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FOREWORD

Our country is facing serious challenge because of extensive land degradation and water stress. Though the estimates may vary, it can be safely stated that nearly half of the country's area is suffering from excessive runoff resulting in soil erosion and loss of precious water resources. The problem is more severe in the rainfed area of the country. As the agriculture productivity has stabilised in assured irrigation areas, the rainfed areas of the country assume more significance because of its potential for enhancement in productivity by successful implementation of watershed development programme.

Though the watershed development programmes were initiated as early as during 5th Five Year Plan, the real impetus to the effort was given only during 8th Five Year Plan. Since 1995-96 to 2006-07 Ministry of Rural Development has sanctioned 45062 projects, out of which 32,411 projects have been completed/ closed by the end of 2010-11. It is time to take stock of situation by assessing the factors influencing success or otherwise of watershed programmes so that the lessons learnt may be useful for future generation of watershed programmes.

It was in this context that a Workshop was held on 'Success stories under Watershed Management' on 02nd & 03rd February 2011 at New Delhi, with the objective of documentation of success stories in watershed management. The present publication contains text of success stories contributed during the workshop. It covers a wide range of issues relating to watershed management. The people's participation, transparency, dedication of officials and formidable strategy appear to be the common thread in all these success stories in this publication.

Earlier studies on watershed projects have indicated that a large number of watershed projects have not been found economically viable because of their low Benefit Cost Ratio and, therefore, there is a need to imbibe the lessons from the success stories to improve overall implementation of watershed programmes in the country.

The launching of an entirely new generation of watershed programmes under the banner of Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP) being implemented under the aegis of Common Guidelines for Watershed Development Projects, 2008 is a very important phase in the historical development of watershed programmes. Though the new programme is armed with so many enviable features, the success can be ensured only by having the dedication and commitment of purpose which were exhibited in implementation of the projects contained in this publication.

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