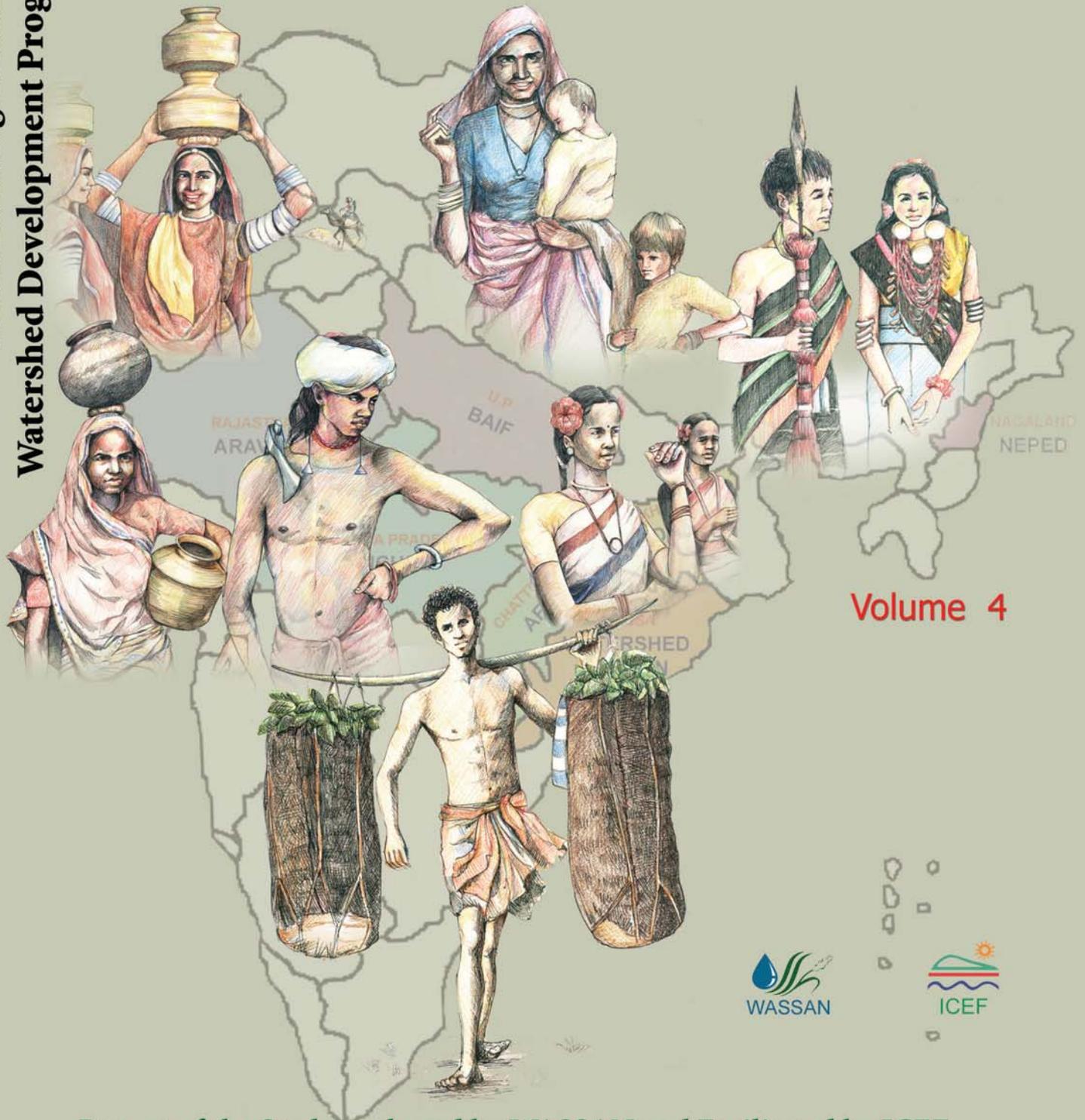


**Understanding Processes of
Watershed Development Program in India**

Policies and Possibilities

Compilation of Good Practices



Volume 4



Report of the Study anchored by WASSAN and Facilitated by ICEF

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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**
- Volume 5 : Making them Better: Gap Analysis, Enabling &Disabling Factors And Recommendations
- Volume 6 : Recommendations at a Glance

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CONTENTS

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------|---------|
| Acknowledgements | 5 |
| Foreword | 7 |
| About the Study and Reports | 9 |
| PREPARATORY PHASE | 13 - 32 |
| 1. Preparing Grounds | |
| 2. Demand driven Initiative | |
| 3. Local Leadership taking the Lead | |
| 4. A Proactive Women Sarpanch | |
| 5. Options for Entry Point | |
| 6. Work is Worship | |
| 7. Need based Interventions | |
| 8. Small Investment, Big Interest | |
| 9. 'Fair' to recognize Good Work | |
| 10. Contributory Efforts of Users | |
| 11. Assuring an Apprehensive Community | |
| 12. Community Ignored, Resources Wasted | |
| 13. Putting Together Money and Minds | |
| 14. Selecting PIAs : Mystery Tales | |
| INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS | 33 - 51 |
| 1. Seeds for Development with CBOs | |
| 2. Uses of the User Groups | |
| 3. For Assuring Quality | |
| 4. Critical and Timely Support | |
| 5. For Protecting Dignity | |
| 6. Committed Committee | |
| 7. To Manage Resources . | |
| 8. 'Core' of Periphery | |
| 9. Further Decentralizing Project Responsibilities | |
| 10. Building Capacities : Early Investment | |
| 11. Ensuring Norms | |
| 12. Innovation in Institutions | |
| 13. Village elects Watershed Committee | |
| 14. Plurality of Institutions | |
| 15. Broadening the Vision | |
| 16. GOPAL - Extending support for Livestock | |
| 17. Efforts for Effective Communication | |
| 18. A 'Super'vising Initiative | |
| 19. An Ideal Leadership | |
| 20. How Participatory is Participation? | |
| 21. Lost out Opportunity | |
| 22. A False Promise : Broken Institution | |
| 23. For Supplementing the Capacities | |
| PLANNING PHASE | 52 - 70 |
| 1. Delineation Revised | |
| 2. Doing it Themselves | |
| 3. Women's Idea | |

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| 4. 'Cha()k'ing out a New Path | |
| 5. Trees, Grasses, Gardens, Forests | |
| 6. Naturally Sustainable | |
| IMPLEMENTATION PHASE | 71 - 75 |
| 1. Self Financing a 'Productive' Initiative | |
| 2. Ensuring Transparency | |
| 3. Who decides What is Good? | |
| 4. Building on the Experience | |
| 5. Collective Effort for Pasture Development | |
| BENEFITS, RESULTS AND SURVIVAL STRATEGIES | 76 - 92 |
| 1. Investing for Food Security | |
| 2. Food for Thought | |
| 3. Opening up New Options | |
| 4. Milk and Honey | |
| 5. Fish, Cashew and Cash | |
| 6. Self Help : In its True Spirit | |
| 7. Optimizing Resources | |
| 8. Unexpected Gains | |
| 9. Mango Orchids of Landless Women | |
| 10. Providing Livelihoods | |
| 11. Khora Meena : <i>Amla</i> Village | |
| 12. Initiative for Improving Productivity | |
| 13. Development : Exclusive and Inclusive | |
| 14. Creating Children's Interest | |
| FOCUS ON POOR | 93 - 100 |
| 1. Vikas Kutir : Facilitating Equity and Gender Justice | |
| 2. Reaching the Unreached | |
| 3. Grain Bank | |
| 4. Breaking the Barriers | |
| 5. Learning to talk to Women | |
| 6. Poor take care of Poor | |
| 7. No Woman's Land | |
| 8. Who Gains? | |
| POST PROJECT PHASE | 101 - 105 |
| 1. One Rupee a Day | |
| 2. Using WDF | |
| 3. Samajik Bank | |
| 4. All for Common Benefit | |
| RIGHTS IN WATERSHEDS | 106 - 112 |
| 1. Struggle for Rights | |
| 2. Watershed for the Landless | |
| 3. And the fight is still on. | |
| 4. For 'Formal' Control. | |
| 5. Procuring 'Better' Price | |
| 6. Dealing with Land Rights : A Network Approach | |



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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 (ARAVALLI, Rajasthan); Rashmi, Hargovind Singh (AAK, Uttar 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.

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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.

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The study teams would have spent time with about 2500 persons in all the selected watersheds to understand the watershed related processes. These are members from watershed committees, user groups, SHGs, facilitating teams, government staff, donors and several others. I thank all of them for their support and interest in sharing their experience with our study teams.

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During the field work and report preparation, I was away from home for long periods of time and busy with myself, even when I was at home. They missed me so much, while I was engaged with this study and its report, but also supported me in the entire process. I thank them for all their support.

I hope this report would contribute to the ever growing literature on watershed projects in India. I also hope this report would make the policy makers, academicians, donors and field level facilitators to little more sensitive to the importance of processes in watershed development projects. Ultimately, I thank the readers and users of the reports.

Thanks...

M V Rama Chandrudu
WASSAN



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.

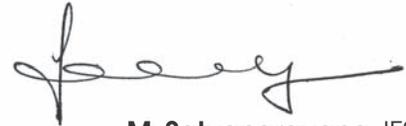
ICEF projects gained considerable success in transforming their areas and influencing similar practices in the region and elsewhere, largely due to the participatory processes followed, which bonded all the key stakeholders and elicited from them self motivated participation. The project for Strengthening 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

ICEF



About the Study and Reports

“Understanding 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**

Name of the Village: Bhainsadani
 Location: Orissa
 Facilitating Agency: Lokdrusti
 Project: INGO



PREPARATORY PHASE

Preparing Grounds

There are several theories and experiences on time period required for watershed development projects. The MoRD supported watersheds initially had four years time period, which was eventually extended to five years. There are other experiences with longer periods of time. Based on these experiences, one could conclude that “How much time” is less important than “what to do in a given period of time?”. In this context, the informal phasing of the project of Bhaisadani watershed project has some lessons.

Lokdrusti, a local voluntary organization in Khariar, Nuapada district, Orissa got a grant from German Agro Action (GAA) to conduct a socio economic study of 18 villages in Boden block, in 1991. This study was supposed to be conducted over a period of one year. The main purpose of the survey was to understand the local issues (people, area and their problems) and profile the villages in terms of their conditions (social, economical and natural resources, livelihoods of the communities in selected villages). This survey is also expected to help the organization to develop its own operational strategies in the region. Apart from developing deeper insights and understanding of the local issues, this study helped Lokdrusti to establish rapport with the villagers. Based on the understanding of the region, the organization decided to take up watershed development projects to address the critical concerns of the villages.

Of all the villages, Bhaisadani seems to be most deserving village in several aspects. The drinking water scarcity, migration, absence of livelihoods options are some of the most pressing issues of the village. There is also an informal collective of women in the village, which is engaged in village issues such as drinking water. But their efforts are not well organized. As an initial step, Lokdrusti decided to work in Bhainsadani watershed with a long-term commitment. Lokdrusti approached



German Agro Action for necessary financial support for the watershed projects in the village. The final agreement from the funding agency came little late. This did not deter the organization. Lokdrusti continued to work in the village on issues like non formal education, institutional processes around issues related to village development and strengthening of women's collective. Villagers responded to these inputs from Lokdrusti positively and started working collectively on issues like drinking water, education and so on. This phase acted like a preparatory phase for the impending watershed development project in the village. By the time the project was actually sanctioned in the village, the community already mobilized and cohesively organized. Because of the strong groundwork done by Lokdrusti it could very smoothly implement the follow-up activities during the next phase, which started towards the end of 1993. Though the actual time period of the project is only "4" years, the earlier preparatory phase also helped the organization to effectively implement the "main phase of the project" in a short period of time.

Abani Panigrahi, chief functionary of Lokdrusti believes that the preparatory work (field survey, non formal education, formation and strengthening of women's groups) established most critical favorable conditions for proper implementation of the "main" project in the village. If this phase is not there, the effectiveness of the project could have been less.



Name of the village: Hatikhoj
 Location: Orissa
 Facilitating Agency: Line Department
 Project: Gol



Demand driven Initiative

Villagers of Hatikhoj village had a long experience of protecting the forests in their village. They collectively protected 300 acres of land without any external aid. The villagers planted different forest species and imposed social ban on tree felling and open grazing. The Block Development Officer was very supportive to this initiative of the villagers and generally encouraged them in their efforts. When the villagers demanded for renovation of Khalia sagar tank in the village, the BDO shared the basic details of watershed development project with them and encouraged them to apply for it. He also informed them that watershed approach would develop the forest, water bodies and land resources in an integrated manner. This idea was very convincing the communities. They thought that the watershed project would give a comprehensive framework for their endeavors.

As recognition to their collective action and strength of their experiences, the watershed project was sanctioned to them. The villagers readily agreed to take part in the watershed development project. As an entry point activity, Khaliasagar village tank was renovated, with more than 30% labour contribution. During this process, they also evolved norms for usufruct rights over forest produce and equitable distribution of the minor forest produce. The BDO acted as PIA for the village. As a result, he could also facilitate the convergence of the FFW programme with watershed programme and helped in creation of more number of water bodies in the watershed area.



The villagers not only revived the Indirakanan forest without the external aid, but also converted the landscape into full of greenery and water bodies. The thick and green forest tells a tale of unlimited people power in natural resource conservation.



Name of the Village: Guret
 Location: Uttar Pradesh
 Facilitating Agency: Linre Department
 Project: Gol

Local Leadership taking the Lead

When developmental plans are sketched, the communities—their needs and aspirations are often reduced to cold statistics. They just appear as a figure against the number of beneficiaries. This top down model of planning not only undermines the felt needs of the communities, but also their priorities. Naturally developmental projects stemming from this model remain at the periphery of the community's lives. There is hardly any feeling of ownership over the projects. Ill maintained, ill focused and uncared for, these very soon fall into a state of disrepair.

Conversely, where development is demanded by the communities and projects are people-driven, the results are quite different. In the Guret village of Uttar Pradesh, agriculture was entirely rain-fed. Before the watershed program in the area, 50% of the land remained unutilized due to a lack of irrigation facilities. People were poor and as is typically the case the most disempowered are usually the least vocal. However, strong local leadership ensured that their voices were heard.

Sarpanch of the village approached the government to demand a watershed project. His connections with local political party leaders also came handy to him. The results were encouraging. The village got a watershed project and the entire village proactively participated in the entire process through various stages of planning for the watershed, building the community structure, setting up systems for operations and maintenance, developing conflict resolution mechanism, etc.

The case study demonstrates that when development is a response to people's felt needs, it is better owned and managed. Thus, a community based process of 'self-selection' is one of the best practices in watershed programs. The role of the funding and implementing agency is that of a facilitator with the people and their organizations taking the lead.





A Proactive Women Sarpanch

Khoremeena is a tribally populated village. It used to suffer with continuous drought due to low rainfall. The livelihood of the villagers was primarily on rain-fed agriculture. Over the years, migration of the village community increased due to drought. Poor used to migrate to nearby Jaipur for sustaining their livelihood.

The woman Sarpanch of the region was an educated lady having good rapport with the village community and the government departments such as DRDA. Looking at the crisis situation existing in the village, she took personal interest and initiative in bringing the watershed programme to the village.

In the process she took support from her husband (a higher official in the Police Services) and community leaders. She went several times to the DRDA office, submitted the application and discussed with the officials. After her long struggle and sincere efforts, the village was finally selected during the district watershed meeting. During the whole process she also used her political influence in getting the programme sanctioned. Later on the Government PIA implemented the project.

This is a rare example in which the representative of villagers (Sarpanch) made sincere efforts to address the critical needs of the village, through watershed project.



Name of the Village: Dewarghatt
 Location: Chattisghad
 Facilitating Agency: Line Department
 Project : Gol

Options for Entry Point

When Dewarghatt village was selected for the implementation of a watershed program, the Entry Point Activities were decided in close collaboration with the community. The developmental needs of the people were identified and prioritized. Community participation was not automatic. Proactive steps were taken by the PIA to facilitate participation. Important among this was to use participatory tools that were both efficient and transparent in eliciting information from the communities and using the same for informing planning and implementation of programs.

