

BRIEF REPORT ON
SPEECH- NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE
LIVELIHOOD OPTIONS IN THE KARIAPATTY SUB-BASIN OF GUNDARU
RIVER

SPEECH a development non-governmental organization was established in 1987 with the view to combat social imbalances in rural areas of Tamilnadu. SPEECH believes that development can not be brought from outside but the local communities should participate in every development initiation/ intervention so that the ownership will be established. The major activities of SPEECH include awareness generation, building up grassroots associations, capacity building, preventive health care and alternate medicine, gender and development, action research and documentation, natural resources conservation and management.

As of now SPEECH in partnership with OXFORD/SIDA involved in implementation of river basin program in Gundaru-basin particularly in Kariapatty sub-basin. Basically the Gundaru river basin is one of the biggest river basins in Tamilnadu. The basin spreads over 546700 hectare or 5647 sq.k.ms and has got 5 sub basin, namely Usilampatty, Thirumangalam of Madurai district, Kamuthi and Sayalkuti of Ramnad district. Looking at the resources SPEECH confined itself to start the work in the Karriapatty. Sub basin particularly in Udaiyanampatty. In Udiyanampatty cascade a chain of tanks which consists of 24 tanks have been selected for the initial intervention.

PROBLEMS RELATED TO TANKS IN UDAIYANAMPATTY CASCADE

- ☞ No linking channel from Gundaru for the irrigation tanks.
- ☞ Breaches in the irrigation tanks.
- ☞ Siltation => low water storage.
- ☞ Catchment area encroached by prosophis Juliflora-(a thorny bush)
- ☞ Improper/no maintenance of sluices, surplus weir.
- ☞ Encroachment of inflow channel in some villages by farmers.
- ☞ In 4 villages/tanks the tank level is lower than the command area.
- ☞ Acute sand mining in Gundaru river by government/ influential persons.

☞ Non – availability of checkdams/dams, in Gundaru-Karipatty sub-basin.

The peculiarity of the Gundaru basin is that surface and ground water available is 1317 MCM and the water requirement for different sectors like domestic, Agriculture industry and livestock available works around 563.6MCM.the surplus available water is 753.4MCM. It is quite clear that the basin has a very good potential but due to several factors the problems are still existing.

SPEECH aims to address these issues and create awareness among the small farmers, landless, dalits, and women about the natural resources conservation, which will lead to food security. During the project period participatory information generation, discussions will be used to identify the specific issues. Secondly a tank yatra organized in the said villages/ tanks is yet another strategy of SPEECH in order to have spread on the issue of conservation of tank and lands.

The issue of NRM can not be tackled by organizing/ mobilizing the farmers alone and it has to go beyond that. Hence dialogue/ lobby with PRI, government line departments will be done. In order the grassroots farmers to have broad base knowledge about the natural resources conservation and food security cross cultural exposures/exchange visits will be organized with the assistance of OXFAM and other partner NGO's involved in the project.