

**GENDER AND IRRIGATION MANAGEMENT
TRANSFER IN SRI LANKA
SECOND COMPONENT**



**Antoinette Kome
1997**

21959

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1997**

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| | |
|--------|---|
| AGA | Assistant Government Agent |
| AI | Agricultural Instructor, working at the DAS |
| DAS | Department of Agrarian Services |
| DD | Deputy Director (main officer for ID at district level) |
| DDS | Death Donation Society |
| DO | District Officer (main officer at DAS) |
| DS | Divisional Secretary |
| FO | Farmers' Organization |
| GA | Government Agent (=AGA) |
| GBE | Garandi Bakini D-channel |
| GBE FO | Garandi Bakini Ela farmers' organization |
| HSE | Hakurusimbalaya D-channel |
| HSE FO | Hakurusimbalaya farmers' organization |
| ID | Irrigation Department |
| IE | Irrigation Engineer |
| IIMI | International Irrigation Management Institute |
| IMD | Irrigation Management Division |
| INMAS | Integrated Management of Major Irrigation Schemes |
| IO | Institutional Organizer |
| IRMU | Irrigation Research Management Unit |
| JP | Justice of Peace |
| JVP | Janatha Vimukthi Perumuna (People's Liberation Front) |
| LDO | Land Development Officer |
| MANIS | Management of Irrigation Systems |
| MDE FO | Medagama Ela FO |
| MDE | Medagama D-channel |
| MP | Member of Parliament |
| NIRP | National Irrigation Rehabilitation Program |
| O&M | Operation and Maintenance |
| PA | People's Alliance (ruling party) |
| PM | Project Manager |
| PMC | Project Management Committee |
| RDS | Rural Development Society |
| SLFP | Sri Lanka Freedom Party |
| TA | Technical Assistant (to the Irrigation Engineer) |
| UNP | United National Party |

GLOSSARY

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| aka | elder sister |
| ama | mother |
| ande tenant | legal tenant, registered at agrarian services |
| aiya | elder brother |
| anicut | diversion irrigation |
| bina | marriage in which the husband comes to live with the wife's family. |
| chena | highland, rainfed cultivation |
| diga | marriage in which the wife comes to live with the husband's family |
| govi-gama | 'farmers caste', the highest caste in Sri Lanka |
| govi karake | farmers' committees |
| sabaha | |
| gramasevaka | municipality, also short for the highest administrative authority in the municipality |
| gramodemandale | president of the village organization consisting of the presidents of all village organizations in the village |
| Janasavia | government support program for the poorest, UNP program |
| kanna | growing season |
| LDO | Land Development Authority, they used to give permits for governmentland to landless. |
| leasers | 'non-registered' tenancy arrangements |
| low-country | coastal provinces, low-country people is usually synonymous for non-Kandyan Sinhalese |
| Maha | wet season, from september to february |
| mama | uncle (from mother's side) |
| mamaty | sort of hoe |
| mudalali | literally businessman, also shopkeeper |
| nayamake | adviser for the Samurdhi mobilizers |
| paratara | low-country people, traditionally they did not have a caste system |
| pradeshi sabaha | Divisional Secretariat |
| purana | traditional sinhala village, thus not a settlement |
| samate mandale | state sponsored village court |
| Samurdhi | governmental support program for poorest, PA program government |
| sharmadana | communal labour |
| sin acre | land in ownership |
| successor | the one who is registered with DAS to be the legal tenant or owner after the present owner has died |
| Swarna Boumi | a deed under which temporary permits were legalized. |

| | |
|---------------|--|
| tatumaru | way of inheritance in which one child has the right to cultivate a plot one or two growing seasons once in a number of years. The number of years one has to wait depends on the number of children that share tatumaru rights on the same plot. |
| thatha | father |
| up-country | hill-country |
| velvidane | village water |
| waga niladari | cultivation officer |
| walauwe | the group of people that used to belong to the King's court/servants, most respected descendance |
| Yala | dry season, from April to August |

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PREFACE

The past year in Sri Lanka has been a great learning experience for me. I enjoyed very much to have the opportunity to work a whole year on a subject that is very dear to me: women in development. It also gave me the chance to get to know the International Irrigation Management Institute, the Irrigation Department and Sri Lankan rural life from inside.

First and foremost I would like to express my sincere thanks to Ms Margreet Zwarteveen for giving me this opportunity and for her continuous support. I also want to thank Ms Rhodante Alhers and Mr Robbert Smit for their critical analysis of my work and situation, and for their friendship.

Thanks also to Ms Kusum Athukorale and the research officers, Ms Padma Weerakoon, Ms Priyanthi Wannigadewa and Ms Thanudja ..., who supported me with their tremendous knowledge about Sri Lanka and who more than once helped me out in practical matters. I also thank Ms Subhashini Seneviratne who faced quite some hardships for the sake of this research, being my research assistant and later on my interpreter.

I would like to express my gratitude to Dr Haq for supporting me within the department, and my counterparts Ms Swarna Sumanasekara of NIRP and Ms Champica de Silva of the Irrigation Department for working with me on this research. I also thank the Deputy Director Mr Samarasekara and all other people from the department in Colombo and in the field, who helped me.

My special thanks are for Ms Seelawathie and her family for letting me stay in their house, and to all people who helped during the field work for sharing with me their family life, their problems and their aspirations.

Finally I would like to thank my supervisors Ms Joke Muylwijk and Mr Peter Mollinga. Their critical remarks have stimulated me to continue analyzing the data and their suggestions have greatly improved this report.

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Wageningen, 1997

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Rice is the most important staple food in Sri Lanka and almost all the rice in Sri Lanka is produced under irrigation. There are about 14000 minor and about 266 medium/major schemes all over the island. [Brewer, 1994] To improve management and to overcome the performance problems that these systems face, the Sri Lankan Government adopted the 'Participatory Irrigation Systems Management Policy' in 1988. Through this policy farmers would be organised in Farmers' Organisations (FO's) and the FO's would take over part of the responsibilities of Operation and Maintenance (O&M) in the systems. Farmers were thought to be able to manage these systems better, because they are the most important stakeholders in the system and because they have a better knowledge of their specific situation. In addition to this, the Farmers' Organisations would contribute to the performance by facilitating the co-operation between farmers and implementing agencies: the Irrigation Department and the Department of Agrarian Services. Until today, the government of Sri Lanka considers this 'Participatory Irrigation System Management' a key element in the future development of irrigated agriculture in Sri Lanka.

This report discusses the results of a research done by staff of the Irrigation Research Management Unit (IRMU). The IRMU is a joint project of the International Irrigation Management Institute (IIMI) and the Irrigation Department (ID). As funding of the IRMU is related to another project within the ID, the National Irrigation Rehabilitation Project (NIRP), a condition for funding of the IRMU was that IRMU-research should support the NIRP project. The NIRP project concentrates only on the irrigation systems under the Management of Irrigation Systems (MANIS) program, one of three Participatory Irrigation Management programs in Sri Lanka.¹ This research, therefore, also only deals with 'MANIS' -schemes.

The research deals with "Female Involvement in Farmers' Organisations". About two years ago both the NIRP staff and the ID staff observed that female participation in FO's was rather limited in comparison to male participation. [NIRP, IRMU and IIMI, 1995] It seemed that female participation in FO's was not so evident except for female heads of households and it was feared that this would negatively affect both the strength of the FO's and the position of women with respect to irrigation management. In Sri Lanka, like in most parts of the world, women constitute about 50% of the population. Limited participation of women might indicate a gender inequality in the Participatory Irrigation Systems Management Policy. In addition, it was thought that if 50% of the population is only marginally involved, this will pose problems to the viability of the new form of management, eg in implementation of the decisions of the FO.² In order to understand the extent as well as the reasons behind this phenomena, a research proposal was developed in collaboration with IRMU. Finally this resulted in the following two research questions:

Q1. Is access to participation in the FO gender specific and how?

Q2. Does gender specific access to the FO affect the capability of the FO to reach its objectives in the context of Participatory Irrigation Systems Management?

¹ The other two programs of the Participatory Irrigation Management Policy are called the Integrated Management of Irrigation Systems (INMAS) program and the Mahaweli program. More information about former policies concerning irrigation management can be found in annex 4.

² An example is a case in Nepal, where the organization faced difficulties in enforcing its rules on women, because they were not recognized as members. Female farmers were able to take more water and minimize their contributions to the scheme's maintenance. [Zwarteveen and Neupane, 1995]

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The research was to result in recommendations that could be used by the NIRP program, eg. to achieve a more gender balanced FO if that would prove to be important. I joined the research as a researcher. My personal objectives were to contribute to the improvement of the position of female farmers in irrigation management, to learn about Sri Lankan irrigated agriculture and gender issues, and to learn from the co-operation with more experienced (Sri Lankan) staff. An additional personal objective was to use the material for my MSc thesis. A specific characteristic of this research, is that it has been carried out within the ID. In that context, the research was part of the discussion about gender issues and irrigation management within the Irrigation Department. The report is to a large extent an elaboration of this discussion within the Irrigation Department. Contrary to the initial ideas at the Irrigation Department, gender analysis is much more than looking for 'discrimination of women'. In this report I hope to show that gender relations of power discuss the position of both men and women in social relations of power.

The research was carried out by a team consisting of a researcher, one counterpart from the ID, one counterpart from the NIRP and two research assistants. In the course of one year five short studies and one in-depth study were carried out. The short studies were carried out in Manankatiya tank system in Anuradhapura district, Dunupotha tank system in Kurunegala district, Parapegama anicut system in Kegalle, Udawela Maha ela anicut system in Kandy district and Ambewela tank system in Badulla district. The in-depth study was done in Buttala anicut system in Monaragala district. This report will present the findings of the in-depth study, whereas the findings in the short surveys will be presented in a second report.

I chose to show the wealth of diversity that exists among rural families in contrast with the large NIRP project. The large number of cases serve this purpose. However, it is possible to read the report skipping the cases.

The report is divided into four parts. The first part introduces the methodology of the research, the location of the research and the theoretical research background. The second part examines the influence on male and female participation in the FO by both the membership criteria and the intervention process. The third part questions the incentives for participation by male and female farmers in the FO in view of the current practices of the FO's. Conclusions are drawn in the last part.

CHAPTER 2 RESEARCH BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter the basic thoughts underlying the research will be explained. A division has been made between meta theory, applied theory and research framework. In the section meta theory, some general theory on society will be given. Particular attention is given to the concepts power and gender. In the paragraph on applied theory the most important concepts that have been used in the research are explained. Most attention in this chapter, however, is given to the research framework, as this is the perspective from which the problem has been addressed. The report has also been structured according to the framework.

2.2 Meta theory

The basic axiom in this study is that all people are equal individuals. There is no a priori knowledge to distinguish between individuals and determine their inherent value, because distinctions between people are made on the basis of systems of thought that are created by people. Therefore I believe that reason policy makers cannot justify and should try to prevent an unequal impact of their policies. Although there exist differences between people in our societies, policy makers should be aware of these and make sure to provide equal chances to every civilian.

Gender refers to the meanings that people use to legitimise their behaviour as men or as women, and their behaviour towards men and women. This both constrains and enables men and women to deal with their livelihood problems in the sense that gender structures their access to and control over resources. There is a peculiar and persisting tendency for gender to result in the construction of male and female as opposing categories, and the supremacy of male over female. This research investigates the effect and operation of these categories and hierarchies in society and questions them. For that purpose, the argument will be elaborated in this section that gender works as socially and historically constructed disciplinary power.

I argue that categories and hierarchies in general are more an inherent characteristic of human thinking and logic, than a description of nature. Moreover, as every person is just one single man or one single woman, observations about natural differences between men and women -apart from physical differences- have the tendency to be biased, to be incomplete and to differ over the world. Consequently I argue that gender categories and hierarchies are created by people in order to make reality understandable and meaningful. People's behaviour is based on this understanding. The categories and hierarchies constituting gender are thus socially (and historically) constructed as opposed to naturally existing.

The categories and hierarchies constituting gender are historically constructed in the sense that people are socialised in a society constituted by existing categories and hierarchies. As a result existing categories and hierarchies are more often reproduced by human agency than that they are challenged. Foucault analysed this process of socialisation as the working of disciplinary power. [Foucault, 1976] The norm has a central role, because individual behaviour is compared to the norm and the performance of others in comparison to that norm. In most cases this is not recognised as power, because the norm is presented as a natural and/or scientific truth. In fact the norm states that a certain combination of categories and hierarchies is better than any other combination. As a result, some behaviour is produced and other behaviour is banned, and a

specific kind of power relations is (re)produced. In these relations, power is not thought to be divided between those who have and those who have not. Every individual is subject to power and exercises power, but the specific constellation of power in relations depends on the position of the individuals in the 'natural and/or scientific' order. For example two individuals may be in relation to each other at the same time as mother and son, as uneducated and educated, as woman and man, as landowner and tenant.

