



# Policy Brief **9**

Water Series

Translating Practice into Policy and Practice Change

## Resource Mobilisation for Rehabilitation of Tanks With People's Involvement



Involvement of people in rehabilitation work



Tank and its users

### Executive Summary

Resources play an important role in all Tank rehabilitation programmes. Generating resources is a challenge and managing the resources wisely is even more so, and will always be a limiting factor, no matter how well it is managed. Raising resources locally will add credibility to the tank project, as this will give the stakeholders a say in the restoration and upkeep of the tanks. Cost-effective ways of implementing a development/rehabilitation programme will make the programme more acceptable.

Traditionally, the local communities maintained the tanks with financial support from the local Rulers and Kings. There are references about tanks in *Sangam* literature that confirm the contribution of Pandiyan kings to tank irrigation in the southern parts of Tamil Nadu. The kings not

only built large irrigation structures themselves but also encouraged the local nobles and ordinary citizens to build water-harvesting structures such as tanks and ponds by giving them grants/revenue for the construction as well as their maintenance and management. The villagers played an important role in managing their own water resources. The user communities maintained the tanks through traditionally accepted method like “KUDIMARAMATHU” (Voluntary labour contribution). Under the British Government, with the introduction of the Ryotwari settlement, the responsibility of commonly owned properties like *Eries* (Small Scale Water Bodies) was vested with government and hence the maintenance of the tanks became the government's responsibility. Hence, what was previously seen as a local village

property was thereafter seen as government property and what was previously local responsibility became government responsibility. Because of improper maintenance and neglect of tanks over the years, they started deteriorating and had lost their original capacities. To bring back these structures to their original potential, DHAN Foundation initiated the participatory approach with the tank users for renovation of tanks through resource mobilization and the

users' involvement. Different approaches were followed depending on the local situation. This 'brief' gives in detail, the various methods adopted for resource mobilisation for rehabilitation of these water bodies with people's active participation and support. Based on the approaches made and the experience gained, DHAN Foundation finds that certain changes in policies and practices are needed. They are suggested here under:

## Summary of suggested changes in policies and practices in various departments

Existing policies/guidelines and practices and their shortcomings	Policy/practice changes required
<b>CENTRAL GOVERNMENT</b>	
<b>1. Ministry of Finance/Planning Commission</b>	
<p>Minor irrigation sector is important for agriculture. But the actual investment made by the government in Minor irrigation is low. Investment in the minor irrigation sector has come down from 3.35% during First Five Year Plan to 1.61% in Tenth Five Year Plan. Similarly, the investment on Minor Irrigation which was 49% of the investment of the total irrigation sector during the Fourth Five Year Plan has come down to 26% during the Tenth Five Year Plan. (Source: Report of Working Group on Water Resources for the XI Five Year Plan (2007–2012) GOI Ministry of Water Resources.)</p> <p>Even this allocation of 26% on minor irrigation includes both ground water development through private wells and surface water irrigation through tanks (Upto 2000 ha ayacut). The share of government fund allocation will be much less when the investment on ground water development is deleted.</p>	<p>Future food security of the nation depends on Rainfed farming and minor irrigation development. Hence increased funding pattern to minor irrigation sources is needed.</p> <p>Majority of funding is received from institutional and private sectors. The funding by private sector is done only to development of ground water. The stake of the Government in minor irrigation sector therefore needs to be increased from the present 1.61% to at least 3.5% of the total national plan out lay which was existing in First Five Year Plan and even more, considering the potential of Minor Irrigation to improved productivity.</p>

Twelfth Finance Commission strongly recommends that panchayats are to be encouraged to take over water supply assets. Panchayat Raj Institutions to recover 50% of the recurring costs in the form of user charges. The Twelfth Finance Commission has made a grant of Rs 20,000 crores for improving the service delivery by the Panchayats in respect of water supply and sanitation.

The Twelfth Finance Commission fund for improving the service delivery by Panchayat for water supply and sanitation can be utilized for tank rehabilitation in places where drinking water is essential.

## 2. Ministry of Water Resources

As stated in Tenth Planning Commission Minor Irrigation (MI) Committee report, there is a lack of coordination between various Ministries and Departments of the Central and State Governments in the investments made in Minor irrigation sector.

There is need to create a regulatory mechanism at the Central and State levels to look after all aspects of development in Minor irrigation sector.

Large part of investment comes from the Ministry of Water Resources and is reflected in the Central and State plan outlays. Additionally about 20% of investments made by the Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Rural Development are meant to be used in water resources sector, comprising minor irrigation and rural water supply respectively. But there is no check and accountability of these funds. Diversion of funds from one head to another is happening without any regulatory mechanism, mostly depriving the development of small scale water resources.

A Minor Irrigation Development Organisation (MIDO) needs to be promoted at Central and State levels as recommended by the Minor Irrigation Committee of Tenth Five Year Plan.

Only with the establishment of MIDO, the restructuring of the institutional arrangement in the government and ensuring effective coordination and accountability of funds received from other departments for the specific purpose will become possible.

Government advocates participatory irrigation management.

Participatory irrigation management has to be given much greater emphasis. MIDO when formed should assist in drafting a MoU between Government and Beneficiaries (WUA/Farmer's Association). MoU should

Roles and responsibilities of government agencies and WUAs are not well defined.

clearly underline the roles and responsibilities of Government and Beneficiaries. MIDO would undertake policy planning for development of Minor irrigation Sector.

Responsibility should be given to WUAs for work planning, implementation and follow-up maintenance. They also have to be given the rights to usufructs like, trees, tank silt fodder and fishing as in Pre British days or at least a fair part of them to be shared with the local Panchayat Raj Institutions, on condition that such income should be used for sustainable maintenance of tank structures and water management.

### 3. NABARD and Commercial Banks

In the Ninth Five Year Plan, 57% of investment on minor irrigation sector was made by institutional and private funding. As the institutional funding is governed by commercial interest, little attention has been paid to prevent over exploitation of ground water resources.

As minor irrigation sector is vitally important for irrigated agriculture and increased crop production as well as to recharge the ground water resources, NABARD may come forward to finance rehabilitation of small scale water bodies on a long term basis with grant and loan support.

Financial institutions like commercial banks and have to come forward to invest on minor irrigation resources through Farmers/Tank Associations/WUAs in coordination with state organisation, considering the importance of these traditional water bodies to the rural poor.

Bankable products with grant support need to be developed for minor irrigation sources. Loans with low interest have to be provided to WUAs/Farmers Organisations. Financial institutions should also support WUAs, for Crop Insurance, banking facilities and offer other financial services.

Wherever farmers' federations are functioning effectively, NABARD may route its grant cum loan mix for setting up Kissan clinics for improving productivity of tank fed agriculture.

Rural Infrastructure Development Funds (RIDF) of NABARD are expected to improve the credit absorption capacity and provide

RIDF corpus should be used effectively for development/rehabilitation of Minor irrigation resources. Implementation of RIDF IX Tranche should be done through the local community organisations.

infrastructure support for agriculture production and development. Various activities like watershed development and minor irrigation projects have been included under Tranche RIDF IX and are executed through state departments.

