

off. After the rains, the situation reverses, with moisture scarcity prevailing, mainly due to the topography, poor organic content in the soil, and a lack of suitable water storage sites.

How to meet the demands of food, fodder, fuel, fibre, timber and water on a sustained basis is the greatest challenge facing us today. It has now been firmly established that conservation of soil and water, development of degraded lands, and the rational utilization of available resources are the most important inputs for meeting the needs of the people and for the eradication of poverty. Sustainable Milli Watershed Management — *with proper planning* — is a scientific and efficient approach for the management of land, water and vegetation. It has shown excellent results for the people living in ‘watershed managed’ areas. Conservation and development have together made achieving the goal of higher productivity and stability possible. Therefore, resource management by the people, and for the people, with a scientific approach, is the answer for sustainable management of watershed areas.

Watershed and its Approach

A watershed area is a geo-hydrological unit or piece of land that drains at a common point. Watershed areas are considered the basic unit for planning and development. In this approach, developmental work starts from the highest point in the area, and progresses downwards to the natural stream or lowest point.

Watershed Management

Watershed management is an ‘area development’ strategy. In this strategy, the area being developed is a watershed area, and the subject is soil and water conservation. Watershed management is the harmonious development and management of soil and water resources within the natural boundaries of a watershed area, on a sustainable basis, for the equitable benefit of the people, while delivering clean and controlled water flow downstream.