

**WORKSHOP ON FARMER
PARTICIPATION IN REHABILITATION
ON NIRP SCHEMES: FARMER
PERSPECTIVE**

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WORKSHOP ON FARMER PARTICIPATION IN REHABILITATION OF NIRP SCHEMES : FARMER PERSPECTIVE

*Proceedings of the workshop on
Farmer Participation in Rehabilitation
of NIRP Schemes : Farmer Perspective
held at Colombo, Sri Lanka
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(Eds.)

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Acronyms

BTI	- Business Turn over Tax
DAS	- Department of Agrarian Services
DC	- Distributory Channel
DD	- Deputy Director
FC	- Field Channel
FO	- Farmer Organization
FR	- Farmer Representative
ID	- Irrigation Department
IE	- Irrigation Engineer
IIMI	- International Irrigation Management Institute
IO	- Institutional Organizer
IRMU	- Irrigation Research Management Unit
NIRP	- National Irrigation Rehabilitation Project
O&M	- Operation And Maintenance
PEU	- Provincial Engineering Unit
RRA	- Rapid Rural Appraisal
SAR	- Staff Appraisal Report
SLFO	- Sri Lanka Field Operations
SLITI	- Sri Lanka Irrigation Training Institute
TA	- Technical Assistant

Preface

Experiences from past rehabilitation projects indicated that without effective farmer participation in the rehabilitation process, it is extremely difficult to achieve cost effective and quality rehabilitation. This led NIRP to mandate farmer participation in planning, design and implementation of rehabilitation projects with the ultimate objective of handing over O&M responsibilities of rehabilitated schemes to FOs.

In late 1992, the Irrigation Research Management Unit (IRMU) carried out a rapid appraisal (RRA) of five NIRP schemes to evaluate effectiveness of farmer participation. Results were presented in a workshop in October, 1994. At the recommendation of the workshop the study was expanded to cover a significantly larger sample size (20 more schemes) with a view to more thoroughly analyse issues raised. Preliminary results showed that farmers bear wide ranging views on their participation in rehabilitation and take over. This situation necessitated the need to consult farmers to draw on their views and opinions, to further strengthen rehabilitation process being pursued by NIRP.

Many workshops and seminars have been held in the past to solicit opinion of the experts on the subject including documenting experiences of the agency officials engaged in the implementation of rehabilitation projects. IRMU has taken a step forward by obtaining feedback directly from the farmer leaders on the issues that contribute to further strengthening farmer participation in the rehabilitation and turnover of NIRP schemes.

The workshop provided a forum to the farmer leaders to frankly and openly express their opinion and share their experiences. Proceedings of these discussions were meticulously recorded and this report provides the outcome of those discussions.

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The workshop on Farmer Participation in Rehabilitation of NRP Schemes: Farmers Perspective held on February 25, 1995 at SLITL, Galgamuwa was successful beyond the expectations of the organizers due to particularly to better interaction between participants and the facilitators.

First of all, we would like to sincerely thank the 19 farmer representatives who gathered at SLITL from various parts of the Island to participate in the workshop.

We also thank Mr. B.M.S. Samarasekara, DD/IRMU and Dr. K. Azharul Haq, Technical Advisor, for their invaluable support in organizing the workshop as well as active participation.

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Dr. C.M. Wijayarathna, Head, IIM/SLFO and Mr. L.K. Weerawardana, Consultant, NRP deserves special citation for skillfully facilitating the workshop by inducing lively discussions and helping farmer representatives focus on the pertinent issues.

Our special thanks go to Mr. S.M.K.B. Nandarathna and Mr. P.B. Aluwihare for helping organize the workshop and preparing notes on the discussions.

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Editors

Farmer Participation in Rehabilitation of NRP Schemes : Farmer Perspective

1. Introduction

Farmer participation in the management of irrigation schemes is based on three major assumptions. The first assumption is that participation should begin at the grass root level. This means that the farmers at turn out level should be given an opportunity to participate. Secondly, it assumes that participation should take place at all stages of the development process, that is from the pre-planning, planning and design, and the implementation stage, to the monitoring and evaluation stage. Thirdly, it assumes that participation should be available right up to main decision making level in the schemes' Project Management Committee and this should be through organized group representatives of the farmers. Experience gathered from a number of projects has proved the participatory management in irrigation schemes is the most desirable management system that is suited to this country's irrigated agriculture sector.

The changing scenario in the irrigation systems during the last decade has shown that due to shortage of funding, the physical structures have deteriorated and this had led to poor performance of the systems. This situation has in turn resulted in low yields and a final drop in the farm incomes. Therefore the NRP team has identified the problems related to the irrigation scheme and had suggested that there should be maximum participation of farmers at all stages during the rehabilitation.

The National Irrigation Rehabilitation Project (NIRP) therefore has laid down three principles: (i) One calls upon the farmers to establish turn out committees at the pre-planning stage, secondly, that the POC should

The National Irrigation Rehabilitation Project therefore has laid down three principles. One calls upon the farmers to establish farmer organizations at the pre-planning stage, secondly that the FO S should agree to contribute at least 10 percent of the construction costs, and thirdly, the FO should agree to maintain the scheme in accordance with the O&M plan, once the rehabilitation is complete and the scheme is handed over to the FO. In self managed schemes (the minor schemes) the FO S will take responsibility of overall policy making for implementation of O&M and resource mobilization of the whole system right after rehabilitation with guidance and advice from the Irrigation Agency. In joint management systems (the major, medium schemes) the FO S along with the Irrigation Agency, will jointly share the management of the Headworks and the main canal, while the Distributary channels (DC) and below will be the responsibility of the FO S. The mechanism adopted to implement this is the Project Management Committee system, where the FO representative and government officials jointly decide on overall policy issues. The FO S will take responsibility for O&M in field and DC channels while the Agency will continue to look after the headworks and the main canal until a final decision to hand over is taken at a later date.

