C. Formation of SHGs

1. Designed and Desirable Processes

Members who are indirectly dependent on watershed resources are organized into Self Help Groups. This institutional form gives them an opportunity to gain strength from each other and eventually gain control over natural resources of the watershed project. The watershed project provides them some financial assistance in the form of revolving fund. These institutions are meant to create opportunities for resource poor, vulnerable families/ persons. This is an interesting way of addressing equity concerns in a project context.

2. Gap Analysis

2.1. Classification of Processes

Formation of SHGs	
Most Common Processes	**Rare Processes**
☆ The process of forming SHG evolved over a period of time. The PIAs did not have necessary process understanding or tools to proactively establish SHGs (Not Desirable)	☆ Persons interested in thrift and credit members were taken as members (Desirable)
☆ Identification of poor families to form SHGs (Desirable)	☆ User groups are transformed into thrift and credit groups. This process merged the boundary between the functions of SHGs and UGs (Desirable)
	☆ Village Council permits the formation of SHG (Desirable)SHGs of men were formed (Desirable).

2.2 Critical Concerns

The capacity of facilitating agencies to form SHGs is limited. The formation of SHGs is not fine tuned to the needs of the watershed development project. SHGs became synonymous with women in general. Whenever the facilitating agencies formed SHGs, the focus was mainly on thrift and credit. The natural resource management related agenda and role of SHGs in that process was not well articulated.

In limited number of cases, the SHGs could tackle natural resource management related aspects (such as production problems, credit support to livestock, etc.) through thrift and credit. Empowerment of women remained elusive when thrift and credit dominated the SHGs.

2.3. Implications of the Gaps

SHGs were largely busy with thrift and credit related activities. Though these groups gave an institutional space for women to come together and express themselves, they were not every effective in the watershed committees in general. SHGs in watershed development projects were stereo typed – only women, limited to thrift and credit.

3. Influencing Factors

Formation of SHGs	
Enabling Factors	**Disabling Factors**
✰ The process of forming SHGs and their role in watershed projects is positively influenced by the following enabling factors.	✰ The process of forming SHGs and their role in watershed development projects is negatively influenced by the following disabling factors.
✰ Previous experience of the facilitating agencies in forming SHGs	✰ Low level of capacities of the facilitating agencies to form SHGs
✰ Facilitating agencies believed that SHG is an important institutional space for women.	✰ Main mandate and human resource profile of the facilitating agency (male dominated and technology oriented)
✰ Facilitating agencies believed that empowerment of women goes beyond SHGs. They created collaborative and separate institutional spaces for women and men.	✰ Facilitating agencies did not have a clear picture of SHG's role in watershed development projects (beyond thrift and credit).
✰ Influence of donors	

4. Recommendations

✰ Create appropriate functional roles for SHGs in watershed context.

✰ Since several projects/ programs are already concentrating on creation of SHGs, it is better to develop convergence between such projects and watershed development projects, rather than expecting WDT/ PIAs to create SHGs. This convergence would go a long way in giving focused attention to SHGs and helps in maximizing the existing capacities of the facilitating agencies.

✰ The existing experiences on the role of SHGs in watershed context should be converted into capacity building modules, for the benefit of facilitating agencies.

✰ DRDA/ Project Authorities should ensure that focus on resource poor families is retained in the project by creating SHGs of poor. At the same time, DRDA/ Project Authorities also have to ensure that convergence of projects takes place with watershed development projects with a clear division of responsibilities between facilitating agencies and other projects (that aim at creating strong SHGs).

D. Formation of Watershed Committee

1. Designed and Desirable Processes

All the members of the community, who are directly or indirectly dependent upon the watershed area, will be organised into a Watershed Association, after forming of UG and SHG. The WC may consist of 10 – 12 members who will be nominated by the WA from amongst UG (4-5), SHG (3-4), Gram Panchayat (2-3), and a member of the WDT. Each Watershed Development Project shall have a Watershed Secretary, a full – time paid employee of the WA (1994 MoRD Chapter III, Para 36 - 38, WARASA MOA Chapter IV, Para 60 - 65).

2. Gap Analysis

2.1. Classification of Processes

Formation of Watershed Committee	
Most Common Processes	**Rare Processes**
☆ Meetings of Watershed Association/ Grama Sabha to form watershed committees (Desirable)	☆ Existing village level institutions (Village Development Council) was given the responsibility of Watershed Program (Desirable)
☆ Representation of user groups and SHGs is notional in watershed committees.	☆ PIA acts as Watershed Committee (Not Desirable)
☆ Formation of watershed committee is largely an internal process, though there are some limitations with this process (Desirable)	☆ Communities do not know that there is a project account (Not Desirable)
☆ Watershed Committees were formed within one or two meetings (Not Desirable)	☆ User groups/ SHGs nominated their representatives for watershed committee (Desirable)
☆ Bank A/c was opened for project funds (Desirable)	☆ Joint Exercise by the Villagers and PIA for selecting the Watershed Chairman (Desirable)
☆ Watershed committees were not formed out of representation of primary stake holders groups	☆ Five to six meetings are organized to form watershed committee (Desirable)
	☆ Each hamlet nominated their representative to the watershed committee (Desirable)

2.2. Critical Concerns

The building block approach was not followed. In fact several groups were formed after forming the watershed committee. The primary groups such as user groups and self help groups were formed, as the project progressed. So their representatives could not become part of the apex body – watershed committee.

This arrangement also suited the facilitating agencies, which exploited the "leadership-dominated" institutions. The efforts on forming user groups and SHGs were minimal as they were seen as only instruments for completing the works. The watershed committees also executed works in several cases, without involving the local user groups (however notional they may be). There is no transparency in the context of bank accounts of the project. The watershed committees and facilitating agencies connived in fund management.

2.3. Implications of the Gaps

The members of watershed committee did not represent any particular production interest/ natural resource management related issues. They were randomly picked up in Grama Sabhas. This process gave ample scope for the traditional leadership to find space in the watershed committees. Since part of the leadership was already with the Grama Panchayati, remaining "unemployed" leaders found themselves as watershed committee leaders. The Grama Sabha gave an opportunity for such vested interests to become part of watershed committees. Communities remained ignorant about the project and its finances.

Best practices on watershed committee formation (bottom up approaches) did not get adequate attention and popularity. Over a period of time, formation of watershed committee directly in a Grama Sabha (without forming SHGs and UGs) became the norm.

3. Influencing Factors

Formation of Watershed Committee	
Enabling Factors	**Disabling Factors**
☆ Facilitating agency believed in institutional approach for development processes.	☆ Focus on works, not on institutions.
☆ The project authorities/ donors gave adequate time and financial support to form primary groups, before the execution of watershed works.	☆ Beliefs and values systems of project authorities and facilitating agencies
☆ Several support systems (volunteers, local level workers of the organization, mainly women; series of orientation programs at the village level) were evolved to create building blocks and strengthen institutional base of the village.	☆ Availability of inadequate time for the project facilitating agencies to follow building blocks approach.

☆ Phasing of project activities were followed informally	☆ Absence of capacity building support to form institutions
☆ Facilitating agencies focused on hamlet based, theme based and multi layer-based institutional forms. They also worked with existing institutions.	☆ Absence of monitoring systems that are fine tuned to the processes of the project
	☆ Lack of understanding of the project authorities on the basic messages of watershed guidelines
	☆ Funding of project is not fine tuned with the project phases and activities. Fund releases are not fine tuned with the institutional processes of the project.

4. Recommendations

☆ Primary institutions should be formed first followed by apex institutions. DRDA/ Project Authorities should ensure that the committee formation is stalled till the primary institutions are formed and functional.

☆ DRDA/ Project Authorities should have appropriate monitoring systems to ensure that phase specific activities are taken up as per the desired sequence.

☆ Capacity building of the facilitators and DRDA/ Project Authorities on the project phasing is an important requirement.

☆ The funding of the project should be in tune with the proposed activities (such as formation of SHGs and UG) at the watershed level.

☆ There is a time lag between the project commencement data (at Delhi and State Head Quarter) and the actual date of project commencement at the village level. This leads to considerable pressure at the village level to "spend" money. As a result of this, the project activities are "front-ended" instead of establishing primary watershed institutions, such as user groups and SHGs.

☆ Develop systems for transparency in the funding arrangements and develop the capacities of the local institutions on financial systems of the project.

E. Formation of Watershed Association

Designed and Desirable Processes

Watershed Association is a general body of the watershed institutions. All members of the UGs and SHGs, other dependent members of the watershed are become part this institution. When the watershed area is co-terminus with the area of the Grama Panchayati, the Grama Sabha itself is called the watershed association. Members of UG and SHGs are nominated to watershed

committee by the watershed association. The main function of watershed association is to approve action plans and accounts of the project. The watershed association is registered as a society. This will have a bank account, which is handled by watershed committee.

Gaps, Concerns and Needs

Watershed Association is a nebulous institution. If the watershed area is coterminous with the Grama Panchayati area, the Grama Sabha is also considered as watershed association. The formation of watershed association is not a clearly defined process and many communities did not recognize this institution. Wherever they were formed, it was only a formality.

The relevance and functions of watershed association/ Grama Sabha depend on the strength of the over all democratic systems at the local level. In limited number of cases (in the case of INGO NGO projects), the facilitating agencies made considerable attempts to strengthen Grama Sabha in the context of watershed development projects.

Alternative arrangements were promoted to ensure that a common citizen in the village gets an opportunity to take part in the decision making process. These projects also ensured that women and resource poor families took part in these meetings. The Grama Sabha functioned as a "collaborative space" for men and women in decision making processes in the context of watershed development project.

Apart from such sporadic examples, the watershed projects and its facilitators did not make any attempt to strengthen this democratic institution (in general). No other institution/ department tried to strengthen the Grama Sabha or Grama Panchayati. As a result, the role of Grama Sabha and watershed association remained weak and nebulous.

Options

Strengthening of PRIs: The democratic institutions at the village level need to be strengthened as a prerequisite of any participatory project. However, no one takes the responsibility of ensuring such vibrant representative institutions (Grama Panchayati and Grama Sabha). The efforts by concerned departments (PRI Department) and legislature need to be in the true spirit of decentralization and empowerment of Panchayati Raj Institutions.

Formalization of Membership- Based Institutions: As part of the institution development (formation of primary groups – user groups and SHGs), "membership drive" needs to be organized. Based on the formal membership, the watershed association could be formed. This association of dependent communities could be actively engaged in decision making and governance of natural resources. The concerned Grama Panchayati has to be part of this process.

Delineate Executive and Governance Functions: It is important to delineate executive functions with governance functions, in the context of watershed development projects. The executive functions might include activities such as planning, executing works, managing funds and records of the projects. The governance functions might include functions such as regulation

of resource use, conferring entitlements, conflict resolutions, setting standards and priorities of allocation.

It would be ideal if all governance related functions are taken up by the Grama Panchayati/ Grama Sabha/ Watershed Association, while the executive functions are allocated to watershed committee, user groups, SHGs and other institutions. This division of functions and responsibilities should be part of policy framework of watershed development projects as well as the operational norms of the project. In the absence of such clear policy framework, it is unfair to expect that the facilitating agencies and Grama Sabha would establish such governance norms at the local level. The watershed association requires similar policy support, to establish itself as an institution of governance.

Participatory Planning

Introduction

This chapter examines the process related issues of action planning for watershed development projects.

The main purpose of all activities in this phase is to:

·   Develop action plans for conserving, developing and utilizing watershed resources in a participatory manner.

·   Develop common understanding and consensus on the contents of action plans among different institutions at watershed level.

For achieving the above objectives, the facilitating teams were expected to undertake/ facilitate the following key activities:

A. Identification of Poor

B. Delineation of watershed area

C. Conduct problem analysis (General and Specific to women and resource poor)

D. Decisions on Interventions and Site Selection - Role of Local Volunteers

E. Identification of ITK

F. Preparation of Group/ Individual level action plans

G. Discussions on non-negotiables (Contribution, etc.)

H. Preparation of designs and estimates

I. Consolidation of Action Plans

Designed and Desirable Processes during Action Planning Phase

Development without planning sounds like a vehicle without wheels. The term development itself envelops the process of participatory planning in which local communities come together to discuss issues & concerns and evolve appropriate options for addressing them. Contribution by local communities, internal decision making and collective thinking are some of the key features of the participatory planning. External agents function like a facilitator in the process and help them to arrive at appropriate choices. Planning process is envisaged to be an elaborate exercise extending to several days and weeks with several key steps. Watershed development

team spends considerable time with the communities and conducts situation analysis and basic surveys. Several participatory tools and methods were employed for this purpose such as Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), focused group discussions, problem analysis, etc.

The main emphasis is to interact with rural communities and understand their situation, relationship between their life and watershed resources. Information generation/ collection is only one of the purposes of such interactive process. The main purpose is to involve communities, particularly resource poor families and women/ dalits in the process of planning. During this process, the communities get together and understand the potential of the project and devise their own role in the entire project. The institutions such as user groups, SHG, watershed committees, Grama Panchayati also define their role during this process. Thus the watershed development planning is also seen as institution strengthening process.

Similarly, planning is also an opportunity to integrate several key concerns such as gender, equity, transparency, sustainable resource use and so on. The external teams have to facilitate negotiations between the groups/ individuals to arrive at commonly agreed norms and priorities. Sequencing of activities, contribution from users, responsibility sharing among different institutions are some of these norms are to be discussed and decided during the planning process.

The external facilitating teams (WDT/ PIA/ Project Authorities) have to support this process and ensure that choices and action plans emerge from the people who are actually facing the production related problems in the context of watershed program. The facilitating teams are expected to use several participatory tools/ methodologies that enable the people to identify, prioritise and analyse their problems and opportunities comprehensively.