Considering the fact that minor irrigation projects have comparatively more advantages like small investments, early completion, easily manageable and quick returns, the bulk of this fund can be usefully invested in them. Substantial increase in RIDF corpus from Rs. 10,000 crores is needed to facilitate development/rehabilitation of small scale water resources on a large scale which is the need of the hour.

#### 4. Government of India, Rural Development Department

Drought Prone Area Programme (DPAP) was launched by the Government in 1972–1973 to minimise the effects of drought on the production of crops and livestock and increase the productivity of land, water and human resources. Presently the rehabilitation / development of tank systems is not included for funding from this project. In Andhra Pradesh (Chittoor District) it is included.

As the objective of DPAP includes increase in the productivity of land and water resources, it is considered necessary and is therefore suggested to include rehabilitation of minor irrigation tank systems (as in the case of percolation tanks/farm ponds) in this programme to facilitate increased productivity of agriculture.

Integrated Wastelands Development Programme (IWDP) is being implemented since 1989–1990. This programme revitalizes and revives village level institutions and enlists peoples' participation. It aims at giving decision making powers to them in terms of project implementation and funds disbursal. Integrated development of wastelands based on village/micro watershed plans is the objective.

Rehabilitation of minor irrigation sources, if any in the village/micro watershed may also be included in the project to make the integration complete. Flexible approach in release of funds for developing and maintaining minor irrigation sources is needed.

Hariyali was introduced in 2003. All the watershed projects are to be implemented by the Hariyali guidelines.

Hariyali watershed development at Panchayat level needs to be classified on the basis of hydrological boundary. Work implementation by only peoples' organisations, such as Watershed Association/Water Users' Association (without any middlemen) has to be facilitated to ensure sustainability of the developments made.



## Existing policies/guidelines and practices and their shortcomings

## Policy/practice changes required

Common Guidelines (2008) has come up with professional team expertise for implementation of watershed project. The team is mainly constituted to avoid delays in estimate and release of funds.

Involvement of NGOs as project implementing agencies is minimal or absent even though they contribute resources and motivate the villagers to participate actively in the programme.

Delays in preparation of detailed estimates and in their approval is one of the reasons for delay in timely release of funds. This can be overcome by ensuring the presence of an Engineer in watershed committee for scrutiny and approval of estimates. Ensuring quality of implementation, timely completion of estimates and approval, release of funds needs regular monitoring by expertise team.

NGOs with professional competence should be encouraged to take up implementation as they can also facilitate raising resources and if they have sufficient field experience, as Project Implementing Agencies.

### 5. SwarnJayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY)

Stresses the importance of irrigation facilities. Recommends project approach for increasing the irrigated area and productivity. Emphasises consultation process of farmer groups for selection of important activities and assistance.

Farmer groups should be included in the consultation process at district level (SGSY) consultation committee and block level committee for identification of activities in agriculture and allied areas. Funds can be allotted for development or repair and rehabilitation of existing water resources such as tanks, ponds. Planned removal of silt, development of inland fisheries, construction of community filters in surface water bodies should be encouraged and fund support has to be provided. Emphasis on Agro forestry and dry land agriculture has to be given.

### 6. Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY)

Provides additional wage employment and food security. The majority of works to be taken include works of soil and moisture conservation, minor irrigation, rejuvenation of drinking water sources, augmentation of ground water, traditional water harvesting structures and desilting of village tanks/ponds.

Limitation on the project period as 2 years for watershed project. No ceiling on cost of work, but must be completed within a year or maximum of two years.

The restriction of two years for completion of work is difficult to follow, as these works are season bound and can be carried out only during non monsoon and non cropping seasons.

The project period requires to be enhanced to three years. The works have to be carried out through the beneficiaries with technical support by an appropriate agency to ensure good quality and timely completion.

## Existing policies/guidelines and practices and their shortcomings

## Policy/practice changes required

Wages paid partly as food grains and partly as cash.

Distribution of quality food grains is not given due attention. Distribution of the food grains can be done through PDS or the cash component can be increased so that people can purchase what they need.

## 7. National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA)

Provides 100 days of employment to the rural poor. Works to be taken are construction of new ponds, renovation of existing ponds, Oorani, desilting of channels and irrigation tanks among other developmental activities.

Gram Panchayat may be required to take up works in consultation with village people who would suggest need based priorities on small scale water bodies.

NGOs should be given space for facilitating the timely implementation of the programme.

## 8. Ministry of Agriculture

**National Watershed Development Project for Rainfed Areas (NWDPA):** Common Guidelines on Watershed Project has come up with the decentralisation of procedures, flexibility in choice of technology and provision for active involvement of the watershed community in planning, execution, maintenance and evaluation of the programme before and after implementation of the watershed programme.

To ensure effective implementation in watershed project, selection of project implementing agency is a must. NGOs with competent quality/Civil Society Organisation/Panchayat Raj Institution are to be selected for the implementation. Watershed projects need to be planned and implemented on a contiguous and cluster basis.

Convergence of funds from various departments for all watershed development activities and training where tanks form part of the watershed is required. Budget provision for capacity building needs enhancement.

As per the Common Guidelines para 9.6 and 9.7 the Common Guidelines has insisted on convergence of funds from various schemes through State level Nodal Agency. Hence, effort is needed from State level and District level agency to converge all relevant schemes at project level.

Watershed development – its sustainability depends upon the principle in which WUAs, User groups and Watershed Committee promoters.

Water Users Association should have flexibility to mobilise resources on its own from various sources to build up their revolving fund for maintenance of tank/watershed area. However, the guidelines for its operation need to be evolved to mobilise resources on context based.

## STATE GOVERNMENT

## 9. PWD (Water Resources Organization), Planning and Finance Departments

Lack of coordination between the various Government departments in respect of planning, construction, physical achievement of irrigation potential created and channelisation of funds through various agencies.

(Source: Minor Irrigation Committee Report of GoI, X Plan)

**Integrated Agriculture Modernisation and Water Resource Management (IAMWARM)**–World Bank aided Tamil Nadu Irrigated Agriculture Modernisation and Water Bodies Restoration and Management project is being implemented through contractors in Tamil Nadu.

Creation of a coordination mechanism encompassing PWD, RD, Agriculture and Fisheries, Forest departments/Agricultural Universities and Research institutions is needed. The formation of a Minor Irrigation Development Organisation at state level needs urgent consideration as recommended by the Committee on Minor Irrigation on the Tenth Five- Year-Plan to ensure such coordination.

NGOs/WUAs should be given the responsibility to plan and implement the project as is being done in JSYS scheme of Karnataka which is similar to IAMWARM, so that the community participation can be enlisted and post rehabilitation operation and maintenance can be ensured.

State and District organisations should draw a MoU with WUA to implement the rehabilitation work directly.

## 10. Department of Agriculture

Watershed Development schemes such as IWDP, DPAP, DDP have constraints in their guidelines and procedure of implementation and cost. They do not provide flexibility to farmers/WUAs to directly implement the development/rehabilitation works. They also do not have long term perspective for maintenance of tanks and other small scale water bodies, since the project is implemented over a particular period of time.

