

### 10.2 WESTERN GHATS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

11. The Western Ghats Hill Ranges run to a length of about 1600 Kms., more or less parallel to the west coast of Maharashtra starting from the mouth of river Tapti in Dhule district of Maharashtra and ending at Kanyakumari, the southern-most tip of India in Tamil Nadu. The region covers an area of 1.60 lakh sq.kms. supporting a population of 442 lakh (1991 Census).

12. The main problems of the Western Ghats region are the pressure of increasing population on land and vegetation, undesirable agricultural practices etc. These factors have contributed to ecological and environmental problems in the region. The fragile eco-system of the hills has come under severe pressure because of submersion of large areas under river valley projects, damage to areas due to mining, denudation of forest, clear felling of natural forests for raising commercial plantation, soil erosion leading to silting of reservoirs and reduction in their life span and the adverse effects of floods and landslides, encroachment of forest land and poaching of wild life etc.

13. A separate Western Ghats Development Programme (WGDP) was launched in 1974-75 as a component of the programme for the development of hill areas of the country. The delineation of the Western Ghats Region for inclusion in the Programme was settled in 1981 by a one-man Committee headed by Dr. M.S. Swaminathan, the then Member-Incharge of the Hill Areas in the Planning Commission. For delineation of the areas for coverage by the WGDP, the criteria of elevation (600 metres above MSL) and contiguity with taluka (a territorial administrative unit) was adopted. The Programme is being implemented in 159 talukas comprising of Western Ghats in five States viz. Maharashtra (62 talukas), Karnataka (40 talukas), Kerala (29 talukas), Tamil Nadu (25 talukas) and Goa (3 talukas).

14. Since the Sixth Plan, the allocable Special Central Assistance (SCA) for the Hill Area Development Programme (HADP) was being distributed between WGDP and HADP in the proportion of 13.39 per cent and 86.61 per cent respectively. Presently, this is being distributed in proportion of 16 per cent and 84 per cent. The SCA allocated to States is released in the form of 90 per cent grant and 10 per cent loan. The financing pattern of Special Central Assistance (SCA) earmarked to WGDP is allocated among five States on the basis of 75 per cent weightage to the area and 25 per cent weightage to the population except Goa in which case, ad-hoc allocation of 5 per cent of the total SCA is made because Goa's share when worked out adopting same criteria of weightage of area and population comes out to be minimal.

#### APPROACH AND OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAMME

15. During the Seventh Plan period, the following guiding principles were followed for WGDP for sustainable development of the areas covered under the Programme:

- Maintenance of ecological balance essential for the life support system.
- Preservation of the genetic diversity.
- Restoration of the ecological damage caused by human interactions.
- Creation of awareness among the people and educating them on the far-reaching implications of ecological degradation and securing their active participation for the eco-development schemes.

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16. The general approach under WGDP during Eighth Plan period and continued during Ninth Plan has been of integrated development on compact watershed basis keeping in view the over-riding priorities of eco-development and eco-restoration as well as the basic needs of the people like food, fodder, fuel and safe drinking water. The guiding principles of WGDP, also, lay emphasis on the people's involvement in the programme. This calls for extension of education and publicity through audio-visual aids, mass contact programmes, visits to model sites etc. All these requires highly trained and motivated executing staff with team spirit.

17. It has been decided to gradually switch over to the Integrated Watershed Approach on Project basis for development in the Western Ghats area. This approach envisages the identification and delineation of macro and micro watersheds, their prioritisation, base-line survey and preparation of an integrated development plan for each macro/micro watershed covering all relevant activities such as Soil Conservation, Agriculture, Horticulture, Afforestation, Fuel and Fodder Development, Minor Irrigation, Animal Husbandry and Sericulture.

18. During the current financial year, it has been decided to allocate about 40 per cent of the total allocation under WGDP for programmes to be implemented on Integrated Watershed basis. The State Governments have been directed to initiate necessary preparatory work such as identification and prioritization of macro watersheds, entry level works, Participatory Rural Appraisal/Rapid Rural Appraisal exercises etc.

19. A decision has also been taken to allow State Governments to utilise upto a maximum of 15 per cent of Special Central Assistance allocated to them under WGDP, for maintenance of assets created in the past under the Programme.

### ACTIVITIES/PROGRAMMES DURING THE YEAR 2000-01

20. During the year 2000-2001, it is proposed to:

- To prepare a comprehensive Perspective Plan for the development of the Western Ghats Region in consultation with State Governments.
- To have a Multilateral funded project for Western Ghats Development.
- To get a comparative performance study under watershed development by various Project Implementation Agencies.
- To train the field staff and build research data through implementation of a few Model Integrated Watershed Projects through Research Organizations with community participation.
- To initiate action and collect data/information on bio-diversity, flora and fauna and other information on Western Ghats and to have a network of Researchers in the field.
- To evaluate the efficacy of certain schemes undertaken under WGDP in different States for the purpose of replicating the same in other WGDP States.

21. Table 10.2.1 showing approved/revised outlay and expenditure for 1998-99, approved / revised outlay and anticipated expenditure for 1999-2000 and approved outlay for 2000-01 is given below:

**TABLE 10.2.1**  
**Western Ghats Development Programme: Allocations/Expenditure**

(Rs. in lakh)

Name of the State	1998-99			1999-2000			2000-01
	Approved Outlay	Revised Outlay	Actual Expdr.	Approved Outlay	Revised Outlay	Antici. Expdr.	Approved Outlay
Maharashtra	1911.00	1911.00	1880.82	2097.00	2097.00	2097.00	2097.00
Karnataka	1413.00	1448.00	1278.31	1551.00	1684.30	1684.30	1551.00
Kerala	1191.00	1191.00	1174.74	1308.00	1351.50	1351.50	1308.00
Tamil Nadu	997.00	997.00	997.00	1094.00	1160.45	1160.45	1094.00
Goa	295.00	295.00	292.37	320.00	330.00	330.00	320.00
Survey & Study/WGS	43.00	43.00	16.52	30.00	30.00	17.70	30.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>5850.00</b>	<b>5885.00</b>	<b>5639.76</b>	<b>6400.00</b>	<b>6653.25</b>	<b>6640.95</b>	<b>6400.00</b>