The PIA was flexible in its approach and this allowed a range of activities to be undertaken under the aegis of the program. These included diverse activities like laying of hume pipe along a local stream, repair of roads, repair of school building, construction of water tanks, construction of parapet, extension of drinking waterpipes, etc, many of which were not conventional EPA. Given that there were financial limitations to support the activities, the people agreed to contribute to the programs. Contribution ranged from a minimum of 25% to a maximum of 40% where a two kilometers long drinking water pipeline was laid.

Working on people's needs and with people's engagement inculcated a strong feeling of ownership. All the structures are well maintained by the community who undertake the operations and maintenance activities through their "Vikas Khata".

The case study illustrates that Entry Point Activities can play a critical role in determining the shape of the watershed programs and the range of developmental interventions around the same.



Name of the Village: Anwari
 Location: Chattisghad
 Facilitating Agency: Gayatri Pragya
 Project : Gol



Work is Worship

The tribal communities in the Barpara watershed in Kanker district were deeply religious. Gayatri Pragya, the local organization respected their faith and wanted to build on this to mobilize them and engage them in the process of watershed development project. When the watershed project was initiated in the area, they invoked the religious symbolism of the people. Every morning prayers were organized and the people took oath to undertake good work during the day. People worked hard and with sincerity. The work was no ordinary work; it was an offering to the God. This belief resulted in a significantly high quality of work.

Despite limited financial resources the project was accomplished through people contribution that actually exceeded the budget. People not just contributed through their labour (*Shramdaan*) during the construction phase but also took the responsibility for maintenance of the created structures. This also stemmed from the faith that an offering to the God should be well maintained.

The case study demonstrates that respecting people's faith and creating new symbolism for work can significantly harness community participation. Invoking cultural values also ensure sustainability of the initiatives.



Name of the Village : Kanoojthoria
 Location: Rajasthan
 Facilitating Agency: Foundation for Ecological Security
 Project: Gol

Need based Interventions

Under watershed development project, a budgetary provision was made initiating the entry point activities (EPA) in the watershed project areas. But as facilitating agency was already working in the region before the sanctioning of the watershed project, technically there is no need for taking up entry point activity again. However, facilitating agency thought it is a good opportunity to fill in some of the critical gaps of the village. Therefore several discussions and meetings were held with watershed development committee and village community to identify and plan for appropriate EPA under this budget. Facilitating agency also conducted need assessment exercises. Several activities emerged such as building community hall etc.

During this exercise, the hamlets of the Kanoojthoria village demanded to install electric poles for getting electric connection in their hamlets as they were devoid of the same. Actually three out of the five dhanis (hamlets) were not having electric connection to their hamlets. Even the only dairy in the village, which served the whole village, was not electrified. However, it is a common knowledge that electrification of village would have a negative impact on the ground water, as more and more farmers use electric pumps for irrigating lands. With this concern, the facilitating agencies initially discouraged the villagers about this option. But, villagers convinced that electrification would not only improve the quality of life in the village, but also reduce the cost cultivation, by reducing the cost of inputs (particularly diesel). Villagers also convinced the facilitating agency that they would use water judiciously and in an efficient manner. It was also felt that if the dairy were connected with the electricity it would perform in a much better manner and serve all the hamlets. Other benefits of getting electric connection would be that Thoria being the central hamlet would get an electric connection of its own by incurring very little expense.





The facilitating agency realized that the villagers are very keen on getting the village electrified and supported them to complete the formalities. The total amount sanctioned for undertaking the EPA was Rs.1,30,000/-. Out of which only Rs. 29,250 were utilized for this electrification work. Community contribution came largely in the form of free and voluntary labour. This is an example of responding to the felt needs of the community in a project framework. An entry point activity could predict nature of future.



Name of the Village: Hatikhaj
 Location: Orissa
 Facilitating Agency: Line Department
 Project: Gol

Small Investment, Big Interest

The village forest is part of their life. But now it is in a degraded condition. The tree cover reduced, soil erosion increased, there is scarcity of fodder, fuel wood, the water tank which used to get water from the forest is getting silted up...

Chittaraja Yubak Sangh, is a collective of youth in the village. The Sangh was particularly perturbed by the fact that the degradation of forest lands is causing all sorts of problems. They wanted to take some action. Initially, they developed some norms for forest management. This showed some good results. Encouraged by this, they wanted to intensify their efforts of forest protection.

They approached Block Development Officer for supporting them in two aspects — supply of new plant material and repairs of water tank in the village. The members of Chittaraja Yubak Sangh met the BDO several times for support. These meetings developed a good rapport between the villagers and the officer. Block Development Officer visited their village and saw the efforts made by the Chittaraja Yubak Sangh in forest regeneration. He also understood their future plan of intensified forest protection and water resource development. He thought that the village deserves a watershed development project, which attempts to develop all components of natural resources in a comprehensive manner. He also appreciated the strength of collective action of the village based organization. Since he is responsible for watershed development project, he could immediately sanction the watershed development project to the village.

This project helped the villagers to develop a clear perspective of the villager resources and converted the village forests into a green gold. They also improved the land and water resources of the village. "Investment" of their time, enthusiasm and collective action in protection of forest lands yielded a good "interest" to the village, in the name of watershed development project.



Name of the Village: Ramach
Location: Rajasthan
Facilitating Agency: Seva Mandir
Project: I INGO



'Fair' to recognize Good Work

Mela, a fair is a common event in the lives of rural population. Everyone loves to be part of these melas and they look forward to be part of this. Use of local practices and culture is an effective means of creating awareness on watershed projects as these events are more acceptable and memorable, believed Seva Mandir.

Seva Mandir organized a mela in Ramach village for generating awareness on environmental issues among the village community. They organized such fairs in many villages of the watershed area. This helped in generating awareness and mobilizing the community for the watershed development project.

In the year 2003 a big rural fair was organized on natural resource management issues. The fair was named as "Aapno Mela". PIA also felicitated individuals and community as whole for their sustained good work. This motivated the village community for sustaining their efforts in the watershed development project.



Name of the Village: Thana
 Location: Rajasthan
 Facilitating Agency: BAIF
 Project: Bilateral

Contributory Efforts of Users

In a village in Thana watershed there were 10 families having agricultural lands. These lands were facing severe problems due to soil erosion and undulating slopes. During monsoon season the crops and lands were used to submerge in the rainwater. This badly affected their living conditions and had huge economic loss each year.

The community earlier constructed an earthen structure to reduce the pressure of water flow but it couldn't last due to huge water pressure. When the watershed program was initiated, the affected communities did not care to approach the PIA due to lack of unity and willingness to contribute for the construction of Pucca structure (Anicut). With increased misery, they realized they could not withstand this adversity anymore. They could see the benefits nearby communities got with the implementation of watershed program. Then they approached the PIA with a proposal to construct a concrete structure for solving their problem.

Watershed committee rejected their proposal due to lack of funds and time required for completion of the physical structure. But the community showed its unity and proposed the committee to provide free labour for constructing the structure. Local MLA supported the community by providing Rs. 30,000/- financial assistance to them. Seeing the community determination, PIA expressed its willingness to provide the necessary help. Locally available construction materials were provided by the community as their voluntary contribution. Balance amount was provided from the watershed fund. A user group consisted of beneficiaries constructed the Anicut and took responsibility of looking after the maintenance and repair work for the sustainability of the physical structure. A common village fund was also initiated and nominal charges were collected from the other groups for utilizing water for





irrigation during low rainfall years. The impact of all these efforts is reflected with the increase in land availability for irrigation, decreased soil erosion, increase in water table in downstream wells and improvement in the agricultural productivity.

This is story of slow learners. Certainly, they leaned to work together, during this entire experience.



Name of the Village: Ramsin
 Location: Rajasthan
 Facilitating Agency: WASCO
 Project: Gol

Assuring an Apprehensive Community

Ramsin watershed in Rajasthan was implemented by WASCO. The PIA did not have smooth go in the initial stages convincing the community for undertaking the watershed intervention. The problem was that the community was unaware of such intervention. There was also some skepticism about the program because of their earlier experience with the implementation of a central government program on famine relief. The community was supposed to contribute at a certain rate from the wage earned from the project. Though it was contributed, some village elders like *Patwari* misappropriated the funds. As total contribution was not deposited into the account, there were some dues for which recovery was undertaken. This experience made the villagers very skeptical towards the government schemes. They were thinking that the cost of the project undertaken would be later recovered from the community.

In this background, PIA had a tough time in convincing the community. Exposure visits and meetings were organized. Communication and awareness generation programs were undertaken. Around 30 people from the community were taken to Udaipur for exposure. Apart from the watershed area, some religious and tourist places were visited in order to win their confidence. People were selected based on the respect and prominence in the community. The idea was that they could convince others on behalf of the PIA when they return to the village. The village community was given an assurance in writing by the PIA that the villagers would not have to pay anything else except the contribution at the time of work implementation. It was also assured that there would be no recovery in future. General meetings were held at the village level to explain various benefits from the project. Much emphasis was given on the employment that would be generated within the village from the project. PIA was very well aware that the community was desperately looking for employment opportunity and this would attract their attention.





Video-shows, puppet-shows, demonstration through posters, distribution of literature educating the community about watershed intervention and seed distribution were some of the other measures that were taken up to generate awareness and motivate the community. Later the community was convinced and permitted to take up the project in the village. Though initially there was not much participation from the community, things improved slowly with the time

The village has a large population of landless people who were dependent on their livestock. An attempt was made by the PIA to motivate them. An *animal shivir* was organized to motivate and develop interest within the landless community and also to involve them in the watershed project. A meeting of the landless community who depended on cattle rearing for their livelihood was held in which different problems of the community was discussed. It was decided to organize *animal shivirs* to resolve the problems concerning animal health. A government veterinary was appointed for the purpose. As he proved very unpunctual and irregular soon he was removed. A para veterinary who was trained under the *Gopal Yojna* was temporarily engaged. Later a veterinary was selected by the PIA and placed in the village at its own cost. It proved to be a successful attempt of the PIA in luring the landless community to participate in the watershed project.



Name of Village: Vinnoaur
 Location: UP
 Facilitating Agency: Line Department
 Project: Gol

Community Ignored ... Resources Wasted

The intentions of the government were good when they decided to develop EAS projects with the left over money from the million wells scheme. However, the only people who were aware of these good intentions were the government personnel, especially those belonging to the upper echelons.

The community came to know about the project only when the contractors started building bunds on the fields. The implementation had started but without any consultation with those for whom it was meant. This made the villagers suspicious.

The local government personnel were also not clear on the program and its guidelines and therefore when the villagers approached them, they could not be of much help. All they realized was that the plans and the programs were very well done on the paper. They were also told about a non-existent PIA that was supposedly implementing the project. The contractor was the only 'face' of the 'facilitating agency'.

Distraught villagers maintained their distance from the initiative. They refused to be a part of the program once it completed, which was critical to its success. Eventually time, energy and resources were wasted in a poorly planned and implemented project that did not seek community involvement.



Name of the Village: Bhaisandani
 Location: Orissa
 Facilitating Agency: Lok Drusti
 Project: INGO



Putting Together Money and Minds

Lok Drusti is part of a consortium, which aimed at creating new approaches in watershed development projects. German Agro Action (GAA) wanted to support watershed based approaches that are forward looking and innovative. They also realized that all innovations and approaches could not be demonstrated in one single place, organization or village. There are several challenges in different parts of the state and it is important to explore whether watershed approach could actually address these challenges. With this background, a set of villages was selected for the project. Each village represented a particular challenge and complex situation to the watershed approach. The village also had a hidden potential on a particular aspect.

To facilitate this project, villages and their facilitators were carefully selected. The facilitating agencies were all organized into a consortium. A nodal NGO was identified to support this consortium approach. The facilitating team at the nodal NGO was mainly responsible for providing inputs and direction to the members of the consortium. Regular planning and review meetings were organized for all members of the consortium. Critical decisions related to project plans, support systems and priorities were decided during these meetings. Apart from the project facilitating team, all members of consortium also have to participate in these meetings.

Project approaches were designed during these meetings in response to the emerging situations in the villages. Capacity building strategies evolved during these meetings were eventually operationalized by the nodal NGO. Flexible funding support was made available to all these aspects. The issues like transparency and participation were given due importance in this processes. Innovation and new challenges were the core concerns of the approach. Several of the members of consortium addressed issues like migration, drinking water, crop diversification (horticulture) through watershed approach. Considerable time was given for





selecting appropriate villagers for project. Adequate funding support was provided for different components of the project.

This entire experience putting money, minds and action together generated a set of new and innovative approaches, which are very critical for the watershed development sector. The lessons learned from these watersheds could define the new possibilities under watershed approaches. It is important to create such flexible, responsive and forward looking projects within the large scale development projects also. These projects challenge the mainstream projects and eventually redefine the course of direction.



Name of the Village: (Not relevant)
 Location: Jharkhand
 facilitating agency: DRDA
 Project: GoI



Selecting PIAs : Mystery Tales

PIA selection plays very important role in the watershed development programme. But the criteria and procedure for selecting the PIAs are different in different states. About 95% of PIAs are NGOs in Jharkhand. The study team wanted to understand the process of selecting PIAs in the state.

During a discussion with DRDA officers, Chatra District (Jharkhand) the selection process of PIA was discussed by the study team. The officials shared their opinion – “Watershed programme requires considerable administrative and logistic costs. The provisions made in the project are not adequate to meet the costs of exclusive staff for the programme. The salary proposed in the guideline for WDT is too less for any government staff to work. Only NGOs could work at such low levels of staff salaries. So we give this work to NGOs. However, getting good NGOs, who are willing to work at this kind of low rates is also a problem”.

The discussion was now focused on the availability of NGOs. Some experiences shared by them were incredible, but they seem to be a reality. Few years back, Chatra didn't have any credible NGO. Then wife of one of the Watershed Development Team member of Chatra District established an NGO. It was made PIA of all the watersheds projects of MoRD. Even now it is the PIA for most of the projects in Chatra district.

Apart from this, there are other mysterious processes followed in the state. Some of the anecdotes on the selection process of PIAs are so popular that they became part of folklore of the watershed history in the state.

Two NGOs were selected as PIAs and first installment was also released to them. The DRDA also made some correspondence with them. Everything was okay for some time. After a period of about one year, the entire correspondence to these organizations was returned to DRDA as “undelivered”. The clerk in DRDA office



thought that there is something wrong and enquired about these organizations. To their utter surprise, they realized that one of them is TV repair shop, which was closed and another was Satyam Sivam Sundaram”, which never existed. This revelation was a shocking experience and raised several questions on the process of selection of PIA.



Name of the Village: Ramach
 Location: Rajasthan
 Facilitating Agency: Seva Mandir
 Project: INGO



Seeds for Development with CBOs

In an era of “new institutions for each new project”, it is important to realize that there are already institutions in the village. It is important to explore whether such institutional platform is suitable for the new projects or not, before constructing a new institution for the new projects. This not only saves the energy and time, but also deepens the capacities of the existing institutions. The experience of Ramach tells this moral.

Seva Mandir is an NGO working in southern Rajasthan. Prior to the implementation of watershed programme, it had field operations in the Ramach village. They had formed Village Development Committee (VDC) as an informal body in each village for working on livelihood issues. This idea was conceptualized to involve and ensure the participation of entire community in the village development process. VDC is responsible and accountable for implementing the village development activities. The committee comprises of members from all the caste, hamlet and weaker sections of the society. It was seen that there was enough women representation in the VDC. They also formed a village fund called ‘Gram Vikas Kosh’. The contribution generated from the community in the form of cash and kinds were deposited in the village fund. This fund was utilized for the maintenance and repair of the physical works in the village.

When the watershed program came to the village, instead of forming a separate institution, PIA implemented the watershed development project through VDC. They released the funds to VDC for executing watershed activities VDC also framed self-regulatory norms, rules and regulations for monitoring work and ensuring sustainability of the project activity.



Name of the Village: Thoria
 Location: Rajasthan
 Facilitating Agency: Foundation for Ecological Security
 Project: Gol

Uses of the User Groups

As in any community based watershed development program, User Groups (UGs) were formed in the Thoria village based on hamlets. Representatives from different UG's were further nominated as members of Village Development Committee (VDC). This VDC, however, was different from the conventional VDCs in their approach towards development. Rather than waiting for external support, the VDC emphasized on mobilizing local resources from the village. People's experience, traditional wisdom, local skills, capacities were the focal point and for these formed the base for development. Thus while the participation of the communities are often restricted to contribution in terms of money or labour, in this case, the contributions were in terms of higher level skill inputs.

