Historical Transact of Watershed Policies in India
Shifts in Content and Philosophy and Their Implications[1]

Community based management of natural resources in the framework of watershed program is now an accepted approach for ecological regeneration and sustainable use of natural resources. The Guidelines issued by Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India (Oct 1994) have significantly contributed to popularize watershed approach in communities, NGOs, academicians, donors and government departments. These Guidelines have shifted the paradigm from centralized top driven approach to decentralized and bottom up approaches and initiated a new era in the ecological restoration.

Since 1994, the country has wide variety of experiences in facilitating the watershed program. Eventually, the Guidelines of watershed development program are revised in 2001 (Watershed Guidelines – Revised) and 2003 (Hariyali). Apart from these guidelines, Ministry of Agriculture also issued guidelines for National Watershed Development Project for Rainfed Areas (2000). In state like Andhra Pradesh (which has highest number of watershed development projects in the country) Government of Andhra Pradesh has recognized the need for strengthening participatory processes and supported a process of consultations on the issue. As a result of this, "Process Guidelines for Watershed Development Program" came into existence in Dec 2002. These Process Guidelines were conceived in the broad framework of earlier guidelines (1994 and 2001).

Functionaries at different levels (field and facilitating) involved in watershed program in the framework of these Guidelines, find it difficult to track the exact nature of changes in each version of these Guidelines. Many times, the field level functionaries do not get the opportunity and time to "read" and "understand" these guidelines too. (Often, there is a considerable delay in circulating the copies of newer version of Guidelines to the field level functionaries and district administration). Others make a cursory reading of the newer version of Guidelines and tend to make many assumptions while using these guidelines in their day-to-day work. Though there is a need to consider the Guidelines as "only Guidelines, but not as bible", it is also important to understand the need for greater appreciation of actual contents of each version of Guidelines and make them work for the project in the interest of the communities.

This paper tries to conduct a historical transact of the watershed guidelines of Ministry of Rural Development (1994, 2001–Revised; Process Guidelines of GoAP and Hariyali 2003) and Ministry of Agriculture (2000 WARASA) and make a comparative analysis of the changes in the content and philosophy on some key aspects of the program. The analysis also indicates their implications.

Evolution of Policies and Changes in the Watershed Framework (1970 - 1994):

Drought proofing in ecologically sensitive areas of India has been one of the priorities of the state. Government of India had conceptualized programmes like the Drought Prone Areas Programme (DPAP) and the Desert Development Programme (DDP) in 1971 to support drought proofing in selected parts of the country. From time to time, expert committees were constituted to suggest improvements in the contents and strategies of these programmes. Task Force Committee under the leadership of Dr B S Minhas

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[1] M V Rama Chandrudu, WASSAN, Hyderabad

(1973) and another Task Force Committee under the leadership of Dr M S Swaminathan reviewed ongoing programmes and recommended that integrated and sharpened approaches would be essential for sustainable development of ecology and environment in drought prone areas. However, these committees could not bring in the relevant strategies and contents into these programmes and they continued to support the creation of irrelevant infrastructure in a dispersed manner without the necessary area focus. The Central Sanctioning Committee (1987) recommended that soil and water conservation activities should be the focus of DPAP and DDP. Latter, the National Committee on DPAP and DDP (1988) under the chairmanship of Dr L C Jain recommend the involvement of community participation and involvement of voluntary organizations in the programmes. Though these two committees made some improvements in the design of programme, they could not clearly conceptualize the necessary operational strategies and content. Meanwhile, the Central Government initiated Integrated Waste Land Development Programme (IWDP) since 1989. In spite of all these committees and their recommendations, the problems of these programmes, namely dispersed nature of interventions, lack clear strategies and relevant contents continued. (Refer Table 1 for summery of committees on drought related programs)

Table No 1: Committees on drought related programmes and their main recommendations.

Year	Programme/ Committee	Focus
1962-63	River Valley Project	Prevention of silt in reservoirs of large multi purpose dams
1970-71	Employment Assurance Scheme	Creating employment opportunities in drought prone areas. Asset creation that could mitigate severity of drought.
1972	Drought Prone Areas Programme	Local perspectives and initiatives in programme planning
1973	Tasks force under leadership of Dr B S Minhas	Priority to integrated approach, assured employment opportunities for weaker sections, Focus on income generating activities
1977-78	Desert Development Programme	Controlling desertification process
1982	Task force on DPAP and DDP in the leadership of Dr MS Swaminathan	Encouragement to income generation activities; Exclusion of Basic Infrastructure (Eg: Chilling centers); Priority to land based basic services, watershed based planning; Focus on individual beneficiaries, instead of area perspectives; Subsidies to all categories of farmers.
1987	Central Sanctioning Committee	Conservation of land and water; Development of land, afforestation; Waste land development; Departmental approaches; Efforts to decentralize.
1988	National Committee on DPAP and DDP under the chairmanship of Dr L C Jain	Involvement of community and voluntary organizations in the programmes.
1993	Technical Committee on DPAP, DDP under the chairman of Dr Ch Hanumantha Rao	Integrated community based watershed development program.

