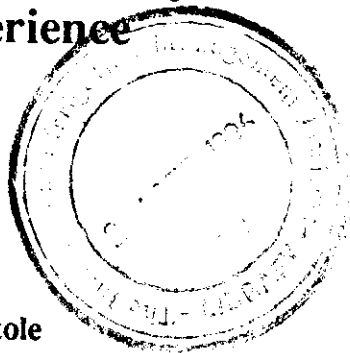


Status of Irrigation Management Transfer in India

Water Users' Association in Hadshi Minor Irrigation Project: Farmers' Experience

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**Water Users' Association in Hadshi Minor Irrigation Project:
Farmers' Experience**

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Foreword

This booklet is one of the series of short narratives about farmers' efforts to create and manage water user associations. The purpose of the series is to provide other farmers in the state with succinct, readable, and interesting information about these efforts that might enable farmers to improve their access to the irrigation services. This study is being published in both Marathi and English. See the back cover for information about the other narratives in this series.

This narrative was written by Sahebrao D. Patole under the guidance of IIMA and IIMI team members. He lived with the farmers described here from October, 1994 to April, 1995. While there, he interviewed and observed the farmers in order to document the water user association and irrigation management transfer process at this site. The information presented here reflects the ideas and opinions of the farmers themselves.

Sahebrao D. Patole's effort was part of the study on Status of Irrigation management Transfer in India being carried out from 1993 to 1995 by the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, and the International Irrigation Management Institute, Colombo, with funding from the Ford Foundation. The study investigated and documented the policies and activities of agencies, non-governmental organizations, and others with regard to promoting irrigation management transfer from the government to farmers. The overall goal was to contribute to formulation of effective policies and programs with regard to irrigation management transfer in India. In addition to this series of short narratives, study results are reported in more traditional research reports and other forms.

The primary members of the IIMA/IIMI study team were Shashi Kolavalli, Amaral Kalro, Gopal Naik, and S. Ramnarayan from IIMA, and Jeffrey D. Brewer, R. Sakthivadivel, and K.V. Raju from IIMI. Editing in Marathi was carried out by Sudhir Sevekar and Suryakant Saraf. The edited first draft was translated into English and reviewed by the study team, particularly Gopal Naik and S. Ramnarayan.

The members of the study team, including Sahebrao D. Patole, wish to thank the people of Village Hadshi, concerned government and non-governmental agencies who gave their hospitality and time to answer questions and explain how things work without expecting compensation. We sincerely hope that their experiences will be useful to others.

Jeffrey D. Brewer
IIMI

Gopal Naik
IIMA

Water Users' Association in Hadshi Minor Irrigation Project: Farmers' Experience

There are now many water users associations to distribute water equitably and timely. The Hadshi water distribution society is rather different.

Historical Background

Hadshi village has a historical background. The Tikona fort is nearby. The Village is surrounded by hills and forests. It is located along the Paud-Talegaon road. There is a small temple dedicated to God Dutta, the village deity. On the upper side of the village, a dam was constructed across a small river. There was water scarcity in the village before the dam was constructed and farmers used to take one crop of paddy in the kharif season. The monsoon water drains away through the rivers and rivulets. Water was not available for drinking either. Farmers who had wells grew wheat and gram in the rabi season and sold the produce at Kolwan market nearby.

The village population is about 1500. People belong to all castes and communities. The literacy rate is quite satisfactory. There is only a primary school here. For further education the children have to go to Kolwan. The Maratha community forms the major part of the population. Two family names are common Lohire and Kalekar. The Kalekars are in majority. The village has considerable people belonging to scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. Adivasis are also found in large numbers. These groups have a lower literacy rate compared to the Maratha community. Their children help the parents in traditional vocations. The Kalekar and Lohire families are advanced in their standards; the rest of the people lead a simple life. The backward class people are generally farm workers. There is a co-operative milk dairy and a grocery shop in the village.

Before the dam was constructed, the farmers used traditional equipments for cultivation. Improved seeds and insecticides were rarely seen. The dam

work began in 1980, supported by American funds. After the dam was completed, water supply improved. The once dry grounds in rabi were lush green now. Besides wheat and gram, many farmers grow vegetables. Earlier water distributed by the irrigation department. The villagers were dissatisfied and said, "We don't get water properly".

