



**Proceedings of the National Meeting**

*On*

***Non-negotiable  
Principles of Development & Management  
of  
Natural Resources In Sustainable Manner***

*16th January 2005, Development Support Centre at Bopal, Ahmedabad*

Development Support Centre  
Bopal, Ahmedabad

	<p><i>Supported by</i> Aga Khan Foundation The European Union Planning Commission, Government of India</p>	
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## 1) THEME PAPER

After 40 years of state dominated/led development, India realized that sustainable development takes place when peoples' initiatives and energies have full scope for attaining their own goals of better life. This new approach to development was reflected in the liberalization of the economy in 1990s that gradually put an end to government controlling and managing " the commanding heights of country's economy".

In parallel development during this **Golden Decade** the rural development programmes of natural resources management were also liberated from top-down bureaucratic management to bottom-up stakeholders' participatory mode of management.

### **1<sup>st</sup> June 1990: Joint Forest Management Launched – An Important Milestone in India's Forest Policy**

Ministry of Environment & Forests (MoEF) issued instructions on the need to involve forest communities in protection and development of degraded forests. This programme, later on known as Joint Forest Management (JFM), was reckoned as watershed in the forest policy of India. Following this order of 1<sup>st</sup> June 1990 by MoEF, 27 State Governments issued orders on operationalising of JFM in their own state laying down the principles of organizing forest communities, their roles and responsibilities and the privileges they would be entitled to in terms of share of minor forest produce and the share of the timber value when trees mature and harvested.

#### **Box-1 : Spread of JFM**

The forest area under the JFM has increased to 14 million hectares in 2002 conserving and managing 19 per cent of the country's forest cover. Twenty-nine lakh families are involved in JFM of which 49 per cent are scheduled tribes and 29 per cent are scheduled castes.

*(Minister Environment and Forest at the meeting of the Ministry's Parliamentary Consultative Committee, 10 February 2003.)*

In a study by Development Support Centre (DSC) on cost benefit of JFM, it was found that against average investment of Rs.8000/- per hectare, the average benefit over 10 years period was about Rs.25,000/-, ranging from Rs.11,000/- to Rs.50,000/- per hectare. Interestingly over a period, Forest Department gained more out of forestland protected by the village communities than the income the department realized from the forestland managed by its own staff.

### **Oct 1994: Silent Revolution of Watershed Development**

Based on report of a committee led by Prof C H Hanumanth Rao the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) issued in October 1994, Guidelines on Watershed Development Programme, the committee's key recommendation was incorporated in the MoRD scheme of empowering the local community to plan, implement and manage their natural resources on watershed basis.

By March 2002, the programme covered 161 (1.61 million) lakh hectares leading to investment of about Rs.8677 crore and Rs.2100 crore released, giving average of Rs.500 crore a year during the Ninth Plan.

#### **Box-2 : Advantage Watershed**

The programme amounted to a paradigm shift ushering in almost a **silent revolution** in the country. Study by DSC in 16 villages of 8 drought prone districts of Gujarat found that as compared to neighbouring non-watershed villages, watershed villages were very much better off in terms of drinking water, fodder availability, crop areas and crop yields, employment etc. That earned for the study the title "Eloquent 'Silent' Revolution!" A sequel study in the same villages in 2000-2001, second year of drought, revealed that though differential was reduced, watershed villages had advantage over non-watershed villages. The study was titled "Advantage Watershed". In 2002-2003 the same villages were revisited to find impact of continuing drought. The differential was reduced and in two parameters watershed and non-watershed villages were at the same level. The title "Advantage Declined".

MoRD programme also impacted the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) which was running its own scheme of watershed development on traditional top down fashion. Adopting the 'Common Principles' jointly evolved by MoA and MoRD, MoA launched in 2000 its own scheme which has participation so much at the center that MoA called its scheme "*Jan Sahbhagita*". (*People's Participation*)

#### **In the Hands of the Farmers - Participatory Irrigation Management**

In terms of transfer of government canals to Farmers Organizations (FOs), the work was started in 70s as expected in the Command Area Development (CAD) programme. Carried out in top-down "command" manner the Water Users Associations (WUAs) established by Irrigation Departments almost disappeared when the attention of the departmental staff was diverted to some other priorities. The real push to the programme came in 1997 when the Andhra Pradesh Government passed a law transferring all tertiary canals and distributories to WUAs. This was a real revolutionary move that led to formation of about 10,000 WUAs and 172 Distributory Committees. With the leadership provided by the Chief Minister and some committed bureaucrats, the implementation achievement were remarkable.

### **Box-3: How PIM works:**

Dr K V Raju, Professor, Institute of Social and Economic Change, Bangalore, based on his study of 38 irrigation systems in Andhra Pradesh – 14 major, 5 medium, 19 minor spread in Telegana, coastal Andhra and Rayalaseema, reports:

- Transparency in handling funds
- Desiltation of some canals done after 14 years
- Across the state water reaches the tail ends
- In Tungbhandra High Level Canal – first time in the project history, during Rabi season, 1, 30,000 acres irrigated without additional supplies, just from saving of water during kharif.
- Government investment in PIM is resulting in 5 – 10 fold increase in agricultural production (perception of some farmers and officials).

*“IT IS HARD TO DISPUTE VISIBLE BENEFITS”*

Madhya Pradesh government followed by passing similar act transferring government canals to WUAs and distributory committees.

Thereafter, more states like Rajasthan, Tamilnadu, Orissa, and Karnataka have taken legal recourse that required transferring government canals to FOs - either a new special law for PIM or amendment of the State Irrigation Act.

Though reliable information on progress of PIM is not available, roughly 58 lakhs hectares may have been transferred to FOs that means almost 17% of the total canal command in the country. Out of this, Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh PIM areas constitute 15% and hence only 2% areas of the rest of the country are covered under PIM.

Gujarat and Maharashtra have already prepared legislative bills for transferring government canals to FOs. Maharashtra has promulgated an ordinance.

The restructured command area programme for the 10<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan now called Command Area Development and Water Management (CADWM), has made PIM as a pre-condition for availing of central assistance available from Ministry of Water Resources (MoWR). It can be expected that by the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> Plan almost 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the command area would be under the management of WUAs.

## Golden Decade

Thus, the decade of 90s saw sweeping, almost revolutionary changes in the management of natural resources, which are crucial for the well-being of people living in rural areas. No longer through commands coming from national or state capitals to be implemented almost in a mindless manner by district bureaucracy; but by the rural communities that would decide and prioritize their requirements and accordingly prepare and implement micro-plans appropriate to local conditions and needs.

## A Decade Later

However, the trends of the Tenth Five Year Plan are alarming, pointing towards distortions and reversal of healthy trends initiated in the Golden Decade of the '90s. It is imperative to arrest the tendencies to revive obsolete concepts that would undermine the gains of the '90s and deny to the rural areas the benefits of liberalization that should put the stakeholders at the center of development processes.

