

agreed upon, such as pumping and opening valve operation and irrigation drainage schedule for each kind of plant. Irrigation management and organization are under farmers' control. In one production unit some educated and healthy farmers were assigned to be in charge of irrigation and drainage operation for the sake of each household. One person can take charge of 5-10 ha. Those persons are sent by the state management irrigation organizations to short-term training courses for improving their professional level and for absorbing new information on technical matters and irrigation management. They also have regular meetings with farmer households to listen to their comments.

The equipment and machinery for irrigation systems in Vietnam are still poor and backward in comparison with those in other regional countries. The irrigating farmers have to work hard without efficient systems. Irrigation systems often deteriorate quickly.

Since 1992, the Vietnamese government has focused on upgrading the existing irrigation systems and strengthening farmer management with adequate management information. We wish to learn useful experiences from neighboring countries for better application in our country.

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From Public to Private Ownership: A Minor Irrigation Case

Private management of the minor irrigation equipment has fared well in rural Bangladesh as opposed to its public control. Accountable shared interest of the private owners is conducive to its efficient management. The following makes a case for privatized management of the minor irrigation equipment in rural Bangladesh.

In 1970, a group of 60 people approached Pakistan Agricultural Development Corporation (PADC) to obtain a Low Lift Pump (LLP) on a rental basis. The group was named Taluk Kalua Paschim Par Samity. They received the LLP and installed it at a canal which is linked to a branch of Dharla River passing through Kurigram Region. The rainy season fills the canal afresh every year and starts drying from October. At one point of the canal the bed depth of an acre area is enough to retain water to irrigate 20 acres to cultivate HYV boro rice.

At the beginning, the LLP was run by diesel but was converted to electricity in 1978 as part of a rural electrification program of the then government. With the introduction of electricity its rent went up to Tk. 2,000 per year. Despite the

small amount in rent, its payment was irregular on account of absence of accountability on the part of the irrigation group.

At that time, the government was disinvesting most of the minor irrigation equipment (e.g., DTW, STW, LLP) to the private beneficiaries at a nominal rate in order to get rid of perpetual loss. While the payment of rent was irregular, BADC (an offshoot of PADC) had to provide various maintenance and engineering services to the rented DTW, STW and LLP for which a large body of engineers and technicians have been on the regular payroll. It has been a source of perpetual criticism that the irrigation program of BADC is a losing concern.

Taluk Kalua Samity took over the LLP at a cost of Tk. 16,000. Each member of the irrigation group made an equal contribution. At present, the group has to pay a lump sum of Tk. 18,000 per annum to the Electricity Department, regardless of actual consumption of electricity. However, the actual amount does not vary much from the lump sum figure as reported. The new arrangement has let the Electricity Department end underbilling through corruption. The water rent collected is now spent for the maintenance of the machine, for payment for drivers and for other expenses. If there are unforeseen expenses the group has to bear them too.

The command area of the machine has undergone changes over the years. At present it is 20 acres; in 1981 it was 30 acres since a few nonowners also bought water from the same machine.

In the command area there is unequal distribution of land among different classes of owners. Five acres of the command area are owned by 3 landowners who are also owners of 10 acres of land individually; 4 acres of the command area are owned by 8 landowners who are otherwise owners of 6 acres of land individually; 3 acres are owned by 15 different owners who are otherwise owners of 4 acres individually, and small owners numbering 34 are owners of 8 acres. Unequal land ownership does not affect the managerial process of the irrigation group. Functional interest has evolved a cohesive management and optimum utilization of the LLP under private ownership.

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Workshop on Participatory Rural Appraisal

An intensive, nine-day, field-based workshop on Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) was held at Bandarawela, Sri Lanka in June 1992, in support of the Second Badulla Integrated Rural Development Project (SBIRD). It was