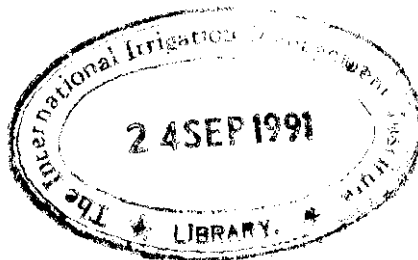


**STRENGTHENING INSTITUTIONAL CAPABILITIES OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF AGRARIAN SERVICES FOR
IMPLEMENTING THE PARTICIPATORY MANAGEMENT POLICY
IN IRRIGATION**



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**STRENGTHENING INSTITUTIONAL CAPABILITIES OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF AGRARIAN SERVICES FOR IMPLEMENTING
THE PARTICIPATORY MANAGEMENT POLICY IN IRRIGATION¹
IMPSA STAFF WORKING PAPER (SWP) 4.2**

I. INTRODUCTION

The first three IMPSA Policy Working Papers propose important changes in the functions, missions, responsibilities, and implementation strategies of the government irrigation management agencies. These changes can be summarized as a shift from a primarily "control" function to a primarily "support and facilitate" function. The three papers also highlight the necessity for significant changes within these agencies in order to implement the participatory management programme effectively, and achieve the broad objectives set out in these papers.

Policy Working Paper No. 4, entitled "Modernizing the Irrigated Agricultural Sector: Transformations at the Macro-Institutional Level," will spell out the changes required in the irrigation management agencies necessary for long term success. This paper will be based on five Staff Working Papers, which will be detailed analyses of the key agencies involved, as well as of provincial and local governments and the private sector.

The present paper, Staff Working Paper (SWP) 4.2, focuses specifically on a key department within the Ministry of Agricultural Development and Research, the Department of Agrarian Services (DAS). DAS plays an essential role in the implementation of participatory management. The Department is presently undergoing important changes that began before the IMPSA process. This paper describes and builds on those changes, highlights a number of key issues, makes some additional recommendations, and discusses the role of the DAS could be in the larger context of promoting participatory irrigation management.

Objectives

The specific objectives of SWP 4.2 are:

1. to clarify the role of the DAS given recent constitutional and other changes: its role vis-a-vis smaller irrigation systems in view of the provincial council system and the re-classification of schemes as "self-managed" and "joint-managed" (replacing the "minor" - "major" distinction); and its relationships with the other irrigation agencies given its role in registering, monitoring, and supporting farmers' organizations;
2. to identify what changes, if any, are required within the DAS, in terms of its mission, personnel, organizational structure, organizational culture, recruitment promotion and incentives policies, communications, degree of centralization versus decentralization of decision-making authority, financial management, and other supporting services;

3. to propose a strategy the DAS could use to bring about necessary internal changes in order to be able to implement the new policies effectively; and
4. to suggest ways in which the activities of the DAS could be more effectively coordinated and integrated with those of the irrigation management agencies located in the Ministry of Lands Irrigation and Mahaweli Development.

Methodology

As is true for other SWPs, this paper has been prepared based on the following processes and sources of information:

1. A small consultative panel was constituted, consisting of the present Commissioner of Agrarian Services; a consultant assisting the IMPSA Secretariat, and representatives from the IMPSA secretariat and IIMI/SLFO². This panel held several discussions of the key issues, and is a major source of the data and ideas in this report.
2. Background data gathered by an IIMI Research Associate, including a questionnaire survey of a small sample of middle and higher level management staff of the DAS (Appendix 1);
3. A study of some of the basic documents, including the recently amended Agrarian Services Act and the organogram of the structure proposed by the Department of Agrarian Services itself;
4. An informal consultative workshop with a wider group of DAS staff at which some of the proposals in an early draft of this paper were presented, and the views of the participants were elicited on what changes are necessary for DAS to fulfill its role under the new circumstances [to be done in August].