Objective of the Farmers Forum

The IRMU during 1994 studied five selected NIRP schemes in order to evaluate as to how this participatory management system is being implemented in those schemes. The results of this study was discussed at a workshop held at the Irrigation Department in October 1994.

This workshop identified the need for further consultations with the beneficiaries. A workshop for representatives of farmer organizations from 20 NIRP schemes was therefore organized by the IRMU to get a feed back from the farmer representatives themselves on selected issues pertaining to the participatory aspect of the project.

During the last decade there had been numerous lectures, seminars, workshops attended by eminent academicians, and the implementors, on the topic of participatory management of Irrigation schemes. Various viewpoints and experiences had been shared at these seminars and workshops. However a workshop involving only the beneficiaries namely the farmers had been a rare one, and it is to meet this demand that the IRMU organized this workshop in order to share their experiences and to arrive at conclusions as to how the beneficiaries feel about the implementation of the participatory principle and what action could be taken to further strengthen it.

This workshop was also intended to provide an opportunity for the policy makers and implementors to educate themselves and learn lessons from the experience gained so far on the participatory process in the NIRP from the beneficiaries themselves.

Methodology

This farmers forum organized by the IRMU and was held at the Galgamuwa SLITI on February 25, 1995.

Twenty farmer representatives from 20 FO S in NIRP schemes were invited to the workshop. The representative were from the FO S in the Irrigation DD ranges of Hambantota, Moneragala, Bandarawela, Kandy, Kurunegala, Anuradhapura, Galle and Colombo.

The schemes they represented belonged to both major/medium and minor schemes. Some schemes had just been identified for rehabilitation, while a few other were on going schemes and a few more were where the rehabilitation work has been completed and is awaiting handing over to FO S.

The discussion therefore reflected the experiences of the FO S regarding all stages of rehabilitation.

The farmers were divided into four groups based on their geographical setting.

The workshop had two sessions with two groups participating in each session. Each group represented irrigation ranges to which they belonged and each farmer represented his scheme.

Each session was led by a facilitator. The facilitator firstly briefed the participants on the objectives of the workshop and explained how to present their experiences under each component.

The five components selected for discussion are as follows:

1. Farmer organization-formation and preparation
2. Farmer participation in planning and designing of rehabilitation schemes
3. Farmer contribution of 10% of the resources needed for the rehabilitation

4. Construction contracting by FO S
5. Construction supervision by FO S.

The facilitator guided the farmers so that they presented their views on each topic stated above. They were briefed as to the openness of the forum, where they could come up with their own independent views and experiences without any inhibitions or constraints.

The FO representatives were also told that this was not a session where long speeches could be made and answers expected from the officials present. The farmers were the only actors at this workshop and the officials were only there as observers. Each farmer was given an opportunity to come up with his own experiences on the subject at issue.

During the session the farmers not only commented on the respective components but also came up with recommendations to improve the activities as presently being followed with a view to obtaining better results.

2. The discussion proceedings

1. Formation of farmer organizations

The farmer representatives who attended the forum discussed the issue of the formation of FO S and they described their experience with regard to the various steps taken both by farmers and officials in the organizing process.

Almost all the FO representatives stressed the need to have an awareness built up before the FO S are formed. They said that FO's must have specific objectives that will help the people. The project objective to increase the farmers incomes through rehabilitation is a very broad objective. This should be translated into specific objectives and activities, so that the people will both understand and participate in FO programs. Rehabilitation should be considered as just another activity.

The FO representatives went on to describe as to how their respective FO s were established. Those who came from major-medium schemes said that the basis for their FO was the DC boundary while the representatives were selected from FC s. Most FO S were established even before the scheme was selected for rehabilitation and registered under Section 56A of the Agrarian Services Act. The representatives who came from Hattota Amuna and Manankettiya said that their FO s were reorganized to meet the new demands like O&M and better FO administration as a result of the rehabilitation program. They found that the new FO demarcations are more logical and useful than the earlier demarcations.

The FO representative who came from Kalutara said that in minor schemes the FO S were established by the Grama Niladharis in collaboration with the Divisional Officer (DO) of DAS after summoning a meeting of the farmers. Here too the boundaries were adjusted to cover the rehabilitation scheme. At Haltota in Kalutara District and in many other minor schemes, the representatives said that the area covered by the FO was over and above the area earmarked for rehabilitation and therefore a new demarcation of boundaries had to be made.

Both groups stated that due to lack of the awareness about the rehabilitation, the attendance at the original meetings were not very satisfactory. However once the FO was formed and registered and the office bearers selected, the farmers found the FO S useful organizations. In doing so they were thankful to the ID and DAS staff for the cooperation they received from them to set up the institutions. The farmers were given a draft constitution, the provisions of the Agrarian Services Act was explained and the necessary coordination lines established.

Once the FO was formed the office bearers had to prepare correct lists of farmers, collect data and start programs to get more farmers join the organization. Each FO had its own system for the enlistment of membership, for example in Ambewela FO each farmer had to pay Rs. 10/- as a membership fee and Rs. 100/- as a share capital which could be paid in installments. In certain other FO like Ketawela only the membership of Rs. 5/- is collected.

Most of FO representatives spoke about the delays in registration of new FO S by the Department of Agrarian Services. The application for registration of FO S in Ma Ela is still pending said the representative from Ma Ela FO.

Once the FO s are formed they continued to hold regular meetings with farmers. The FO s present said that the committee meetings are held once a month. The meeting place is either at the residence of one of the office bearers or at the local school hall. The lack of an office was considered a felt need. General body meeting of farmers is held once every season while a few FO s said they hold meeting once in 3 months. They spoke about the necessity of each FO to have a separate office. The FO representative from Manankettiya and Ketawela said that the NTRP has constructed an office and a meeting hall in their scheme. The FO representatives were told that there is provision to construct an office and meeting hall in all medium/major NTRP schemes.

