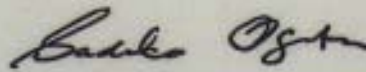


# CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION

## Attappady Hills Area Development Society

*In recognition of your many years of cooperation with the work of Japan International Cooperation Agency and your deep understanding of the promotion of international cooperation, I am pleased to present to you this certificate of appreciation as an expression of our sincere gratitude to you.*



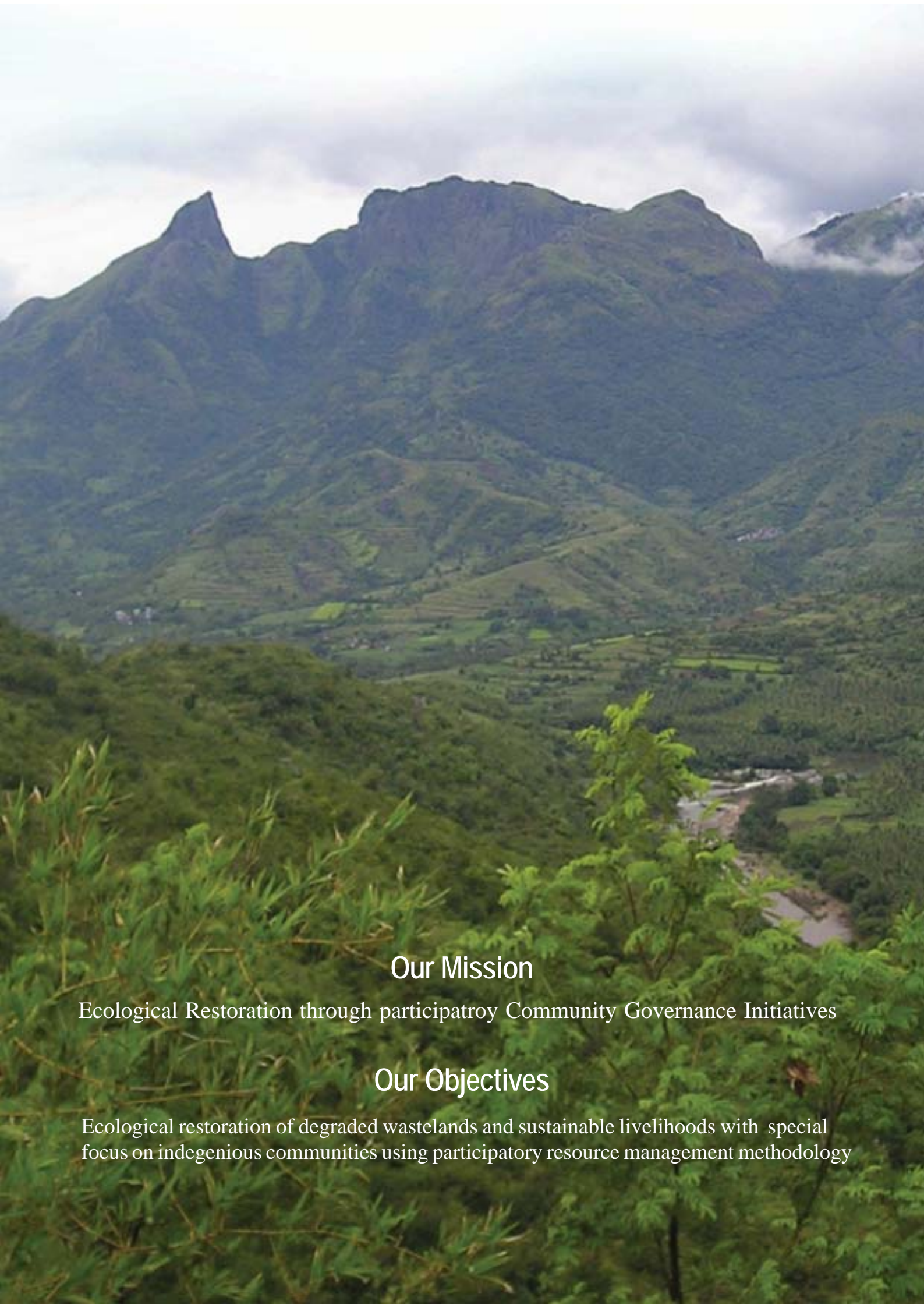
SADAKO OGATA  
PRESIDENT  
JAPAN INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AGENCY  
JAPAN