One watershed is further subdivided into sub watersheds and action plan would be prepared with the concerned user groups. Action plans would be prepared to address conservation, development, management and production problems of watershed resources. The action plans prepared at individual as well as group level would be consolidated at watershed level. The Grama Sabha/watershed association is expected to approve all these action plans and prioritize them. During this process, the Grama Sabha and Grama Panchayati would formally commit themselves towards the non-negotiables of watershed project such as genuine contribution from user groups, regulated use of watershed resources, preferential allocations of watershed benefits (particularly from CPRs) to resource poor families/ women groups, etc.

The project views participatory planning as a flexible and evolutionary process to be inculcated in the community for better understanding of the resource management concepts. This process is also expected to strengthen the next steps of the project such as implementation, maintenance, etc. A participatory planning process establishes a sense of ownership among communities and boosts their confidence to exercise control over resources.

A. Identification of poor

1. Desirable and Designed Processes

Identification of poor families is the first step towards achieving equity in watershed development projects. Though the guidelines are not explicit on this process, there are several implicit directions on this aspect. The main purpose of this step is to categorize the community into different sections (depending on their level of vulnerability and poverty) and design the projects in such a way that the poor families get benefit of this project. This an occasion in which the planning process is made proactively and positively biased towards the resource poor families. Developing institutions of poor, removing hurdles in their growth path and creating learning opportunities for them were some of the important next steps on this process.

2. Gap Analysis

2.1. Classification of Processes

Identification of poor	
Most Common Processes	**Rare Processes**
☆ Initial data was collected through interviews with village leaders followed by household survey and PRA (Desirable)	☆ Camp in the village by PIA staff for conducting bench mark surveys (Desirable)
☆ List of poor families was not generated (Not Desirable)	☆ Watershed committees providing list of poor in the village (Desirable)
☆ Social mapping/well being ranking for identifying poor (Desirable)	☆ Hiring resource persons for conducting bench marking surveys (Desirable)
	☆ Previous knowledge of the village helped the PIA to understand the poverty situation in the village (Desirable)

2.2. Critical Concerns

This step is not followed in several watersheds. The opportunity for equity based action planning is lost in these watersheds.

Though several methods are used for conducting survey, the utility of such exercise is not clear. The community remained passive in most of the cases as the tools used are relatively non-participatory. The role of village leadership is significant in this process. In majority of the cases, the facilitating agencies could not follow up the findings of this exercise. As a result, this process remained as an isolated exercise.

2.3. Implications of the Gaps

✫ Exclusion of poor from the project institutions, activities and benefits

✫ Watershed projects got an image that they are against the poor.

✫ When the facilitating agencies made sincere efforts, the poor families could access watershed benefits such as Establishing land rights, ensuring proper functioning of Public Distribution Systems (to ensure food security), entitlements over forest produce, establishing institutions of poor families/ women, capacity building opportunities.

3. Influencing Factors

Identification of poor	
Enabling Factors	**Disabling Factors**
✫ The facilitating agencies are particularly sensitive to equity and gender mainstreaming processes and have good experience of working with poor.	✫ Implicit understanding of guidelines was ignored by the facilitating agencies
✫ Donors insisted on the on equity based approaches in the watershed projects	✫ Facilitating agencies did not have experiences and expertise of working with rural poor
✫ Policy framework clearly mentioned about the need for targeting poor.	✫ Social mapping and other participatory exercises were largely completed like a formality. The facilitating teams could not crystallize the action points from such exercises.
✫ Clear budgetary support in the project towards the activities that enhance equity in watershed projects	✫ Project authorities/ donors did not insist on the need for equitable approaches in watershed development projects

4. Recommendations

✫ There should be explicit focus on poor families in watersheds. The facilitating agencies should be oriented and sensitized on the opportunities that exist for poor in watershed development projects. They should also be equipped to facilitate such processes at field level.

✫ Several of the equity related issues go beyond the watershed development interventions (E.g.: conferring rights over CPRs, issuing land rights, additional budgets). Convergence with other concerned departments should be forged for facilitating such inputs. DRDA/ Project Authorities should take a proactive role in such occasions.

✫ The action plan could have a clear budget allocation towards the activities that benefit poor families, in the village. DRDA/ Project Authorities should ensure that such processes are followed and equity based action plans are prepared.

B .Delineation of Watershed Area

1. Designed and Desirable Processes

Delineation of watershed area is a participatory exercise in which the facilitating agency takes up a detailed survey of the watershed area through methods like transact walk and topographical surveys. The drainage lines and ridge lines need to be identified along with public and private lands. Appropriate maps of the watershed area need to be prepared by watershed development teams.

2. Gap Analysis

2.1. Classification of Processes

Delineation of watershed area had a wide variety of processes. Some of them were very participatory in which villagers also participated and others were very non-participatory in which the delineation was only on the map and PIA alone completed this task. The details of this process are mentioned below.

Delineation of Watershed Area	
Most Common Processes	**Rare Processes**
☆ Watersheds were delineated by conducting transect walk, PRA and other relevant maps by PIA and villagers (Desirable)	☆ Remote sensing data/ maps were provided to PIAs (Desirable)
☆ Initial usage of toposheet and later confirmation by the community (Desirable)	☆ Services of technical support organizations were hired (OK)
☆ Delineated maps were painted/ displayed on wall/ board in the village (Desirable)	☆ Availability of watershed maps with watershed committees (Desirable)
	☆ Watershed area and village area were merged to suit to the needs of the village (Desirable)
	☆ Entire village was adopted for watershed development. Watershed area was not delineated (OK)

2.2. Critical Concerns

The technical aspects of watershed area delineation are not followed in action planning and technical designs. Technical delineation of watersheds covered only part of the villages.

2.3. *Implications of the Gaps*

The technical aspects of the watershed area concept need to be married with social aspects of the village. The village boundary and watershed boundary did not match in majority of the cases. When a part of the village was selected (after delineating the watershed area) the entire village is considered to be "treated". This created a database in which even partially treated villages were reported to be completely treated. The available budgets were thinly spread over the entire village area. Though this practice is widely seen, this is not officially reported. The villages tend to get inadequate funds.

The treatment options/ activities were sprinkled all over the village. Though, technically watershed area is about 500 ha, in reality entire village was "treated". In fact, the concept of "saturating on area" did not get real experience.

Maps were present only with PIAs/ Zilla Parishad office and not in the watershed village. Like village resolution, the watershed delineation was also seen as one of the formalities and administrative requirements to be completed. The real utility of watershed map in planning and treatment is not known to the communities (Except visualizing the location of activities). The delineation and preparation of maps are one time events. Their further use is not clearly established.

3. Influencing Factors

Delineation of Watershed Area	
Enabling Factors	**Disabling Factors**
☆ Entire village was considered as watershed.	☆ The technical designs (regarding watershed area, run off and technical parameters) did not consider the watershed related technical parameters. The standard "set-designs" were adopted irrespective of the watershed location/ size. As a result, the real application of watershed concept (ridge to valley, treating watershed to saturation) was not seen anywhere.
☆ Sensitive technical support organizations provided useful inputs making technology application relevant to the village situations.	☆ Technology application in watershed context seen largely as "one-size-fits-all" approach, rather than facilitating site specific designs. Recognizing that typical watershed boundaries are not being followed is an important first step in this direction.

4. Recommendations

☆ Recognize village or hamlet as a unit for watershed development project. The budget provision should be for developing the entire area of the village. The treatment options should be based on watershed approaches of the technical considerations of selected sub watersheds within the given village.

☆ Technology application should be appropriate to the local situation. The capacities of WDT should be augmented to ensure that technical interventions are appropriate to the local needs.

C. Conducting Problem Analysis – General and Specific to Women and Resource Poor

1. Designed and Desirable Processes

Problem analysis is a joint exercise of the communities and facilitating teams. Several participatory tools are to be used and situation of natural resources and dependent families need to be carefully analyzed. Particular attempts are to be made to identify problems of resource poor families and women. This step is expected to provide inputs to the action plans of poor.

2. Gap Analysis

2.1. Classification of the Processes

Conducting Problem Analysis – General and Specific to Women and Resource Poor	
Most Common Processes	**Rare Processes**
☆ Problems were generally identified in the village meeting with the facilitation of PIA/ WDT (Desirable)	☆ Amin (Revenue Officer) participated in village level problem analysis (Desirable)
☆ Problem analysis was by field survey, transect walk, discussions with individuals etc. (Desirable)	☆ Hamlet wise problem analysis was conducted (Desirable)
☆ Problem analysis largely ignored problems of women and weaker sections (Not Desirable)	☆ Issues related to landlessness were discussed during problem analysis (Desirable)
	☆ Village/ hamlet level camps were organized by the PIA to conduct problem analysis (Desirable)
	☆ Watershed functionaries played specific roles and contributed to problem analysis (Desirable)

2.2. Critical Concerns

Problem analysis is an occasion for community and facilitating teams to understand the situation of resource poor families, natural resources and production systems in the village. This is an empowering process in which decisions are collectively taken, priorities are set and basic outline of the project is conceptualized. When problem analysis is not conducted, there is no space or opportunity for the rural poor to exercise their choice in terms of watershed planning options. This results in external agents (facilitating teams/ project authorities) in introducing their whims and fancies into the watershed development plan. This process is observed in majority of the watershed projects, in case of GoI funded projects.

Process of enquiry (related to problems of women and weaker sections) is fairly limited to pre-determined themes such as thrift and credit. This reflects the limited orientation and capacity of the facilitating teams. The good experiences of problem analysis were not recognized and supported. These experiences did not become part of capacity building strategies or administrative norms.

2.3. Implications of the Gaps

The watershed development plans did not necessarily target women and resource poor families. Poor and women were excluded in watershed action plans. Imbalanced action plans - Action plans were dominated by one or two components (water resources and land development) and other components (E.g.: Livestock) were grossly neglected.

3. Influencing Factors

Conducting Problem Analysis – General and Specific to Women and Resource Poor	
Enabling Factors	**Disabling Factors**
☆ Concern of the facilitating agencies towards equity, gender issues	☆ Inability of the facilitating agencies to interpret the provisions and options in watershed guidelines. Facilitating agencies did make limited efforts to understand the problems of women and weaker sections.
☆ Experiences of the facilitating agencies to work with poor	☆ Project authorities/ donors did not insist on the need for conducting problem analysis with poor and women.
☆ Influence of donors on equity and gender issues.	
☆ Clear budget provisions for addressing the needs of poor in the project	

4. Recommendations

✮ Process of conducting problem analysis should be defined and the facilitating teams should be oriented. The skills of the facilitating teams should be enhanced on philosophy and different methodologies of problem analysis. The capacity building process on these aspects should have strong focus on equity and gender issues.

✮ Project policy should have an explicit budget provision for addressing the needs of poor and women. The DRDA/ Project Authorities should monitor the adherence of such processes.

D. Decisions on Interventions/ Site Selection and Role of Volunteers in Watershed Planning

1. Designed and Desirable Processes

After problem analysis, WDT members along with the farmers/users will conduct surveys to document the details like survey numbers, name of the owner, exact nature and extent of problem/opportunity and indigenous technical innovations, farmers/users concerns and constraints, suggestion of farmers/users on technical solution, etc. Field survey, field visits and PRA are the tools used for this purpose. Role of local volunteers and other institutions is important at this stage. Decisions like type of interventions, site selection, etc. are to be taken during this stage.

Village level watershed volunteers are expected to support WDT locally in action planning process. PIA provides necessary capacity building inputs to these volunteers to perform their roles. The involvement of volunteers in watershed planning and beyond is discussed here.

2. Gap Analysis

2.1. Classification of Processes

Decisions on Interventions/ Site Selection and Role of Volunteers in Watershed	
Most Common Processes	**Rare Processes**
✮ PIA's/ WDT's role is significant and critical in deciding interventions and in site selection.	✮ Volunteers performed key roles in planning (Desirable)
✮ This critical role was performed in both authoritarian manner (largely GO PIAs) (Not Desirable) and in a facilitating mode (largely NGO PIAs) (Desirable)	✮ Users and watershed committees decided sites as part of watershed plans (Desirable)
✮ Volunteers joined the project only during the execution of the project (OK)	✮ Youth took part "voluntarily" during planning process (Desirable)

2.2. Critical Concerns

Choice of intervention is an outcome of informed discussions and awareness on possible options among the communities. The facilitating agency has to conduct series of exposure visits and capacity building events to user groups and support them to take collective decisions. This role is grossly misunderstood by the facilitating agencies. In stead of supporting the communities to take decisions, they themselves took decisions in majority of the cases. They also did not identify local volunteers from the very beginning. So the local institutional support is almost absent during planning phase. The communities obviously depended on the facilitating agency.

Wherever the local institutional processes were facilitated (in the form of user groups and volunteers) and capacity building support was provided, the choice of interventions and site location was largely handled by the local volunteers, user groups and watershed committee. However, such experiences are limited. They are also not replicated in other parts of the state/ district.

2.3. Implications of the Gaps

· Dependency of the institutions on the facilitating agency for every step of the project

· Weak institutional base

· Low levels of transparency in project decisions and actions

3. Influencing Factors

Decisions on Interventions/ Site Selection and Role of Volunteers in Watershed	
Enabling Factors	**Disabling Factors**
☆ Facilitating agencies believed in the role of local institutions in decision making. They systematically established the local institutions including volunteers and nurtured them to perform their roles (mainly decisions making).	☆ The focus on works dominated institutions.
☆ Plans (site location, choice of activities) had clear bearing on the exercises conducted previously.	☆ The control is with facilitating agencies. Decisions are largely taken by the facilitating agencies and project authorities.
☆ Project budgets provided for honorarium of local volunteers and capacity building of the volunteers/ institutions.	☆ Project authorities did not insist on the role of local institutions/ volunteers.
	☆ Even when volunteers were selected, their job was mainly to supervise the activities. They did not participate in decision making process.

4. Recommendations

✰ Local volunteers should be selected and trained for planning exercise. DRDA/ Project Authorities should make sure that local level functionaries are identified and trained on technical aspects of the project.