Local experts on relevant developmental aspect were identified who worked with the representatives of the UG's at the committee levels after identifying the issue. Interventions were planned in hamlet based meetings and estimate for the action plan are prepared with the help of local expert. All plans had enough space for flexibility to changing needs and realities and all plans were so made to ensure that they were amenable to future revision if needed. The Committee on its own managed the financial aspects of the watershed program. The committee played a major role in the supervision and monitoring work. The *modus operandi* led to the higher accountability and transparency of the activities undertaken. The concept of well defined User's involvement should be promoted in all phases for sustainable development.

The case study demonstrates that watersheds provide an opportunity for the villagers to recognize their own skills and capacities and building on the existing strength can considerable strengthen not just the local civil society but also the developmental interventions undertaken.





Name of the Village :
Location : Osiyan, Jodhpur, Rajasthan
Facilitation Agencies: Line Department
Watershed: Thob

For Assuring Quality

Creating quality assets is a major challenge for the village level institutions, particularly when they are not very experienced in such activities. Similar challenge was faced by Thob watershed committee. Then it decided to seek the support of those individuals, who have the skill to supervise works and ensure good quality. Sub groups were formed for supervising specific tasks with these skilled persons based on their specializations. These sub groups were responsible for providing training and technical assistance to the villagers in implementation of activities. They were also responsible for monitoring the project progress. The groups were recognized in the village and the individual members of these groups were paid honorarium for the role they played.



Name of the Village: Joba
 Location: Chattisghad
 Facilitating Agency: Line Department
 Project: Gol

Critical and Timely Support

Formation of SHGs is often considered an essential part of any developmental activity. However, it is important to be clear about the vision of the SHGs. There are often contesting claims over the identities of the SHGs- as representatives of the local civil society, as vehicles of women's empowerment, as facilitators of developmental projects, as forums for livelihood generation, etc. The roles of the SHGs are often best understood contextually and their genesis defines them in the most complete way.

When the Joba watershed was underway, the watershed committees had also formed SHGs. However, a lack of vision and perspective resulted in these SHGs being weak. They could not really fit into any of the role envisaged for them. At this point, the local Anganwadi workers took the initiative to revitalize the SHGs. They worked closely with the groups and developed their capacities to meaningfully participate in the process of development. After a period of handholding support, the SHGs were strengthened to manage their affairs and emerged as a forum for women's participation.

The case study is interesting because it demonstrates that a watershed in a community program and all members of the communities can contribute towards strengthening the program. In this case, the Anganwadi members had no real link with the program but they took initiative to rejuvenate SHGs and the watershed program provided them with the space to do so. Inclusion of diverse stakeholders and building on their capacities is thus has fundamental advantages that, as this case shows, can considerably strengthen watershed program initiatives.



Name of the Village: Joba
 Location: Chattisghad
 Facilitating Agency: Line Department
 Project: Gol



For Protecting Dignity

Driven by various exigencies of life, the villagers in Joba had to borrow money from the banks. Given that most of the loans were taken for meeting needs that were not really 'productive' and that the income and livelihood options were limited, many villagers were unable to repay the loans and were classified as defaulters.

The watershed program and the economic avenues there in provided an opportunity to the defaulters to repay their borrowed amounts. In this case the defaulters worked out a unique arrangement. A SHG was formed that had only defaults as its members. This not only helped to focus better and steer them towards enhancing their livelihood but also inculcated a feeling of solidarity around a common problem. Additionally, they were saved the embarrassment of being singled out as defaulters in SHGs where they would be considered burdensome. The defaulters SHGs restored their dignity and provided them with the opportunity to work towards the common goal. Hard work by the group soon saw them reaping financial benefits. They were able to repay their loans and became eligible to take further loans that they could afford to use for 'productive' purposes as classified by the authorities.

The case study illustrates that within the watershed programs thinking beyond the ordinary can help form social capital in ways that address some critical concerns. In this case formation of defaulter groups was an idea that worked very well for the people while remaining sensitive to their needs, aspirations and dignity.



Name of the Village: Joba
 Location: Chattisghad
 Facilitating Agency: Line Department
 Project: Gol

Committed Committee

Livelihood was a core agenda for development in the Joba watershed area. While on farm practices had enhanced the livelihood options, there was also a need to look at other ways to diversify the livelihood base.

The Watershed Committee of Joba decided to support the SHGs to undertake natural resource based livelihood practices. With the facilitation of the watershed committee, SHGs took up collection of leaves from the forest and making leaf plates for sale in the adjoining villages. This resulted in the generation of Rs 8,000 per month for the group. In another instance, SHGs were encouraged to undertake pisci culture for which seeds were provided. This turned out to be very profitable with the groups earning Rs 60,000 per year. Some SHGs were supported to make incense sticks and various food materials that had a ready market. The watershed committee provided the packaging materials to the groups. As a result of these economic activities, the SHGs earned Rs 4,000- Rs 6000 per month.

The watershed committee was also sensitive to the need of the landless and they were supported to take up diverse non farm livelihood practices like starting a small eatery, opening grocery shops, etc.

The case study is important as the Watershed Committee was unconventionally supportive of livelihood practices that were not directly related to the watershed. However, the livelihoods promoted were in harmony with the natural resource management practices that only strengthened the program. This demonstrates that prioritizing community needs and working with a natural resource perspective towards meeting those needs is a possible and viable option that can be tried out in watershed projects.



Name of the Village: Bhainsadani
 Location : Orissa
 Facilitating Agency: Lokdrusti
 Project : INGO



To Manage Resources

A 2 Km long canal (diversion channel) from Rani Jhola stream to the main water harvesting structure is a lifeline of the Bhainsandani village. The water collected in the main tank was shared among the users equitably. They evolved certain sharing norms and gave priority to small and marginal farmers among the villagers. While planning for the water collection and distribution, one of the farmers wanted to divert the water from canal itself, even before the water reaches the main tank. This was not agreeable to the remaining water users. The watershed association resolved the conflict by setting the norms of water usage. They mentioned that the diversion of water from canal was not allowed. As the discussions were going on, the farmer expressed his willingness to 'pay' higher contribution. But the association took a position that the water is not for 'sale'. After considerable discussions, the water distribution norms were finalized giving priority to small and marginal farmers. Such collective thinking and action has a strong impact on the management of the asset.

When there was a heavy rain in 1997, the water harvesting structure and the canal got damaged. The entire village came forward to repair it. They have not taken any support from anyone or from WDF. They treated the water harvesting structure as their own property and decided to maintain it at their own cost.

Local PIA realized the important role played by watershed association and user groups in the entire process of harvesting, using and managing water resources. Based on this experience, it promoted the water resource focused approach in several other villages. The replication of this experience mainly focused on harnessing the perennial streams to store/ collect water in water harvesting structures and facilitating the use of the same through user groups. The village/ hamlet based association plays critical role in decision making and setting norms. Some times the entire village itself was considered as user group.



Watershed: Dumri
 Location : Dhanbad, Jharkhand
 PIA: Tata Steel Rural Development Society (TSRDS)
 Project : Gol

'Core' of Periphery

Institutional arrangements are critical for facilitating the involvement of communities in development processes in a village. Several efforts are made by different organizations to facilitate appropriate institutional arrangements for a given context and need while implementing the program. One such example is from TSRDS, Dhanbad. The salient features of this arrangement are :

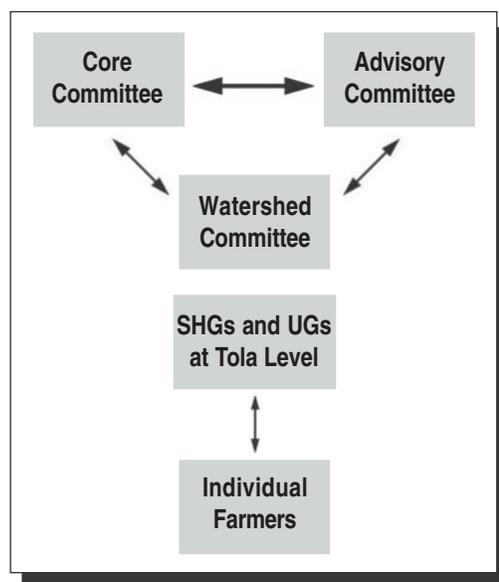
- ★ Core Committee
- ★ Advisory Committee
- ★ Watershed Committee
- ★ Self Help Groups/ User Groups

Each of this arrangement has its specific role and function

Core Committee:

Popularly known as CC, it is a village level structure setup by TSRDS in 1982 as an intermediary structure between the organization and the community. Members are selected on the basis of representation from all the hamlets (tolas). Each tola selects 2 representatives in a common meeting and they represent that hamlet in CC. It meets quarterly or whenever the need arises. When any new project comes to the village; TSRDS inform the CC and decides the strategy. Then it becomes CC's responsibility

to design the activities of the project, select the beneficiaries, inform fellow villagers, finalize the plans, monitor the execution and





ensuring that the projects runs smoothly and achieves all its objectives successfully. This CC set up assumed significance due to its acceptability and transparency.

Village Advisory Committee:

Village Advisory Committee (VAC) also acts as Core Committee. But the difference is its access with meeting higher officials of TSRDS promoting company Tata Steel. it attends half yearly meeting with the General Manager of the company and presents the development report. VAC is an authorised body to participate in the meeting with GM.

Watershed Committee:

There are total 12 members in the watershed committee. It has 7 members from Core Committee. This committee has to take approval from Core Committee for any intervention or decision. In real sense the Core committee finalizes the interventions.



Name of Village: Panchgachhiya
 Location: Jharkhand
 Facilitating Agency: PRADAN
 Project: Gol

Further Decentralizing Project Responsibilities

'Seva Samiti' experience of Panchgachhiya tell us the benefits of further decentralization of watershed processes. The approach of the facilitating agency was to form institutions of community closer to the action. When the Grama Panchayati had several villages, they formed a "Samiti" constituting a representative of each family for each village. Seva Samiti was one such village based committee. It consisted of 18 members who lived in that village. It was responsible for planning, executing and monitoring of watershed interventions. It had a secretary, president and treasurer selected from its members. A bank account was opened in the name of Samiti and members were trained on the basic responsibilities, technical and financial aspects of the watershed project. It prepared action plans for developing land, water resources and agriculture productivity of the village.

The most interesting aspect of the Samiti functioning reflects in its responsibilities of fund management. Based on the action plan for a given period, the Samiti would submit an indent to the Watershed Committee (WC). It would scrutinize the same and release the required funds to the Samiti, as an advance. The Samiti would execute the works, with the support of trained volunteer and maintain necessary records (site book, muster roll, cash books and vouchers). The Seva Samiti members regularly monitored all the works and prepared necessary records for making payments. During the payments day, the secretary, labourers and Samiti members would be present. The records were verified by the secretary and payments were made. The vouchers were signed by Samiti members as well as the secretary. User group, which is the Samiti itself made contributions on the same day. Typically, a Samiti like this would have spent about three to four lakh rupees of watershed project budgets for a variety of purposes during the project period. The availability of funds advance to the Seva Samiti made all the difference in making project corruption free.





Generally advances are not given in watershed projects, funded by government. Someone makes an advance investment and completes the works. This person is supposed to be reimbursed all the costs/ the money he spent. Since the payments are delayed and not properly made, there is a risk in making such advance investments. No one wants to take this risk, even if one is part of a user group. So someone with some ulterior interests would only be making these advance investments. This system is the origin of contractorship in the watershed development projects. During the execution of work itself, this person (contractor) would make his profit and complete the works with poor quality. Since user groups generally do not contribute, they do not have any right to question the malpractices of this person (contractor). This person could be from out side the village or from the village or from the users themselves. The advance given to Samiti makes the investments available to the community No one has to make the advance investments and make the project into a “Contractor Driven” project.

When finances are controlled by the communities, the project is also controlled by them. The facilitating agency has to believe in the capacities of the local institutions and transfer the powers to them, including money power. This empowerment is visible with several such Samitis that managed the project affairs including funds.



Name of the Village: Jaithaliya
 Location: Banswara, Rajasthan
 PIA: Line Department
 Project: Gol

Building Capacities : Early Investment

When the watershed project sanctioned to Jaithaliya, PIA realized that mobilizing the community around the project was critical for its success. It thought that meaningful participation could come only from an active engagement in the process. Since the department was not sure on its strength in community mobilization and capacity building activities, it requested the GVT, a local NGO to provide support. This partnership made a good sense as the strengths of different agencies were pooled together for a common purpose – building capacities of rural communities.

A training program was organized for the PIA and the community based Watershed Committee. It was a perfect balance of the soft and the hard inputs, i.e. technical and people-skills. Exposure visits were organized to watershed areas. While these were limited to a section of the village population, efforts were undertaken to broadbase participation. A Jan Chaitanya (People’s Awareness) rally was organized. People were encouraged to interact, share their experiences. Across watershed review meetings were also facilitated during this rally. Large number of women and children participated in it. In addition to developing a good perspective, it greatly motivated the community and developed a competitive attitude to perform better. Presence of District Administration and MLAs during the “pad yatra” has dispelled the fear and doubts in the mind of the community regarding the project implementation. Everyone expressed their views on the objectives and importance of the program.

This effort demonstrated that a clear preparatory phase would motivate the community and involve them in the project. The investment in building the capacity of the community in the inception period will pay off with strong community based organizations in place. These will sustain much beyond the project life...



Name of the Village : Kanoojthoria
 Location : Rajasthan
 Facilitating Agency : Foundation for Ecological Security
 Project : Gol



Ensuring Norms

In Thoria, the Watershed Development Committee (WDC) ensured full participation of the community in preparing village plans for executing soil and water conservation works. During the implementation, a Loose Stone Check Dam (LSCD) was built near the agricultural field of Chairman of the WDC. Infact it was a sheer coincidence.

Within a year the Chairman took the benefit of this situation and increased his farm area. In the process he encroached the near by land. When the Committee members and villagers came to know about this, they immediately held a village meeting to solve the issue. Entire village took a decision to penalize the Chairman for this act. He was fined for 21 Mann (1 Mann = 40 kg.) of food grain to be distributed to the cattle and the birds of the village. He was also asked not use the encroached land for sowing purpose and see that such incident of encroaching the land will not be committed again. Chairman also realized his mistake and obeyed the decision of the village community.

This incident shows that the strong institutional set up within the village and the peer pressure makes every body accountable. It also facilitates to follow a transparent and participatory process by the community leaders.



Name of the Village: Jaithaliya
 Location: Rajasthan
 Facilitating Agency: Line Department
 Project: Gol

Innovation in Institutions

The Watershed Committee in the Jaithaliya village reflected the developmental aspirations of the people. This implied that they had too many things to do. SHGs had to be formed for the empowerment of the women so that they can engage in the development process. The forests had to be protected. The capacities of the people had to be developed to practice sustainable agriculture to protect and enhance the natural base of the area. This required working very closely with the people through a totally decentralized *modus operandi*.

In order to facilitate the process, the Watershed Committee hired volunteers from the village with the support of the PIA. Special attention was paid to ensure that the essential skill sets were identified and the candidates were fit to play the roles. Local Volunteers were selected on the basis of their interests, capabilities and most importantly the right developmental orientation to undertake the work. Four areas of specialization, based on the local needs were SHG formation, vermiculture promotion, vermicompost promotion and protection of forest. A token honorarium was fixed for the volunteers.

The results were extremely encouraging. Community based mechanisms were in place for the protection of the forest. SHGs were formed, strengthened and linked with institutions like NABARD. Vermicompost structures were installed. Most significantly, the Volunteers were instrumental in improving the quality of program.

The case study illustrates that agencies need to be alert of and support institutional arrangement that strengthens the local capacities and asset base of the project. This not only improves the service delivery systems but also enhances the quality of the programs



Name of the Village: Dujod
 Location: Rajasthan
 Facilitating Agency : Line Department
 Project: GoI



Village elects Watershed Committee

In Dujod watershed, village committees were formed in each village. There were a total of six village level committees in the whole watershed area. Committee members were elected through village meetings. The purpose, objective and expectations about the committee were initially explained to the community. With all this awareness, villagers were able to elect the members of their choice. The total strength of the committee was in relation to the population of the village. Representation ranged from 5 to 11 members. These selected members in turn elected a President and General Secretary for the committee. Care was taken to provide representation on the basis of caste and gender.