Disciplinary power is a productive power³, because individuals who evaluate themselves in relation to the norm, try to confirm themselves to it. They constitute themselves to the exclusion of other persons. Therefore the rule of the norm has not only a tendency towards homogeneity, but has also the tendency to result in a moral classification reflecting the degree to which behaviour attains the norm. Institutions, such as schools and clubs, are often organised in such a way that normal behaviour is praised and deviating behaviour is punished; they aim at normalising behaviour. Again this is a reproduction not only of human behaviour, but of power relations. [Foucault, 1976]

In Foucault's view, we cannot be liberated from this kind of power, because he thinks that to think in categories and hierarchies is a prerequisite for human social life. He does think we should unmask those categories and hierarchies, but he does not make a moral distinction between one kind of categories and hierarchies and another. [Lambrechts, 19..] This is the reason why Nancy Hartsock rejects his theory as a theory for power in gender studies: it does not provide knowledge claims to ground political action for gender equity. [Hartsock, 1987] If Foucault's liberation implies thinking without categories and hierarchies, and if making a moral distinction should be based upon an ontological truth, Foucault might be right. However, what matters to individual people is not so much that we cannot think beyond the structure of categories and hierarchies, but the kind of categories and hierarchies that we live in and the power relations and material conditions that result from it. For individual people there is a difference between one kind of categories and hierarchies and another one. I think that people are free and able to think beyond existing categories and hierarchies, if they want. Foucault's stress on the argument that there is no way to judge the difference objectively, therefore tends to neglect the fact that these are choices made by people who do attach meaning to it. The justification for those choices should then not be sought outside our own (moral) position, for example in nature. Neither should the reproduction of existing social relations be legitimised outside our own (moral) position.

There are of course many circumstances in which people choose to reproduce existing social relations that they do not consider morally justified, because of the constraints that are imposed by their position in society. Related to this, people might choose to reproduce such existing social relations because it does not have priority to challenge them at that moment. To be free and able to think, obviously does not imply to be free and able to act. However, it is very rare that an individual does not challenge existing social relations at all once calling existing categories and hierarchies into question.

This research considers gender as disciplinary power and investigates how existing categories

³ The word productive is used to show that certain behaviour is produced. The production of that behaviour suppresses other kinds of behaviour.

and hierarchies are reproduced in the construction of the FO. It critically discusses the normative justifications that underlie this reproduction. Finally it discusses the trade-off for individuals to challenge the situation.

2.3 Applied Theory

Like the NIRP project, this research is concerned with the Participatory Irrigation Systems Management Policy. However, its concern has a slightly different form. The NIRP project staff designs the policy models and the intervention methods for the ID staff. To do this, the Participatory Irrigation Systems Management Policy is based upon assumptions regarding farmers' behaviour. This research -being research- had the possibility to look at the processes that shaped the impact of the Participatory Irrigation Systems Management Policy in the farming community. It could look at what male and female farmers think, say and do with Participatory Irrigation Systems Management Policy. It is assumed that during the implementation process, from Colombo to every single scheme, the Participatory Irrigation Systems Management Policy would be modified by the different people, that are involved, due to experiences and problems encountered in the field. The impact could therefore not be described in terms of the Policy alone, but needs an account of actors and the organisation of production and households.

Actors

It is assumed that the Participatory Irrigation Systems Management Policy is modified in the interaction between all those who are involved. In other words, the intervention practices as they evolve, are shaped by the negotiations between various participants. Those would not only be male and female farmers, but also officers and the various collective bodies. It is assumed that all these people and collectives act and interact as actors. The actor oriented approach as defined by Long [1992], means that individuals and social groups are, within the limits of their information and resources and the uncertainties they face, 'knowledgeable' and 'capable': that is they devise ways of solving 'problematic situations', and thus actively engage in constructing their own social worlds. In a similar sense the FO is constructed as an interaction domain by certain actors.

Although actors are capable of agency, this agency takes place within specific limits. There are limits in terms of free will and in terms of freedom to act. In other words, agency is limited by the body of existing categories and hierarchies in thought as well as by the material conditions resulting from that. This means that for a woman to participate in the FO meeting, she should both challenge the norm that might exist in her thinking that men engage in outside affairs and women in household matters, and she should also face the material conditions resulting from this norm, for example who looks after her small children when she goes to the FO. Thus if this woman does change the existing gender norms in her thought, she still has to negotiate about this new meaning with other people in order to actually change power relations.

The Organisation of Agricultural Production

The impact of the Participatory Irrigation Systems Management Policy involves a modification in the organisation of agricultural production. The organisation of agricultural production is about the allocation and the use of resources, principally land, labour, capital, water and knowledge. As a result of the Policy the allocation of water, labour and capital -and in some views knowledge as well - is expected to change or even improve. In line with the view of Long, this research assumes that this change in organisation of agricultural production comes about as the result of a continuous negotiation about the rights and responsibilities of different people.

This negotiation entails a process of 'giving and taking', not only in co-operation, but also in conflict. The reallocation of resources takes place at different levels. The organisation at the level of the irrigation system management changes because farmers' representatives become the president of the project management committees. On D-channel level the Farmers' Organisations become solely responsible for the operation and maintenance of the system, not only for implementation and decision making but also for finance of operation and maintenance. This labour and capital has to be mobilised at the household level, because it is through the organisation of production within the household that the irrigation water is used and paddy is produced.

It is well-known that the organisation of agricultural production at household level follows a gender division of rights and responsibilities. The authority that one person in relation to another person may have to lay claims on resources, does not depend on his or her ownership alone. This authority depends on the specific constellation of power relations. A husband may, for example, claim his wife's labour, or a mother may claim her sons labour. The gender division of labour is certainly the resource that received most attention in literature about the organisation of production. In many cases this division of labour is described by a static list of gender specific tasks. Risseeuw [1988] describes in a part of her book the ideological division of labour in Sri Lanka. Men's jobs are more prestigious and related to some notion of danger. Men's duties are also more irregular and they are entitled to more leisure, used to talk discuss village politics, gamble and visit friends. Women's duties are characterised by a restricted mobility. Her jobs are associated with cleaning and keeping clean. It are usually repetitive tasks. [p267-p271, Risseeuw 1988] I think Risseeuw's description is most appropriate to the division of rights and responsibilities in Sri Lanka. However, in this research I focus on the negotiations between householdmembers about rights and responsibilities. I think this allows to show when and how men and women co-operate for agricultural production, and when and how they do not.

Households

There is some confusion as to what the basic unit is, that is or should be represented in the FO. It is not unusual that a priori the household is considered to be the basic unit in an organisation. There are some objections against this. Firstly, it obscures the organisation of production within the household, while this is precisely the place where all the resources necessary for Participatory Irrigation Systems Management should be mobilised. Secondly, there seems to be no definition of the concept of household that is universally applicable. For example, Whitehead [in Whatmore, 1991] says that a household refers to 'the socio-economic unit organising the subsistence process and centred on co-residence and commensal resource provision and consumption.' She argues that the household is a problematic concept, in two ways:

1. in defining the boundaries of the unit when commensality may vary between different resources and may not be fixed.

2. the households internal relations are frequently assumed to be non-economic, so that exchange, let alone the possibility of unequal exchange, between members is not raised.

Barrett [in Whatmore, 1991] draws a more radical conclusion from the problematic character of the household concept. She says 'the family does not exist other than as an ideological construct, since the relations of which it is composed- household, kinship, family ideology itself are historically, socially and culturally specific and diverse.' As a consequence, the question of what is the basic unit for the FO will be addressed in the study. This means that both interhousehold relations (relations between households) and intrahousehold relations (relations within households) are objects of research. For the purpose of the selection of sample households, a

pragmatic definition was used: 'a household is the group of people that are registered together at the electorate list'.

Head of Household

Because the 'household' concept is a problematic concept, the a priori status of the concept 'head of household' also becomes problematic. Therefore this concept will be part of the study as well. Traditionally the head of household is assumed to be a man. About 1970 attention was drawn to the fact that there could also exist female heads of household, meaning widows or divorced women with no other man in the house. Later yet, another category of female headed households was distinguished: de facto female headed households. These were households where a male was absent in day to day household decision making, for example due to migration. The former female headed households became de jure female headed households. In my view the whole concept of head of household is too static. In households with numerous adult members, there seems no reason to assume the existence of one single head a priori. Only in the case of one adult, one -a priori- assumes a single headed household. Consequently some households would turn out to be either male headed or female headed, because the only adult present is resp. a man or a woman. Most households in Sri Lanka consist of several adult members, and could be classified multiple headed households, if you wish.⁴ Whether there is one de facto head of household, and who this is, will be examined in the study.

2.4 Research Framework

Participatory irrigation management refers to the complete or partial transfer of responsibilities for operation and maintenance from agencies to farmers or to farmers' organisations. The two most frequently mentioned reasons for participatory management are the following:

1. It is expected that system management will improve through the mobilisation of farmers' knowledge and improved communication between farmers and agencies.
2. It is expected that the costs of operation and maintenance of the system will be reduced by handing over part of the responsibilities to farmers. [Brewer, 1994]

The transfer of responsibilities in operation and maintenance to farmers takes place in many parts of the world nowadays, and in that respect it is part of a larger tendency towards privatisation and deservement of the state. In Sri Lanka this transfer is called Participatory Irrigation Systems Management.

Whatever the motives behind it, the success of Participatory Irrigation Systems Management heavily relies upon the active participation of farmers. It is important to note that this is contradictory, because in the first instance the need for Participatory Irrigation Systems Management in Sri Lanka is conceived by an external agency.⁵ The agency has its expectations of the farmers who will participate, eg. to have knowledge about the irrigation system, to contribute knowledge in communication with the Irrigation Department and to have an interest in management of the irrigation system. For the success of Participatory Irrigation Systems Management it is thus crucial who finally participates in the realisation of Participatory Irrigation

⁴Thanks to Ms Rhodante Ahlers for discussion on this issue.

⁵In many cases the need for participatory management is conceived by an agency that is even external to the country, for example the Worldbank.

Systems Management, in other words in the FOs.

Effective management by an FO depends on the selection of 'stakeholders'⁶ as participants, a process that involves both inclusion and exclusion. As in any group where decisions have to be taken, it is thought important for the FOs that not just anybody is allowed to have a say about the irrigation system. This is thought to be not only inefficient in decision making, but also unjust. On the other hand, it is not desirable that hardly anybody participates. In that case the FOs would be affected in both their decision social support basis, as their capacity to mobilise labour.

Ostrom [1992] distinguishes three cumulative layers of rule making: operational rules, collective choice rules and constitutional rules. Operational rules refer to when where and how to withdraw water, who should monitor, and what information should be exchanged. Collective choice rules are the rules for making management policies. The selection of 'stakeholders' refers to the highest layer, constitutional choice rules. These rules determine who is eligible to participate and what specific rules will be used to craft the collective choice rules. Ostrom specifies that she talks about rules-in-use. I think it is important to stress that these rules-in-use are made on different levels and by different people. Initially access is regulated by the rules made by the ID in Colombo, later on these rules become rules-in-use by their application in the village by ID-officials and farmers. In the course of time, the 'rules-in-use' become more and more appropriated by the people who use them, the members of the FO. To stress the above process, I refer to the constitutional choice rules by the term construction of the interaction domain or construction of the FO.

Ultimately, who participates in the FO depends on the one hand of the construction of access to the FO and on the other hand by the incentives that the FO provides. The importance of incentives forms another contradiction in Participatory Irrigation Systems Management, because incentives depend very much upon the practices and the activities of the FO. This is contradictory because in Participatory Irrigation Systems Management those who participate are expected to have considerable influence over the activities and practices of the FO, and thus over what the FO is for its members and potential members. One could expect the regulation of access becoming more a matter of contestation, once incentives for participation in the FO increase.