A serious problem hampering preparation of this paper is the lack of adequate data on the actual management, communication and operational processes within the DAS. There are some research data on irrigation system performance, farmers' behavior, cropping patterns, etc, but the internal management processes of the managing organizations themselves have gone largely unstudied so far. The paper has had to depend on statements by agency staff which tend to reflect official policies and expectations rather than actual observed processes, official documents, and perceptions of outsiders whose views may be biased or incomplete. Most successful efforts at organizational transformation in other organizations, as described in the organizational change literature, have included the presence of neutral trained observers to collect data and feed it back to those planning a change process, and a continuing observational process to provide data for guiding the change process.

² The panel members are J Medagama, Commissioner, DAS; I K Weerawardena, IMPSA consultant; Anura Widanapathirana, IMPSA secretariat; and D Merrey, IIMI/SLFO.

Finally, an important conceptual problem that faces all efforts at organizational change is an understanding of the complex relationships between changes at the individual level and the organizational level. At the individual level, we can observe very important changes over the last decade in regard to many peoples' attitudes, perceptions, understanding, and motivation, largely a result of both training and experiences. But it cannot be assumed that such individual level changes by themselves are sufficient to bring about a change in the organization's actual effectiveness or behavior. Nor can we assume that changes at the organizational level, for example a new organizational structure, by themselves, are sufficient to bring about changes in individual behavior.

There is a complex mutually reinforcing relationship between change at these two levels, and both must be addressed simultaneously. This complexity, moreover, makes a change program a very complex one in which the exact outcomes of specific inputs are not entirely predictable. This is why a change process requires a deep understanding of the issues, effective monitoring and feedback systems, full participation of the staff, and very effective leadership.

Time constraints -- IMPSA is on a very tight schedule -- prevent thorough study of all of the issues involved. This paper does not attempt a complete description and analysis of the history and present status of the DAS. Rather, it attempts to focus on those key issues that need to be addressed soon, and also identifies a longer term process for refining and elaborating the changes required in the future.

Brief Overview of the Department of Agrarian Services

The Department of Agrarian Services (DAS) was established in 1958 with its main function being the implementation of the tasks specified in the Agrarian Services Act [or Paddy Lands Act?], especially regarding land tenure and the establishment of Cultivation Committees. The DAS is headed by a Commissioner. Originally the Government Agents continued being responsible for minor irrigation works, but this responsibility was transferred to DAS later. From 1972 to 1979, the responsibility for overseeing minor irrigation systems was transferred to the Territorial Civil Engineering Organization (TCEO), which apparently neglected minor irrigation work. In 1979, with the new Agrarian Services Act No. 58, the DAS was again given the responsibility for overseeing improvement and management of the minor irrigation schemes. The estimated 21,000 schemes constitute about one third of the total irrigated area of the country.

Since 1979 the planning and implementation of the agrarian services programme has been done through the 536 Agrarian Services Committees (ASCs), and centers. These committees generally included about 14 people, of whom eight were officials and the rest elected farmer representatives. The committees deal with a wide variety of issues, including co-ordination of input supplies. In regard to minor schemes, the DAS has a modest budget for maintenance and improvements, and has been centrally involved in the implementation of donor-funded projects, especially IRDPs and the Village Irrigation Rehabilitation Project (VIRP). A specific objective of VIRP was to build DAS' technical capacity to assist farmers to improve, maintain, and better manage the minor systems. VIRP evolved over time from a rather top-down bureaucratic approach to rehabilitation, to a more participatory approach.

The next change occurred with the 13th Amendment to the Constitution in 1988 [?] under which construction, rehabilitation and maintenance of minor irrigation schemes was devolved to the Provincial Councils. Following this amendment, DAS had initially begun handing over responsibility, as well as staff and assets, to the Provincial Councils (PCs). But many of the PCs have not been successful as yet in developing their own capacity for this work. A further complication arises from the fact that while Section 9.2 of the 13th Amendment mentions rehabilitation and maintenance of minor schemes as devolved, it does not mention "management." Responsibilities not specifically devolved remain with the Centre, so that DAS has re-gained important responsibilities again, after a ruling by the Attorney General.

The present status varies among PCs, but in general, the DAS continues to receive an allocation of funds from the Government for O&M. Some is channeled to the Provinces based on a plan of work, and is then monitored by DAS; other funds are spent directly by DAS. In 1991, implementation of the National Irrigation Rehabilitation Project (NIRP, successor to the VIRP) began; DAS is responsible along with the Irrigation Department for this project, especially with regard to minor systems, and institutional development on these.