### **Box-4 :Retrograde Trends: Watershed Development**

<b>Item</b>	<b>d Guideline –2003</b>
1. Operational flexibility	No mention of flexibility in implementation.
2. Objectives of the programme	- More emphasis on water resources conservation, rather than conservation of all natural resources falling within the watershed
3. Consultative forums	<b>No provision for consultative committees at any level.</b>
4. Project implementing agencies	Only Panchayati Raj Institutions at Block and District level as Project Implementing Agencies. If not available, then government line departments. Failing that, voluntary organisations as stop-gap arrangement.
5. Village level institution of stakeholders	Statutory Gram Sabha as general body and Gram Panchayat as the committee for planning and implementing watershed development at village level, in place of stakeholders' organizations - Watershed Association.
6. Fund allocation for training & community organization	Fund allocated to community organizing and training reduced from 10% to 5%.



## Retrograde Trends : JFM

<p>1<sup>st</sup> June 1990 Guidelines of MoEF</p>	<p>National Afforestation Programme for the 10<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan</p>
<p>1. <u>Objective:</u> Essentials of forest management that the forest communities should be motivated to identify themselves with the development and protection of forests from which they derive benefits</p>	<p>Objective of institutionalizing people's participation with the increased availability of fodder, grass and fuel wood from the regenerated forest</p>
<p>2. <u>Role of NGOs</u> Voluntary agencies/NGOs with proven track record may prove particularly well suited for motivating and organizing village communities for protection, afforestation and development of degraded forest land.</p>	<p>No specific expectation from NGOs</p>
<p>3. <u>Organization:</u> Access to forest land and usufructuary benefits to forest communities that get organized into a village institution – panchayat or cooperative or village forest community</p> <p>The Forest Department should not cut trees being protected by the village communities and in case an emergency needs, the village community should be taken to confidence.</p>	<p>At the village level the JFM committee – Chairman elected by the members, the forester to be the Secretary and he would nominate (in consultation with the Chairman) other members of the executive committee.</p> <p>JFMC no longer a people's organization but only to assist the Forest Department in preparing local plans and implement it.</p> <p>At the district level there would be Forest Development Agency (FDA), a registered body with only officials as members.</p> <p>No membership for NGOs. The Presidents of the JFMC are to be nominated by the Conservator of Forest on rotational basis.</p> <p>Unlike the District Rural Development Agency, which is the district level agency for rural</p>

	development providing funds and supervising various rural development schemes, FDA is a regulatory and executive organization which prioritize, implement, improvise etc.
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For the management of the land resources both in private and public domain, the initiatives have come from the national level and therefore a national level effort is required to work out common principles of managing productive lands in the country that would strengthen the forces of stakeholders / centrality and foster the environment and system that would be supportive of local initiatives and responsibilities. Such principles could be:

1. *Community Based Organizations (CBOs)* to be the focal point of the scheme empowering them to plan, implement and manage local resources, with essential financial, technical and administrative support.
2. *Equity*: Need for focus and mandated processes to ensure differential part-taking of disadvantaged groups in local planning and benefit sharing.
3. *Flexibility* in technical and financial norms that could be adapted to suit the varying local conditions at state, district and village level. This requires decentralization of decision-making in consultative mode at a level appropriately close to the action situation. In a way this is adapting the principle of *subsidiarity* (any activity that can be undertaken at a lower level must be preferred to being undertaken at any higher level)
4. *Facilitating Agency*: Though self-initiated local organization is the most desirable development, experience shows the need for a facilitating agency consisting of a multi-disciplinary professional group that would motivate and organize the local groups and communities to initiate development process and activities leading to locally empowered development. Project Implementing Agency in MoRD's watershed programme is the best example.

Such facilitating agency could be a government department, a panchayat institution or NGO. Though carefully selected and supported NGOs have performed the best as catalytic agency, what is required is scope for selecting the best agency after proper screening and then equipping the agency through training, exposure to the best in the country and adequate funding and other support. This was the case in MoRD' watershed programme till Hariyali Guidelines.

In case of JFM there is no provision for a facilitating agency. The Forest Department through the Forest Development Agency (FDA) has assumed the role of regulatory, promotional, developmental and funding organization. This has to be radically changed.

5. Emphasis on and provision for *software support* of the programme by way of appointment of experienced facilitating agencies that would be responsible for community organizing, training; and assisting in participatory management .
6. Independent, reliable and on-going *monitoring and evaluation* that would help the policy makers to take corrective action in real time.
7. *Sustained momentum of development* : In development of the local resources through community action there is need for two-stage funding.
  - a) Stage-1: *Introducing* scope and potential for NRM. Liberal grant to CBO + stakeholders' contribution + funding support for software activities.

The watershed guidelines take care of Stage-1.

Equity considerations should require higher contribution from large farmers, particularly with ground water facility.

JFM needs similar guidelines.

- b) Stage-2: Expansion, realizing the full potential – Watershed Plus, JFM Plus, PIM Plus, Swajaldhara Plus etc.

During stage-1 even limited funding of Rs.6000/- per hectare in MoRD scheme of watershed development, the cost benefit should have demonstrated the benefit of investment in NRM. However further development of potential would also need investment, that should come largely by way of credit. This will be credit route to development. There is similar potential for productivity enhancement and value addition for the beneficiaries in other schemes of natural resources management.

This will require changing the mind-set of the rural community that has been used to development through government subsidy. This is a new role and challenge for the facilitating agency. Some grant support will be required for the facilitating agency to fully develop over the next five years the potential for productivity enhancement and value addition through feasibility studies, training, exposure visits, local demonstration and experimentation etc.

## 8. *Beyond Lip Service – Organizational restructuring*

All good participatory schemes like watershed development, JFM provide for software support for training, monitoring and evaluation. Those noble intentions are very tardily implemented, creating no impact on performance in the field.

Need for entrusting these essential software functions to independent competent agencies at the national level, which may appoint thoroughly screened agencies at state level for carrying out these functions within the states.

Experience of various schemes of participatory management of natural resources such as Joint Forest Management, Watershed Development has shown that Government Departments whether at the centre or at the state or at the district level have inherent difficulty in providing necessary support and guidance for such highly participatory programmes. There is need for a **paradigm shift** towards setting up organizations that will have policy and funding support of the Government but enough competence, manpower resources and autonomy of operations in planning and supporting local initiatives and institutions. National Dairy Development Board (NDDB), a central government organization, has achieved commendable success in promoting village and district level institutions managed by the stakeholders that have led to phenomenal increase in productivity and income levels of milk producers throughout the country.

Need to initiate serious thinking on designing and operating government supported autonomous, competent organizations at national, state and district (or regional, depending on workload) level that would enter into agreement with government as Agency committed to achieve agreed goals through agreed processes.

### *Paradigm shift in organizational structure and system*

a) For each important programme of NRM, a National Board should be constituted with secretary as chairman, an eminent reputed non-political personality as co/vice chairman and relevant officials of the Central Government, representatives of State Governments keenly implementing the programme, NGOs and academics actively involved in promotion / studies of the concerned programme, would be the members. The National Board would periodically review the progress of the programme in various states. Based on the review the Board may modify the Guidelines and also suggest to specific State Governments what action they need to take for keeping the progress on track. The National Board would put to good use the reports it would receive

from the sub-committee of the Board empowered to formulate policies and programmes for software support to the programme as mentioned in 10 (b).

