



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