USER GROUPS FOR MISSION AMRIT SAROVAR

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MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

User Groups for Mission Amrit Sarovar

Common Property Resources such as Sarovars are important for the sustenance of villages. These resources are economically and socially important for the entire community and it becomes crucial to not just construct or rejuvenate Sarovars but also maintain and govern them by forming User Groups (UGs) for sustainability of the Sarovar.

The roles and responsibilities of the User Groups are explained below to help them plan, implement and manage the Sarovars.

User Groups (UG)

Development of Amrit Sarovars involves feasibility assessment, execution and its utilization where role of User Groups is important to take ownership in managing and maintaining them. Even Sarovars may be catalysed as recreational centres including hoisting the national flag on important days.
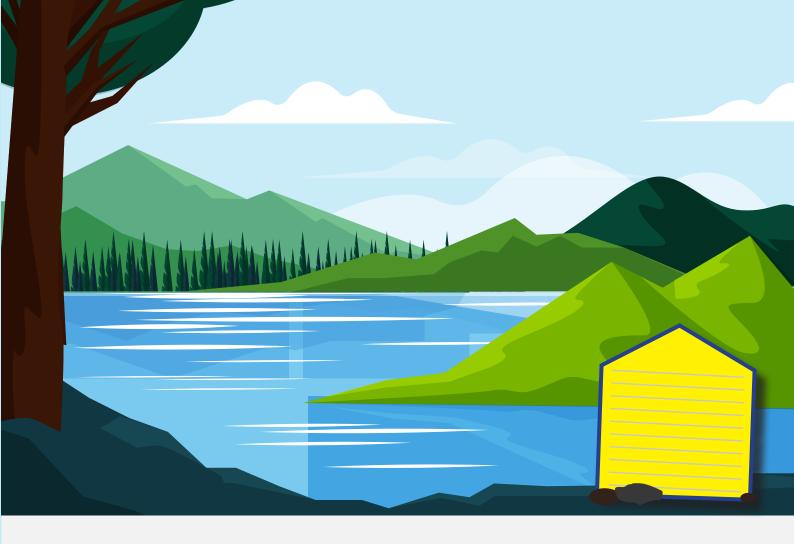
Box 1:

Overview of Mission Amrit Sarovar

Hon'ble Prime Minister launched the Mission Amrit Sarovar to construct or rejuvenate 75 water bodies in each rural district of India by 15 August 2023. Amrit Sarovar will play an important role in increasing the availability of water, both on surface and under-ground. Development of Amrit Sarovars is also an apt symbol of constructive actions that create sustainable and long-term productive assets, beneficial to both the sentient beings and environment, dedicated to the country on the occasion of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav.

The Ministry of Rural Development is the nodal agency and has issued Mission Amrit Sarovar Guidelines for effective implementation and management of the Mission. The Mission is implemented by the States and Districts, through convergence with various schemes such as MGNREGS, 15th Finance Commission Grants, PMKSY sub schemes such as Watershed Development Component, Har Khet Ko Pani besides States' own schemes. It encourages mobilization of citizens, NGOs for supplementing the above-mentioned efforts.

What is a User Group

A User Group is a voluntary group that operates collectively to conserve and manage the Sarovar for promoting water use efficiently. It is a representative body of user members of the Sarovar with adequate representation of women and weaker sections. The existing Members of Community Based Organizations (CBOs) formed under the mandate of Government of India (GoI) as mentioned in Box 2 if associated with the Sarovaros, could use their experience for efficient functioning of the user groups. Once the members are appointed, the group may identify and assign specific roles and responsibilities to its members for undertaking the planned activities as mentioned ahead:

Box 2:

Different types of user groups could be formed based on the usage:

1. Village Water and Sanitation Committee (VWSC) / Pani Samiti (Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation, GoI)
2. Self Help Groups (NRLM)
3. Fishermen group (Department of Fisheries, GoI)
4. Van Samiti (Forest Department)
5. Aquaculture practitioners
6. Water chestnut cultivators
7. Lotus cultivators
8. Makhana cultivators
9. Duckery
10. Water for Livestock users
11. Domestic water users
12. Any other depending on the socio-economic importance of local lakes

Functioning of the UG

It should have a unique name.

Form rules and regulations based on consensus for optimum use of Sarovars for irrigation, livelihood and other day to day usages.

Formulate rules for membership and Governing Body role

Pay one-time membership charges (to be deposited in the UG bank account)

Decide rate of charges for water use

Devise mechanism for conflict resolution

Responsibilities of the UG

- Utilize the Sarovar water democratically by using water budgeting tool (Concept of water budgeting) and crop water management

- Plan water usage efficiency

- Collect water charges for water usage

- Resolve disputes among members and non-members.

- Define a system for governance of the Group

- Generate awareness of the Mission and selected Sarovars in the village for people's participation through Shram daan, laying of foundation stone, plantation, etc.

- Encourage farmers for carting of silt excavated from water bodies.

- Catalyze Sarovar as recreational spot including flag hoisting.

- Ensure co-ordination with Gram Panchayat.

The User Group will ensure people's participation, optimum utilization of water resources, efficient maintenance and long-term sustainability of the Sarovars.

Implementation Mechanism of Amrit Sarovar at the Panchayat level

Different bodies/collectives and officers play an important role in selection, decision making and implementation of the Sarovar in the Mission Amrit Sarovar. These responsibilities are given below:

Gram Sabha (GS):

- Conduct a Special Gram Sabha for:

  o   Approval of the Amrit Sarovar site

  o   Appointment of Panchayat Pratinidhi (PP)

- Prioritize operationalizing and maintenance of Amrit Sarovar with integration into Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP)

Panchayat Pratinidhi (PP):

- Supervise development of Sarovar on behalf of the Gram Panchayat

- Ensure faithful and fair execution while protecting the community interest.

Gram Panchayat (GP):

- Provide overview of the Mission to Gram Sabha and its intention to form a user group (Meeting 1)

- Elect members of User Group (Meeting 2)

- Register the UG in GP office

- Prepare resolution with aims, objectives, norms, functions, moral code, limitation, role and responsibilities of the UG

- Open a bank account in the name of the UG

- Resolve all conflicts

Panchayat Level Officer (PLO):

The Panchayat Secretary/ Sachiv will act as a PLO and has following responsibilities:

- Ensure faithful implementation of the Mission Amrit Sarovar in the Panchayats

- Collect data on water users and enter details on the Mobile App

  o This shall include details of name of the group, their mobile number, purpose of the particular UG, it can be the livelihood activities they will carry out through using Sarovar water such as fishery, agriculture and Irrigation.

- Report progress of implementation with appropriate geo-tagged photos and videos using the Amrit Sarovar Mobile App

  o Upload at least 3 videos of Sarovar site viz. before commencement, during development and on completion

- Document best practices and case studies

The above implementation mechanism in coordination with the User Groups paves way for sustainability of the Amrit Sarovars.

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