Date: 19 October, 2009



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## Our Mission

Ecological Restoration through participatory Community Governance Initiatives

## Our Objectives

Ecological restoration of degraded wastelands and sustainable livelihoods with special focus on indigenous communities using participatory resource management methodology

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background

Attappady, the only tribal block in Kerala with largest extent of wasteland in the State has historically experienced severe ecological degradation. The progressive loss of water and vegetation resulted in the expansion of wastelands and became evident in all classes of land, viz. private agricultural holdings, the tribal and government lands, the riverbanks, wetlands and common lands. The widespread ecological degradation consequently affected livelihood security of the people of Attappady adversely, especially the tribal population. The beginning of the 1990's presented Attappady with absolute backwardness and poverty, with more than 80 percent population living below poverty line. Attappady was then associated with administrative apathy, rampant child labour, labour migration to the plains of Tamilnadu and Kerala and disease and hunger.

It was in these circumstances that the Attappady Wasteland Comprehensive Environmental Conservation Project (AWCECOP) was taken up in 1996 with the objective of halting the processes of ecological and social degradations and improving the livelihood base of the affected communities, with special focus on the tribal communities. The AWCECOP aims at eco-restoration and promotion of sustainable livelihoods using participatory resource management methodology. The major objectives of this project include ecological restoration of Attappady, prevention of further ecological degradation, development of replicable models of participatory eco-restoration and promotion of sustainable livelihood options for the local people (with special emphasis on tribal population) in harmony with the resource base. The project is implemented by Attappady Hills Area Development Society (AHADS), an autonomous institution under the Local Self Government Department of Government of Kerala.

For this purpose, a loan agreement was signed between the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC), now Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), and Government of India (GoI). The loan agreement became effective from 26<sup>th</sup> March 1996, with the loan disbursement closure on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2005. Through subsequent amendments to the loan agreement the loan disbursement closure date has been extended upto 26<sup>th</sup> March 2010. Of the total project outlay of Rs 219.31 crore (6338 million Yen), Rs 176.90 crore (5112 million Yen) is provided by the donor agency as loan, whereas the GoK shares Rs 42.41 crore towards administrative cost. In the beginning of each financial year, GoK allocates funds to AHADS for implementation of the project activities. The funds utilized for various project activities are subsequently reimbursed by JICA.

The uniqueness of this Project is its transparent management of public funds and participatory nature of implementation. More than 3,500 people, as office-bearers, are directly involved in the implementation of the Project activities through 313 People's Institutions (PIs). 56 percent of the office-bearers are women and 83 percent belong to the tribal communities. The very fact that these communities are successfully implementing Project activities worth millions of rupees speaks volumes about the success of the Project and its impacts on the empowerment of local populace.



## 1.2 Demography of Attappady Block

Location project area	Details of project area														
<p><b>Geographical Location</b>                  India                  Kerala State                  Palakkad District                  Attappady Block</p> <p><b>Ecological Location</b>                  India                  Southern Western Ghats                  Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve                  Attappady Restoration Zone</p>	<p><b>Location :</b> 10°55' and 11°15' N                      76°21' and 76°48' E</p> <p><b>Altitude :</b> 430 m asl - 2300 m asl</p> <p><b>Rainfall :</b> 700 mm - 3000 mm</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Land use</th> <th>Area</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Total Area</td> <td>745 km<sup>2</sup></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Forest land</td> <td>444 km<sup>2</sup></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Agri. land</td> <td>130 km<sup>2</sup></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Fallow land</td> <td>157 km<sup>2</sup></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Water bodies</td> <td>11 km<sup>2</sup></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Roads &amp; Buildings</td> <td>3 km<sup>2</sup></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><b>Major forest types</b>                  Wet evergreen forest                  Semi evergreen forest                  Moist deciduous forest                  Dry deciduous forest                  Scrub &amp; Thorny forest</p> <p><b>Major Tribal Clans</b>                  Irulas                  Mudugas                  Kurumbas</p>	Land use	Area	Total Area	745 km <sup>2</sup>	Forest land	444 km <sup>2</sup>	Agri. land	130 km <sup>2</sup>	Fallow land	157 km <sup>2</sup>	Water bodies	11 km <sup>2</sup>	Roads & Buildings	3 km <sup>2</sup>
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Roads & Buildings	3 km <sup>2</sup>														