On the subject of training of farmers, the FO S agreed that this should be a very important component in the establishment and development of FO S. They were aware that the first module in the training program prepared by the Project, is on Awareness. But some FO representatives said that this is not conducted properly. The facilitator explained that as far as FO S are concerned there are five training modules. They are, Awareness, Strengthening of FO S, Financial Management, Construction and Operation and Maintenance. The Galgamuwa Training Institute did the training for major-medium schemes while Department of Agrarian Services was responsible for Training FO s in minor schemes.

The FO representations described how the awareness program helped them to organize the farmers. In Buttala and Kukurampola the FO S said that it was the TA who had done the initial awareness program and organized the. The Buttala Amuna representatives said that at the beginning the response from farmers were very poor but after sometime the situation improved.

The Buttala representative said that the FO collects a bushel of paddy from each farmer per season as their contribution towards the development fund to be used for O&M and other development programs. This FO now owns a tractor and they are ready to undertake O&M once the scheme is handed over. The Panugala representative wanted the Agrarian Service loan-schemes and implement and tractor sales to be extended to FO S in major/medium schemes as well. At Kukurampola the representatives said, that the initial participation of farmers were very poor. The FO representatives had gone from house to house to explain the rehabilitation program as a result they were able to get membership of over 75 percent. At Hattota Amuna too the farmers were not aware of the rehabilitation program at the beginning but here the Institutional Organizer appointed by the project was very helpful. He has helped the FO to establish and consolidate itself. He was able to reorganize the FO S on the basis of better water management. The farmer leaders along with the IO visited the farmers in their own houses, and they were able to establish four strong FO S. The people have agreed to pay Rs. 100/- as a share in addition to the membership fee.

The FO representative from Hambantota stated that they had organized the farmers and sent up the papers for registration to the DAS but their have not been registered up to date. The FO S discussed about the usefulness of the IO s in establishment, restructuring and development of FO S. The FO

reps from Matara and Kandy said that originally the FO were established as a top down institution where the Grama Niladhari summoned a few farmers and organized the FO. But after the appointment of the IO S by the NIRP the situation has changed. Most IO S have helped the FO representatives to organize the farmers. The IO, they said acted as a liaison and a coordinator with the Agency officials and others. The ID officials and the IO S thus helped FO S to develop the organization. The representative from Ma Ela, Kandy said that as physical rehabilitation work had not yet started, the IO helped them to concentrate their attention to other activities like youth and women projects with a view to strengthen the FO S. In some FO S the IO S attended to the meeting arrangements and discussed the rehabilitation proposal with the farmers. They linked the FO S with the services provided by the government, specially in the minor crops sector. The IO S helped the FO S to organize Shramadana. The Ketawela FO rep said that they had done over 10 Sharamadana before the beginning of its rehabilitation program, although most of their members were part time farmers and therefore mobilizing them was not a easy task. They had requested those who could not attend the Sharmadana to send a laborer or pay their a days wage.

Hambantota representative said their FO is now well established and is providing the following services to the farmers -

- 1 Fertilizer at low cost
2. Tractor ploughing on an easy payment basis
3. Bee keeping boxes
4. Providing seed paddy by cultivating a 15 acre seed paddy farm

5. Providing implements like mamoties at low cost
6. Planting material like coconut plants.

Almost all FO reps showed their dissatisfaction over the long delays in getting the construction work started. Indrasiri from Akurcassa said that the officials at the preliminary meeting promised many items of work but they have not included all in their estimates. They still do not know whether their anicut will be repaired or not. Its a long time these officers have come and inspected the site of the old anicut but nothing has happened since then.

Mr. Dharmasena FO rep from Hambantota also stated that their rehabilitation has not yet started and that they are unaware of the progress made by officials. There are five FO S under the scheme, due to the delay in starting the rehabilitation work the farmers are losing interest and it is difficult to summon them even for a meeting. This has weakened the functioning of the FO S. The representative from Wennoruwara disagreed with the above situation and said that it is incorrect for the farmers to depend on the rehabilitation and wait without strengthening the FO. The FO is a more important and a permanent institution for the farmers. It should not depend only around rehabilitation, in such case the FO will end up as a failure. The farmers will lose interest as soon as the rehabilitation work is completed. He said that they must have a much more greater vision in the establishment of FO S. Mr. Ranasinghe FO representative who came from Anuradhapura said that their FO S functions well but in establishment of FO there is the question of giving membership to the third generation farmers living within their scheme. They have no land of their own but cultivate land together with their parents or relations in the scheme. The actual problem is that when electing farmer

representatives, the question of their eligibility is raised by some farmers as they cannot be officially included as cultivators. They do not possess any land permits which in under the name of their parents, but however the allotment are unofficially divided.

He also stated that in the establishment of FO, political issues has come to play an important part. During the last regime the FO S were mostly controlled by the supporters of the previous government, but now with the change of government, those who support this new government wants to take over the control of FO S. This has created dissatisfaction among the farmers and has affected progress. The DAS has decided to reorganize the FO S and in doing so there will be a change in the present office bearers. If this happens it would mean the need for a fresh awareness program. The new representatives will not know anything about the NIRP rehabilitation and the concepts of participatory management. The representative from Ketawala also agreed with this view and further went to say that the farmers too prefer to elect those who support the present government as they feel that they can get greater support from their Parliamentarians. Some other representatives who were present did not agree with this view point.

The representative from Tannita FO said that they have diversified their activities. They have started a milk collecting center and the milk is purchased by the Nestle Co. At the sometime they have distributed nearly 500 coconut plants in this area. The representative from Ketawela said that the officials once appointed to a scheme should not be transferred till the rehabilitation work is over, as this will effect the personal relationships he has built up during the years. It will take time for a new officer to understand the scheme and the people, this will be a drawback on the rehabilitation program.

Almost all farmers insisted the need for official support to get the FO s stabilized. They wanted the IO S be allowed to continue for sometime after rehabilitation is complete, and that there should be more training program to farmer reps and farmers on subjects like O&M and agriculture.

