Session Plan Three
Participatory Watershed Management (WM) and Key Elements of Its Processes for Planning, Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation

1. Objectives

- To emphasise that participatory watershed management is process-based rather than target-based
- To stress that natural resource management activities are crucial for overall human development
- To illustrate that sustainable upland watershed management requires planning, monitoring, and evaluating in a participatory manner through the empowerment and involvement of local people

2. Session Outline

- Integrated Watershed Management
- Participatory Processes in Watershed Management
- Farmers' and Professionals' Envisioning and Their Cosmic Vision
- Farmers' Empowerment and Ownership
- Land Use Titling and Tenure
- Integration of Gender Concerns
- Assured and Quick Benefit Generation
- Participatory Watershed Planning, Monitoring
- Other Important Aspects of Participatory WM

3. Session Time

4. Assumptions

- Traditionally, watershed management has been thought to involve physical target-oriented activities fitting into the government or non-government or donors' pace of life rather than that of the local people; as these agencies acted as though they knew what was best for local communities.
- Traditionally, top-down watershed management practices followed a Transfer of Technology (TOT) model led by researchers and extensionists in which local people simply became passive recipients of development benefits.
- Traditionally, monitoring and evaluation activities were considered to be very highly skilled work which could only be carried out by outside experts. The role of local people was simply to provide the information sought from them.

5. Session Outline Topics

6. Integrated Watershed Management

- Watershed - The boundary which divides an area draining separately
- Catchment - The area itself draining separately in a natural manner

Integrated watershed management deals with the use and conservation of natural resources to meet the needs of land users. Modern watershed management is more people friendly and process-based, fitting into the farmers' pace of life rather than functioning at the convenience of development agencies, as is the case in the traditional approach.

In a given watershed, the activities to be undertaken have the following common primary aims.

- Natural Resource Management (NRM) for human development within a target group
- Poverty reduction through capital and income generation
- Distributional equity among men, women, all social groups, classes and castes

A comparison between conventional and modern WM approaches is given in the Table in the following page.

Participatory integrated WM can be defined as:

"Utilisation and conservation of land, water, and forest resources at farm household and community (or given watershed) level for continuously improved livelihood and human development."

7. Participatory Processes in Watershed Management

Farmers need to become equal partners in development; their local knowledge and capacity for continued experimentation and innovation needs to be recognised. Based on such an approach, the basic foundation of a participatory integrated WM can be laid.

Conventional and Modern Approaches to Watershed Management

CONVENTIONAL APPROACH	MODERN APPROACH
1. Executing agency-driven, target-based	1. Participatory, farmer-driven, participatory process-based
2. Aimed at soil, water, and forest conservation only	2. Aimed at poverty reduction and overall human development through NRM
3. Transfer of Technology (TOT) extension method	3. Farmers' first approach married to TOT
4. Extensionist- and scientist-led, based on imported technology and ideas	4. To be farmer-led, based on indigenous knowledge and the culture of local people
5. Top-down planning, monitoring and evaluation (M&E)	5. Participatory planning, monitoring and evaluation
6. Land use based on land capacity	6. Land use based on land suitability and people's needs/preferences
7. Does not consider structural issues, e.g., land ownership, farmers' organization, etc	7. Land use titling and farmers' organization at forefront of participatory WM
8. Aimed at long-term benefits	8. Aimed at quick net benefit generation (economic, environmental, social as well as political)
9. Empowered the agents of TOT, i.e., officials.	9. Aimed at people's empowerment
10. Attempted to select generally better-off farmers	10. Aimed at marginal, small, and poor farmers with special emphasis on gender and disadvantaged classes
11. Tended to be controlled by single sectors/depts	11. Multi-sectoral and multi- disciplinary
12. Engineering structures prioritised	12. Biological, agroforestry methods prioritised
13. Incentives and aid used for people's participation	13. Investment at the disposal of farmers
14. Does not encourage people's initiatives	14. Based on people's initiatives
15. Disjointed and arbitrary	15. Uses farming systems' approach as well as common property management approach
16. Based on large watersheds	16. Small watershed-based