(This table is adopted from Ravindra (2001), Combating Drought and Land Degradation in India, Rio, Johannesburg and Beyond)

The Technical Committee headed by Dr Ch Hanumatha Rao (1993) brought in a real shift in the programme. This committee made the following important recommendations.

A. Micro watershed area should be the basis for interventions, not the administrative block.
B. Communities living the watershed should be involved in the entire project cycle.
C. Voluntary Organizations should be given responsibilities in the programme.
D. Funds from various schemes/ programmes should be pooled together and channeled to watershed programme.
E. Appropriate institutional arrangements at all levels should be created. Identification criteria for selection of districts for DPAP/ DDP/ IWDP should be developed.
F. Support to training of various stakeholders should be supplied.
G. Ministry of Rural Development should take up the responsibility of the programme at national level.

> **Box 1**
> **Influence of Experiences of NGOs in Policies of Watershed Development**
> Many Voluntary Organizations like MYRADA, AKRPS(I), Relegan Siddhi, Pani Panchyat, BAIF have adopted watershed approach in various parts of the country and demonstrated that community based watershed approach would not only mitigate the negative impact of drought, but also strengthen the village economy. The Technical Committee headed by Dr Ch Hanumantha Rao studied some of these experiences and converted the key lessons from them into recommendations.

Based on these recommendations, the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India issued Guidelines for Watershed Development (1994). These Guidelines have achieved the difficult task of integrating drought-proofing agenda with community participation, appropriate technical interventions, capacity building support and participatory processes.

Another Era:

Since 1994, the watershed guidelines provided a new framework for community based natural resource management in drought prone areas. The subsequent versions of Guidelines and other guidelines have either added newer elements in watershed framework or deleted existing ones. This paper tries to track these changes together in an analytical framework. The key parameters that were selected for comparison are

- Objectives
- Institutional Arrangements – At watershed Level
- Institutional Arrangements – Above Watershed Level
- Project Phasing
- Capacity Building Strategies
- Fund Flows

For each parameter, the key words/ statements from each Guideline are presented and an analysis of the same is made on the key changes and their implications.

1. Objectives – Missing the Core and Wandering in the Periphery:
Watershed program is considered to be an important instrument in addressing the issues related to drought and its adverse impacts. One would expect that this concern

be reflected in the objective statements and related activities. The objective statements from the guidelines are summarized here against key themes.

Table 2: Common Features and Special Emphasis in Different Guidelines MoRD and MoA:

Guidelines	Objective Statement
	Theme: Drought
1994	Optimum utilization of the watershed's natural resources like land, water, vegetation, etc that will mitigate the adverse effects of drought and prevent further ecological degradation.
2001 and 2003	Mitigating the adverse effects of extreme climatic conditions such as drought and desertification on crops, human and livestock population for the overall improvement of rural areas.
2002	Conceived in the broad framework of Guidelines – 1994 and 2001
2000 (MoA)	No mention in the Objective Statements
	Theme: Technology and Institutions
1995, 2001 and 2003.	Simple, easy and affordable technological solutions and institutional arrangements that make use of, and build upon, local technical knowledge and available materials
2002	Conceived in the broad framework of Guidelines – 1994 and 2001
2000 (MoA)	No mention in the Objective Statements
	Theme: Community Action
1994, 2001 and 2003	Encouraging village community towards sustained community action for the operation and maintenance of assets created and further development of the potential of the natural resources in the watershed
2002	Conceived in the broad framework of Guidelines – 1994 and 2001
2000 (MoA)	No mention in the Objective Statements
	Theme: Economic Development
1994	• Promote the economic development of the village community which is directly or indirectly dependent on the watershed • Special emphasis to improve the economic and social condition of the resource-poor and the disadvantaged sections of the Watershed Community such as the assetless and the women
2001 and 2003	Promoting the overall economic development and improving the socio-economic condition of the resource poor and disadvantaged sections inhabiting the programmes areas
2002	Conceived in the broad framework of Guidelines – 1994 and 2001
2000 (MoA)	No mention in the Objective Statements
	Theme: Employment Generation
1994	Employment generation and development of the human and other economic resources of the village in order to promote savings and other income-generation activities.
2001 and 2003	Employment generation, poverty alleviation, community empowerment and development of human and other economic resources of the rural areas.
2002	Conceived in the broad framework of Guidelines – 1994 and 2001
2000 (MoA)	Creation of sustained employment opportunities for the rural poor
	Theme: Ecological Degradation/ Balance
1994	Optimum utilization of the watershed's natural resources like land, water, vegetation, etc. that will mitigate the adverse effects of drought and prevent further ecological degradation.

