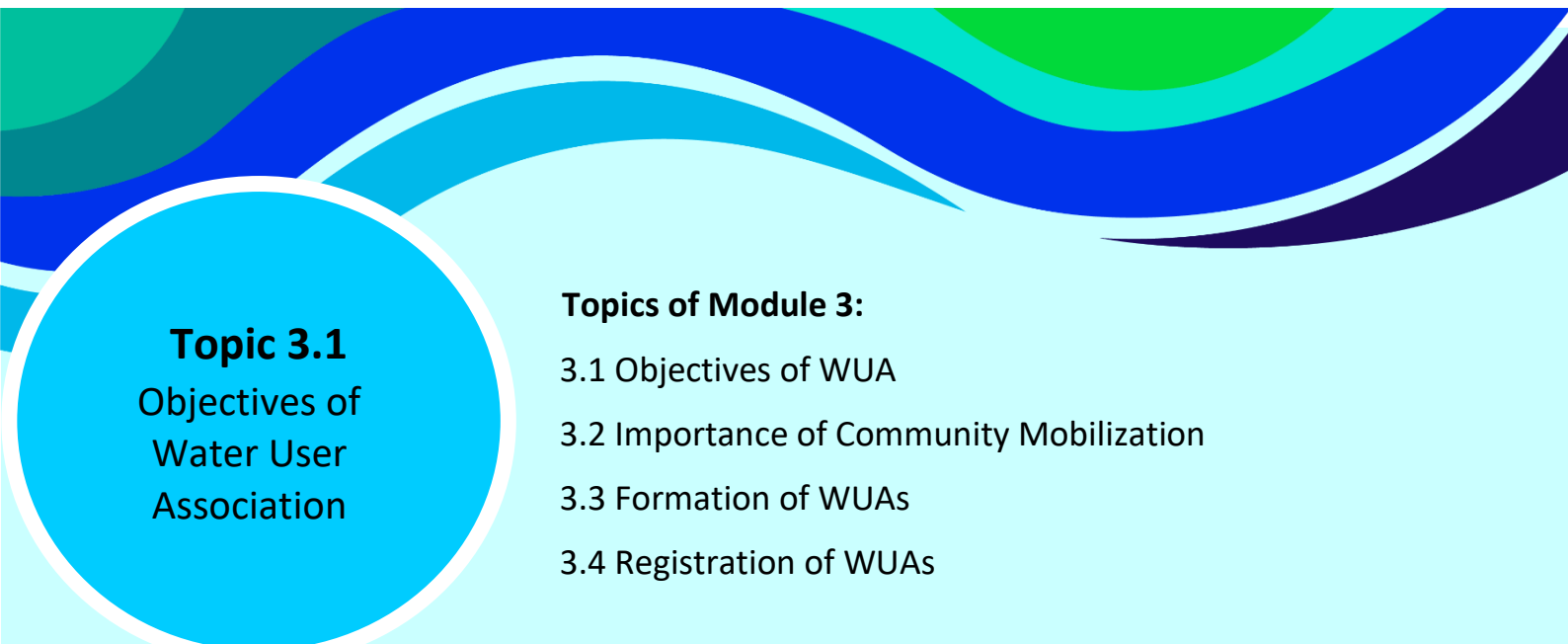


Certificate Course on Participatory Irrigation Management (PIM)

Module 3- Constitution of Water User Associations (WUAs)

Topic 3.1 – Objectives of Water User Association



Topic 3.1 Objectives of Water User Association

Topics of Module 3:

- 3.1 Objectives of WUA
- 3.2 Importance of Community Mobilization
- 3.3 Formation of WUAs
- 3.4 Registration of WUAs

3.1 Introduction

The official acceptance of the involvement of farmers in management of the irrigation systems was first introduced in the National Water Policy adopted in 1987.

Remember and Read: First National Water Policy was adopted in India in the year 1987

3.2 National Water Policy Directives

Provisions made in the National Water Policy of 1987 were as under:

“Efforts should be made to involve farmers progressively in various aspects of management of irrigation systems, particularly in water distribution and collection of water rates. Assistance of voluntary agencies should be enlisted in educating the farmers in efficient water-users and water management.”

3.3 Farmer's involvement in irrigation system

In fact, being resident of command area and practicing agriculture in their own piece of land, farmers are the permanent stakeholder of irrigation system. So principally they are involved in the irrigation business. Moreover, construction of irrigation system is done on their acquired piece land, even if the compensation of their land is paid off, they are involved in the system which was popularly known as Participatory Irrigation Management (PIM).