The National Board will also formulate criteria for the selection of facilitating agency for the respective programme, and on the lines of Project Implementing Agencies in watershed programme, payment will be made to the facilitating agency that will cover all their cost of software support including overheads.

b) The National Board would appoint an empowered committee on software support for the programme with non-political, eminent personality well-versed in the concerned programme to be the chairman and 5 non-officials members with similar reputation and 5 officials dealing with the programme in the Center and States. The empowered committees will design the strategy for such software support and select reputed agencies for implementing the strategy.

Both the National Board and the empowered national committee would constitute their own secretariat consisting of a small group of first rate professionals with necessary equipments, facilities and budget.



1



2

**Glimpses of the workshop**

*Clockwise from top*

1. Al Fernandez (MYRADA) clarifies a point.
2. H.Jagawat (NMSWDF) and Srinivas Mudrakarta (VIKSAT) participating in discussions
3. Prof Y K Alagh, B N Yugandhar and Anil C Shah
4. Girish Sohani (BAIF) proposes a Principle and Declaration
5. Neelima Khaitan (Sewa Mandir) proposes a Principle and Declaration.



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## **2) MESSAGES FROM INVITEES AND PARTICIPANTS**

1) From Prof M S Swaminathan, Chairman, National Commission on Farmers, Government of India. New Delhi.

“January 6, 2005

Dear Anil,

Thank you very much for your kind letter and for the papers you had sent. I am sorry I am unable to be with you on 16<sup>th</sup> January, 2005.

The theme papers as well as the Declarations have been well prepared. I only doubt about the potential efficacy of the Board you have recommended. If it is on the model of NDDDB, it should be structured in such a way that the Chairperson is an eminent professional. The Prime Minister also called for ending the “tyranny of the bureaucracy” in his address at the Science Congress. The other aspects which need consideration is the need for ensuring social inclusion and achieving a win-win method of group cooperation. I wish the 16<sup>th</sup> January meeting much success.

With warm personal regards,

Yours sincerely

Sd/

(M S Swaminathan)”

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2) From Shri C H Hanumantha Rao, Chairman, Centre for Economic & Social Studies, Hyderabad

January 4 2005

Dear Shri Anil Bhai Shah,

Many thanks for the Theme paper and the draft Declarations. I am delighted and fully agree with the contents. It is clear that we have thought alike independently! The next meeting of the NAC is on 8<sup>th</sup> January. We may finalize our recommendations on Watershed Development by then. In view of my commitments at the NAC, I can decide about attending your meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> only

after the NAC meeting and let you know on 10<sup>th</sup> January. In any case, I hope our note should be available to you before 16<sup>th</sup>. Finally, if you like, you can include me as a signatory to your Declaration, even if I am not able to attend the meeting. It is indeed, a pleasure to be a signatory to such declarations.

Best wishes,

Sincerely yours,

Sd/-

C.H. Hanumantha Roa

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3) From Dr J S Samra, DDG, ICAR, New Delhi

Excerpts from communication received:

My Dear Mr Anil Shah

I am sorry that I will not be able to participate in the discussions personally due to some other pressing engagements and I am submitting a few points for the kind consideration of the participants.

- It was with the great difficulty that we could harmonize common guidelines of the two major players of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development in 2000 and subsequently the position has been altered by issuing Haryali guidelines which has placed PRI as most important agency for undertaking watershed development process. The Hariyali guidelines have emanated from the fear of a few bureaucrats to shirk responsibility of dealing with NGOs and they opted for a very safe bet of PRI.
- Water marketing through the PIM should be emphasized in the canal irrigation commands. Water marketing by the w associations for the harvested water is becoming more popular. However, the problem is that the state development agencies are difficult to change and they still have old mind set of some extra consideration for taking up any developmental activity.
- There is also need to converge watershed management programme, groundwater recharging and utilization.
- Capacity building, sensitization of politicians, planning interventions, keeping in view emerging issues of globalization, micro financing and micro enterprising are very important.

With regards,  
Yours sincerely

J. S. Samra  
DDG (NRM)

Deleted: ¶



5) Jan 22 2005

Dear Anil Bhai,

Greetings!

Thank you very much for arranging the 16th January consultation. This will be yet another in the list of your outstanding contributions to making the world a better place.

I do hope things are moving ahead after that. I would be interested in being involved in what happens ahead.

With deep regards,

Neelima

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=====  
6) Jan 20 2005

Dear Anilbhai,

I write belatedly to thank you, both for hosting the meeting last Sunday and for inviting me to it. Thanks to the thoughtful structure, the meeting covered a lot of ground in a very short time.

While I was leaving you said you wanted my help in Delhi. While I remain an outsider in the Great Portals here, I would be most happy to do whatever you think I can. Please do not hesitate to tell me whatever you would like me to do here.

With personal regards,

Deep

From:  
PRADAN

### 3) INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Shashidharan, (Advisor to DSC) gave the customary welcome address. He explained how this National Meeting fits into the overall portfolio of Policy Research in DSC, giving a brief overview of the approach taken by the organization in identifying areas where policy changes are called for. The close interaction with field level functionaries and creation of suitable fora for dialoguing with policy makers came across as the key features of DSC's work in policy reforms.

To set the context for the National Meeting **Shri Anil C Shah**, Chairman, DSC recounted the recent history, important milestones and turning points in policies and programmes in NRM sector. Excerpts of his address are given here.

“Development requires technology, capital and other resources but above all, motivation and capability of the concerned people, the stakeholders, to utilize their resources in efficient, equitable, and sustainable manner. This is **participation** as the core of sustainable development. The trend was started soon after independence with the launching of Community Development Programme which was diluted and almost given up later. It was again re-introduced more rigorously particularly in economic activities of natural resources management.



“The decade of 90s saw sweeping, almost revolutionary changes, in the way rural development particularly relating to the natural resources which are crucial for the well being of people living in rural areas, were to be managed. No longer through commands coming for national or state capitals to be implemented by district bureaucracy; but by the rural communities that would decide and prioritize their requirements and accordingly prepare and implement micro plans appropriate to local conditions and needs. Joint Forest Management (1990), Watershed Development (1995), Participatory Irrigation Management in (1997), Swajaldhara (2003) are some of the major programs formulated on the new Principles.

“When those working for Participatory management of natural resources were hoping for strengthening and carry forward participatory approach in 2000-2001 at the time of formulation of the Tenth Plan, there was severe setback as described in my paper “The Fading Shine of the Golden Decade.” The paper is a cry of anguish. When this paper was presented to Dr. MS Swaminathan and Prof. YK Alagh, they encouraged DSC to organize national level deliberations to voice concern at the dilution and almost reversal of the participatory approach and at the

same time present Principles that should guide the formulation and modification of schemes of NRM by center, states, or donors.