2001 and 2003	Restoring ecological balance by harnessing, conserving and developing natural resources i.e. land, water, vegetative cover especially plantations.
2002	Conceived in the broad framework of Guidelines – 1994 and 2001
2000 (MoA)	Restoration of ecological balance in the degraded and fragile rainfed eco-systems by greening these areas through appropriate mix of trees, shrubs and grasses
Theme: Resource Development/ Management	
1994	Optimum utilization of the watershed's natural resources like land, water, vegetation, etc. that will mitigate the adverse effects of drought and prevent further ecological degradation.
2001	Developing wastelands/degraded lands, drought-prone and desert areas on watershed basis, keeping in view the capability of land, site-conditions and local needs.
2003	Harvesting every drop of rainwater for purposes of irrigation, plantations including horticulture and floriculture, pasture development, fisheries etc. to create sustainable sources of income for the village community as well as for drinking water supplies.
2002	Conceived in the broad framework of Guidelines – 1994 and 2001
2000 (MoA)	Restoration of ecological balance in the degraded and fragile rainfed eco-systems by greening these areas through appropriate mix of trees, shrubs and grasses
Theme: Equity	
1994	More equitable distribution of the benefits of land and water resources development and the consequent biomass production. Greater access to income generating opportunities and focus on their human resources development.
2001 and 2003	No mention in the Objective Statements
2002	Conceived in the broad framework of Guidelines – 1994 and 2001
2000	Reduction in regional disparity between irrigated and rainfed areas
Theme: PRI	
1994 and 2001	No mention in the Objective Statements
2002	Conceived in the broad framework of Guidelines – 1994 and 2001
2003	Ensuring overall development of rural areas through the Gram Panchayats and creating regular sources of income for the Panchayats from rainwater harvesting and management.
2000 (MoA)	No mention in the Objective Statements
Theme: Productivity Enhancement	
1994, 2001, 2003	No mention in the Objective Statements
2002	Conceived in the broad framework of Guidelines – 1994 and 2001. But provided budgetary support for productivity enhancement related activities.
2000 (MoA)	Enhancement of agricultural productivity and production in a sustainable manner

Analysis:
The above table is self explanatory in presenting the shifts and changes in the objective statements of Guidelines since 1994. Some of the key shifts are mentioned below. It may be noted that the objectives of process guidelines are broadly conceived within the broad framework of 1994 and 2001 guidelines.

Commonalities:
- Economic development of people dependent on watershed resources is one of the common features of all guidelines of MoRD (1994, 2001 and 2003). However, MoA does not mention about the economic development in its objectives.
- Restoring ecological balance by regenerating/ developing natural resources is a common approach in all guidelines
- All Guidelines mentioned that generating employment opportunities is an important objective.
- Though there is a variation in the proposed activities, all guidelines have mentioned the need for related to natural resource conservation/ development/ utilization.

Variations:
- While the drought proofing is not the core concern of Guidelines of MoA, even the Hariyali Guidelines also made a cursory mention in the objective statement. In fact, this word is mentioned only twice in the entire document of Hariyali. However, the Guidelines (1994) have a clear focus on the drought proofing and indicated that the sustained community action and simple and easy technical options and institutional arrangements would help in restoring ecological balance in the drought prone areas.
- While all the Guidelines indicate an integrated approach and optimum use of natural resources, in Hariyali (2003), there is a strong focus on water harvesting and irrigation.
- Only Guidelines of MoA (2000) have clearly mentioned about the productivity of rainfed agriculture. Rest of the guidelines of MoRD is silent about productivity in the objective statements.
- Only Hariyali (2003), the role of Panchayat Raj Institutions is mentioned, while rest of the guidelines indicated the role of sustained community action and simple institutional arrangements.
- Only Guidelines (1994) have expressed the concern for equitable distribution of benefits, while MoA Guidelines (2000) have expressed the same concern in a different manner (reducing the disparity between rainfed and irrigated areas).

The very fact that newer versions of guidelines are issues indicates that there would be some variation in the program. However, the dilution in the "core" concepts and agenda of the watershed development program like drought proofing and nature of involved institutions is cause for concern.

2. Institutions at Watershed Level – Confusing Roles:
In this section, the variations in the institutional arrangements at watershed level would be analyzed first.

Table No 3: Institutions at Watershed Level

Guidelines	Institution at Watershed Level – Profile and Functions
User Groups	
1994	Groups of persons directly dependent on watershed resources
2001	Groups consists of persons having land in watershed area
2002	Groups of persons directly dependent on watershed resources
Hariyali 2003	Groups of persons who own land
WARASA (2000)	Land owners within the identified watershed area

