

## **Mid-term Evaluation of Revised National Watershed Development Projects for Rainfed Areas during X Plan\***

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*This paper deals with the development of rainfed areas through the watershed development projects of the Government of India. Four blocks in four districts of Maharashtra have been selected, viz., Gadhinglaj block from Kolhapur district, Kuhl block from Nagpur district, Himayatnagar block from Nanded district and Murud block from Raigarh district. The study shows that watershed developments have great potential to generate employment opportunities for the rural people. This is due to the increased availability of water resources and diversified cropping pattern including the cultivation of labour-intensive crops. The additional employment generated from the watershed programme in the villages leads to minimizing the migration of labour to the urban areas.*

### **I Introduction**

Over the years, the Government of India has made budgetary provisions for micro-watershed development. This is because rainfed agriculture is risk-prone and is characterized by low productivity. The challenge before the policy makers is to transform rainfed farming into a more sustainable and productive system. The Government of India has accorded high priority to the sustainable development of rainfed areas based on the watershed development approach. Many projects for enhancing production and improving the livelihood of the people are being implemented through watershed development programme. The National Watershed Development Project for Rainfed Areas (NWDPA, GoI 2002) is the largest project in terms of scope and extent. The Ministry of Agriculture is implementing it since 1990-1991. NWDPA involves conservation, development and sustainable management of natural resources including their use, enhancement of agricultural productivity in a sustainable manner, restoration of ecological balance in the degraded and fragile rainfed areas by greening them, reduction in regional disparity between irrigated and rainfed areas, and creation of sustained employment opportunities for the rural community (Rao 2000).

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