

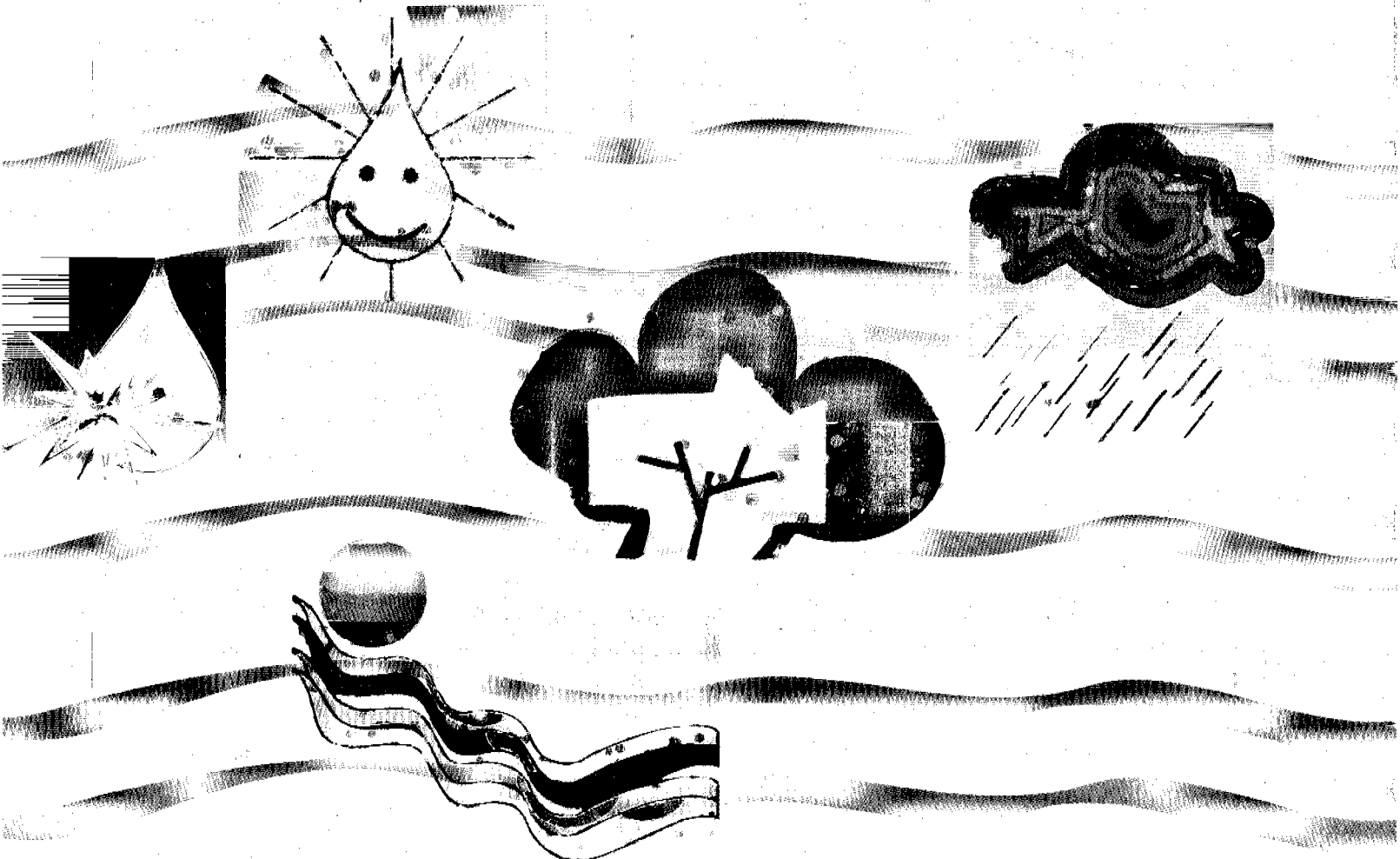
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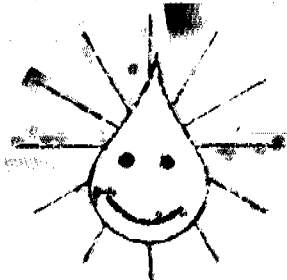


**Watershed
Organisation
Trust (WOTR)**

A Conspectus 1993-97



822-INMA97-15063



Foreword

It gives me great pleasure to present this Conspectus Report of the Watershed Organisation Trust (WOTR), to our well wishers on the occasion of its successful completion of three years.