“This is led to this National level Meeting that seeks to present Eight Principles and Declarations that should guide the policy makers.

Four of these are reiteration of Principles accepted but not consistently operationalized:

1. Participation-centrality of CBOs
2. Equity
3. Decentralization
4. Facilitating agencies

There are four other Principles that are mentioned in various guidelines but without strategy to implement them:

1. Monitoring and Evaluation
2. Training and software support
3. Productivity enhancement and value addition
4. Restructuring of organizations

All the eight Principles embodied in eight corresponding Declarations are important – none should be neglected. They should be insulated from the vagaries of changing political and administrative leadership”.

“Given the rich nationwide experience of policy makers, practitioners, and academics that have gathered here, each proposed Declaration can be deliberated upon for the whole day. But the purpose is not to get into nitty-gritty of each Principle and Declaration but to agree in a broad manner with the proposed Declarations. Most of us here involved in NRM have basic commonality of understanding as seen in the message of Professor CH Hanumantha Rao. (Message in Item:2 and Notes in Annexure 3)

“As leaders in the field we want to tell the policy makers that we consider these Principles non-negotiable, inviolable.

“The idea is to note down variations in experiences and expressions that may be suggested for improvement of the Declarations. The suggestions will be considered later by the steering committee led by Professor Alagh that would finalize the Principles and Declarations. They would then be presented to policy makers in the centre, states and important donors supporting NRM.

“We have two able leaders Professor Y K Alagh and Shri BN Yungadhar to make sure that this national meeting, despite the time constraint, gets best out of the best in the country that is present here.”

**Prof Y K Alagh**, commended the initiative taken by DSC in organizing the National Meeting . He noted the exceptional ability of Shri Anil Shah to understand and create participative institutions and therefore try and find solutions for problems. He made a focused reference to the importance of watershed program, not only as a drought mitigation measure but also for its institution building role.



He said that participative programmes are bound to have problems, but “you need systems to face these problems, champion the cause and resolve problems as they come”. Instead of letting the “empire strike back” we must struggle against regressive features such as certain provisions in Hariyali guidelines and recent revisions in JFM.

He expressed his confidence that this National Meeting will lead to “Bopal Declarations” that are not merely enunciating basic principles, but are so formulated that they cover the last mile --- ensuring its implementation in all NRM programmes.

**Shri. B N Yugandhar**, Member, Planning Commission, Government of India, expressed his keen appreciation of the efforts by DSC to organize this National



Meeting . He found the composition of participants a unique mix of practitioners, policy makers and academics. They will be able to bring in expertise in capacity building, institution building processes and technologies. Even though the National Meeting was focusing on NRM programmes, he felt that the Declarations and the Principles underlying them are equally valid for other sectors like education and health. He said that the proposed Principles are basic and yet critical to the success of programmes. He attributed the decline in quality of results of NRM to the dilution of some of these Principles.

Concurring on the concerns expressed by Shri Anil Shah, Shri B N Yugandhar observed that the National Meeting is very timely. He is keen to use the outcome of the National Meeting to initiate corrective measures at the central level so that important programmes continue to retain the progressive elements of participation and indeed strengthen them further.

#### **4) PREAMBLE**

A transition from top-down way of program implementation to a community driven participative way requires significant changes on many fronts. The deliberations and subsequent Declarations capture the essential and non-negotiable Principles that constitute the basic framework of participatory development programmes. Each Principle and Declaration is evolved in a manner that it emphasizes its need and importance in any NRM programme.

It was evident during the deliberations in the National Meeting that many of the Principles are intricately connected to other Principles. In fact, some of them have relevance only when considered in tandem with other Principles. There is a temptation to draw cross-references and attempt to connect such relevant Principles in each Declaration. There was concern that some of the Principles and corresponding Declarations will not serve the desired purpose unless other relevant Principles are also mentioned. For example, the primacy of CBOs can be safeguarded only if the process of promoting and strengthening them is done by an agency that is sensitive to community-level sociology and has the competency for social organizing. The second aspect is captured in a separate Principle on facilitating agencies. If we tried to include all constituent aspects in each Principle, then the Declaration becomes unwieldy and perhaps run the risk of missing out the core Principle itself. Therefore, the language and wordings of the Principle and Declaration will be done in a manner that the core Principle is explicit in an unambiguous manner. To ensure that the interconnectedness of various Principles are understood, the final report will emphasize that the set of Principles are effective only when they are bundled together as a package. In other words, the Principles work only when applied in total, and may lose their relevance when applied selectively.

In the following pages, each Principle is presented along with the rationale. and the Declaration that reflects the central Principle.. The rationale attempts to cover the arguments and justifications for the Declaration.

## 5) PRINCIPLES AND ADOPTION OF DECLARATION

### **Principle 1: Centrality of Community Based Organisations**

#### **Rationale**

The inadequacies of most of the rural development programmes launched after independence were summed up in the Hanumantha Rao Committee Report of 1994 thus: "Drought Prone Area Programme (DPAP) and Desert Development Programme (DDP) have been implemented in a fragmented manner by different departments through rigid Guidelines without involving the stakeholders. Apart from exceptions, the achievements have been dismal". While the "top-down" and "blue-print" nature of design and implementation resulted in a high level of disconnect between the provisions in various schemes and the needs and resource status of the intended beneficiaries, numerous projects, notably from the non-governmental organisation (NGO) sector, could demonstrate quite convincingly the advantages of community participation at all levels of the programme. Process of formation and capacity building of a CBO depend on the quality of facilitating agency involved. NGOs have a clear advantage over government agencies. Not only did participation yield far better results in terms of sustainable resource development and management, but also provided an excellent opportunity for building social capital in the village communities. As primary stakeholders community members chose technologies that were more appropriate for the local conditions. Benefit distribution was more equitable across social and economic groups. Participatory programmes were successful in adopting a gradual and incremental approach to cost sharing by the user-groups, thus taking a significant step towards diminishing government subsidies. It was precisely these compelling advantages of participatory programmes over "top-down" ones that resulted in a major policy change in the 1990s towards decentralisation and devolution of responsibilities and resources to communities.

Evidence from various studies indicates, quite conclusively, that programmes centred around CBOs perform much better than those that are implemented through government departments or public agencies. Therefore, any endeavor that dilutes the participatory nature of the programme and takes responsibilities and financial resources away from the community can only be a regressive step. All present and future programmes must build on this experience and further strengthen the central role played by the community.

*Gram Panchayat*, as the last and crucial link in the chain of governance in the country has to play an important role in providing support to primary stakeholders' organisations engaged in economic activities. *Gram Sabha* and as its executive committee the *Gram Panchayat* should be associated with stakeholders' organisations so as to secure required support for the development of local resources. The CBO will represent the interest group of primary stakeholders which is not to be identified with the *Gram Panchayat*. The *Gram Panchayat* will provide enabling support to the interest group, not replace it..

