

BACKGROUND

Drought and Flood are the frequent natural features and being a major threat for the people. Drought happens when the precipitation is less and the flood happens when the intensity of precipitation is more. The erratic change in the climate also increases the recurrence of the droughts and floods. The droughts and floods are making severe losses in environment, economic and social area. This natural phenomenon's can't be eradicated but can be managed. Building resilience among the people to manage the drought and flood with the perspective of the recent climatic conditions is the need of the hour. During the 25 years of journey, the DHAN Vayalagam (Tank) Foundation has identified many traditional and existing coping strategies among the people to manage the drought and flood. This convention has been organized to share the experience of farmers in Pambar basin on flood management with the following objectives.

- Sharing the traditional practice of the people on Flood management
- Sharing the existing best practices on Flood management
- Evolving action plan to manage the flood with the futuristic perspective by considering the effect of climate change

PAMBAR KOTTAKARAIAR RIVER BASIN

This is one among the 17 River basins exists in Tamilnadu and it is located in 9° 45' to 10° 25' N Latitudes and 78° 10' to 79° 00' E Longitudes respectively. The average annual rainfall if the basin is 948mm with significant seasonal variations. The intensity and amount of rainfall in south west monsoon period (June – September) are unpredictable. Maximum rainfall occurs in North east monsoon period (October – December).The entire basin falls in drought prone tract and our ancestors built thousands of tanks and ponds for agriculture, drinking and other domestic use of water. The small anicuts were constructed across the streams and they divert the rain water to small scale surface water bodies to store for meeting their demands when required. There are no perennial sources of water either for agriculture or for drinking water in this River basin.

PAMBAR KOTTAKARAIAR RIVER BASIN

The Pambar- Kottakaraiar river basin has endowed with hundreds of small scale water bodies namely irrigation tanks, village ponds. These small scale water bodies are the only source for irrigation, agriculture and drinking water etc need of the community and they have highly depended on this for their daily life. During the past, these water bodies have been maintained and managed by the local village community through Kudimaramth system by contributing voluntary shramadhan as collective action. The maintenance and management was centralized and community stake become weak and lost its originality and also the efficiency in serving the purpose of these water bodies.

According to our recent pilot study on mapping out vulnerable tanks and ponds for flood reveals that because of poor management of tank system and missing of local management system, many tanks have got breached during the floods in the years 2005, 2007 and many tanks are not performing to their original efficiency. The Chain of tanks is the hydrological and social unit and this is considered to be most important and appropriate for the planning and implementation for any natural resource management to mitigate the chronic flood that persists in this area for the past few decades. The basin has more numbers of tanks and ponds, the water harvesting structures and providing base for the agriculture livelihood and drinking water.



STRUCTURES AND PROVIDING BASE FOR THE AGRICULTURE

DHAN Foundation is working in the basin since the year 1992 through its water thematic collective. The Vayalagam tankfed agriculture development programme was initiated in Kottampatti block of Madurai district during the year 1992. Then it was expanded to Singampunari and Thirupathur Blocks of Sivagangai District based on the support received from ITC through its Mission Suneherakal CSR project. Then during the year 2011 the three new blocks namely S.Pudur in Sivagangai district, Natham in Dindigul district and Ponnamaravathy block at Pudukottai district as mega expansion along with the Kottampatti block in Madurai district with the support from Axis Bank Foundation support.

DHAN Vayalagam (Tank) Foundation has promoted social capital around the tanks like Vayalagam (Tank association), Cascade Vayalagam (Cascade association) and Basin Vayalagam to bring back the people management. Lot of flood and drought mitigation measures was implemented with the active participation of the people and financial support of donors. The traditional knowledge of the community and efforts of DVTF has reduced the impact of the vulnerabilities among the people due to floods and droughts. We hope that the symposium 2017 will be the right place to share the experience of the people and people institutions in Pambar basin on flood management practices and to discuss on the future perspectives.