This is an innovation in institutional arrangements of watershed projects. Each hamlet/ village had its own "Village Committee". The representatives of each village committee nominated their representative for bigger watershed committee. These type of arrangements could help in resolving the differences on various issues.

Dujod is a big village panchayat. A cordial relation was established between panchayat and watershed committee. All activities and expenditure were shared in the village meeting.



Name of the Village : Bhainsadani
 Location : Orissa
 Facilitating Agency: Lokdrusti
 Project : INGO

Plurality of Institutions

Institutions of communities are established with a specific purpose and they should have functional roles. In the absence of such purpose/ functional roles, there could be considerable institutional redundancy. On the other hand it is unreasonable to expect everything from a single institution, which might lead to too much of centralization. In Bhainsandani village, this dilemma was resolved and functional roles are defined for all institutions through effective negotiations.

The villagers have established a very sound system of institutional arrangement to take care of village. There was a village committee to facilitate the development processes in the village more effectively. Various sub-committees were also formed around issues like health, education, forest etc. There was a Mahila Samiti (committee of women) to address concerns of women. Co-existence of structural and functional relationships between these committees proved to be a good arrangement

During the watershed program implementation, local PIA facilitated in forming Watershed Development Committee (WDC), User Groups and SHGs. These project based institutions started performing the tasks related to the program. There was some misunderstanding and conflict between the existing 'issue based institutions' and 'new project based institutions'. Members of the existing institutions thought that the new institutions are breaking the village into several pieces and there was duplication of roles and functions.

Mutual discussions held between existing institutions, new institutions and local PIA helped in defining their roles and functions. The main role of village committee as well as other sub-committees in the implementation of watershed was to ensure that concerned issues of the village have been properly addressed, monitoring the processes involved and sharing of benefits from specific activities. Role clarity and limitations of different institutions together helped the project to run smoothly, and all the villagers and their institutions participated actively in the implementation of the project.





Broadening the Vision

Lok Drusti steered developmental process in a rather different direction. Rather than a task oriented and watershed project oriented approach, it focused on empowerment of women and enhancing their participation in the development process.

As a result of a process of capacity building, strong women's groups emerged who took active interest in the implementation of watershed program, which was considered mainly to be a male dominated area. The women took initiative to engage in plantation of 50 acres of community land. They also brought 22 acres of fallow land under cultivation and subsequently *patta* or land rights were given to 22 marginal tribal farmers. This is significant because the tribal population who mainly reside in the forest areas are often branded 'encroachers' and are deprived of their traditional rights to land and forest. Reinstating the rights is a significant achievement in the direction of restoring their rightful entitlement. The women also addressed the food security and related issues by engaging in an income generation program with the PIA providing.

While these activities were taken place the watershed project was approved. By that time, the community was strongly organized that provided the conducive civil society platform for the program. 10 SHGs were formed and they mobilized the community to contribute to the project through their labour (*shramdaan*). After the completion of the project, the SHGs continued to play a significant role in the development affairs of the village.

The experience demonstrates that the watershed program provides an opportunity to initiate community based activities that really strengthen the community. The institutions formed in the process can also play a positive role in ensuring that people access their rights and improve their quality of life.



Name of the Village: Panchgachhiya
 Location: Jharkhand
 Facilitating Agency: PRADAN
 Project: Gol

Learning by Doing

Jaiprakash Rai, Secretary of a community based organization in Dumka was very diffident doing what he had been encouraged to do. The PIA of the watershed had asked Jaiprakash to take over the responsibility of all financial transactions pertaining to the Entry Point Activity. Neither Jaiprakash nor the organization had the experience of handling the finances of this sort. And they feared that their inexperience will lead to errors and omissions. He was more comfortable with PIA handling the finances.

But the PIA refused to be directly involved in the process. They changed the direction of support and started building the capacity of the organization personnel - the secretary, volunteers and other watershed committee member in accounts and financial management. Building on the training, the organization encouraged the functionaries to carry out all financial tasks involved in EPA - getting the advance, preparing bills and finally making the payments. During this process it provided handholding support, cross checking the bills and cashbooks and gave feedback for further improvement of the financial systems.

When Jaiprakash and his colleagues became confident and successful in handling the financial affairs, PIA decided to take a step further and encouraged them to engage in other financial activities as well in a process of 'learning by doing'. The results of the experiment were impressive.

PIA did not sign even on a single withdrawal slip in the entire project period. The secretary was capable of preparing internal audit report by the second year. During the period, the accounts of the organization were audited and cleared thrice. Jaiprakash is now the custodian of all the financial documents at committee level. He has indeed, turned into a resource person for other watershed projects in nearby area.

It demonstrates that the emphasis on the capacity building of the local community in watershed implementation processes has a significant positive impact in promoting high levels of transparency and participation



Name of the Village: Dujod
 Location: Rajasthan
 Facilitating Agency : Line Department
 Project: Gol



GOPAL - Extending support for Livestock

In Dujod Watershed, a skill based training programme was taken up by the PIA (Animal Husbandry department) It was under 'Gopal' scheme implemented by the state government with the financial support from World Bank. This scheme was implemented in all the watersheds. As part of this comprehensive scheme, training was given on animal health and their management aspects over a period of six months. Local active youth were identified by the village watershed committee to train them. Priority was given to young enthusiastic individuals having interest in livestock and committed to serve in rural areas.

This extension initiative became very successful as it provided veterinary services in the remote areas. It also ensured the livelihood of the *Gopals* with substantial income coming from the farmers who have taken up their services. These *Gopals* in turn identified many activists and provided training to them. This increased their outreach in providing veterinary services.

This is one of the interesting and effective examples of convergence between different projects and departments that demonstrated considerable synergies at the field level. It helped to address one of the most critical, but neglected interventions in the watershed projects – health of livestock.



Name of the Village: Dujod
 Location: Rajasthan
 Facilitating Agency : Line Department
 Project: Gol

Efforts for Effective Communication

Transparency is the core value of participatory development projects. Institutions are mainly meant for establishing the mechanisms for transparent decision making. However, it is important to realize this process needs to be facilitated till this value is internalized. The facilitating agencies have a major in establishing these norms.

Project Implementing Agency (PIA) of Dujod watershed followed a unique methodology for informing and communicating the community about the watershed program. The idea was to inform and motivate all the stakeholders for their active participation and involvement in the program. The focus was especially on ensuring the participation of the poorest communities, women and weaker sections of the village.

PIA used to display the information regarding the meetings well in advance (20 days prior) at various places the village. Gram Panchayat office, Community Buildings and all the common places where villagers generally gather served this purpose. Pamphlets were distributed and information was announced through loudspeaker throughout the watershed area. All these efforts resulted in enlightening the community about the program. There was enhanced participation of the stakeholders particularly from the poorest communities and weaker sections of the village...



Name of the Village : Ramach
 Location : Rajasthan
 Facilitating Agency : Seva Mandir
 Project : INGO



A 'Super'vising Initiative

Giving complete responsibility to a particular group/ institution is not a good idea, when large amount of funds and physical activities are involved. Peer pressure acts more effectively in ensuring transparency and stabilizing institutional functions. Recognizing this, Seva Mandir initiated the formation of "Supervisory Committee". This institutional arrangement worked as an effective system of checks and balances and also helped in developing transparency.

The Village Development Committee appointed a supervisory committee to look after the different physical works. This committee used to give verbal feedback to the Village Development Committee about the progress of work. Committee members were capable persons with specific skills and had experience of implementing physical activities like contour vegetative hedge, loose stone check dam, masonry work, farm ponds, horticulture and plantations etc. Supervisory committee members voluntarily work on the sites or sometimes worked with the labor so that they can supervise the quality of the activity.

The Village Development Committee tried to capture the potentials of those individuals who were not part of the watershed committee but have good leadership qualities. Elder people were given preference in the committee so that their experience enriches the quality of the implementation. Some young individuals were also made the part of the committee who had good expertise on a certain activity. Over a period, it was recognized that such a simple system of sub-committee was effective in enhancing the quality of the works and also the transparency of the program.



Name of the Village: Bhagirathi
 Location: Orissa
 Facilitating Agency: Line Department
 Project: Gol

An Ideal Leadership

Sitaram Purohit, aged between 40-45 years was the Chairman of Bhagirathi watershed. He was also the Sarpanch of the Panchayat. The area was politically very sensitive. Due to personal animosity between the leaders, people of the entire constituency were divided politically. The political rivalry is fueled by stray incidents of conflicts and confrontation among them. Murder of Sitaram's father was also such an incident.

Sitaram belonged to one political party but he did not have any political bias. He was holding certain position and responsibilities in the village. In spite of his fairness it is quite obvious to have resistance from the opponents. He was able to handle such situations very easily only as he did not have any ill intention. He facilitated and supported the process of formation of user groups and selection of its leaders. Several members of the opposite group also became the leaders of user group. By doing this he established an inbuilt mechanism of checks and balances in the functioning of user group. He facilitated the process of consultations with all groups before taking any important decisions to minimize conflicts in the subsequent phases of intervention. He encouraged the user groups to handle money as it is the true indicator of taking responsibility. Such systems established higher level of transparency and confidence in the village.

In spite of all efforts women were quite reluctant to participate in watershed activities. As there were no women WDT members, Sitaram requested his wife Sulata to motivate the village women to take part in the watershed activities. She took initiative and succeeded in doing this. After her involvement, several SHGs were formed in the village. These SHGs are currently engaged in thrift and credit activities. They also accessed revolving fund from watershed funds.





The Bhagirathi watershed assumed recognition as one of the best watersheds in the block and district. Several government officers gave special attention to this project as a result of Sitaram's own persistence in dealing with the line departments and DRDA. Sitaram attributes the success of the project to all individuals associated in the watershed for their commitment and sincerity. But in reality it is the leadership of Sitaram that made the watershed different from others.



Name of the Village: Dhunri
 Location: Jharkand
 facilitating agency: (Not relevent)
 Project: (Not relevent)

How Participatory is Participation?

“Of course we work for the oppressed communities- the scheduled castes and the dalits. How else do you think that these illiterate and uncivilized people got their ration cards?”

The Core Committee members of Dhunri in Dhanbad district were aghast at the allegations that they were not inclusive enough. After all, the Core Committee was set up as peoples representing organization more than three decades back. It was the community based organization that worked as an intermediary between the local NGO and the community. Initiatives were taken to ensure that the Core Committee was well represented. The process of selection involved representation from each hamlet followed by final selection in the ‘Aam Sabha’.

The Core Committee assumes the responsibility of community leadership. They design the activities of the development projects for the village, select the beneficiaries, inform fellow villagers, finalize the plans and monitor the execution. The Watershed Committee also are within the aegis of the Core Committee and need to take the approval from the Committee regarding the nature of interventions, selection of beneficiaries and other important decisions etc.

While the Committee has been an effective implementer, it has over the years excluded the dalits and the scheduled castes, the most oppressed sections of the social structure. This is not by design though. Indeed the Core Committee had undertaken extensive community development work. It is just another example of the way the oppressed have been bypassed and excluded by mainstream development process!





Institutional arrangements are critical for the involvement of communities in development processes. However, this process of institution development is not free from biases and prejudices and the inherent beliefs of the facilitating agency influence the process to a great extent. Fundamental to development is a process of inclusion of the poorest of the poor and the most oppressed as until their proactive engagement is at the core of development. Facilitating this inclusion is the critical challenge that institutions face.



Name of the Village: Ramsin
 Location: Rajasthan
 Facilitating Agency: WASCO
 Project: Gol

Lost out Opportunity

There was only one group in Ramsin at the time of the project commencement. It was a group of the sheep owners. All the members belonged to the *Rebari* group. They are mostly landless and earn their livelihood from cattle rearing. The group comprised of 85 members. It was formed under a state government scheme with an objective to improve the productivity of the animals. At the time of initiating watershed project, they were not much interested in its interventions. PIA tried to motivate them by awareness activities and organizing '*Animal Shibir*s'. The benefits of the watershed program was explained to them. But all such efforts were found futile.

This disinclination had its own history. Earlier the animal husbandry department implemented a project in the village. They organized a group of landless rabari families. The group was assigned 98 hectares of the panchayat land on lease for developing pasture. A veterinary expert was deployed to look after the animals for better breeding. A committee was formed to manage the group and keep them functional even after the completion of the project. Various repair works and plantation were undertaken. Different types of grass were grown for providing fodder to the animals. Some soil and moisture conservation measures were also taken-up. Structures like dug-out ponds and LSCD were constructed to restrict the soil erosion and increase the moisture content. A guard was employed to keep watch on the pastureland. Membership fee was collected and deposited in the group bank account. This all looks like a comprehensive process of interventions. But there was a critical lacuane in the whole process. The group remained isolated and disengaged in all these activities. Besides playing a dominant role in decision-making, the line department has capsized the whole program implementation

Meanwhile the project was discontinued due to some mismanagement of the officials. At that time there were 25 such groups at the state level. All these groups joined hands and





collectively resisted the attempt to discontinue the project. They filed a legal case to keep the project going. The court gave a verdict in the favour of groups and the project was allowed to continue. When the work resumed, the plantation could not be taken because of lack of time. The forest department later took it up. Meanwhile, the group became more defunct and almost dormant. Non-involvement of the group in all stages of the project, discontinuity of project funds and support, low level of inputs to the group, considerable delays in the project made the entire initiative as unproductive. One of the most comprehensively planned interventions on livestock got had a blow because of low level of community involvement and absence of empathy from the line department.



Name of the Village: Thob
 Location: Rajasthan
 Facilitating Agency: Line Department
 Project: Gol

A False Promise : Broken Institution

Formation of groups is an important function of the facilitating agencies in watershed program. But they should know how to form groups and build their groups. Basic requirement is to have faith in the capacities of the community. Without this it is not possible for the facilitating agencies to establish institutions of communities.

The WDT member made initial efforts to motivate the villagers to form thrift and credit groups in Thob village. While facilitating this process, the WDT member made some false promises. He told that if they come together to form a group, each such group would be given a fund of Rs 10000/- and this amount was to be returned to the watershed committee after one year. It was also said that there would be no interest. This 'offer' created considerable enthusiasm among the villagers.

But the response of the community and the profile of the groups did not inspire the WDT. He was not very sure whether these SHGs could actually return the money. While the group was about to settle, he withdrew his promise of revolving fund. The PIA also did not support his enthusiasm. The breaking of promise had a strong impact on the fragile and nascent institution. The new SHGs were disturbed and the members were not cohesive with each other. There was more dissimilarity among themselves. They struggled to survive for two years and eventually collapsed. The initial hope was never realized, even after working for two years and in spite of some support from local banks in the form of loans. In fact, both the SHGs could not repay the loans they borrowed from the banks. It conveys a message that crafting community institutions is not an easy task!



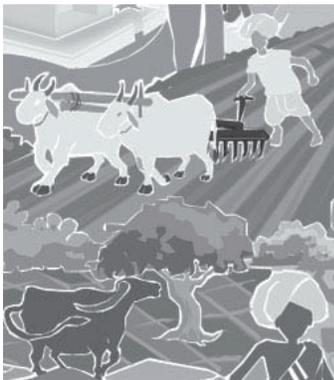
Name of Village: Bhasandani
 Location: Orissa
 Facilitating Agency: Lok Drusti
 Project: INGO



For Supplementing the Capacities

When the watershed development project was initiated, PIA Lok Drusti was not familiar with the depth and breadth of watershed approach. The orientation was vague and understanding was limited. But the organization had a commitment and willingness to do something useful to the communities. This village was part of a consortium of organizations which set a new challenge for them in the watershed approach. Donors and nodal NGO recognized that commitment and interest only make them eligible to be member of the consortium. But for performing and achieving the expected objectives, this commitment was not adequate. It requires to have capacities. Capacity building through traditional training programs has its own limitations. Every thing can not be taught in training programs. So the need for an alternative capacity building support system was strongly proposed.