## **Declaration 1**

- i. Community Based Organisations (CBOs) of primary stakeholders, whether set up by law or enabling administrative instructions, must be at the centre of planning, budgeting, implementation, and management of all natural resources development programmes.*
- ii. The programme design must provide adequate time for capacity building of stakeholder institutions as well as for organizing financial, technical, and administrative support the stakeholder institutions require to take full ownership of the programme. The ability to elect its own office bearers and appoint its staff who are authorised and competent to carry out all financial transactions (instead of government officers) is the hallmark of a robust CBO.*
- iii. Functioning as an empowered organisation, the CBO should prove its sense of ownership of the programme by sharing the cost of the investment which is being made for its benefit. The share of the cost should steadily rise till entire the investment is made up from member's own resources and from loan funds from credit institutions.*
- iv. The CBOs should be closely associated with the Gram Sabha in planning, budgeting, and implementing the programme; they should also obtain the support and participation of the Gram Panchayat so that there is convergence of all programmes in the area served by the Gram Panchayat.*

## Principle 2: Equity

### Rationale

NRM programmes have a profound impact on the livelihood of all households in a rural community. One of the most serious failings of centrally sponsored NRM schemes has been their inability to reach out to the disadvantaged groups in the communities. This has serious consequences not only on the livelihood of households with little or no resources but also on the sustainability of the programme. Despite a clear mandate to target disadvantaged groups, most programmes do not have built-in mechanisms to ensure that the target group is able to access resources and obtain their legitimate share of benefits. Gender-based inequity, marginalisation of economically disadvantaged groups, and exclusion of socially backward groups are some of the serious shortcomings of community-based development programmes. Experience from recent programmes reveals that despite ample rhetoric and sporadic efforts to enhance participation of women in implementation, planning and the benefit-sharing, resources are overwhelmingly cornered by men. Poor impact of the Ministry of Rural Development's watershed programme on drinking water situation, recently studied by the DSC, is a case in point.

There are processes and approaches to community organising that would ensure that the disadvantaged groups enjoy their legitimate share of benefits. At the design stage itself the programme must identify and account for losers and gainers or "less gainers". Interventions in the form of differential contribution, customised village-level institution building for instance, single gender user-groups, non-negotiable budget provisions, gender-sensitive choice of technology, and targeted delivery options are some of the approaches known to be more effective in reaching out to poorer sections. Therefore it is essential always to inquire while planning, monitoring, and evaluating who are the losers, who are the "less gainers" and how non-gainers' access is protected.

### Declaration 2

***Natural resource development and management programmes should be considered as levers for achieving greater economic, social, and political equity. The implementing agency must keep in view the critical significance of equity considerations at all stages. Suitable mechanisms and safeguards must be incorporated into the design process and execution of the programmes so as to ensure participation of the disadvantaged.***



## **Principle 3: Decentralisation**

### **Rationale**

NRM schemes were conceptualised and formulated in a prescriptive mode where norms and procedures were set by the Centre or, at best, at the state level. When site-specific issues or concerns emerge, they would be either ignored or referred to the central or the state agencies for consideration. More often than not, the issues remained unattended, and if attended to and action proposed, it would be too late for the field-level functionaries to act. Poor response would lead to a gradual decline in feedback and this, in turn, would discourage any initiative to make the scheme more appropriate and relevant to the site-specific social, political, and geographical needs and resources of the community. Moreover, such programmes, sometimes implemented through the government line departments are so disconnected from each other at the field level that all advantages of convergence are lost.

In most NRM programmes, administration of implementation and fund disbursement is at district level. The uncertainty in the tenure of the current district-level staff hampers them from gaining understanding, acquiring competence, and developing the attitude essential for providing consistent support to community-based organisations and the facilitating agencies. This affects even routine matters such as the release of funds -- any delay upsets the momentum of the programme, demoralises the stakeholders' groups, and puts a severe strain on the facilitating agency.

The autonomous, professionally competent and dedicated organisation that is considered and recommended in Principle 8 has relevance here. Decentralisation: Restructuring of organisation can begin with the set up at the district level in selected districts in the first phase. It is necessary that development administration transforms the traditional bureaucratic organisation into an instrument of governance with understanding and competence so that it can support formulation, implementation and supervision of natural resource management programmes which would make the rural communities prosperous.

### **Declaration 3**

*i) Flexibility in technical, social, and financial norms to suit varying local conditions should be facilitated through the process of decentralisation embodied in a broad-based organisation at the district level. For this purpose the district level organisation must be led by a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) who is competitively selected for a fixed term with a performance-based contract and is granted full autonomy within the limits of the organisation's charter to deliver results.*

*ii) A governing board, constituted with strong representation from stakeholders and multi-disciplinary professionals with high levels of competence, can provide support to the CEO for effective decision-making. This organisation should provide continuity to administration in decision-making and ensure timely release of funds as approved in the action plan of the project.*

## Principle 4: Importance of Facilitating Agency

### Rationale

Participatory programmes will see a significant change in the way key stakeholders play their role at various stages of the programme. The change is considered so significant that it is referred to as a *paradigm shift*. Most importantly, after remaining passive recipients or beneficiaries of subsidised services for decades the key stakeholders will have to emerge as user groups and members of community-based organisations and take on the role of active proponents of programme design, implementation, and management. Such a radical change in the roles of various players will require backstopping support and capacity building inputs from professionally competent agencies. Experience of community organising so far indicates that the quality and pace of participation and building people's institutions can be greatly enhanced when facilitating agencies play a catalytic role. Absence of such an agency can, on the other hand, prove to be a serious constraint in the CBOs' effort to build capacity to cope with external and internal stresses. With the exception of the watershed programme, other NRM programmes such as forestry and irrigation do not have clear provisions for any role for such agencies. Under such circumstances, CBOs tend to surrender their roles and responsibilities to public agencies.

Facilitating agencies must have core competence in the process of social organising and additional competence in relevant subject matter depending on the programme it supports. Without diluting the central role of the CBO, the facilitating agency must provide knowledge and skills required to implement the programme so that both are equally accountable for the quality of the results. Experience has shown that NGOs are best suited to work as a facilitating agency for establishing robust CBOs, and therefore priority may be given to them while selecting facilitating agencies. This does not obviate the need for rigorous selection criteria and scrupulous adherence to them in selecting NGOs. Non-deserving NGOs must be kept out and room created for other agencies -- government and others -- to be considered as facilitating agencies. The agency must operate in a transparent manner and be accountable to the community and government since the role of such agencies is crucial.

If involving *Panchayati Raj* Institutions (PRIs) is considered a legal requirement, the facilitating agency could work as an accredited agency of a PRI.