Since its inception in December 1993, WOTR has come a long way. Staffed by a dedicated and committed team of professionals from various disciplines, WOTR today is actively involved in assisting over 90 village self-help Groups and 55 Non Government Organisations undertake participatory watershed development covering approximately 100,000 hectares in 20 districts of the State of Maharashtra, India.

We are happy that our contribution has helped a little over 100,000 rural people in Maharashtra help themselves, to achieve a little better life today than was yesterday.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our partners, donors, supporters and benefactors without whose confidence, understanding and encouragement WOTR would not have been able to walk the distance it has.

In particular, I must mention my gratitude to 'watershed villages' the true 'skyline dwellers' who trustingly gave all of us the chance to justify the faith they reposed in us.

As this is our first Report, we take this opportunity to introduce ourselves and our work during the preceding years in greater detail.

We hope you will find this report interesting and informative.

H. Bacher
Chairman

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Introduction

Post World War II, the predominant belief amongst planners, policy makers and developmental practitioners was that the earth's resources were vast and infinite; that what was required was the technology to exploit them. However, the situation at the end of this century has proven this belief wrong.

The outrageous and often mercenary exploitation of the earth's resources has resulted in its being pared well nigh the bone. In many parts of the globe, this has resulted in the alarming expansion of deserts, capricious weather regimes, loss of biodiversity, contaminated water sources and habitats.

Furthermore, despite tremendous technological advances, the capacity of the earth to provide adequate food, water and the basic necessities of life to its ever increasing billions is rapidly declining. This is primarily due to unprecedented land, water and oceanic degradation. The main culprits being both human activities and aggravated natural processes - deforestation, overexploitation and inappropriate use, effluents and massive soil erosion. This has resulted in hardcore poverty, pauperisation, migration, conflicts and social unrest.

It is now increasingly evident that wars in the future will be fought not so much over territorial or political considerations but largely over access to and control of natural resources especially energy and particularly water.

Of all natural resources, water for domestic purposes and cultivation is the most vulnerable and the most sensitive. While on the global macro level supplies seem abundant, the bulk of it is concentrated only within a few regions, few of which have access to it through out the year. Most inhabited rural areas of the globe do not have year round access to adequate and safe potable water in the near vicinity.

Water, that much taken-for-granted yet precious and rapidly dwindling resource, is set to become the bone of contention and conflict in the 21st century. Riparian areas are already becoming the 'hot' spots of dispute, division and armed clashes.

The situation, however, is not altogether irredeemable. It is yet possible to not only enhance the standard and quality of life of our teeming billions but also to do so in a manner that allows the planet to recuperate and replenish itself - the essence of sustainability. But this involves unity of purpose and commitment on the part of everybody especially those who will be the most affected, namely, the stakeholders.

In rural areas especially, the symbiotic relationship between man and the environment is close knit and extremely sensitive. The day to day needs of the people like food, water, fibre, fuel, fodder is directly received from the surrounding environment. However, due to the destruction of the environment and loss of livelihood opportunities, the rush for alternate avenues of employment to other areas, especially urban, has increased exponentially.

To reverse this damaging and socially disruptive trend, it is essential that the people living in the immediate environment be given the authority, resources and the responsibility to manage their own resources and environment.

The smallest compact geographical environmental unit for management is the watershed. Participatory watershed development, planned and implemented by the people themselves, is a very effective way to meet this challenge.

Any such developmental initiative should, however, not be restricted to just a few areas, but have a multiplier effect so that it is replicated on a larger scale. Only then will it have a significant impact and attract resources - social, political, financial and institutional - that are so necessary for long term impact.

The Indo German Watershed Development Programme (IGWSDP) was started with this objective - to catalyse, wherever possible, a dynamic, a movement where the people, with support from Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and framework actors, become the chief initiators and sustainers of their own development through ecological and environmental regeneration. Initiated in 1989 under bilateral agreement between the Government of India and the Government of Germany, it became operational in 1992-93. The Programme to date covers 90 villages spread over a cumulative geographical area of about 100,000 ha. with the involvement of 55 NGOs.





WOTR - An Overview

Established in December 1993 as a support organisation for Village Self Help Groups (VSHGs) and NGOs implementing watershed development projects, Watershed Organisation Trust (WOTR) seeks to assist people living in rural areas alleviate their poverty through participatory natural resources management on a watershed basis.