Increase in the ceiling amount for watershed development upto Rs. 12000/ha is required.

Schemes should be drawn up with a long term perspective for ensuring sustainability. Involvement of WUAs with right to usufructs from the watershed/water resources should be facilitated for ensuring the periodic maintenance of the works and the sustainability of the developed infrastructure. All these have been ensured and Common Guidelines, but it has to be ensured while implementation at field level.

Focus on ecosystem based watershed approach is required. Involvement of people to be made compulsory and also facilitated.

## 11. Rural Development Department

**SwarnJayanti Gram Swarozgar yojana (SGSY), Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY), Tamilnadu Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (TNREGS), Anaithu Grama Anna Marumalarchi Thittam (AGAMT)**



## Existing policies/guidelines and practices and their shortcomings

## Policy/practice changes required

Under this SGSY scheme funds are provided for rural infrastructure development.

SGRY and TNREGS provide employment opportunities for the rural poor by carrying out rehabilitation works in farm ponds or other water sources along with other development works.

RFA and economic assistance under SGSY can be given to MFGs formed under tank rehabilitation project for improving livelihood activity. A part of this fund may be specifically allocated in SGSY for repair and rehabilitation of water resources infrastructure.

Scheme implementation has to be made effective by involving WUAs. Redefining the roles and functions of State organisation, District and Panchayats, WUAs/People's organisations and NGOs are required to carry out the works systematically.

## 12. Agricultural Universities

There are no exclusive studies related to cost effective designs for various component works in tank rehabilitation and the direct and indirect benefits accrued in terms of monetary values, crop diversification and water management and ground water recharge along with other development works.

State Department of Economics and Applied Research and competent NGOs with necessary expertise and the concerned departments/divisions of Universities can work out the economics of tank rehabilitation and do Cost-Benefit analysis of the work done. This will substantiate the effective work implementation and its impact of the improvements made. Such a study will also enable the stakeholders/community in villages who depend on tank for the various activities as well as the implementing agencies to make modifications in their approach, design, implementation and monitoring.

Establishment of a separate department or Chair for taking up research projects and field based action research to encourage farmers to adopt proper water management/crop diversification and other improved agricultural practices is necessary.

## 13. Department of Fisheries

Fishery Department / FFDA takes the revenue from sale of fish in tanks. The WUAs are unable to utilise the revenue derived from inland fishery.

Usufruct right should be given to WUAs for raising and selling fish so that part of the funds generated can be utilised for long term maintenance of tanks after rehabilitation.

## 14. Department of Forestry

Forestry department has stake on the trees grown on the water spread and foreshore areas and tank bunds. Hence the people are not allowed to cut the trees and utilise the money for operation and maintenance of tank irrigation systems.

Usufruct right should be given to WUAs along with local panchayat for raising and managing the trees in common lands. Resources mobilised from fodder as well as felling of mature trees should be used for the maintenance of tanks and the village development.

# Resource Mobilisation for Rehabilitation of Tanks with people's involvement

## I. Introduction

Tanks are traditional water harvesting structures. There are 40,319 tanks in Tamil Nadu. They are vital and significant for serving the community for multiple uses such as irrigation, recharge of ground water, drinking water and supporting livelihood activities such as Pisciculture, Agro forestry etc. Hence tank is considered as a multi faceted entity involving the sectors of Agriculture, Engineering, Management, Environment and the local Community.

### **History and evolution of tank management**

**–King's rule:** Most of the tanks in South India are of ancient origin, with several dating back to the 4th and 5th centuries A.D. There are references about tanks in *Sangam* literature that confirm the contribution of Pandiyan kings to tank irrigation in the southern parts of Tamil Nadu. To the 'Pallava' kings go the credit of creating a large number of tanks from 500 A.D. to 900 A.D in the northern parts of Tamilnadu. During their period there was a rapid development of tank irrigation systems. Tanks were ingeniously designed by the native rulers and managed by the local communities over the past several centuries.

Studies made by various scholars on the historical growth of traditional tank irrigation systems in pre British India, show that while the state had taken the role of creating the capital assets like tank systems, it was not involved much in maintenance and operational functions but facilitated the local communities to undertake them. The state has found numerous ways of creating sustainability by utilising the tank resources. Records in the form of inscriptions and colonial officials' notes depict that the state had set up endowment grants in the name of the tanks, transferring usufructory right such as trees, fishing, sand etc. to the tank organisations. These resources could generate sufficient revenue through local management to the tank systems. Further the village assemblies

have also recognised the tank associations as part of their user groups in administration of small scale water bodies

### **Status of Tank systems during the British**

**Period:** During their colonial rule the British took over these common properties as well as the revenue generated by them to the State. In effect the tank systems had undergone great changes in terms of administration and governance. Over the years the British Government did try to change the administration scenario by transferring certain roles and functions to the Panchayat systems on the assumption that they are closer to the ground. However, the results of such transfers combined with various community based management / institutional efforts had not met with success.

### **Experiments on 'Transfers' :**

As the Britishers took away control and revenue from tanks the farmers were deprived of their usufruct rights. However they realized that improvements to tanks could only be brought about by getting 'closer' to the local community. They enacted the Madras Village Panchayats Act of 1920 which had provisions for 'transferring' the works (owned by government) as well as their maintenance functions to Village Panchayats. The concept of the Britishers was that Village panchayats might be the nearest and closest local institutions to take care of these systems as they wanted. In the year 1920 the 'transfer' of works and functions related to tank maintenance and management was attempted, but very little was achieved in this regard. Though these transfers happened in the 'statute' books, on the ground the technical departments i.e. Irrigation Departments were given decision making powers over the Panchayats for executing improvement works through other provisions and executive orders.

**After Independence:** The government had to make all efforts to increase food production to meet the challenges of famine and drought and achieve self-sufficiency in food. As one of the

priority efforts the government undertook special repairs and maintenance of irrigation works. This made the farmers to consider all the common property resources as government property. Consequently tank maintenance was neglected by the farmers and it resulted in gradual deterioration of the physical components of the tank system.

**Analysis of the poor status of tanks:** The poor status of tanks is attributed to several reasons of which the centralization of administration is one, resulting in the breakdown of community institutions and initiatives. The following sections depict the deterioration of tanks and the various reasons.

Current scenario: Listed below is the chronological sequence of deterioration of tanks

- Centralisation
- Breakdown of community involvement
- Meagre resource allocation
- Encroachments
- Siltation and weed infestation
- Urbanisation
- System failure
- Extinction of tanks
- Decline in tankfed cultivation

Conservation of tanks through periodical maintenance was not undertaken by any of the government departments or the panchayats, except for the occasional allotment of rehabilitation grants. Also, the responsible departments or agencies were perhaps overworked at the grassroots level with other functions, which are in no way related to the tanks. Wherever the tanks are surviving and still performing, it is largely due to some of the local organizations and farmer's initiatives, which are mostly informal.