Self Help Groups	
1994	Groups of persons indirectly dependent on watershed resources
2001	Homogeneous groups who are dependent on watershed directly or indirectly
2002	Groups of persons indirectly dependent on watershed resources
Hariyali 2003	Groups consist of landless, Women who are dependent on the watershed area for their livelihood.
WARASA (2000)	Landless or have marginal size of land holding
Watershed Association	
1994	Watershed Association consists of all members of groups and a registered body. Grama Sabha when watershed and village are coterminous
2001	Same as 1994. Watershed Committee and Association to have same person as Chairman/ President
2002	Same as 1994.
Hariyali 2003	No mention of this. Grama Sabha to supervise over all activities
WARASA (2000)	General Body of all members of the above groups and also other participated who have not yet become member of the SHG and UG
Watershed Committee	
1994	Nominating members from UG/ SHGs by WA constitute watershed Committee. Adequate number of women in Watershed Committee
2001	Same as 1994. Watershed Committee and Association to have same person as Chairman/ President. 1/3 Women Members in Committee
2002	Same as 1994
Hariyali 2003	No mention of this
WARASA (2000)	Same as 1994.
Volunteer and Secretary	
1994	Volunteer (3 No) and Secretary from local area/ village
2001	Volunteers (1 No) and Secretary from the local village/ area
2002	Same as 1994. Though number of persons is not indicated.
Hariyali 2003	Government Employee as Secretary. Vana Rakshak as Volunteer.
WARASA (2000)	Same as 1994. Services of Volunteer could be paid met from community organization
Panchayat Raj Institutions	
1994	Representatives of PRI are compulsory members of the Watershed Committee. Grama Panchayat has authority to review the project, support formation of User groups/SHGs; their capacity building, facilitate convergence; ensuring wage norms; maintaining assets in common property resources and so on. When the Watershed Committee is not capable of handling funds, funds could also be routed through Grama Panchayat to watershed committee.
2001	Same as 1994.
2002	Same as 1994 (2 or 3 members for Grama Panchayat in committee)
Hariyali 2003	Grama Panchayat to execute works on day-to-day basis.
WARASA (2000)	Same as 1994.

Analysis:

User Groups:
Guidelines (1994) have de-linked the ownership and usage of natural resources. As a result of this provision, any "User" of a resource irrespective of its ownership could become a member of user group. This provision is particularly relevant to common property resources in watershed area (Eg: water bodies like tanks, common grazing lands and so on). However, the subsequent guidelines have linked ownership with resource use. Only persons owning land are expected to be members of user groups. This is a   restrictive approach and does not accommodate the "user rights" in resource management. However, the role of user groups is completely reduced to maintenance of assets created. Their role in planning, executing development works, and management of resources is nullified in Hariyali. These functions are transferred from user groups to President and Secretary of Grama Panchayat.

Self Help Groups:
The role of self-help groups is not clearly defined in any of the guidelines. The revolving fund (as a capital) given to SHGs are expected to establish their stakes over natural resources as users (eg: A group of fishermen/ women could take revolving fund from watershed program and "use" water bodies like tanks in watersheds for cultivating fish in them). This support to SHGs is retained. But subsequent guidelines did not make any improvements in the role of SHGs at conceptual and operational levels. In fact only thrift and credit groups of women are considered as SHGs.

Apex Bodies of Watershed Communities:
The functions of apex bodies of SHGs and User Groups like watershed committee and watershed association are mainly supporting planning, monitoring, reviewing, fund flows, quality control and conflict resolution. These two institutions were removed from the institutional arrangements in Hariyali. The Grama Panchayat is expected to perform the roles of these institutions.

The role of Grama Panchayat:
The main functions of Grama Panchayat is to facilitate community organization and training programmes and use its administrative authority and financial resources to support and encourage the formation of SHGs/UGs and the operation and maintenance of the assets created the common property resources such as pasture lands, fisheries tanks, plantations, etc. The Grams Panchayats area also expected to supplement and complement the Watershed Development Programmes by converging funds from other programs. Further the Gram Panchayat shall have the right to monitor and review the programme. In case, the watershed committee is not capable of handling fund management, the watershed funds could also be channeled through Grama Panchayats. All these functions of Grama Panchayat mainly relate to governance of natural resources at watershed level. There is a division of roles between apex bodies of communities and Grama Panchayat. This division of functions and roles are commonly seen in all guidelines (1994, 2001, 2002 and 2000). However, Hariyali (2003) made a significant shift in the roles of Grama Panchayat and apex bodies of watershed committee and watershed association. The institutions of apex bodies of communities are completely removed and these functions are transferred to Grama Panchayat. The Grama Panchayat is expected to perform both executive functions (like being responsible for day to day activities; making payments, so on) and governance functions. In this sense, the Grama Panchayat almost displaces all institutions of primary stakeholders. Only Chairman and Secretary are considered to be Grama Panchayat for all practical

purposes in Hariyali. Whether this arrangement is supportive to the cause of deepening democracy is a question that only future could answer. When watershed area is not coterminous with the Panchayat's area, the Grama Panchayat would be almost a non-stakeholder (at primary level), like a line department, which has to plan and execute watershed program.

3. Institutions above Watershed – Missing Links:

Institutional arrangements above watershed level mainly relate to Project Implementation Agency, district level project authorities and state level institutional arrangements. One could see that the institutional arrangements are becoming too restrictive over a period of time.