It was established primarily to respond to the needs arising from the Indo-German Watershed Development Program (IGWSDP). Many NGOs and VSHGs who wanted to undertake watershed development felt that they required timely, on-the-spot guidance, support in terms of technology, management, organisation, human resource development, community mobilization and flexible financing.



WOTR arose from these expressed needs of NGOs and VSHG.

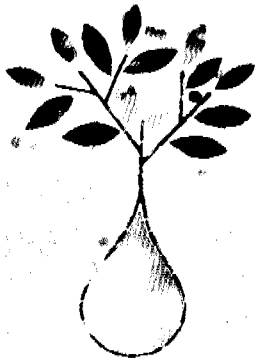
Furthermore, it was felt that since watershed development is a complex initiative involving a variety of actors as well as substantial finances, it was important to not only build up the institutional capacities of NGOs but also and primarily so, to progressively empower VSHGs to regenerate and sustainably manage their environment.

Therefore, it was felt that a sound participatory Capacity Building Programme for NGOs and VSHGs was required. WOTR was mandated to develop such an effort so that NGOs and VSHGs could effectively participate in the IGWSDP.

WOTR also functions as the institutional base of the Programme Coordinator of the Indo-German Watershed Development Programme (IGOWSDP). It serves as the link between VSHGs and NGOs desirous of undertaking watershed activities and the Programme which accepts only "qualified" VSHGs and NGOs.

WOTR thus acts as a coordinating and support institution of the IGWSDP, especially of the Capacity Building Programme.

Aims and Approach



- * The aim of WOTR is to organize self help efforts for poverty eradication through environmental regeneration along watershed lines.
- * To achieve this objective, WOTR seeks, in collaboration with its partners (individual and institutions), to mobilise the creative and organising potential of watershed dwellers so that they come together and mobilise the resources of the environment they live in a comprehensive and integrated manner.
- * WOTR also seeks to assist NGOs and other VSHGs interested in watershed development by extending to them technical, managerial and financial support as well as by networking and linkage building.
- * In order to ensure a large scale impact and replication effort, WOTR seeks to facilitate, in collaboration with its partners and key framework actors, the unfolding of a people's movement for natural resources management along watershed lines.

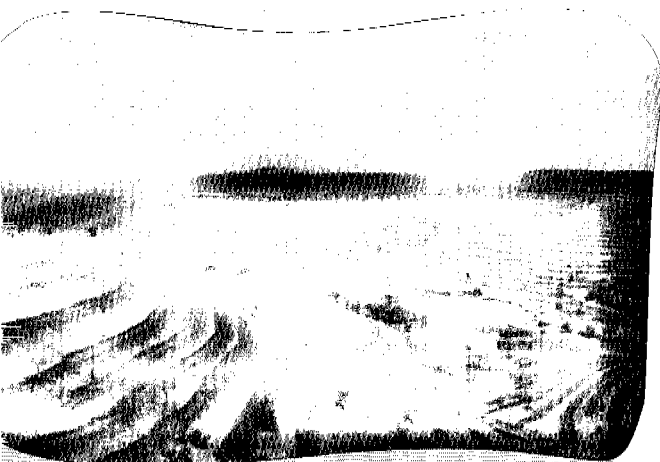
The Philosophy



- * Poverty eradication and development in rural areas is possible only when people come together as a group and decide to work together.
- * The environment provides the framework as well as the agenda which draws people together, leads them to work together and awakens their creative potential,



- * Participatory environmental regeneration along watershed lines not only leads to an improvement in the economic condition of the people but also sets into motion a 'development dynamic' which catalyses people into an industrious innovative community which is the basis for the creation of sustainable opportunities for all.



WHAT IS A WATERSHED?

A watershed can be defined as the drainage basin or catchment area of a particular stream or river. Simply put, it refers to the area from where the water to a particular drainage system, like a river or stream, comes from. A watershed may be small, consisting of a few hectares, or huge, covering several thousands of hectares.

WHAT IS WATERSHED DEVELOPMENT?

Watershed development refers to the conservation, regeneration and the judicious use of all the resources - natural (like land, water, plants, animals) and human - within a particular watershed. Watershed management tries to bring about the best possible balance in the environment between natural resources on the one side, and man and grazing animals on the other. It requires people's participation because those who degrade the environment would have to want to regenerate and conserve it.

WHY WATERSHED DEVELOPMENT?