As per census 2001, the total population of Attappady Block is 66,171. The general category population, which largely consists of settlers from the States of Tamil Nadu and Kerala, constitutes 55% of the population, and the ST and SC comprise 45%. Among the Scheduled Tribes, there are Kurumbas, Mudugas and Irulas. Kurumbas are the minority among the tribals and live in 19 forest based hamlets. Kurumbas are dependent on hunting-gathering as well as shifting cultivation. It is believed that Kurumbas occupied Attappady prior to the other tribes. Mudugas, the second tribal community live in 24 hamlets and largely take to cultivation of coarse grains and pulses. Due to their proximity with the settlers of Kerala and Tamil Nadu, their culture and conduct have substantially changed, with higher literacy rates and more integration into the mainstream. The third tribal community is the Irulas. They form the majority among the tribals and live in 144 hamlets, and those that own land practice dry land agriculture. All the three tribes still maintain their social hierarchy and institutions such as 'Ooru Moopan' (Tribal Chieftain) 'Kuruthalai', (Junior Headman) 'Bhandari', (the treasurer) and 'Mannukkaran', (the Soil-agriculture man) who determines the sowing season, management of crops, handling indigenous medicine etc. and occupy high position in the social hierarchy.



**Table 1.1 : Population details of Attappady Block**

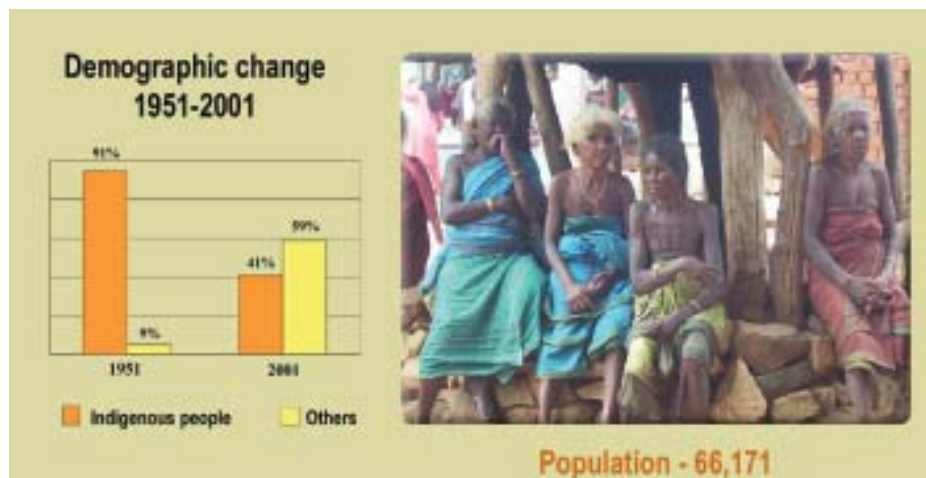
Year	Tribal Population	% of Tribal Population	Non Tribal Population	% Non Tribal Population	Tribal Population
1951	10200	90.92	1,100	9.68	11,300
1961	12,972	60.45	8,489	39.55	21,461
1971	16,536	42.21	22,647	57.79	39,183
1981	20,659	33.00	41,587	67.00	62,246
1991	28,711	46.28	33,322	53.72	62,033
2001	27,121	41.00	39,050	59.00	66,171

**Table 1.2 : Details of Tribal Communities in Attappady Block**

Total Population	No.	Remarks
Total Population	66,171	89 persons per sq.km
General communities	30,026	55% percent of the population
Scheduled Castes	3,024	4% of the population
Total Scheduled Tribes	27,121	41% of the total population
Irulas	20,883	77% of the tribal population living in 144 hamlets
Mudugas	3,482	13% of the tribal population living in 24 hamlets
Kurumbas	2,755	10% of the tribal population living in 19 hamlets

From being more than 91% of the total population in 1951, the tribals have been reduced to a minority in a matter of 50 to 60 years time. The non-tribal population has increased considerably due to migration both from Tamil Nadu and Kerala. This demographic process in Attappady valley played a crucial role in impacting the tribal culture, economy, social institutions, landholdings, agriculture and power dynamics, which have been, in general, disadvantageous to the tribal population.