The capacity building support was needed in terms of conceptualizing the project; improvising it from time to time. Internalizing the concerns; providing appropriate technical and institutional supports, facilitating reflections, planning and review meetings were all part of this process. For operationalizing this, a Technical Support Group was constituted as part of the project design. The main functions of this group was to provide 'on the job' training on several issues including technology applications, institutional processes, integration of core concerns in the project implementation. The members of the technical support group regularly visited the project villages and met members of consortium to provide hand holding support. They also participated in the review meetings and provided their feed back on the performance of the field level NGOs and members of consortium.



This is an innovative arrangement that combined learning processes with project philosophy. The inputs were taken seriously, as the technical support group was institutionally embedded in the entire project and had a clear mandate. While designing process building, an arrangement of this kind is very essential and critical.



Name of the Village: Khorameena
 Location: Rajasthan
 Facilitating Agency: Line Department
 Project: Gol

PLANNING PHASE

Delineation Revised

Khorameena Watershed in Rajasthan was implemented by Government PIA. When the village got the project, watershed area was already delineated. But villagers felt that it was not proper because major part of the watershed was under another village. Hence a proposal was made to DRDA to revise the watershed area. In this process, the Women Sarpanch of the village, who was instrumental in getting the watershed project to the village, played an important role. She convinced the district officers about the need for revising the watershed area, as per the sentiments and needs of the village. She also used her contacts with many others to put pressure. DRDA had to respond to this need and the watershed area was again delineated.

Topo sheet and cadastral map were used for delineating and community participated in this process effectively. It was decided that the village road should be taken as a boundary. The area of watershed was technically delineated as per drainage lines and ridge lines. Thus the total area (500ha) of watershed remained within the village. The involvement and grit of the village community, coupled with the committed leadership helped in redefining the watershed area.

Indeed the delineation of watershed may or may not follow the political boundaries of the village. The technical criteria could induce several conflicts in the village. On the other hand, any area could be treated on 'watershed principles' irrespective of its location. The demand from local leadership and villagers on redefining the watershed area, which coincided with their village area is a major lesson for watershed hardliners.



Name of the Village: Anwari
 Location: Chattisgarh
 Facilitating Agency : Gayatri Pragya
 Project: Gol



Doing it Themselves

Anwari is a picturesque village in Bastar district of Chattisgarh. Here agriculture was undertaken in the plains. Erratic rainfall, high degree of erosion caused by run-off created lot of problems for the community. Considering these problems Anwari was selected for a watershed project. With its little experience in implementing the watershed. PIA decided to work on two priority areas : Harvesting optimum amount of water and taking measures to control soil erosion.

As a first step, exposure visits were undertaken to the nearby watershed villages to understand the measures and impact of program implementation. Participatory exercises were held wherein the PIA encouraged the community to prepare plans on their own building on their traditional knowledge. According to these plans a number of gully plugs were constructed and series of small tanks / ponds were dug on the hill slopes. This helped significantly in controlling soil erosion. The tanks were recharged with water and it was available through out the year.

A significant fact about the project was that no technical surveys were carried out. Neither the services of technical experts were used. People on their own identified appropriate interventions, site locations and accordingly designs and estimates were made. Indigenous knowledge of the community helped in this process. This demonstrates that the communities can themselves plan and implement the projects building on their traditional knowledge and wisdom even with little external support.



Name of the Village: Hatikhoj
 Location: Orrisa
 Facilitating Agency: Line Department
 Project: GoI

Women's Idea

When the men in the Hatikhoj village got engaged in the watershed project in under the Employment Assurance Scheme, the women wanted to get involved in contributing to the family income. Most of the women were members of the Self Help Groups (SHGs) and had undertake saving and credit activities. While these activities provided a necessary cushion or safety net for the households in times of crises, there was no real economic enhancement. The watershed program and the variety of natural resource management processes that went into it got the women thinking. With the facilitation of the PIA, the women decided to engage in farm based income generation activities.

The big landowners in Hatikhoj practiced mono-cropping of paddy on their land. During the rest of the year, the land would remain uncultivated. The women requested the landowners to give the land to them on lease after the harvest of paddy. The women took the land and started producing cotton. This crop diversification technique turned out to be a lucrative income generation activity for the women and it encouraged others to take up similar activities.

The case study illustrates that a watershed is not a one-off activity. If implemented in a participatory manner that facilitates flow of knowledge, skill and information, it can trigger off a process of all round development. In this case, a natural resource management approach to watershed enhances the awareness of the women about agricultural possibilities and this led to cotton farming. It is also a good practice for the PIA to be open to the range of possible developmental activities and facilitate them building on watershed projects.



Name of the Village: Ramach
 Location: Rajasthan
 Facilitating Agency: Seva Mandir
 Project: INGO



'Cha(l)k'ing out a New Path

In the rain-fed village of Ramach, scarcity of water forced the community members to think beyond the regular methods of soil and water conservation. The communities with the help of the forest department developed an innovative mechanism called Chak. Given most of the farmers have small and marginal land holding that perpetuates poverty resulting from economic inefficiencies of small farms, the farmers decided to consolidate land. Plots ranging between 5 and 10 ha were created by consolidating the land of five to six farmers. In each of the Chaks, area is stipulated for growing grass as fodder for the animals.

In terms of mechanisms, proposals are submitted by a group of farmers to Village Development Committee (VDC) where the necessary details and mutual agreement are spelt out. Financial resources are allotted to the Chaks after assessing the technical feasibility and economic viability. Resources are allotted on the area basis for a period of six months. All measures of arable and non-arable land are completed by the users.

This innovative practice has not only worked out as an efficient *in situ* moisture conservation technique and as a successful model for meeting fodder needs during periods of severe scarcity but has also led to increased understanding among the farmers and sense of cooperation in the process enhancing the social capital of the area.

The case study demonstrates that watersheds provide opportunities for innovations and these innovations are reflections of people's wisdom. The extent to which watersheds are able to provide the ground and the space for harnessing people's wisdom often determine the success of the projects in achieving its long term developmental goals.



Name of the Village: Hatikhoj
 Location: Orissa
 Facilitating Agency: ASCO
 Project: Gol

Trees, Grasses, Gardens, Forests

The drought prone village of Hatikhoj was located from hillsides to valley side. The area was largely degraded with no forest cover. When the Soil Conservation Department took up the area under NWDPPA, it collaborated closely with two other departments – the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Horticulture. The three departments came together to develop an integrated land use system with a ridge to valley treatment approach. A series of activities were undertaken with a broad natural resource management approach. Forest trees on the uplands and fodder trees on low lands were planted. The plantation program was sensitive to the needs of the community and the livestock. Rain water harvesting tanks were constructed. Dryland horticulture was initiated, coarse pulses were grown and all backyard/kitchen gardens were promoted across all households.

Community members were also mobilized around the entire process. The villagers organized themselves into protection committees and in rotation took up the responsibility of protecting the forest and the horticultural initiative.

This approach turned out to be highly successful and strengthened soil and water conservation measures. The case study demonstrates that collaboration and coordination between different stakeholders, including the different government departments can have a tremendous positive impact on undertaking holistic development. In this case, three government departments came forward and contributed that led to a level of achievement that was much higher than departments working on their own.



Name of the Village: Dujual
 Location: Rajasthan
 Facilitating Agency: WD & SC
 Project: Gol



Naturally Sustainable

Being a primarily rain-fed village, it was imperative for the villagers of Dujual to develop mechanism to prevent water run off. When the area came under watershed development during the 1990s, watershed development programs were still at nascent stage. Watershed development was introduced in the village as a part of wider natural resource management program with high emphasis on enhancing agricultural productivity. The Agriculture supervisor of PIA inspired the community to undertake plantation of the locally suitable plants as vegetative barriers. In order to ensure soil & moisture conservation, locally available species of plants were identified and planted and horticulture was promoted. This not only increased the vegetative cover of the area but also reduced soil erosion and controlled rain water run-off that led to higher productivity and consequently enhanced livelihood.

Increased incomes being critical and visible change, farmers from the neighboring villages were also encouraged to adopt similar practices. Such practices promoted use of vegetative measures and a sustainable natural resource management approach to the watersheds.

The case study illustrates that a natural resource management approach can build on the existing and available resources. Such approach, when successful also has a greater ripple effect as more people can learn and replicate without investing money. A natural resource management approach would be sustainable, if the interventions are harmonious with the development aspirations of the people and the natural environment.



Name of the Village: Kadampura
 Location: UP
 Name of the Facilitating Agency: Parmarth
 Project: INGO

Process Facilitation : Step by Step

Mainstreaming gender concerns in watershed projects was the main thrust of the facilitating agencies in this village. OXFAM, the donor supported the process of building perspective and capacities of PARMARTH, in this project. The sequence of process steps followed by the organization gives interesting insights into the nature of activities involved in mainstreaming gender concerns.

★ Understanding the village situation – social, political, economic, religious aspects)

- ❖ Confidence building among the communities on the philosophy
- ❖ Developing rapport with the community both men and women
- ❖ Collection of primary data from the village and consolidation for analysis with gender perspective (Gender Disaggregated Data on selected themes)
- ❖ Collective analysis of data/ information along with community and NGO staff and understanding the opinion of community on NRM and Gender Issues

★ Identification of problems of village

- ❖ Capacity Building inputs to People's Institutions on NRM and Gender Issues (Exposure visit, shrama daan)
- ❖ Sensitization on gender concerns at the community level and conducting mass awareness campaigns

★ Establishing People's Institution (Jan Sanghantan) with men and women

- ❖ Establish Grama Chetna Samiti and Women SHGs/ Mahila Mandals
- ❖ Establishing women SHGs
- ❖ Meetings at community level





- ❖ Establishing Women's Sanghatan - Natural Resource Management Committee
- ❖ Formation of Cluster Level Institutions and improving the access of women and men into this Cluster Level Institutions
- ★ **Networking and Advocacy at local level**
 - ❖ Raising the issues related to women in the village level People's Institution
 - ❖ Organizing Rallies/ Abhiyan on Violence Against Women and Reducing Number of Women
 - ❖ Awareness Camps on NRM and Women Empowerment
 - ❖ Facilitating the access and control of women over decision making and resources
 - ❖ Organizing Women Meets and Bal Melas
 - ❖ Facilitating regular interactions and review meetings
- ★ **Action Planning with men and women**
 - ❖ Involving community in the preparation of action plan – area, objectives, target; responsibilities
 - ❖ Mobilizing financial resources
 - ❖ Decisions on Project Planning, Management, Rules and Regulations and establishing systems for follow up
- ★ **People's Institutions to implement the project plans**
 - ❖ Facilitating Shrama Daan/ Anshu Daan
 - ❖ Creating Revolving Fund/ Grama Kosh (other activities like grain bank; seed bank; irrigation facilities/ infrastructure)
 - ❖ Defining roles and responsibilities and sharing between People's Institutions and Organization
 - ❖ Capacity Building of People's Institutions – Training Programs; workshops; meetings for implementing plans. Women and Men to participate in these capacity building events





★ **Monitoring:**

- ❖ Continuous Monitoring of the project activities by People's Institutes and NGO
- ❖ Consolidating lessons and upscaling
- ❖ Deciding on rule and regulations on maintenance and responsibility sharing
- ❖ Conceptualizing withdrawal strategy while conceptualizing the project interventions (as per the time line of the project)

One could see that there is a considerable effort to integrate both men and women at all the steps, to create collaborative spaces. At the same time, separate space for women was also created to raise their conscious efforts to tackle issues like violence against women, within all institutions at the village and cluster levels.



Name of the Village: Tola
 Location : Orissa
 Facilitating Agency : Line Department
 Project : Bilateral



IMPLEMENTATION PHASE

Self Financing a 'Productive' Initiative

Often the required initiatives are not taken citing the problem with funding or financial support in the watershed project. If the initiative is really 'productive', then the community does not bother to self finance itself so as to reap the benefit. Here is an example in the Tola village of Kukudnala watershed

A combination of NGO and GO functionaries implemented watershed project in the area. Community organization and action planning were the responsibility of NGO Sarvodaya Samiti and physical activities were implemented by Project Management Unit (PMU) consisting of officials from Soil Conservation department.

During the project implementation, Maheswar Swain, a community organizer realized that the ground water potential increased substantially in the watershed area. Using water from "Chauans" (small shallow wells of 1 meter diameter) for critical irrigation was already a traditional practice in the village. Several farmers protect their crops with traditional irrigation system. Maheswar thought that this traditional system could be strengthened by combining 'treadle peddles pumps'. These pumps are operated with human labor (without any electricity) and can function effectively in shallow water.

The village situation was ideally suited to this improvised technology. But there was a hitch with regard to the funding. The watershed project did not have funding support for 'using' water. It supports initiatives of 'conserving' water. Each pump costs Rs1500/-. The promoters of pumps agreed to give a subsidy of Rs 50/- per pump. Maheswar motivated few farmers to buy the pumps with their own resources. After some persuasion few farmers came forward and purchased the pumps. These were installed on their 'chaunas'. It helped to increase the productivity in terms of both human labor and land. It also helped the survival of crops in critical dry spells. This experience motivated other farmers in the village. Now the village has 540 farmers using this pump with traditional chaunas. They not only increase the area under protected irrigation, but also productivity of crops. It is significant that this entire initiative was self-financed!



Name of the village: Chora
 Location : Jharkand
 Facilitating Agency : Krishi Gram Vikas Kendra
 Project : Gol

Ensuring Transparency

Several actors are involved in execution of the watershed works. While the roles of certain groups like User Group, Watershed Committee, Secretary and Volunteers are well defined, it was not the same with other groups. These groups/ individuals also work in execution of activities (eg: Laborers), but do not have any say or clearly defined role in the process. There may be some other groups/ members who could play a critical role, but do not get an opportunity to do so as the project does not allow it. These omissions lead to confusions, mistrust and misunderstandings. Certain persons/ groups in the execution of works may be suspected as 'outsiders' but in real sense they could be potential 'insiders' It is important to develop institutional processes to enhance the transparency of the execution processes with inclusive nature. The Krishi Gram Vikas Kendra (KGVK) innovated an institutional process, which helped not only to enhance the transparency, but also created a space for involving concerned stakeholders in the process.

KGVK adopted the strategy to form *Temporary SHG*. It comprised of the members of existing SHG, other villagers and outside labours. All these members of *temporary SHG* took part in the execution of activity. Funds were given to them by the Watershed Committee (WC) for work implementation. The existing books and bank account of the old SHG were used for channeling the fund from WC. This *Temporary SHG* had the responsibilities to supervise the work, check the measurement, prepare the bills and master rolls, pay the labours, collect the contribution from the beneficiaries/ labours and deposit it with the Secretary of WC. During the implementation period, all the members had to attend the meetings. All the transactions were carried out in these meetings. After the completion of the activity the temporary members had no role and membership was automatically withdrawn. In this way labours from outside villages were also involved in the implementation, monitoring and payment processes.



Name of the Village: Anwari
 Location : Kanker
 Facilitating Agency : Gayatri Pragya
 Project : Gol



Who decides What is Good?

The villagers of Anwari had an unusual predicament. They had a watershed project approved which was basically for sustaining their farm based economy. But the reason god knows! The district administration insisted to plant Subabool saplings, as it felt that was the most suitable plant that can be planted on field bunds in the watersheds! This insistence was based on the point that Su-babool provides a protein rich fodder for the animals.

While the villagers were open to plantation, years of experience had demonstrated that Subabool spreads very fast and it effects the soil fertility and reduce crop yield. It also requires considerable management skills and timely action by the farmers to contain its growth and spread. When the villagers, supported by the local PIA Gayatri Pragya, voiced their concern to the district administration, they were misunderstood and the suggestions were not well-taken. And it was reflected on the pattern of fund releases. The amount released for the watershed was much less than expected! A part of the budget was transferred to some other NGO!

Though plantation was an important component for moisture retention, the choice of the villagers for the same purpose, was different. Gayatri Pragya worked closely with the community to work out a solution to the problem. Finally boulder checks were put and earthen dams were constructed that was successful in conserving the soil moisture.

The experience demonstrates a situation where the PIA and the community took a stand against the donor agency to ensure that the local needs are better understood by the local communities in tune with their capacities and management practices.