✰ Capacity building funds for such purposes should be released in time. Availability of appropriate capacity building modules available on all project components for different target groups should be ensured.

E. Identification of Indigenous Technical Knowledge

1. Designed and Desirable Processes

Use of Indigenous Technical Knowledge (ITK) for planning was expected to strengthen community's confidence and develop higher levels of sustainability of the interventions. Problems related to natural resources could be addressed by applying ITK and related practices. The watershed project (mainly budgets and human resources support) could be deployed to strengthen and improve the indigenous knowledge and practices. Planning process is expected to explore these options and integrate them into the watershed action planning process. This section of the chapter gives the details of ITK and its application in action plans of watershed projects.

2. Gap Analysis

2.1. Classification of Processes

Identification of Indigenous Technical Knowledge	
Most Common Processes	**Rare Processes**
✰ No efforts were made to identify ITK (Not Desirable)	✰ PIA knew the local practices and promoted them during the planning process (Desirable)
	✰ Tools for exploring ITK - PRA exercise with the community in village level meeting and separate meetings with older persons, field visits to the sites and conducting of impact analysis (Desirable)

2.2. Critical Concerns

Local technical knowledge is generated out of experience of local communities. The knowledge could be on technology and/or a practice. When action plans are based on such knowledge, the sustainability of such interventions is likely to be higher. The local communities would be

able to manage it more easily. Considering this, the watershed development projects gave a clear emphasis on the importance of ITK. However, the facilitating teams were either ignorant about the local knowledge or not capable of exploring them. They do not have adequate tools and capacities to explore the local practices. In several cases, they do not even know that watershed guidelines have a clear emphasis on ITK.

2.3. *Implications of the Gaps*

Action plans were not built on the local knowledge. Exogenous technologies dominated the action plans. The maintenance and management of new technical options has its own limitations, when compared to the local practices/ stabilized technical options.

3. Influencing Factors

Identification of Indigenous Technical Knowledge	
Enabling Factors	**Disabling Factors**
☆ The previous relationship with the villagers and the facilitating agency	☆ Planning process/ directions of the project authority which gave a set of limited options for the community
☆ Sensitivity of the facilitating agencies on the local knowledge base and systems	☆ As a result of this ignorance and weak capacities, the local technical knowledge received little attention in the watershed development plans.
☆ Involvement of local volunteers	

4. Recommendations

☆ Sensitize the DRDA/ Project Authorities and facilitating teams on the potential of ITK in natural resource management.

☆ Build the capacities of facilitating teams on the methods of exploring, identifying and understanding ITK.

☆ Develop local level inventories of technical knowledge and practices on agriculture, water management, livestock management, etc.

☆ Collaborate with regional/ state/ national level technology based resource organizations to engage with ITK in the watershed context.

F. Preparation of Group/ Individual level Action Plans

1. Designed and Desirable Processes

After completing the field level surveys and interactions, the WDT has to facilitate the evolution of action plans at individual and/or group level. Several minute details need to be worked out at this stage to evolve the final action plan.

2. Gap Analysis

2.1. Classification of Processes

Preparation of Group/ Individual level Action Plans	
Most Common Processes	**Rare Processes**
☆ More than one type of process was operational in a single watershed (OK)	☆ Formats were developed for preparing action plans (OK).
☆ Low level of participation of the communities (Not Desirable)	☆ Available funds were kept in mind, while preparing action plans (Desirable).
☆ Action planning process showed high level of participation (Desirable)	☆ Applications from users were collected for preparing action plans (Desirable).
☆ Domination by leaders (Not Desirable)	☆ Hamlet wise action plans were prepared (Desirable)
	☆ Monthly action plans were prepared based on the fund availability and needs of the community (Desirable)

2.2. Critical Concerns

There was no standard and uniform approach that was followed for watershed action planning. 29 processes in 55 watersheds is a clear indicator of this issue. While diversity is an important strength, it is also important to ensure that there is some common ground across different watersheds. On the whole, watershed projects adopted participatory processes for planning in 50% of the projects.

The component wise and group wise action plans were prepared in limited number of cases. The interventions were predetermined and community's choice was largely limited to these predetermined activities. The priorities and biases of the facilitating agencies found easy space in the action plans. Demand driven approaches in action planning is observed in limited number of cases.

2.3. *Implications of the Gaps*

☆ Action plans remained ad-hoc.

☆ Priorities of the facilitating agencies/ DRDA/ Project Authorities dominated the action plans.

☆ Diversity of interventions is limited. One or two components dominated the action plans.

3. Influencing Factors

Preparation of Group/ Individual level Action Plans	
Enabling Factors	**Disabling Factors**
☆ User groups and hamlet wise discussions and action plans.	☆ Absence of user groups and volunteers.
☆ Previous discussions and problem analysis were linked to develop action plans at group level.	☆ Decision making on plans was largely by the facilitating agency/ DRDA/ Project Authorities.
☆ Identification of poor and deserving families helped to develop action plans for them.	☆ Weak capacities of the facilitating agencies to develop action plans

4. Recommendations

☆ Ensure that the interventions and contents of the action plans are determined by the local communities. The facilitating teams need to motivate the communities to make appropriate and informed choices. For ensuring this process, both the facilitating teams and community members need to be properly oriented on the potential of watershed development projects.

☆ DRDA/ Project Authority has to create enabling environment for facilitating open-ended planning processes that are in tune with the felt needs of the community. The planning process need to be continuous and flexible. The planning methodologies also should be in tune with this philosophy.

G. Discussion on Non Negotiables

1. Designed and Desirable Processes

Contribution from communities is an important non-negotiable of the project. During planning process, the PIA/ WDT have to inform about the need for contribution and facilitate an informed decision at the user group/ community level. Similarly, other components such as local level responsibility sharing by user groups in execution of action plans, no deductions from wages of the communities are some of the non-negotiables.

2. Gap Analysis

2.1. Classification of Processes

Discussion on Non Negotiables	
Most Common Processes	**Rare Processes**
☆ Previous experience of NGO PIAs established the culture of contribution in the watershed villages (Desirable)	☆ Discussions were limited to village leadership. (Not desirable).
☆ No discussion on contribution in 34% of watersheds (Not desirable).	☆ Previous practices/ culture of contribution continued to the watershed development project also (Desirable).
☆ Cursory discussion on contribution in 24% of watersheds (Not desirable)	
☆ Detailed discussion on contribution in 43% of watersheds (Desirable).	

2.2. Critical Concerns

Contribution is an important instrument for making the project demand-driven and truly need based. The contribution by community also empowers them to demand better quality works and services from the facilitating agency. However, initially this point is not generally accepted by the community. The facilitating agency has to make serious and genuine attempts to motivate the community and convince the same towards making genuine contribution. This is a very complicated process and strongly linked to the planning process. When the planning process is open-ended and participatory; choice of interventions was made by the user groups, they would be willing to contribute to such activities. Thus, the contribution is a real indicator of the levels of participation during planning.

In the sample watersheds, the efforts made by facilitating agencies on this issue seem to be distributed across three categories: low level of transparency; average level of transparency and high level of transparency. On the whole, the understanding of the communities on the issue of contribution is minimal as the efforts made by facilitating agencies is also minimal, in about 58% of watersheds.

2.3. Implications of the Gaps

☆ When the facilitating agency did not communicate with the communities, the communities remained largely ignorant about the non-negotiables of the project, including contribution.

☆ Wages of the labourers were deducted. This exploitative system is deep rooted now. Labourers believed that this is the norm of the project.

3. Influencing Factors

Discussion on Non Negotiables	
Enabling Factors	**Disabling Factors**
☆ Belief in transparency of the project management	☆ Focus on works dominated the watershed projects.
☆ The facilitating agencies are clear about the non-negotiables	☆ Facilitating agencies did not give adequate importance to the non-negotiable features such as contribution. So they never made any attempt to communicate these issues with the communities.
☆ Communication campaigns at village/ hamlet level	
☆ Support for organizing the communication campaigns	

4. Recommendations

☆ The contribution from user groups as a non-negotiable is to be strongly supported by the DRDA/ Project Authorities. Unless the communities agree for this minimum and genuine contribution (during the initial stages itself); the project should not be sanctioned to such village.

☆ The form and quantum of contribution should be according to the convenience and affordability of the communities. There is no need for having standard norm across all villages and all communities. The norms of contribution should not exploit the wage seekers and give an additional advantage to the resource rich families.

☆ DRDA/ Project Authorities should build the capacities of the facilitating agencies to ensure such participatory decision making takes place on the issues related to contribution. The facilitating agencies and DRDA/ Project Authorities should believe that the genuine contribution from users is an empowering process. In the background of heavily subsidized projects, convincing communities on this issue is a tough task. DRDA/ Project Authorities should ensure that no short cuts are invented by facilitating agencies to "complete the project activities".

☆ Communication campaigns should have a clear focus and message on the need for genuine contribution of the communities.

H. Preparation of designs and estimates

1. Designed and Desirable Processes

Preparation of designs and estimates is the final step in giving a concrete shape to the project plan. The role of WDT is to provide technical support to the communities/ user groups. The watershed committee is expected to play critical inputs in this process, along with volunteers.

2. Gap Analysis

2.1. Classification of Processes

Preparation of designs and estimates	
Most Common Processes	**Rare Processes**
☆ PIA and WDT played a major role in designs and estimates (Not Desirable)	☆ Use of local expertise for design and estimates (volunteers/ masons) (Desirable)
☆ There are several processes of preparing estimates (Desirable)	☆ Technical experts (sent by Donors) also participated in the estimate and design process (Desirable)
☆ Use of SSR for estimates (Desirable)	☆ Local rates were used (OK)
	☆ Community members consulted local mason to prepare estimates of the watershed works (Desirable)
	☆ A combination of local rates and SSR is used for estimates (Desirable)
	☆ Rates and estimates were presented in the Grama Sabha (Desirable)

2.2. Critical Concerns

Though there is a strong role for WDT in designs and estimates, it is not compulsory that all designs and estimates are prepared by WDT only. It is important and desirable that technical skills (related to designs and estimates) are shared with local communities/ functionaries and they start taking up some responsibilities on the designs and estimates of the project. This engagement of local volunteers/ functionaries is an important requirement for empowering the communities on watershed technology. However, in the sample watersheds, it is observed that the involvement of local volunteers/ functionaries in preparation of action plans is minimal.

Absence of a strong technical back up system is a major limitation of the projects. The available technical staff at DRDA and line departments is largely engaged in administrative/ monitoring functions rather than providing technical support to the facilitating agencies.

In limited number of INGO NGO projects, additional technical support was provided to the designing and estimation process of watershed plans. This proved to be a useful support system, when compared to the support available from line departments, in mainstream projects. In fact, several facilitating agencies found that the support from the line departments is not in tune with the requirements of watershed development projects.

2.3. Implications of the Gaps

☆ Watershed development plans are dominated by the interest of facilitating agencies and DRDA/ Project Authorities.

☆ Community largely remained ignorant about the project plans and its contents. It is not a desirable practice in a participatory project.

3. Influencing Factors

Preparation of designs and estimates	
Enabling Factors	**Disabling Factors**
☆ Trained volunteers at the village level.	☆ Facilitating agency itself decided the interventions and dominated the action planning process.
☆ Plans were prepared as per hamlets/ groups. They were also able to contribute to the process of the designs, choice of sites and to some extent cost estimates.	
☆ Component wise action plans were prepared, which could be consolidated by the watershed committee itself.	
☆ Support of a technical support organization	

4. Recommendations

☆ There should be transparency in design and estimation processes. PIA/ WDT have to adopt a more consultative process for preparing the estimates/ designs.

☆ The village level functionaries should be identified and oriented before the planning process is initiated. The orientation of the village level functionaries should cover technical aspects of the watershed development projects. These capacity building inputs would go a long way in creating transparency systems in short term and local knowledge systems in long run and appropriate support.

☆ DRDA/ Project Authorities should make sure that site specific designs are prepared which are in tune with the technical norms (instead of using standard stereo typed designs). DRDA/ Project Authorities could also facilitate the process of technical support provision to the facilitating agencies.

I. Consolidation of Action Plans

1. Designed and Desirable Processes

User group and SHG wise action plans are to be consolidated for each component by the watershed committees and WDTs. This consolidated action plan shared with the entire village/ Grama Sabha before submitting to the DRDA/ Project Authority.

2. Gap Analysis

2.1. Classification of Processes

Consolidation of Action Plans	
Most Common Processes	**Rare Processes**
☆ Watershed plans are not prepared at group/ individual farmer level (Not Desirable)	☆ Applications from user groups formed the basis for consolidating the action plans. This demand driven action plans are approved by watershed committees (Desirable)
☆ PIA alone consolidates the action plans without any involvement of local institutions (Not Desirable)	☆ Watershed committee/ association alone consolidate action plans without any external support from WDT/ PIA (Desirable)
☆ Watershed committee with PIA/ WDT consolidates action plans (Not Desirable)	☆ Technical support from external resource organization was provided to NGO PIAs for consolidating the action plans (OK)

2.2. Critical Concerns

The consolidation of action plans sets the agenda of prioritization and sequencing of the project interventions. This process has to be participatory and local institutions need to play a key role in this. It is also an occasion to reflect on the contents, composition, budget allocations and target groups of the action plans. Based on a clear review and reflections in the light of the objectives and core concerns of the project, action plans need to be modified or revisited. However, such processes are hardly facilitated in majority of watershed projects.

2.3. Implications of the Gaps

☆ The action plan is not in the public domain for discussions and improvements. It became property of the facilitating agencies.

☆ Contents of the action plans remained in fluid state till the activities are implemented. This gave ample scope for the DRDA/ Project Authorities and facilitating agencies to push their priorities into the action plans.