Table 4: Institutions above Watershed

Guidelines	Institution above Watershed Level
Project Implementation Agency	
1994	Wide Variety of Organizations/ Institutions to function as PIAs including PRI. Preference to Voluntary Agencies.
2001	Wide Variety of Organizations/ Institutions to function as PIAs including PRI. Preference to PRI, Line Departments and Voluntary Agencies
2002	Wide Variety of Organizations/ Institutions to function as PIAs including CBOs. No preference to any category of organizations. Selection criteria for each category of organization are proposed.
Hariyali 2003	District/ Intermediate Panchayats, Line Departments and only very well reputed NGOs in the order of preference.
WARASA (2000)	All categories of organizations and institutions as PIAs.
District Project Authority	
1994	Zilla Panchayats and DRDA to act as nodal agencies at district level
2001	Zilla Panchayats and DRDA to act as nodal agencies at district level
2002	District Water Management Agency - Special Project Authority at District Level with Project Director and Multi Disciplinary Teams
Hariyali 2003	Zilla Parishad/ DRDA or Any Agency could act as nodal agency with the permission of Dept of Land Resources
WARASA (2000)	District Nodal Agency – Agriculture Department
District Watershed Advisory Committee	
1994	Watershed Development Advisory Committee at district level. Representation of Voluntary Agencies in this Committee.
2001	District Watershed Development Committee (DWDC). Representation of Voluntary Agencies in this Committee.
2002	District Watershed Development Committee (DWDC). Representation of Voluntary Agencies in this Committee. Functions were clearly defined.
Hariyali 2003	No mention of District Watershed Advisory Committee
WARASA (2000)	District Watershed Committee
State Level Watershed Committee	
1994	State Watershed Programme Implementation and Review Committee as a platform for policy advocacy. Representation of Voluntary Agencies in this Committee.
2001	State Watershed Development Committee (SWDC). Representation of Voluntary Agencies in this Committee.

2002	Silent on State Level Institutional Arrangements
Hariyali 2003	Silent on State Level Institutional Arrangements
WARASA (2000)	No mention
Others	
2002	Autonomous Support and Resource Organizations and Networks
WARASA (2000)	Autonomous Support Organization

Analysis:

Choice of PIAs --- Inclusive and Exclusive Policies:

The Guidelines (1994) have a very clear inclusive policy in case of Project Implementation Agency. The preference is given to voluntary agencies for their established credentials in social mobilization and presence in the field. At the same time, role of Zilla Panchayats and Grama Panchayat are elaborately discussed. PRI (at all levels) could apply as PIA for a cluster of villages and implement watershed program. But it also has to fallow same norms and process as any other PIA. Though guidelines (2001) broadly followed this inclusive policy, the priority is changed. Voluntary Organizations were given last priority. Process Guidelines (2002) have further included the Community Based Organizations/ Apex Bodies of Communities as potential organizations as PIAs. On the other hand, the Hariyali Guidelines have an "exclusive policy" and limited options. Voluntary Organizations are given explicit last preference.

Shrinking Space:

The state level institutional arrangements provided "institutional space" for policy advocacy and project monitoring in all the guidelines, except in Hariyali. This space has disappeared in Hariyali. Such institutional arrangements at state and district level are discarded in Hariyali.

4. Project Phasing:

It was a common knowledge that clear cut project phasing only helps to achieve the objectives of the project. The guidelines have different approaches and norms on project phasing.

Table 5: Project Phasing

Guidelines	Description
Project Commencement Date:	
1994	To be informed by PIA, When full complement of WDT is present
2001	Date of Sanction at MoRD
2002	Not indicated.
Hariyali 2003	Not defined
WARASA (2000)	Three months from the nomination of PIA
Time Frame:	
1994	4 Years
2001	5 Years
2002	5 Years
Hariyali 2003	5 Years
WARASA	5 Years

(2000)	
Project Phases:	
1994	Phasing is implicit and not well defined. 9 to 10 months for institution development and planning. 3 Years for implementation.
2001	Phasing is confused with Short Term and Long Term benefits (Twin Track Approach)
2002	Clearly defined Phases and corresponding activities and time frame.
Hariyali 2003	Not Mentioned
WARASA (2000)	Well Defined Phasing and related activities. Capacity Building Phase; Community Organization Phase; Planning Phase; Implementation Phase; Withdrawal Phase

Analysis:

Compared to WARASA guidelines, the guidelines of MoRD are poorly conceived in terms of project phasing and related activities. The project commencement date is decided as per the convenience of the MoRD in 2001. Guidelines of MoRD (2001 and Hariyali) only confused the concept of phasing and did not "insulate" community organization from implementation pressures. The experiences indicate that there is a time lag between the sanction of the project (at national/state/ district level) and actual entry into the village by the Project Implementation Agency. As a result of this time lag, the over all time for project implementation is reduced. Capacity building and institution development are key victims of this time lag. Apart from this, the district administration also expects "action plans", without giving any time for community organization. Project Phasing is an important management tool to off set such undue pressures on the Project Implementation Agencies. However, Process Guidelines (2002) have benefited from the concepts of WARASA and incorporated them.