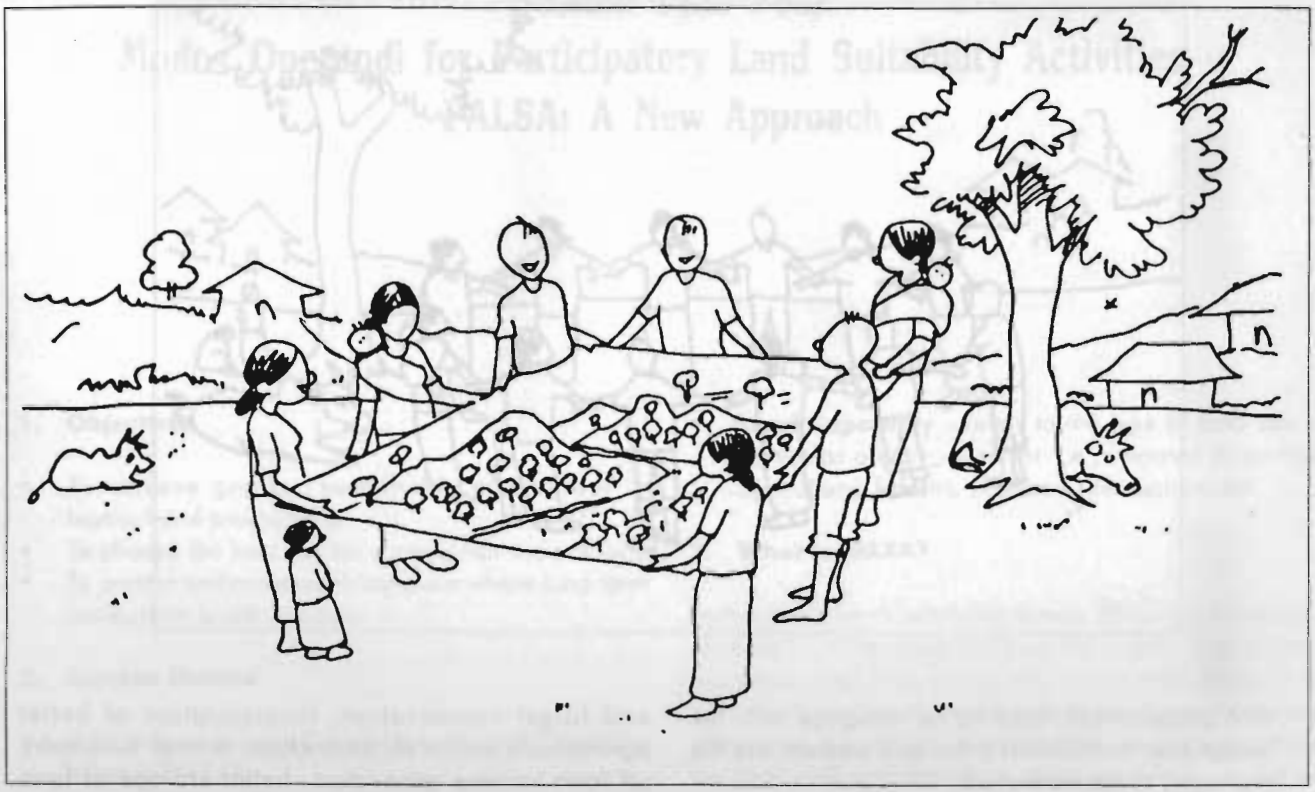
The key elements of a participatory process enabling farmers to have ownership in WM development programmes are given below.

- Envisioning by farmers and professionals of integrated WM and basing programmes on the cosmic vision of the people, i.e., their relationship to nature and the universe
- Farmers' empowerment and ownership of WM processes and programmes
- Mainstreaming gender concerns, especially women's, and ensuring other disadvantaged groups' participation
- Assured and quick benefit generation by WM programmes

8. Farmers' and Professionals' Envisioning and Their Cosmic Vision

Participatory watershed management should result in an improved livelihood and social life style in harmony with nature and based on the cosmic vision of a community. Envisioning exercises by farmers and professionals can be carried out in many ways. The envisioning steps could consist of the following.

- Understand the philosophy of life of a given community
- Identify the dominant culture of a given community
- Identify moral values as an entry point for farmers' WM programmes
- For moral decay/degradation in the community or among the professionals revitalise/regenerate through appropriate leaders/development practitioners
- In most Asian countries, culture can motivate people to take part in activities for the common good.
- Build from successes and failures
- Spiritual retreat for development agents and local leaders to instill moral virtues in them would be helpful
- Training programmes should be based on the community's felt needs.



9. Farmers' Empowerment and Ownership

Empowerment is linked to control over resources, which in turn is linked to ownership. Land ownership is thus seen as an important aspect for facilitating people's participation. Giving rights to people to use resources is seen as an effective means of empowerment. Farmers' group formation and networking into federations help institutionalise the empowerment process.

The following three aspects are very important for the empowerment of farmers.

- The right to organize, i.e., farmers' organization
- The right to use/own land and other resources, i.e., land use titling
- Equity among all sections of society, especially in relation to gender concerns and disadvantaged groups, i.e., main-streaming gender and other social concerns

Recent efforts to encourage people to participate in WM/NRM in the Asian region have been through farmers' group formation. Successful examples of this can be found in Users' Group activities and the FARM programme in Nepal.

