

Process Planning for Preparation of Integrated Water Resources Development and Management Plan (IWRD&MP) in Wainganga Sub Basin, Maharashtra

Background

Wainganga is the largest sub-basin of Godavari river which occupies an area of 36,306 km². The basin has unique physical, social and political features. It is a region with the highest forest cover in the State of Maharashtra, affected by Naxalism and suffers from a developmental backlog despite the availability of natural resources.



River course and major tributaries

Major issues and challenges in the region

The water users in Wainganga sub basin face many challenges to manage their water resources. Flooding has been a major problem in the past. Failure of agriculture has contributed to the rise of farmers' suicides in Vidarbha region. Untreated waste water from Nagpur city is released in Wainganga from its tributaries, such as Kanhan, polluting surface water and groundwater. This affects the numerous fish species found in the river, some of which are endemic. For example, 38 fish species were found in the 'Kathani' tributary during a sample survey. Technological improvement is required to reduce water transmission and distribution losses. The security problems include Naxalities operating in the dense, deciduous forests, especially in the Gadchiroli district. This makes the issue of social and economic development more complex. Though most parts of the basin receives a rainfall of about 150

cm during the monsoon months, there are very few water conservation structures on the main river, and therefore only a few irrigation schemes. Despite the presence of some of the most ancient tribes and deciduous forests in India, tourism has not developed as desired. Absence of agricultural allied activities like oil processing units (from Soya beans, cotton seed), power looms and mills (processing cotton), vegetable processing units etc, have resulted in stagnated economic growth of the region.

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The situation needed to be improved through integrated and visionary planning of the river basin, boosting agriculture and economy with due attention to developing water conservation structures, strengthening water user groups and ensuring reliable and efficient water delivery in the Wainganga Sub Basin, Maharashtra. The Goal-1 of Global Water Partnership (GWP)'s Strategy 2009-2013 envisages "To promote water as a key part of sustainable national development" by putting IWRM principles into practice. In consideration of this goal, GWP-India (India Water Partnership) supported its West Zone Water Partnership's Coordinating Agency, Gomukh Environment Trust for Sustainable Development (Gomukh Trust), Pune to initiate the planning process for developing IWRD&MP for the Wainganga River Basin through Negotiated People's Participation approach.

Negotiated people's participation approach is defined as "A future where communities (whether living in upper watersheds, in forests, on river banks, in rural or urban areas, estuaries or in flood-plains) are aware that they themselves have to act and respond locally to the multifarious impacts of the water crisis, and build up their own institutional structures and management practices which can be up-scaled from the micro-catchments to the river basins, and which are socially, politically, economically and technically within their control."

In 2010 January, the planning consultation started with Stakeholders meeting initially and later on in the month of June, 2010, Gomukh Trust was formally engaged by Department of Water Resources, Government of Maharashtra for preparing IWRD&MP.

During planning process, Gomukh Trust with support of India Water Partnership organized two rounds of consultation workshops of the stakeholders comprising of local tribes, fishermen, farmers, Below–Poverty-Line (BPL) people, women, representatives from the industry, urban areas, Govt. agencies, etc. The objectives were to initiate process planning with inputs from all stakeholders for making a base for IWRD&MP, forming sub-groups to collect base data and to obtain a set of proposals or investment projects contributing to the Master Plan and information exchange system between the stakeholders and water sector government agencies. Proceedings of the two workshops and an Inception Report have been submitted to India Water Partnership and Water Resources Department of Maharashtra.



A consultation workshop of Stakeholders

Outcome of the Process Planning

The outcome of planning exercise was to obtain the stakeholders' inputs for formulation of an Integrated Water Resources Development and Management Plan that would cover 160 watersheds extending over an area of 13,663 km², which would comprise of (i) Assessment of Project Area & SWOT analysis; (ii) Land Use Planning, Development & Management (iii) Water Resources Development (iv) Water Resources Management and (v) Disaster Management (vi) Water for energy; (vii) Tourism; and (viii) Fisheries.

For the first time the Government of India has selected a non-government organization, Gomukh Trust, which is the Coordinating Agency for GWP India West Zone Water Partnership (WZWP), to prepare IWRD&MP. Gomukh Trust was chosen to develop the plan for the Wainganga River Basin because it has built a vibrant, trusted platform for negotiating water issues involving the community, government, NGOs and the private sector. This marks a major change in the mindset of government agencies. The initiative has substantially changed the water management strategy in four districts of Maharashtra. As a result, Procedures have become more transparent and polarization and confrontation has changed to co-operation and appreciation of mutual interests. This is a major step towards integrated water resource management. The initiative of India Water Partnership's WZWP Coordinating Agency to take the lead in developing the IWRM plan sets a promising precedent for planning IWRM in Wainganga river sub-basin.

Further information on Integrated Water Resources Development and Management Plan for Wainganga Sub Basin , Maharashtra, can be obtained from:

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