5. Capacity Building Strategies:

One of the important features of watershed development program is support provided to capacity building agenda. Specific budgetary provisions are provided in each guidelines for the purpose.

Table 6: Capacity Building:

Guidelines	Description
Priority	
1994	Given Top Priority to Training and Community Organization
2001	Need for spending the complete budgets was stressed.
2002	Clear top priority for capacity building. Need of continuous capacity building inputs recognized
Hariyali 2003	Undermined the capacity building needs of the project.
WARASA (2000)	Given Top Priority to Training and Community Organization
Budgets	
1994	5% Budget for Training and 5% for Community Organization
2001	Total Budget increased as unit cost increased
2002	Higher budgets as a result of increased unit cost
Hariyali 2003	Reduced the budget for capacity building (training and community

	organization) from 10% to 5%.
WARASA (2000)	Community Organization: 7.5%; Training: 5%
Operational Strategies	
1994	Silent on Operational Strategies. But believes that PIAs could attend to this agenda. Gave a wish list of training programs that each category of participants need.
2001	Almost maintained status quo
2002	Operational Strategies are proposed. Role of Autonomous Support Organizations/ Resource Organization and their networks established Separate Phase for Capacity Building including Experiential Learning
Hariyali 2003	Not mentioned.
WARASA (2000)	Separate Phase of capacity building and necessary support (Time, Resource Centers, Budgets) Proposed Category Wise Training Inputs at different points of the project. Autonomous Support Organizations as part of institutional system.

Analysis:

Though the Guidelines (1994) have clearly departed from earlier process and provided budgetary support to capacity building (community organization and training), it offered very flexible operational mechanisms. The guidelines (1994) believed that the Project Implementation Agency would be able to offer capacity building support to the communities. But this was not the case. Many Project Implementation Agencies did not have necessary skills and capacities to address the capacity building needs of the communities. This budget was also misused in some cases. Over a period of time, this budget was not released or not allowed to be spent. But the Revised Guidelines (2001) also did not make any headway, in spite of having successful experiences in the country (Watershed Guidelines of CAPART and Indo German Watershed Project in Maharashtra). WARASA guidelines have incorporated detailed process of strengthening this agenda. Government of Andhra Pradesh have tried to pick up lessons from all over the country and incorporated in the Process Guidelines (2002). Over a period of time, the bureaucracy started believing that the budgetary provision is more than adequate. This is reflected in Hariyali Guidelines (2003). Hariyali reduced the budgetary provisions, which is contrary to the lessons learned so far. It is sad that the lessons from many parts of the country did not find space in the formulation of Hariyali. Guidelines (2001) and Hariyali were not even clear on the phasing of the project, which is very essential for strengthening the institutions of primary stakeholders.

6. Fund Flows:

For the first time, Guidelines (1994) have trusted the fund management capabilities of communities and directly transferred funds to the bank account of watershed association, which is handled by Watershed Committee. This is one of the important steps in the direction of empowering the communities. Though this feature is retained in subsequent guidelines, the "route" changed in subsequent guidelines.

Table 7: Fund Flows

Guidelines	Description
Unit Cost	
1994	4000 Rs/ Hect
2001	6000 Rs/ Hect

2002	6000 Rs/ Hect
Hariyali 2003	6000 Rs/ Hect
WARASA (2000)	4500 Rs/ Hect (Less than 8% Slope) and 6000 Rs/ Hect (More than 8% slope)
Budgets Allocations	
1994	Works: 80%; Community Organization: 5%; Training: 5% PIA Overheads: 10%
2001	Works: 80%; Community Organization: 5%; Training: 5% PIA Overheads: 10%
2002	Works: 80% -- 50% for NRM and 30% for Productivity Enhancement Community Organization: 5% Training: 5% PIA Overheads: 10%
Hariyali 2003	Works: 85%; Community Organization and Training: 5% PIA Overheads: 10%
WARASA (2000)	Works: 77.5%; NRM: 50%; Productivity Enhancement: 20%; Livelihoods Promotion for Landless: 7.5% Community Organization: 7.5% Training: 5%; PIA Overheads: 10%
Route	
1994	Watershed Committees to receive grants directly from district administration. If the committee is weak, funds could be routed through Grama Panchayat
2001	Watershed Committees to receive grants through PIA.
2002	Watershed Committees to receive grants directly. 30% of grant to be channeled to Village Organization of SHGs.
Hariyali 2003	Grama Panchayat to receive grants directly
WARASA (2000)	Watershed Committees to receive grants directly
Usage	
1994	User Groups to execute works and keep necessary records including finances. Watershed Committee makes the payments to user groups. SHGs to receive revolving fund.
2001	User Groups to execute works and keep necessary records including finances. SHGs to receive revolving funds
2002	User Groups to execute works, keep necessary records including finances and receive grants. User Groups would make the payments.
Hariyali 2003	Grama Panchayat to execute works, keep necessary records including finances and make payments. Organize "day to day" activities of watershed program.
WARASA (2000)	Detailed Process for fund utilization is suggested. User Groups to execute works and keep necessary records including finances