Current schemes of Central and State Government, supports for rehabilitation of tanks. For maintenance of water resources, funds need to be allocated and mobilised from the users with people's participation, so that tank maintenance can be ensured in long term. There is a need to

mobilise resources with involvement of people and need to assess the gap in schemes for tank rehabilitation for sustainability and maintenance of water resources.

## II. DHAN's Experience

DHAN Foundation believes that in order to conserve the tanks in a sustainable manner, there is a need to motivate the tank users through innovative ways. Vayalagam Tank Development Programme (VTADP) of DHAN foundation was therefore initiated in the year 1997. The programme mainly focuses upon the regeneration of farmer's management, by organising water users from tanks into an association and involving them in rehabilitation works. DHAN Vayalagam Tank Development programme aims at building the stake of farmers by raising a part of the tank renovation cost as contribution from them and involving them in the tank development works right from the planning to implementation, management and maintenance phases.

Because of improper maintenance of tanks over the years, they have lost their original capacities and started deteriorating. To bring back the tank systems to their original capacity and performance level, tank rehabilitation works are needed which would involve mobilising funds for such works. To encourage this activity, DHAN initiated the participatory approach in renovating tanks through resource mobilization. Contribution of people in tank rehabilitation works gives them a sense of ownership and belonging and also provides employment opportunities. The following activities are undertaken by VTADP.

- Enlist the participation need involvement of local community and build the capacity of the Ayacutdhars/Water users for tank rehabilitation and maintenance
- Facilitate the community/WUA for resource mobilization and contribute their own share for tank rehabilitation.
- Facilitate the community/WUA to generate resources for periodical maintenance and long term sustenance of tanks

## Need for Resource Mobilisation

Most of the farmers depending on tanks are found to be small and marginal landholders. Hence participatory approach by involving people in Rehabilitation works is the major focus area of 'Vayalagam Programme' of DHAN Foundation. The government schemes mostly provide funds for rehabilitation works alone. For building a fund for maintenance works after rehabilitation of tanks, no funds are made available. Hence resource mobilisation from people is necessary for long term sustenance of tanks. The contribution they make is partly used for rehabilitation of tanks and a matching grant provided by philanthropic organisations is retained as a corpus fund by the people for later use for maintenance of tank structures.

## Tank as source of revenue generation

Tanks can generate resources for their maintenance on their own, when provided with better management facilities involving the local organisation. The tank bed and bund provide space for raising tree/grass plantations, fisheries in the tank water, silt and sand for brick making and construction activities and generate adequate funds, which in turn can go into the tank maintenance and management. Because of poor management at present, the revenue generated from the tank is very meagre and most of the times they are not adequate even for petty maintenance. Hence DHAN foundation believes that with proper management regimes in place and accreditation of Tank Farmers' Associations (TFAs), tanks can generate adequate resources to meet their maintenance and management expenses. To bring back these tanks to their original capacity and performance level, funds/resources and participation of people are imperative.

Resource plays an important role in all the three phases (before, during and after) rehabilitation of tanks. Participatory approach followed by DHAN and emphasis on people's contribution in rehabilitation of tanks have been mainly responsible for the success of tank rehabilitation. Involving people in rehabilitation and in resource mobilisation not only generates employment opportunities but also creates a sense of ownership to the village common water resources. Hence during rehabilitation of tanks

people bear upto 25% of total cost and the remaining 75% is given by government through various schemes. The 25% people's contribution is through cash or human labour. Because of this initial contribution by the government, the remaining funds are more easily mobilised from the community and the work is done faster. The following is the sequence of steps adopted in the Vayalagam Programmes.

1. To form water users' farmers associations
2. To involve the users in planning rehabilitation works
3. To make farmers contribute 25% of the estimated cost of work towards rehabilitation and long term maintenance of tanks
4. To facilitate farmers associations commit for involvement in rehabilitation work without allowing contractors
5. To make farmers' associations commit for maintenance of tanks after the rehabilitation works are over, on a long term basis and facilitate resource mobilisation for it
6. To adopt transparency in maintaining accounts and the works done for tank rehabilitation.

Involving the people in rehabilitation works is expected to bring about the following benefits:

1. Generation of employment opportunities to the village people and implementing the rehabilitation works effectively without compromising on quality.
2. To provide the people, the sense of ownership of common property resources and confidence to undertake the maintenance and management of tanks.

From the experience of DHAN working in various districts, different ways of resource mobilisation have been possible and they are described below:



Orientation on NREGP to people in T.Kallupatti







When people do not have cash, they contribute in terms of human labour for the rehabilitation of tanks. This may be in the form of clearing of weeds, earthwork, and selling of silt etc.

### Contribution by people

1. Labour in the form of work
2. Sharing of contribution
  - Direct collection of contribution from Ayacutdars
  - Village common fund. In some rare instances, money collected from auctioning of fish, trees, etc.
  - Donation of construction materials such as bricks, sand, cement etc.



People's contribution as labour

### CASE STUDIES

Sl. No.	District	Name of the Tank/Oorani	Fund from Government scheme	Different Ways of peoples' contribution
1	Madurai	Vellinipatti Oorani Kottampatti block	Namakku Namae scheme	Village common fund, money obtained through sale of fish, donation, human labour
2	Ramanathapuram Year (1999–2000)	Nediamanickam tank, Mudukalathur block	Namakku Namae scheme	From auctioning of <i>Prosopis juliflora</i> trees, Rs. 20,000 as contribution, and Household levy @ Rs. 100/ household (Total cost= Rs. 1,40,000 and contribution from people = Rs. 35,000)
3	Ramanathapuram year (1999–2000)	Kadamban Kulam tank, Kadaladi block	Employment Assurance scheme	People's contribution in the form of human labour like for desiltation of supply channel /tank bed. (Total cost of the project= Rs. 1,00,000 and people's contribution = Rs. 25,000)
4	Theni (1999–2000)	Nagalapuram Mangaleeswarar tank, Bodi block	Namakku Namae scheme	Out of Rs. 25,000, Rs. 3,000 and Rs. 5,000 as donation from two villagers
5	Theni (1999–2000)	Karuvellankumam tank, Palarpatti, Bodi block	Namakku Namae scheme	Village common fund (VCF) Total costs of works were shared from village common fund.
6	Thiruvallur (1999–2000)	Devanthavakkam Pudhu Eri, Poondi block	CAPART, NOVIB	Total cost Rs. 67,000/- Rs. 7,000 as contribution from tree auction and each member's contribution @ Rs. 300/acre.
7	Kancheepuram (2000–2001)	Ponpathir Kudam	Employment Assurance Scheme	Total cost Rs. 1,61,420/- People contribution Rs. 39,050/- Rs. 100/acre from farmers and from all the other villagers.

## Case study-1: Thiruvallur district

Vyasapuram tank in Thiruvallur district was to be rehabilitated under 'Namakku Namae' scheme of Tamil Nadu government. DHAN had initiated the rehabilitation programme and persuaded the villagers to contribute 25% of the total fund for the rehabilitation work. The villagers made a collective decision and the funds were mobilised in the following ways.

