

# NEWS LINE

## Formation of Mashi River Parliament with Participatory River Basin Management in Semi-Arid Areas of Rajasthan

### Background

Mashi river (part of Banas River Basin) covers approximately 6400 square Km. (2,16,110 hectare), has 33 macro watersheds and 151 micro watersheds, spread over three districts of Rajasthan (Jaipur, Ajmer and Tonk), 6 Blocks and 382 villages covering more than 84,289 households with 4,91,430 population (2,53,765 male and 2,37, 665 female).

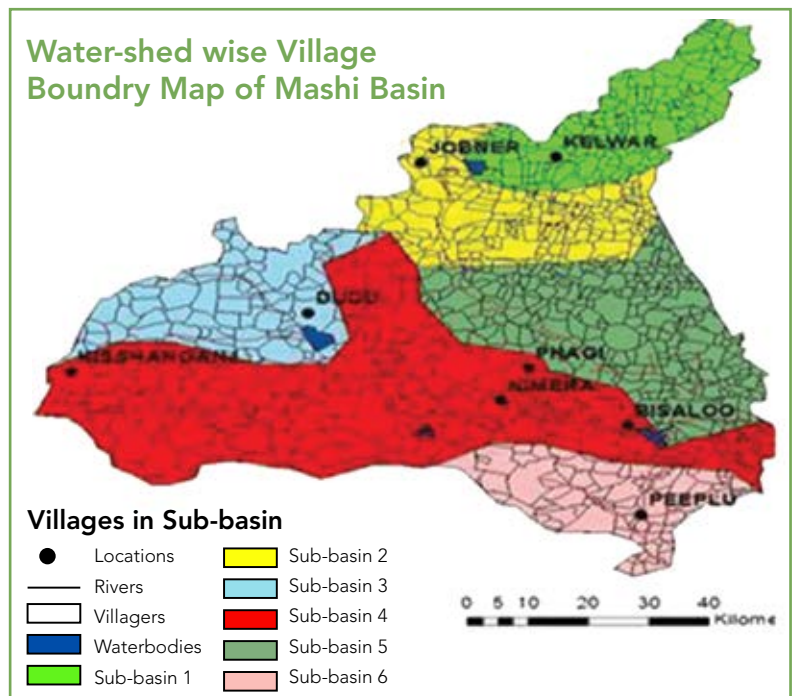
The Mashi river in Rajasthan has been experiencing dramatic changes in its flow, in the recent times. Given expected changes in global climate and water needs, this may create serious problems, including loss of native biodiversity, risks to ecosystems and human life from increased flooding or water shortages. The river discharge under different climatic condition and the consequent water withdrawal is changing every year and the population is experiencing water stress.

### Objective

In the backdrop of the above scenario, India Water Partnership (IWP) with support from its network partners, Centre for Environment and Development Studies, Jaipur (CEDSJ), has made a case for setting up of "River Basin Parliament" for Mashi River Basin in Rajasthan as a new model of water governance under IWP-Global Water Partnership-South Asia funded Water and Climate Resilience Program with community participation which will lead to better water resources management in the Mashi river basin.

### Role of Mashi River Parliament

The "River Basin Parliament" will help manage the common pool resources in the ways like: efficient use of water; improve soil fertility; arrest soil erosion by construction of water harvesting structures; prohibit illegal mining; generate self-employment and alternative livelihood options through better management of land, water and forest resources; promote cultivation of water saving crops with local seeds and manure. The way towards setting up of this kind of a parliament will bring all the stakeholders to work together to protect the river wherein there are defined role and responsibility of people, civil society organizations, government, and technocrats. The new governance model will be people centric which will be in contrast to the present State Driven Government Centric Decentralized Model, which in most cases failed to deliver. The River Basin Parliament will seek support from State Government of Rajasthan to provide legal, financial and other support with its minimum role in the working of River Basin Parliament and to create an enabling environment for better democratic functioning of the Parliament. While the



team of Technical Support Group (part of the River Basin Parliament) will provide all kinds of technical advice on different aspects of natural resources rejuvenation, conservation, protection and sustainable management, they will also build the capacity of stakeholders to facilitate equal (gender-wise) for better participation in governance system and facilitate selection of good livelihood options exists in the river basin to reduce pressure on natural resources.

### About Formation of Mashi River Parliament

For formation of Mashi River Parliament, the CEDSJ has engaged four local associated NGO partners as field level implementation partners to facilitate, i.e., community mobilization, formation of River Basin organisations starting from Gram Panchayat, undertake capacity building activities in order to prepare IWRM plans. The information generated by conducting a number of studies with the inputs from Hydro-geologists and Remote sensing experts etc. to map the land, water (water bodies and drainage system) and other natural resources in the Sub-Basin based on IWRM approach and changes/obstructions caused in the sub-basin in hydrological system by the people, development agents and development activities by the State, formed the basis for developing the capacity building training modules by CEDSJ and IWP. Trainings have been imparted to the three group members, i.e., Stakeholder Group, Technical support Group and Public Representatives Group at local level through various training programs and workshops to build the capacity of stakeholders for better decision making. The Mashi River Parliament will consist of 80 members comprising of Stakeholders Group (37 members), Technical Support Group (14 members) and Public Representatives (29 members).



Stakeholders Meeting for Formation of Mashi River Parliament

For setting up the Mashi River Parliament; stakeholder consultations, group meetings including meeting with PRI representatives, line department officials, Agriculture University staff and civil society groups working have been organised and water shed-wise capacity building modules prepared was shared with stakeholders. A draft constitution of the Mashi Basin Water Parliament have been prepared and shared with stakeholders for their approval.

This initiative of IWP would make the river resilient to climate change. To achieve this, various meetings, awareness building activities, training programs had been designed and shared to inform the local population the urgent need to work together to find ways to withstand the climatic disturbances in the coming years.

### IWP and CEDSJ Efforts in the Mashi river basin will result into:

- Enhancement in water & food security for the people living in the basin and adjoining areas;
- Establishment of democratic system of participatory water resources management after the formation of River Basin Parliament;
- Enhancement in capacity of people to deal with the challenges posed by climate change for better and efficient management of surface and ground water resources;
- Ensuring drinking water security to all people living in and around the river basin;
- Awareness generation among the people about the gap between water supply and demand;
- Minimization in human and livestock from migration caused by climate change/variability stress;
- Creation of a macro vision to manage natural resources in adverse climatic conditions;
- Integration of climate change adaptation actions into the local planning process in line with State Water Policy of Rajasthan; and,
- Bringing new approach on Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) & Integrated River Basin Management (IRBM) and make people understand the concept of water budgeting and apply it into water resource planning and management.

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