Analysis:

Receiving and spending funds in a transparent manner is an important indicator of maturity of the community-based organization. This opportunity for the groups of primary stakeholder is reducing with each guideline. While WARASA (2000) and Process

Guidelines (2002) make funding arrangement a tool for empowerment, Revised Guidelines (2001) and Hariyali (2003) have reduced the role of groups of primary stakeholders in fund management. Fund is expected to be routed through PIA as per Revised guidelines (2001) and Grama Panchayat is to spend funds (execute works on day to day basis, including making payments) in Hariyali (2003). Similarly, the allocation to productivity enhancement is not an explicit policy of MoRD, though many experiences indicate the need for the same. Similarly, the fund allocations for capacity building purpose is also reduced from 10% to 5% in Hariyali, contrary to many experiences on the ground.

Empowerment of PRIs: Can watershed projects "ALONE" achieve this?
The above analysis gives an opportunity to reflect on the role of Panchayat Raj Institutions in natural resource management, particularly watershed management program. Hariyali is seen and interpreted as a tool for empowering Panchayat Raj Institutions in the watershed development program (to the extent of displacing apex bodies of watershed committees and watershed associations). But the question is, whether this is the right option and only option to empower the Panchayat Raj Institutions. In this context, it is important to understand the decentralization of powers in India.

In the light of 73rd amendment, the state governments have an obligation of ensuring the decentralization of powers to Panchayat Raj Institutions at three levels – district, mandal or block and village level. The following table indicates the progress made in this process in different states of India.

Table 8: Levels of Decentralization in India:

SNO	Nature of Decentralization	Number of States (out of 31) and their names
1	Transferred funds, functions and functionaries of ALL subjects to PRIs	1. Karnataka
2	Transferred funds, functions and functionaries in more than 15 subjects	4. Kerala; Himachal Pradesh; Maharashtra; Sikkim
3	Transferred funds, functions and functionaries in less than 15 subjects	10. Andhra Pradesh; Madhya Pradesh; Chhattisgarh; Manipur; Orissa; Uttar Pradesh; Uttranchal; West Bengal D&N Haveli; NCT of Delhi
4	Transferred only some functions, but not functionaries and funds	4. Haryana; Lakshadweep; Punjab; Tripura
5	Transferred functions of ALL Subjects, but not corresponding functionaries and funds.	3. Tamilnadu; Rajasthan; Daman & Diu
6	Did not transfer funds, functionaries and functions of any subject.	9 Arunachal Pradesh; Assam; Bihar; Jharkhand; Goa; Gujarat; A&N Islands; Chandigarh; Pondicherry.

Apart from explaining the levels of decentralization, there are many other concerns related to decentralization process. Some of them are described here.

- It is evident that the provisions of 73rd amendment are not operationalized in reality. Many state governments have performed poorly in devolving powers from their fold to Panchayat Raj Institutions. Out of 31 states, only one state formally transferred funds, functionaries and functions of all subjects to PRIs. Without this process, it is difficult to expect the real empowerment of PRIs in practical sense.

- The role and functions of intermediary Panchayat is not defined clearly. This vagueness is leading to many conflicts between the members of Grama Panchayat and Intermediary Panchayat.

- Panchayat Raj Institutions are superficially involved in implementing many central government/ state government schemes and these are projected as "decentralization of power" or "empowerment of PRIs". Hariyali is also one among such projects, albeit with higher fund allocations (compared to any other such schemes).

- Staff of many line departments (like irrigation, education, health, so on) does not report to the PRIs. They only make themselves present in the meetings of district/ intermediary Panchayats. In fact, district collector or ministers preside over the meetings of district/ intermediary Panchayats. This process does not help the empowerment of the Panchayat Raj Institutions, as institutions of local self-governance.

It is important that the PRI should be empowered. At the same time, it is also important the recognize that the real decentralization and empowerment has to come from state and bureaucrats, but not by distributing schemes, which would be completed in a short span of time. In this background, it is important to understand the observations made by Task Force on Decentralization.

Observations made by Task Force on Decentralization:
- Many state governments, political parties and bureaucracy paid little attention to the empowerment of Panchayat Raj Institutions in its real sense.
- The transfer of functions, functionaries and funds to Panchayat Raj Institutions at district/ intermediary/ local level is grossly incomplete and nominal.
- In all practical terms, ministers of state governments and bureaucrats are handling the 29 subjects that are supposed to be within the jurisdiction of PRIs, undermining the authority of local self-governments.
- In reality, the PRIs are acting as extensions arms of bureaucracy, in implementing central and state sponsored schemes.
- In this process, the local level institutions and their plans are not given any respect. Entire decision making system is centralized at state and district levels.
- Panchayats do not have any financial autonomy. Financial autonomy implies vesting of financial powers in Panchayats to raise and spend funds without taking permission or approval of district or Block-level Officials. But currently, all central and state sponsored schemes function exactly in opposite manner (requiring approval of every activity by district or block level officers).
- State Governments are expected to allocate part of their budgets to be utilized by the PRIs as per their own action plans and needs, without any involvement of ministers and bureaucrats. To support the implementation of these plans, the district/ block level bureaucrats are expected to support (not approve the action plans of PRIs) the PRIs. But this practice is not seen anywhere (except in Kerala, where 40% of state budget is allocated to PRIs as untied budget and kept at the disposal of PRIs).