Name of the Village Thoria
 Location : Rajasthan
 Facilitating Agency : Foundation for Ecological Security.
 Project : Gol

Building on the Experience

The facilitating agency was already working when the watershed project was sanctioned to the village. By that time, the community had inculcated the habit of making collective decisions and following transparent operational systems. And they were clearly visible in the implementation of various project based developmental programs. When the government funded watershed development project came to the village, Facilitating Agency thought that the efficient and transparent operating norms should be followed in its implementation. Discussions were held with the community. A condition was put forth by the facilitating agency so as to continue the existing effective decision making processes and operating systems. Since the community was aware of its benefits, it readily agreed.

Apart from several other aspects, the systems for material procurement was also picked up from the earlier experiences. Before finalizing the suppliers, they were called in the village meeting and asked to quote their rates openly. Based on the analysis of rates and other related attributes, the material suppliers were finalized. Due to this practice, there was no need to call for quotations by the watershed committee for material procurement. It was done openly and a signed resolution book stood as the testimony for such decisions.



Name of the Village: Thane
 Location: Rajasthan
 Facilitating Agency: BAIF
 Project: Bilateral



Collective Effort for Pasture Development

Livestock is the most generally neglected component in the watershed development projects. But in some watersheds livestock related issues got high priority. These stray examples have shown the way to make the watershed development projects more comprehensive and meaningful to the communities.

Majority of the families in Thane village depend on livestock and animal husbandry. One of the problems they encounter was scarcity of fodder. It was felt that developing pasturelands was one of the critical interventions needed to address the problem. The facilitating agency organized several discussions on this issue. It found out that there was major chunk of pasture land in the village.

Though the community agreed to take up the activity, there were huge differences regarding selection of site for pasture development. Few influential villagers had encroached a community land for private cultivation and they were not inclined to give up the land. But most of the villagers determined to remove the encroachers from the land. And they wanted to make use of this land for accruing benefits for entire community. They even thought to erect a fencing around the identified land.

In this conflicting situation, PIA played a major role in facilitating the whole process and convinced the encroachers to withdraw from the encroachment to reserve the land for common purpose. A user group was formed to look after the maintenance work of the pastureland and ensuring the sharing of the benefits.



Name of the Village - Bhainsadani
 Location : Orissa
 Facilitating Agency : Lok Drishti
 Project : INGO

BENEFITS, RESULTS AND SURVIVAL STRATEGIES

Investing for Food Security

Bhainsadani is the only village under Bhainsadani watershed. Economic condition of the people of the village is very poor. They are very much in pressure for managing the food requirement of their families. During rainy season, the villagers faced famine like conditions. Food grains are always scarce. Generally farmers took loans in advance from traders for buying food grains. These loans came with a tag/ condition that the borrowers have to sell the agriculture produce to the same trader at a very low price (80 to 100 Rs/ bag of 75 kg during the time of harvest, though market price at that time would be about 250 to 300 Rs/ bag). The rate of interest was also dependent upon the urgency of loans and the bargaining capacities of the concerned farmers. This is a recurring practice every monsoon in the village.

In such a situation an effective Public Distribution System (PDS) could be a real boon for them. But it was not to be. It was quite irregular and villagers had to walk a long distance for getting ration from the PDS. Even after making several trips, there is no guarantee that the ration would be available there. In this context the Lokdrusti recognized the importance of effective PDS in the villages during rainy season. Lokdrusti enquired the possibilities of a community managed PDS in the village. After initial discussions, the villagers approached the district collector in 1992 for support. The collector agreed with the proposal and sanctioned 150 quintals of rice to keep it for rainy season stock at Bhainsadani to avoid the starvation situation of the villages. This storage, selling and distribution of this rice is to be managed by the villagers themselves.

After the initial positive experiences in Bhainsadani village, villagers from neighboring villages also expressing interest in joining Bhainsadani efforts. In response to this requirement, Loka Samiti was formed with two men and two women representatives from each village. The main responsibility of this samiti is to ensure proper functioning of PDS. They meet every 27th of each month to plan and review the functioning of PDS. When the villagers were convinced





that they were getting essential commodities easily in every month through PDS, they agreed to donate some amount of money to continue the system. They had collected a sum of Rs.5000 in the initial stage from 10 villages. Lokdrusti helped the committee to purchase infrastructure worth Rs.6000. The PDS was operating from Bhainsadani.



Name of the Village: Jaithaliya
 Location: Rajasthan
 Facilitating Agency: Line Department
 Project: Gol

Food for Thought

Food security is one of the most fundamental pre requisite of development. Hunger entrenches people in poverty, reduces their productive potentials and jeopardizes their capacities to participate in the process of their development. Any developmental intervention therefore, should be sensitive to the basic needs of the people and address the most critical needs before initiating the program agenda.

The village of Jaithaliya was mostly inhabited by tribal population, with small land holdings. The village was characterized by unavailability of sufficient food grain, especially during the droughts that were very frequent. The PIA recognized that given the poor state of livelihood and food security, especially during the droughts, there is a need to develop and maintain buffer stock of food grain. Subsequently, the Watershed Committee purchased food grain from the watershed fund and handed it over to one of the SHGs for maintaining the buffer stock. This stock of grain was utilized during the drought season when the communities experienced food scarcity. The amount was paid back to the Watershed program along with interest during the favourable season. This ensured that food grain was available with the community throughout the year that was a tremendous positive feeling that enthused them to participate proactively in the watershed development program.

This is a non-agriculture based intervention that addressed food security concerns at the local level by addressing the distribution and procurement related aspects. It is also important to note that the watershed development fund which is created by accumulating the contribution from the communities is also used for this purpose. The case study illustrates that in designing and implementing any developmental interventions, the priorities of the people have to be well understood. This understanding gave not only information to address their critical needs but also fostered a feeling of cooperation and partnership, so critical to development.



Name of the Village: Joba
 Location: Chattisghad
 Facilitating Agency: Line Department
 Project: Gol



Opening up New Options

Ghansiram was very worried that the family might have to part with their traditional occupation as farmers. Agriculture was no longer profitable enough to sustain his family. He was even considering migration, a survival strategy during the agriculturally lean seasons.

The Joba watershed however supported the family during the crisis period. Mono-cropping of paddy during Kharif was the only means of livelihood for Ghansiram before the watershed. As a result of the watershed, Ghansiram could grow paddy during the Rabi season as well as grow leguminous plants and wheat on the same land.

As a part of the watershed program, agricultural equipment like pumps, hand sprays were also provided. Watershed structures ensured that water was available for irrigations. Subsidized seeds were provided for growing vegetables. Ghansiram now has a robust kitchen garden where he grows chillie, tomato, corn, etc adequate to meet the needs of his family and for sale in the market. In fact, he is able to earn additional Rs 500-800 per month by selling vegetables.

The case study demonstrates that a natural resource approach of watershed projects can not only help conservation of soil but also enhance livelihood options before the farmers. The PIA can facilitate the process by encouraging the farmers to look at ways in which livelihood can be enhanced.



Name of the Village: Gariaband
 Location: Chattisghad
 Facilitating Agency: Line Department
 Project: GoI

Milk and Honey

In Joba watershed, the focus from the beginning itself was on livelihood generation through improved natural resource management. This included a series of activities related to land development, soil and water conservation etc. These works led to holistic and sustainable community development.

Under the aegis of the watershed program, Saurabh Devangan decided to take up animal husbandry. He wanted to respond to the need of milk in the area that was not easily available. Saurabh was supported with credit to purchase a cow and a buffalo. He took good care of the animals and today he has 40 buffalos and 10 cows. The family is selling 250 liters of milk in the market. Production and sale of milk products like cottage cheese, curd and sweets was also taken up. Saurabh took the help and services of governmental agencies for treatment of the livestock, artificial insemination, vaccination etc.

The case illustrates that watershed programs that support enterprises can contribute towards significantly enhancing livelihoods. Therefore it is a good practice to build in mechanisms to promote sustainable livelihood under the aegis of the program.



Name of the Village: Karmari and Anwari
 Location: Chattisghad
 Facilitating Agency: Gayatri Pragya Peeth
 Project: Gol



Fish, Cashew and Cash

Both the villager and facilitating agency were new to watershed development projects. When the project was sanctioned to the village, the facilitating agency was not clear on the process of facilitating it. As a learning process, the community and the members of facilitating agency visited few watershed development projects in the nearby villages. It helped them to visualize their future with watershed. Several ideas emerged and discussions followed.

One among such ideas was to grow cashew plantation. The climate, soils were suitable to take up that plantation. Initially, only two persons volunteered to grow cashew plants. Later ten more persons joined them and slowly the number swelled. At one stage the plantation was in 161 hectares of land. These plants were planted on both private and common lands. Appropriate institutional arrangements were made to take care of the plantations on common lands. A group was formed with the farmers with clarity among themselves on their functions and entitlements in terms of benefit sharing.

This initiative triggered similar processes in other watershed villages. Nine women groups came together to protect water bodies in the village and convert them into fish ponds. These groups collectively decided on the process of taking up fisheries and took support from the watershed project. Due to the water and soil conservation activities, there was sustained water availability in the ponds.

The user groups of village (both men and women) demonstrated that the collective action and norms could yield good incomes and employment. The project made an 'idle' village into an 'ideal' and busy village. Now they are busy, counting cash from fish and cashews....



Name of the Village: Navapara Tanda
 Location: Chattisghad
 Facilitating Agency: Lok Sakti Samiti
 Project: Gol

Self Help : In its True Spirit

Initially they were mere thrift and credit groups. Gradually they emerged and matured to tackle even the critical concerns of the rural life. The tale of SHGs of Navapara Tanda conveys the true meaning of Self Help. .

Initially there was only one SHG in the area. Women used to save small amounts of money. They used to meet and discuss issues related to them on regular basis. Each member was taking loans from the group savings. They also had a bank account. These savings and access to credit helped them in small financial needs. This process was keenly observed by other women in the village. They could clearly see the benefits of thrift and credit. Thus two more groups were formed over a period of time. Slowly, these women groups started taking interest in other development aspects of the village. They started participating in the village meetings, watershed committee meetings etc.

During their regular meetings, women groups realized that the alcoholism was creating several hardships to the women folk in the village. Though it is part of culture to consume alcohol, the abuse of women associated with alcoholism was the worrying factor for them. The women groups discussed this issue with the watershed committee. A consensus was emerged during the meeting to close down the liquor shop in the village. It was also decided to allow the alcohol only on festival days. Whoever tries to disobey this rule was punished with heavy penalty. This was a major victory of the women groups in the village.

They also recognized that the mid day meal program at the village school requires some support. They decided to take the responsibility of cooking food for school children and for that small groups each with three members were formed. on rotation basis, Each group was given the responsibility of cooking food for three days in the school.



Protecting forest lands was another activity that these women groups took up. They banned cutting trees in the protected area (about 25 hectares) and planted new trees. Apart from taking support from watershed committee, they also pooled money from their own sources to make necessary investments. In the process they could also withstand the non-cooperation from men. But they put together their efforts bravely and succeeded in their endeavors. ❖



Optimizing Resources

Like many farmers in Joba, Sohanlal was contemplating to migrate with his family to a city in search of work. He could grow paddy only once a year during the Kharif season. It was very difficult for such people to survive in the lean season. But the watershed program changed the situation...

He actively participated in the watershed works. That provided him not only the employment but also a supporting system to survive upon. A water harvesting tanks was constructed under the aegis of the program. He has a high level of attachment with this structure. After all, he was also actively engaged in its creation. Today Sohanlal has water availability for irrigation.

With the orinetation on the cropping pattern, he also decided not to go with mono cropping. He now grows paddy during Rabi in addition to chick peas and wheat. Growing legumes has enhanced the fertility of the soil. He also practiced pisci culture in the water tank. This has enhanced his income by Rs 15,000-20,000 per year.

Sohanlal's case is about optimizing resources from a watershed development initiative. He was so enterprising that he could reap benefits from various interventions of the program. It demonstrates that watersheds offer livelihood opportunities that are both direct and indirect. With a spirit of enterprise, it is possible to significantly enhance available livelihood options. This process can be at the level of individuals as an enterprising activity or at the level of the PIA which can play a crucial role in promoting similar practices.



Name of the Village: Daburchuan
 Location : Orissa
 Facilitating Agency : Line Department
 Project : Gol

Unexpected Gains

Neragaon and Daburchua are small villages in Keonjhar district of Orissa. These villages have land in abundance but most of it was fallow. During the implementation of the watershed project, check dams were constructed that made water available in the downstream uplands.

With the availability of water, farmers in the vicinity of the check dams took an initiative to cultivate their land. To their pleasant surprise they realized that the soil fertility was improved. Since their fields were in the down stream of the check dam, moisture was retained that made the land cultivable. It encouraged more farmers to take cultivation. Eventually 12 acres of land was developed by the farmers without any external help or facilitation. The practice has been replicated by others who have started cultivating lands in proximity to the check dams.

This experience demonstrates that often small initiative can have a far reaching ripple effect. In this case farmers took their own initiative and experimented that led to excellent results. It also illustrates that keeping an eye for innovation helps to build on small steps and multiply the benefits.



Name of the Village: Jhumpura, Kandaraposi
 Location: Orissa
 Facilitating Agency: TADASA
 Project: Gol



Mango Orchids of Landless Women

Watershed development project has an inherent bias towards land and natural resources. Large portion of budget, time and energies are spent on conserving, developing and managing natural resources of the watershed area. It is very difficult to create opportunities for (natural) resource poor with the 'normal' processes. Since these normal processes are followed to a large extent watershed projects got an image that they are 'anti-poor' and 'pro-landed' etc. But changing the existing property regimes (eg: land redistribution and providing entitlements) is not considered to be part of watershed projects in general. An attempt was made to change this sort of thinking in Kandaraposi watershed. They initiated a process through which even the land less families gained reasonable share of benefits in the watershed projects.

Planting mango saplings on private agricultural lands and back yard gardens was the common practice in Jhumpura village. During the discussions, SHG members wanted to explore natural resource base linked opportunities. But they do not possess own land. 12 members of a labour group wanted to grow mango trees on a piece of common land (8 acers) in the village. This was not readily agreeable to the others. There was long negotiation on the process of giving this opportunity to the land less labour.

Finally, the village agreed to allow the landless women to grow mango orchid with some conditions. As per this, 1/3 of the sale consideration of mangoes would go to the village fund as the contribution. The group will be entirely responsible for managing the land and mango trees. This condition was agreeable to the group and they gained access to land and controlled the process of using the same. The mango orchid was developed and the women are about to enjoy the yield



With this intervention, the members of the landless SHG not only became 'land owned', but also got access to an assured income from sale of mangoes every year. The village fund also got its share of benefit and it likely to have a regular flow of funds. This arrangement is one kind of 'win-win' situation in watershed experiences.



Name of the Village: Tola
 Location : Orissa
 Facilitating Agency : Line Department
 Project: Bilateral

Providing Livelihoods

This is an example of a sustained effort of the facilitating agency to bring out a meaningful change in the lives of poor women by building their institutions and providing new opportunities

Tola is a tribal village in Kukudanala watershed with 160 families. Majority of the families (145) were below poverty line. 12 women members from these poor families formed a self-help group in 1996. Sources of income for these families were mainly from daily labor, agricultural works and minor forest collection. Each member paid a membership fees of Rs.5/- per month and opened a joint passbook in the name of Group President and Secretary

Local NGO Sarvodaya Samiti facilitated various activities among these group members during the watershed project implementation. It promoted leaf plate making activity among them. 2-3 members learnt the skill. Group members were encouraged to start a Mahila Kisan Nursery. They earned Rs.2000/- by doing this activity. Some of the members took up vegetable cultivation in common lands and got an income of Rs.800/-.

The project assisted the group by providing Rs.15,000/ as financial assistance for leaf plate making and collection and selling of Minor Forest Produce. The NGO has provided 8 plate stitching machines for training & production of leaf plates. The groups have been able to produce quality plates and they did not find difficulties in marketing as there was demand for their produce locally.

The group has developed into a self sustaining SHG. At present the SHG has no loan liability. It has learnt the skill of money transaction with the local bank. The problem with seasonal unemployment is nowhere visible now!