S. No.	Source of Income for rehabilitation of tank (1999–2001)	Total Amount received from the various sources (Rs.)
1	Land levy from one acre of land from all the villagers	40,500
2	Pisciculture activity (where other organisations were not interested)	4,500
3	Loan from women SHGs (Interest free)	5,000
4	Loan from outside sources	50,000
5	<b>Total amount mobilised from the sources (by cheque)</b>	<b>1,00,000</b>
6	<b>Total amount for rehabilitation</b>	<b>4,87,000</b>
7	<b>Total people contribution</b>	<b>1,21,000</b>
8	<b>Excess amount met by people through labour</b>	<b>21,000*</b>

\* People in form of human labour gave Rs. 21,000 through weed clearing and desilting of supply channel

Endowment matching grant is also a source of resource mobilization. SRTT (Sir Ratan Tata Trust) of Mumbai has approved to give an endowment-matching grant. Rehabilitated tanks will be maintained using the interest accrued from this endowment-matching grant. The tank associations which are functioning well will be eligible for this maintenance grant for a period of four years. It is expected that after four years, the WUAs themselves will generate the required funds for future maintenance.

## Case Study-2: Improved Livelihoods for Venneervaikkal Villagers through the Renovation of Traditional Tanks and Ooranies

Venneervaikkal is a small village in Mudukulathur Block of Ramanathapuram district. Agriculture is the only form of employment for these villagers. The annual rainfall varies from 600 to 800 mm. There is a lot of fluctuation in the rainfall pattern and the people face many hardships. They realised the importance of rainwater harvesting and rehabilitated four tanks and three Ooranis in their village. Additional water storage capacity was created in all those water bodies for the benefit of the present inhabitants as well as for future generations.

### Problems in the Tanks and Ooranis

Three of the four irrigation tanks (Venneervaikkal big tank, Thiruvakki tank and Adiyotti tank) were affected by siltation, which reduced their storage capacity. *Prosopis juliflora* and *Ipomea* weeds not only hindered the maintenance works but also consumed water stored in the tank. Encroachment in the tanks was also a problem, and no renovation work was done in the tanks in the last twenty years

## Society for the Promotion of Wasteland Development (SPWD)

The SPWD came forward to fund the development of the traditional water bodies in Venneervaikkal village. DHAN foundation supported the mobilisation of funds and facilitated the implementation of the work in the village and provided orientation training to the farmers. DHAN provided accounts training and guidance also for the successful implementation of the project. People's participation was ensured in the rehabilitation planning, implementing and maintaining the tank and the villagers contributed 25% of the cost in the form of labour. Venneervaikkal Big tank Association undertook to maintain the Oorani and the big tank with the involvement of all the villagers.

### Venneervaikkal Tank

This tank was last rehabilitated in 1984 and since then the tank had become heavily silted up with storage capacity reduced by more than 45%. Three sluices in this tank were not functioning well. Two sluices were to be reconstructed and one sluice and weir required repair work. The width of the field channels in the command area was also reduced due to encroachment and siltation. The tank was receiving water from its own catchment and there was no water supply from any river. So the supply channel renovation work was very urgent and important.

To increase storage capacity, the tank and its supply channel were desilted and tank bund was strengthened. To ensure effective distribution of stored water, construction of new sluices and repairs to existing sluices and weirs, revival of surplus course, provision of shutters to sluices, and selective lining in field channels was taken up after evicting the encroachments. All the activities were planned in consultation with the Association members and executed through them. The total amount for rehabilitation of the tank was Rs. 3,40,000. The people contributed Rs. 85,000 (25%) worth of labour and Rs. 2,55,000 (75%) was received as SPWD grant.

### Outcome

- Successful organisation of the farmers and formation of Tank Farmers' Associations. Community stake building on tanks through people's contribution. A minimum of 25% of the total unit cost was mobilised from the people through cash, kind and labour.
- Development of a unique and replicable model of farmers' participatory tank system rehabilitation in the district through capacity building was achieved.
- Associations which implemented the work have taken the responsibility for their future maintenance. They also developed a set of norms to manage water with equitable distribution by themselves.
- Increased storage capacity of tanks through desiltation and elimination of wastage of water through repairs to sluice outlets was achieved.



**Involving People in Watershed Development**

### III. Sectoral Review Analysis

Agriculture is the backbone of India. Most of the rural population depend on Agriculture for their food security. Because of uncertainty in monsoons and improper maintenance of small scale water bodies, agricultural production has gradually declined. As a result there is migration of rural people dependent on agriculture to urban areas for employment. Most of the areas are rainfed areas and water harvesting is essential for improving agriculture and allied activities.

Out of the 140 mha of ultimate irrigation potential of the country, the share of Minor irrigation potential is 81.54 mha, (58.58%). Expenditure on the total irrigation sector has reduced from 22% of plan outlay for all development works during first Five Year Plan to 6.7% in Ninth Five Year Plan. Of the total expenditure, allocation on minor irrigation has reduced from 33% during eighth plan to 16% in Ninth plan of the total outlay for irrigation sector. (Source: Report of the minor irrigation working group of tenth five year plan)

#### Actual outlay and expenditure on Irrigation sector during Ninth and Tenth Five Year Plan in Tamilnadu

(Rupees in Crores)

S. No.	Source of Irrigation	Ninth Five Year Plan		Tenth Five Year Plan
		Outlay	Expenditure	Outlay
1	Major and Medium Irrigation	785	1366.49	1700
2	Minor Irrigation	515	243.17	500
3	Command Area Development	90	94.1	175
<b>Total</b>		<b>1390</b>	<b>1703.76</b>	<b>2375</b>

(Source: Report of the minor irrigation working group of tenth five year plan)

During the Ninth Five Year plan an expenditure of Rs. 1703.76 crores was incurred as against an outlay of Rs. 1390 crores. A sum of Rs. 581 crores was allocated over and above the planned outlay of Rs. 785 crores to Major and Minor irrigation schemes. Minor irrigation projects were not given adequate attention which can be seen from the above table where a sum of Rs. 243.17 crores only was utilised as against Rs. 515 crores outlay. Consequently in the Tenth Five Year Plan there has been a substantial increase in the budget from Rs. 785 crores to 1700 crores for Major and medium Irrigation sector while the outlay for minor irrigation has been reduced from Rs. 515 crores (Ninth Five Year Plan) to Rs. 500 crores (Tenth Five Year Plan). (Source: Report of the minor irrigation working group of tenth five year plan)

One of the reasons for the negligence is that the stake of Government in minor irrigation sector is around 33% only and major part of that funding is received from institutional and private sectors. Hence, there is an urgent need for restructuring of institutional arrangements to sustain the level of irrigation development in the Minor Irrigation sector.

The investments made in the minor irrigation sector by the various Ministries and Departments of Central and State Governments have remained uncoordinated. Large part of Government investment comes from the Ministry of Water Resources and is reflected in the Central and State plan outlays. Investment from Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Rural Development Department are not directly



allocated to the Ministry concerned with irrigation sector. Diversion of funds from one subhead to the other is a common feature and there is no clear-cut accountability of the expenditure incurred on specific minor irrigation schemes.

A general lack of coordination exists in respect of planning, construction, implementation, physical achievement of irrigation potential created and channelisation of funds through various funding agencies. (Source: Report of Minor Irrigation Committee of Tenth Five Year Plan).