2. Farmer participation in planning

The SAR has laid down very specifically that the agencies should adopt the participatory approach in identification of work items, in the preparation of designs, in the schemes selected for rehabilitation. The mechanism to be adopted for such participation by the beneficiaries is through consultations, walk through surveys, formal meetings, etc. The Technical staff of Agencies are expected to go through this process with the Farmer Organization representatives and the other beneficiaries in the area. Every attempt should be made to accommodate the requests of the FO s and the beneficiaries. If the suggestions made are technically not feasible the Technical staff are expected to explain the reasons clearly in order to avoid misunderstanding. This is a part of the participatory process. It will also help the agency to avoid problems at the time of handing over. Once the designs and estimates are ready the Agency staff is requested to attend a ratification meeting organized by the FO s where the items taken up for rehabilitation has to be explained. At the end of the meeting, the farmers are expected to take a decision as to whether they agree to the items or not, and that they undertake to do attend to their 10 percent contribution, and thereafter to take over the management of the scheme once the rehabilitation is completed.

At the forum, the farmers from Gampola Raja Ela, and Udugoda Bandara Ela who represented two sample schemes taken up at the beginning of the NIRP, expressed their opinions and said that they were not properly consulted. They were not aware of any meeting to find out their needs. Even the ratification meetings were not well attended, as the farmers were not aware of the NIRP procedures at the beginning. Furthermore at that stage they did not have an IO, their FO S were not properly organized. On the contrary the representative from Buttala Amuna said that they are satisfied with the rehabilitation procedure. They said that they had a strong FO to start with and therefore could react better. He said that almost all the rehabilitation contracts under the scheme is undertaken by the FO S in the scheme and all their requests were accommodated.

The representative who came from Kukurampola scheme was very appreciative about the way discussions and consultations are done right now. This is a new scheme that is to be taken up for rehabilitation. They said that the Agency staff held a number of meetings, visited the sites a number of times for the purpose of preparing the designs and estimates. The representatives from Kande Ela too said that the Agency staff and the consultant had meetings with them and had a walk through identifying the number of places which needed channel lining and outlets. They were able to show the damage caused to the channel by the people cultivating the reservations and also the illicit tapping by rich farmers. They were happy that the agency staff had given them the assurance that the reservation encroachments and illicit tapping would be controlled once the rehabilitation work commences. The Kande Ela representative also said that one of their major problems is the shortage of water to the Kande Ela paddy farmers. This he said will be solved through rehabilitation as a result

of agency agreeing to divert some amount of water from the Ambewela scheme which at the moment has excess water. It was due to the study made as a result of rehabilitation that this was made possible.

The Kande Ela representative said that their main problem is that the paddy farmers who cultivate at the tail end of the scheme are far away from the reservoir and they get no water because the rich potato farmers syphoned their water mid way. They originally suggested a pipe line and a storage tank which would have been very expensive. Now due to the rehabilitation discussions the Agency has found that they could divert some excess water from the Ambewela reservoir. Therefore their original suggestion was found to be redundant.

The Ambewela FO representative was also thankful that this decision is not a unilateral decision of the Agency, as would have happened in the earlier days but it was arrived through a consultation process where both scheme representatives together with the ID officials discussed this problem and arrived at a settlement. The Deputy Director ID agreed to be the chairman of the committee representing both schemes to decide on the question of diverting the water. They were thankful about the procedure laid down in the NIRP which helped this process. The representative from Murapola FO said that over 100 farmers attended their preliminary meeting to discuss their rehabilitation proposals. This was followed by a walk through which helped the Technical officers to identify correctly the places which needed lining. They also saw the difficulty in communication between villages as the scheme was over 10 miles long. They said that when the Agencies staff and Consultants realized the difficulty of managing this scheme they even suggested a internal telephone system, but this was turned down by most farmers, as maintaining such a telephone system will not be possible

for the FO s once they took over the scheme. Instead they suggested a better road system. They too were happy about the consultation concept in the NIRP. The farmer reps from Ketawala stated that they wanted a number of places lined, but this was curtailed due to lack of funds. They said that the pro-rata rate fixed by the Project is a constraint in including all the items needed to rehabilitate the scheme. Specially when the scheme is large and neglected for a long period, the money available on the pro-rata is inadequate. If the total needs are not met they shared the view that the farmers may refuse to take over, as most of their needs had not been attended to under rehabilitation. The Manankattiya representative spoke about the delay in starting rehabilitation work. They said that the time spent on designing and final ratification is too long and the farmers have got frustrated. Even the FO s find it difficult to face the people and the IO is kept idling. They suggested that once the items for rehabilitation are identified the work should start without too much delay. However they were thankful for the rehabilitation which has now started after about two years delay. The Hathota Amuna representative said that an area which was originally considered as an encroachment is now included in the scheme and this is an asset to these farmers who, up to then had to undergo hardships. Now these farmers has been organized them under a separate FO. The representative from Labonuruwa FO also stated about the delay in taking up their scheme for rehabilitation. He suggested that it is better to do a preliminary survey and given them an assurance as to whether the scheme would be taken up or not and by when it would be taken up. If not they find it difficult to develop their FOs as the farmers loose all interest in co-operating with the FOs activities. Most farmer representatives agreed with this view. Thus the need for better communication between the FOs and the constructing agencies.

The representative from Ketawala FO said that once rehabilitation process starts the officials connected to this should not be transferred out. This he referred specially to the Technical Officers. The knowledge that these TA s get from listening to farmers cannot be transferred to another officer during the course of rehabilitation process. Therefore those officers who are there at the beginning must be allowed to stay till the construction work is completed.