### Declaration 4

***i) Rural Communities, if they are to be promoted and developed as community-based organisations, require facilitating agencies that are skilled in motivating and organising local groups to work for a common purpose. Facilitating agencies, preferably competent NGOs, should be selected by the district level NRM agency through a rigorous and transparent process as indicated in the guidelines to be formulated by the respective national board of each major programme.***

***ii) The facilitating agencies should have a multi-disciplinary professional team supported through financial resources. They should motivate and organise local groups for participation in development processes and activities, thus build up locally empowered communities.***

## Principle 5: Monitoring and Evaluation

### Rationale

No programme can be designed to foresee or accommodate variations across space and time. When a programme is implemented on a national or state level and at the same time actively involves communities, it becomes enormously complex. An effective and responsive programme must have mechanisms to refine constantly the programme provisions based on experiences gathered during the course of implementation. Past programmes have often suffered from delayed, biased, or incomplete feedback. When programmes are evaluated internally they are fraught with biases of the implementing agency. The agency is also reluctant to accept its errors and deficiencies. External evaluations are conducted usually towards the end of the project and therefore have very limited relevance or meaning. Monitoring and Evaluation (M & E) must be built into the programme cycle of formulation and implementation as a learning loop. This will lead to improved implementation.

Decentralised programmes, by virtue of their geographic spread, will generate varied and valuable lessons even during the implementation phase. These lessons have to be distilled from the field and made available to both policy makers and programme review bodies in a manner and at a time such that they can be instrumental in improving programme policies, reforming procedures, or adopting improved ones. When programmes are monitored in timely fashion and feedback is used for bringing reforms in the field, key functionaries are motivated to “embrace errors” and convert failures into learning opportunities.

The national board for each major programme will appoint an Empowered National Committee (ENC) for M & E, as recommended in Declaration 8: “Organisational Restructuring”. The ENC should design the strategy for giving timely feedback to policy makers and key implementers on essential parameters while the programme is being implemented. The ENC for each programme will also stipulate criteria for selecting appropriate, competent agencies for undertaking M & E at national and state levels.

Thus, M & E is to be directed to *improve* the programme and strengthen the system, rather than to *prove* anything. It should not serve merely to showcase achievement or become just a source of information to establish accountability in the Parliament. M & E should therefore be based on a clearly stated purpose; should focus on outcomes and impacts rather than on outputs; should cover not just the physical achievements but also process aspects; and should be appropriately designed for the project-, programme-, at national-levels. A participatory monitoring approach needs to be built in so that indicators and outcomes bring in the vision of the CBOs. M & E has to be use-focused. The State and national boards should use M & E to make real changes in the programmes including modification in implementation plans for which they would have the flexibility.

## **Declaration 5:**

***A participatory, outcome/impact-oriented and use-focused Monitoring and Evaluation (M & E) system should be put in place to obtain concurrent feedback and undertake mid-course improvements in the programme design and implementation systems.***

***i) An Empowered National Committee on M & E, appointed by the National Board and constituted for each major programme, should develop the strategy and lay down guidelines for selecting and funding independent, competent agencies to bring about continuous improvement of the programme.***

***ii) The lessons learnt should be available in a transparent manner, not only to the policy makers but also to the implementing agencies and to all those interested in improved performance of NRM programmes.***

## Principle 6: Training and Software Inputs

### Rationale

New approaches, new technologies, and new concepts will require a new set of skills, knowledge, and attitude among the key functionaries involved in sustainable NRM programmes. Inadequacy of the knowledge base and poor understanding of new paradigms have resulted in poor results. Past attempts to remedy the situation has been in the form of *impromptu* training programmes targeted at a specific problem or a specific group of functionaries. While this may have yielded some immediate results, the overall quality of programme has not improved. Didactic, classroom-style training programmes have proved to be inadequate and inappropriate for participatory programmes. The established training institutions with traditional training programmes have not been able to evolve a new curriculum or adapt the existing one to the changing needs for capacity building. Even where training budgets are provided, for want of essential directing instruments the budget provisions are under-utilised, thereby prompting an excuse for reduction in subsequent provisions and programmes. Not enough effort and resources are channelled to develop training methods.

Participatory programmes are more complex than top-down blueprint-based programmes. Most of the key stakeholders are familiar with only the top-down method of implementation. To reorient these functionaries towards participatory approaches towards new institutional arrangements under the new dispensation, and to focus on achieving the objectives of the concerned programme in a sustainable and equitable manner, a comprehensive long-term strategy for capacity building through awareness creation, communication and training needs to be designed and implemented. The training programme for sustainable NRM should aim at building capacity of all stakeholders to understand the linkage between natural resources and livelihood and help choosing the appropriate technology and practices to arrest degradation of natural resources in such a way that it fits in with local socio-economic situation. This can be better addressed by a coordinated effort: the ENC appointed by the national board for each major programme of natural resource management would design the strategy for capacity building of key functionaries and through transparent criteria select national and state level institutions to implement a common training module for key functionaries. To make the training institutions responsive to the changing ground realities and to make them accountable, the monitoring and evaluation system must be closely linked to the training programme. Monitoring for quality of results is expected to generate demand for specific capacity building inputs.

### Declaration 6:

***i) For each major programme of natural resource management, an Empowered National Committee, appointed by the concerned National Board should develop strategies and lay down guidelines for effective capacity building through awareness creation, communication and training of key functionaries in the programme.***

***ii) The plan for capacity building should cover from policy makers, in the centre and in the states, to village level stakeholders' institutions and leading functionaries of relevant Panchayati Raj Institutions. The strategy should be operationalised through national and state level institutions selected through objective criteria and funded according to the guidelines laid down by the Empowered Committee.***

## **Principle 7: Sustained Momentum of Development**

### **Rationale**

Natural resource management programmes such as Watershed Development, Joint Forest Management and Participatory Irrigation Management focus on improving the management of land and water resources. However, it has been seen that development by itself does not necessarily result in sustained improvement in productivity and income levels. To take NRM programmes further and optimise the gains, linkage activities have to be initiated along with the NRM programme and intensified when the "project" period is over.

Professor C. H. Hanumantha Rao concurs with this approach when he says as given in Annexure-3: "There is need to move from strategy for protection and survival to strategy for prosperity". What is advocated here is that the momentum for productivity enhancement and value addition should continue which would require linkages with external agencies for agricultural research, credit, processing, marketing, etc., Similar intervention is required to take JFM beyond protection of trees and gathering of non-forest timber produce. To realise the full potential of the forest land brought under JFM for the benefit of the forest communities, it is important to process and market forest produce so that there is value addition which will lead to rising incomes and prosperity of the forest communities. In case of Participatory Irrigation Management (PIM) transferring government canals to farmers' organisations is only a first step towards realising the full potential of the resources available in the command area of the canal system. PIM should go beyond more efficient and equitable management of water through access to agriculture research, credit, marketing, etc., which would result in increasing level of income and prosperity of the farming community.

Responsible NGOs working in different parts of India on productivity enhancement and value addition in NRM programmes have found it useful to promote federations of the user groups. Federations, with their huge resources and large scale activities are better placed to access external resources such as knowledge, credit, and agencies for processing and marketing. These federations can be encouraged to form strategic partnership with larger groups, both private and public. The partnership would provide opportunities to them for productivity enhancement and value addition.

All this will require professional support of a facilitating agency during and after the project period. All NRM programmes must provide resources and room for continuing assistance after the project phase is over. While the productivity enhancement and value addition initiatives can be financed through credit, promotional/supportive role played by facilitating agencies would require grant assistance for a few years beyond the project period.