Sofar it has been explained that the involvement of the 'stakeholders' in the FOs is central to the success of Participatory Irrigation Systems Management, even though it is not yet clear what exactly 'successful' Participatory Irrigation Systems Management means for FOs. It has also been explained that the selection of people who participate in the FO is a result of both the regulation of access to participation and the incentives for participation. The basic assumption in this research is that in principle all women and men above 18 years and living in the village are eligible for the FO. Any subgroup is considered a selection and as such should be explained and justified in terms of differences of either access or incentives of the subgroup. This research focuses on gender selections. This means, on the question whether who participates in the FO is gendered and how.

⁶ By definition, stakeholders are the one's who are concerned by the objective of the organisation. To identify them, however, involves the operationalisation of the concept into selection criteria.

Firstly, if participation is gendered, there is a difference in female participation in comparison to male participation in terms of:

- female and male membership
- female and male attendance
- female and male office-bearership

Secondly, in line with the above reasoning, there are two ways to explain a gender difference in the FO:

1. access to participation in the FO is gendered; due to the way in which access to participation in the FO is regulated, less women than men are allowed to participate.
2. incentives to participation in the FO are gendered: due to what the FO is for resp women and men, less women than men want to participate.

What should be looked at to locate these two kinds of gender differences, will now be elaborated in detail for the Participatory Irrigation Systems Management Model of the NIRP schemes.

2.4.1 Access to Participation in the Farmers' Organisation

Access to participation in the FO is regulated by several -either explicit or implicit- choices. These choices are guided by a perception of who should participate in the FO and, I would argue, by a perception of society by the actors as well. In this research, I divide the regulation of access into three parts: formal criteria that legitimise FO membership, informal criteria that legitimise participation in the FO and the practice of access to participation in the FO. In reality, of course, they are present at the same time.

Formal Criteria

Formal criteria for membership are laid down in the regulations of the organisation. They are the official way of defining the distinction between participants and non-participants. The first selection of participants results from formal criteria. The criteria are based on some presupposed relation between a status and stakeholdership. This status may, for example, refer to landownership, residency. [see Cartier et al, 1997] In the NIRP project formal criteria are formulated by the consultants in Colombo. Formal criteria may be gender specific indirectly, if the status on which they are based is gender specific.

Informal Criteria

The legal status, however important to obtain FO membership, does not entirely explain the participation in the FO: not all formal members actually participate in the FO. The people who participate are a further selection of the village. Local officers, office-bearers, male farmers and female farmers use yet another set of criteria to distinguish between participants and non-participants. These criteria are generally not written down and sometimes not even made explicit. Therefore I will call these criteria informal criteria. I assume that (gendered) informal criteria both discipline the behaviour of men and women, as well as their behaviour towards men and women, and in that way regulate access to participation in the FO. The gender specific character of informal criteria is embedded in the social construction of the concepts that form these criteria. This construction may be such that the concepts are only understood as referring to one gender. (see section on socially constructed power)

One could imagine numerous informal criteria with respect to gender, but in this research I will only discuss those that are most frequently used in the Sri Lankan context. Of course not every individual uses the same informal criteria in the same way. Because those differences exist, I do

not want to pinpoint some actors to some informal criteria. My interest lies in deconstructing these criteria and tracing their justification.

Practices of Access to Participation

The influence of formal and informal criteria on the selection of participants in the FO is exerted through practices both at household level and at higher levels. They are not only a structuring principle for agency, but they are also being redefined by actors. Access to participation in the FO as a member is not (yet) very much contested. The (formal and informal) criteria are therefore not (yet) in a process of redefinition. Access to participation in the FO as an office-bearer is much more contested as it involves a greater degree of control over the FO. The same criteria that are relevant for access to participation as a member are used in the regulation of access to participation in FO ranks. The way in which access to participation in FO ranks is constructed, is thus partly illustrative for the selection procedure in practice. The construction of access to FO ranks is partly different, because it entails more and other criteria than access to membership. Access to the interaction domain of FO ranks is also much more contested.

It is rather difficult to distinguish key moments in the construction of access to participation in FO ranks, as it is the result of intensive interaction between intervention processes and village politics. The principal question is how people obtain enough authority to distinguish themselves from others as office-bearers. For this authority one could expect people to rely on family background, wealth or proven qualities in other organisations, however some might obtain authority in the intervention process itself principally through control over information. Obtained authority might be questioned by others, this may also be done on the base of gendered arguments.

2.4.2 Incentives for Participation in the Farmers' Organisation

The use of 'access to participation in the FO' as determinant of the kind of participants assumes that the right to participate in the FO is an aspired right or, in other words, that people are willing to participate. The actual participation in the FO might, however, also be explained by the existing incentives, in other words, what kind of participants does the FO attract by its performance. In the following it will be elaborated what should be looked at to locate gender differences in incentives to participation.

Incentives for participation in FOs might be described as positive activities in terms of costs/benefits. The reasoning is that once the benefits of participation exceed the costs of participation, the activities form an incentive for participation. Uphoff and Wijeratne [1981] used this method, but they were careful to show that not only material costs and benefits are important for farmers, but also social costs and benefits. Costs for farmers would for example be the increase in costs for irrigation in terms of direct cash, labour, travelling to see the officers, foregone earnings, social tensions involved with solving conflicts about water or social pressure. Benefits could include benefits in terms of time, money, increase in production, timeliness and/or convenience of irrigation, increase in control over water or a rehabilitation project. Meinzen-Dick and Subramanian [1996] point out that what matters more than one single factor, is the presence of sufficient incentives both in the initial phase, as on the long-term. They mention that a rehabilitation project might provide sufficient incentives for organising a Water Users' Association in the beginning, but that one single incentive might not be enough to ensure sustainability in the long run of the Water Users' Association. A similar point was made by an IO of Buttala, who said that if the Irrigation Department does not come up with a new program,

people will join the organisations of the Department of Agrarian Services.

If incentives have their impact on the kind and the number of participants, a differential participation can be explained by a difference in costs or benefits or both, between potential participants. Both costs and benefits may differ in nature and in weight attached to them by a potential participant. For example, what may be considered an overriding benefit for one person, may be an almost neglectable benefit (thus weight=0) to another person. It is not difficult to imagine that relative costs and benefits of participation could differ for men and women.

Benefits are different because men and women may have different or even opposing needs. Men do not automatically support women's needs, because some of these needs may be related to underlying unequal power relations. In addition to this the link between female participation and benefits is not necessarily direct. Mayoux mentions the example of a pastoralist case in which women have difficulty in retaining control if income reaches a level which might present a threat to male authority. Costs may also differ for women because they have on an average less time than men, because their mobility is usually restricted or their ability to interact with men is. [Mayoux, 1995] Evidence from the short surveys suggests that women cannot mobilise labour of other household members as easily as men. Therefore participation almost always lead to an increase in their workload. (see report on the second component of this study)

A more comprehensive way to describe the reasons for participation and non-participation than the cost/benefit approach offers the concept 'enrolment' of Arce and Long. Enrolment refers to the ability of actors to create space for their own projects, meaning their own strategies and objectives. [Villareal, 1995] In stead of understanding incentives as positive cost/benefit activities, incentives then reflect whether actors perceive the FO as a means to create room for solving their own problems. The capacity of enrolment of each actor depends on the interaction domain and the authority of an actor in that domain. In this context Villareal quotes Van der Zaag [Villareal, 1995]. "People's practices and their interactions emerge... it can be seen that domains are more than simply spatial or physical settings. In a particular domain, people have particular ways and also expect particular attitudes of others, and value particular things that in other domains might be quite irrelevant." Consequently, men and women may have different perceptions about their capacities to solve their problems through the FO.

There are multiple perspectives on the nature of the function of the FO in solving the problems in irrigated agriculture. Although these functions have their own rationale, more attention should be given to the reasons for individual farmers to participate. This means to how the FO can be a means for male and female farmers to solve their problems. Three common perspectives on the problem and functions of the FO are for example:

1. FO as an organisation governing a common pool resource
2. FO as a link with the agencies
3. FO as an empowering organisation (of farmers towards the state)

These three perspectives are not mutually exclusive, but they refer to a different emphasis on problems and solutions in irrigated agriculture. Although one could make a distinction between the actors that put forward each perspective, this is not the objective of the distinction. The perspectives are put forward because it is important to recognise that so many actors engage in constructing the FO, while using different perspectives of the FO in their actions. This implies that the discourse about the present FO and about the future FO (!) is to a certain extent pluriform. In this research these three perspectives serve as a framework to identify possible

incentives for farmers. The rationale of the perspective and the interests of male and female farmers, will now be elaborated for each of these three perspectives on the FO.

The Farmers' Organisation as an Organisation governing a Common Pool Resource

If the FO is conceived as an organisation governing a common pool resource, the irrigation water and infrastructure is the common pool resource. The objective of the organisation is to ensure long term sustainability of production. The management activities of the FO should therefore concentrate on dividing the burdens and the benefits of the irrigation system in a justifiable way among the members. In an irrigation system the burden would be the mobilisation of money and labour for O&M, the benefits would be the irrigation water.

The FO is thought to be successful in managing the irrigation system, because it is assumed that those people whose livelihoods depend on irrigation, can be expected to make a continuous effort to use the irrigation water efficiently and maintain the irrigation infrastructure. In this line of thought participatory management is necessary for improved performance. It has often been said that irrigation systems did not achieve their performance objectives. Instead of assuming that the core of this performance problem is a technical issue, this approach assumes that the emphasis should lie with management improvements. Merrey[1988], Yoder[1994], Vermillion[1991], Uphoff[1986] and Ostrom[1992], among others promoted this idea of self-management as a solution for the performance problem.

In irrigation systems, the issues of self-management concentrate around problem of water distribution and the problem of mobilisation of resources for O&M. Meinzen-Dick [1996] mentions the following incentives for farmers to become collectively involved in the organisation of waterdistribution by an organisation such as the FO:

1. More efficient and reliable water delivery: Improvements in water supply in terms of convenience and/or reliability may be an incentive for farmers. Particularly if the agency failed.
2. Augmented farm productivity: better yield through improved water delivery services and better maintenance. The weight of this incentive depends upon the marketability and price of the produce.
3. Quicker resolution of water conflicts between farmers and between farmers and the irrigation agency: Through farmer participation farmers disputes can be settled quickly and amicably. Even when certain parties do not get what they want they are more likely to accept the outcome, because they participated in the decision making. However, there are situations in which farmers prefer to have an external agency involved in settling disputes so that they do not have to confront each other.

The incentives arising from the mobilisation of resources by an organisation such as the FO could be that farmers have more influence on the way in which resources for O&M are allocated. In that case they might be able to ensure a better and more cost-effective operation and/or maintenance. They will also be able to direct the resources towards the parts of the system that have a priority to them.⁷

Crucial in self-management is how the link between the efforts and gains of individuals can be

⁷This point has been demonstrated by W.H. Kloezen in his presentation on an Mexican irrigation system at Wageningen Agricultural University.

ensured. Whether male and female farmers are able to obtain the above benefits depends very much on their capacity to act as a group. According to Ostrom[1992] the activities of individuals can be grouped into two types, transformation activities and transactions activities. Transformation activities are changing one state of affairs into another for example diverting water to a field. Transaction activities are directed towards the co-ordination of transformation activities, the provision of information and the acquisition of strategic advantage over others for example setting the date of the first water issue. Transaction costs can become very high due to free-riding, rent-seeking and corruption. An example of free-riding is investing time in private activities, when others are investing in joint activities, such as canal maintenance. An example of rent-seeking behaviour is trying to influence decisions of e.g. officials about subsidies in favour of one's own plot. An example of corruption is withholding the delivery of water to those entitled in order to receive illegal side-payments or special favours.

It is thus desirable that the FO develops rules for use of water by the 'irrigators'. This means if the FO is to manage the water distribution they should decide about entitlements⁸ to water and ensure those. Any conflict about water should be discussed and solved in the FO meeting and afterwards the FO should be capable of enforcing the decision. In other words, the FO should make the operational rules and if these rules do not work, the FO should redefine them. [cf. the beginning of section 2.4] If this is not done every 'irrigator' will increase his or her water levels at the plot inlet and take more water. In that case water levels and supply fluctuate a lot and it becomes more difficult to irrigate for everybody.

The Farmers' Organisation as Link with the Agencies

The FO can also be considered as a link between the agencies and the farmers, facilitating both the governments ability to reach people working in irrigation systems as well as the ability to get information from and about these people. In addition to that people working in irrigation systems could more easily obtain information from the agencies. Such an organisation is more or less an extension of the state apparatus, but ensuring a more efficient and effective link than government agencies would be capable of. The FO would be more efficient in the sense that the organisation is assumed to do a better job with less expenses in terms of time and money. This is partly because the FO can use the unpaid labour of their members and office-bearers -in stead of expensive government servants-, and partly because the office-bearers are expected to have more knowledge about their village. The FO is supposed to be a more effective link in the sense that the office-bearers would be more capable of identifying the appropriate target groups for programs and government incentives. In addition to that, the effectiveness of government programs would increase because the office-bearers would be capable of informing the government more adequately about the needs of farmers.