Two very important changes occurred in 1991, with the Amendment of the Agrarian Services Act. First, under this Amendment, DAS was made responsible for co-ordinating and registering farmer organizations throughout the country. Sections 56a and b provide respectively for "informal" farmers' organizations, and "formal" ones which would be recognized as legal entities and bodies corporate through registration by the Commissioner of Agrarian Services. Farmers' organizations can be formed for a wide variety of purposes, including but not limited to irrigation management. Rules are currently being framed to operationalize these provisions.

The second important change is the re-constitution of the Agrarian Services Committees. The composition was increased to 15 members, of which 10 are to be farmers and 5 officials from the relevant government agencies. Out of the 10 farmers, three should be tenant farmers. These Committees are to continue co-ordinating all agricultural activities, including irrigation. At present, the DAS is planning to divide each ASC area into zones, each having a farmers' organization; representatives from these organizations will be members of the Agrarian Services Committee.

II. ANALYSIS OF DEPARTMENT OF AGRARIAN SERVICES: KEY ISSUES

Brief Analysis of DAS

The Department of Agrarian Services was created to execute the provisions of the Agrarian Services Act. This remains the primary mission. It is an "open" Department in the sense that officers from various administrative services hold positions. But management of the Department is by senior Sri Lanka Administrative Services (SLAS) personnel, while chartered engineers and technical assistants from the technical services provide technical support services. Presently, there are about 191 staff in the Head Office including all levels. All field staff had been transferred to the Provinces; but some of these are slowly returning with the re-centralization of Agrarian Services functions and re-organization of the DAS currently underway. 1991 is a transition period, but by 1992 DAS expects to get the approved staff.

DAS has been given two new assignments: implementation of the NIRP (with the Irrigation Department); and promotion and development of farmers' organizations. The rationale is that NIRP is a national project, and promotion of farmers' organizations is a national policy. Therefore, Government has decided DAS will be responsible for these even within what are theoretically provincial council areas of responsibility.

Because of the re-assignment of older functions, and assignment of these new functions, the DAS requires a new cadre of people. It has proposed a plan that has been accepted by Government [right?]. The proposed new cadre of people is 264 (all inclusive) at the Head Office, and 1497 outside the Head Office. There will be a Deputy Commissioner assigned to each Province; this person will informally assist the Provincial Council in implementing its responsibilities for "minor" irrigation schemes (PCs will not have their own Department of Agrarian Services as previously envisioned). Under these Deputy Commissioners, there will be Assistant Commissioners in the 26 Districts plus Chilaw who will supervise the work at divisional level.

There will be 538 Divisional Officers (DOs). Formerly field-level work was done by the Cultivation Officers, but this post was abolished recently. Therefore gramasevaka niladharis have been given the functions of cultivation officers, for which purpose they report to the DOs of DAS (this is additional to their other functions). In addition to the regular DOs, a cadre of 60 full-time "supra" DOs, who are senior and said to be highly experienced, will work full time on the establishment of farmers' organizations. Funds for minor system O&M will continue to be channeled through the Assistant Commissioners until such time as the Provincial Councils develop the management and financial capacity for managing these.

Under the proposed re-organization, the Head Office will include, under the Commissioner of Agrarian Services, five Deputy Commissioners (for administration training and progress control, services and projects, institution building, legal issues, and internal audit) (see Figure 1). They will be assisted by 7 Assistant Commissioners, two engineers, and two senior technical officers. At field level, there will be about 100 technical officers in addition to the administrative positions described above.

Our small and rapid survey of the views of DAS officials used too small a sample to claim it is representative. But if the trends emerging in that survey were confirm, they show several significant patterns (see Appendix 1). First, only one of seven people interviewed mentioned "farmer organizations" as being part of his duties and responsibilities. Second, there seems to be a higher degree of dissatisfaction with their jobs at middle and lower levels than higher levels. Third, there seems to be a willingness to accept changes in the Department to improve its effectiveness and the staff's job satisfaction.