The representatives from Murapola FO also stated that the awareness about rehabilitation is very vital. Before the designs are prepared there should be a good awareness program which will help the people to cooperate. If this is not done the rehabilitation will be confined only to the agency requirements. He said that the FOs should arrange general meetings for which agency officials should participate. The representative from Gampola Raja Ela also spoke about the IO being appointed at the appropriate time. He/She can do much of the awareness program and organize the FOs better, he/she will also act as a link between the agency and the farmers. He/She can help the FO in a number of ways.

At the same time the IO s too should not be taken out from the scheme till the final handing over is done. He spoke of the situation at Gampola Raja Ela when the earlier IO was transferred out and two lady IO s were appointed, it took sometime for the new IOs to know the area and the farmers.

The representative from Kaltota said that the planning and design stage was done with their fullest cooperation but when it came to implementation they were not told about the details of items and the estimates but were only told of the items in general. They said that the farmers should be given all details so that they could see that the contractor does a good job of work.

The representative from Ketawala said that the agency staff discussed with them and they had a walk through and they were able to show the officials the places that needed outlets, but when the final design was done instead of the 28 outlets there were given only 8. The farmers were not very happy about this. This could have been avoided if they were told the reasons for this reduction. As for the lining they are now aware that this was reduced due to financial constraints. The Ketawala representative went on to explain that without proper lining their main channel would become broader and broader due to erosion taking place. They urged that this be re-considered also as a result of the limitation in outlets will effect the rotational distribution of water. At Murapola the FO said that most of the channel sides are subject to landslides due to the steep slopes and therefore lining is needed. They said that they had a very good discussion with the agency staff before rehabilitation.

The Buttala representative said that work in their scheme is almost complete and they are very happy about the rehabilitation. Now they can distribute the water well as the measuring gauges that has been installed will help them. However no action has yet been taken to hand over the D channel to them. What they now need is training in operation and maintenance.

3. Farmers contribution to 10 percent

Another pre condition for NRP is that the farmer should contribute ten percent of the total value of the rehabilitation estimate. The main purpose of this concept is to get the farmers to participate in the rehabilitation process and to give them a sense of ownership in the scheme. The SAR states that the FO S should agree to contribute at least 10 percent of the cost of rehabilitation and improvement in

the form of free labor or any other acceptable form. This is a pre condition to rehabilitation and the FO S are expected to pass a resolution at the ratification meeting to the effect that they will provide this contribution.

The general opinion of the FO representatives is that organizing the 10% is easier in minor schemes than in major schemes. That it is easy to implement the 10 percent in rural areas and more difficult in schemes closer to urban areas as most farmers are part time farmers.

It was found that FO S use different strategies to get this 10 percent accomplished.

The FO S stated that they have to face problems, as to some agency staff do not divulge the total cost of the rehabilitation. As a result they are unable to account for the 10 percent when they are questioned by farmers. In certain other cases the FO has to wait till the contractor completes his part of the contract to show the farmers 10 percent, as this can only be done afterwards like for example turfing.

It was told by FO Udawela Maha Ela representative that, in case the farmers refuse to do their part of the ten percent the FO is unable to take any action against such farmers, as there is no legal authority for non compliance. However on the whole the FO representatives agreed that the farmers did not show much dislike for doing this 10 percent contribution.

A representative from Kaltota scheme said that some technical officers have included the 10 percent in their main contract. The contract itself is given to the FO and every time the FO gets a payment for work done, a 10 percent is deducted as the contribution. The FO said that they do not mind this as long as the contract includes earthwork but when it comes to concrete items this system is not at all suitable and the FO looses on the contract.

In Ketewala schemes the 10 percent is done through the farmers, who work on the normal contract given to the FO. The FO has asked the farmers to work one hour more on a voluntary basis to cover the 10 percent. Thus they are paid a days wage for working 9 hours instead of the stipulated 8 hours.

The Murapola representative said that they have organized a number of Shramadana to accomplish the 10 percent. Those who did not participate were asked to pay for the days labor. In the Wennoruwa scheme, where most farmers are employed as part time farmers the FO finds it difficult to get the 10% done. The FO had decided that all cultivators should pay their contributions in cash. The FO in turn employed daily labor and completed the work. However one FO at Wennoruwa has still failed to get their 10 percent completed because the owners had defaulted in their payment.

In most minor schemes the FO present said that they apportion the 10 percent based on the Pangu list and get the work done in the manner as an obligation. The representative from Kalutara district said that in the Hattota Amuna scheme they have done more than 10% as part of the contribution because they wanted to do the items that was dropped due to lack of funds (on the pro rata rate). In Kandy district too they said that at Udawela Nawa Ela the farmers had done over 25 percent.

Thus it was seen that the farmers adopted their own methods to achieve the 10%. This could be summarized as follows: 1. Shramadana 2. Working extra hours 3. Collecting money from the owners and cultivators 4. By deducting the 10% from the main contract 5 by giving a specific allocation under the pangu list.

4 Construction contracting by FO s

Another important principle followed in NIRP is that, the rehabilitation construction contracts should firstly be offered to the FO S if they are capable of undertaking them. It is normally the implementing agency that decides this, but the general rule adopted is that if the contract is technically not complicated, it is given to the FO otherwise it is given out to private contractors. Sometimes the technical staff split the total contract into a number of small contracts. Those involving earth work is offered to FO S while those involving more complicated items are given to outside private contractors.

The decision to give contracts to FO S is generally made at the ratification meeting. In case of minor scheme the Divisional officer of Agrarian Services, and in the case of medium scheme the Technical officer in charge helps in making this decision.

Where the contract is done by an outsider the FO is expected to see that it is done well by appointing a sub committee for the purpose. The FO S that take the contract and make a profit, deposits this amount to their development fund.

All FO S are given a training about construction by the Training Division of the SLITI or DAS. The purpose is for the farmers to know about construction and this will help both when they do their own contract and when they supervise the private contractors work.