Man and his environment are interdependent. Any change in the surrounding environment directly affects the people living therein. A degraded environment results in a degraded quality of life of the people. Thus a programme to reduce poverty and improve the standard of living of the people must be aimed at improving the environment they live in. Environmental degradation does not recognise administrative and political boundaries (e.g., village, taluka, etc). A watershed provides a natural environmental unit for planning a developmental initiative.

COMPONENTS OF WATERSHED DEVELOPMENT

Watershed development involves the conservation, regeneration and judicious utilization of natural resources. It seeks to bring about an optimum balance between the demand and use of natural resources such that they remain sustainable over a long term. This can only be achieved when people come together and work towards a common objective. The components of watershed development are :

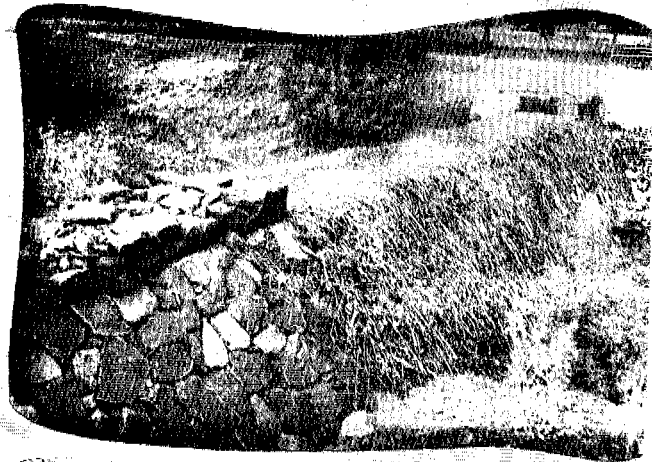
- Human Resources Development (Community Development)
- Soil and Land Management
- Water Management
- Crop Management
- Afforestation
- Pasture/Fodder Development
- Livestock Management
- Rural Energy Management
- Farm and non-farm value additive activities

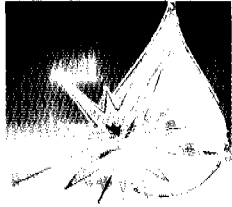
All these components are interdependent and interactive.

WHY PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION

There is a close relationship between the environment and the human community living within that area and which depends on it for its livelihood. When the economic condition of a community deteriorates, it leads to over-exploitation and degradation of natural resources. It is thus necessary for people to see the relationship between their poverty and the degraded environment they live in. However, if they are to willingly let go their claims on the environment, then they have to be provided with equally good if not better economic alternatives.

Thus, just as human beings and their activities are the cause of environmental destruction, only they can restore to health the environment they have ruined. Hence there can be no sustainable natural resources management unless it involves the participation of all inhabitants of the concerned environment / area in an active manner.





Highlights

In these three and a half years of functioning, WOTR has been able to achieve the following :

- ◊ developed a **pedagogy** for capacity building of NGOs as well as Village SHGs in the area of participatory natural resources management along watershed lines, commonly referred to as the **POP** (participatory operational pedagogy)
- ◊ developed programme and project level capabilities, both administrative and management, for participatory watershed development.
- ◊ assisted in developing institutional arrangements and partnership relationships between bilateral agencies, institutional framework actors on the one hand and NGOs and VSHGs on the other.

Activities

WOTR recognizes the people living in the watershed as the centre around which the whole Programme revolves. The activities of WOTR are directly and indirectly organized around their efforts to help themselves out of poverty.



Briefly, these include :

AWARENESS GENERATION

Creating awareness of the symbiotic relationship between man and his environment amongst various groups like NGOs, rural people and others is achieved through a multiplicity of means, such as mass media, audio visuals, exposure visits, farmer-to-farmer extension, workshops, seminars, etc.

CAPACITY BUILDING OF NGOs AND VILLAGE SELF-HELP GROUPS

This aims at ownership, stake building and sustainability of the Programme. The capacities of NGOs and VSHGs are built up over a period of time through various training and exposure programmes and hands-on, at site assistance. In order to institutionalise learnings and experience, they are assisted in developing simple but effective management systems for project implementation, so that, they can progressively, on their own, implement the project.

LEARNING-BY-DOING

Recognising that the best way of learning is by actually doing and experiencing, WOTR initiates capacity building by supporting NGO/VSHG's to undertake the planning, organisation and implementation of a small micro watershed within the larger watershed. This becomes the forum for a learning, dialogical and reflective process for these implementing groups. Mistakes made become learning occasions for change, internalization and consensus building.