- Ecological destabilization affected the tribal groups namely, Irula, Muduga and Kurumba most.
- Migrants arrival forced them to leave fertile valleys.
- Resource appropriation in hillocks continued through shifting cultivation.
- New markets and economic relations changed from barter economy to monetized systems.
- Conflict between traditional and modern value systems.
- Disempowered, culturally fragmented and economically impoverished lot.



- Represents a transition from wet tropical forest situation in the west to dry thorny scrub to the east.
- The watersheds feed river Cauvery in the east and Bharatapuzha in the south- west.
- The forests were once a private property, where tribal communities enjoyed full privileges.
- Arrival of plainspeople changed land use patterns, the forest fragmentation set in.
- The loss of forests affected the water absorption and retention capacity leading to loss of fertility
- A once fertile region was turning into semi aridity due to human induced ecological reasons.

## 2. ATTAPPADY WASTELAND COMPREHENSIVE ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION PROJECT (AWCECOP)

### 2.1 Project - Genesis

During 1993, the Rural Development Department, Government of Kerala, entrusted the Centre for Water Resource Development and Management (CWRDM) the task of drawing up a comprehensive project for Integrated and Sustainable Eco-Development of Attappady Wastelands. The Project was submitted to the Department of Economic Affairs (DEA), Government of India with a request for loan assistance from the Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund (OECF), later renamed as (JBIC). In January 1995, DEA short-listed the Project for posing it to the OECF and during February 1995, a fact-finding mission from the OECF visited the Project area and held discussion with the Central and State Government agencies. Subsequently in October 1995, after finalizing the structure of the Project, the implementation agency and the financial terms and conditions, the State Government announced the formation of the autonomous society, 'Attappady Hills Area Development Society' (AHADS) with its headquarters at Agali for the implementation of the Project. The initial title of the project – 'Integrated and Sustainable Eco-Development of Attappady Wastelands' was changed as "Attappady Wasteland Comprehensive Environmental Conservation Project". It was decided that the AHADS would have reasonable freedom of action, both in terms of financial and administrative matters in order to enlist massive public participation in the implementation of the Project and for achieving the desired results.

On October 31, 1995, AHADS was registered under the Charitable Societies Registration Act, 1860. A Loan Agreement ID-P/111 was signed on 25.1.1996 between the GoI and the Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund (later renamed as JBIC and now JICA). The Project was formally inaugurated by the then Chief Minister of Kerala on February 11, 1996. As per the requirement of the project, M/s Nippon Koei Co Ltd. Japan was selected as Project consultants on 15.7.1999. The consultants prepared and submitted an implementation schedule during February 2000, based on which, the implementation of field level activities was formally inaugurated on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2000 by the then Minister for Rural Development, GoK.

### 2.2 Project Restructuring

With the commencement of field level Project activities in the year 2000, it was realized that without addressing the prevailing socio-economic issues, primarily related to poverty, illiteracy and health, especially among the tribal communities of Attappady, the stated objectives of participatory eco-restoration would remain a distant reality. It was felt that the work components already agreed in the original Project might not adequately address the objective of livelihood security and the special emphasis given to the tribal population. Therefore, the project was restructured during 2002 by adding the Total Hamlet Development Programme (THDP) and the health and education components in the Project. The then President of India, Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam inaugurated the restructured Project on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2002.



## 2.3 Our Approach

AHADS endeavours to restore the resource base and secure livelihoods of the inhabitants of the Attappady hills, with special focus on the tribal people. The approach of implementation is based on the principle of Community Governance through grass root level People’s Institutions (PIs), ensuring informed participation of local communities and transparency in handling public funds. The approach is based on reading the landscape, delineating watersheds and treating them using participatory methodology.

In a major departure from the past, the current implementation is based on the locally accepted new practice of transparent governance through grass root level community organizations. In the process, a new stratum of people-centred neighbourhood leadership has emerged to assess, plan, implement and monitor developmental works for regenerating the landscape and enhancing sustainable livelihood options.

### 2.4 Characteristics of the Project

- Intensive people’s participation in project planning and implementation.
- Good representation of women and tribals in People’s Institutions.
- Watershed based resource management with participatory planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation through PIs.
- Equitable and transparent implementation arrangements delivering development benefits to deserving people.
- Multi-disciplinary team concept for field implementation.