Most FO S who attended the workshop said that they had all undertaken contracts. The Gampola Raja Ela representation said that in their scheme out of the 32 contracts the contractor defaulted only in 2 cases. Some contracts done by the private contractors were not to their fullest satisfaction. Although they had appointed a supervision committee they found it difficult to make complaints against the contractor, because they feel that the Agency would not like such complaints and that the FO would be penalized at a latter stage. However some FO S said that after making representations to the Agency they were able to overcome the defects through discussion.

The representative from Udugoda Bandara Ela said that the estimates prepared by the Irrigation Department was low and this made it difficult for them to make any profits. They cited the example of the Hume Pipes. The estimate allowed only Rs. 7000/- for one pipe while the market price was Rs. 10000/-.

They also said that there were long delays between the preparation of the estimate and the final award of the contract. In between the prices of items would escalate. When they make representation about this situation the agency says that the contract cannot be amended at this stage. They also cited examples of the price changes in the open market. Very often there is the difficulty of obtaining cement. This has resulted in delaying the contracts which would in turn result even in damage to the

work already done due to rain and other natural reasons. Also the half done structures when left for long periods also get damaged by other means.

The representatives who came from Ketawela and Pamugala said that except with the DAS the work Estimates are prepared in English and that the FO finds it difficult to understand. They requested that they be given a Sinhala translation.

The representatives from Hathota Amuna said that they cannot get the mobilization advance in spite of the Government circular which allows the FO S get such an advance up to 20 percent of the value of the contract. This is due to the reason that the Agency staff is not ready to certify this advance and undertake the responsibility of recovery. Almost all representatives agreed that this is a severe constraint and that the NIRP should make representations to the government and solve this problem.

The private contractors, on the contrary get this advance on production of a bond. The FO representing Kesekhenawa said that in case of minor schemes the Department of Agrarian Service gave them an advance from the Agrarian Trust Fund on the recommendation of the Divisional officer of Agrarian Service. They requested a similar system be adopted for major schemes also. A revolving fund supported by the project may be one answer to this.

In the case of Imbulgoda Amuna at Matara the farmer representative said that they collected their own money from a few members who could afford and used this as a fund to start work. This was paid back at the end of the contract. The FO from Manankettiya and Hathota Amuna said about the lack

of work Supervisor has hampered their work. The lack of knowledgeable person at the work site to assist them when they undertake the contracts is a major constraint. The technical officer comes only occasionally and they find it difficult to get advice from any other person. In case of private contractors they said this is not a constraint as they are more experienced than FO S and can do even without a Work Supervisor. They also raised the issue that without a Departmental Supervisor the private contractor can resort to do sub standard work and even the FO supervision committee finds it difficult to complain as there is no one at site and even if they go to the office and complain it would be too late.

The representatives from Buttala Amuna scheme said that they have undertaken a number of contracts and that they have earned a profit. However he said that the procedure to get money for work done is very slow and they had to go a number of times to Agency officers. They said that if this is expedited the FO S can do more work as they need a quick turn over for work done to pay the laborers and purchase material. They also said that when FO S take over a contract they loose because they are inexperienced in implementing the contract. They often bring materials more than the required amount and do not know the correct timing to bring such items. They said that if they could be advised by the Agency it would be useful. They also said that the construction training they receive from the project is very general in nature. It is good if the construction training is based on the specific contract that they are expected to undertake.

The opinion of some representative is that a few technical offices are not sympathetic towards FO S, therefore they are not keen to undertake contract even if they have the capacity, because of the lack

of mutual trust. They say they prefer to give to private contractors as they are less troublesome and not demanding like the FO S. Sometime the FO S are harassed when they go to collect their cheques, or that they have to go a number of times.

Gampola Raja Ela representative spoke about the poor quality of work done by private contractor and told about a structure that got washed away due to rain.

The representatives from Ketawela spoke about the threat to one of their FO S from a group that wanted to change the officer bearers of the FO for the sole purpose of getting the contracts. He deplored this trend. He said there is danger to the stability of FO S if they exist only to do rehabilitation contracts. The FO will not be sustainable after the rehabilitation is over. Most FO S said they are unable to take contracts due to lack of capital. Some Range Deputy Director of the ID provide construction material instead of money but the FO complained that the material cost given by the Department is higher than in the market and that they have to pay a 25% departmental charge for materials given. This they said should not be done to FO S.

Almost all FO S complained about the low rates given for work in the estimates. They said that there should be a method to change the rates of the items when the market prices goes up. Some private contractors abandon the work and therefore the work stands idle for long periods. They only do the items that are profitable and abandon the rest. In such cases the FO finds it difficult to face the farmers. If the agency provides better supervision over contractors this could be avoided.

The representative from Hathota Amuna said that the work to rule campaign by the TA s has affected them. During the last Maha Season there was a delay in certifying the work done. Raining started in between and a part of their work got washed away. The FO has to face a loss. He said that there should be greater cooperation by the agency. Otherwise the FO s as a movement cannot sustain itself.

The Gampola Raja Ela representative stated that they started supervising the contractors as they were unhappy about the work. After making complaints the contractor disappeared and did not turn up to continue his work.

The contracts taken by FO S in the Udugoda Bandara schemes ended up with a loss to the FO.

The deduction of 5 percent BTT is another reason for the FO loosing on contracts. The FO representatives suggested that this should be stopped as the government has already exempted the cooperatives from this tax.

5. Construction supervision by FO s

Another important aspect in the NIRP in the SAR is the responsibility given to the FO S to supervise the construction program. The purpose is to get the farmers interested in what is being constructed. This is a logical conclusion to the consultation process. One of the complaints received in earlier rehabilitation projects is that the beneficiaries are kept in the dark and that construction is only a contract between the agency and the contractor. To overcome this, the Project has two in-bu

alternatives. One is to give the contract to the FO itself and the other is to get the FO to appoint a sub committee to supervise the work done by the contractors. This aspect of supervision in the project activities is one of the weakest, as implementation is extremely difficult due to a number of reasons. The FO representatives gave their views as follows. The normal accepted system to date in the construction arena, is for the Technical staff to take over this responsibility of supervising the contract, now that the FO S has also been told to supervise is a thing which the technical staff has always resisted. Giving this authority to FO S needs an attitudinal change by Agency staff. Under the project the FO S are expected to report any defects to the very same technical officer who is in charge of the work. The officer will not like such complaints as it would reflect his inefficiency and bring disrepute to him in the face of his superior officers.