The justification of participatory management, in this perspective, is found in the more effective and efficient use of government resources and the reduction of government expenditures. This conception of a rural organisation has been developed by the (traditional) extension science. For the FO this would imply the following responsibilities:

- 1 identification of target groups for training programs and incentives on the basis of needs
- 2 dissemination of government information through the FO
- 3 communication of needs for programs and incentives through the FO to the agencies

⁸ I use the term entitlements, because property rights as such are not yet used in the Sri Lankan context.

The incentives for farmers for participation would be the material benefits and the information they receive through the FO. If the organisation improves overall communication with and accessibility to the Irrigation Department, more farmers can benefit from better contacts with the ID staff.

The Farmers' Organisation as an Empowering Organisation

The FO can also be considered as an organisation that empowers the rural population in relation to the agencies. The problem analysis in that case, is that farmers have too little control over their own system and that agencies are not accountable to them. An organisation such as the FO could enable male and female farmers to gain more control over their own livelihoods. They could develop an alternative for the discourse on system management and development of the ID. The organisation could also help them to develop an understanding of their position in relation to the ID and their shared interests. Collectively they would be able to exert pressure on the government agencies and express demands towards them. In this way they would get better services and co-operation from the agencies, and prevent malpractice.

Meinzen-Dick and Subramanian [1996] distinguish the following incentives of empowerment:

1. cost savings from unwanted physical facilities: As stakeholders farmers can ensure that construction or rehabilitation is done as scheduled. They can get better irrigation facilities.

2. control over water: beyond adequate and reliable irrigation supplies, control of water implies that the WUAs decisions and actions determine water deliveries. Hunt [in Meinzen-Dick and Subramanian 1996] suggests that 'organisational control of water' is a key variable in farmer willingness to take part in WUA activities.

WUA control is much less likely where the organisations manage only the lowest levels of the system, and are dependent on water deliveries from main systems managed by agencies. Such situations require mechanisms to make agency action accountable to the users [Merrey, 1994] and provide WUAs with substantial input into decisions on management of their system.

3. organised WUAs increase the accountability of agencies to farmers. Farmers can exert pressure to collective action.

Analogous to the above mentioned incentives, the FO has a practical empowerment potential for farmers in three ways under Participatory Irrigation Systems Management:

1. construction
2. decision making about water
3. exerting accountability from the Irrigation Department

A problem of the FO as an empowering organisation is that not all farmers may be in the same position. As Mayoux [1995] indicates there are likely to be problems in defining common interests and in meeting these interests without addressing underlying power relations and inequalities within the organisation. In particular for female farmers to gain more control over their livelihoods will in many cases also entail addressing unequal power relations among farmers. In addition to this there may be long-term commitments [Grindle in Long 1992] between government officials and some farmers that prevent the development of such a pressure group. If these two above mentioned factors constrain the issues that are articulated in the FO, the empowerment potential of the FO will be severely limited.

CHAPTER 3 LOCATION OF THE RESEARCH AND RESEARCH METHODS

In this chapter, site selection and research methods will be explained. Some background information will be provided on the selected irrigation system and the village.

3.1 The Selection of the Location of Research

As mentioned in the introductory chapter, this research only deals with schemes belonging to the NIRP project, in other words, MANIS schemes. This limited the number of schemes from which sites could be selected, but there were still 450 schemes all over the island belonging to the NIRP project, of which about 30 major/medium schemes. In the initial phase of the research some minor and medium schemes were visited during a reconnaissance survey. Very quickly it became clear that some FO's only come into being/existence after the start of the rehabilitation project and that overall participation in FO's is not yet very good, the rehabilitation being the only activity of the FO. In addition to this, FO's in the smaller minor schemes seemed to consist of people that cultivate plots in many different schemes. It appeared that the management of smaller minor schemes usually did not have a very high priority to farmers, because they consider the cultivation rules more flexible.

Based on the reconnaissance survey and discussions within the Irrigation Department, it was decided to select only those schemes where rehabilitation had started before February 1995. In addition to that, only those schemes would be selected that were indicated by the implementing agencies, the Irrigation Department or the Department of Agrarian Services, as having relatively active FO's. Although 'activeness' is a very subjective matter, this criterion was considered necessary to avoid the problem that the selected FOs would only exist on paper. If both male and female participation is non-existent, there is obviously little left to compare. Schemes in the Western Province were left out, assuming that due to the degree of urbanisation and off-farm employment, the interest in irrigated agriculture would be less. For the minor schemes only those would be selected that belong to the -present or future- After Care Program⁹ and that have a command area of at least 20 hectares. This size-limit of 20 hectares was used to avoid the problem that the scheme would not have much priority to farmers because it was very small.

With these criteria, selection took place randomly in every district. As a result 6 minor and 3 medium schemes were selected for the short surveys and one medium scheme for the in-depth study. Ultimately, short surveys were conducted in only 3 minor schemes and 2 medium schemes due to staffing problems. The in-depth study was conducted in Medagama, one of the villages of Buttala anicut¹⁰ system, in Monaragala district. (figure 2) Buttala anicut was selected, because it is one of the few major/medium irrigation systems within the NIRP project in which the rehabilitation had been finished and the system had been handed over to the farmers' organisations. Buttala has also been selected, because there was water and irrigation in this dry year. It was assumed that irrigation would be relatively important for the people of Buttala, as

⁹ The After Care program is the follow-up of the NIRP project. The counterpart from NIRP was also responsible for the design of the After Care, so this would be a way to directly benefit from research findings.

¹⁰ an anicut system is a diversion system.

there are few income generating activities besides paddy cultivation. The chena¹¹ cultivation is limited as the chena lands have been confiscated for the sugar company. Monaragala district is a quite remote district and as a result there are few off-farm employment possibilities, except for the sugar company. As such, the performance of the FO's could not be claimed to be influenced by other activities, like gemming, (office) jobs or business.

It was decided to base the research on a village in stead of on a separate D-channel¹². This was done because people appeared to have land under several D-channels. Focusing on one D-channel would then distort the perception of the size of their farms and paddy cultivating activities. Another reason was that previously all rural organisations had been village based, as opposed to D-channel based in Sri Lanka. The village perspective would help to place the FO in a historical perspective.

There are 7 FO's in Buttala anicut (figure 3), but the inhabitants of Medagama are members of more or less 3 FO's. The village Medagama was selected because two of those three FO's were indicated as relatively 'active' by the ID. In addition to this the president of one of the FO's is a woman. There are 5 quarters in Medagama village: Aluthwela, Garandi Bakini Ela, Happoruwa, Karawila Kotuwa and Alukalawita. As the members of the three FO's mainly lived in the first 3 quarters of the village, sample households were selected from those three quarters. A sample of 25 households was taken on the basis of wealth ranking. Later on, 2 more households with leasers, were added to the sample. Only those households were selected, in which at least one member was personally engaged in cultivation. Specific attention was given to include households with:

- no FO members at all
- only female FO members
- only male FO members
- male and female FO members
- FO office-bearers (there was only one female office-bearer)

The majority of the households had than one adult member, but there were also some single headed households. Two female single headed households and one male single headed household were included in the sample. In the course of time, nine key-informants were identified among the farmers.

3.2 Background Information

3.2.1 The Irrigation System

The system is an anicut from the Manik Ganga, which is a perennial stream. It is the first water user of this stream, therefore water supply is not a problem for the system¹³. The command area is about 1620 ac. and 1050 families live off that land.¹⁴ There are 9 D-channels and 7 FO's. The main crop is paddy, which is cultivated both in the dry (Yala) and the wet season (Maha). Vegetables are hardly cultivated, except in a few tail-end plots in Yala. Buttala anicut is a special

¹¹ Chena refers to rainfed cultivation. This usually takes place on higher plots, for that reasons it is also called 'highland cultivation.'

¹² A D-channel is a secondary channel, in other words the first branch from the main channel.

¹³ However, in the dry season some farmers said the illegal water tapping by the sugar company upstream from the anicut caused water shortage.

¹⁴ The approach channel is 2.2 km long and the main canal is 5.1 km long.

system, because almost all the drainage water flows back to the main channel, in order to be used again by farmers of downstream D-channels. In that way, wastage of water is kept to a minimum.

Elder farmers say, that originally the anicut had been constructed by farmers with wood, but in 1815 the British built concrete gates at the anicut. In 1953 the system was rehabilitated for the first time by the ID. The NIRP rehabilitation started in 1990 and the system was handed over to the FO's in 1995. The actual construction for the NIRP project was done between April 1992 and September 1994. Before the NIRP rehabilitation, the main problem in the system, as identified by the ID, was flooding of tertiary canals due to the uncoordinated operation of the system. The rehabilitation aimed at solving this by ensuring a continuous flow for all plots. For this purpose every farmer would receive a tube inlet. [NIRP progress report 1996] [NIRP Technical Report on Buttala scheme]

Physically the system can be divided into 3 parts, upstream, middle and downstream. (figure 3) Medagama village is located in the middle part of the system. There are 3 D-channels in that part, Hakurusimbalaya ela, Garandi Bakini Ela and Medagama ela, with a command area of respectively 208 ac., 71 ac and 140 ac. (figure 4)

3.2.2 The Village

In 1994¹⁵ there were 343 families living in Medagama, 1436 people. The majority of the adult population is between 19-35 years old. Of the total population older than 18, 50.5 % is male and 49,5 % is female. Of the adult population 82% is employed in the agricultural sector.

There is a small tank (command area of 25 ac.), belonging to the village, but the major part of the paddy land belongs to Buttala anicut system. Of the 626 ac. of paddy land under Buttala scheme in Medagama, 566 ac is owned by private owners, 17 ac. belongs to Kataragama deewale¹⁶, 33 ac to the Land Rehabilitation Board and 10 ac. are Permit lands¹⁷. Most of the paddy land is cultivated by tenants. The landlords live outside the village. There are quite some muslim landlords who are mudalali's¹⁸ in Buttala. Most of the tenants got the tenancy in 1953 with the Paddy Lands Act. Besides tenants, there are leasers. Leasers also cultivate other people's land, but they are not registered at the Department of Agrarian Services. There are many different leasing arrangements. Among the most important arrangements are share cropping and 'tenants leasing'. Under share cropping, some percentage of the costs of inputs are paid by the owner. After harvest, that amount is subtracted from the harvest first, the remaining part is divided equally between cultivator and owner. 'Tenant leasers' bear all costs of the cultivation themselves, but they pay 40 bushels per acre to the landlord. It should be noted that legal tenants pay only 10 bushels per acre.¹⁹ In comparison to them 'tenant leasers' are thus a lot worse off. This is increased by the fact that they do not have legally ensured rights to the land either. As

¹⁵ The data in this part are based on the information given by the gramasevaka, the mayor of Medagama. His information dated from 1994.

¹⁶ Land belonging to the temple.

¹⁷ Legally, permit land are owned by the state. The farmer has a permit to cultivate the land. Officially a small sum should be paid, and the permit should be renewed every year.

¹⁸ Mudalali's are businessmen, usually shopkeepers.

¹⁹ The average harvest is about 80 bushels per acre. A bushel is about 22 kgs of paddy.

paddy cultivation becomes more expensive, there are many cases in which legal tenants lease 'their' land to 'tenant leasers', because relatively few risks are involved. Very few people in the village do not cultivate irrigated land at all. In the report legal tenants will be referred to by 'ande tenants', and other arrangements will be called 'leasers'.

Medagama is a Sinhala village; there is only one Tamil lady living in the village. Muslims live in the nearby town, Buttala. Although it is a purana²⁰ village, almost all the inhabitants of the village are high-caste, govigama, and upcountry people. Low-caste people left to the settlement areas, because they were the ones who did not have paddy land. There has never been a settlement program in Medagama, but in the beginning of the century many new families came to live in the village. These people came to the village in search of chena lands, which was still available in the village at that time. Later on, men from the hill-country or from low-country married women from the village in bina²¹, because of the relative abundance of paddy land. Some years ago the Sri Lankan government confiscated the slash and burn chena lands (meaning those without legal owners) for the sugar company. According to the villagers there is now a shortage of both chena and paddy land in the village.