3. Influencing Factors

Consolidation of Action Plans	
Enabling Factors	**Disabling Factors**
☆ Local trained volunteers.	☆ Action plans are largely decided and consolidated by the facilitating agencies.
☆ Hamlet/ group wise action plans for each component	☆ Absence of local institutions including volunteers
☆ Support from Technical Support Organizations	☆ Low level of involvement of communities at the local level in action planning process
☆ Planning methods adopted by the facilitating agencies such as applications from user	

4. Recommendations

☆ The local communities and facilitating agencies should collectively look at the action plans and verify it for consistency with the objectives of the project. If the action plan is lopsided and not-equitable, it should be revised with appropriate methodology.

☆ Such review meetings during the consolidation phase could avert major disasters of the project in terms of the content, balanced-nature, budgets and targeting of the action plan. This process of review could also be a major learning experience for the community and facilitating agency in terms of ensuring the integration of core concerns of the projects.

DRDA/ Project Authorities should support such review and reflective exercises while approving the action plans.

Approval of Action Plans

Introduction

This chapter examines the processes related issues regarding the approval of action plans.

The main purpose of the key events during this stage is:

✫ To prioritize activities and arrive at collective decisions on the contents of action plan.

For achieving this, the WDT/PIA/ WC/WA have to engage in the following key events:

✫ Develop set of criteria and prioritization of activities in action plans

✫ Approval/ consent from the Grama Sabha/ Watershed association.

✫ Submission of action plans to PIA/ DRDA/ Donor

✫ Modification of action plans (if necessary)

Approval by Watershed Association

The Watershed Association is the ultimate body at the village level for the approval of the plans and passing resolutions whenever needed. No expenditure at village level should be incurred without this approval. These approved strategic action plans form the basis for fund release, reviews and monitoring.

Preparation of Annual Action Plans/ Revision of Action Plans

The strategic/ perspective plan defines the broad outline of watershed development program for the entire project period. This strategic plan would contain indicative plans for the entire area of the watershed and also for all the eligible components in order to achieve an integrated development. It is observed that the available funds are usually inadequate to meet the requirement of the entire watershed area. On the other hand, based on the experiences of the first year the user groups might want to reconsider their earlier plan. In such circumstances, the strategic plan should not come in the way of future demands of the user groups. In order to keep space for such future demands of user groups/Self Help Groups, there is a need for a detailed "Annual Action Plan".

A. Criteria and Process of Prioritization of Activities in Action Plans

1. Designed and Desirable Processes

Watershed communities (user groups, SHGs, watershed committee and association) have to decide the criteria and priorities for the works in watershed development projects. These criteria are the basis of approval of action plan at the watershed level.

2. Gap Analysis

2.1. Classification of Processes

Criteria and Process of Prioritization of Activities in Action Plans	
Most Common Processes	**Rare Processes**
☆ No criteria for prioritization and consolidation in 33% of projects (Not Desirable)	☆ Soil conservation activities, Ridge to valley and Crop production were given importance (Desirable)
☆ Water resource development for agriculture was used as the major (22%) criteria for prioritisation (Desirable)	☆ Capacity of people for construction and in which season what material can reach the site was followed (Desirable)
☆ Crop production, Ridge to valley, and Soil Conservation activities as criteria for prioritisation (Desirable)	☆ WDT decided the priority on the basis of emphasis given by the Higher officials and some influential persons of the community (Not Desirable)
☆ Reaching out to a specific target group was considered as criteria in 37% of projects (Problems related to women) (Desirable)	

2.2. Critical Concerns

The approval of action plans by watershed association and Grama Sabha need to be based on systematic and locally relevant criteria. The facilitating agency should facilitate the evolution of such criteria for making this process meaningful and transparent. Since the action plan would be shared in the Grama Sabha/ watershed association, all concerned members would get an opportunity to contribute to the decision making processes.

However, one could observe that such process of prioritization and formal approval did not take place in about 33% to 50% projects. In these watersheds, this process either did not take place at all or dominated by WDT and local institutions did not have any say in the process. In about 11% of projects, the criteria are related to largely to the project management and convenience of WDT. Criteria related to activities and targeting were also used in reasonable number of sample watersheds.

2.3. Implications of the Gaps

✫ Activity domination gave little space for issues like equity and gender.

✫ Low involvement of communities made the projects less transparent and amenable to interference by the external agencies including facilitating agencies/ DRDA/ Project Authorities.

3. Influencing Factors

Criteria and Process of Prioritization of Activities in Action Plans	
Enabling Factors	**Disabling Factors**
✫ Hamlet wise action plans	✫ Top Down approach of facilitating agencies in action plans.
✫ Focused approach by the facilitating agencies to reach out to poor and vulnerable groups	✫ Ad hoc approach of the facilitating agencies/ DRDA/ Project Authorities in project management gave little importance to decide on priorities of the action plans.
✫ Clear budget provisions for reaching out to poor	

4. Recommendations

✫ The process of evolving criteria for prioritization cannot just happen in one final meeting, in which the action plans are supposed to be approved. The facilitating agency should motivate the village leadership and institutions to think on issues related to prioritization, positive bias towards resource poor families, degraded resources and vulnerable communities. The instruments for reaching out to vulnerable groups should be designed during the planning process. When several such plans are consolidated and shared in the Grama Sabha/ watershed association meeting, the community is mentally ready to consider the issues related to equity, gender and transparency. They should decide on non-negotiable conditions for project.

✫ The DRDA/ Project Authorities should ensure that such systems are in place from the very beginning of the project. Early indicators of such preparation by facilitating agency should be developed. Based on health of such indicators the DRDA/ Project Authorities should assess the processes.

B. Approval/ Consent by Grama Sabha/ Watershed Association

1. Designed and Desirable Processes

The prioritized activities become part of the action plan. This action plan would be presented before the watershed association/ grama sabha, which will approve the watershed action

plans. In this approval process, concerned members of watershed based institutions and Grama Panchayati are expected to participate.

2. Gap Analysis

2.1. Classification of Processes

Approval/ Consent by Grama Sabha/ Watershed Association	
Most Common Processes	**Rare Processes**
☆ Consent from Grama Sabha/ Watershed Association was not taken in 36% of watersheds (Not Desirable).	☆ WC role in taking the consent from the Gram Sabha/GP (Desirable)
☆ Key role in taking the consent from the Gram Sabha/ GP was played by PIA (Not Desirable)	☆ Hamlet wise action plans were presented and approval was taken (Desirable)
	☆ When Sarpanch is the Chairperson of the watershed committee, formal consent was not taken. (Not Desirable).

2.2. Critical Concerns

No formal consent was taken from the Gram Sabha/ WA in 36% of total sample watersheds. In about 33% projects, the process is dominated by the facilitating agency. The formal approval of the watershed association is a necessary step for ensuring the involvement of Grama Panchayati/ Grama Sabha in the watershed management and governance. When this step is neglected, the opportunity for convergence with local institutions is lost. The marginalization of Grama Sabha/ watershed association has largely happened in case of GoI GO projects. The DRDA/ Project Authorities also did not really insist on this mandatory requirement.

The sensitivity towards the formal requirements such as village/ Grama Sabha/ watershed association approvals is fairly low in watershed projects. The project authorities also did not care for such mandatory requirements. As a result of such negligence of such non-negotiable steps, the watershed project acquired an impression that this project is neglecting the Grama Panchayati and Grama Sabha.

2.3. Implications of the Gaps

☆ The Grama Panchayati/ Grama Sabha and watershed project based institutions became parallel bodies.

☆ The existence of watershed based institutions was questioned in the name of strengthening PRIs.

☆ Conflict between PRI and watershed based institutions became conspicuous.

☆ NGOs working with watershed projects were branded as "anti PRI", while in reality, majority of the GoI GO projects completely neglected the Grama Panchayati in all aspects.

3. Influencing Factors

Approval/ Consent by Grama Sabha/ Watershed Association	
Enabling Factors	**Disabling Factors**
☆ Hamlet wise action plans are prepared, which were also approved at that level.	☆ Facilitating agencies and DRDA/ Project Authorities did not believe in working with Grama Panchayati/ Grama Sabha.
☆ Several institutions are formed at the village level. The regularity of the interactions between these institutions is an enabling factor.	☆ Weak Grama Panchayati at the local level
☆ Belief of facilitating agencies in the process of involving Grama Sabha/ Grama Panchayati for approval of action plans.	

4. Recommendations

☆ Define the roles of PRIs and Watershed based institutions.

☆ Differentiate the roles of governance and execution and allocate responsibilities to respective institutions.

C. Submission and Modification of Action Plans (If necessary)

1. Designed and Desirable Processes

Watershed action plans are to be submitted to DRDA/ Project Authorities, through PIAs. There are several steps in this process. Typically, the plans are first submitted by watershed committee to PIA. In the second step, PIA submits the action plans to DRDA/ Project Authorities. The DRDA/ Project Authorities send relevant details to state/central departments. Though these steps differ from project to project, the broad process should ideally remain the same. The awareness levels of this process at community level indicate their involvement and participation in the program.

Participatory development programs are dynamic in nature and there would be several occasions in which the action plans need to be changed. Such flexibility is necessary to incorporate the emerging needs of the communities. The processes related to changes in action plans are described here.

2. Gap Analysis

2.1. Classification of Processes

Submission and Modification of Action Plans (If necessary)	
Most Common Processes	**Rare Processes**
☆ WC in the first step and PIA in the second step submitted the plans for approval to project authority (Desirable).	☆ Village committee submitted the plan in the first step. (Desirable)
☆ Community is not aware of the processes at PIA level on the issue of submission of action plans. (Not Desirable)	☆ Village leaders submitted the plan in the first step (OK).
☆ Changes in action plans were made formally (43%) (Desirable).	☆ Annual plans are prepared based on experience and availability of budgets (Desirable).
☆ Plans were not changed in 36% of watersheds (Not Desirable).	☆ Action plans were changed to accommodate minimum wages, include left over families and new needs (Desirable).

2.2. Critical Concerns

The action plans are submitted to the donors in several steps by different actors (at each step). This is an administrative requirement of the projects. However knowledge of communities on these steps enhances their control over the process. It is observed that the administrative steps were largely followed by facilitating agency and communities have little role at this stage.

In any participatory development program, the changes in action plans are inevitable. As the experience grows, the communities would like to change the contents of the action plan. The project authorities need to be flexible to accommodate all such changes. In the sample watersheds, the action plans were revised and the system seems to be accommodative to the emerging needs. However, there are several reasons for these changes (administrative directions to genuine needs of the community).

There were also experiences in which the communities revised the action plans every year based on the availability of funds and emerging needs. Such yearly action plans were found to be more realistic.

2.3. Implications of the Gaps

☆ Action plans were influenced by the availability of the funds.

☆ The revisions of action plans are not always based on experiences, so the interest of communities is not as expected.

3. Influencing Factors

Submission and Modification of Action Plans (If necessary)	
Enabling Factors	**Disabling Factors**
☆ Facilitated reflection processes on the action plans at community level	
☆ Responsive donors/ DRDA/ Project Authorities.	
☆ Annual plans are prepared, which facilitated the revision of action plans.	

4. Recommendations

☆ Flexibility is the core value in watershed development action plans. The revision of action plans is an inevitable step. Several participatory processes to revise the action plans based on the experiences, needs, timeliness, availability of funds, and coverage of a particular category of population, etc. should be evolved.

☆ Ensure that these changes are formally carried out with the involvement of concerned users and approval of Grama Sabha/ watershed association. Process of revising the action plans without the knowledge of the communities, but at the insistence of the project authorities should be resisted.

☆ DRDA/ Project Authorities should release the entire requisitioned fund to the watershed committee. In case there are any difficulties in the fund flows, the action planning process will be unrealistic.

DRDA/ Project Authorities should ensure that at no point of time, project works are stopped "due to lack of funds". If this principle is followed, the revision of action plans would be administratively and financially supported.

Implementation

Introduction

Once the Action plan is approved by the concerned authorities and funds released, the implementation begins. The time frame for main implementation phase is 3.5 years. The main purpose of the set of activities under this key event is mentioned below.

✰ Create assets that conserve, develop and help the management of natural resources of watershed area

✰ Develop sense of ownership among the user groups and other institutions on the assets created

✰ Establish transparent processes for implementing the watershed development program.

For achieving the above objectives, the following activities should be carried out by PIA/ WDT and other watershed based institutions.

✰ Collection of contribution from users and Establishing Watershed Development Fund (WDF)

✰ Execution of Works

　　❋ Marking out the activities (transferring the plans onto the ground)

　　❋ Supervision of works

　　❋ Responsibility Sharing among the user group members

✰ Measurements of works

✰ Making payments and Maintenance of records/ finances

Designed and Desirable Processes

Implementation of works is the longest phase in the project. In this phase, the watershed plans are implemented by the user groups under the supervision of watershed committee and WDT. The priorities in action plans guide the implementation process. Before implementation, the user groups are expected to make demands for executing the works (as per the approved action plan). Detailed estimates are prepared by a trained local volunteer and WDT.

Based on these estimates, the respective user groups have to contribute their share in the form of cash, material or labour. The contribution is mandatory and the minimum percentage of

contributions is fixed for various categories. The contributions are deposited in a separate fund known as Watershed Development Fund (WDF). Collection of fees, charges, fines and voluntary donations are also encouraged. The contribution is considered an indicator of people's participation. The WDF account is jointly operated by the chairperson of WC and the president of WA. It is a non-operational account during the project period and can be used for maintenance of community works/common property resources only after completion of the project. The watershed committee and association are expected to develop appropriate norms for maintenance and use of WDF.

The volunteers/ secretary/ watershed committee members and WDT provide necessary technical guidance and supervise the implementation. They will also make measurements and maintain the records for works. Regular WC meetings and periodic WA/Gram Sabha meetings are emphasized in the guidelines to review physical and financial progress of the programme. Withdrawals and disbursement of money can be done as per locally decided norms and procedures. Displaying these details in public places and sending copies of statements of expenditure to Grama Panchayati will avoid misunderstandings and mistrust among the local institutions. Transparency in all the transactions of watershed programme is both cause and effect of people's participation. Based on such transparent processes and systems, the payments are made to the respective user groups.