There is also the general impression by a majority of officials that contracts are technical matters and that the farmers are ignorant about these technical matters and therefore they are incapable of performing the task of supervision. It is to overcome this problem that the project has included a training module on Construction both for the farmer representatives and farmers. The FO representatives were of the opinion that this training program does not keep pace with the construction program, secondly the training is very general which is hardly adequate for this purpose of supervision and it has little relevance to the actual contract. Another aspect which most FO representatives pointed out is that they are not given the contract details by the Agency staff that is given and only to the private contractor. They are thus unaware of the actual specifications laid down in the contract. Even if they ask the Technical officer they do not get a satisfactory reply. Furthermore all contracts

except those done by the DAS is written in English and this makes it difficult for the FO representatives to understand.

It has been found that the farmers and the FO resort to their traditional method of sending petitions if they want to point out any defect in work done by the private contractors. This was told by the representative from Buttala. He said that the petitions sent to higher authorities brought better results than making complaints to the officers in charge of contracts.

The representative from Matara told how an IO who went to the agency office to find out details of a contract was asked to leave the office and he was even reported for not following the correct procedure of going through the hierarchical system on these matters. He went on to say that unless there is an attitudinal change by all officials, this transfer of supervision authority to FO will never work.

The representative from Panugala pointed out that the FO S need authority to supervise and report contracts. He said if this is to be done they must either be given such authority in writing by the Project Director or on the contrary this matter must be included as a clause in the contract document, if this is not done they will have no say in this matter. One FR said that the technical officers are hand in glove with the private contractors and therefore there is no purpose in pointing out any defects to the notice of the such Officers.

The representatives from a Kandy FO said that because the IO questioned the technical officers at a meeting about some construction defects, the Agency staff has even refused to attend IO meetings hereafter. They said that the IO progress meetings held at Agrarian Office Kandy is not attended by the Provincial Engineers.

However all the FO reps told that they still continue to appoint a sub committee but the working of the committee depend on the strength of the FO and their relationship with the Construction Agency. The members of the Committee are of the opinion that farmers authorized to do this supervision do so only as time permits. They do not follow any specific time schedule as they have so much of other work and cannot spend all their time at the work site.

The FR from Wemotuwa said that the private contractors do not recognize this supervising committee at all. They do not keep the Committee informed as to when construction items like concreting takes place, as a result they find it difficult to supervise the work done. However sometime later the farmers complain that the work was not done according to the specifications, then it is too late even to make a complaint. One of the most common allegation is that the contractor uses large size metal instead of the stipulated 1/2 in metal to do concreting etc. But it is not possible to prove this once the job is done. The FO S themselves are unable to prove the allegation which is often made to them through another farmer. They are thus unable to take the full responsibility and make a complaint to the authorities.

The construction supervision is further aggravated due to the lack of Works Supervisors, (which has already been discussed).

Some FR s however spoke well about the role of Technical staff. They said that the FO S get the fullest cooperation from them and in actual fact some TA S take great pain to see that the work is done well and they are always personally present when concreting takes place. The FO representatives from Hathotota Amuna said that they should build good relationship with the Technical staff and the contractor. If this is done much of the allegation made could be overcome and a good job of work could be assured.

Summary of issues raised at the forum

Component 1 - Farmer Organization Formation and Preparation

	Issues	Suggested remedies
01.	Need for increased awareness among farmers on project objectives and activities	Improved communication with the farmers on project objectives and activities
02.	Some FO boundaries are not suited for participatory and O&M activities (eg. administrative and hydrological boundaries)	Need to re-demarcate boundaries more convenient to the farmers or establish new FO s
03.	Delays in registration of FO s	DAS should be more prompt in registering FO s
04.	In some schemes, IOs are not available to organize FOs	Early action should be taken to recruit and fill vacancies
05.	Delays in the start of physical rehabilitation	Technical staff in ID, DAS and PEE should expedite the process

06.	Need to increase representation of youth and women in FO s	IO s should help improve this situation including ammending FO constitution, if needed
07.	Need for greater agency support	Agencies should be more responsive to FO needs

Component 2 - Farmer Participation in Planning

	Issues	Suggested remedies
01.	Farmer requests for work items had not been included in the rehabilitation plans in some schemes	Agency should accomodate farmers requests. Whereever these cannot be entertained, agency should provide clear explanation to FO s
02.	Insufficient consultation at early stages with farmers	Agency should involve farmers from the very early stage of rehabilitation
03.	Essential work items were dropped from estimates due to limitation in pro-rata rate	PD should have the decretion in dealing with special cases
04.	Design and estimate take too long	Agencies should shorten the process
05.	Transfer of technical staff and IO s should be avoided once the scheme is identified for rehabilitation	Agencies should avoid such transfers
06.	IO s should be appointed from the beginning of rehabilitation as this would help FO s	Project management should take appropriate action

Component 3 - Farmer Contribution of 10 percent

	Issues	Suggested remedies
01.	Total cost estimate of rehabilitation is often not made available to FO. This creates problem in computing 10 percent contribution	Agencies should make estimates transparent
02.	Identification and estimation of the 10 percent contribution is often delayed	Agencies should act to expedite the process
03.	Contractors delays lead to delays by FO	- do -

04.	Lack of co-operation by FO members in contributing 10 percent work	More training/awareness is needed for FO members
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05.	Lack of legal support to deal with defaulters	Legal authority is needed for FO
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Component 4 - Contracts by FO