The development of irrigation is most essential for increasing food and other agricultural production to meet the needs of growing population. Development of minor irrigation should receive greater attention because of the several advantages they possess like small investments, simpler components, being labour intensive, quick maturing and farmer friendly.

### **Review of Twelfth Finance Commission Report**

Twelfth Finance Commission strongly recommends that panchayats are to be encouraged to take over water supply assets. Panchayat Raj Institutions to recover 50% of the recurring costs in the form of user charges. The Twelfth Finance Commission has made a grant of Rs 20,000 crores for improving the service delivery by the Panchayats in respect of water supply and sanitation.

In Tamilnadu, Rs 870 crores has been allotted for Panchayat Raj Institutions which is 4.35 % of the total share to improve the drinking water supply and sanitation under village panchayats. These funds can be utilized for tank rehabilitation in places where drinking water is essential.

Panchayat Raj Institution to identify common property resources and the funds from these Common property resources can be used for tank

rehabilitation. There is a need to have an interlinkages between user groups and PRI for fund access and usufruct right for maintenance of tank.

### **The Madras Compulsory Labour Act 1858**

Community participation in the form of *Kudimaramathu* for maintenance of tanks was in vogue in the earlier periods before the British rule. After the tanks were vested with various departments, the peoples' participation started to decline.

The Madras Compulsory Labour Act 1858 came into existence in order to make compulsory labour for maintenance of water bodies lawful. Hence what was voluntary contribution was made compulsory in terms of labour or cash and in times of emergency related to irrigation works that had to be immediately taken up, like flood control, breach closing of bunds or repair of sluices etc.

The provision of compulsory labour is against the modern concept of democracy. The Act was not effective or sustainable, since involvement of people was made compulsory and its implementation became difficult. Hence people's stake in the project is considered important. Execution of works through contractors does not result in quality work; hence peoples' participation and stake in the project should be facilitated so that the quality of work could be better achieved.

Tamil Nadu has been implementing a number of programmes for tank irrigation mostly through the minor irrigation wing of the Water Resources Organisation (WRO) and Rural Development Department. The minor irrigation programmes/schemes date back to 1940s. Special Minor Irrigation programme, Desilting cum Restoration programme and Accelerated Minor Irrigation programme were the initial programmes for formation of new



tanks, restoration of abandoned tanks and removal of silt in the tank bed. But the major drawback was that repair and restoration works concentrated mainly on earthen embankments and repair of sluices. The equally important task of repairing inlet channels to restore their original capacity and maintenance of tanks after rehabilitation did not receive adequate attention. Moreover peoples' participation was not emphasised in the programmes.

In 1970s tank modernisation programme was started focusing on large tanks, to save water and increase the area irrigated with the available water. In 1980s, European Economic Commission (EEC) showed interest in giving assistance for tank modernisation focusing on non system PWD tanks.

The major lacunae in the tank modernisation programme was that the farmers were informed rather than consulted about their perception of the problems in relation to their tanks and their ayacuts or their ideas regarding possible solution. Farmers' committees were not formed till the works were well under way. The virtual absence of people's involvement in planning as well as monitoring and evaluation mechanisms reflects more basic lacunae in the implementation of tank improvement programmes.

### **Allocation of Resources for Tank Rehabilitation**

In Tamil Nadu among the various irrigation sources, wells irrigate 52.63% of total area while canals and other source irrigate 27.7% and tanks 19.7%. A few decades back each of these sources was contributing about 33 1/3% and the present pattern shows that the groundwater sources are being tapped fast and the commandability of the tank irrigation is on the decrease due to siltation and encroachments of tank foreshore and supply channels. It has to be construed that to sustain

the existing irrigation potential, the watersheds/catchments have to be adequately conserved (Source: Season and Crop Report 2005–2006, Department of Economics, Government of Tamil Nadu).

It is necessary that comprehensive development in the rehabilitation of tanks and small water bodies like ponds and treatment of their catchments areas with soil and water conservation works like field bunds, gully plugs and check dams should go hand in hand in order to minimise sedimentation of tank beds and to keep up the tank system performing efficiently. To sum up, tank based watershed development will be a good option to stabilise tank fed agriculture and enhance food security in a sustainable manner. Hence, convergence of allocation of funds is required for tank rehabilitation in watershed areas.

### **Development of Schemes in tank rehabilitation in the recent years**

**DPAP, DDP:** Drought Prone Area Programme (DPAP) and Desert Development Programme (DDP) have been implemented under area development schemes aiming at restoration of ecological balance by harnessing, conserving and developing natural resources i.e., land, water and vegetative cover and raising land productivity. Both the programmes were started in late 1970s.

Government of India and Government of Tamil Nadu share the project cost on 50:50 basis. Implementing agencies are Panchayat Raj institutions and NGOs through the village communities.

**Integrated Wastelands Development Programme (IWDP):** IWDP was implemented in 1990 under Ministry of Rural Department. It aims at facilitating rural employment besides decentralising actual decision-making powers in terms of project implementation and fund disbursal. According to the Hariyali guidelines

described below, IWDP is proposed to be implemented with enhanced participation of multiple stakeholders like people's participation by involving local Panchayat Raj institutions, NGOs, Government Departments and watershed community at grass roots level. This programme is implemented in non DPAP blocks (99 blocks) in 24 districts of Tamilnadu. The Government of India provides 100% grants in Aid. But as per Government of Tamil Nadu guidelines, People's contribution of 10% of the cost (5% from SC/ST community) is expected to be mobilised by the implementing agencies.

**National Watershed Development Project for Rainfed Areas (NWDPR):** NWDPR was launched in 1990–91 under Ministry of Agriculture. It aims at watershed development to be planned, implemented, monitored and maintained by watershed community itself. The watershed approach enables a holistic

development of agriculture and allied activities in the area taking into land users based on crops, horticulture, and agro poverty. It also provides flexibility in choice of technology and creation of sustained employment opportunities for the rural community including the landless. Ten percent of cost of work done in private lands (5% in case of SC/ST) shall be borne by the beneficiary.

**Hariyali guidelines:** Department of Land Resources in Ministry of Rural Development implements the watershed schemes through the Hariyali guidelines. The main objective of the guideline is to restore ecological balance through employment generation, poverty alleviation and community empowerment. Gram panchayats are the implementing agencies. This scheme clearly defines an exit protocol, which is absent in the previous schemes.

**The review of various schemes on watershed programme by Mid Term Appraisal Committee of Ninth Five Year Plan highlights the following:**

S. No	Major problems encountered in developing sustainable watershed development	Suggestions made for the watershed development programme to succeed
1	Inadequate peoples' participation	Peoples' participation is imperative
2	Lack of professional competence in planning and implementation	People should be involved right from the planning stage through implementation, monitoring, evaluation and maintenance in a participatory manner
3	Absence of appropriate management system	
4	Failure to make an integrated approach	
5	Lack of monitoring and evaluation	Need for capacity building on various aspects and to create awareness among villagers about the role of watershed development in augmenting in situ soil moisture and groundwater.  Gender consciousness and women's involvement is needed.
6	Frequent change of senior staff	
7	Lack of coordination among the agencies working in the watershed	

(Source: Mid Term Appraisal Committee of Ninth Five Year Plan)

## Common Guidelines on Watershed Development Project 2008

Common Guidelines, 2008 for watershed development projects have been formulated for application to all watershed development projects in all department/Ministries of Government of India concerned with watershed development projects. These guidelines indicate a fresh framework for the next generation watershed programmes. Review by Forum for Watershed Research and Policy Dialogue highlight the following on Common Guidelines.