Key Issues Emerging from Analysis

A large number of important issues emerge from this brief discussion of DAS. We focus here only on those issues relevant to implementation of the participatory management policy. Many of these issues could not be resolved satisfactorily in the limited time available to IMPSA, or through the consultative approach adopted as the basis for preparing this paper. After identifying the issues here, some suggestions are given in the following section.

The key relevant issues that emerge from this analysis are as follows:

1. Are the regulatory functions regarding the protection of tenant cultivators and maximizing use of the land, as specified in the original Agrarian Services Act No 58 of 1979 and continued into the present, consistent with:
 - a) the regulatory functions in regard to the legal recognition of farmer organizations as provided in the recent amendments to the Agrarian Service Act;
 - b) the institution-building functions of DAS under the new amendments, and in continuation of previous work on improvement of minor irrigation schemes?
2. Are the regulatory functions of DAS regarding registration and oversight of farmers' organizations consistent with the active institution-building and promotion of farmers' organizations under minor irrigation schemes?
3. How can the confusion regarding provincial council versus DAS responsibility for supporting "minor" irrigation schemes be resolved? If the PCs take full responsibility, what are the implications for DAS and what should be its future role? Should DAS focus more narrowly on building Provincial Councils' capability to promote and support farmers' organizations, rather than on building farmers' organizations?
4. How can a close coordination and mutual support, as well as a consistency of policy and implementation strategy, be ensured between the efforts of the DAS, and those of the irrigation management agencies in the MLI&MD which are responsible for larger irrigation systems?
5. The present mandate of the DAS continues to be conceived in terms of "minor" irrigation schemes, which are arbitrarily defined as systems irrigating less than 200 acres (80 ha). But IMPSA Policy Paper No. 2 calls for promoting self-management on all schemes under 1,000 acres (400 ha), and even larger ones if deemed feasible. Should DAS' mandate therefore be expanded to include all "self-managed" systems?
6. Is there an inconsistency between DAS' mandate to further strengthen the Agrarian Services Committees, and the IMPSA Policy Paper No. 2 proposals to promote federation of farmers' organizations managing irrigation systems at catchment level? Is there a contradiction between the co-ordination functions of the ASCs and the same functions of the Project Management Committees on larger schemes? Does the DAS have too many functions to be able to implement all of them effectively?
7. Once the questions above regarding the role of the DAS are answered, the next issue is whether the proposed re-organization of the DAS would be appropriate and adequate to effectively achieve its mission? What are the changes that might be envisioned in terms of staffing, organization, decision-making processes, communication processes, performance evaluation of staff and program, and human resource development to ensure that DAS can achieve its mission? Particularly at field level, can DAS effectively implement its programmes through gramasevaka niladharis, who have many different functions, some not compatible with promoting

self-reliant organizations? Will the "supra" cadre of DCs be an appropriate means to promote farmers' organizations?

III. PROPOSED MISSION AND ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES

Introduction

The consultative panel met twice in June. Most of the discussion was focused on gaining a clearer understanding of the past functions of the DAS, and the proposed re-organization given its new functions and mandate. In general, the panel members supported the proposed re-organization, and did not discuss any radical alternatives. In fact, given that DAS has recently gained approval for its enhanced cadre and new functions, it may be counter-productive to propose any radical further changes or alternatives. Further, the lack of detailed objective observational data on the actual working and effectiveness of the DAS hamper arriving at any firm conclusions. Therefore this section discusses some alternatives that could be considered over the next several years as DAS gains experience.

Many of the issues identified in the previous section remain unresolved, and cannot be addressed at this stage, in this paper. They require further analysis, discussion, and study before they can be resolved.

It is clear that DAS has a very vital role to play in the implementation of the Government's participatory management policy. It will be responsible for registration and regulation of all farmers' organizations under the amended Agrarian Services Act, whether organized by the DAS itself, the Irrigation Department, MEA, or farmers themselves. It is vital that effective rules be framed for these purposes, and that the DAS build a capability to evaluate regularly the functioning and particularly financial management of farmers' organizations, and provide assistance to those facing problems.