I n this process, the preference is given to creation of wage opportunities to the local people, who are dependent on wages. The systems established during the initial phase are repeated for every type of work. The execution of each activity is the responsibility of the respective user group. The execution of works should not be taken over by the watershed committee members/ WDT/ PIA. Similarly the role of contractors and use of machinery in execution of works should be completely avoided. In this section the processes followed for executing the works are described and analyzed.

A. Formation of WDF and the Knowledge of Communities about WDF

1. Designed and Desirable Processes

Peoples' participation should be assured through voluntary donations/ contributions in terms of labour, kind and cash for the developmental activities as well as for the operation and maintenance of the assets created. The watershed development fund is to be created by depositing the contributions from the communities. This WDF will be used for maintenance of the assets created and WA/ WC are expected to develop appropriate norms for using this fund. The knowledge levels of communities related to this fund and related processes are described here.

(1994 MoRD, Chapter II Para 25 I, Chapter III Para 45, Chapter IV Para 84, 98; WARASA, MOA Chapter VI Para 157, Chapter V 79, 80 and 81)

2. Gap Analysis

2.1. Classification of Processes

Formation of WDF and the Knowledge of Communities about WDF	
Most Common Processes	**Rare Processes**
☆ Wage of labourers is deducted to create watershed development fund in 65% of watersheds (Not Desirable).	☆ The contribution in the form of material / machinery (Desirable)
☆ Users genuinely contributed in 33% of watersheds (Desirable).	☆ The contribution both by material and cash (Desirable)
☆ Contribution in the form of labour, followed by cash (Desirable)	☆ Watershed level functionaries (leaders of user group, chairman, volunteers) also collected contribution from user groups (Desirable)
☆ The contribution was mobilized by deducting the wages from the labourers and users. (Desirable)	☆ Contribution is deposited in the same account in which the grants (funds for watershed works) are deposited (Not Desirable)
☆ Secretary played a key role in collection of contributions (Desirable)	☆ Part of the WDF is deposited in PIAs' own account (Not Desirable)
☆ The Watershed Development Fund was created at watershed level (Desirable)	☆ Contribution was in kind/ labour (Desirable)
☆ Receipts are not issued to the contributors (Not Desirable)	☆ Wages of labourers from neighbouring villages are not deducted for contribution (Desirable)
☆ The community is aware of the existence and purpose of the WDF (Desirable)	☆ Contribution is deposited in two accounts. Part of the contribution was deposited in WDF account and remaining amount was deposited in "Village Development Fund (Gram Kosh)", which is created as a separate fund (Desirable)
	☆ There was no need to form watershed development fund, as per the guidelines of the project.
	☆ Receipts are issued to persons who contributed (Desirable)
	☆ WDT, WC, UG leader and volunteers played a key role and issued receipts (Desirable)

	✩ WC meetings documented the details of contribution and vouchers are prepared to that extent (Desirable)
	✩ Communities are aware of WDF on all aspects (existence, purpose and amount) (Desirable)
	✩ Contribution cards/ pass books are issued to record and document the contribution related details at family level (Desirable)
	✩ Muster rolls documented the contribution of communities, which is in the form of labour (Desirable)

2.2. Critical Concerns

Genuine contribution from the villagers/ users is an enabling and empowering process. Users who genuinely contribute would demand interventions as per the need and also ensure the quality. However, this is a tough task for the facilitating agencies to accomplish. In the sample watersheds, the genuine contribution from users is not mobilized. Instead, the wages were deducted from the wage seekers. Since the concept of contribution was not properly explained to the communities, the users were not prepared to contribute willingly. So the deductions from wages became a natural choice, which is against the principles of equity. This process is observed in 65% of watersheds. The process gap needs urgent attention.

The practice of opening a separate bank account for WDF is followed in large number of cases. There is also a practice of creating two separate bank accounts (WDF and Grama Kosh) for depositing the contribution. In limited number of cases, a separate bank account was not created to deposit contribution in the form of WDF.

2.3. Implications of the Gaps

It is clear that the project authorities and facilitators gave little attention to the non-negotiable feature of the project, i.e. "contribution". The main focus was on completing the activities and spending the funds. So all activities (such as mobilization of contribution) that take time are relegated, or neglected. As a result the primary institutional base of the project was marginalized. The user groups never got any opportunity to decisively participate in the watershed development project.

Interests of conservation, production and management of natural resources did not get converted into any institutional form (user group). As a result, the construction of works dominated the watershed agenda. The non-negotiable concept of contribution was grossly neglected. Wage seekers were exploited in the name of contribution for watershed development projects. When

the user groups made genuine contribution, the choice of activities, quality and decision making power of the users was of superior quality.

The village leadership/ project authorities/ facilitators occupied the major role in decision making. Leader dominated project processes got stabilized, instead of institution led development. Facilitating agencies/ DRDA/ Project Authorities dominated the choice of interventions and execution of works.

3. Influencing Factors

Formation of WDF and the Knowledge of Communities about WDF	
Enabling Factors	**Disabling Factors**
☆ The facilitating agency believed that the contribution from the users is an indicator of their participation.	☆ Absence of user groups
☆ "By contributing a nominal amount, the poor farming family becomes the partner of the projects, rather than a beneficiary of the project." This philosophy guided the facilitating agencies.	☆ Action plans were dominated by the facilitating agency/ DRDA/ Project Authorities.
☆ The communication campaigns helped to give a clear message on the importance of contribution by the communities. The facilitating agencies also followed this principle rigorously.	☆ Facilitating agencies did not believe or understand the concept of contribution in watershed development projects
☆ The support of donor in facilitating agencies taking a strong position with the communities on the need of contribution.	☆ DRDA/ Project Authorities did not insist on the genuine contribution. The formation of WDF was perceived as an administrative requirement.
☆ The choices of interventions in action plans were largely made by the user groups.	☆ The process of forming WDF was not the concern of DRDA/ Project Authorities or facilitating agencies.
	☆ Wage seekers were not organized or empowered. They could not resist the practice of wage deductions.

4. Recommendations

☆ The DRDA/ Project Authorities should give adequate time and support to the facilitating agencies to engage in elaborate discussions and negotiations with the community. In several occasions, the community would be very reluctant to contribute, as they are used to get "free-lunches" in all other projects. In such situations, the facilitating agencies need to be tough with the communities and stand firmly on the principle –"genuine contributions

from users is a non-negotiable". In such occasions, the DRDA/ Project Authorities should support the facilitating agency (morally and administratively).

✫ The DRDA/ Project Authorities should withdraw from those villages, where community is not willing to contribute genuinely, at any point of the project period. Such a provision strengthens the hands of the facilitating teams. Communities will also get to understand the importance of their share in development process.

✫ The contribution related financial transactions should be streamlined to develop higher level of transparency.

✫ The need for developing WDF from genuine contributions should be established in all types of projects/ PIAs.

B. Execution of Works

1. Designed and Desirable Processes

After initiating the process related to contribution the execution of works begins. The main activities at this stage are as follows:

✫ Marking out the activities (Transferring the plans on to the ground) at the selected sites.

✫ Supervision of activities

✫ Sharing of responsibilities among the user group members

It is expected that the local institutions and volunteer take up these activities with the guidance of the WDT. Watershed Committee is expected to provide necessary supervisory support to the execution. Decisions are taken by the watershed committee on quality of work, management of execution and so on.

2. Gap Analysis

2.1. Classification of Processes

Execution of Works	
Most Common Processes	**Rare Processes**
✫ PIA/WDT played major role in marking out of activities. (OK)	✫ PIA/WDT alone conducting all activities related to supervision (Not Desirable)
✫ Supervision is largely a shared responsibility between PIA/WDT and local level functionaries (Desirable)	✫ Village level functionaries engaged in supervision of activities (Desirable)
✫ User groups did not exist/ execute works (Not Desirable)	✫ User groups are formed after the execution of works (Not Desirable)

☆ User groups (when formed) are engaged in supervision and execution of works (Desirable)	☆ Local trained functionaries/ volunteers perform the technical functions (Desirable)
	☆ Advances are given to user group which executes the work (Desirable)
	☆ Agreement between watershed committee and user groups for executing the works (Desirable)

2.2. Critical Concerns

The execution of works is largely in the realm of the facilitating agency. The local institutions are either non-existent or non-functional. The role of user groups is particularly weak in the process of execution of works.

The role of local level trained volunteers/ functionaries is yet to be stabilized in watershed projects. Though the technical back stopping by PIA/ WDT is a requirement, the role of local level functionaries needs to be clearly established. The execution process indicates a "dependency" syndrome of the communities on the facilitating agencies. As a result, the role of facilitating agencies changed from facilitation to executive role. This is a creation of the facilitating agency itself. In majority of the projects transparency in the execution process is low.

3. Influencing Factors

Execution of Works	
Enabling Factors	**Disabling Factors**
☆ Formation of user groups	☆ Absence of user group, volunteers.
☆ Belief of facilitating agencies in establishing the institutional base for watershed development, primarily user groups and volunteers	☆ No capacity building inputs to the existing institutions.
☆ Capacity building inputs to volunteers and user groups	☆ Execution process was dominated by the facilitating agencies or as per the directions of DRDA/ Project Authorities.
☆ Responsibility division among the user groups, committee members, volunteers and WDT members for executing the works	
☆ Properly implemented Entry Point Activity helped to establish the execution norms of watershed activities	

4. Recommendations

· DRDA/ Project Authorities should detect the absence of institutions at an early stage itself. When local institutions exist and are capable, the execution of plans would be participatory.

· Define processes that ensure local level participation, involvement and controls during the execution stage. Formations of sub committees, identification of local volunteers are few such processes.

· Capacity building support is important during the entire project period, for enabling such processes. Capacity building inputs should not be limited to a particular phase of the watershed development project. The capacity building processes at this stage need to be very different and focus more on "on-the-job-training" type of interventions.

· Appropriate capacity building inputs need to be organized at the local level by DRDA/ Project Authorities/ facilitating agencies on the roles and responsibilities of the local institutions in execution of the projects.

· Taking the support of technical support organizations for ensuring better quality works and local level participation is an important intervention at this stage.

C. Measurements of Works

1. Designed and Desirable Processes

The village level functionaries (mainly volunteers, secretary) are expected to take measurements of the works executed. The committee member, user groups and WDT play different roles in performing this function properly (supervising the volunteers, supporting the volunteers and building the capacities of the volunteers/ secretary). Necessary records are to be established/ maintained by the user groups and watershed committees. The payments are made based on these primary records.

2. Gap Analysis

2.1. Classification of Processes

Measurements of Works	
Most Common Processes	**Rare Processes**
☆ Taking measurements is the prerogative of WDT/ PIA. Watershed functionaries provided necessary support to them (Not Desirable)	☆ Local skilled persons are involved in taking measurements and maintaining Measurement Book (Desirable)
☆ PIA/WDT alone conducted the tasks related to measurements without any involvement of local communities (Not Desirable)	☆ Technical skills of local functionaries are upgraded to perform the tasks related to measurements (Desirable)

☆ PIA/ WDT maintained the Measurement book. The role of community is almost negligible (Not Desirable)	☆ Measurement book is not maintained (Not Desirable)
☆ Frequency of measurements is not known to communities (Not Desirable)	☆ Advance released to User Group. The measurements are taken by volunteer, when 70% to 80% of advance is spent (Desirable)
☆ Measurements are taken on completion of work (OK)	☆ Village level functionaries took the lead and responsibility of taking measurements. PIA/WDT provided necessary technical support and guidance (Desirable)
☆ Weekly measurements (Not Desirable)	☆ Daily measurements by Matt/ users (Desirable)
	☆ Daily measurements by volunteers and secretary (Desirable)

2.2. Critical Concerns

Measurement of the works and maintaining related records is an important requirement of the projects as the community based organizations received funds from Government. The involvement of the local institutions and functionaries make this process transparent and empowering. This also helps to sustain the interventions as the local institutions would have gained the knowledge on technical aspects of the project. However, such empowering process is observed in limited number of cases.

The responsibilities of measurements and maintaining records were largely with the facilitating agencies. As a result, the system became less-transplant, in several cases. The role of local functionaries was limited to supervising the works. The measurements and recoding keeping remained with the facilitating agencies.

There were very few innovations in terms of role for local volunteers, records at the group level, and advance to user groups, which were not well documented and up-scaled. These experiences remained as isolated experiences.

2.3. Implications of the Gaps

☆ Less transparency in the measurements of works and related records

☆ Domination of facilitating agencies and Project Authorities

☆ Possible exploitation of facilitating agencies/ village leadership at the cutting edge level

3. Influencing Factors

Measurements of Works	
Enabling Factors	**Disabling Factors**
☆ Belief of facilitating agencies on the role and capacities of the local institutions	☆ Absence of volunteers and user groups
☆ Budgetary support to facilitating agencies for building capacities of the volunteers and secretary/ others in performing finance related functions	☆ No capacity building inputs were provided to the watershed committees and others on financial aspects of the projects
☆ Systematic approach from the beginning of the project in the involvement of community and institutional processes	☆ Low levels of confidence and belief of the facilitating agencies and DRDA/ Project Authorities on the role of local institutions on finance related processes

4. Recommendations

The technical and managerial skills of the local functionaries need to be systematically developed to ensure their participation. In the absence of such capacity building inputs, the local institutions tend to depend on the facilitating teams.

D. Making Payments and Maintenance of Records/ Finances

1. Designed and Desirable Processes

The WC will take necessary actions to open the bank account. This shall be operated jointly by Chairman of WC, one member of WDT and the watershed Secretary. The Watershed Secretary shall maintain the necessary records of Income and expenditures from the Account. Annual auditing of accounts of the WA is to be done (1994 MoRD Chapter IV Para 83, 84, 95; WARASA, MoA Chapter IX, Para 174, 180, 181.