PROMOTING GENDRE EQUITY

Realising that women's issues need special attention given the socio-cultural situation, WOTR prioritises programmes and measures which attempt to enhance the self image and skills of women. One of the objectives is to bring about gradually a greater appreciation of their role and contribution and a more effective integration into the institutional dynamics of village life. The other objective is to reduce the drudgery and improve the quality of life of women. A consensual approach is adopted wherein the family is considered the starting point and men are encouraged to get involved in these efforts.

EXPERIENCE SHARING

Shared experiences promote solidarity and learning. In order to enable the sharing of experiences amongst the various institutions/groups implementing similar programmes, WOTR tries to provide fora, build networks and linkages. These are done through workshops, seminars, regionwise review meetings, fairs and publishing of newsletters and literature.

DEVELOPMENT OF TRAINING AIDS

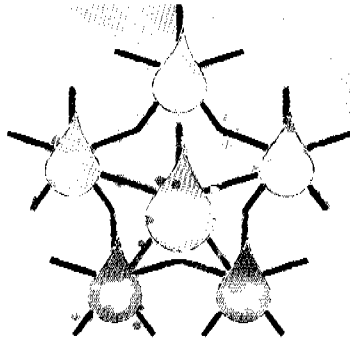
In order to support all its activities, WOTR has developed and develops training aids, publicity material, manuals, etc in close collaboration with its partners and end users. All aids are extensively field tested before finalisation.

DIRECT ACTION PROJECTS

Just as a well which is continually pumped runs dry if not recharged, "handholding" and "capacity building" extension soon gets mechanical and irrelevant if not constantly tested and challenged by the complexities of field reality. In order to test new ideas and approaches as well as to modify and revalidate the assumptions and practice of our **POP** on a real time basis. WOTR also implements several large watershed projects of its own.

ACTION RESEARCH

An effort which seeks to address the needs of a community should constantly review and reflect on its functioning and effect. This feedback should be accurate and regular. This is sought to be achieved by the the initiation of a few action research projects which study the various dimensions of a watershed project. The findings are fed back to the partner NGOs and VSHGs for their consideration. This fosters a greater awareness as well as ownership of the project in addition to uncovering interesting facets of rural life.



Organizational Structure

WOTR has established an organisational structure which is geared towards meeting its objective of supporting the unfolding of a people's movement for watershed development.

It is professionally managed with a central coordinating unit based at Ahmednagar which supports five autonomous decentralised Resource Centres located in various regions of Maharashtra.

WOTR is governed by a five member Board of Trustees, headed by Fr. Hermann Bacher, Founder-Chairman of WOTR. The other board members are :

Crispino Lobo: Development Professional, Co-ordinator -IGWSDP; Managing Trustee -WOTR

Asoke Basak: Senior Government official -Indian Administrative Service (IAS)

Dr. G.G. Parikh: Development Professional, Chairman -Yusuf Meherally Centre.

Thomas Salve : Educationist.

EXTENSION NETWORK

In order to support the various groups implementing projects in different parts of Maharashtra and also to coordinate these activities, WOTR has established five Regional Resource Centers (RRCs). Three of these are established in collaboration with various locally active and well known NGOs and one with the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD). These 5 RRCs and the regions they service are as follows :

RRC Konkan : Yusuf Meherally Centre

RRC Marathwada : WOTR/NABARD

RRC Ahmednagar/South Western Maharashtra : Social Centre

RRC Sangamner/ North Western Maharashtra : WOTR

RRC Vidharba : Gandhi Peace Centre

WOTR together with its RRC's has entered into resource sharing arrangements with some of our partner NGOs. Selected personnel from these NGOs are trained in various disciplines and constituted into Regional Resource Teams (RRT). Their services are made available whenever required on a regional basis.

SUPPORT CELLS

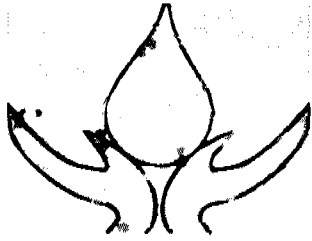
In addition, at its Head Office in Ahmednagar, WOTR has different Cells. These Cells essentially support the RRCs and RRTs in their efforts and also help to coordinate the activities of the Programme. These Cells are as follows :

Technical Cell : which assists the RRC's and NGOs/VSHGs in the planning, formulation and implementation of the various projects and activities.