	Issues	Suggested remedies
01.	Estimates are low, thus making it difficult for FO s to undertake contracts	Agencies should take suitable steps to solve this
02.	Long delays in award of contracts lead to market prices of materials to escalate	Agencies should act promptly in awarding contracts to FOs
03.	Shortage of construction materials including Cement	Agencies can help in procurement
04.	Contract estimates are in English which is difficult to understand by FO members	Agencies should provide a translation in Sinhala/Tamil where applicable
05.	Mobilization advance is selectively given to FO at the discretion of IE	Project management should make arrangements so that each FO can obtain mobilization advance
06.	In instances where construction materials are supplied by the agency, 10 percent of the total cost is retained as departmental charges	Project management should waive requirement
07.	BTT is deducted from FO contracts	This matter should be taken with ministry to exempt this charge from FO s
08.	Shortage of work supervisors at sites is adversely affecting the work progress	Project management may take appropriate action to redress situation
09.	Delays in getting payment for work done by FOs	Agencies must avoid unnecessary delay in payment

Component 5 - Construction supervision

Issues	Suggested remedies
01. Lack of cooperation by some technical staff on complaints made	Agency should discuss with FO about their complaints. Agency officers should be more responsive to the FO needs
02. Lack of construction knowledge of FO representatives	Training must be more contract specific than general
03. Contract details are not divulged to FO s	Agencies must discuss these details with farmers to clear doubts
04. No authority has been given to FO s in supervising the contracts implement by private contractors	Authority should be given to FO s
05. Getting farmers to serve on work supervision committees is difficult as this is an honorary job and farmers cannot devote full time for this purpose	Farmers suggested that the Project management should compensate this . (We think that this is a responsibility of the FO)
06. Supervision committees find it difficult to supervise the contract work because private contractors avoid providing work schedules	Agencies to ensure that such schedules are provided to the FO s

WORKSHOP ON "FARMER PARTICIPATION IN REHABILITATION OF NRP SCHEMES : FARMER PERSPECTIVE"

Venue: Irrigation Training Institute, Galgamuwa

Inaugural Session

[illegible]

Morning Session

10.00 -11.00 a.m	Presentation of group I (Farmers from Hambantota & Galle DD ranges) Rapporteur : Mr. P.B. Aluwihare, IRMU
11.00 a.m - 12.00 noon	Presentation of group II (Farmers from Bandarawela & Kandy DD ranges) Rapporteur : Mr. S. M. K. B. Nandarathna, IRMU
12.00 noon - 12.30 p.m	Suggestions from farmers Concluding remarks by Chairperson Rapporteur : Mr. W. J. J. Upasena, IRMU
12.30 - 1.30 p.m.	Lunch

Afternoon Session

Chairperson & Facilitator : Dr. C.M. Wijayaratna, Head/ IIMI-SLFO

1.30 - 2.30 p.m.	Presentation of group III (Farmers from Monaragala & Kurunegala DD ranges) Rapporteur : Mr. S.M.K.B. Nandaratna, IRMU
2.30 - 3.30 p.m.	Presentation of group IV (Farmers from Anuradhapura & Colombo DD ranges) Rapporteur : Mr. P.B. Aluwihare, IRMU
3.30 - 4.15 p.m.	Suggestions from farmers Concluding remarks by Chairperson Rapporteur : Mr. W. J. J. Upasena, IRMU
4.15 p.m.	Vote of thanks by Mr. B.M.S. Samarasekara, Deputy Director, IRMU
4.30 p.m.	Closure

ANNEX II : List of participants

Farmer Representatives

Name	Irrigation Range	IE Division
Group 1		
1. Mr. R.K. Piyadasa,	Hambantota	Hambantota
2. Mr. E.K. Gunapala,	Hambantota	Hambantota
3. Mr. S.M. Sudubanda,	Monaragala	Monaragala
4. Mr. R.M. Ariyadasa,	Monaragala	Wellawaya
Group 2		
5. Mr. H.M. Jayasekara	Bandarawela	Badulla
6. Mr. S.A.R. Appuhamy,	Bandarawela	Badulla
7. Mr. Gamini Wimalaratna,	Kandy	Kandy
8. Mr. K.D. Wimalasena,	Kandy	Kandy
9. Mr. J.K.M. Tikiribanda,	Kandy	Kandy
10. Mr. K.M. Kiribanda,	Kandy	Matale

Group 3

11. Mr. H.D.R.Wegantale,	Kurunegala	Hiriyala
12. Mr. W.M.Jayasingha,	Kurunegala	Hiriyala
13. Mr. T.M.Dharmasena,	Anuradhapura	Anuradhapura
14. Mr. K. Sudharmasena,	Anuradhapura	Anuradhapura

Group 4

15. Mr. I.D. Premadasa	Galle	Ambalangoda
16. Mr. D. Y. Indrasiri	Galle	Matara
17. Mr. Milton Gamage,	Colombo	Gampaha
18. Mr. J.A.E. Jayasooriya,	Colombo	Gampaha
19. Mr. M. A. Cyril Ranasingha,	Colombo	Ratnapura

Officials

1. Mr. B.M.S. Samarasekara, Deputy Director, IRMU
2. Mr. H.M. Jayathilaka, Deputy Director, SLTI, Galgamuwa
3. Dr. K. Azharul Haq, Technical Advisor, IRMU
4. Dr. C.M. Wijayarathna, Head/ IIMI-SLFO : Chairperson & Facilitator
5. Mr. I. K. Weerawardana, Consultant, NIRP: Chairperson & Facilitator
6. Mr. W. J. J. Upasena, IRMU/IIMI : Workshop Coordinator/Rapporteur
7. Mr. S. M. K. B. Nandarathna, IRMU/IIMI: Rapporteur
8. Mr. P.B. Aluwihare, IRMU/IIMI: Rapporteur
9. Mr. S. S. L. Weerasinghe, IE/NIRP
10. Mr. M. Balakumar, IE/NIRP