

## **Regenerating Kudimaramathu – the water Governance by people: an Emergent solution to protect water bodies in Tamil Nadu**

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### **ABSTRACT**

"The traditional irrigation tanks in Tamil Nadu are the primary source of livelihood not only for farmers but also to millions of landless agricultural labourers. Presently there is an emergent need for protection of traditional irrigation tanks through concerted & collaborative efforts by all stake-holders from the diversified domains. The local communities, specifically the younger generation, should strive for reclaiming their ownership and should collectively participate in tank protection measures. Agriculture is still the primary source of livelihood for nearly 40 percentage of the people in Tamil Nadu. Performance of agriculture is declining mainly due to rapid increase of water shortages. Tamil Nadu can augment availability of water for irrigation by properly maintaining the traditional irrigation structures. It was firmly believed that the poor maintenance of 4000 water bodies in Tiruvallur and Kancheepuram districts was one of the main reasons for inundating Chennai Metropolitan city during 2015 floods. It also has caused severe damage to standing crops in both districts. Our ancestors not only built these traditional irrigation tanks but also they had actively participated in operations & maintenance of tanks and irrigation management processes. Our ancestors had planned, implemented and led their own sustainable development process locally depending on availability of water in the traditional irrigation tank. The present generation doesn't need to do anything different but simply follow the footsteps of our ancestors who had safeguarded and nurtured the water bodies through 'Kudimaramathu'. The traditional irrigation tanks even today play a vital role for livelihood and sustainable development of rural communities. Protection and maintenance of traditional irrigation tanks is the primary responsibility of all stake-holders. Kudimaramathu was the meticulous way of operations and maintenance of tanks which is still worth to be practiced with the values of equity and social justice. In the context of severe water crisis in Tamil Nadu, protecting the remaining 3900 traditional irrigation tanks must be the top most priority of Government of Tamil Nadu. Professional social workers have significant role to play. This paper will focus on the need for regenerating traditional methods of water management and call for the professional social workers towards leading and facilitating sustainable community development process."

**Key words :** Farmer – Agriculture - Traditional Irrigation Tanks – Feeder Channels – Water Crisis – Tamil Nadu - Water Resources Management - Community Participation. – Role of Professional Social Workers.