

of employment, projects not having preponderance of common lands may also be considered for sanction provided there is adequate justification.

(g) Watersheds where actual wages are significantly lower than the minimum wages.

(h) Watershed, which is contiguous to another watershed that has already been developed/treated.

(i) Watersheds where People's participation is assured through raw materials, cash, contribution on labour etc. for its development as well as for the operation and maintenance of the assets created.

### **Development of Forest Lands in Watershed Areas**

16. Some watersheds may encompass, in addition to arable land under private ownership, forestland under the ownership of State Forest Department. Since nature does not recognize artificial boundaries of forest and non-forest lands in any watershed, the entire watershed is to be treated in an integrated manner. Though the criterion for selection of watersheds primarily remains predominance of non-forest lands, the forest lands forming part of such watersheds may also be treated simultaneously as detailed below:

(a) The Divisional Forest Officer concerned should give technical sanction of the treatment plans.

(b) The programme should as far as possible be implemented by Village Forest Committees existing in that area. If no such Committee exists, their formation may be encouraged, or else the project activities in such watersheds should be taken up by the Forest Department.

(c) Village Forest Committees should be treated at par with Watershed Committee. Since Village Forest Committees are registered with the Forest Department of the respective States, there would not be any need for getting them registered under the Societies Registration Act.

(d) The Micro-watershed Development Plan for the forest areas should be in conformity with the Forest Conservation Act and the approved working plan of the area.

(e) Where a relatively larger proportion of the watershed is covered by forestlands, Forest Department at the district level should be