## 2.5 Replicable Model of Community Governance

The uniqueness of the project is its transparent handling of public funds and participatory nature of implementation. PIs are democratically elected and registered bodies in each micro watershed. The microplans are prepared with active participation of the PIs. AHADS prepares cost estimates and accords sanction for implementation and transfers funds to the bank accounts of the PIs. The people are democratically organized with enough inputs on social capital development. Each PI represents a micro watershed based government, planning and implementing various works leading to eco-restoration and sustainable development.

AHADS facilitates the implementation of the works through estimate preparation, supervision, recording of measurements of the completed works and internal audit of accounts and books of the PIs. The PIs observe necessary administrative and accounting procedures to incur expenditure on such works and maintain accounts and books. The general body of the PIs audits the quality and quantity of works and proper expenditure from time to time. The predominantly illiterate/semi literate locals are successfully implementing project activities worth millions of rupees, thereby endorsing the project approach based on empowerment of local communities for participatory governance of resources.

### Organizational Arrangements

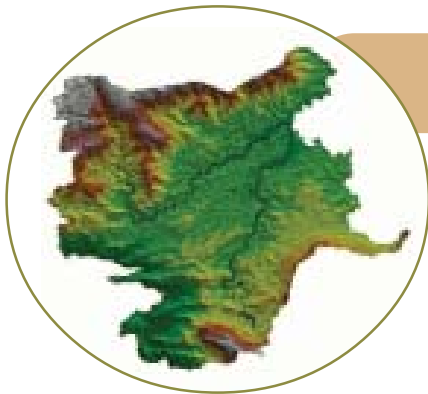


## 2.6 Watershed Based Field Implementation

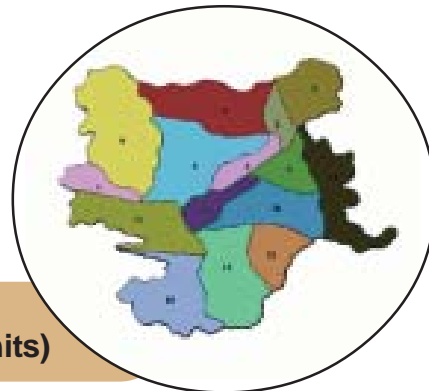
The 745 square kilometer area of Attappady is divided into 146 micro watersheds for this purpose. However, of the 146 micro watersheds, only 93 have habitations and hence 93 micro watersheds based User Association (UAs) have been constituted democratically. Within the ambit of the UAs, all tribal settlements have their own Ooru Vikasana Samithy (OVS), looking after tribal land and social developments. The conservation activities like afforestation, biomass development, soil and water conservation, water resources development and promotion of sustainable Income Generating Activities (IGA) are attempted through community based organizations, ensuring microwatershed based governance of resources. For this purpose communities are organized at microwatershed levels and participatory microplans are prepared. The microplans reflect the needs of the people, explored through a series of field exercises like Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), transect walks, household surveys etc., involving the end users right from planning through implementation.

To reach out to all corners of Attappady simultaneously, the project is implemented through five multi-disciplinary watershed teams.

- The term watershed describes an area of land that drains down-slope to the lowest point.
- The water moves through a network of drainage pathways, both underground and on the surface.
- Watershed boundaries follow major ridgelines around channels and meet at the bottom, a point commonly referred to as a stream or river.