### Key features of these guidelines are

The Common Guidelines reinstates the centrality of participatory processes and community based institutions for planning, implementation, and future management of the assets created by watershed projects. It endorses the three phases of project implementation suggested by the Parthasarathy Committee Report, namely, preparatory phase, watershed works, and consolidation and withdrawal phase, extends the project duration from four to seven years, with a likely hike in the cost norm of up to Rs. 9,000 to 10,000 per ha as per the Eleventh Five-year Plan.

The Common Guidelines also emphasises on adopting a cluster of micro watersheds with an average of 1,000-5,000 ha as unit of implementation, multitier strategy based on ridge to valley approach, with Forest Department and Joint Forest Management Committees, scientific planning and monitoring using remotely sensed data and creation of database both at national and state levels ,focus on livelihood while ensuring resource conservation and regeneration, and dedicated institutions at central, state and district levels with professional personal and devolution of finances.

The Common Guidelines make a special reference to convergence with other schemes like National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS), Bharat Nirman and Backward Regional Grant Fund. The guidelines clearly specify that the user groups in close collaboration with panchayats/gram sabha should maintain structures and assets by using the watershed development fund.

The Common Guidelines has suggested institutional arrangements that strike a balance between different types of Project Implementing Agencies (PIAs) which may include departments, Voluntary Organisations, Non-Governmental Organisations, gram sabhas-village panchayats and community-based institutions created under watershed projects. The most critical feature of the Common Guidelines is the delegation of power to the States.

*(Source: Common Guidelines for Watershed Development: Some reflections, Economic and Political Weekly, June 7, 2008)*

## Areas for consideration

- Emphasis is required on access to and effective management of common property land resources by user group since their development is essential for addressing the issues of equity and sustainability.
- Regulation and sharing of ground water among households within watershed community needs mention and attention.
- Gender equity needs an emphasis for overall empowerments of women to address their concerns and to provide them representation in various decision making bodies.
- Sharing of information or data is essential for maintaining transparency
- Handling over responsibility to the Panchayat or user group as part of withdrawal phase, to ensure actual performance for sustenance in the post project phase and for long term monitoring of the project.
- The common guidelines insist about multitier ridge to valley approach by involving Forest Department and Joint Forest Management Committees in implementation of the watershed development. In areas where micro watershed include forest area, a common treatment programme needs to be evolved under the control of the local project implementation mechanism (PIA/WDT/WC/Gramsabha) with adequate representation from the Forest Department and Joint Forest Management Committee

## Further Improvements in the Common Watershed Guidelines (2008)

- After completion of watershed work phase (phase – II), atleast 50% of watershed development fund is being used for

maintenances of assets created on community land of or for common use under the project. Works taken up on private land is not eligible for repair or maintenance with this fund. The watershed committee comprises of members owning both common assets and private assets. Hence there is a need for flexibility to user groups (comprises of private and common land) to mobilise fund for maintenance of tanks.

- There is a need for formation of Micro Finance Groups (MFGs) among the Water Users Association (WUAs) / Tank Users Association (TUAs) / Watershed Committee (WC) for improvement of livelihoods through land based activities and allied activities
- Income generated from usufruct in the watershed is now being collected by Panchayat. Usufruct rights to be given to WUAs in agreement with Panchayat to mobilise resources for maintenance of the tank. A part of the usufruct fund can be used for maintenance of the assets created in private land.

## Review of Employment Generation Schemes

1. **Sampooran Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY)** : SGRY's main objective is to provide additional wage employment in all rural areas and thereby provide food security and improve nutritional levels of people. Gram Panchayat is the implementing agency. The drawback of the scheme is that a part of the wages is given as food grains which are not of good quality.
2. **NREGA/TNREGS**: This is a recently launched (2005) employment generation scheme. It assures 100 days of employment opportunity to the rural people by issue of job cards to every registered household.

## To sum up.....

Review of the various schemes of Central and State Governments mentioned above as identified by the mid-term appraisal of Ninth Five Year Plan, which highlights the following; which are mostly, concerned with implementation of tank rehabilitation or watershed development.

***Lack of people's participation, Field staff unfamiliar with participatory approaches, insecurity about fund availability at the grassroots level, limited time for preparatory activities, little emphasis on cohesive group formation, lack of transparent criteria for selecting areas and villages, limited human resource capabilities, lack of involvement of senior government functionaries and line agencies, weak horizontal linkages among various agencies at the district level, no exit protocol for withdrawal after project completion, plethora of watershed development programmes with different guidelines and cost norms. The new common guidelines, 2008 of watershed development project will achieve the set standards and eliminate the minimum drawbacks.***

The working group's recommendations on Tenth Five Year Plan on minor irrigation sector have to be carried out by the State and Central governments to ensure Participatory Irrigation Management. Other suggestions of the working group are to come up with suitable legal environment, institutional arrangements for Government (Minor Irrigation Development Organisation–MIDO) and the community and ensure rights and responsibilities of community ownership. Hence MIDO is necessary at State and Central level.

Sectoral review on the allocation of funds and the various schemes available for development

of minor irrigation sector highlights the following:

- Participation of all stakeholders in the development and management plan of the watershed and water resources should be ensured for sustainability.
- Participation of local community in management of water resources, right from conceptualising, planning, implementing, operating, maintaining and managing the resources should be facilitated until it becomes self-reliant.
- In the development of small scale water resources, the unit for planning and organising could be taken as a tank cascade where hydrologically linked tanks exist.
- The water resources development programme should be totally a people led movement, the other agencies providing facilitating mechanisms like techno-managerial support and capacity building, to enable the development works to be sustainable.
- Institutional management should be such that maintenance and functioning of existing water resources projects should be given greater importance than that of construction of new projects.
- People's contribution has to be made compulsory for real participation. People should contribute their share of the project cost either through labour or kind or cash or a combination of two or three. The compulsory contribution, even if it is small, builds people's stake in the project.
- Funds for maintenance of water resources development project have to be generated from revenue collection from the users and the assets created with their efforts.