DAS is also likely to play a key role in promoting and strengthening farmers' organizations both for non-irrigation purposes (not discussed here), and for irrigation management on all except the larger schemes managed by the Irrigation Department or Provincial Councils. This could cover as much as half the irrigated area of the country, and include over 20,000 schemes in principal at least. This is a mammoth responsibility.

DAS is also going to continue to play a key role in supporting the O&M and improvement of smaller and mediumsized schemes, both through its regular budget and through special projects such as NIRP and IRDPs.

In addition to these roles directly related irrigation management, DAS is planning to revitalize and strengthen the Agrarian Services Committees; and it will continue its functions in regard to co-ordination of services and enforcement of rules regarding land tenure and other activities under the Agrarian Services Act.

Can one Department carry out so many different functions?

Mission and Objectives of the Department of Agrarian Services

The mission of the DAS is fixed by the Agrarian Services Act. Therefore, we are not in a position to propose any specific modifications at this stage. But it is clear that the present mission is probably too broad, with too many elements, to be implemented effectively, particularly given the administrative weaknesses inherent in the present public services. This leads to the question as to whether the present "centralizing" trend is most appropriate in the long term?

In the short term, the Provincial Councils are undoubtedly not capable of effectively implementing the participatory management policy on all the irrigation schemes that are under their purview. In this sense, the re-centralization of DAS functions is quite understandable. But is this workable in the long term? Is it compatible with the constitutional trend toward de-centralization, and the Government's efforts to reduce the role of the central government at the local level?

It is recommended that the DAS re-consider whether it should establish and maintain an administrative system stretching from Colombo to the field. Instead, it is proposed that the DAS consider re-orienting its efforts to building provincial capacity, and through this means, district, and divisional capacities for implementing its programmes. If it is deemed inappropriate to change the present proposed re-organization, the objective of devolution could still be considered as a longer term objective, and as Provincial Councils build capacity, the provincial, district, and divisional functions and cadre could be handed back to the Provincial Councils.

Organization and Structure of the Department of Agrarian Services

Figure 1 provides the organizational structure of the head office of DAS as proposed by DAS itself. No radical alternative to this structure is proposed here. However, a number of suggestions for modification are suggested for consideration. These seem necessary in view of the large number and range of functions to be undertaken by DAS, as noted above.

1. One Deputy Commissioner is proposed for "administration, training, and progress control." We suggest that training - or rather, human resources development - should be under a separate Deputy Commissioner. The function of a human resources development (HRD) unit would be to ensure that the long term strengthening of the Department (including the provincial departments that may emerge later) occurs through appropriate training and other measures, and that staff in the Department are assisted in planning their careers, by setting long term goals, and arranging for appropriate training, that would contribute to the strengthening of the Department.

If it is not feasible to have a separate Deputy Commissioner for HRD in the near future, then a separate Assistant Commissioner might be useful.

2. In the previous chapter we had raised the question of the compatibility of the regulatory functions regarding farmers' organizations, and the function of promoting farmers' organizations through catalysts and other support services. Further, we doubt that one Deputy Commissioner for "Institution Building" can oversee these

functions plus re-vitalize the Agrarian Services Committees and supervise special projects such as NIRP (but the inclusion of NIRP under this Deputy Commissioner does place the appropriate emphasis on the institution-building objective of NIRP). Again, we suggest two Deputy Commissioners are required, one to look after ASCs and promotion of farmers' organizations (the institutional strengthening role), and the other to look after the monitoring, evaluation, registration, and regulation of the farmers' organizations (performance monitoring and regulation role). Putting the promotion of both ASCs and farmers' organizations together would also provide an administrative mechanism to work out the potential contradiction between ASCs and farmers' organizations for irrigation management.

Again, if two Deputy Commissioners are not feasible, additional Assistant Commissioners might be an alternative.

3. The question of the short- and long-term relationship between DAS and the Provincial Councils is a vital one, as is the relationship and co-ordination between the DAS and the irrigation management agencies within the Ministry of Lands, Irrigation and Mahaweli Development. The proposed organizational structure may not make adequate provision for the development of this relationship, which includes not only "co-ordination" but also provision of direct supporting services, and as suggested above, eventual devolution of some functions. We suggest that a senior officer, another Deputy Commissioner, is required for this purpose.

