

Certificate Course on Participatory Irrigation Management (CCPIM)

Module 15- Strengthening of Water User Associations

Topic 15.3- Leadership



Topic -15.3 Leadership

Topics of Module 15:

- 15.1 Interdepartmental linkages –
 - How different departments can be useful for WUAs
 - Benefits from associated schemes
- 15.2 Women's participation
- 15.3 Leadership
- 15.4 Community mobilization

1. Background

The Water Users Associations (WUAs) are the backbone of Irrigation Management Transfer (IMT), or in other words, the success of WUAs mark the effectiveness of an IMT programme. Across the country, the WUAs are formed through state-specific Acts or Amendments to the existing Acts and in some cases through Government Notifications as well. Within the country, the WUAs are at different levels of evolution. At very few places they are successful; on the other hand, at majority of places, the establishment of WUA is more like a work-in-progress.

Besides usual Operation and Maintenance (O&M) of canal system in its jurisdiction, any of the WUAs are also engaged in irrigation charges collection.

Some of the 'very progressive' WUAs are also engaged in several other activities and that makes them different from many other WUAs in the country.

The objective of this Module is three-fold:

- a. to discuss various aspects that can aid strengthening of the WUAs – awareness and information.
- b. to encourage the farmers towards a sustainable and active model of WUA – capacitate
- c. to share some real-life case studies to make the WUAs believe that, 'YES this is possible' – self-belief.

The Module is divided into four parts, that is:

- i. interdepartmental linkages –
 - how different departments can be useful for WUAs
 - benefits from associated schemes
- ii. women's participation
- iii. leadership
- iv. community mobilization

Here we will discuss the third part, that is, leadership

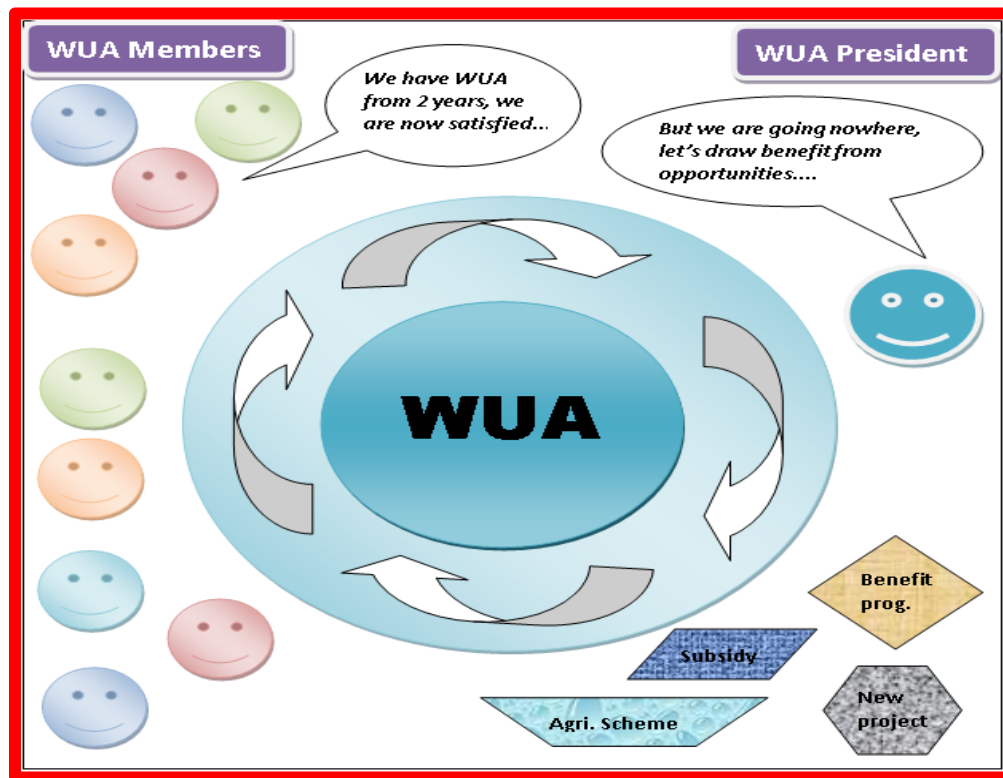
2. Leadership

Leader simply means, the one who leads; this also means that a good leader can make wonders can lift his/her organization to next level and can earn distinction. The WUA Presidents, Heads of Outlet Committees, and other key governing body members of a WUA need to exemplify through their conduct and behavior to encourage and motivate fellow WUA members towards a right and forthcoming direction. At a WUA level, the leader should be:

- a. **Visionary** – the leader at WUA or Outlet Committee or at a Distributary Committee or at a Project Committee should be a visionary – he/she should be clear as to where he wanted to see his/her organization in coming years and how he/she can achieve that.

- b. **Well-versed with WUA affairs** – he/she should be thorough with the prevailing Acts and Rules of the WUAs or PIM related Acts and Notifications from both the state and national government. A well informed leader can not only aware his/her fellow WUA members but can also then take right decisions.
- c. **Trainer for other WUA members** – he/she should be a good trainer to the extent that his deliberations and demonstrations can explain the desired aspects to the fellow WUA members.
- d. **Keep vigil on what is going on in external world** – the ever-changing external world brings lot of challenges and opportunities and a leader should keep himself aware about all that; so that he can take advantage from the opportunities and prepare his WUA members for any challenge that may be posed by changing external conditions.
- e. **Develop rapport with Departments** – he/she should remain in regular touch with the key concerned departments, including – local officials and field functionaries of water resources and irrigation department, agriculture department, local agricultural universities or KVKs, *mandis*, cooperatives etc.
- f. **Keep motivating WUA members** – at all times the leader should keep motivating his/her fellow farmers towards improving from the current state, so that the WUA can become a better one.
- g. **Keep WUA an active entity** – irrigation water distribution across the command area amongst fellow WUA members along with operation and maintenance of canal is the key function of a WUA. However, a WUA should not remain confined to this activity alone. Rather, the leader should have a persistent knack of keeping the WUA an active entity, but engaging them in other allied activities, like – horticulture, floriculture, pesticides and fertilizers access/procurement, basic food-processing, exposure and knowledge exchange in nearby areas (where progressive farming takes place) to improve their own agriculture and irrigation practices.
- h. **Neutral and transparent** – for a leader, all WUA members irrespective of gender, cast, religion, reach (head/middle/tail) are the same. He/she should adhere to and demonstrate neutral and transparent behavior and conduct while dealing with WUA affairs.

Following figure is developed to illustrate that, what should be the conduct of an ideal WUA leader.



A short case study to explain how an active WUA extended its efforts to help fellow WUA members.

Farmers of Bhoari Water Users Association (Harsi Irrigation Project, Dabra, Madhya Pradesh) faced lot of difficulties during 2007-08 in procuring inputs and the cost was way too high from Maximum Retail Price in local open market. The President of Bhoari WUA held a meeting of WUA office bearers and decided to procure DAP at WUA level.

This was done with the help of son of another WUA member, Mr. Prem Singh Kushwaha. As per the decided procedure (after having discussion with the local officials from Madhya Pradesh State Agro Industries Corporation – Government of Madhya Pradesh), he collected necessary documents (Copy of Kisan Cards, Copy of ration card) and money from fellow WUA members. Mr. Prem Singh prepared a list of beneficiary WUA members, their whereabouts and the quantity of DAP to be procured for them. He provided these documents to officials of MP Agro for delivery of DAP.

The DAP was loaded in a truck in presence of Prem Singh and he drove off from there to Bhoari WUA for delivery of the same to fellow WUA members. This procured DAP was handed over.