Each self help group/ user group shall maintain its own accounts for the works/ activities undertaken by it. The user groups shall also maintain a register of the users who have actually contributed labour and material with their monitory value (1994 MoRD Chapter IV Para 95, 96; WARASA, MoA Chapter VI Para 156, 161)

2. Gap Analysis

The entire project funds are converted into investments by making payments to the labourers/ user groups and material suppliers. Different processes are followed to make payments. The inventory itself gives the flavour of participation and transparency in the payment systems. While the role of PIA seems to be prerequisite in the context of payments, some PIAs made the processes very transparent and participatory, while other PIAs made the process "PIA Centric".

Based on the observations from the sample watersheds, the processes related to this key event could be classified as below.

2.1. Classification of Processes

Making Payments and Maintenance of Records/ Finances	
Most Common Processes	**Rare Processes**
☆ Village level functionaries played a key role in making payments (Desirable)	☆ PIA alone makes the payments and dominated the systems of payments (Not Desirable)
☆ Collaborative arrangements between village level functionaries and PIA/ WDT for making payments (Desirable)	☆ PIA office is used as venue for making payments (which is 30 Km away from the village) (Not Desirable)
☆ Payments are made in the presence of watershed functionaries (Desirable)	☆ Watershed volunteers/ president prepare records of watershed committees (Desirable)
☆ Payments in cash (OK)	☆ Communities are ignorant about the financial records/ cash book of the projects (Not Desirable)
☆ PIA/ WDT prepare the cash books/ other records (Not Desirable)	☆ Watershed Committee President is recognized as custodian of the financial records (Desirable)
☆ Secretary maintains the financial records (cash books and others) of the watershed project (Desirable)	☆ Payments are made in the forms of food grains (OK)
☆ Watershed secretary/ committee is recognized as custodian of financial records of the project (Desirable)	☆ SHGs receive advance and make payments to labour groups (Desirable)
☆ PIA/ WDT are recognized as custodian of financial records of the project (Not Desirable)	

2.2. Critical Concerns

Power to make payments is ultimate in any project. In a project like watershed, where large amounts of funds were released to the communities, the watershed based institutions are expected to be really "in-charge" of the watershed funds – records, payments and related aspects.

The sample watersheds indicate that the local institutions of watershed development projects were not in tune with the expectations. The capacities of local level institutions and functionaries were not augmented to perform their roles. The roles of local institutions were performed by

the PIA/ WDT. In several cases, the communities also thought that the entire responsibility of record keeping was with the facilitating agencies.

The systems for making payments need to be more transparent and fool proof. When the control of funds (writing records, making payments and maintaining records) with facilitating agencies, they used this power for their own benefits. They did not use these opportunities to empower the local communities and transfer their power to the local institutions.

2.3. *Implications of the Gaps*

✩ The project is largely in the control of facilitating agencies and/or Project Authorities. The local institutions have little role in the project management

✩ Exploitation by the project authorities, facilitating agencies and local leadership

✩ Disempowerment of the communities

3. Influencing Factors

Making Payments and Maintenance of Records/ Finances	
Enabling Factors	**Disabling Factors**
✩ Presence of trained volunteers and properly oriented user groups	✩ Insistence on completion of works, but not on capacities of the communities
✩ Belief of the facilitating agencies on the abilities of the local institutions	✩ Low priority to institutional processes and mechanisms by facilitating agencies and/or DRDA/ Project Authorities
✩ Funding support to facilitating agencies to nurture the capacities of the local institutions and functionaries on the project finances and related themes	✩ Absence of user groups and other functionaries
✩ Support from donors and/or Project Authorities for enabling this process	✩ Low emphasis on the transparency mechanism of the project

4. Recommendations

✩ Transparency is a core value of the project. The measurements and payments should be in tune with the objectives and core values of the project.

✩ Appropriate capacity building measures should be in place before the actual execution of the work begins. The local institutions need to identify responsible persons, for maintaining the records and making payments.

✩ Good practices of fund management in which the local capacities were augmented and supported should be documented and converted into useful capacity building agenda.

✫ Facilitating agencies should be oriented to ensure that such institutional systems are in place before the project works are actually initiated. Facilitating agencies also should resist the temptation of taking up the direct responsibility of maintaining records and making payments. It might take longer time initially, but eventually the local institutions would learn to take up responsibilities of managing their own affairs.

✫ DRDA/ Project Authorities should monitor this process and ensure that facilitating agencies are on track.

Post Project Issues

Introduction

This chapter examines the processes related to Key Events such as maintenance of assets, project completion formalities and use of WDF. The main purpose of these key events is to:

✰   Prepare the watershed institutions to take up the post-project management issues/ activities.

✰   Ensure that appropriate management systems are established

For achieving this, the Project Authorities/ Project Implementing Agency will take up the following key activities/ events:

✰   Completion of works and Extension of Project Period

✰   Develop norms for management and use of WDF

✰   Evolve guidelines for management of assets after the exit of PIA.

Desired and Designed Processes

Phasing of the development projects gives a clear focus on specific activities that need to be completed in a given period of time. Each of the phases has a particular objective and role in building the project content and preparing the local institutions for that particular function. The sequence of phases has a meaning and logic -Preparatory phase consisting of activities like awareness generation/ rapport building; Institution building phase consisting of activities like group formation, watershed committee formation; Participatory planning phase consisting of planning related events; implementation phase consisting of activities related to execution of works, record keeping, etc.

It is expected that such a sequence of interventions make the local institutions and interventions sustainable and stable. By the end of implementation phase, the local institutions are expected to gain considerable experiences and capabilities to manage the project related activities/ functions on their own without external support. So the quality of inputs given during the initial phases would have a strong correlation with the post project sustainability of the institutions and interventions.

Once a project period ends, the management of post project activities becomes difficult if it is not planned properly and there will be none to own the responsibility. In case of watershed project, the guidelines envisage that the responsibility of post-project management will be taken

over by the Watershed Association and functional groups. They can also access other resources/ schemes to strengthen their production improvement activities. A very important arrangement is the creation of WDF with the contributions and donations from the user groups. The Watershed Association and Committee are expected to develop appropriate norms for maintenance of assets created on public and private lands and for sustainable use of WDF.

The processes related to the above phase are explained here.

A. Completion of works and Extension of Project Period

1. Designed and Desirable Processes

The works should be completed within the stipulated project period, extension is given only in deserving cases during which works budgets can be expended (1994 MoRD Chapter III, Para 41, Chapter IV 97; Chapter II Para 32, Chapter IX 184).

2. Gap Analysis

Completion of works and Extension of Project Period	
Most Common Processes	**Rare Processes**
☆ Extension was not needed in majority of watershed projects (Desirable)	☆ Under utilization of funds as the reason for extension of project (Not Desirable)
☆ The extension time was for one year for many watersheds (OK)	☆ Revision of watershed area is another reason for extension of project (OK)
☆ The extension was mainly due to the delay in releases (Not Desirable)	☆ Project was foreclosed though work was not completed (Not Desirable)
☆ Problems with fund flows (Not Desirable)	

2.2. *Critical Concerns*

☆ Regular flow of funds is an important support system of the project. Several initiatives would remain isolated in the absence of funds. The project extension is also as a result of project management related inefficiencies.

☆ Though there are several such issues (related fund flows and incomplete funding, clear and relevant data could not be generated to substantiate the issues from the field work.

☆ The absence of data related to finances is a major concern.

☆ The records of the project are changed from department to another (as the project management is shifted from one department to another). The PIAs did not keep records of the projects and several watershed committees were not active in these matters any way.

☆ The state and district level support to such systems are not in tune with the requirement at the field level (particularly in administrative and financial aspects).

2.3. Implications of the Gaps

✯ Lack of accountability at any level

✯ Once the project is closed, there is no way one could obtain information and meaningful insights into the projects (particularly on financial aspects)

✯ Issues related to discontinuity and irregular funding has severe negative impact on the project processes

3. Influencing Factors

Completion of works and Extension of Project Period	
Enabling Factors	**Disabling Factors**
✯ Fund releases in time and as per requirement	✯ The discontinuity or irregular funding
✯ Capacity building strategies of the facilitating agencies which improved the project efficiency over a period of time and reduced the work load of the facilitating agencies.	✯ Non cooperation of DRDA/ Project Authority
	✯ Low level of understanding of DRDA/ Project Authority to support participatory development projects

4. Recommendations

✯ Administrative problems related to fund flows should be addressed. State/national level project monitoring should help to sort out the gaps in the fund flows.

✯ Appropriate project phasing and related funding arrangements help to complete the project tasks within the project period. Policy support in terms of project management should be given for this funding arrangement.

✯ Sensitization and capacity building inputs to senior government officers on the role of civil society and community based organizations in participatory development.

B. Management and Use of WDF

1. Designed and Desirable Processes

The watershed development fund is an innovation for ensuring the maintenance of the assets created during the project period. The maintenance of assets and the use of WDF indicate the health and capacity of the watershed based institutions.

2. Gap Analysis

2.1. Classification of Processes

Management and Use of WDF	
Most Common Processes	**Rare Processes**
☆ WDF is not established in several INGO funded projects. Instead the contribution was used for a variety of purposes during the project period itself. (Desirable).	☆ Grama Panchayati operates WDF. (OK)
☆ Communities are not aware of complete details of WDF, particularly signatories of WDF account. (Not Desirable).	☆ PIA is a co-signatory of the WDF account (Not Desirable).
☆ Watershed committees/ Watershed Association operate WDF. (Desirable)	☆ WDF is used for a variety of purposes. (OK)
☆ WDF is not used so far. (Not Desirable)	☆ Loans/grants are given from WDF for income generating activities at individual/ group level. (Desirable)
	☆ WDF is used to paying the salaries of watchman for protection of common lands. (Desirable)
	☆ Repairs of water harvesting structures/ irrigation structures are conducted with WDF. (Desirable)

2.2. Critical Concerns

Creation of Watershed Development Fund is an innovation in project management. The continued community action is ensured with the help of this fund. However, it is important that the local institutions are equipped to handle this fund without any help from outside facilitating agency. For making this possible, the capacities of the community level institutions need to be augmented from the beginning of the project itself. When the watershed committee is able to use projects funds appropriately, it would be able to manage the WDF also, without any external support.

From the sample watersheds, it is clear that the watershed committees were not in a position to manage the funds on their own (in majority of watersheds). This incapability is reflected in the use of WDF also. The watershed communities are ignorant about the WDF (its purpose, amount, signatories). As a result of this, many watershed committees could not use WDF. There is also no clear direction or support from facilitating agencies/ DRDA/ Project Authorities on the use of WDF (in spite of requests from the watershed committee). The experiences of using WDF were also observed in limited number of watersheds. These experiences remained isolated and informal.

2.3. *Implications of the Gaps*

✩ The maintenance of watershed assets could be neglected, in spite of creating a fund for the same purpose.

✩ The institutional growth could not be facilitated and the agenda of watershed based institutions suddenly ends with the project period.

✩ The "works-centric" approach is reflected in the nature of closure of the projects.

3. Influencing Factors

Management and Use of WDF	
Enabling Factors	**Disabling Factors**
✩ The continuity of the facilitating agencies in the village	✩ Absence of policy and procedure for using WDF
✩ The local leadership and its innovative initiatives	✩ Low level of institutional capacities to handle the project related issues after the project period
✩ Requirements of the interventions	✩ Low level of involvement of Grama Panchayati

4. Recommendations

✩ Capacities of watershed committees/ watershed associations should be built so as to enable them to take decisions related to the use and management of WDF. This fund is their own fund and they are responsible for using, managing and benefiting from the same.

✩ Facilitating agencies and DRDA/ Project Authorities should ensure that the institutional capacities are part of the core mandate. Financial aspects of the project should be part of capacity building processes.

✩ DRDA/ Project Authorities should evolve appropriate mechanism and support systems for management of WDF. Lessons learned from the experiences should guide this process. It is important to realize that the WDF is accumulated by the contributions of rural poor, mainly laborers in majority of cases. So the use of WDF should be in tune with the needs of poor and enhance their role in natural resource management.

C. Management and Maintenance of Assets (On CPRs and Private Lands)

1. Desired and Designed Processes

At the end of the Watershed Development project period the Watershed Association and the Watershed Committee will continue to function for operation and maintenance of the assets created. The Watershed Development Fund may be used for this purpose including payment

of salaries to the Watershed Secretary and the Volunteers. However, it is left to the WC/ WA to decide the level of permanent staff that they would like to continue after the project period. During the project period, the WDT and the WC are expected to work out procedures for continued accruals to the Watershed Development Fund for operations and maintenance as well as further development of the Watershed assets (MoRD Guidelines, 1994). The processes related to the maintenance of assets are described and analyzed here.