4. A suggestion that would further strengthen DAS's management capability in regard to institution-building, that could be combined with the above suggestions, is to create a post of "Additional Commissioner for Farmers' Organizations" who would oversee the institution-building, and monitoring and regulation functions as discussed above. We would suggest placing the responsibility for developing relationships with and provision of support services to Provincial Councils and other irrigation management agencies under this Additional Commissioner.

Figure 2 shows the modifications in the proposed organizational structure that are suggested above.

Given the magnitude of DAS's mandate, there is a serious question as to whether it can be achieved with the current and proposed field level staffing and organization. Focusing specifically on the DAS roles in regard to organizing farmers for self-management of irrigation systems, and assisting in improving these systems, it seems extremely unlikely that the gramasevaka niladharis could play the role of catalyst and provide the necessary technical and management support to help farmers develop effective self-management systems. There is thus a serious gap between the objectives as set out in the IMPSA Policy Paper No. 2 and the capability at this level.

This can be only partly overcome through implementation of NIRP on about 1000 schemes, using a special cadre of catalysts. And whether the "supra" cadre of DOs, whose long experience in the field may have given them a different orientation than that required for building self-reliant farmers' organizations, could be effective is not clear.

We therefore propose that the gramasevaka niladharis' agrarian services functions be limited to regulatory and co-ordination functions, but that they not be asked to act as catalysts for farmers' organizations. We suggest that the "supra" cadre be carefully screened

to ensure they are the appropriate people for working as catalysts, that they be given very intensive training and some specific incentives for working as catalysts, and that the DAS monitor their performance very carefully to see whether they are as effective as hoped. In addition, as catalysts gain experience through NIRP, some could be absorbed into this "supra" cadre to work in other areas. Provision of attractive career opportunities to the best institutional organizers engaged under NIRP may provide incentives for attracting and retaining good catalysts.

Another important issue is that the linkages between head of office and field staff are not clear. It will be important to establish an effective system for developing annual and longer-term plans and objectives, tying staff work plans to these plans, and monitoring and evaluating performance of staff against these plans. But at present we have no basis for proposing a specific system for implementing this suggestion.

Finally, the past, present, and proposed future organizational structure of DAS is basically a top-down one, in which authority is centralized and partially delegated, and information flow and decision-making is generally from the top down. This may be a root cause of the apparent decline in level of job satisfaction as one moves down the DAS hierarchy (Appendix 1). We make two suggestions here: as part of the process of finalizing job descriptions, lines of communication, and allocation of responsibility and authority, it will be important to specify these clearly, and to follow a principle of maximizing devolution. Authority and responsibility should go together, and not be separated as one often finds in government agencies. The job descriptions we were given do not contain sufficient specificity for employees to really understand what they are to do.

Second, the staff from field level to head office level should fully participate in this process of re-organization, finalizing of job descriptions, etc, in a way that would promote a management style that emphasizes team building and participation of staff. This is further discussed in the next section.

IV. PROPOSED STRATEGY FOR IMPLEMENTING CHANGES

This section briefly outlines some of the methodologies and actions required for successful implementation of organizational changes. It should be read in conjunction with the SWPs 6.1 and 6.2 on human resource development, which provide important suggestions as well. The discussion is at a general level.

The first section of this paper emphasized the complex relationships between organizational-level change and individual-level change. To be sustainable and effective, change must be carried out at both levels simultaneously. Introducing a new organizational structure without attention to the individual human dimension will not result in improved overall performance. Training individuals without also changing the organizational context within which they work is equally futile. The previous sections have emphasized organizational change; this section emphasizes the equally important changes within individuals.

In this section four key principles are discussed: leadership; participation; values; and specificity. Four methodologies are also briefly identified: training; workshops; performance incentives and accountability; and professional assistance.

The Four Key Principles

Leadership. Effective leadership is absolutely essential for implementing a successful organizational change programme. The organizational change literature is very clear on this: successful efforts always have had good leadership; the absence of good leadership is always a key factor behind failures. In the DAS, leadership would primarily be provided by senior management in the initial stages, but as time goes on, leaders will develop within smaller units of the agencies as well.