- The functions related to usufructs from the tank system should be transferred to the WUA and the income derived therefrom should be shared between the local panchayat and WUA on a mutually agreed pattern. The WUA should contribute to an endowment fund within a period of three years from the turnover of the tank system and the government should provide a matching grant to the WUA on a 1:1 basis. The income by way of interest from the endowment fund, MFGs savings and WUAs' share of usufructs should be utilised by the WUA, only for the operation, maintenance and management of the tank system.
- The linkage with the Panchayats and Panchayat Unions shall be made within the purview of Panchayat Act by considering the tank user groups as functional groups of the panchayats.
- The introduction of middlemen like contractors in the implementation of tank rehabilitation has to be banned in order to enable the people to become primary stakeholders and own the programme.
- Treatment of watersheds should be based on their ecological context and site specific, (e.g.) hills, forest, coastal, rainfed, tankfed, urban, canal fed and wastelands.
- Flexible procedures/guidelines based on the context and needs of tank farmers should be developed in consultation with WUAs.
- Capacity building of the WUAs, Government officials, project implementing agencies should be undertaken through competent institutions and NGOs who have long experience in social mobilization.
- To encourage promotion of quality user groups and ensure greater participation,

the government departments should play enabling role and not direct implementation role of watershed programme.

## IV. Seminar

A Seminar was organised on “Resource Mobilisation for Rehabilitation of Tanks involving people” focusing mainly on issues related to resource management and changes needed in the various schemes related to rehabilitation of tanks. The main participants were Farmers, Central and State Government Officials, Bank Officials, Academicians and Scientists from Research Institutions and DHAN Foundation executives. The seminar discussed mainly the various ways and means of resource mobilisation by the People and the Government. For increasing participation of people in rehabilitation works in tank, Agriculture Department, Agricultural University, Government and Banks should join hands. As a follow up of the seminar and further deliberations, the following recommendations emerged:

## V. Recommendations

- People's participation is imperative in any development project. They should be involved right from the planning stage through implementation, monitoring, evaluation and maintenance.
- Gender consciousness and women's involvement are also essential to complete the project successfully.
- Roles and responsibilities of WUAs should be clearly defined as given by the minor irrigation working group during the Tenth Five Year Plan review and enumerated below:

- ✗ To develop irrigation infrastructure by availing institutional finances.
- ✗ To procure water in bulk on volumetric basis from the source i.e., irrigation department and distribute to the land holders in accordance with the principle laid down by the general body for equitable distribution of water.
- ✗ To operate and maintain canals situated within its jurisdiction.
- ✗ To levy/collect water charges and service charges from the beneficiaries at the rate approved by the general body of the WUA.
- ✗ To educate and train the beneficiaries in the field of efficient economical use of water and adoption of new technologies as well to implement necessary programs.
- ✗ To prepare water and financial budget for each irrigation season.
- ✗ To resolve disputes that may arise amongst the land holders.
- Formation of Minor Irrigation Development Organisation (MIDO) at Central and State level is required to provide financial assistance, to formulate general guidelines, draw up plans, formulate design specifications, quality control during construction, monitoring and evaluation and participation in project activities such as education and training
- Ban on contractors should be imposed to enable the people to become primary stakeholders to implement the works and own the common property resources
- Contribution by the people towards the project cost through labour or kind or cash or combination of any two or three should be

made mandatory to build people's stake in the project

- Treatment of watersheds based on an ecosystem approach should be considered.
- Flexible procedures/guidelines of water resources development programme should be developed based on the context and need of tank system in consultation with WUAs
- Capacity building of the WUAs, Government officials, Project Implementation Agencies should be strengthened.
- To ensure greater participation of the people, the Government should play an enabling role and not an implementing role in the watershed programme.

## Way Forward

DHAN foundation will take this policy brief into consideration for bringing in the required changes in Policies and Practices for the benefit of people depending on tanks in consultation with the following departments:

- Central and State Water Resource Departments
- Central and State Agriculture Departments
- Central and State Rural Development Departments
- Department of Fisheries of Tamil Nadu Government
- Department of Forestry of Tamil Nadu Government
- NABARD and Commercial Banks
- Academic institutions including ICAR, Agriculture and Engineering Universities.
- NGOs
- Experienced Farmers' Federations

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## Abbreviations

<b>AGAMT</b>	–	Anaithu Grama Anna Marumalarchi Thittam
<b>DDP</b>	–	Desert Development Programme
<b>DPAP</b>	–	Drought Prone Area Programme
<b>IWDP</b>	–	Integrated Wasteland Development Programme
<b>JSYS</b>	–	Jala Samvardhane Yojana Sangha
<b>MIDO</b>	–	Minor Irrigation Development Organisation
<b>NABARD</b>	–	National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development
<b>NGO</b>	–	Non-Governmental Organisation
<b>NREGA</b>	–	National Rural Employment Guarantee Act
<b>NWDPRA</b>	–	National Watershed Development Project for Rainfed Areas
<b>SGSY</b>	–	SwarnJayanti Gram Swarozgar yojana
<b>SGRY</b>	–	Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana
<b>TFA</b>	–	Tank Farmers' Association
<b>TNREGS</b>	–	Tamilnadu Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme
<b>WUA</b>	–	Water Users' Association



**Renovated Tank**

## Why this policy brief?

DHAN Foundation is involved in Natural Resources Management focusing mainly on Community based Development and Management of Water Resources in South India. The initiatives taken so far have reached several villages through rejuvenating water bodies benefiting thousands of families. By working closely with the community, DHAN Foundation has gained valuable experience over the past two decades. DHAN believes that for better management of water resources, certain changes in the present policies and practices are needed. Hence, it has been decided to come out with Policy Briefs to disseminate the changes needed in specific sectoral issues. This will facilitate Administrators and Field level Organisations in their attempts of better management of scarce water resources.

Policy Brief 9 focuses on the various ways to mobilise resources for the tank rehabilitation management and maintenance works. This brief lays emphasis on contribution from people for the rehabilitation works to ensure their ownership and stake in the project activities. Further, it is also intended to draw the attention of Finance Department, Agriculture Department, Rural Department, Forestry and Fishery Departments, NABARD and NGOs on the policies to be adopted or changed for mobilising resources for the works. We would like to share the experiences among the stakeholders and pave the way for developing ecologically sound water resources development programmes.

## About DHAN Foundation

DHAN Foundation is a grassroots development organisation and was initiated with the objective of bringing highly motivated and qualified young professionals to the development sector for new innovations in development programmes and for upscaling development interventions to eradicate poverty. The Foundation works towards bringing significant changes in the livelihood of the poor through innovation in themes and institutions.

The approach of the Foundation is to promote people's organisation and their networks aiming at improving the livelihoods of poor communities by organising development works around themes. These people's organisations would sustain themselves and excel in long run. Presently DHAN Foundation is working on the themes namely Community Banking, Conservation of Tanks, Information and Communication Technology for Poor, Rainfed Farming and Panchayats.

## About the Centre for Policy and Planning

The Centre for Policy and Planning of DHAN Foundation provides support to the programmes and institutions of the DHAN Collective so that they evolve, develop and modify their policies and fulfil their aims. It shapes the sectoral policies to practice at the grassroots. DHAN Foundation as a member of many policy-making bodies on Micro Finance and Water Conservation strongly advocates pro-poor policies. The Centre takes up policy study and initiating research on Micro Finance, Water Conservation, Rainfed Farming, Panchayat Raj Institutions and Disaster Mitigation. As a resource centre, it organises many capacity building events and training programmes for Bankers, Government Officials and Representatives of NGOs within and outside the country.



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