2. Gap Analysis

2.1. Classification of Processes

Management and Maintenance of Assets (On CPRs and Private Lands)	
Most Common Processes	**Rare Processes**
General	*General*
☆ PIA formally handed over the project responsibilities to watershed committee/ association in a grama sabha (Desirable)	☆ Project was foreclosed and PIA/WDT almost disappeared from the project villages (Not Desirable)
☆ No formal resolutions/ decisions on the maintenance and management of assets created during the project period (Not Desirable)	☆ Resolutions were taken by watershed committee and Grama Panchayati for maintenance of assets (mainly water harvesting structures on CPRs) (Desirable)
☆ No specific responsibility centers were established (Not Desirable)	☆ PIA uses project funds for repairs and maintenance (Not Desirable)
CPRs	
☆ Data on damages/ maintenance of assets on CPRs is not available (Not Desirable)	☆ PIA continues in the village even after the project period is over. But engaged with other tasks (Not Desirable)
☆ No damages (minor and major) of assets on CPRs reported during the project period (Desirable)	☆ Technical Resource Organizations provided funds for repair and maintenance of assets (Desirable)
☆ Whatever is the level of damages, they were not repaired (Not Desirable)	*CPRs*
☆ Damages of assets on CPRs increased after the project period was completed (minor and major) (Not Desirable)	☆ Minor/ major damages of assets on CPRs during the project period (Not Desirable)
☆ The percentage of cases where damages were not repaired increased, after the project period was completed (Not Desirable)	☆ Village Fund used for repairs of damages of assets on CPRs (after the project period was completed) (Desirable)

✰ User themselves repaired the damages of assets on CPRS after the project period was completed (Desirable)	✰ WDF and Shram Daan of user were used to repair the damages of assets on CPR during and after the project period (Desirable)
Private Lands	*Private Lands*
✰ The level of damages of assets on private lands is low, during the project period (Desirable)	✰ Major damages (Not Desirable)
✰ Wherever damages are there, they are minor (Desirable)	✰ WDF and User's efforts were used to repair the damages (Desirable)
✰ The data on repairs of such damages is not clearly available (Not Desirable)	✰ PIA used project funds to repair the assets on private lands during and after the project period (Not Desirable)
✰ The level of damages of assets on private lands did not substantially increase after the project period (Desirable)	
✰ After the project period was completed majority of the repairs were taken care by users themselves (Desirable)	

2.2. Critical Concerns

The institutions are expected to live up to the occasion of taking over the assets. However, it is observed that the "occasion" was never organized in several watersheds. The responsibility of the watershed institutions was not formally handed over to the watershed committee/ watershed association/Grama Panchayati. The communities were not prepared during the project period to take up responsibilities of the project. The facilitating agency itself functioned as executive agency. The institutional roles of the communities remained nominal in several cases. It is difficult for such institutions to take up all the responsibilities on their own, particularly on CPR related issues, after the project period is completed.

The maintenance of assets on private lands is largely the responsibility of the land/ asset owners. WDF is envisaged to be utilized for repairs of assets on CPRs. In the absence of clear processes and support, the assets created could become useless and dysfunctional. It is important to develop systems for creating quality assets and maintenance of the same during and after the project period. Issues related to the assets on private lands need to be clearly discussed and decisions taken.

There is a need to think about the continuity of the facilitating agencies in the village, rather than planning for "withdrawal" strategies from the village. The nature of roles of the facilitating agencies after the main execution of the project could be defined as per the needs of the community.

2.3. Implications of the Gaps

✰ The watershed projects are perceived as "works" programs. When works are completed, the project and agenda were also completed.

✰ The utility and management of assets created a new challenge for the project authorities and facilitators.

✰ The flow of benefits from the assets was fairly dependent on the quality of assets, but the role of users is fairy limited in maximizing or maintaining the benefits.

3. Influencing Factors

Management and Maintenance of Assets (On CPRs and Private Lands)	
Enabling Factors	Disabling Factors
✰ The functional institutions took responsibilities of post project issues, in limited number of cases. These experiences were mainly driven by the emerging new leadership of the villagers and continued support/ facilitation from the facilitating agencies.	✰ Low priority given to institutions and their capacities, from the very beginning of the project
✰ Good quality structured needed low maintenance.	✰ Absence of norms for using WDF
✰ On private lands and important common works, communities voluntarily worked to maintain them, whenever required. The collective sprit still exists in the villages.	✰ Absence of facilitating agencies
	✰ Low level of involvement of Grama Panchayati

4. Recommendations

✰ The process of decision making on maintenance and management of assets and roles of PIA/ WC/Grama Panchayati should be clearly defined. In the absence of this, the village level institutions would not be prepared to take care of the management of the assets created.

✰ The preparations for the post implementation stage should begin from the early stages of the project itself. The facilitating agency should prepare the members of the institutions to take up responsibilities of the project from the beginning.

✰ The management of assets on CPRs requires considerable attention and preparation of the institutions from the beginning of the project itself. The role of user groups and watershed committee/ Grama Panchayati needs to be well articulated and established during the planning and implementation stage itself. When such processes are not followed, the

management of assets on CPRs will receive less attention. Even the systems for use of WDF could not be properly and formally established, by the local institutions.

☆ Plan for continuity of facilitating agencies rather than withdrawal of these agencies.

D. Withdrawal of Facilitating Agency

1. Designed and Desirable Processes

The guidelines have modified their position on the role of facilitating agencies, after the project period is completed. Initially, the facilitating agencies/ WDT were expected to be redeployed to other projects, where the projects are being implemented in the same region (1994, MoRD); later the facilitating agencies were expected to develop clear withdrawal strategies (2001, MoRD) and follow them, by the end of project period.

2. Gap Analysis

2.1. Classification of Processes

Withdrawal of Facilitating Agency	
Most Common Processes	**Rare Processes**
☆ PIA formally handed over the project responsibilities to watershed committee/ association in a grama sabha (Desirable)	☆ Project was foreclosed and PIA/WDT almost disappeared from the project villages (Not Desirable)
☆ No formal resolutions/ decisions on the maintenance and management of assets created during the project period (Not Desirable)	☆ Resolutions were taken by watershed committee and Grama Panchayati for maintenance of assets (mainly water harvesting structures on CPRs) (Desirable)
☆ No specific responsibility centers were established (Not Desirable)	☆ PIA uses project funds for repairs and maintenance (Not Desirable)
	☆ PIA continues in the village even after the project period is over. But engaged with other tasks (Not Desirable)
	☆ Technical Resource Organizations provided funds for repair and maintenance of assets (Desirable)

2.2. Critical Concerns

The nature of facilitating agencies during the entire project period was not really of a facilitating agency. They almost executed the watershed development projects in reality (In majority of the cases). As a result, the existence and capacities of the local institutions is fairly weak, in majority of the cases.

The selection of facilitating agencies is an important concern. Even after selection, it is important to give adequate orientation, support and flexibility to the facilitating agencies to perform the role of a "facilitating agency" in its true spirit.

There are several issues and themes in which the local institutions require support. The government supported watershed projects could at the best initiate a participatory process of collective action in natural resource management (however weak it is). It is important to sustain this momentum and energy. It is premature to think of withdrawal of the project facilitating agencies from the villages, at this stage.

2.3. *Implications of the Gaps*

✰ When the facilitating agencies withdrew after the project period is completed, the existing institutions (which are weak anyway) became almost support less.

✰ Since the nature of partnership between the facilitating agencies and the village level institutions is not in the true spirit of partnership, the institutions did not miss too much. The communities got busy with other aspects of their life and the agenda of watershed never got any more support or importance. It is "business as usual" for them.

✰ In some cases, the institutions and individuals got the benefit of linkages with line departments/ banks. They tried to maximize this linkage.

✰ In limited number of cases, the watershed institutions got diversified to address production, entitlement, credit related issues, with the continued support of the facilitating agencies.

3. Influencing Factors

Withdrawal of Facilitating Agency	
Enabling Factors	Disabling Factors
✰ Commitment of the facilitating agencies to address the critical issues raised in the watershed projects.	✰ The facilitating agencies did not believe in partnerships. They simply focused on completing the works. They stopped working with the villagers, once these works were completed.
✰ Continued donor support to the facilitating agencies to tackle emerging issues	✰ Program policy did not have any clear role for the facilitating agencies after the project period.
✰ Responsive communities and string presence of institutions at the local level	✰ No donor support for the facilitating agencies to continue the support.
✰ Convergence of other projects that needed continued support from the facilitating agency	✰ Changing roles of facilitating agencies in the watershed policies itself

4. Recommendations

✰ Conceive "Consolidation Phase" of the watershed development project.

✰ Define clear objectives, roles and functions of different agencies including facilitating agencies and Grama Panchayati.

✰ Facilitate convergence and institutional strengthening for sustainability, growth and resource management by communities

✰ Mobilise appropriate funding support to this phase.

✰ Attend to pending tasks even after completing the "works" part of watershed development project.

Redefining Watershed Approaches

Reality Check to Possibilities and Possibilities to Policies……

The reality check of processes in watershed projects brought in the possible options for enhancing the quality of watershed projects and also presented some constraints in operationalising them. These processes were conceived and practiced in the broad framework of given policy of watershed development projects (guidelines of ministries). While strengthening participatory processes is an important concern and need of the watershed projects and policies, it cannot be seen in isolation. The processes need to be in tune with the goals, objectives and end results of the program. To achieve these goals and objectives, the program design should have several components, support systems (administrative, management and institutional arrangements), appropriate funding, partnerships, professional support and leadership.

The core concerns and values of the project should guide this design and normative policy framework of the watershed projects. The processes at the ground level will be meaningless and directionless, if this normative framework and goals of watershed development policy are not well defined. In this section, an attempt is made to articulate some of the "Core Concerns" that could make the watershed polices and programs more comprehensive and process-centric. These core concerns are divided under the following categories:

✫   Redefining the Watershed Approaches

✫   Necessary Instruments

Redefining the Watershed Approaches

Based on the evidences of possibilities and good practices, the scope of the watershed framework and approaches are re-defined. While the focus on natural resource management agenda is retained, the potential for including related components and concerns are discussed. These include:

1. Adding Missing Dimensions: Values, Components, Rights over Resources, Support Systems, Results

2. Complementary Projects on Additional Themes: Forging Convergence, Inclusion of Forest Lands, Inclusion of Tanks, Rain-fed Farming Systems, and Developing Assigned Lands.

3. Rights Perspectives: Rights over Forest Lands/ Common Property Resources; Assignment of Land Rights; Rights over Water Resources

1. Adding Missing Dimensions

Expectations from watershed development projects are ever increasing. The possibilities and potential of watershed development projects is also amply proved from several good practices on the ground. The missing dimensions of watershed approach are presented here, in the form of "key words". Explanation of the concept of each key word and its rationale are not made here with an assumption that these key words are well known in watershed related debates. Some of the important aspects are explained in subsequent parts.

(a) Values: Equity, Gender, Participation, Sustainability and Growth, Belief in Institutional Approaches and Partnerships

(b) Components: Conservation, Development and Management of Natural Resources, Productivity Enhancement of Natural and Human Resources, Livelihoods Promotion

(c) Rights over Resources: Regulated Use of natural resources and entitlements over land, water and forests

(d) Support Systems: Funding; Independent Project Facilitating Agencies at state/ district/ project level; Learning opportunities; Monitoring and Action research; Hand Holding Support; Networking; Linkages; Fair Markets and Consumers of products from rain-fed farming systems, Innovations; Convergence.

(e) Results: Improved Capacities; Food Security; Diversification of Livelihoods; Employment Opportunities; Increased Incomes; Reduced Discrimination on Gender/Caste basis; Better Natural Resource Base.

2. Complementary Projects for Additional and Related Themes

There is also a danger of making watershed program too unwieldy by over loading it with several components. However, it is important to note that a single "watershed project" cannot and need not address all the components. It is the creativity of the approach that ensures that all the related components are integrated and converged at the village, community, institution, family and individual levels. Several partners could work together to ensure that these components are addressed in a cohesive manner. Some of the additional components, that could be forged to make the watershed projects more complete, are mentioned here.

(a) Forging Convergence with Similar Projects: There are several new and similar projects/ programs in the rural areas now. (Stree Sakti which establishes SHGs of women; Employment Guarantee Act which envisages taking up watershed based interventions while creating employment). It is important to develop systems for convergence between these and watershed projects as they operate on similar lines. The convergence is in the lines of planning, institutional arrangements, fund flows, human resource deployment and capacity building support.

(b) Complementary Projects – Inclusion of Forest Lands: Inclusion of reserve forestlands into watershed development plans and creation of entitlements over the forest produce is not

yet part of watershed development programme. Though the Guidelines (1994 and Revised 2001) indicate that the joint forest management committees can be considered as watershed committees/ user groups, in reality this integration is not taking place. Absence of an agreement between forest department and rural development department on operational aspects of this policy support (in Guidelines) is a critical bottleneck. It is important for both these departments to recognize the autonomy of user groups/ watershed committee in terms of fund utilization and rights over forest produce, while framing such operational aspects.

(c) Complementary Projects – Inclusion of Tanks: The tanks in dry land regions (under the control of Panchayati Raj Department and Irrigation Department) need special attention. The watershed programme (investments and technical interventions) largely helps the farmers in the catchment areas of these tanks. The riparian rights of farmers at micro/ macro watershed level are of critical concern particularly in drought years. Similarly, institutions for groundwater management need to be created to utilize augmented groundwater in a sustainable manner. Since the investments for developing/ maintaining these tanks are huge, it is important to conceive a separate but complementary project on tanks in watershed areas.

(d) Complementary Projects – Rainfed Farming Systems: The watershed development programme is facilitating a shift in agricultural practices that are commercial and water intensive. Market forces and a sense of pride attached to irrigated crops also facilitate this shift. Early indications warn that this shift may not be sustainable. Natural resource conservation related interventions would have to be necessarily followed up with interventions related to strengthening of rain-fed agriculture. Examples of such interventions are as follows:

✫ Developing locally generated, controlled and managed systems for seeds, fertilizers, pest management, processing etc.

✫ Marketing Support -pricing and procurement of rain-fed crops for public distribution systems.

✫ Diversification into horticulture/ animal husbandry that is suitable to rain-fed farms

✫ Field relevant action research on technologies, institutional and financial arrangements.

The interventions for strengthening rain-fed agriculture range from field level facilitation to creating policy support.

(e) Complementary Projects – Developing Assigned Lands: It is important to develop new projects to attend to the missing components of the watershed development projects, such as inclusion of forest lands; distribution of land (issuing land pattas) and developing assigned lands of dalits for productive use, irrigation and livelihoods support to dalit farmers (assignees) for sustainable farming systems,

3. Rights Perspectives in Watershed Projects

Entitlements over natural resources and employment are becoming increasingly relevant and important ingredients in watershed approach. The equity considerations in watershed development projects are possible, only when the rights related issues are seriously dealt with.

