A brief report of MoWR-NIRD & PR Collaborative Regional Training Programme on Participatory Irrigation Management (PIM) in different Hydrological Areas for Replication of Best Practices (held at NIRD & PR, Hyderabad during March 23-27, 2015)

MoWR-NIRD & PR collaborative Regional Training Programme on "Participatory Irrigation Management (PIM) in different Hydrological Areas for Replication of Best Practices" was conducted during March 23-27, 2015 at NIRD & PR, Hyderabad. The need of the programme is as follows.

Need:

Judicious management of water resources is among the critical policy issues across the country due to the absence of proper mechanisms for conservation, distribution, augmentation and efficient use. Despite ever increasing budget allocations towards major and medium irrigation, funds available for operation and maintenance (O&M) are inadequate resulting poor maintenance of the system, unsatisfactory service and ecological problems. To counter this problem, number of States in India has transferred the irrigation management responsibilities to Water User Associations (WUA) or Private/NGO Contractors during the second half of 1990s. In most of the cases, full transfer of powers has taken place as far as responsibilities are concerned (O&M, water distribution, fee collection, etc.), while only partial transfer has taken place in case of assessment, assured water supply etc. None of the States have concentrated to conserve water much. Except, watershed interventions are implemented in rainfed, wasteland and drought prone areas, the conservation of water in irrigated command areas is little tricky in nature due to hydro geological entity of the areas. However, the effectiveness of these institutional arrangements includes water conservation mechanisms needs to be assessed. Therefore, there is need for strategizing the introduction of Participatory conservation, allocation and distribution of water. Among other demands crop-water budgeting, assessment and assured water supply ensure critical significance for Participatory Irrigation Management. Hence, this course seeks to equip the participants with the needed skills for promotion of Participatory Irrigation Management (PIM) in sustainable manner.

Course Objectives:

Keeping in view above, the following **objectives** of the capacity building exercise were set for delivery of inputs for clientele at different levels.

1. To enable the participants to understand the management of water resources include proper mechanisms for conservation, distribution, augmentation and efficient use.
2. To equip them with skills for operation and maintenance of the system in tune to pool resources (both financial and human resources), delivery mechanism and repair, restoration and renovation of the system, and
3. To familiarise them with the comprehensive assessment of the Water User Associations (WUA) legislation and identify its feasibility and practicability in terms of implementation

Taking in to consideration of objectives the programme content and coverage has further divided into the following modules format and delivered the inputs accordingly through lecture cum discussion mode/ in the form of in-house sessions, case study discussions, panel discussions and exposure/field visits to the best practices.

Module-I: Introduction to the PIM: Concepts, scope of PIM and highlights of National Water Policy.

Module-II: Management of Water Resources: Proper mechanisms for conservation include soil and water conservation practices, distribution, augmentation and Efficiency in Use

Module-III: Operation and Maintenance: Pool Resources (both financial and Human Resources) Delivery mechanisms- Repair, Restoration and Renovation

Module-IV: Formalisation of Irrigation Institutions: Water User Associations, Transfer of Powers: Legal, Legislative, O& M issues, Distribution of Water/Sharing Mechanisms: Canal Vs. Tank: Head reach, Middle reach and Tail-end, Financial self-sufficiency (Fee collection), **Effectiveness of institutions:** Use efficiency, Conjunctive use of both surface and ground water, **Equity Aspects**: (across size-class and social class wise), Assessment, Assured water supply (Demand and Supply), Economic Self-sufficiency, **Governing Issues**: transparency, delivery etc., **WUAs: Organisational Issues**, Capacities, rehabilitation processes, sharing mechanisms, riparian system, utilisation of funds, planning of works, convergence between project committee and executive committee, Procedures for collection of water tax, role of irrigation regulatory committee (agriculture, revenue, irrigation and farmers representatives), if any, PIM: Collective Action, Social capital:-leadership, community cohesion, Formal and Informal institutions etc.

The programme was inaugurated by Shri. Joginder Singh, Advisor, National Water Mission. In his inaugural address he has highlighted the issues of Participatory Irrigation Management-Operation & Maintenance, Conservation of Water, Catchment Area Protection and reforms in financial matters in irrigation sector include user fees and tradable water rights. Dr. U. Hemantha Kumar, Programme Coordinator presented programme design, contents and present status of PIM in India.

In all, 18 participants from Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and Maharashtra participated in the training programme. Delegates shared their experiences of PIM. During the programme, various innovative and best practices of PIM adopted in Tamilnadu, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh were discussed. The week-long training programme designed and discussed in various sessions based on modules of Formalisation of Irrigation Institutions, Effectiveness of institutions, Equity Aspects, Governing Issues, and WUAs: Organisational Issues.

As a part of training programme, one day field visit was ognaised to Nagarjunasagar dam and Nagarjunasagar Left Canal (NSLC) in Myryalaguda and interacted with the Engineers and farmers. The participants gained knowledge and experiences of PIM practices and other livelihoods of various farmers in NSLC command area. The participants interacted with the Deputy Engineer, Nagarjunasagar Dam, elicited the data and importance of the dam and its multi-purposed utilities. They interacted also with farmers on sharing of water through NSLC and monitoring its discharge through sensors. Overall, the programme delivery has been appreciated by the participants and the same feedback has been given in our in-house online training evaluation assessment.

The programme was coordinated by Dr. U. Hemantha Kumar, Dr. Siddayya, Dr. Radhika Rani and Dr. K. Prabhakar of Centre for Water and Land Resources (CWLR), NIRD & PR.