Grameen Vikash Andolan, a nationwide campaign, launched through CAPART (Council for the Advancement of People's Action and Rural Technology) by Ministry of Rural Development on Water Conservation, Sanitation and other Development Programmes within its fold to ensure people's participation to derive maximum benefit from various developmental projects at DRDA/Panchayat level.

One of the important objectives of the campaign is to inform and orient the PRI members, SHGs, village youth, government servants and traditional water experts of the Panchayat level about the developmental programmes of Rural Development Ministry which are available at their end and expedite their implementation by making the rural people aware of it.

The soul of India rests in its villages where more than 70% of the population resides. The march of India for assuming its rightful place in the comity of nations is not complete without significant improvement in the quality of life of rural populace. Hence the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) and its constituent wings like Department of Rural Development, Department of Drinking Water Supply and Department of Land Resources are committed to improve the life of rural people qualitatively as well as quantitatively through a series of well structured and demand driven rural development programmes in the country. But lack of information and awareness seems to be the major impediments for disadvantaged rural communities to reap the benefits of the programmes like Swarnajayanti Grameen Swarojgar Yojana (SGSY), Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY), National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme (NREGP), National Food for Works Programme (NFFWP), National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP), Swajaladhara, Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC), Drought Prone Area Programmes (DPAP), Integrated Watershed Development Programme (IWDP), Desert Development Programme (DDP), Hariyali, etc.

Hence a countywide campaign through NGOs has been launched by CAPART (Council for the Advancement of People's Action and Rural Technology) to spread awareness in rural India regarding various programmes of Rural Development Ministry. The campaign will be implemented through grass-root NGOs in the areas of operation. CAPART will be funding, monitoring and implementing the campaign with active co-operation from the Ministry of Rural Development, NGOs and other stake-holders.
Why Water Conservation and Sanitation Awareness:

Water is a prime natural resource, a basic human need and a precious national asset for any country. Although water constitutes about 70% of the earth's surface, nearly 97% of the World's Water is saline, 2% in the form of ice and only less than 1% of water is available for human consumption. But availability of fresh water has continued to be same for last 2000 years whereas the World Population has risen over 33 times during this span resulting in substantial decrease in per capita availability. World Bank and United Nations estimates predict that by 2025 the demand for fresh water will rise by over 65% more than the present availability. In view of the rapid decrease in per head fresh water availability, continuance of current unsustainable consumption practice will lead to 2/3 of World Population to live in water stressed condition by 2025. Unequal, unsustainable consumption pattern along with pollution of the resources compound the problem of water scarcity in India.

India’s ever-increasing population puts a severe strain on all the natural resources including water. The rainfall of this second largest populated country of the World is not always sufficient and a major portion of it runs off unused to the sea/ocean. The total Natural Renewable Water Resources (NRWR) in India is 1897 cubic km. and per capita NRWR is 1822 cubic meter (source: www.water.org) from which it is evident that both surface and underground water resource is scarce.

In rural India people use water from sources like rivers, springs, wells the water quality of which is quite poor. So, increased cases of water related diseases are found with them. As water is deeply linked with sanitation, improper sanitation facilities and practices get rural water resources contaminated easily causing various health hazards. Hence, it is imperative to generate awareness about the importance of proper sanitation in rural India in addition to water conservation.

In this backdrop, there is an urgent need for action on creation of public awareness about water conservation and management, sanitation and other beneficiary programmes of Rural Development Ministry throughout the country. It's not alone the government effort but the participation of common people, civil society organizations can yield desired results in this respect. Hence Grameen Vikash Andolan, a countrywide campaign to propagate awareness about water conservation, sanitation and other development programmes of Rural Development Ministry has been launched.

CAPART's regional committee (East Zone), Bhubaneswar has adopted 43 districts/Blocks of three states for development of Grameen Vikash Andolan through voluntary organizations. Amongst these lies seven districts and blocks of Orissa namely Phulbani (Phiringia), Nuapada (Boden), Bolangir (Loisinga), Koraput (Dashmantpur), Kalahandi (Karlamunda), Nawarangpur (Papadahandi) and Malkangiri (Mathili) are included.

Salient Features of the Campaign:

(i) Training : All the elected members of the panchayats, selected youths, members of SHGs and grass-root government functionaries of the selected Blocks will be imparted orientation training. Efforts will be made to ensure that at least 50% of the participants are women. Vikash Sarathi Groups will be constituted for each panchayat to carry the campaign forward.
(ii) Vikash Sarathi Groups-The Campaigner: Vikash Sarathi Groups will be engaged in various advocacy and awareness generation activities like morning procession, flag hoisting, exhibition, campaign through audio-visuals, folk songs, dance, puppet shows, skits and drama, experience sharing, dissemination of traditional and modern techniques of water conservation, management and quality, making people aware of the programmes of Rural Development Ministry.

(iii) Water Agency-Pressure Group for Development Activities: The trained youth from every panchayat will serve as resource persons and watch agency. They will ensure social participation in development work of the PRIs and act as pressure group in their respective panchayat to facilitate, expedite and oversee proper implementation of various development programmes.

(iv) Bicycle Rally: The Vikash Sarathi Group in collaboration with NGOs will organize bicycle rally in the panchayats to give a boost to the work done by village community. They will also generate an enabling environment on the issue of water conservation as well as other programmes/schemes of the Ministry of Rural Development.

(v) Vikash Pathasala: The watch agency will organize a 'Vikash Pathasala' in every village of the panchayat. Vikash Pathasala is a forum for discussion and finding ways for effective implementation of development programmes in the village through PRIs and DRDAs.

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Hon'ble Chief Minister Shri Naveen Patnaik receiving a cheque of Rs 50 lakh from CMD, UCO Bank for Chief Minister's Relief Fund at Secretariat on 8.2.2008.