**Project area - 745 sq.km.  
Basin of two major rivers**



**Project area divided into  
15 major watersheds (Development Units)**

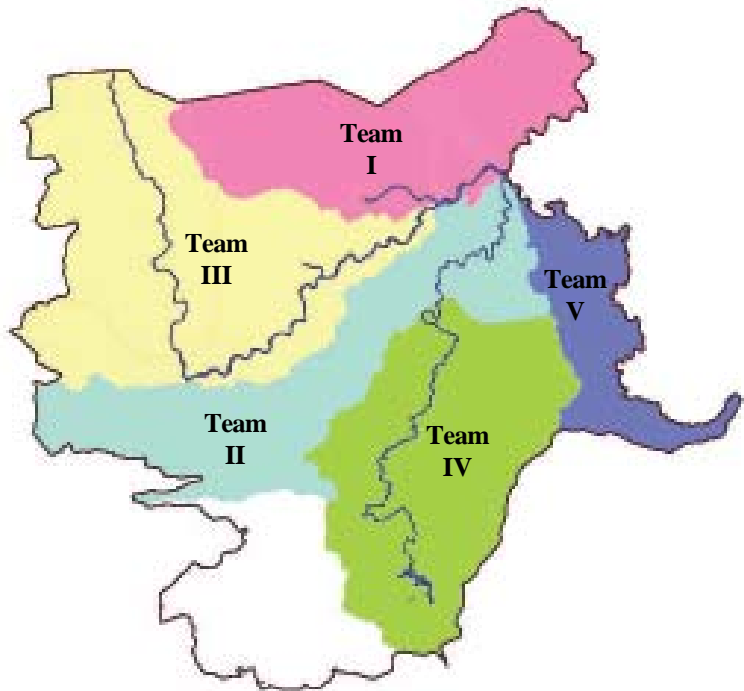


**Development Units further divided  
into 146 micro watersheds**

## 2.7 Multi-disciplinary Teams

The project area is divided into five geographical divisions to enable integrated and time bound implementation of participatory eco-restoration activities. Five multidisciplinary teams with specialists from various fields like Forestry, Agriculture, Soil Conservation, Civil Engineering and Extension, headed by a team leader facilitate and monitor project implementation.

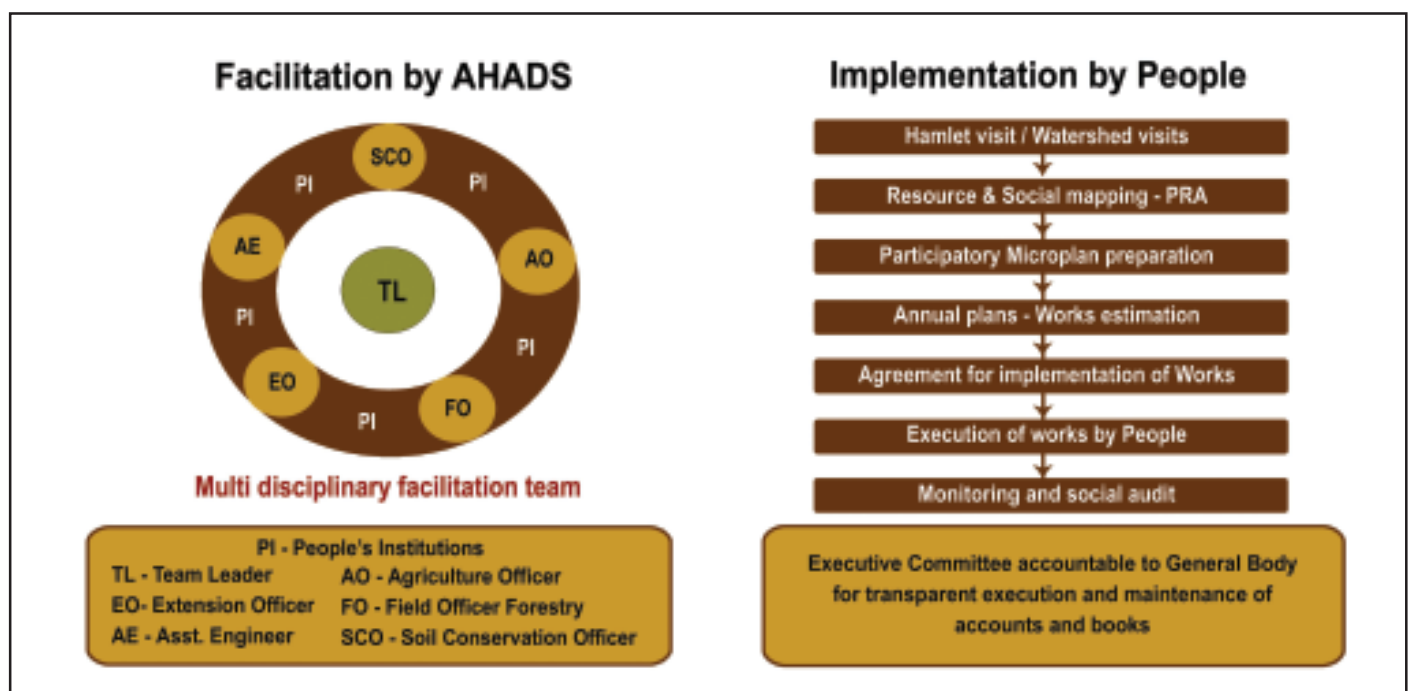
The project has institutionalized participatory mechanisms that ensure transparent handling of public funds and quality execution of works. The mechanisms are based on the universally accepted principles of grass root level governance of resources, adopting participatory technology through instrument of social empowerment. As on 31 March 2010, the Project has utilized Rs 225.06 crore, of which Rs.197.45 crore has been utilized against the loan component and Rs.27.60 crore as State share. Apart from the direct and indirect changes to the ecology of Attappady, this project has also generated 74,97,442 mandays of employment for local people.