Training Cell : which conducts training programmes for NGOs and VSHGs to buildup their capacities in the social, technical and managerial aspects of project implementation.

Women's Promotion Cell : which assists NGO's and womens' groups to identify major issues affecting them and to arrive at possible solutions.

Information and Networking Cell : the main purpose of which is to prepare audio-visual aids, training manuals and publish promotional literature, newsletters and other information handouts.



Our Enablers

In an interconnected and interdependent world, goodwill, good advice and resource support - financial, administrative, moral - are necessary, if an effort is to develop synergies, bear fruit and radiate outwards.

WOTR would like to place on record our gratitude to the following institutions for their timely and generous support:

The Government of India:

Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Agriculture

The Government of Maharashtra :

Department of Rural Development - Soil and Water Conservation

Department of Forests and Department of Agriculture]

The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD)

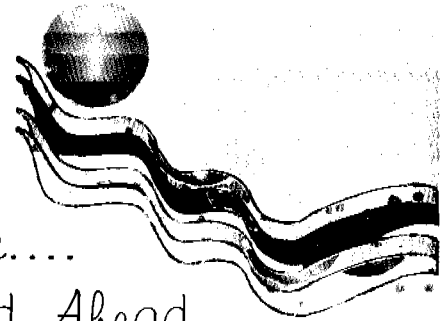
The German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ)

The German Bank for Development (KfW)

MISEREOR

The Becker - Cordes Foundation

The German Consulate, Bombay.



Prologue....

The Road Ahead

A few steps - tentative but eventful - have been taken these past three years by WOTR and its partners. We'd like to think of these years as our 'growing together', our 'bonding' years.

A long and challenging journey lies ahead of WOTR and its 'Parivar' (extended family).

Hence we preferred bringing together the closing strands of our Conspectus into a Prologue - a pause, before once again entering into the dynamics of change, renewal and growing together with the poor of rural India as they struggle to recreate their lives and their world.

We welcome you to come and join us in this endeavour.

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Yusuf Meherally Centre

Yusuf Meherally Centre was established in 1961 in the memory of Mr Yusuf Meherally, a freedom fighter. Since its initial activities of promoting national integration and studying urbanisation, the YMC has shifted its focus to the transformation of rural areas through the mobilisation of urban resources. Operating from its field base at Tara Panvel taluka, Alibagh district, YMC is involved in medical, educational, agricultural, rural industrial and other social work activities.

Gandhi Peace Centre

Gandhi Peace Centre is a development organisation, established on the principles of Mahatma Gandhi. It is operational in about 12 states of the country, GPC believes that education is a key element to the process of change; hence all GPC's programmes try to raise the questions of why and how. This approach leads to the concept of 'Lok Shakti' (Power to the people), so that people have the capacity to make their own decisions and be arbiters of their own destiny. GPC conducts various training programmes for development workers and also gives fellowships to those deserving. GPC reaches out to all sections of society, without any discrimination, through its project partners, to achieve these objectives.

Social Centre

The Social Centre is a rural development institution, founded by Fr. Hermann Bacher in 1967. It has been actively working in Ahmednagar district of Maharashtra for the past 30 years. Initially, it concentrated its activities on promoting cooperatives for lift irrigation schemes, digging of wells and other agricultural activities as well as undertaking programmes for women's development. Later it has shifted its emphasis to soil and water conservation activities along watershed lines. In addition vocational schemes, livestock development, training are some of its other activities.

Summary Statement of WOTR's Activities (Upto July '97)

Human Resource Development

Social Mobilization Skills, Technical Skills and Record Maintenance Trainings

No. of Programmes	135	No. of Participants	3855
No. of Workshops	19	No. of Participants	567
No. of Fairs	5	No. of Participants	600

Women's Promotion Trainings (from Jan '96)

No. of Programmes	29	No. of Participants	650
No. of Exposures	12	No. of Participants	755
No. of Fairs	7	No. of Participants	3071

Preparation of Project Feasibility Studies

Done by WOTR	22	Gross Area (Hectares)	26971
Supported by WOTR	12	Gross Area (Hectares)	16665

Watershed Projects implemented by WOTR 6

Covering a gross area of (Hectares) **5832**

Watershed Organisation Trust (WOTR)

Mission Statement

We are a development support team of professionals having core competency committed to motivating and facilitating rural communities and NGOs towards sustainable integrated watershed development with the help of local and external resources.