Formation of Society

The then deputy engineer in the irrigation department took upon himself the task of forming a water distribution society in the village. He started visiting people to convince them of the need for an association. Important people in the village expressed their support.

The irrigation department and the village leaders arranged some 15 - 20 meetings. Finally, in 1992 steps towards the foundation of the society began to be taken. The farmers collected Rs. 50 each as the share and Rs. 5 as entry fee.

The Society was registered but the water distribution work was done by the irrigation department. Water was given free of charge to the farmers. That helped farmers gravitate towards the society.

The chairman himself learned about the water distribution system from the patkari. While doing this, he was convincing people of the importance of the society. There are 46 members in the society today.

The chairman has to spare plenty of time for the society. Some times he has to travel to kolwan, Paul, etc. at his own expenses. He himself happens to be the sarpanch of the village.

In the year 1993, the chairman called a meeting before the start of the rabi Season. He discussed about water tax collection. "We should collect and submit the water tax as early as possible because if we pay on time we get 20 per cent subsidy that's exclusively our benefit," said the chairman. But he got no response.

This year, too, water distribution was done by the government patkari with help from the chairman.

Before the rabi Season of 1994, the chairman called a meeting. This time, again, he did not get proper response. The topic of discussion was the field channels. The farmers were requested to repair their field channels. The chairman threatened to stop water supply for those neglecting the repairs. Appointment of a society patkari was also discussed. But none showed any enthusiasm to be the patkari. Everyone was afraid of the conflicts germinating from the simplest mistakes in water distribution. The wages, too, were not attractive. Water tax collection was also discussed in the same meeting. Many of the farmers had not paid the water tax for 1993. So the society could not avail any of the benefits. There was growing displeasure about the canal among the farmers. It is interesting to see why they felt that way.

Canal and Bad Concrete

The canal is not fully lined. There are seven field channels. Half the depth of the canal has been concretized. The farmers were displeased with the canal work. They accuse that the contractor was not careful. The supervising officers did not pay much attention either. The canal work has not been done in a uniform manner. The canal is in good condition up to channel No. 2. Though the canal bed is lined there are rat holes as the cement has vanished at places. After channel No. 2, there is bad concrete. Red soil is very much found at this spot. Water does not drain out properly through the small outlets. The channel doors are not in good condition. The canal level is varying at places and creates obstacles for smooth flow of water. The diameter of pipes underneath the road is small and the water lags in the canal itself. The canal breaks up frequently and much water is wasted.

In the first rotation during 1994, water distribution started from the tail end as per the rule. The government patkari let in water in the channel. But it was broken and water rushed to the river bed nearby. The next day,

water supply was stopped and the channel repaired. The society was penalized for the wasted water.

An area of five acres near channel No. 1 comes under percolation forever. The soil here is below average quality and it helps percolation. The percolated water leaches into the field and is harming the land quality. Therefore the farmer cannot have any crop here during the rabi season. The farmers complain that because of this channel their land is turning infertile.

Who is Responsible?

The farmers have strongly demanded for repairing the bad lining of the canal. But all this has been in vain. The irrigation department says, "We have done our work in our way. It is now society's duty to maintain it." The farmers in turn say angrily, "We want neither the canal and nor the water distribution society."

Some of the farmers say that the irrigation department should discharge the water into the river if it is unable to have the lining done in concrete. They can then pump the water with the help of diesel engines.

The society is not in a position to implement any of the rules because of the bad condition of the canal. If the society demands water tax, the farmers ask for reimbursement of damages.

However, the society has benefitted the people in many ways. The farmers are getting water as their crops need. Though water distribution is done by the government patkari, he seeks the chairman's advice. The farmers ask the patkari for water whenever they need it. The patkari has a register where he notes down the date and time of water supply, water level, date of stopping water supply etc. The register is signed by the chairman. Every farmer avails 15 Litres of water per second.

The farmers do not have to go to the irrigation office for water; the society does it for them. Cooperation among the farmers is increasing. The society wants to take up selling chemical fertilizers in future.

The important thing is the crop choice for the farmers. During rabi they cultivate wheat and gram on a wide scale. Farmers having wells cultivate potato, tomato, etc.

Repairs of Field Channels

Repairs of the main canal repairs are done by the irrigation department. The work is done before the rabi season starts and includes repairs of the channel doors and broken pipes, and removing soil and pebbles.