Leadership involves articulating the mission, objectives, principles, values, and "vision" of the future, and how each individual can contribute to achieving this vision. It involves setting an example, being consistent in applying the basic principles, and in a sense "creating" the new organizational values and culture. This can be done most effectively when a leader acts as a "mentor" or a "coach" (as in a sports team), rather than an order-giver. Thus the leadership must itself be fully committed to the mission and objectives, and effectively communicate this commitment to the rest of the organization.

This view of leadership de-emphasizes the use of formal authority to achieve the expected results. It goes beyond simply issuing directives and orders, and taking action against people who do not implement them. Although obviously individuals differ in their "natural" abilities in this regard, as in other activities, it is possible to develop leadership qualities through training.

Participation. When managers try to impose changes through authoritarian means, particularly in well-established organizations, the result often is a greater degree of resistance to the changes. In the modern world, and in the specific context of Sri Lankan institutions, an authoritarian non-participatory approach is unlikely to succeed. Further, since the new mission calls for DAS staff to implement a participatory management policy with farmers, it follows that participation should be practiced within the implementing institutions.

Thus it will be important for senior management to ensure the active participation of the agency staff, at all levels, in the effort to bring about organizational changes. Authority should be decentralized as much as possible commensurate with peoples' responsibilities. Changes in job descriptions and procedures, development of plans and performance evaluation criteria, and implementation of the programme should be through teams, small problem-solving groups. Special efforts will be required to overcome the current hierarchical nature of relationships among levels and the misunderstandings and suspicions between people of different disciplines, and encourage initiative and leadership qualities to emerge at all levels. This approach would do much to improve the morale of field level staff as well.

Values. Recent literature on organizational change has emphasized the importance of "organizational culture", the basic values, beliefs, understandings, that are shared by members of the organization, and in terms of which they operate and give meaning to what they do. The DAS, as an on-going organization, presently has a set of shared values that contributes to its esprit de corps, and provides a basis in terms of which people understand, interpret and retain their commitment to what they do. But the values required for implementation of a participatory management policy are not necessarily those that are appropriate for a regulatory department. What is required is a "new professionalism" that goes beyond and enhances the normal professional values of various staff members.

The suggested basic values to be developed and inculcated include: a value of participatory decision-making and team work; openness to new ideas; an orientation toward experimentation and innovativeness; a strong orientation to service to farmers' organizations a performance, especially i.e., output, orientation; and commitment to the mission and objectives of the Department, especially to the implementation of the participatory management policy.

Specificity. This refers to the importance of moving from general principles, values and goals, to specifying tasks, objectives, expectations from people, criteria for evaluation etc. People must know exactly what is expected of them, what they are to do, and how they will be judged and rewarded. A key component of success will be the development of detailed job descriptions, detailed plans, and detailed performance evaluation criteria. This specificity should be achieved through a participatory group process, not imposed from above. In other words, staff should be involved in developing their own position descriptions, in an interactive team process, that will lead to a level of specificity that is a basis for action, and that will lead to a thorough understanding of and commitment to what the person is to do, what other members of the team are doing, and how it all fits together into a programme.

The Four Methodologies

Training. IMPSA SWP 6.1 discusses training in some detail, and should be referred to. Training should become an important activity at all levels of the organization; training units and professional training specialists will be needed. As part of the reorganization process, a detailed training needs assessment should be carried out, and training programmes designed to fulfill these needs. A long term training programme, tied both to the Department's mission and the long term career development needs of the staff should be planned and initiated. The kinds of skills required for implementing a participatory management policy go beyond the usual administrative and technical skills (though these are important), and include specific skills in management, leadership, and human relations. Role playing would be a particularly effective training methodology in helping people understand their new roles.

Workshops. Formal training implies a notion of transferring new knowledge and skills to help people do their jobs better. In one sense workshops can be used to fulfill this function. But workshops provide an opportunity for the participants to go beyond simply "receiving" knowledge, and actively participate in the generation and shaping of new ideas, thereby ensuring a sharing of new ideas and the creation of a team spirit.