3.3. Research Methods

3.3.1 Methodology for Gender Research

Initially the Irrigation Department proposed to do research in a lot of schemes and to reveal the numbers of female members and male members. In order to identify starting points for intervention, however, one should also understand what kind of reasons underlie the limited participation of female farmers. This is the reason that I emphasised the use of a qualitative methodology in investigation gender relations.

Scholars on feminist methodology stress two concerns, [Gorelick, 1991]. Firstly feminists argue against the practice in many studies to discuss mainly with men. Feminists say that researchers should give a voice to women as well and as a consequence much emphasis was given to women's own experience in research. In my view it is important to show women's own experience, but research on gender relations does not imply that a researcher talks only to women. This is perhaps self-evident, because both men and women are involved in gender relations.

Secondly there has been much discussion as to whether a specific feminist methodology exists and/or is needed. For investigating gender relations, it is not sufficient to simply talk to women, because there is a tendency to 'norm confirmative' answers. To interpret these answers as the result of 'false consciousness' would be too much arrogance from the side of the researcher. Although 'norm confirmative' answers may be -to some extent- the result of internalised ideology, I argue that in many cases it has more to do with the relationship between researcher and person researched. It is this relationship that has to be improved before the researcher is able to understand which questions to ask and before the person researched feels like answering those

²⁰ Purana means a traditional sinhala village. This is opposed to the villages resulting from government resettlement. The latter are less than 50 years old.

²¹ In a bina marriage the husband comes to live with the wives' family. There are strong indications that on an average the wife has a better position in bina marriages.

questions in a less 'norm confirmative' way. Prerequisites for such a relationship are that a researcher spends time with people, is open to take new perspectives seriously and considers every single person as an individual personality. Other characteristics of feminist research are the emphasis on a dialogue with male and female farmers, the reflection on the researchers' own position and the wish to contribute to a better position of the researched people.

3.3.2 Methods

Data collection for the in-depth study took place over a period of 6 months. During that time periods of approximately 3 weeks in the field were alternated by a stay of approximately one week in the office in order to process data. The data collection was carried out together with an interpreter. During the field work we lived with one of the families who were involved with the FO.

The data collection consisted of two parts/strategies that were conducted simultaneously: data about the sample households and data about the FO issues. The data about the sample households served to provide understanding of the attitudes in that particular household towards the FO and female participation. These attitudes were related as much as possible to the agricultural strategies and problems, and intra- and inter-household relationships. With the sample households, semi-structured interviews were used, but also field visits and games. A more detailed description of the games on village organisations and household decision making can be found in annex 1. In each interview a certain topic was discussed and the same topic was discussed with all the sample households in the same period of time. Data collection about the FO practices, was much more directed towards the issues in the FO at that moment. Meetings were attended, and relations within the FO and with officers were explored. Meetings were recorded completely, because they are very rich in interaction. The aim was to make them a 'situational analysis'. In addition to that, some interviews on specific topics, eg. the history of the FO, were also conducted. Of course, the two parts were not completely separate; many sample household members being FO members, some sample household members being affected by FO practices. In addition to this, some issues got sorted out with the help of about nine key-informants, each with their own 'speciality'.

The following steps give an overview of the different phases in data collection:

1. Introductory phase: 'Who are the female members of the FO?' To get acquainted with the villagers and the FO, and to let them get acquainted with us as well, informal talks and semi-structured discussions were held with the members of the households of female FO members, office-bearers and some officers.
2. Wealth Ranking and gathering of Secondary information, like:
the electorate list, data from the gramasevaka, the cultivation list at the DAS, FO reports of committee and general meetings -if available-, FO attendance lists -if available-, FO membership lists and PMC reports. Maps could not be obtained.
3. 'Searching for water problems', visiting the fields, attending the kanna meeting.
4. Discussion on village organisations and on household decisionmaking with the sample households with the help of card games. Focus on conflicts within the FO. Following possible problems households have with land preparation.
5. 'Searching for water issues in Yala', going to the field again. Cases and potentials of the FO.

No real fixed questions or methods were used. Through interviews and discussions, the more relevant issues and the more suitable methods were identified. Consequently, those became the basis for further data collection. First of all, a good and clear introduction was given of ourselves (researcher and interpreter) and the purpose of the research. The basic aim was to establish a more or less intimate relationship with the members from the sample households. It was not always possible to establish such a relation with all household members in all households. Some methods were more successful than others, and some people responded better to a certain approach than others. An effort was made to vary methods and to elaborate successful methods. The most important thing was to accommodate for the specific characteristics and situation of people. For that purpose, all collected data given by a specific person, or on a specific household or specific topic, were used to formulate sharper questions and sort out contradictions.

Always abstract statements were translated as much as possible into names of people, places, numbers or activities, eg. not talking about 'farmers' in general, but specific farmers by their names. After some time, this practice became quite accepted, although it proved much more difficult to get officers to make specified statements than farmers. In interaction with officers, it proved useful to start the discussion with a specific technical situation, eg. a broken structure, because this implicitly referred to a specific person.

In order to get a better idea of intrahousehold relations, I wanted to talk separately with different household members. This proved not always easy, particularly in the case of young mothers with children who had married in diga.²² A useful way to get to talk to people separately, was either to meet them in the field, or to visit them when they are home alone. Young mothers cannot go to the field that easily, and they are rarely alone at home, because there is always a mother-in-law, a father-in-law or some grandparents of the husband's family. In a later stage of the data collection, we could, however, direct ourselves directly to some of these young women, being young women ourselves. The similar sex and age-class was sufficient reason to develop a special friendship with them and to talk with them separately.

The data collection took place at a particular time over a limited time span. A particular time always entails a certain bias. Firstly, people talk more, and more into detail about things they are doing at the moment than about past events. Secondly, things that take place can be observed, while with events in the past, this is not always the case. As there was little written material available, it took a relatively large amount of time to obtain comparable data about eg. past FO events or irrigation problems.

²² They came to live with the parents-in-law.

PART II

ACCESS TO THE FARMERS' ORGANISATION

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INTRODUCTION TO PART II

In the village of research, Medagama, the ratio men to women above 18 years old is 50.5 to 49.5. One would thus expect a similar sex ratio among FO members. There are two reasons to expect this. First of all 82% of the population is said to be working in and depending upon the agricultural sector. Secondly, there is, a priori, no reason to believe that women's livelihood is not depending as much on agriculture as men's. However, comparing the numbers of male and female members and office-bearers shows that female members are rather under represented in the FO:

Table 1. The numbers of male and female members and office-bearers in the three FOs in Buttala anicut: Medagama Ela (MDE), Garandi Bakine Ela (GBE) and Hakurusimbalaya Ela (HSE). (source: membership lists of the secretaries of the FOs)

| FO | MDE | GBE | HSE |
|-----------------------|-----|-----|------|
| male members | 70 | 35 | 93 |
| female members | 19 | 12 | 21 |
| male office-bearers | 6-8 | 6-8 | 5-10 |
| female office-bearers | 0 | 0 | 0-2 |

In addition to this discrepancy between male and female membership, it should be noted that membership does not imply participation. A distinction has to be made between the number of female members and the number of female attendants. Unfortunately very few figures are available on the latter because attendance lists are rarely kept at FO meetings. Only in the case of Hakurusimbalaya Ela FO attendance lists were available.

Information from interviews suggests that access to the FO is more sharply gendered than access to most of the other organisations in the village. Whereas female participation in the Death Donation Society, Rural Development Society, Sanasa, Co-operative Shops, Religious Organisations, School Organisations, Samurdhi Organisations¹ is acknowledged, female participation is virtually absent in the FO's.

In this part, the construction of access to the FO is discussed. It will be shown how the FO has evolved into a male interaction domain by discussing consecutively formal membership criteria, informal membership criteria and the practices of access to participation. It will be examined to what extent men and women qualify for FO participation on the basis of these criteria and practices. Consequently, part of the discussion will consist of a critical deconstruction of these notions by contrasting these with actual behaviour of men and women.

¹ DDS is the Death Donation Society, RDS is the Rural Development Society, Sanasa is a credit society, Samurdhi is a government program directed at the poor.

CHAPTER 4 ACCESS TO FARMERS' ORGANISATION MEMBERSHIP

4.1 Members of the Farmers' Organisation are Legal Cultivators

The qualification for membership in the FOs in the NIRP schemes is registration with the Department of Agrarian Services as a paddy land cultivator. This registration is only for legal tenants of paddy land and for paddy land owners who did not give their land for tenancy. Other forms of land tenure, like pawn and several variations of lease and share cropping arrangements are not legally laid down at the Department of Agrarian Services.

In the cultivation lists [cultivation lists of Medagama, DAS, Buttala] there are less female legal cultivators paddy land than male legal cultivators of paddy land. (see table 2) Approximately only 32% of the legal cultivators are women. Underrepresentation of women in the FO is thus partly a reflection of the lower number of female landowners and tenants in comparison to male landowners and tenants. Today, most Sri Lankan policy makers seem to take it for granted, and to consider it natural, that paddy land rights are predominantly vested in men. This is surprising. According to the analysis of both Agarwal [1994]² and Risseeuw [1988] women had remarkably strong rights in land in traditional Sinhala society and this only started to change under the British colonisation.³ The next question is of course, why this situation persisted after independence.

Table 2. The numbers of female and male cultivators and the total number of acres belonging to respectively men and women under Medagama Ela FO (MDE), Garandi Bakine Ela FO (GBE) and Hakurusimbalaya Ela FO (HSE). (source: cultivation lists at the DAS of Buttala) ⁴

| FO | MDE | GBE | HSE |
|-------------------------------|-------|------|-------|
| number of women | 38 | 15 | 50 |
| number of men | 68 | 34 | 116 |
| % women to total number | 36% | 31% | 30% |
| acres belonging to women | 63/1 | 22/3 | 61/2 |
| acres belonging to men | 122/1 | 49/0 | 157/1 |
| % of acres belonging to women | 34% | 32% | 28% |

² Agarwal mentions that between 1901 and 1921 the number of female Sinhala paddy land owners fell to half, whereas the number of female wage earners and other labourers increased. [Agarwal 1994, pg.182]

³ 'British administrators, probably less concerned with the problem of landlessness than with the ways in which growing land fragmentation could constrain the development of capitalist agriculture, suggested as one solution the introduction of primogeniture, which would effectively exclude younger sons and all daughters from rights in land. The scheme was eventually shelved because of the enforcement difficulties and the recognition that excluding other children, especially younger sons, would be unacceptable in a system where all children traditionally had inheritance rights. '[Risseeuw 1988]

⁴ These are approximate numbers based upon the number of male and female names in the cultivation list. As people may have different plots under different yaya's or even different D-channels, some men and some women have been counted double. Therefore the total number of acres belonging to males respectively females has been counted as well.

4.2 How to Obtain the Status of Legal Cultivator

Women are less likely to become a member of the FO, because their chances of getting land, in particular paddy land, are limited in comparison to men's. This can be shown by examining the three ways in which people can obtain the status of legal cultivator:

- through inheritance of legal tenancy of paddy land or landownership of paddy land from one of the parents
- through inheritance of legal tenancy of paddy land or landownership of paddy land from a deceased partner
- by purchasing paddy land tenancy or ownership themselves

To understand whether inheritance is gendered, not only the government's laws about inheritance need to be examined, but also the reasoning and practices of inheritances in rural families. The question to what extent men and women inherit (formal) landrights from their deceased partners is also related to inheritance practices in rural families. The extent to which men and women purchase (formal) landrights mainly depends upon their ability to mobilise and control capital for that. This money might be obtained by off-farm income, but also by extending the cultivation. Some people consider lease land cultivation as a strategy to obtain paddy land.⁵ Gender differences in purchasing land rights are therefore examined in relation to the different positions men and women have in their households both before and after marriage.

Legal Cultivator through Inheritance

Under the traditional laws of inheritance in Sinhala societies, a distinction was made between married daughters living with the family of her husband (diga -marriage) and married daughters living with her own parents (bina-marriage). A bina-married daughter had the same rights as her brothers and unmarried sisters in the family estate, whereas a diga-married daughter in principle had lost her rights. According to Agarwal [1994], women do inherit land as daughters in Sinhala society nowadays. Nevertheless they usually inherit less land than their brothers and the chances of inheriting for diga-married daughters are greater if they remain in their natal village. As more women are marrying in diga, fewer women inherit land. Especially because their brothers are afraid their sisters will sell the land to outsiders. The situation in Medagama is illustrative for the pattern of inheritance Agarwal describes.

