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## Irrigation Development Experience of Rural Based NGOs from Chhatis-Mauja

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### Brief Introduction of Chhatis-Mauja Irrigation System

This irrigation system irrigates some 10,000 bighas of land under 54 Maujas of four village development committees; Shankarnagar, Anandaban, Karaiya and Makahara situated near Butwal of Rupandehi district. This system was built by the farmers themselves who were from 36 Maujas originally (hence the name). The water source is from the Tinau river.

There is a 13-member executive committee which comprises a chairman, vice-chairman, secretary, nine members and one nominated person. The entire command area i.e. 54 Maujas is divided into nine regions and one representative is elected. These representatives will be the members of the committee. The main responsibility of the committee is to ensure the water rights of the farmers, to supervise the proper water distribution, to ensure the proper utilization of irrigation water, to maintain the main canal etc. The committee has employed two supervisors (meth mukhtiyars) and two chowkidars as staff. There are one mukhtiyar and one chowkidar in each of the 54 maujas.

The executive members enjoy some facility for the services that they render. The chairman is waived out the labor contribution equivalent to 40 labors and the labor contribution that need to be done for a land-holder of 4 bighas. Similarly, the vice chairman and the secretary are waived out the labor contribution equivalent 20 and 35 labors respectively besides the need to contribute for a land holding of 4 bighas. Likewise, the regional representatives who are the members of the committee need not to contribute their share of labor contribution equivalent to 4 bighas. However the mukhtiyar and the chowkidar get salaries of Rs.1000 and Rs.850 per month respectively.

The uppermost forum for the organization is the "mass assembly." All members have four bighas of land for the entire 54 Maujas.

The representatives of all Maujas and the executive members of the committee form a "general assembly" which is held once a year.

The duty of chairman is to decide on meetings like mass meeting, general meeting, committee meeting etc, to resolve the conflicts over the head reach, to supervise the job of water distribution in main and branch canals, to supervise the works of juniors and the staff.

The duty of the vice chairman is to preside over the meeting called for the movement of non-confidence against the chairman.

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Many visitors who are concerned with irrigation management works and representing International, national institutions come to the Chhattis-Mauja irrigation system to better understand management practice of irrigation systems. Some the visitors are as follows:

- 32 visitors comprising the presidents of water users' groups under Mahakali Irrigation Project, consultants, engineers, agriculture specialist, coordinator, JT, JTAs and AOs (in 2047 B.S.).
- 15 visitors comprising farmers and staff from Banganga Irrigation Project through a program organized by DOI and IIMI (in 2048 B.S.).
- Visitors comprising the farmers and staff of Handetar Irrigation Project and consultants through a program organized by Irrigation Management Project of the Department of Irrigation (in 2048 B.S.).
- 19 visitors comprising irrigation professionals from Bangladesh Water Development Board and the tour organizer, APTEC Consult (in 2049 B.S.).

His Majesty the King granted a sum of Rs.400,000 in 2044 B.S. for the prosperity of the system, which was used for constructing the pucca diversion at the Tinau river. In 2048 B.S., one office building was constructed for the committee, through the funds raised among the beneficiaries themselves. The amount totalled Rs. 200,000.

In 2043 B.S., the Chairman and the Secretary took part in the workshop "Irrigation Management in Nepal" organized by IIMI and IAAS at Rampur. The same team participated in the central committee assembly of the Non-Government Organization in 2048 B.S.

The organization of Chhattis-mauja meant for the management of irrigation water has developed over the experiences of many years of its beneficiaries. It is hoped that due attention and recognition from the government side will be given to protect such efforts of the local people.

### **Suggestions**

- There should be well established policies, rules and regulations for forming a non-government organization.
- Such policies, rules and regulations should be simple, liberal and practicable as far possible.
- Simple procedures/process should be observed for the registration of the organization.
- There should be provision of technical and financial assistance to such organization.