Frequent workshops of small groups around specific topics or problems is a good way to build peoples' understanding and mutual respect, and to build consensus. They can be used to develop and validate specific job descriptions, performance criteria, work plans, etc. Through various methods of group work led by professionals, workshops are an effective means of overcoming divisions and misunderstandings.

Performance incentives and accountability. The importance of planning and performance monitoring and evaluation has been emphasized above. It is recommended that the agencies think in terms of longer term plans, say five years, and annual plans keyed to the longer term plans. These should state specific goals and objectives, resources available, and specify who will be responsible for what. These plans should be developed

through a participatory process, not imposed from above. Management would then monitor performance, and intervene where problems arise. This is no more than what is called Management by Objectives, MBO.

But to be successful, incentives for achieving a high level of performance, and accountability for one's performance are also necessary. Salaries and benefits ought to be commensurate with responsibilities and should vary with performance, but increasing salaries is difficult to achieve in the short run given minimal resources. However, it is possible, with good leadership, to develop some non-monetary incentives that would be appropriate within a public service organization. Possibilities include public recognition of high levels of performance by establishing a system of annual rewards for various units for the best performance in such tasks as turnover or improvements farmers' self-reliance and incomes, and individual awards for innovative ideas, or high levels of achievement in their work. Encouragement of friendly competition among units of the organization could be very effective. Similarly, opportunities for special training or study trips can be used as incentives for high performance of staff. Finally, building morale and shared values through a participatory process will help make people feel the importance of their work, another important type of incentive for high performance.

Accountability is a part of an effective performance monitoring and evaluation programme, in which people are held to be responsible for their work.

Professional assistance. A large body of expertise has now been developed in methods of understanding and assisting organizational change. Many of the concepts and methods are applicable to irrigation management organizations, and to various cultural settings including Sri Lanka. It is suggested that given the wide scope of DAS' mandate, the ambitious nature of the contemplated participatory management objectives, and the complexity of planning and implementing such a programme effectively, the Department should obtain outside professional assistance. "Outside" does not necessarily mean "expatriate"; much of the required expertise may be available in the country. Some expatriate assistance may be required in the early stages, but this should be aimed at building Sri Lankan expertise that would be available for the long term. Three basic kinds of skills are suggested.

It was noted in the introduction that the lack of research on the internal management processes of DAS is a serious weakness in proposing changes. Objective observation and analysis through various social and management science methodologies, many of them developed for assisting organizational change processes, are available and should be used as a source of insights and data to be used for planning, implementing, and monitoring the results of change.

A second type of expertise is "management consultants": people who are specialized in assisting agencies to analyze their management problems, and plan and implement changes. Even seemingly "simple" tasks such as preparing job descriptions, or designing communication systems, can be done more effectively if the process is assisted by specialists.

A third type of expertise is training methods and workshop facilitation. There are a large number of specialized techniques useful for improving the techniques of training, particularly making training programmes more effective for adults, and for assisting people to surface, analyze, understand, and overcome hidden assumptions, tensions, fears, etc that inhibit a change process. These types of expertise should be used to assist in implementing

the long term change process proposed in this paper.

Finally, in view of the unresolved issues regarding the large number of functions of the Department of Agrarian Services, not all of which are compatible with each other or with other trends in the country, and the questions raised about the adequacy of the organizational structure and staffing pattern for these tasks, we strongly recommend a thorough evaluation study of these issues in the very near future. Such a study would provide a basis for ensuring that the proposed mission, organizational structure, staffing, etc. of DAS will be the most appropriate to achieve its objectives, which are extremely important to the success of the participatory management programme.

Conclusion

Success requires bringing about changes at a multiplicity of levels: policy, head office, provincial and district, irrigation scheme, field, and individual. It is a complex process, that must be considered as a long-term programme. The transformation and reorientation of all of the irrigation management agencies is part of the "package" of changes required to achieve the long term participatory management policy vision. In fact it is a prerequisite for long-term sustainable success. This paper has outlined an approach to achieving this. Much more needs to be done to work out the implementation.

PROPOSED ORGANIZATIONAL CHART FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRARAIN SERVICES