Field channels through the fields are to be repaired by the farmers themselves. The work is to be started before the rabi season begins. Some farmers do not repair the channels on time. There is a provision for penalizing such farmers. But practically nothing is done in practice.

The irrigation department provides technical inputs to the society. The irrigation officers had arranged several meetings before the formation of the society, and they meet the expenses. The society is not supported by any non-governmental organization.

Sources of Income

The society gets income from many sources. A major source is the membership fees of Rs. 50 each, and the entry fee of Rs.5 each. It gets 20 per cent discount in water tax if it is paid to the irrigation department on time. The society collects water tax depending on the crop pattern. The tax is Rs.270-00 per acre for wheat, and Rs.170-00 per acre for gram.

The society has only a chairman who complains that other farmers do not pay attention to the working of the society. The irrigation officers' attitude has changed after the formation of the society. They are always helpful and take interest in the working of the society. Other workers, too, help

the society. The farmers will certainly benefit led if the canal is repaired properly.

Changes Brought about by Society

Many changes have been brought in the village because of the dam and the society. The change in the standard of living of some farmers is striking. The problem of drinking water has been permanently solved. The adivasis and scheduled caste and scheduled tribe people are now assured of permanent employment. Their economic condition is also seen improving. As employment is locally available they do not need to leave the village as in the past.

The farmers are using modern techniques for farming. Improved seeds, insecticides, and pesticides are used in large quantities. They use tractor for ploughing and thresher for reaping. They rear animals as a subsidiary business and income from this business helps to improve the economic condition of the farmers. The number of school going children has increased. The literacy ratio is going up. But children from the adivasi and from the scheduled caste and scheduled tribe families are hardly attending school. They help their parents instead.

The main question of canal repair remains unanswered.

The water distribution societies of Parunde and Hadshi were formed by the same person. While the Parunde society is functioning satisfactorily; the Hadshi Society is not. The society work has come to standstill merely because the canal has to be repaired. The farmers wish that this problem is solved soon.

List of case studies published in local languages under Irrigation Management Transfer Project

Case Studies conducted in Gujarat and published in Gujarati

1. Water Users' Association in Ankav Subminor, Mahi Kadana Project: Farmers' Experience
2. Water Users' Association in Right Bank Canal of Pingot Medium Irrigation Project: Farmers' Experience
3. Water Users' Association in Left Bank Canal of Baldeva Medium Irrigation Project: Farmers' Experience
4. Water Users' Association in Bhestan Minor (Mohini), Ukai Kakrapar Project: Farmers' Experience
5. Water Users' Association in Bhima Lift Irrigation Scheme: Farmers' Experience

Case Studies conducted in Maharashtra and published in Marathi

1. Water Users' Association in Phulewadi Lift Irrigation Scheme: Farmers' Experience
2. Water Users' Association in Kadoli Lift Irrigation Scheme: Farmers' Experience
3. Water Users' Association in Minor 7, Mula Project: Farmers' Experience
4. Water Users' Association in Parunde Minor Irrigation Project: Farmers' Experience
5. Water Users' Association in Hadshi Minor Irrigation Project: Farmers' Experience
6. Water Users' Association in Minor 17, 18, 18A, 19 and Distributary 1, Waghad Project: Farmers' Experience
7. Water Users' Association in Minor 10, Bhima Project: Farmers' Experience

Case Studies conducted in Tamil Nadu and published in Tamil

1. Water Users' Association in XIth Branch Canal, Periyar Vaigai Project: Farmers' Experience

2. Water Users' Association in Kedar Tank: Farmers' Experience
3. Water Users' Association in Dusi Mamandur Tank: Farmers' Experience
4. Water Users' Association in 28L and 29R Outlets of Mettupalayam distributary in Lower Bhavani Project: Farmers' Experience
5. Water Users' Association in Malayadipalayam Distributary of Parambikulam Aliyar Project: Farmers' Experience
6. Water Users' Association in A9 Mahilanchery Channel (Saliperi), Cauvery-Valappar Project: Farmers' Experience
7. Water Users' Association in Panchanthangipatti Tank: Farmers' Experience
8. Water Users' Association in Pillayarkulam Tank: Farmers' Experience
9. Water Users' Association in Vagaikulam Tank, North Kodaimelalagian Channel, Tambraparani Project: Farmers' Experience

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