Some of the important rights related issues that have a direct bearing on watershed approaches are as follows:

(a) Rights Over Forest Lands/ Common Property Resources: Ridge areas of many watersheds belong to revenue forests. They are generally excluded from watershed development projects as they belong to forest department. Or the forest lands were treated without the formal permission from the forest department. Similarly, there are villages with common lands, on which several poor families are dependent. In the absence of institutional arrangements the investments on the development and protection of forest lands/ CPRs did not yield useful results in a sustained manner. Another important dimension is also clarity on the ownership, management and usufruct rights over forest lands/ CPRs in the context of watershed projects. This calls for a clear policy from forest / revenue/ other concerned departments that enable the watershed communities to gain access and rights.

(b) Assignment of Land Rights: Landless families in the watershed area pose a serious question on the entire approach of watershed projects. The equity considerations cannot be addressed without dealing structural issues of inequities of the society. Conferring land rights to landless families is a major challenge for the facilitating agencies and state governments. Though this is a long drawn and conflict ridden approach, this is the only way to address structural aspects of equity.

(c) Rights over Water Resources - Social Regulation of Ground Water Use: With the augmented groundwater resources, private investments in drawing out water also increased considerably. The competitive exploitation of augmented groundwater by individual farmers is not only leading to faster depletion of groundwater but also pushing the farmers into debt trap (as a result of heavy investments on bore wells and crop failures). It is important to develop appropriate institutional arrangements for regulated use of ground water. These institutions should have social sanction and legal backup for enforcing regulatory norms for ground water use. The rights of water need to be defined within the broad framework of regulatory norms, set by the local communities.

Necessary Instruments

The participatory processes of the watershed development project are influenced by several factors. Policy and project framework are essential ingredients for defining the nature of process. However several policies are only on paper for want of appropriate and effective operational strategies and instruments. Some such important "Necessary Instruments" are mentioned here:

1. Making Watershed Projects Manageable – Project Management Components: Pre Selection Phase for Selection of Villages; Initial Phase and Probationary Phase; Main Implementation Phase; Consolidation Phase

2. Making Watershed Institutions Functional – Plurality of Institutions: At village level, At Project Facilitation Level; At Project Management Level

3. Making Watershed Processes Better – Critical Support Systems: Civil Society Organizations, Independent Donors, Capacity Building Support

1. Making Watershed Projects Manageable – Project Management Components

Improper phasing, sequencing and timing of project activities seems to be a major constraint in making the watershed projects more participatory and transparent. Phasing of the project is expected to address this issue.

The project management of watershed requires clear phasing and focus on each phase in terms of activities, budgets, time frame and expected results. Proposed phases of the project are mentioned here:

(a) Pre- Selection Phase for Selection of Villages: This is a strategy to make the watershed development project demand-driven. The DRDA/ Project Authorities should make serious efforts to share the salient features of the watershed development project and explain the selection process of the same. The history of collective action, capacity of existing social capital and willingness of the villagers to abide by the non-negotiables of the project need to be assessed through this pre-selection process in an objective manner. Based on the demonstrated performance of the villagers on the above (and other) criteria, the villages could be selected.

(b) Initial Phase and Probationary Phase: This tests the commitment of villagers on the watershed approaches. A small portion of the watershed area would be developed as an entry point activity. The process of execution in this area should demonstrate the core concerns of the watershed approach. Based on the level of participation, transparency and other concerns, the village would be graduated to the next phase.

(c) Main Implementation Phase: The villages which cross the above two levels come to this stage. In this phase, a detailed perspective action plan would be prepared and executed. The planning components and process during this phase also have to follow similar process.

(d) Consolidation Phase: In this phase, the watershed based institutions need to develop action plans for managing watershed resources for sustained flow of benefits and growth. Linkages/networking with other resource organizations; regulated and equitable use of natural resources would be the main focus.

Planning, execution, financial management, monitoring & review and capacity building support should continue through out the project, in all phases.

2. Making Watershed Institutions Functional –Plurality of Institutions

(a) At the village level: The watershed development would be sustainable when the institutional base of the project is functional, dynamic and responsive to the emerging needs of the communities in resource management. No single institution (either Grama Panchayati or watershed committee) cannot and should not function in isolation. Governance and executive functions should be separated for effective and transparent systems. Several user groups need

to be established which have direct benefit from a particular activity/ asset. The facilitating agencies and DRDA/ Project Authorities should have necessary skills to create/ strengthen various types of institutions in the context of watershed development projects.

(b) At the Project Facilitation Level: The facilitation of projects requires considerable commitment and capabilities. This is the single most critical factor that has a strong bearing on the success of the watershed development projects. It is important to develop appropriate selection criteria for selecting the "right" institution for this purpose. The facilitating agencies could be selected from among line departments, academic institutions, voluntary organizations, NGOs, Apex bodies of CBOS, PRIs. Each category of institution has a particular advantage. The watershed policy should enable the entry of all qualified agencies from all categories. The selection process needs to be fair, transparent and objective.

(c) At the Project Management Level: The watershed programs require considerable autonomy, professional skills and responsive management systems at the district/ state level. The financial management, capacity building support, monitoring and learning processes need to be fine-tuned to the participatory nature of the project. Independent and autonomous Project Management Offices should be established at district and state level for managing watershed development projects. Government of India should meet the cost of running these offices (in the lines of DRDAs).

3. Making the Watershed Processes Better - Critical Support Systems

The enabling and disabling factors in Volume 5, reveal the importance of some critical support systems of the watershed development projects, policy and experiences. Such important support systems are briefly mentioned here. These support systems should be given space in the watershed development policy and institutional arrangement.

(a) Civil Society Organizations: The watershed development projects have several components that need to be facilitated and supported. Several civil society organizations could play critical role in this process. Though it is difficult to mention exact nature and role of civil society organizations, an indicative list of their roles is mentioned here:

☆   As facilitating agencies

☆   As resource organizations

☆   As independent monitoring groups

☆   As action research groups

☆   As lobbying groups for creating policy support to watershed projects (affordable energy, fair markets for products of rain-fed farming systems, better quality inputs to the farming, facilitating linkages)

☆   As organizers of wage seekers and farmers to gain greater control over watershed projects and agriculture systems

(b) Independent Donors: It is observed that critical support provided by independent/ international donors made considerable difference in the watershed development projects. The projects supported by the donors have demonstrated new approaches and experiences. Though some of these ideas/ interventions are not unknown, an inventory of themes is mentioned here towards which the donors could constructively contribute:

✫ Provide supplementary budgets to the facilitating agencies to perform their role better.

✫ Support "demand driven" process of village selection

✫ Facilitate the process of "advanced action planning" by communities

✫ Facilitate the processes related to "consolidation phase" of watershed projects

✫ Facilitate/ support the process of independent monitoring, action research and documentation of good practices

✫ Support the process of capacity building support systems

✫ Support the process of creating fair markets for products of rural/ rainfed framing

✫ Support the process of creating watershed activists/watershed professionals on different themes

✫ Support the evolution of lobbying platforms at district/ state/ national levels for better policies for watershed project

✫ Sensitization programs of senior government officers and leadership of facilitating agencies

(c) Capacity Building Support: Clear operational strategies should be developed for capacity building of different actors involved in the watershed development projects. The delivery of capacity building inputs seems to be fairly unprofessional and misplaced. It is important to develop an autonomous capacity building support system that is fairly focused and professional for watershed development projects. It is also important to provide this capacity building support during different phases of the project to build necessary skills and orientation of the key actors.

Platform for Policy Advocacy and Policy Formulation

It is important that the policy framework of watershed development project is re-visited, re-defined and re-articulated from time to time. Informed debates, regular monitoring, new developments/ policies on related themes have to be part of this process. Several actors need to contribute to this process. This is a collective and collaborative agenda of central/ state governments, people's representatives, academic institutions, civil society organizations, NGOs, Donors, community members. This "Platform for Policy Advocacy and Policy Formulation" should be constituted at different levels. Such a platform should be anchored within civil society organizations. Conducting action research on watershed policies, engaging in independent monitoring, taking up pilots, formulating state specific/ theme specific process guidelines could be part of the mandate of this platform.

Conclusions - Setting the Agenda

"Understanding Processes in Watershed Development Projects in India" is an attempt to draw the attention of policy makers, field level practitioners, analysts, facilitators, civil society organizations on the importance of "process centrality" in watershed development approaches. The process data generated from the field work, conducted in 55 watersheds in seven states of India was carefully recorded, quantified and analyzed. For this purpose, appropriate tools such as Process Index were also developed. Based on a systematic analysis of processes, need for entrenching participatory processes was stressed upon. For every cluster of key events, suggestions were made to improve the quality of processes. Through this process, the need for making the watershed development approach more robust and comprehensive was stressed. An attempt was made to suggest new dimensions of watershed approach and necessary conditions to make the watershed approach more meaningful and effective at the ground level.

Articulating new needs and concerns is an on-going process. These expressions have to take shape of new policies, projects and processes at the field level. It is important that several actors take responsibility of contributing to this process of policy formulation and making these policies work at the ground level. It is also important to understand the need for consistent and informed debate on watershed approaches among several key actors involved with this agenda. It is hoped that "Understanding Processes in Watershed Development Projects in India" supports this process and helps to set an agenda for discussion and debate. These debates and discussions should take place at several layers, levels and regions in a cohesive and coordinated manner. This should result in clear operational strategy for improving the policies, projects and processes of watershed development projects in India. Civil society organizations should be engaged in this process. The "self-defined" role of civil society organizations in policy articulation, advocacy and lobbying needs to be nurtured and strengthened through series of consultations, collaborative engagements, networking and partnerships with governments and communities. The study is a call for action, not a conclusion.

Annexure

Organisations involved in the study

WASSAN, Andhra Pradesh
Watershed Support Services and Activities Network (WASSAN), Hyderabad is an autonomous support organization, which conducted process studies on watershed development projects in Andhra Pradesh with the support of Government of Andhra Pradesh (2000 to 2003). These studies made a significant contribution to the formulation of "Process Guidelines of Watershed Development Projects in Andhra Pradesh (2002 and 2004)". WASSAN recognised the need for taking up similar initiative at the national level and contribute to the formulation of new generation watershed development policies in the country. ICEF supported this study. "Understanding Processes in Watershed Development Projects in India" is an outcome of these initiatives and thinking.

ICEF, New Delhi:
India Canada Environment Facility (ICEF), New Delhi provided funding support to this study. ICEF, New Delhi supported several innovative projects that demonstrated new ways of managing environmental resources by communities, in different parts of the country. Several of these projects provided important leads for new policies and programs related to conservation and management of environmental resources.

State Nodal AGencies:
This study was conducted in seven states of India, namely Madhya Pradesh, Chattisghad, Jharkhand, Rajasthan, Utter Pradesh, Orissa and Nagaland. As a network based organization, WASSAN collaborated with state based resource organizations which were Nodal Agencies for conducting the process study in their respective state.

ARAVALI, Rajasthan:
ARAVALI is a resource organization working for creating better policy framework for development and enhancing the role of voluntary sector in this process. ARAVALI has strong partnerships with several NGOs and Government of Rajasthan.

Arthik Anusanthan Kendra, UP:
AAK is a grass root level voluntary organization engaged in community managed developmental processes in natural resources management, education, entitlements, and sustainable agriculture. AAK also implemented watershed development projects and combined land rights related issues within watershed projects.

AFPRO, Chattisghad:
Action for Food Production (AFPRO) is a national level technical support organization involved with several natural resource management projects across the country as a support organization. They pioneered watershed development projects on technical aspects in different parts of the country.

NCHSE, Madhya Pradesh:
National Center for Human Settlements and Environment, Bhopal is a state level voluntary organization engaged in several developmental initiatives at the state level. They have executed large number of watershed development projects in the state. They are also engaged in action research projects in the state.

PRADAN, Jharkhand:
Professional Assistance for Development Action, Jharkhand is a national level professional organization that has expertise in several rural development themes including natural resource management. They have innovated and established several models and approaches of community based developmental approaches. They work in several parts of the country and have strong collaborative partnerships with state governments and local NGOs.

OWDM, Orissa:
Orissa Watershed Development Mission, Orissa is a specially constituted mission by Government of Orissa, for managing watershed development projects in the state. OWDM manages several types of watershed projects in the state including DFID I supported Western Orissa Rural Livelihoods Project (WORLP) in selected districts of the state.

Directorate of Agriculture, Government of Nagaland:
Directorate of Agriculture is responsible for implementing several agriculture and allied development projects in the state of Nagaland. They are also responsible for implementing the watershed development projects in the state under Ministry of Agriculture.

Understanding Processes of Watershed Development Program in India

Report of the Study anchored by WASSAN and Facilitated by ICEF

Volume 5 : Making them Better: Gap Analysis, Enabling &Disabling Factors And Recommendations

This volume conducts a detailed and systematic analysis of processes. Gap analysis is conducted for each key event of the project management cycle. The designed and desirable processes are narrated followed by processes followed on the ground (most common and rare). These are analyzed to give a picture of critical concerns and implications. The enabling and disabling factors behind the processes were also mentioned. These insights are drawn from several sources – process (soft) data, hard data, discussions with the facilitators on the selected themes, case studies, policy changes in the state/ districts, etc. Based on such a thorough analysis of processes, recommendations are proposed for making the watershed process better. As a principle, all recommendations were proposed based on "evidence" on the ground. The evidence could be from a small number of watersheds or even a single watershed. The main idea was to pick up the "real experience" and "up scale" the lessons and principles through policy reform.

While making the process improvements, the need for revisiting the watershed approach itself was recognized. An attempt is made to make a distinction between "watershed project" and "watershed approach". An indicative list of complementary project is mentioned, as part of recommendations. A set of necessary instruments is proposed to ensure that processes get adequate support in the watershed projects and approach. These instruments are – project management tools, plurality of institutions and critical support systems.