**15 Development Units (DUs)**  
**146 Micro watersheds (MWS)**  
**5 Implementation teams**

## 2.8 Planning and Implementation through People’s Institutions

AHADS follows participatory approach in the implementation of the Project, wherein involvement of the real end-users is ensured right from the planning through implementation. While local people, functioning under various PIs plan and implement various components of the Project, AHADS supports them with financial and technical resources and facilitates investments in a transparent and participatory manner. To strengthen this approach and to maintain transparency, AHADS intervenes with the PIs regularly through its team of professionals.



## 2.9 People's Institutions

### User Associations (UA)

93 Associations

9 members Executive Committee (minimum – 5 women and 4 tribals)

Beneficiaries of a micro watershed form the User Associations, which execute all works pertaining to the micro watershed. User Associations have been formed in 93 micro watersheds out of the 146 micro-watersheds in the Project area.

### Ooru Vikasana Samithi (OVS) (Hamlet Development Committee)

166 committees - 13 members Executive Committee (minimum – 6 women)

These committees are intended to take up development works in and around the tribal settlements. These are exclusive tribal committees. Hamlet Development Committees are formed in 166 out of 187 hamlets of Attappady.

### Joint Forest Management Committees (JFMC)

54 committees - 9 members Executive Committee. (minimum –3 women), priority given to SC/ST members. Local forest officer ex-officio member as Secretary to the Committee.

These committees are meant for taking up afforestation and protection works in the State forestlands. There are 54 JFMCs under the Project, which have been federated as 16 Vana Samrakshana Samithies (VSS) under Mannarkad Forest Development Agency (FDA).

### Thaikula Sangam (TKS - Mother's Group)

111 Groups - 12 members Executive Committee

These groups of tribal women have emerged as a result of their empowerment as a social corrective force. These groups are constituted in each tribal hamlet to fight against the social evils like alcoholism, drugs etc, and registered as a Society.

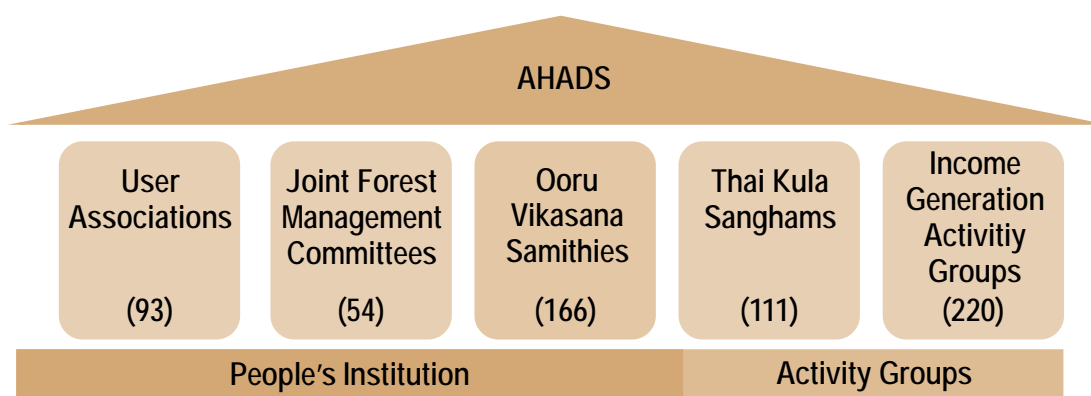
### Income Generation Activity Groups (IGA)

220 Groups - Groups with 12 to 15 members.

These groups are meant to take up sustainable income generation activities through promotion of micro-credit among members in the project area. These groups function as self-help groups. These groups are now completely integrated with the State wide poverty alleviation Kudumbashree programme.

In addition, a consortium of UAs and an association to revive tribal medicine, called Association for Revitalization of Tribal Medicine in Attappady (ARTMA) has also emerged as a result of the Project implementation.