Name of the Village: Khora Meena
 Location: Rajasthan
 Facilitating Agency: Line Department
 Project: Gol



Khora Meena : *Amla* Village

When Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) was conducted in Khora Meena, villagers expressed that the water table in the area was going down each year. It was resulting in decreased agricultural production. Farmers were of the opinion that an alternative had to be found for their subsistence. Along with food crops, cultivation of horticultural crops was suggested. They thought that less water intensive crops need to be promoted, as part of watershed project. Appreciating the views of the farmers, sufficient provision for fruit plantation was incorporated in the detailed project plan. Before proceeding with plantation work, several training sessions were held on the cultivation of fruits crops. Farmers who came forward to take up the plantation were thoroughly equipped with the knowledge of horticulture. They themselves selected appropriate types of fruits. For this they have relied on certain parameters.

- ★ Enough market to the produce so that the farmers start making profit without major marketing initiatives.
- ★ Minimum requirement of water for the cultivation
- ★ Quick returns i.e. the fruit grower may not have to wait for a period of 5 to 10 years for the returns.
- ★ Crops having fewer problems with regard to pests and diseases.
- ★ Highly remunerative so that in full production the grower may completely switch over to it for subsistence.

With the above criteria, farmers have selected Amla fruit plants (*Phyllanthus Emblica*) for cultivation. Preparatory work was done with digging of pits at a distance of 8 meters (from plant and between the two rows). A purchase committee was formed consisting of 2 members of watershed development team (one with agriculture background and another with social sciences) and two representatives from Watershed Committee. The committee members visited about 8 amla nurseries in nearby villages. Quotations were sought from the nurseries. Rates were decided on the basis of





quotations. Taking into consideration of local conditions, *Chakariya* variety of plants was selected. Plants were purchased at a rate of Rs.15.50 per plant and transported to the village. Purchase committee members supervised all these transactions. Plants were supplied in the village according the demand from the growers.

In the first installment, 4000 amla plants were procured and distributed to the growers in September 2000. In the second installment, 2500 plants were procured from Chibila Amla village of Pratapgarh district of Uttar Pradesh and supplied to the intended farmers. . Thus 6500 plants were supplied to 70 growers. They paid Rs 8 per plant as their contribution and it was accrued to the Watershed Development Fund.

Within two years (by 2002) plants started bearing fruits. The growers took adequate precautions to protect the plants from frost and termite attack. These precautions helped them to grow at 80- 90% success rate. These plants are thriving well in the area and now the village became famous with its 'Amla' plantation...





Initiative for Improving Productivity

Agriculture is the mainstay of the Khora Meena village. Animal husbandry also one of the major source of their livelihood. Buffalo is the main mulch animal in the area. Almost every household is engaged in buffalo breeding to meet the domestic need of milk and also to earn the livelihood. The total buffalo population was about 950 in the year 1999. The breed of the animals was local therefore per capita milk production was below average. It was around 1800 liters per lactation only for the whole cattle population. During PRA exercises in the village it was found that the village community was very much eager to increase the per capita milk production. It was suggested by the villagers that bringing the improvements in the local breed and imparting intensive training about scientific animal management could result in increased milk production.

While preparing the detailed project report of the watershed, it was kept in view and a provision was made to buy two best breeding bulls. For scientific management of the animals, intensive trainings were given to the local animal breeders. About seven vaccination and treatment camps were organized. Vaccination calendar was developed. About 70 demonstration plots of sorghum grass were developed in farmer's fields. The total quantity of green fodder obtained was about 1600 quintals per hectare. The cultivators were overwhelmed with the fodder production. They shared the produce with their neighbors and it gave a big boost to the health and milk production of the animals. On an average there was an increase of 1 to 2 liters of milk per animal per day.



Efforts were made to procure Murrah buffalos from breeding tracts of Haryana to improve the local breed. A committee comprising 2 WDTs (Animal Husbandry and Agriculture), Watershed Committee Secretary and two farmers (who agreed to maintain the bulls) were authorized to procure the animals. Two farmers who agreed to maintain the bulls at their own cost were identified with consent of community and given responsibility. The



watershed committee and the two farmers formally got into an agreement defining their roles. As per this, the farmers were expected to maintain the animals properly and were not allowed to sell or transfer them to any other without knowledge of the watershed committee. They could collect 'service fees' for providing the breeding services. The service fee was fixed at 100/- per service. Both of them were also asked to maintain a service record. As per that record, services were extended to nearly 1000 animals. These measures helped a great deal in giving a boost to milk production in watershed area Khora Meena.



Name of the Village: Kusheira
 Location: Utter Pradesh
 Facilitating Agency: Arthik Anusandhan Kendra
 Project: Gol and later INGO



Development : Exclusive and Inclusive

The Kushiera watershed had evoked a mixed reaction among the community. While many were happy hoping that the watershed would address the problem of water scarcity that had inhibited agricultural development of the area, some farmers were disillusioned due to the threats of eviction as the land they were cultivating for generations did not really belong to them.

The local organization empathized with the farmers and appealed to the authorities that given that these farmers were very poor and they should be spared from paying the cost of development. When appeals did not work, the organization focused on a rights based approach and mobilized the community around the issue. A group of around 40 farmers went on *dharna* for a week requesting that they were not evacuated by the project. What was significant about the *dharna* was that around 22 of the participants were women and all the participants were daily wage earners. Sitting of *dharna* implied loss of wage. So important was the issue for them that they decided to forsake wage for the sake of the struggle.

This had an impact on the authorities who decided to change their plans to ensure that these farmers were not evicted. But they expressed their inability to undertake any land developmental works in their land as it was outside the aegis of the program. The farmers were so enthused by the assurance that they took efforts on their own to develop the area through soil and water conservation measures. These works improved the quality of the land.



The experience raises several questions that are at the core of development: how equitable is development itself? Are there situations where development is actually responsible for perpetuating inequity and injustice? What is the role of people's organization in such situations? Who defines what is legal and what is not? Answers to these need to be answered before the content of development is decided.



Name of the Village: Thana
 Location: Rajasthan
 Facilitating Agency: BAIF
 Project: Bilateral

Creating Children's Interest

Children are generally neglected in the process of development. They belong to future generation and it is important to invest time and energies for orienting them on the issues and solutions. With this philosophy in mind, the facilitating agency in Thana watershed worked with children on issues related to environment and education.

A Nature Club was formed to create interest and awareness among the school going children. The focus was on the environment, health, sanitation and watershed program. Several activities were initiated through learning by enjoyment processes such as organizing essay and drawing competitions. Efforts were also there to involve them in health and sanitation activities and inculcating environment friendly habits. They were motivated to follow up with the ANM (local health worker) for regular chlorination of drinking water and organize awareness camps in the village.

Children's groups were formed for looking after the sanitation, cleanliness and appropriate utilization of the water from the hand pumps. An award was initiated for rewarding best efforts of the school students during school functions. It was also tried to increase the enrollment rate and the attendance of the children's in the schools by motivating the villagers



Name of the Village-Bhainsadani
 Location : Orissa
 Facilitating Agency: Lokdrishti
 Project: INGO



Vikas Kutir: Facilitating Equity and Gender Justice

Initially there was a Mahila committee functioning in Bhainsadani village. One woman from each household represented the committee. During the Entry Point Activities like establishing innovative learning center; regularization of PDS and trading of non-timber forest produces, the women committee took the leadership. They also played a vital role in the awareness generation activities. Story telling with action, street plays and puppet shows with the guidance of the teacher were part of these activities.

Gradually the center became a common platform for the whole village where common issues were discussed. This platform helped the women to occupy a public space and gain equality with men in the village. The name of this center was “Vikas Kutir”, which represented the philosophy of development in the village.

Women of the village participated actively on issues like food security, equal wages for equal work etc. They provided leadership in taking up several issues related to watershed project as well as other development issues. They also influenced the action planning and implementation process of watershed development project. Some of the important benefits of this engagement was equal wages for men and women; representation in the watershed committee, decisive roles in NTFP collection and marketing and access to credit.



Name of the Village: Tola
 Location : Orissa
 Facilitating Agency: Line Department
 Project : Bilateral

Reaching the Unreached

Equitable development is normally a result of facilitated processes. The facilitating agencies need to have a clear concern for addressing the needs of vulnerable groups and have a set of instruments and provisions to concretely address the equity concerns in the watershed projects. Tola village demonstrated a similar approach...

During the mid term evaluation of the project, a clear observation was made that the project was unable to reach out the poorest of the poor families. As it was disturbing, the facilitating agencies and donors created a special budget provision in the project to reach out to the excluded families. These families were identified and special discussions were conducted with them to evolve action plans. Several options emerged to address the needs of identified poorest of the poor families.

One of such options was access to livestock. The selected families preferred to buy small ruminants – goats and sheep. This process of having assets helped them to gain confidence and initiated a new pattern of life. To sustain the initiative, the project also supported activities like developing fodder plots. The objective was to provide nutritious grass/ fodder to the cattle. Thus a plot of 12.5 hectares was selected to cultivate improved pasture.

These pasture lands are scientifically designed to supply grass as well as tree fodder to the cattle following two tier system. The lower strata was planted with stylo grass where as the upper strata consisted of tree fodder i.e subabool (Leucosine) which was a new introduction to the area. The leaves, twigs are highly nutritious to feed the cattle. This initiative not only helped the poorest of the poor, but also other communities owning cattle.



Name of the Village : Peepalkhunt
 Location: Rajasthan
 Facilitating Agency: Line Department
 Project: Gol



Grain Bank

The hilly terrains of the area, untimely and erratic rainfall with land holding of 3-4 bigha per family makes it difficult for the households to produce sufficient food grains for a family to sustain for 12 months a year. Therefore the tribal communities of this district migrate in search of better wages to the nearby areas. Debt burden is another problem with which they live.

These tribal people sell their kharif agriculture production at low prices after harvest and pay higher prices for purchase of the same product in the lean period. Normally it occurs in months of April- May to August- September. The families which do not have the capacity to pay for purchasing food grains obtain loans from the money lenders with an assurance to return them after kharif harvest. The condition becomes further deterrent when these families take loans from the moneylenders for kharif agriculture. These loans are either in cash or kind with option for the families to return the principle amount and interest amount of the loan either in cash or kind. In the process the moneylenders become influential and the tribal communities are dragged into debt trap. And it is very difficult for them to break this debt trap.

The PIA recognized the problem and invited GVT, a non governmental organization to facilitate community mobilization. GVT had the experience of establishing and working with community grain bank. It discussed the idea with community and established grain banks in the working villages of the PIA. The responsibility of managing these grain banks was given to local SHGs. The significance of this intervention was the introduction of it as an entry point activity in the village. These community managed grain banks helped the poor tribal communities to manage food grains for the entire year.



This experience demonstrates the collaborative arrangements between government and NGOs could work and help the process of developing innovative community managed support systems for addressing food security.



Name of the Village: Ramsin
 Location: Rajasthan
 Facilitating Agency: WASCO
 Project: Gol

Breaking the Barriers

Padma Ganchi belongs to the Ganchi community. She has got good skills in executing earthen work. But the village watershed committee did not involve women in the watershed works due to traditional customs and beliefs. Padma, being a dynamic and vocal woman objected to this and tried to convince the watershed committee members for enabling women participation. She proved her credentials by doing quality work in constructing a physical structure. She took it up as a challenge and organized the women for doing earthen work in the watershed program.

Padma's initiative has given inspiration to others. Jamuna, a schedule caste woman joined hands with her. She was working as a labour. They took up the work and completed it. Based on the quality of work, Padma was made Mutt and Jamuna was made Mason for some more physical works. The bold initiative of these women has given inspiration to many other women. Later they also started taking up works thus becoming part of the watershed program implementation.



Name of the Village: Ramsin
Location: Rajasthan
Facilitating Agency: WASCO
Project: Gol



Learning to talk to Women

Most of the communication efforts inherently target men. Facilitating agencies tend to explain the project details to men, interact with men, take them to exposure visits, call them for training programs... Women remain as spectators in the entire process. At the most, they attend the meetings... It is important for the facilitating agencies to learn to talk to women and listen to them... WASCO did it.

Women were found to be more active when watershed came to Ramsin village in Rajasthan. WASCO had taken note of this dynamism among the women. It realized the fact that if women could be motivated, there might be more and active involvement of the community in the watershed. Thus an effort was put in by the PIA to win the confidence of the women group. Most of these women were laborers. The PIA at times used to conduct meetings at the work place for women. The idea was to create awareness among them on the group formation, education and other related issues. They were encouraged to learn and motivated to sign when they were paid their wages. Small efforts like this have yielded good results. It slowly gave the PIA a very good reputation within the community. PIA staff became more familiar among the villagers. There was an improved rapport with the community.



Name of Village: Thoria
 Location: Rajasthan
 Facilitating Agency: Foundation for Ecological Security
 Project: Gol

Poor take care of Poor

Rama was a small boy, when had lost his parents. He had land but no means to cultivate it. Some caring villagers brought him up. His land was badly affected by soil erosion and needed immediate intervention. Villagers used to think that his land would become useless, by the time he grew up. Watershed project came like a fresh air into this village. Villagers thought this project could help Rama to conserve his land and make it into a productive asset. Collectively, they decided to construct a water harvesting structure near his land. They also gave some kind of concession and he did not have to make any contribution. This water harvesting structure is a turning point in his life. Today Rama is a grown up boy and able to cultivate his own land and earn his own living.

Durgaram also lives in the same village. Unlike Rama, Durgaram is an old man with a family of 5 children. All of them were married. Durgaram had to take care of himself and his wife. He had some land but due to recurring drought he was unable to make productive use of it. He approached the watershed committee for wage labor. The committee was well aware about his status. In spite of his old age, he was allowed to work as labourer in the works. In spite of his best efforts, he could not complete the tasks. His old age did not help him. Since payments were based on measurements of works (quantum of work), it was difficult for him to earn a decent amount even after struggling for the whole day. Rest of the workers had seen him struggling through out the day to complete his assignment. They mutually decided to complete the shortfall by working for a while everyday on behalf of Durgaram. In few days time the assigned target of Durgaram was completed and he was paid in full. This effort of the co-workers was able to bring back, although for a while, the smile on his face back.



Name of the Village: Kusheira
 Location: Uttar Pradesh
 Facilitating Agency: Arthik Anusandhan Kendra
 Project: INGO



No Woman's Land

Argument: We really do not need land rights, do we? Our families take adequate care of our financial needs.

Counter argument: Needs, OK, but what about your rights?

Argument: We are married into the families that automatically ensure our rights, doesn't it?

Counter argument: Have you ever thought, why is it that special care is taken to get your name in the ration cards and voter list. So then, why not talk about getting your name in land ownership? What is the barrier? Is it not a reluctance to share assets with you?

It took a lot of persuasions for the members of Arthik Anusandhan Kendra to work on women's rights over land. The reluctance was not just from the men but also from the women themselves. There was so much of resistance that often the members of the organizations had to facilitate a process of soul searching among the people to drive home the point. The problems were exacerbated as the women's SHGs, that should have been the appropriate forum for undertaking the issue and mobilizing the community around it, did not have a strong presence in the area. Though the government had passed a legislation making it mandatory to have joint land *pattas* establishing women's rights over land, a survey undertaken by the organization demonstrated that hardly 20% of the land records had joint *pattas*. Mass village level campaigns were organized with *padayatras* to generate awareness about the issue and create a consensus. This yielded positive results with people agreeing to get joint registration of land done.



The case study illustrates that often inequities are so deeply entrenched that the victims themselves are unable to judge the unjust practices and in the process perpetuate them. It is imperative for developmental organizations to see issues through a justice and equity lens to get a correct perspective of things. Based on this, it is imperative to address and remove unjust structures. ❖❖❖

Name of the Village: Saharanpur
 Location : Uttar Pradesh
 Facilitating Agency: Line Department
 Project: Gol

Who Gains?

In the Saharanpur district of Uttar Pradesh, some money was left of the earlier implemented Million Well Scheme. Given that large parts of the district were still water scarce and there was a need to develop the land in rain fed areas, the government decided to utilize the available financial resources for watershed program. Though the objective was noble, the way the project was implemented, thwarted the perceived gains.

In a rather arbitrary fashion, the Principal of the local school was selected as the President of the Watershed Committee. In planning the watershed, only the large and influential farmers were involved. The small and marginal farmers were totally bypassed. The landless agricultural workers who are generally involved as labour force in such projects were also sidelined. Instead, labour was brought from outside the village to undertake the works.

