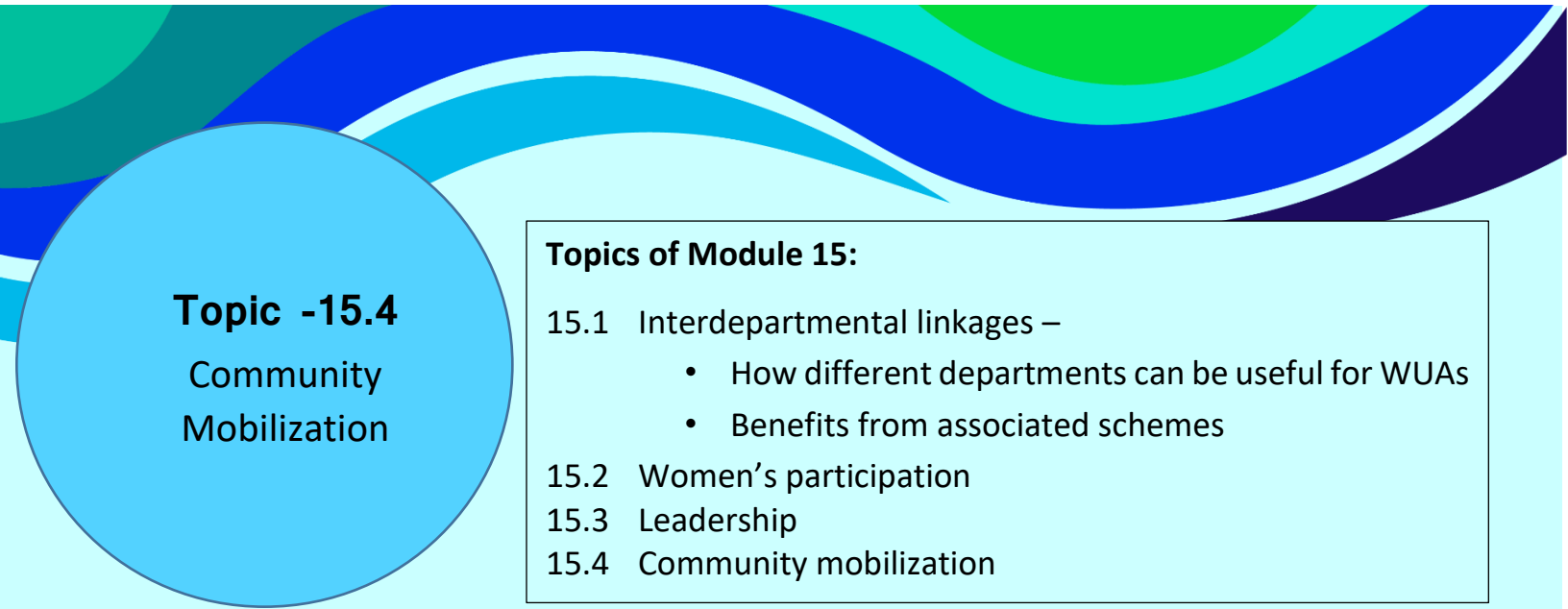


Certificate Course on Participatory Irrigation Management (CCPIM)

Module 15- Strengthening of Water User Associations

Topic 15.4- Community Mobilization



Topic -15.4 Community Mobilization

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 fourth part, that is, community mobilization.

2. Community mobilization

Community mobilization is the process of bringing together as many stakeholders as possible to raise people's awareness of and demand for a particular programme, to assist in the delivery of resources and services, and to strengthen community participation for sustainability and self-reliance. A lot can be achieved when people from different parts of the community share a common goal and actively participate in both identifying needs and being part of the solution. Community mobilization helps to empower communities and enable them to initiate and control their own development.

In simpler terms, effective and persistent community mobilization activities can lead to a vibrant WUA. As part of community mobilization, all the members of WUA and other stakeholders (government departments, public representatives, district administration etc.) would be made aware about the ongoing developmental

activity towards making of a WUA or strengthening of a WUA. There are four simpler steps to reach to a stage where the local community and in this case the WUA members, become active, vigilant, encouraged to deal with WUA affairs. These four steps are:

- a. Aware – with the help of (i) group meetings, (ii) one-to-one discussions, (iii) distribution and recitation of pamphlets and reading material, (iv) playing audio-visual sessions, (v) exposure and knowledge-exchange with active WUAs, the general WUA members or farmers can be made aware about the objective, which could be formation of a WUA or capacity strengthening of a WUA.
- b. Organize – once the members of WUA or farmers are aware, they can be organized towards a common goal, which could be formation of a WUA or capacity strengthening of a WUA. This can be done through (i) establishing the baseline information (ii) consultation & deliberation to develop consensus towards a common goal.
- c. Mobilize – once aware and organized farmers or WUA members are ready, they should be mobilized towards a common goal, which, as discussed earlier, could be formation of a WUA or capacity strengthening of the WUA. This can be done through (i) facilitating buy-in to work together (ii) convincing fellow farmers, who are still reluctant and (iii) demonstrating united approach for dealing with issues that still exist in the minds of reluctant farmers WUA members.
- d. Empower – once the WUA members or farmers are mobilized for a common cause, then empower them through an institution or through capacity building of the existing institution to make the institution much more relevant for them. With all this done so far, the WUA would be a
 - (i) capacitated one for managing WUA affairs
 - (ii) role-model for command farmers and adjoining WUAs
 - (iii) able to negotiate & deal with authorities

There are several examples of effective community mobilization leading to paradigm shift in the existing state of affairs for the farmers or WUAs. One such example is discussed below in the box.

KHANPUR MINOR – Seohara Block, Bijnor district Uttar Pradesh

Key issues:

- a. Dilapidated irrigation system
- b. Tail-end farmers did not get adequate canal water since last 10-12 years
- c. The area beyond tail-gul was encroached
- d. A nearby rivulet (Karula) gets dry during lean season or just has water in patches



Dry Karula river stretch



Dilapidated Khanpur Minor irrigation canal

Objective: enhancing flows in Karula river (part of Ramganga river system) with saved water from irrigation command area of Khanpur Minor, while improving the agricultural productivity.

This was done through community mobilization and finally forming a Water Users Association at the level of Khanpur Minor. As part of community mobilization, the command farmers were made aware about the initiative, then they were organized and mobilized for this common cause. In this process, both demand side interventions (efficient irrigation techniques in sugarcane, information about formation and farm-level application bio-fertilizers and bio-pesticides) and supply side interventions (rehabilitation of canal system and formation of passage from tail-end of canal to Karula river bank for conveyance of saved irrigation water) were taken up. As part of institutional strengthening, the command farmers were capacitated about provisions of UP PIM Act. Through this activity, the command farmers became conversant with their role and responsibilities as WUA members.

Towards the end, the Khanpur Minor WUA is formed – during this process; a critical mass of vigilant, active and aware farmers was formed through additional efforts to strengthen their capacity to handle WUA affairs and responsibilities.



Saved water leading towards Karula river



Trench-based sugarcane cultivation underway