In Medagama, two kinds of arguments are used to explain the preference for sons to inherit paddy land. One argument is that men are the paddy cultivators and as such should inherit the paddy land. If this argument would be applied, one would expect daughters to inherit homestead and chena. However, increasingly daughters do not inherit land at all. The argument is that both chena and paddy land are becoming scarce and the only highland left is the homestead land. The homestead land -plus the house- is generally given to the youngest child. Sinhala people argue that finally the youngest of the children should stay with the parents and look after them in their old age. For that reason he or she is entitled to inherit more than the other children and in particular to inherit the homestead. Although the argument that men should inherit paddy land

⁵ It is, however, a traditional strategy. Many people argue that paddy cultivation has become that much expensive that it is no longer possible to earn money with lease land paddy cultivation.

because they are cultivators is most frequently mentioned, the latter argument is decisive in the inheritance. In practice, it is not the youngest child, but the youngest son who inherits most of the property. Sons are considered to be capable of properly looking after their parents, because men are considered to be the main providers and income-earners.⁶ In this capacity men are thought to be able to decide independently to spend a part of their income on sustaining their parents, whereas women, even if they would inherit their parents' land, would have more difficulty in claiming a part of the income to support their parents. Consequently parents marry their daughters in *diga*, assuming that their sons will look after them.

Recognising the limited value of the assumption that sons are capable to decide independently to spend part of their income on sustaining their parents, most parents do not write the name of one of their children as the successor yet. Afraid of their old age, they keep their children in uncertainty about the division of property as long as they can. In the mean time, both mothers and fathers, but especially mothers, keep a close relationship with their (*diga*-married) daughters. (By sending them foods, taking care of them during pregnancy and childbirth.) Mothers also confirm their power by accusing their sons that they are listening to much to their wives and that the daughters-in-law do not look after them properly.⁷ In addition to the expectation that sons are the decision maker in the household, sons are inheritors because they are expected to have control over the labour of their wives. It is illustrative in this respect, that 'looking after' does not have the same meaning for men and for women. Men should look after their parents in the financial sense, whereas their wives are supposed to provide all the care and labour.⁸ Ultimately, these expectations explain why sons are preferred over daughters in inheritance. In the case of Ms RM⁹ Piyaseele it was actually already decided that she would not inherit, because she married in *diga*.

In Ms RM Piyaseele's (28yrs) family there are 2 sons and 5 daughters. She married Mr Siri Malli (32yrs) in diga. Ms Piyaseele is a very active paddy farmer. Her elder brother, Mr RM Piyadasa(30yrs) and his wife are the only ones left living with their parents. Their father, Mr RM Siri Banda (67yrs) has 3 acres paddy land to divide, but still he has not done so. There is no highland other than the land on which the house is built. That highland is their mother's, Ms AM Pryanthi (58yrs), property. At the moment Mr Piyadasa is cultivating the 3 acres of paddy, but he is not sure he will get the land. His reasoning is that his sisters have paddy land through their husbands and his brother through a dowry. His sisters did not ask for land, he says. It is not probable that his sister's husband, Mr Siri Malli, will receive paddy land from his mother, Ms WM Irangeni (57yrs). Ms WM Irangeni is a widow. She did not divide the paddy land either, and one of her sons, Mr Punchi Malli (30yrs), is cultivating her land as well. Mr Punchi Malli also assumes he is the successor, because Mr Siri Malli received some highland. Ms Piyaseele is cultivating paddy land on lease.

⁶ The role of men as providers, main income earners and decision makers will be discussed in more detail in the section on 'actual cultivatorship'.

⁷ In this context, Schrijvers [1986] quoted a very illustrative sinhalese folk poem:

"I was hungry and I went to my son's house
The son and his wife were measuring for storing up their rice
Then they measured a tiny bit and gave me
My dear son, did I measure the milk also when I fed you?"

⁸ The conflict develops as parents want to receive a share of the land they are actually leasing to their children, whereas they are living with and depending upon the same children. At that moment they become marginalised within the household. This becomes more of a problem once parents become older and ill.

⁹ The abbreviation 'RM' stands for Ratnayake Mudianselage, Piyaseele's surname. This is a high caste name. In Sri Lanka it is common practice to abbreviate the surname in stead of the first name, because surnames are long. Especially in the purana villages where many people are related to each other, surnames are abbreviated. As some people have the same first name, the abbreviation is used to distinguish them.

It is true that her brother, Mr RM Piyadasa is investing most of the labour in the paddy cultivation for his family and his parents. He also does wage labour to provide money for the family. However, when the paddy in her parents' home is finished, Ms Piyaseele gives them paddy. She does not ask that paddy back, but her mother, Ms AM Pryanthi, makes sure Ms Piyaseele will always get coffee, spices and fruits from her home garden. Both Ms Piyaseele's and Mr Siri Malli's mother are threatening the children by saying they will give their land for tatumaru¹⁰. They say there have been too many experiences with family fights about land. In reality, however, they keep their control over the children, by not designating a successor at all.

Ms RM Sirimawathie had prepared everything for a peaceful old age. She married all her daughters and the relation with her youngest son is very good. Then he told her he did not want to marry. Of Ms RM Sirimawathie does not agree with that, because she needs to be sure of female labour to take care of her in her old days.

Ms RM Sirimawathie (68yrs) has 6 children, 3 sons and 3 daughters. She married her 3 daughters in diga. Her youngest child is a girl. Her youngest son still did not marry and he is living with her and her husband. Her eldest son married against her wish. Therefore she did not accept his wife in her family. Her second son married an arranged marriage, but after living with them for some time, she proposed him to go and make a life for his own. The reason was that she was not sure of the commitment of his wife to look after them. Her husband already divided his paddy land among the children.¹¹ He gave all the children 1 ac of paddy land, except for the youngest son, who got 2 acres. Ms Sirimawathie did not divide her own land yet. She has one acre of homestead land on which the house is built and an acre of sin acre¹² paddy land, that she purchased in 1964 on her name. As her younger son still didn't marry and told her he has no intentions to marry, she was very upset. She is now investing in her relationship with her youngest daughter. If her son leaves she will invite her and her husband, and she will write whatever is on her name to her youngest daughter.

In spite of the above mentioned problems, in the end most of the land is inherited by male children. The argument to favour sons over daughters in the inheritance of (paddy) land relies in particular on their (supposed) superior capacity to look after parents in a financial sense. As a result, women have less chances to become registered with the Department of Agrarian Services as a legal cultivator by inheritance.

Legal Cultivator as Successor of Landrights of a Deceased Partner

The majority of the female landowners and tenants obtained the land title after the death of their husband. Traditionally, there was no concept of community of property after marriage in either diga or bina marriages. The Kandyan men and women commonly married and divorced several times during a life-time. Divorce involved no formalities and property was separate anyway. [Agarwal, 1994] After a man's death both male and female children shared equally in a his acquired property, but subject to the widow's life interest. A widow also had the right to maintenance from her deceased husband's parental estate if his acquired property was insufficient. Under the British government until today the Kandyan Sinhalese retained their traditional law, but other Sinhalese fall under the General Law. The General law states, when

¹⁰ Tatumaru is a system of inheritance in which one child has the right to cultivate a plot one or two growing seasons once in a number of years. The number of years one has to wait depends on the number of children that share tatumaru rights on the same plot.

¹¹ He does not need to worry about who takes care of him, because he is 22 yrs older than Ms RM 8.

¹² Sin acre is land in ownership.

either spouse dies, the other inherits half of the property of the deceased partner. The other half is to be divided among the children, unless by his/her life the deceased has written one of the children the successor. A widow inherits the whole of the property if there are no children, according to the law.

In Medagama the majority of the people are Kandyan Sinhalese. Thus one would expect that their traditional Kandyan Sinhalese law would apply. However, the most common way for women to obtain land is as the successor of their husbands. In that case she is in the position to divide the land as she likes. Those widows are under the constant pressure of children and relatives to divide the property. Due to their future dependency on their children their actual bargaining power to control the land is limited. This can be seen in the case of Ms WM Irangeni. Dividing the property does not guarantee a widow that her children will look after her. In case of a divorce or desertion, the second wife becomes the successor of the property. However, it happens that the husband writes (some of) the children of the first marriage as his successor before his death.

Ms WM Irangeni's (57yrs) situation is very difficult. She has 7 children, but her only daughter is a mental patient, only depending on her. One son was killed and one son disappeared during the JVP¹³ uprising, one is in the army, one is a monk. Ms WM Irangeni intended to write the land on her son's name, Mr Punchi Malli's name, but finally he did not give her a share of the harvest and his wife did not look after her. There was a fight and consequently Mr Punchi Malli and his wife left the house with most of the property. Mr Punchi Malli argued that it is his right to do this, because the property was acquired with the money he earned with the paddy cultivation before his marriage. With the harvest of last kanna¹⁴ and bank loans he managed to built a house for himself very quickly on the highland his fathers' first marriage son gave him. Ms WM Irangeni has very little choice but to give him the land again¹⁵, but now under the condition that he pays the whole share. In the mean time she's trying to recover a sin acre land of her father in an other village, and she's investing in her relationship with the youngest son, a monk. Her major problem is that none of the wives wants to look after the mentally ill daughter.

Most women who are registered as a cultivator with the Department of Agrarian Services, obtained paddy land as a successor of their deceased husbands. Due to their future dependency upon their children, many face difficulties in actually controlling the land and its produce. As their primary concern is that their children take care of them when they grow old, they do not confront their children in order to control the production process. The land title is reduced to being the guarantee of their survival and their position in the family. For that reason their interest in FO membership is limited as well. (It does not imply, however, that their labour contribution to the paddy cultivation is limited.) Once their children fail to live up to their expectations, they use their power.

¹³ The JVP stands for the People's Liberation Front. It was a communist movement that was particularly popular among the rural youth. Their uprisings in 1971 and especially the one in 1989 were extremely violent. As a reaction the government took many young rural people into custody.

¹⁴ Kanna means growing season.

¹⁵ She already quarreled with her other daughters-in-law.

Legal Cultivator by Purchasing Landrights

In Medagama, most people consider paddy land the most important resource for the family. This means if it is sin acre or (ande) tenant land. They consider it the most important resource, because of the security, not because of the benefits of production. Women attach as much importance to paddy land as men. The importance women attach to paddy land is illustrated by the case of Ms KM Ukku Manike who has paddy land and who tries to retain it. The relation between paddy land and security is also illustrated in the case of Ms RM Sirimathie.

Ms KM Ukku Manike's (62yrs) only son is an MP¹⁶. He is building a brand new 2-storied house. He is unmarried and he is earning a lot of money. Ms KM Ukku Manike is walauwe¹⁷, therefore she has some sin acre paddy land in the scheme. Besides that she acquired paddy land through her deceased husband. After her husband's death in 1968, she started cultivating herself. With the JVP insurrection in 1989, her house was burned down and her other son was murdered. After that, she was threatened not to go to certain parts in the scheme. In addition to this, she has a problem finding reliable hired labour. For these reasons, paddy cultivation seems hardly possible for her, but she cultivates her sin acre land herself once in every 3 kanna's. Her main reason is not to get any permanent tenants on the land, thus she will always be able to cultivate her own food.

Ms RM Sirimawathie (68yrs) has 3 sisters and one brother, the youngest. Sisters received homestead land and the brother paddy land. However, all the sisters, including Ms Sirimawathie herself, married in bina. Ms RM Sirimawathie's husband had a lot of tenant paddy land in his parents' place, but her father wanted him to come with them. The land in his native place was deewale land (tenant land that belongs to the Kataragama temple), not sin acre. Ms Sirimawathie married before the Paddy Lands Act. At that time, the rights of tenants were not secured by law, therefore her father decided that they would live here. Her husband was able to get some good tenancy land here, of which he later obtained legal tenancy ship. In 1964 she bought 2 acres of sin acre land for herself for Rs14000. In the cultivation list she is named as the owner and her husband as the tenant. It is important for her security, because her husband is much older than she is.