The entire process of watershed development and the range of activities around them were controlled and managed by a few men who gave precedence to their own needs over the priorities of the areas. Consequently, this group of large farmers grew richer while the poor remained poor. The developmental activities were also not sustained beyond the project life. A developmental initiative ended up creating greater divide and disparity within the village.

The case study illustrates that it is not enough to have the right intentions- process and systems of engagement have to be sharp and streamlined. Village society is highly heterogeneous and it is imperative that vested interests are understood and dealt with. Also important is to understand that typically the most needy are the least vocal. Therefore, it is a bigger challenge to elicit their participation. AT the same time, participation of the poor is fundamental to any developmental initiative. Thus the lesson is to develop a plan of action that is inclusive and that addresses community needs.



Name of the Village: Arjun Nala
 Location: Chattisghad
 Facilitating Agency: Line Department
 Project: Gol



One Rupee a Day

Watershed development program is not just managing land and water. It is also about managing money. This is what Virbal thought. As a functionary of watershed committee, he proposed several new ideas on fund management of the program. The idea of “One Rupee a Day” is a simple, but useful innovation for creating and managing watershed development fund.

Since the contribution from the community in the area was largely in the form of labor, a need was felt to find out a simple and practical way of collecting it. Then the concept – ‘One Rupee a Day’ had been thought off. According to it, each person who worked for watershed project had to contribute one rupee per one person day. The villagers felt that this arrangement was simple and easily implementable. When ever they worked they used to contribute on the basis of one rupee per day. In this process, about Rs 54,000/- was collected in two to three years.

This pooled up amount was treated as watershed development fund. And it also helped as a measurement tool for counting the days of employment generated during the project. The community is using WDF for a variety of purposes on credit basis. People are taking loans for agriculture, health, marriage needs etc. Villagers ‘bank’ on this fund in their financial crisis and repaying the amount without fail. After all they feel that it is ‘their money’!



Name of the village: Guret
 Location: Utter Pradesh
 Facilitating Agency: Line Department
 Project: Gol

Using WDF

The rocky terrain of Guret was in real need of a watershed project that could help retention of water for cultivation. The situation was so bad that it was difficult even to cultivate one crop.

When the area was finally selected for watershed development, there was a conflict of a different nature. The people of the area had a fair idea of the land use and contours of the area. They were very focused on what they wanted and had adequate technical skills built on years of experience and traditional knowledge. The PIA however wanted to adhere to the technical norms of the department. This was not acceptable to the community. While implementing the activities, they overruled the hegemony of the line department and implemented the works as per their need, knowledge, experiences and technical specifications. This choice of activities and specifications gave considerable decision making opportunities to the local communities. They became “owners” of the project, crossing the “sense of ownership”. This attitude motivated them to take care of assets created during the project.

Unfortunately, some structures were damaged due to heavy rainfall, during the third year of the project itself. Under the leadership of Sarpanch, they approached the government to allow them to use 'WDF', and successful in accessing this fund and repairing the damaged structures. This is the only watershed in the region, which could successfully utilize WDF for the purpose it was meant for. The role of local leader is an undeniable influencing factor in this experience.



Name of the Village-Bhainsadani
 Location : Boden, Nuapada, Orissa
 Facilitating Agency : Lokdrusti
 Project : INGO

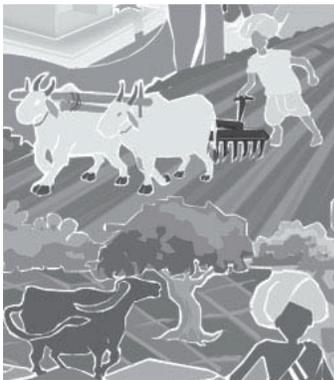


Samajik Bank

Mobilizing contribution was not a major challenge for both PIA and Watershed Committee in Bhainsadani watershed. During last year of the project implementation the issue of maintenance of structures/ assets was discussed in the village meeting. With the consensus of the villagers it was decided for the creation of the Watershed Development Fund. As per this part of wages (about Rs.5 from a daily wage) was deducted from laborers as contribution and deposited into WDF. Thus a total of Rs 20,000 was collected.

Over a period of time, PIA Lokdrusti realized the cohesiveness of User Groups and their role in terms of managing assets. At the same time, there was a need of strengthening SHGs. PIA motivated the villagers to formally transfer the WDF to the village based SHGs as a revolving fund. The SHGs used this fund for promoting several income generating activities such as basket making, setting up of a tailoring machine, grocery shop etc.

This process led to the creation of 'Samajik Bank' consisting of 3868 SHGs from 265 villages with 9752 members. Each member SHG pays an annual fees of Rs 200 on installment basis to the Samajik Bank and take loans from the Bank for variety of income generating activities. The members of Samakik Bank continue to benefit with the financial and institutional support of the bank irrespective of on-going projects of government such as watershed projects. Thus the watershed development fund got a new meaning in this area...



Name of the Village: Thoria
 Location: Rajasthan
 Facilitating Agency: Foundation for Ecological Security
 Project: Gol

All for Common Benefit

Use of Watershed Development Fund is a major challenge in the completed watersheds. As the watershed institutions are weak, there is no guarantee that the fund would be utilized for a meaningful purpose. Since there is no support to facilitate the use of WDF for 'right' purposes, the policy is also silent on this aspect. In this background, the experience of Thoria watershed gives a lesson.

In Thoria Watershed of Rajasthan, all the beneficiaries made contributions. Different rates of contributions were decided during the Aam Sabha. These contributions varied from 5 to 10 percent depending the source. Accordingly labour contributed Rs 2/- per day from their daily wage. For the works done in private lands 10% of the cost was deducted as contribution. In these cases labour working on private lands did not make any contribution. Tractor owners contributed Rs.10/- per each trip.

Contributions were made in cash after the work was completed. It was collected during the time of payment to the labour or concerned party. Some times it was also made in kind. Receipts were given against all the contribution. As there was no separate bank account for Watershed Development Fund, the contributions were deposited in the bank account of the watershed committee. The committee being a village level body functioned in a responsible way to the best interest of the village.

WDF was considered to be the village common fund. It was not looked as an exclusive fund for the maintenance of the watershed structures. There were instances like purchasing of television set for the community, paying of subsidy for different purposes, utilizing it as revolving fund etc. A *Dharma Nadi* (pond) was constructed with the funds from WDF. The community had earlier approached PIA (FES) for the same but the proposal was declined citing that the site location was improper. But the community felt the need of it so as to prevent the common land from encroachment. Though the PIA





refused the proposal, the community went ahead and work was taken up. An amount of 60,000 was utilized from the WDF for this purpose.

When the village suffered a severe drought in 1999, there was an acute fodder crisis. Watershed Committee decided to utilize the WDF to address this problem. It purchased the fodder from outside and provided to the villagers at a subsidized rate. A pasture land was developed by the community. It was to be protected from biotic interference in the initial stages. Two watchmen were recruited for that and they were paid from the WDF. Once the fodder is available, the amount realized from its sale was used for the payment. Though all these works were undertaken utilizing the funds, WDF still had a balance of Rs 74,000/-!



Name of the Village: Kushiera
 Location: Uttar Pradesh
 Facilitating Agency: Arthik Anusanthan Kendra
 Project: INGO

RIGHTS IN WATERSHEDS

Struggle for Rights

Kols, the tribal families in the Kushiera fought for their rights over land and succeeded. They are an oppressed social group and suffered absolute penury for ages. The common land used by Kols was encroached by the landlords. The facilitating agency recognized that the watershed activities could not be planned as the land records were not clear and ownership of most of the lands was skewed. It was also recognized that the land ownership is the fundamental requirement for addressing the poverty and equity related issues in the village. Unless the community was organized, it was not possible to address such issues.

PIA organized meetings of landless families. They were facilitated in a systematic way for getting formal land pattas. In the process, several activities were taken up in the form of dharnas, meetings and interactions with district officers. This helped to garner necessary administrative support for getting the lands surveyed by revenue department. The District Magistrate was finally forced to issue land pattas. Accordingly pattas were given to 61 women and there were also 365 joint pattas. Conferring land rights as a result of people's pressure was the first experience of the entire region. This entire process took about three years.

Though the land rights were issued, there was no way to make them productive. Then the PIA approached its donor agency Action Aid, which was supporting it for several other activities including land rights related agenda, the donor agency expressed its willingness to support the watershed activities and also to take the land struggle to a logical conclusion. The village continued to implement watershed activities with the support of the donor agency. It is a rare example in which one can see the 'structural-inequities' are combined with 'project-based-equity'.



Name of the village: Kushera
 Location: Uttar Pradesh
 Facilitating Agency: Arthik Anusandhan Kendra
 Project: INGO



Watershed for the Landless

Strong civil society organizations can promote suitable community based mechanisms that facilitate resource sharing and equitable distribution of resources within the community. Arthik Anusandhan Kendra (AAK) demonstrated this by working closely with the Scheduled Caste communities in Mirzapur district of Uttar Pradesh.

The village comprised mainly of the landless. Some people have land but most of it was uncultivable. Water was scarce in the area and agriculture was rain-fed. AAK was well-versed with the problems of the poor in the area as it was working there for so long. When the watershed project initiated, AAK took opportunity to solve some of the land related issues in the village. This approach was radical because usually landless population is not covered under the aegis of the watershed projects.

Through a process of consultation across the community PIA evolved a strategy. It was agreed that water would be made available for two *beegha* of land per family. It was also decided that water from the newly created structure would be made available to both the landless families who worked for other people's lands and to those who owned uncultivable lands. This turned out to be a *win-win* situation for the community. The landless families gained access to the water from the water harvesting structures. People who owned un-cultivable land were inclined to rent their land to the landless families, who have "water rights" now. The water rights enabled them to gain access to land also. Land owners saw the benefit of improving their land conditions and bringing their uncultivated lands into agriculture, by renting the same to landless families.



The experience illustrated that the focus on equity in the watershed program can facilitate creation of systems and structures that are socially and economically beneficial. In the process, these arrangements play an important role in bridging the gaps within communities. The process not only enhance the livelihood and food security of the poor landless farmers but also foster harmonious relations within the community.



Name of the Village : Bhainsadani
 Location: Orissa
 Facilitating Agency: Lokdrusti
 Project: INGO

And the fight is on..

Most of the area in Bhainsadani watershed belonged to a reserve forest. Traditionally the villagers have been cultivating these lands. They also never felt that they are encroachers of those lands as they have inherited those lands from their fore fathers. During the watershed development program, when technical consultants and others wanted to know the legal status of the land, the issue of land pattas came out. The technical consultants were very skeptical about taking up any physical interventions in the reserve forest lands. But the villagers said that those lands belong to their village and they have every right to do whatever they like.

Lokdrusti facilitated an interaction between the forest department officials and the villagers to explore about the possibilities of getting 'formal rights' over the forest lands. The DFO was very sensitive and realized the importance of the land in the livelihoods of the villagers and also recognized the strong collective thinking and action among them. But he could not assure the community on formal rights. He informed that the villagers can use the forest lands and the department will not take any action against them for using it. Based on such assurance, the villagers executed the works on "forest lands" and benefited from them.

In this process, the villagers recognized that Sub Committee on Forests was an informal institution. They converted this into "Joint Forest Management Committee" with the support of local PIA and Forest Department. The action plan for forest land was also developed to ensure that both tree and food crops are grown. In the upper reaches of the forest land, bamboo trees, khariyar teak were planted. Paddy, small millets, ragi, horse gram were cultivated in remaining parts.

The community struggle for gaining permanent rights and entitlements over the forest lands is still continuing. They are now part of a national movement called "Jal Jangle Jameen Network"...



Name of Village: Bhasandani
 Location: Orissa
 Facilitating Agency: Lok Drusti
 Project: INGO



For 'Formal' Control

Bhasandani village is located in the midst of forests. The villagers were traditionally using forest lands, mainly for cultivating crops. But the productivity of these lands was low. Though villagers were using forestlands, they did not make any investments to improve the quality of soils and to address the problems

As part of watershed project planning, PIA facilitated the evolution of action plans for forest lands. Appropriate usage of land was the main focus of these action plans. From single crops, the forest land was used for agro forestry, food crops, fodder plants etc. This entire process went on without much conflict as the concerned forest officer was generally sympathetic to the efforts of the community and facilitating agency. There is an informal agreement on the 'rights' of the communities to use and benefit from these lands.

Gradually the community and the PIA realized the limitations of the 'informal' arrangement. It was making villagers always dependent on the supportive departmental officials. The village committee and the facilitating agency became part of a network of activists and groups, which aims at establishing entitlements over forestlands for the traditional users. The network was active in resolving issues related to non-timber forest products (markets, procurement and other issues). Though the villagers could not formally get the rights over forestlands, this engagement with network is helping them to deepen the equitable institutional processes in the village and address the structural issues at local and higher levels.



Name of the Village-Bhainsadani
 Location : Orissa
 Facilitating Agency : Lokdrusti
 Project : INGO

Procuring 'Better' Price

Most of the families in Bhainsadani village are socio-economically poor. Economy of the village is mostly dependent on agriculture and collection of Non Timber Forest Produce (NTFP). But even after spending considerable time and hard work in collecting forest products, they did not get much due to the low prices of their products. The villagers did not have any idea on the outside market and sold their products at a throw away price to the middlemen

Lokdrusti, PIA for Bhainsadani watershed, encouraged the women committee members of the village to take lead role in procurement and marketing of NTFP and get the profits. It agreed to provide seed capital for the women committee to take up this venture. As the women committee started procuring the NTFP, everyone in the village stopped selling to middlemen. The middlemen had no alternative except to raise the price. Thus the primary collectors of NTFP from nearby villages also got a better price.

Eventually this idea got propagated to all villages in the block and many villagers started approaching PIA for necessary support. It facilitated the evolution of a network of women committees of different villages those were willing to engage in NTFP collection and marketing.

The experience that started in a watershed village is now spread to more than 265 villages (both watershed and non watershed villages). The informal women committees are now converted into SHGs of women engaged in thrift & credit and NTFP. The original seed capital given by PIA (about 10 years back) has grown into more than Rs 30 Lakhs with the savings of members, loans from banks and profit from their enterprise. These SHGs also constituted a 'Samajik Bank'

In 1997, the networks of NGOs in Orissa lobbied for necessary changes in the licensing system of NTFP. They succeeded in making Grama Panchayat responsible for giving licenses for collecting NTFP. With the Samajik Bank and license to collect NTFP, several of these SHGs are about to control their own destiny now.



Name of the Village: Kusheira
 Location: Utter Pradesh
 Facilitating Agency: Arthik Anusandhan Kendra
 Project: INGO



Dealing with Land Rights : A Network Approach

The facilitating agency addressed the critical issue of land rights in the watershed village. Eventually it became part of a network working for ensuring land rights of the landless families. Each member of this network adopted five villages and focused on the issues related to land rights. The process of providing land rights and evolution of the network is as below:

- * Village Survey
- * Taking Records from Tehsil
- * Verification of records in the village
- * Categorization and prioritization of problems
- * Identification of illegal occupation of roads, nala, common land,
- * Capacity building of community and field workers on legal process.
- * Establishing contacts with revenue officials
- * Taking lawyer's help at Tehsil level
- * Distribution of pattas on common (by the Tehsildar / Lekhpal)
- * Formation of Sanghatan in villages (Women and men)
- * Bringing out awareness at village and cluster levels
- * Converging village institutions at cluster level (35 village-7 cluster –Sanghas)
- * Distribution of Pattas to the landless
- * Verification of lands records and patta given land less families
- * Identification of problems of higher order
- * Demonstrations and memorandum submission at Tahsil / District level
- * Establishing contacts with Sub Divisional magistrate.
- * Taking legal advice
- * Collection of existing land records of revenue and forest departments
- * Formation of Federation



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- * Awareness generation on issuing joint pattas
 - * Filing PILs on related issues
 - * Collecting GOs on legal aspects on land distribution
 - * Formation of Network of NGOs on land Rights
 - * Evolving strategy of Network
 - * Networking with other organization at field level
 - * Initiation for policy changes at state level

The above process steps are jumbled reflecting the reality at field level while dealing with the issues related to land rights. It is important such efforts need to be integrated with watershed development initiatives; otherwise the structural issues will not be addressed.





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 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

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

Volume 6 : Recommendations at a Glance

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.



ARAVALI