Total People's Institutions	:	313	Women Executive Members	:	2000 (56%)
Executive Members in the People's Institutions	:	3573	Tribal Executive Members	:	2966 (83%)



### **Association for Revitalization of Tribal Medicine in Attappady (ARTMA)**

AHADS intends to revive and pass on to the coming generations the traditional tribal medicinal practices and knowledge that have been losing their utility day by day. In this regard, activities have been initiated to accord due recognition to the tribal healing practices. AHADS has organized the leading tribal healers of Attappady to form this association and provided them space to function. To enable the services of traditional healers of multiple specialties reach the public, a tribal healing center is constructed at Vattulakky.

### **Consortium of User Associations**

The consortium of User Associations, also called the Attappady Agricultural and Forest Produce Procurement, Processing and Marketing Committee, is a collective venture of certain PIs functioning under the Project. The objectives of this venture are to help farmers get financial and technical support and to establish regulated marketing in Attappady. The Consortium has got an Executive Committee of 11 members, of which 9 members are elected from the various PIs and 2 ex-office members nominated by the Project Director, AHADS.



## **2.10 Project Audit and Evaluation**

AHADS being a Society, a qualified Chartered Accountant verifies its annual accounts after March every year. The audited accounts are then presented to the Governing Body of AHADS and after its approval the accounts are presented before the High Power Committee of AHADS, chaired by the Chief Minister of Kerala. The audited statement of expenditure is submitted to JICA annually. In addition, the Accountant General of Kerala also audits the accounts and books of AHADS as mandated for all Government organizations. During 2005-06, the Government also conducted a performance audit of the works, accounts and books of AHADS.

The PIs have their respective annual General Body meetings, in which the Executive Committee members present their works and accounts taken up during the preceding year. It is a mechanism of social audit that assists in maintaining transparency and accountability on the part of PIs. In addition, AHADS has its own institutional arrangement, according to which all the PIs are visited every week by the staff to verify money and material transactions undertaken by them. From 2005-06 onwards, Internal Audit Wing of AHADS has begun functioning and by March 31<sup>st</sup> 2009, all accounts and books of PIs have been scrutinized and audited. The audit reports have been communicated to each PI with observation for rectification, wherever necessary.

In terms of project evaluation against its objectives, *Institute for Rural Management, Anand, Gujrat* conducted a mid-term evaluation of the Project. The evaluation was conducted during 2004-05, and the evaluators concluded that the project achievements are consistent with its objectives. Taking AHADS as an example of good governance, the *Institute for Societal Advancement, Thiruvananthapuram* evaluated the project outputs during 2005-06 and recognizing its social and ecological impacts, presented the case study before GoI during February 2007. For evaluating the performance of the project in the extended phase, JBIC commissioned an independent evaluation study to *M/s Wilbur Smith Associates Private Ltd. Bangalore*, who forwarded their report to the JBIC during November 2006 and December 2007. Appreciating the dynamic nature of the project and a pool of competent employees of AHADS, the report finds many instances of success in the project. However, recognizing the issues of sustainability and post-project management of assets created under the project, the report emphasizes upon institutional strengthening and enhanced capacity building efforts.

Whereas, beginning from 1999, the project received periodic evaluatory and review reports from the project consultant, *M/s Nippon Koei Co. Ltd. Japan*; their services could not be made available to the extended period of the project, except for a short period of about six months, upto December 2005. The consultant helped in devising field level implementation arrangements, methodology for execution of public works, periodic review of the project progress, mid-course correction strategies and in providing technical guidance for implementation of such a complex project. The consultant brought out 25 documents that guided project implementation and evaluation. The consultancy service was subsequently extended for 16 man-months upto March 2010. The consultancy restarted from 14th January 2008 and ended by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2009.

It is noted in all evaluation exercises that the project has consistently performed on the ecological and poverty alleviation areas. The ecological and social impacts thereby are significant. However, there is need to improve the internal monitoring of project progress. It is highlighted that there is a necessity for institutional strengthening and capacity building of the local communities for sustaining the gains made in the project. While the project has become a regular source of employment to the people of Attappady, and has helped in the regeneration of land and water, post-project sustainability issues still remain to be addressed and enhanced efforts are required to convert the present community based organizations as instrument of equitable development and distributive justice.