### **Declaration 7**

***i) Since the goal of NRM is raising incomes and creating wealth for all sections of rural community, it is essential that facilitating agencies should be mandated and supported to initiate productivity enhancement and value addition during the project period and for a few years beyond.***

***ii) The facilitating agencies can achieve this best by organising local groups and associations and federating them so that they can build strategic partnerships with larger private and public groups. The partnership in turn will provide access to knowledge and resources essential for sustaining the momentum of development.***



## Principle 8: Organisational Re-structuring

### Rationale

Policy changes and intensive training to re-orient key players will be crucial in the transition from department-driven approaches to community-led processes. However, such interventions can enhance the programme quality only to a limited extent. To be able to operate effectively on a large scale *the* developmental and service delivery work in a huge and diverse country, it is imperative to transform the existing bureaucratic structure into one that is autonomous and can collaborate with the stakeholders, establish networks, evolve consensual decision-making institutions, partners interest groups, and is accountable to the funding agencies and the stakeholders. Given the present orientation of the control structure and its technocrats, such a transformation will amount to a paradigm change in the way NRM organisations are mandated, structured, and managed.

A re-launch of existing organisations for sustainable NRM is necessary to bring about a change in the work culture and make it more proactive and responsiveness to the stakeholders. These organisations, at the national, regional, district, and local levels need to have much greater operating autonomy and accountability towards their fund-giving bodies and for service delivery to the intended recipients. In many countries, including the U.K., Canada, and Malaysia, greater autonomy coupled with enhanced accountability of governmental service delivery organisations has generally yielded excellent results. In India, NDDDB offers another example. Besides, after the pace of liberalisation picked up in 1991, Government of India owned 240-odd enterprises have been put under a regime of enhanced autonomy, professionalism, and accountability. Their aggregate sales have quadrupled, while their net aggregate profits have increased about ten times. In contrast, the 750-odd enterprises owned by the states, still headed by politicians and bureaucrats with frequently short tenures, have been increasing their aggregate losses by about 17% per annum compounded.

Global experience with public sector organisations indicates that several mechanisms of autonomy and accountability need to be institutionalised to achieve excellence. These include a charter for the organisation that clearly spells out its mission, mandate, powers, responsibilities, and autonomy; it should have a competitively selected CEO with a (renewable) contract appointment with considerable operating autonomy within the organisation's charter; a governance board with strong representation of the organisation's stakeholders and relevant professionals; an annual MoU that spells out the performance expectations of the organisation and support expectations for the institution to which the organisation reports; an Management Information Service that periodically reports to the stakeholders and the controlling institution progress vis-à-vis performance targets as well as other developments; a charter of services that the stakeholders can expect from the organisation and a mechanism to redress grievances ; transparent, merit-oriented human resource management policies (vis-à-vis hiring, emoluments, promotion, etc.); performance linked rewards; "best value for money" market tests for the services offered, etc.

In the Indian context, the foregoing transformation may need to be phased. In the first phase, the bodies that provide expert services to the NRM organisations, such as information technology and technology, human resources department, and the selection

of CEOs on a competitive basis, as well as a few pilot-test NRM organisations may be designed along the above lines. Once the feedback is in, a full-scale roll out with needed modifications should be attempted throughout the country. Such path-breaking changes are possible only when championed by government functionaries at the highest level. Individuals who can champion such cause can force the pace of transformation to a new trajectory.

### **Declaration 8**

*NRM programmes require relatively highly autonomous organizations at district, state and national level with performance accountability, structure of incentives and penalties, accountability for service delivery to their stakeholders, and multi-disciplinary competencies, to enable them to design, modify, operationalize, and implement as appropriate the NRM programmes within their respective mandates.*

ii) *These organizations should have the authority to raise non-government finance for achieving their goals.*

iii) *At the national level, this organization will take the form of a Board for each major programme, initially not necessarily a statutory board.*

iv) *To facilitate excellent contribution to their respective missions, each of the organizations must have :*

- a) *a charter that clearly spells out its mandate, mission, powers, responsibilities etc.*
- b) *a CEO who is competitively selected for a fixed term on a performance contract basis and is granted full autonomy to deliver results within the limits of the organization's charter*
- c) *a governance board with strong representation from stakeholders and relevant professionals*
- d) *an annual MoU between the organization and its controlling/funding authority that sets out performance and support expectations on both sides and also incentives and disincentives.*
- e) *a management information system (MIS) that provides periodic information on the organization's performance against its MoU commitments to its controlling authority and its stakeholders*
- f) *a stakeholders' charter that sets out what services the stakeholders can expect from the organization and the mechanism for redressing any grievances they may have :*
  - i) *transparent HRM policies*
  - ii) *performance-linked rewards; and*
  - iii) *'best value for money' market tests.*

**PARTICIPANTS WHO ENDORSED THE DECLARATIONS  
ADOPTED IN THE NATIONAL MEETING AT BOPAL,  
AHMEDABAD - 16 JANUARY 2005**

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V B Eswaran	Expert – Natural Resources Development & Management New Delhi
Anil C Shah	Chairman Development Support Centre Bopal, Ahmedabad
A P Fernandez	Executive Director MYRADA, Bangalore
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**Those who could not attend the National Meeting but endorsed the Principles and Declarations:**

Prof M S Swaminathan	Chairman, National Commission on Farmers, Ministry of Agriculture Government of India New Delhi
Prof C H Hanumantha Rao	Member, National Advisory Council, New Delhi
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**ANNEXURE – 1 :**

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## ANNEXURE-2

### Excerpts from a note by Prof. C. H. Hanumantha Rao highlighting importance and components of participatory approach in natural resources management

.....The single most important factor accounting for the positive impact of this programme is community participation and decentralisation of programme administration made possible under these guidelines.....

.....Yet, the present level of participation seems highly inadequate for sustaining this development, especially in areas where the programme was focused on the completion of works without the required social mobilization, institution-building and leadership formation at the grass roots level. Thus, post-project sustainability is very low in government projects when compared to those run in collaboration with the NGOs.....

.....Although there are reports of an improvement in the access to drinking water during drought in some project areas, the overall impression is one of acute distress experienced by women in respect of access to drinking water.....

.....The experience from the on-going programme raises the following major issues bearing on the effectiveness of watershed development programme and its sustainability when the official programme comes to an end: (1) Social mobilization, institution-building and leadership formation for ensuring effective participation of people on a sustained basis; (2) Building equity into the programme by addressing adequately the livelihood concerns of the landless, the resource poor farmers and women in general; (3) Convergence of various disciplines, particularly agriculture development programmes, with watershed development; (4) Strategy for conservation of water harvested as an integral part of watershed development; (5) Capacity building through training at various levels;(6) Expert and independent evaluation of the programme; and (7) Ensuring accountability of the programme administration to the stakeholders at various levels.

.....People's participation and decentralization of programme administration, which accounts for whatever positive results achieved so far, is highly inadequate for sustaining this movement in many areas. This turns out to be the most glaring deficiency in the implementation of the programme so far. This is not surprising given the entrenched bureaucratic ethos and the nature of our social structure.....