10. Land Use Titling/Tenure

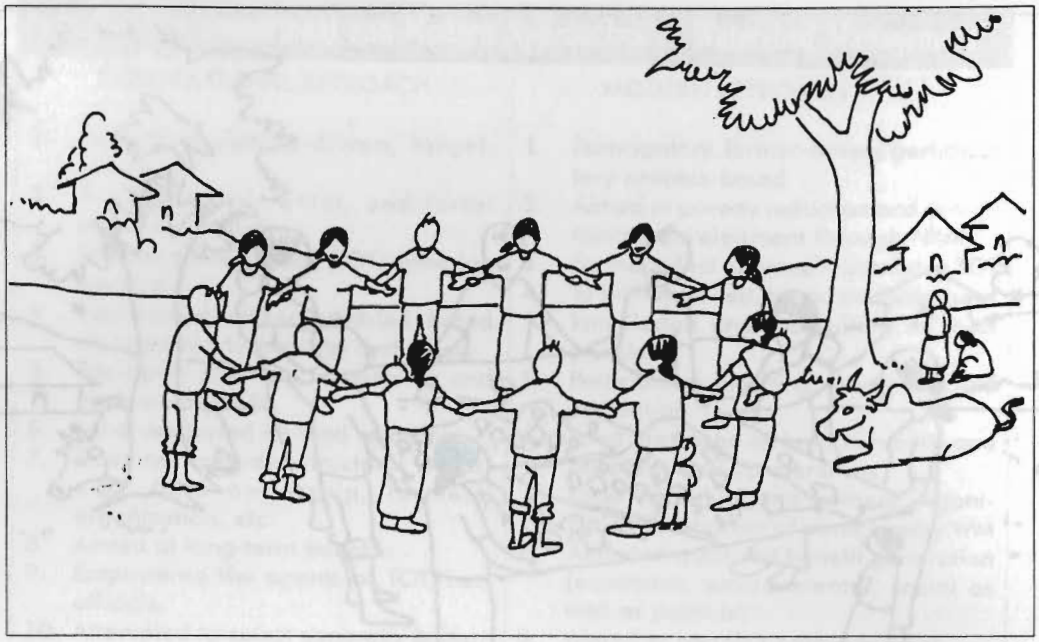
Control over land resources by both men and women is a prerequisite for people's participation in WM/NRM programmes. Although there is no universal model to address the problem of land use titling/tenure for all the countries in Asia and the Pacific because of the different cultural norms and political systems, the following conditions are necessary for addressing ownership issues.

- There should be security of land title/tenure, whether it is on a lease basis or a complete ownership basis.
- Government's support services for development should be clearly defined for successful land allocation.
- Where there are problems in land titling, a participatory consensus approach could be followed.
- In many societies, women do not have land titles. Land titling for women will bring an improvement in land use due to long-term security and control.
- Watershed management: rehabilitation, conservation, erosion control, socio-economic and policy aspects should be comprehensively discussed with potential end- users as a prerequisite for evolving land titling/tenure policy.

11. Integration of Gender Concerns

Despite women's major involvement in upland watershed management activities in addition to their work at home, policy-makers, planners, and technicians have largely remained unconcerned with them. As a result, gender concerns have not yet percolated to the implementation level. There is an urgent need to correct this imbalance by mainstreaming gender concerns into WM/NRM development programme designs.

Steps for mainstreaming gender concerns into WM programmes include the following.



- WM programmes need to be designed with the recognition that farmers (men and women) are the managers of the watersheds.
- Women farmers' and other disadvantaged groups' capacity for better management of watersheds should be improved.
- Staffing positions for women/disadvantaged groups should be designed and they should be trained in communication skills.
- Organizational structures should provide a friendly environment for women/disadvantaged groups.
- WM/NRM activities that save time, reduce workloads and risks, but increase income quickly should be designed.
- WM/NRM development designs should enable women/disadvantaged groups to have control over resources.
- WM/NRM development designs should provide for periodic checks to ensure that women/ disadvantaged groups are benefitting.

For development programmes to be gender-sensitive, project activities need to be segregated for women and men at the design stage itself. Even women professionals need gender sensitisation training; their constraints must be removed as they often work within institutional frameworks designed for men only.

12. Assured and Quick Benefit Generation

Experience in watershed management has shown that, without quick direct benefits, participation of farmers cannot be expected. Likewise, for common property resource management, if the resources are to be managed better by local people, they must produce quick benefits.

The quick income generating activities could include both mechanical as well as biological activities for land, water, and forest conservation. Incorporation of better agronomical practices, cash crops, animal husbandry, off-farm income generation, better storage of farm produce, value-added products, marketing and rural infrastructure require attention as potential quick, income generating activities.

13. Other Important Aspects of Participatory WM

To facilitate implementation of integrated WM/NRM activities, the following aspects must also be planned, monitored, and evaluated.

- Farmer-led Facilitation
- Farmers' Capacity-building
- Farmer-led Planning
- Farmer-managed Funding
- Farmer-led Implementation
- Farmer-led Monitoring and Evaluation

In all the above aspects of the participatory process, dialogue is important to achieve true participatory watershed management. Farmers should have opportunities to express their views and opinions, to identify problems, and to share their ideas with researchers, extensionists, and managers.

In the past, watershed planning, monitoring, and evaluation have been top-down, carried out by the related officials. With the advent of participatory methods and tools such as RRA and PRA, as well as assessment tools for gender analysis, these have now become participatory. However, participation is limited to WM/NRM social and biological resource assessment. Moreover, the process elements of WM/NRM must be understood.