While sin acre and tenant land are usually inherited, (in rare occasions it is purchased) obtaining pawn land involves lots of money. Pawn land is valued as much as legal tenant land, but most people do not have money for it. Both men and women do try to get pawn land if they have money. Taking land on lease is the easiest way to obtain more land and to some a strategy to get money to buy landrights. Compared to men, most women do not value lease land, because they think the costs are too high in comparison to the benefits. This is not surprising considering the fact that women only become active in acquiring land after they marry, whereas it is mainly young unmarried men who go for lease land cultivation. As they do not have the responsibility for a family yet, they can put up with lower margins than married people. These men's objectives are to gain their parents' esteem by contributing to the parental household expenses and to establish their economic independence. With the money, they try to buy some tenant land for themselves, if possible. Unmarried women are generally not encouraged to undertake such kind of things. Married men, who do not have (sufficient) land of their own and who do not have a job either, sometimes also take lease land. They may have built up a reputation of being good

¹⁶ An MP a member of parliament. These people have a high salary.

¹⁷ Walauwe people are very respected. There is a caste system in Sri Lanka, but among the high-caste people there is a group that used to serve the King. These nobles are even more respected than high-caste people. They are called 'walauwe'. Caste and walauwe are identified by the surname.

cultivators, and it is relatively easy for them to get both land and loans, (or share-cropped land). However, in most cases their wives do not agree to take more land than needed for home consumption. They stress that the paddy cultivation on lease land is too expensive to earn money.

It is striking that landless female heads of households do not take lease land, but encroach some paddy land illegally. This has two aspects. According to Ms Elange Piyaseele nobody would consider to give her lease land because there is no man in her household.¹⁸ On the other hand, the right to encroach land and take water is not as quickly disputed in the case of female heads of households, as in the case of a man encroaching land. They are pitied, because they have to cope without male labour and protection.

Ms Elange Piyaseele (34yrs) is a female head of household living in a small temporary house. She sustains four schooling children. Her mother stays with them now and then. In order to survive she makes cajuns, sells coconuts, goes for hired labour and cultivates her 1/4 acre highland. Recently she turned 1/4 of her mother's homestead land, on which she is living, into paddy land. She regrets she couldn't prepare more land. She prepared the whole land by mamaty.¹⁹ She says if the children had helped her she could have prepared more. It was a labour problem, not a water problem. She could have arranged for the water to go there. Her mother told her she would write this small piece of homestead land to her, after Ms Piyaseele builds a two room house. However, Ms Piyaseele has a doubt she will. She is the eldest out of a family of six.

Frequently women actively engage in getting (ande) tenancy land or sin acre during their marriage, for example by saving. They do not always put priority to get this land registered in their name. This might indicate that they consider the land mainly as an insurance for their old age.

Land is highly valued by both men and women, but very few people obtain new paddy land, except for lease land. Although lease land itself does not involve registration with the Department of Agrarian Services (and thus access to FO membership), cultivating lease is a means to get money to buy land. This is mainly an interesting strategy for unmarried people as the margins are very small. Those who obtain new landrights in this way are almost all unmarried men. Their limited freedom before marriage, explains the fact that less young (25-35 yrs) women than men of their age group obtain the status of legal cultivator in this way. Women who do obtain new paddy land after marriage, value that land more as an investment for future security, than as something to make money at present. This means that many women do not give a high priority to get this land registered under their name at the Department of Agrarian Services.²⁰ As a consequence of these two mechanisms less women than men get new landrights registered under their name. In fact hardly any women get the status of legal cultivator by purchasing new landrights.

¹⁸ Implying that without a man the cultivation will never be successfully enough to pay the shares for lease.

¹⁹ A mamaty is a large hoe.

²⁰ As most people consider it natural paddy land is registered under a man's name, newly acquired land is more often registered under the husband's name.

4.3 The Genderedness of Access to Membership of the Farmers' Organisation

Access to FO membership is gendered, because it is regulated by the criterion 'legal cultivator'. This is to be registered with the Department of Agrarian Services as a landowner or a legal tenant. There are not only less female legal cultivators than male legal cultivators at present, but this situation will most likely also persist in future. Although it is not part of the Sri Lankan Laws, girls have less chances to become legal cultivators than boys. As a daughter, girls have less chances of inheriting paddy land from their parents, because parents expect financial support from their sons. As a young unmarried women, they usually do not have the chance to earn money to buy landrights as some men do. As a married women, the paddy land they acquire, tends to be registered under the husband's name. Ultimately, as a widow, women do obtain the status of legal cultivator, but at that point they lack the power to control it.

For the majority of the women the criterion of legal cultivator thus denies them FO membership, until the age when participation in the FO is no longer useful to them.

CHAPTER 5 ACCESS TO PARTICIPATION IN THE FARMERS' ORGANISATION

5.1 Informal Criteria

Although legal cultivatorship is the formal criterion for FO membership, it does not imply that every legal cultivator actually participates in the FO activities. Out of the limited number of women who have legal cultivatorship, only a few (actively) participate in the FO activities. In households where a man is the tenant or landowner, this fact is used as the explanation for his attendance. However, in households where the legal cultivator is a woman, the greater participation of men in paddy cultivation or their position as 'head of household' is used as an explanation.

These ideas function as 'informal membership criteria', or criteria for participation in the FO. The concept of actual cultivatorship aims to find those with the most direct link with the paddy cultivation, in other words the 'real' stakeholders. The concept of head of householdship is concerned with the idea of representation. The direct link between the participants in the FO and the cultivation is not the issue that matters, but the idea that the interests of all stakeholders are represented by the heads of household. Stakeholder definition is thus avoided in the concept of head of household.

Both these informal criteria are gendered. Actual cultivatorship is gendered due to the idea that men are considered the 'real' paddy farmers and women 'just help them'. The concept of 'head of household' is gendered, because a priori men are seen as the best representatives.

The gendered impact of informal criteria on participation, is illustrated by the fact that there are sons, who cultivate their mothers land as leasers, who participate in the FO on her behalf. Contrary to the rule that 'leasers do not have the right to talk', some of these sons even become committee members. However, a daughter who is cultivating her father's paddy field, doesn't go to the meetings, because, she says, 'I do not have a right to talk.'

Ms DM Pryanthi (35yrs) is the youngest in her family. She is an unmarried mother and lives with her parents. She cultivates her father's paddy land in order to sustain her three children and her parents. Her father has membership in the FO, but she does not go to the meetings. She says: 'I do not have the right to talk in the meeting, because I am not a member. My father is the member, but he is too old to go.' Surprisingly, she is very active in many other organisations.

Informal criteria are used by both officers and policy makers, and male and female farmers. Although not all individuals personally agree that these criteria are legitimate, most officers and male and female farmers think these informal criteria regulate female participation in the FO. I will now discuss the informal criteria, 'actual cultivatorship' and 'head of householdship', into more detail.

5.2 Participants in the Farmers' Organisation are 'Actual Cultivators'

The concept of actual cultivatorship assumes that, although legal cultivatorship is registered with the Department of Agrarian Services, legal cultivators are not necessarily actual cultivators. For actual cultivatorship other qualifications than registration with the Department of Agrarian Services are relevant. The concept is the most commonly used by both officers, and male and female farmers. There are 2 criteria used to designate someone (a man) as the 'actual cultivator':

- a) the 'actual cultivator' is the one who works in the paddy field
- b) the 'actual cultivator' is the one who makes decisions in the paddy cultivation

The 'Actual Cultivator' is the One who works in the Paddy Field

In this first definition of actual cultivatorship, it is thought that one person works in irrigated agriculture and that this one person is a man. This idea is supported by statements like the following:

'I have never seen a woman working in the paddy field.'

'Women do almost nothing in the paddy cultivation nowadays. They used to do transplanting and weeding, but now most farmers do broadcasting and they use chemicals to control the weeds. Therefore women are no longer part of the paddy cultivation.'

A variation of the thought that there is one male worker, is that a woman is working in the paddy cultivation as well, but that she is helping and therefore she is not an actual cultivator.

'Men are doing the real paddy cultivation, because they are doing the heavy tasks, like land preparation. Due to their lack of strength women cannot perform those kind of tasks. As a consequence women can never become real paddy cultivators.'

It is quite common for both officers and male and female farmers to explain the lack of female participation in the FO, in first instance by saying they are not the real workers in the paddy field. It should be noted that, on the one hand, female labour contribution is generally underestimated and undervalued. On the other hand, it is common practice to answer such questions by the norm, and not by observations that deviate from the norm. Most villagers say the norm in Sinhala society is that men should earn the money. In that way a man 'provides protection' for his wife and children, by not allowing them 'to go around' and 'beg'. This idea, however, does not imply that women are expected to stay idle and they do not. In practice, it is hard to come across a household where only one person works in the paddy field. Therefore it is difficult to tell one person is the 'actual cultivator' in a household, and even more difficult to tell which person.

Traditionally the specific female tasks in paddy cultivation are: transplanting, weeding, and collecting paddy²¹. The first two tasks are said to be limited due to the use of new technologies: broadcasting and spraying. Making rice from paddy and preparing meals for attam²² or hired

²¹ Collecting paddy refers to carrying the paddy to the threshing floor.

²² Attam means exchange labour

labour are also specific female tasks²³.

The negotiations about labour in Medagama suggest that the labour contribution to the paddy cultivation by men and women, is only partly based on the ideological prescribed gender division of labour. More important is the labour availability in every specific household situation. This labour availability changes when, for example, one household member has a job, or in periods when there are wage labour opportunities. This leads to temporary or permanent labour substitution by other household members. In the following two cases it is shown that the 'one who works' in the paddy fields is sometimes determined by the fact that another person has a job.

Ms RM Piyaseele's (28yrs) husband is a tractor driver. With her husband standing next to her she says: 'I do nearly everything in the paddy field because he has a job. You can see it, his toe nails are all neat, but mine are almost completely spoilt.' She is an enthusiastic and knowledgeable farmer. She arranges all the hired labour and she goes to the field every day to divert water and search for diseases. She has to come every day because it is a tail-end plot.

Ms KM Sirimathie (27yrs) has a job as accountant in the sugar company. She thinks her job, together with the paddy stock are her most important sources of income. As she has a job, she says the home garden and the paddy field are her husband's work. Both of them will do household work and discuss about the expenses.

The following case is an examples of labour substitution during periods when wage labour opportunities were available. Contrary to the explanation by most Irrigation Engineers, water diversion does not seem to be a gender specific task. It is done by the person who is available and often combined with other work in the paddy field.

In Mr Kalu Aiya (39yrs) household there seemed to be a rather explicit labour division. He 'does' the paddy cultivation, the children take care of the cows and his wife 'does' highland cultivation, homestead cultivation, weaving cajuns and all the household work. When the sugar cane harvesting time came, Mr Kalu Aiya started doing wage labour. Then his wife took over the responsibilities for the paddy. She went for water diversion or sent one of the children to check. If there was a water problem, she would tell Mr Kalu Aiya to go and check the water that night.

There are traditional male tasks in the paddy cultivation that are generally not performed by women, either because they are categorised as 'heavy' or because there is a taboo on it. Land preparation is considered too heavy for women. In some schemes, but not in Buttala, it is considered impure if women set foot on the threshing floor. However, these are not laws of nature. Substitution of male labour by female labour for gender specific male tasks, takes place in two cases. Some of the poorer families prefer to use (unpaid) female family labour for male tasks rather than using male attam or hired labour. This happens in the case of Ms KM Punchi Manike. Some women will do male tasks themselves, if for some reason, they cannot dispose of male labour. The cases of Ms KM Heemalatha ama is an example of this.

²³ and indispensable tasks.

Ms KM Punchi Manike (35yrs) contributes labour to elder brothers' paddy field, like collecting paddy, diverting water, preparing meals, but also harvesting. She explains it is cheaper to do harvesting with own labour, than to use hired labour or attam labour. Therefore they use as much own labour as possible. They can ask relations, but still they will have to return the labour.

Ms KM Heemalatha (60yrs) has grown-up sons and she wrote almost all her land to them. One acre of paddy she kept, that she is cultivating for her expenses. One day she told: 'I have to use hired labour to do the land preparation, because my sons are not helping. I went to find hired labour early in the morning. Yesterday night, I already diverted the water for the land preparation.' Finally she couldn't find the hired labour in order to start the cultivation in time. Therefore she prepared the land herself, by mamaty. Usually the land is prepared with bullocks or a two wheel tractor. Her land preparation was not deep at all, therefore her paddy succeeded only partly.

The idea that men are the actual cultivators because they are the ones who work in the paddy field confirms to the norm rather than to actual practice. Overall contributions of women in paddy cultivation are quite substantial and the traditional labour division is not very rigidly applied. Depending on the specific situation in their household, several household members contribute to cultivation.