There were many schools of thoughts on ensuring "Farmers Involvement in Irrigation System". It is only in mid-nineties when involvement was seen from the point of view of sustained participation of farmers in management and maintenance of irrigation system.

A valuable modus of participation was coined in the statement that "Participation flows from organization". This concept laid the foundation of farmer's organization for irrigation water management (FOIWM) or farmers managed irrigation system (FMIS) which later termed as Participatory Irrigation Management (PIM) or in recent terminology Water Users Association (WUAs).

3.4 WUAs for Irrigation Water Management

3.4.1 Why and how WUAs were established and by whom?

It is important to address this issue from WUAs management point of view. One of the following options can be used for setting up of WUAs.

- WUAs established by Water Users.
- WUAs established by the Water Resources Department or other organizations.
- WUAs established jointly by the Water Resources Department and water users.

Remember: WUAs established by water users themselves are more sustainable.

3.4.2 Reasons for setting up WUAs

- Water scarcity or getting less water.
- Not getting water on time.
- Adequate Quantity not supplied.
- Water theft.
- Powerful people threat.
- Fear of losing water quota for which farmers are entitled.
- Fear spread by officials of WRD.
- Government policy to provide water to WUAs.
- It is the right alternative for equitable water distribution.
- Water users understood the importance of WUAs as explained by WRD.
- Water users realized the value of water.
- Success of WUAs in other area.

Remember: There may be many more reasons for formation of WUAs than above. One has to find out the appropriate reasons that are responsible for voluntary action by water users to form their organization.

WUAs may be established for one or more of the above reasons. The purpose is to know that the sustainability of the WUAs is hidden in the basic reasons for which they have been established. In terms of WUAs management, all the members of the organization need to be aware of such reasons.

The basic reason behind the formation of any organization or group is that the problems of the members of that group or organization are the same. In WUAs common concern or common problem is the adequate, timely and reliable availability water. Hence in all WUAs water become the important component or binding force. Therefore, if the background issues of establishment of WUAs remain constant, then

the members have a strong sense of mutual harmony and integration. Its reflection is evident in the decision-making process of the WUAs.

Remember: In any WUAs common concern or common problem is the adequate, timely and reliable water supply.

Therefore, possible future of WUAs can be analysed for the situation delineated as under:

If the germination or formation of any organization or group is by consensus or collective decision of the people, then that organization or group is more likely to survive for a long time. Conversely, if an organization is formed at the behest of other organizations or individuals, then that organization or group cannot survive for long.

In terms of management of organization, if WUAs are established by consensus of the people i.e. water users, then that WUAs inherit its internal strength from the common ideology of its members. Such WUAs are able to survive even in times of crisis. This is called group or organization dynamics. Every organization has to create standards to maintain the glory of its establishment. The sustainability of the organization depends entirely on the unity of the members. Therefore, every WUAs need to think about the reasons and conditions involved in their establishment.

Remember Conclusion: WUAs established by people's decision are borne permanent.

3.5 Objectives for setting up water users organizations:

The objectives of WUAs are determined by law.

The main objective of any Water User Association is to bring about water user participation in water management and also to create among the water users a sense of ownership towards irrigation system. More specifically, the objectives of a Water User Association are:

- i) Promote and secure equitable distribution of water amongst its members.

- ii) Maintain adequately the irrigation system; and ensure efficient, economical and equitable distribution and utilization of water to optimize agricultural production;
- iii) Protect the environment;
- iv) Ensure your ecological balance;
- v) Actively involve the members inculcating amongst them a sense of ownership of the irrigation system;
- vi) Safeguard and promote the common interest of its member pertaining to irrigation and agriculture in the area of operation;
- vii) The association may also engage into any activity of common interest of the members in the Command area related to irrigation and agriculture, such as introduction of Drip and Sprinkler system for optimizing the use of water; developing farm pond and community projects for exploiting groundwater; procurement and distribution of seeds, fertilizers and pesticides; procurement and retaining of agricultural implements; marketing and processing agricultural produce from the Command Area and supplementary business like dairy and fisheries.

Remember: There may be more objectives given in PIM act of different states. Study thoroughly your own state PIM act and find out what are the objectives of formation of WUAs.