Without establishing clear roles for PRIs at different levels (moving from subjects to activities and sub activities – as suggested by the Task Force) and transferring the funds, functionaries and functions the true decentralization does not take place. The supporters of all democratic decentralization need to realize that the real hindrance in this process is absence of commitment from state government (all political parties) and bureaucracy to operationalise this concept.

Meanwhile, an illusion is created and propagated that "institutions of people (in case of natural resources, dependent communities) are "parallel" to Grama Panchayat and they undermine the role of Grama Panchayat, while pursuing their own agenda". This argument conveniently shifts the focus of the debate from state's role in decentralization process to the very existence of different peoples' institutions. On the one hand, it is a common knowledge that organized institutions of people (around a common interest) would only strengthen Grama Sabha; deepen the democracy and make the Grama Panchayat more accountable. Without realizing the need and role for such peoples' institutions in pursuing their own interests and goals, they are pitted against the Grama Panchayat in the name of strengthening decentralization. In this process, the arguments are generally to replace people's institutions like watershed committees/ watershed association/ user groups/ forest protection committees/ water users associations with Grama Panchayat. These arguments also indicate that all the functions that are essentially to be performed by primary stakeholders (who have interest and direct benefit from the resource management functions) are to be transferred to Grama Panchayat.

In this context, it is important to realize that the roles to be performed by Grama Panchayat and people's (mainly common interest groups like user groups, self help groups) institutions in natural resource management programs are different. While people who are dependent on natural resources are best suited to plan, execute works, maintain assets and manage resources, Grama Panchayat is expected to be involved in governance of natural resources like – support the process of institution development; establishing operating norms among different user groups/ people's institutions; conflict resolution; resource allocation and regulation. When the "executive" functions are separated from "governance" functions, the resource management would be sustainable. The need for different categories of institutions is to be understood and appreciated in this context. With this background, the roles of Grama Panchayat are clearly visualized in Guidelines (1994) and necessary provisions are made to make them effective (Refer Table: 3). Unfortunately, Hariyali reversed these institutional arrangements and displaced the apex bodies of dependent communities by Grama Panchayat and made the user groups/ SHGs redundant in all practical terms.

At this juncture, it is also important to realize that the state governments and majority of Project Implementation Agencies did not make special and serious efforts to involve Grama Panchayats and other Panchayat Raj Institutions in watershed program. In fact the relationship between Grama Panchayat and Watershed Committee are not very harmonious in many villages. Many experiences of involving Panchayat Raj Institutions did not go beyond structural convergence (members of Grama Panchayat being also members of Watershed Committee). This arrangement did not make much difference in strengthening the relationship between PRIs and institutions of dependent communities. There are not many positive experiences of working with Panchayat Raj Institutions in watershed context on issues of resource governance.

Conclusions and Way forward:

Having understood the evolution of watershed policies and their implications in terms of different parameters, the need of enhancing the relationship between Panchayat Raj Institutions and institutions of dependent communities is well recognized. It is important to make Hariyali work in this direction. Hariyali Guidelines should be suitably amended to accommodate the role of institutions of dependent communities. The provision made in Panchayat Raj Acts on Standing Committees is expected to bring together these two stakeholder groups with different functional domains (execution and governance functions). The advocacy agenda that is triggered by Hariyali could be broadly summarized below.

1. There is a need to create consultative forums at different levels (national/ state/ district) with multi stakeholder representation and institutionalize their roles in the projects, particularly policy advocacy processes. Unlike the current process, which ignores the experiences on ground, these forums should act as pressure groups in making these policy advocacy processes transparent, experience based, consistent and field relevant.
2. Strengthen the process of decentralization of power in its true sense. Coexistence of institutions with different purposes is vital for a democratic society. The agenda is to pressurize political parties, state governments and bureaucrats to take the agenda of power decentralization to PRIs in the framework suggested by Task Force on Decentralization (moving away from subjects to activities and sub activities, to establish role clarity).
3. Work with PRIs to create awareness and sensitize them on issues related to management and governance of natural resources. It is important that members of PRIs realize and recognize the role of institutions of dependent people in resource development and management and people's institutions also recognize the role of institutions that regulate resource allocation, use and management.
4. Capacity building of delivery systems and facilitating organizations like PRIs, line departments and civil society organizations including voluntary organizations in the context of natural resource management and governance.

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