.....The outlays on training and capacity building have been slashed under the revised guidelines. NGOs in general are better equipped to undertake the work towards creation of awareness, social mobilization and capacity building. But the revised Guidelines for Hariyali introduced in April 2003, instead

of evolving mechanisms at the national as well as regional levels for selecting the bonafide and competent NGOs, have severely restricted the role of NGOs as PIAs in watershed development. This has been done despite the mounting evidence that the performance of watersheds in the implementation of which government or externally aided agencies collaborated with NGOs has been distinctly better than those which have been implemented by the government agencies alone. This process should be reversed immediately and mechanisms evolved at the national as well as regional levels for selecting the bonafide and competent NGOs, who should be involved in the task of social mobilization and institution building at the watershed level.....

.....Experience shows that equity in the distribution of benefits is a pre-requisite for effective or broad-based participation and sustainability of the project. But the programme has failed to build adequately the livelihood concerns of the landless, the marginal farmers and women.....

.....Experience suggests the need for appropriate revisions in the guidelines for pre-empting certain portion of outlays towards activities that meet the livelihood concerns of the poor as well as for ensuring equitable sharing of the benefits from watershed development such as water, fodder and usufructs from common property resources.....

.....Capacity building for watershed development through training encompasses wide ranging tasks such as awareness building or imparting resource-literacy; development of technical skills; and reorienting motivations and attitudes of officials and political functionaries at all levels towards the need for empowering the people through decentralization. Those who administer the programme, and who themselves need such training, are not best fitted to oversee these training programmes. While a number of measures have been taken for strengthening training at various levels since the adoption of new guidelines, experience so far strongly suggests the need for (a) broadening these programmes with a view to imparting training to bureaucracy at all levels as well as to political functionaries from Panchayat level to parliament; (b) improving the content and quality of training programmes with due priority given to the processes of empowering people through decentralization; (c) intensifying training by adequately taking care of the changing requirements in the field; and (d) ensuring the autonomy of training institutions and their uninterrupted functioning on the required scale by entrusting this task to an independent nodal agency at the national level and by guaranteeing adequate funding by the concerned ministries at the Centre.....

.....Evaluations and performance monitoring should be focused on outcomes against such goals originally set at the district as well as watershed levels.....

.....Despite wide coverage of the programme in the country, there is virtually no institutional mechanism put in place at the national level for concurrent evaluation as well as for undertaking studies of basic and long-term nature.....

.....It is of utmost importance, therefore, to put in place an institutional mechanism for research and evaluation in this field by involving reputed institutions in the country for upgrading the quality of evaluation, for example, by evolving methodologies for capturing the participatory processes and convergence of complementary interventions; by guaranteeing to them adequate funding on a long-term basis at the national level; and by ensuring for them autonomy in the pursuit of research and evaluation.....

.....It is necessary to distinguish this strategy for protection or survival from a wider or holistic strategy for the development of agriculture in dry land or rainfed areas. Such a wider strategy would involve issues of agricultural technology suited to rainfed areas, price and credit policies, infrastructure development for processing, marketing and transportation of agricultural produce and trade policies to afford reasonable protection to the dry land farmers and to provide opportunities for export of their products. Some of these supporting measures are no doubt present in certain dry land areas, especially in the watershed areas run by some of the distinguished NGOs, where there is a sustained increase in agricultural productivity and income. But this is nowhere comparable to the policy framework and infrastructure available to the areas in the country which have experienced green revolution. Such a wider strategy for extending green revolution to the rainfed or dry land areas is essential not only for deriving full benefit from soil and moisture conservation already accomplished in some areas through the watershed development programme, but more fundamentally to provide the necessary economic incentives for turning watershed development into a truly spontaneous and demand driven movement of the people in dry land areas not covered so far, and to sustain watershed development already undertaken when the current official programme comes to an end.....

.....Social mobilization, equitable distribution of benefits and convergence of various disciplines in watershed development, though necessary, would not be sufficient for optimizing the benefits from soil and moisture conservation and for sustaining the interest of dry land farmers in such efforts in the long-run, unless there is a major shift in the existing policy for dry land agriculture. To appreciate this, it is necessary to understand the basic differences between the conditions faced by dry land farmers and those in the green revolution areas.....

.....A large part of rainfed or unirrigated area is characterized by low and uncertain rainfall, low wages and high poverty. Owing to the unregulated exploitation, these fragile areas have been highly degraded. In the irrigated or favourable areas, given the technology, the decisions and efforts of farmers as individuals were central to the spread of green revolution, whereas in the dry land areas such individual farm-level decisions have to be preceded by community

effort for soil and moisture conservation which is a painstaking and time consuming process. Besides, dry land areas are characterized by greater agro-climatic diversity than the traditional irrigated areas, necessitating location-specific research for evolving viable technologies and practices. However, dry land areas have not received so far the priority they deserve in respect of agricultural research: Green revolution was characterized by land-saving but water-using technologies whereas dry land areas need water-saving enterprises and practices which optimize output per unit of scarce water. In the absence of such technologies, the farmers in the dry land areas go in for water-intensive crops like rice even when water resources are scarce, giving rise to conflicts on irrigation water and scarcity of drinking water. Unlike irrigated crops like wheat and rice, crops under dry land conditions face yield uncertainty as well as price uncertainty, in addition to being less remunerative, as price support and procurement operations are highly inadequate in these areas. Further, pricing of electricity for pumping water at a flat rate or supplying it free instead of on a volumetric rate has led to the over-exploitation of scarce ground water resources. Infrastructure like roads and marketing is highly inadequate in dry land areas.....

.....However, given the necessary shift in the policy framework in respect of agricultural research, extension and supply of inputs like seeds, infrastructure development and price and credit policies, dry land areas hold considerable promise for the development of agriculture. Indeed, the returns on investments in inputs as well as research at the margin are now higher for such areas than for irrigated areas, which so far have received greater attention. Consumer demand is shifting fast towards water-saving enterprises like dairying, animal husbandry, horticulture and floriculture in which rainfed areas have a comparative advantage. Also, such products have a good potential for export. Agro-processing, therefore, holds a great promise in dry land areas. All of this combined can be expected to provide the necessary incentives for the conservation of natural resources and indeed for easing pressure on such resources. Watershed development can certainly become more manageable under such a scenario.....

.....Involvement of user-farmers in the management of irrigation systems at various levels is accepted the world over as an effective alternative to the present system of management by the government, as well as to privatisation. Participatory Irrigation Management (PIM) being experimented in the country towards this end has thrown up certain useful lessons: Unwillingness to devolve adequate powers to the Water Users' Associations (WUAs) and insufficient infrastructure for capacity building at grass roots level have inhibited the participation of user-farmers and impeded the growth of leadership at the local level. Therefore, there has to be a vigorous drive towards the empowerment of Water Users' Associations in the country by putting in place an adequate infrastructure for capacity building and for extending the coverage under PIM, as, at present, only about 15 percent of the net irrigated area in the country is partially covered.....