

### **VIII.1.A.1. Environment and Local Level Planning in Development: A Study of Two Selected Agro- climatic Regions in Karnataka**

**Damini Masand**

2092, 1st Floor, 9th Cross, 5th Main, Vijay Nagar II Stage, Bangalore-40

Poverty alleviation and proper management of natural resources have become challenging tasks for the planners today. Poverty is considered both a cause to, and effect of, environmental degradation. This implies that the regions, where poverty is endemic, will always be prone to ecological and other catastrophes. Alleviation of poverty, therefore, requires an understanding of basic needs of the poor, the practices that they adopt to fulfil their basic needs and the kind of effect that these practices have on the environment. Poverty, to a large extent, can be alleviated if basic needs of the rural poor having a bearing on environment are fulfilled through the planning process. If not, it needs to be examined as to how such basic needs are to be taken care of in an alternative system of planning.

Decentralised planning process enables a better perception of needs of local areas (including basic needs of the local resources and growth potential of area concerned. It helps in ensuring local participation, mobilizing local resources, incorporating field level experience, facilitating integrated physical planning to establish close linkages between resource endowment and potentialities of an area, and accelerating the development of backward regions.

Incorporation of the basic needs, such as secure livelihood, provision of safe drinking water and fuel-wood for daily needs into local level planning requires an examination of what are basic needs, how local level planning is actually done, whether the basic needs are incorporated into local level planning.

An integrated approach with a complete understanding of economic, social and institutional policies and incentives that influence the environment related behaviour of government agencies, major resource users in countless small- scale using activities is essential for understanding how people in rural areas actually fulfil their basic needs and the manner in which it affects the environment. Any such sustainable natural resource management in rural areas may include a complete assessment of available physical resources in the area, institutional arrangements such as property-rights, management of common property resources, laws of inheritance and other factors such as commodity prices, an analysis of demand and supply of labour force.

It is also essential to analyze the factors, which determine the environmental quality of a region. For instance, water that is safe and plentiful and air that is healthy is itself part of the improvement in welfare that development attempts to bring. If the benefits from rising incomes are offset by the cost imposed on health and quality of life by pollution, it cannot be called

development. Hence, water and a sanitation problem of the people needs to be analysed. The importance of factors in the local level planning process and implementation have been analysed in two selected agro-climatic regions of Karnataka.