The argument that men are the ones who work in irrigated agriculture is very often used as a legitimisation for male dominant participation in organisations and training. It is a strange discussion, not only because the amount and value of female labour in irrigated agriculture is often underestimated, but also because it is questionable whether participation should be legitimised on the base of labour contribution at all. In addition to this question, there is a tendency of wanting to identify one primary worker in stead of a more flexible number. Once it is recognised that not one, but several people contribute their labour to irrigated agriculture, the objective shifts towards identifying the one persons who works most. To establish this, it is mostly suggested to measure and compare the amount of labour contributed by each household member. While accurately measuring is already a tricky affair, comparing is impossible as there are so many and many different tasks. (water diverting, preparing meals, making field bunds, negotiating with the mudalali). On one hand, it seems unjustified to simply compare the amount of time that is spent. On the other hand, comparing the so-called heaviness of different tasks is also not easy. How many hours making field bunds equals how many hours transplanting, for example? The importance given to this exercise is surprising. Some officers, for example, explain the predominant male participation in the FO by the amount of mudworks done by men. The absurdity of using the amount of mudworks done to define the 'actual cultivator' (and thus FO participation), becomes evident in households where most of such work is done by hired labourers. Male and female farmers and officers certainly do not think that this work makes the hired labourers the 'actual cultivators' of that field!

The 'Actual Cultivator' is the One who makes the Decisions about the Paddy Cultivation
In the second definition of actual cultivatorship it is assumed that there is one decision maker in irrigated agriculture and that this person is a man. Analogous to the first definition of actual cultivatorship, a variation of the second definition is that the main decisionmaker is a man. Men are the only real paddy cultivators, because men are the main decision makers about paddy cultivation. Again this seems to reflect more the norm, than reality. Although there is only one

legal cultivator for one plot, there are generally several people who contribute land, money and labour to the paddy cultivation. This means that in reality decision making is a process of negotiation and rarely one single person is the independent decision maker.

Ownership is one of the clearest sources of decision making power, but it is certainly not the only source. Decision making power is also affected by the nature of relations in each household. Due to the number of people and the diversity of relations that are concerned, it is rather difficult to describe the decision making process at household level. For simplicity, a distinction will be used between:

- relations between parents and children
- relations between spouses
- relations between brothers and sisters

In addition to this, decision making about land, money and labour will be dealt separately for simplicity reasons.²⁴ The sole intention of the following cases is to show the diversity of issues and decision makers, there is no intention to draw general conclusions about decision making in irrigated agriculture in Sri Lanka, as the information is simply not elaborate enough for that.

Land

Decision making about land is most dependent on property rights; the one who has legal ownership generally has most authority to decide who may cultivate the kanna. As has been shown in previous cases, land is a major issue of dispute between parents and children. Parents have the final say, but ultimately children might not pay them the shares to live from. That such a decision about land may change the cultivation decisions, is illustrated by the case of Mr Kalu Aiya.

Mr Kalu Aiya's father is more than 90 years old, but still he didn't divide his property. He has 6 children. He lives in his own house with the family of one of his sons, Mr Kalu Aiya (39yrs). Mr Kalu Aiya's wife, Ms AM Sudu Manike (34yrs) takes care of him, as he is very old. For a long time Mr Kalu Aiya cultivated some of his father's paddy land, meaning his father is the tenant of that land. The land is in the tail-end of Aluthwela yaya, but does not have a severe water problem. It was close to the highland of Ms Sudu Manike. However, this kanna the father decided to give the land to another son to cultivate. As a result Mr Isiri Malli had to take lease land from outsiders. That land was situated at the tail-end of Hakurusimbalaya Yaya. It is difficult to divert enough water to that land, therefore Ms Sudu Manike goes during day-time, but Mr Kalu Aiya has to go at night as well.

Landownership is not the only basis of decision making power. Mr Bandara Mama already transferred the land titles to his children, but still he has say about the cultivation and the produce. However, in practice he has more to say about the land of his unmarried daughter, than about the land of his married son. She says this is not only because she is unmarried, but principally because she is a daughter.

²⁴ This is only a very simple way of organizing information on household decision making, more elaborate studies on household decision making use further distinctions like Rajapakse [1992] She used a class distinction to describe household decision making in relation to gender. In addition to the distinctions I made, she also made a distinction between: the entrepreneurial peasant household, the subsistence oriented household and the landless peasant household.

Mr Bandara mama (76yrs) has 12 children. He is a former priest and when he left the order he became tenant of a large part of the temple land. Therefore he was able to give some land to every child; one acre to daughters and two acres to sons. He already legalised this. (except for 2 acres) Two children are still living with him. Ms Ghanawathie (26yrs) is one of the children living with him. She is unmarried. She has one acre of paddy land. Although she does certain tasks in the cultivation, she is not involved in decision making. Her father decides who is the leaser and what will be done with the yield. He tells how much of the yield is for her English course and how much is for the household. Her younger brother, Mr Ratnasiri (23yrs), received two acres. He is married, but he is still living with the family. He makes all the decisions about the paddy land independently from his father and he decides about the produce. His father thinks, he should contribute to the household, but normally he does not. Mr Ratnasiri explained that he used to borrow money with interest from his father for the cultivation, but that he now tries to cultivate without credit or borrow somewhere else. If he does not borrow from his father, he can make his decisions more independently.

Sometimes land is also an issue of discussion between spouses. In some cases the wife is the owner of sin acre and the husband is legally the tenant. In the following case the wife is the ande tenant, but she is reluctant to let her husband cultivate that land, because she considers he does not contribute (sufficiently) to the household expenditures.

Ms JM Irangeni (36yrs) lives with her husband, five children and her elder brother in her parents' house. Her husband has a small business with fruits. She has 1 acre of tenant land, but the past four years she gave it for lease. She does not want to give it to her husband, as she is not sure how much he will contribute to the household expenditures. If she gives it for lease, she will receive the share herself. She always takes care to choose a good, and little bit rich tenant, who can take loans with the bank. In this way she is earning 50 of 120 bushels, for example.

A more common issue of discussion between spouses is how much land to cultivate the kanna and whether to take or give land for lease. Mr Mutu and Ms Nandawathie finally agreed to give part of their tenant land for lease, because Ms Nandawathie insisted that cultivating would be too expensive. Because her husband always wants to cultivate his lease land, whereas every year their debts increase Ms KM 9 says:

Mr HM Mutu Bandara (39yrs) has more than 5 acres tenant land, but this kanna his household will only cultivate 2 acres. He wanted to cultivate all acres, but his wife, Ms HM Nandawathie (36yrs), thinks it is useless to cultivate a lot of rice this kanna. The prices of paddy are low and mudalali's do not want to buy it. Ms Nandawathie keeps the accounts, and she says the paddy cultivation costs more than it yields in terms of money, especially in Yala and with these low prices. Therefore she only wants to cultivate paddy for home consumption.

Ms KM Ukku Manike (26yrs) is the youngest of a family with four daughters. Therefore she married in bina. She is cultivating the tenant land which is in her mother's name, together with her husband (29yrs). For 3 kanna's they had lease land, but this time she doesn't want it anymore. Her husband wanted to cultivate the lease land this Yala, but she didn't agree. She said: 'I told my husband that it is too expensive. I said that we do not want to cultivate this land anymore; it is not necessary.' The kanna before last kanna, they couldn't pay their share of the tenant land. Therefore this kanna they had to pay for 2 kanna's. If they do not pay for 3 consecutive kanna's the landlord has the right to remove them from the ande tenant land. It was the lease land that was too expensive. They even sold highland yield to pay the credits. Ukku Manike said: 'If we want to earn something sugarcane cultivation is better, but still I did not manage to obtain sugarcane land.' Finally they only cultivated the tenant land.

Money

Parents are generally reluctant to ask their children for money directly, but they do think children should provide money. Often money is given to the mother and she is the one to show (indirectly) whether it is sufficient. Especially unmarried sons are expected 'to do something' to improve the standard of the family, and look after the education and marriage of their younger. Mr Sudu Aiya is an example of such a 'good son'.

Mr Sudu Aiya (34yrs) is the youngest son of a family with 6 children, 3 sons and 3 daughters. He is unmarried. Both he and his second brother provided their parents with money to build the house, by cultivating paddy land. Two years after his brother married, his mother kindly requested him, his wife and their baby to leave the house. She said: 'Please, now you go and start a life for yourself. You live on your own and spend your own money.' She found he did not contribute enough and profited from the other brother's contribution. She also found his wife did not help her enough.

After Mr Sudu Aiya got a job as a chemical mudalali, he arranged the marriages of his two younger sisters and he built a new kitchen for the house. Recently, he made a ceiling in the house. After getting the job, he also started to go to parties and he bought expensive clothes, gems and gold for himself. His mother disapproves the latter expenses. She thinks that if he marries he would not go around and waste money like that. Now she mentions every day that she is tired of sweating for him, she is old, she cannot work anymore, in other words, he should marry.

Unmarried daughters are generally not encouraged to earn money for themselves. Most parents have the opinion that unmarried women do not need any money. It is good if they can save something to assemble their trousseau, but it is better if they stay at home. Going around will reduce their chances of a good marriage. (Unless they work as a teacher.) Pressure on unmarried daughters to contribute money to the parental household is less. If they do go out of the house to earn something, it is generally because of need and they are also expected to hand over at least part of their earnings to their mother.

After marriage children are considered to be a separate household concerning money matters. Still sons are expected to contribute to their parents' household (especially if they live with them), but to a lesser extent than before their marriage. Parents and brothers and sisters might provide them money, but the larger amounts only on interest basis. Ms Karunawathie is an exception to lend money to her relatives without asking interest, but there is a reason for that.

Ms KM Karunawathie (27yrs) and Ms KM Sirimawathie are twins. Ms Sirimawathie lives with her husband and 3 children with her parents, Ms Karunawathie has quarters. She only comes in the weekends. As Ms Karunawathie has a job, she lends money to her mother and her sister, who have more problems to make both ends meet. She does not charge interest over it, but her only child is living at her parents' house.

However, in most cases relations don't provide any money to married relations at all, as they are afraid they will not repay. Therefore most people borrow from the mudalali's and from neighbours.²⁵ Ms DM Pryanthi needs to borrow most expenses for the paddy cultivation, but she does not borrow from her (relatively) rich relations.

²⁵ Very few people actually borrow from the FO. The reasons for this will be discussed in chapter 5.2.

Ms DM Punchi Manike (42yrs) is Ms DM Pryanthi's (35yrs) elder sister. She has a job at the co-operative shop. However, for this kanna Ms Pryanthi borrowed Rs4500 from 5 non-related villagers. All other expenses of the paddy cultivation she tries to cover with small jobs, like selling tamarind.

An exception to the preference of relations not to provide any money, are brothers who sometimes help their married sisters in money problems. Especially if the marriage was an arranged marriage. This also means they can count on their sisters' help (mainly labour) on other occasions.

Ms Ran Manike (30yrs) said: 'I come from Badulla. My father is a government servant. My parents wanted to marry me quickly after I passed my A-levels. They arranged this marriage, but they did not get the correct picture about my husbands family background. They thought it was a good family, wealthy and respectable, with a lot of property. My husband told my mother he does not smoke or drink, but now he breaks all his promises. When he had to go to the JVP rehabilitation camp, his relations chased me and the children, from his parental household. For three years I stayed in my own maha giddere, with my parents and elder brother's family. My elder brother does not drink or smoke like my husband. Still he provides everything for me and the children, dresses, schooling for the children. He lent Rs15000 to my husband for the cultivation. Now he took pawn land here, we are looking after it.'

Between spouses day to day decision making about money is frequently done by the wife, however, spending larger amounts is most often a joint decision. As has been said before, traditionally in Sinhala society men are considered to be the earners of money. The woman, on her turn, has the responsibility to spent the money economically. In conformity with this idea women are frequently to be found the ones who manage money affairs, who save and who make the accounts. In such households, men give their complete or the larger part of their wage earnings to their wives. Ms KM Ama and Ms HM Nandawathie are such 'economic spenders.'

Ms KM Ama (56yrs) decides about the paddy stock, afterwards she discusses with her husband. Recently her son got a job, indirectly she tells him what he should do with his salary. Her husband has a bank loan, but that is from a long time ago. For present the paddy cultivation she borrows about Rs2000 from Karunasena mudalali and smaller sums from neighbours. Her husband will tell her how much money he needs for fertilisers and chemicals. She will give him the money and he brings it. He also asks her money for arrack, beetle and cigarettes. She will scold him and give him a small amount. She and her daughter spend their paddy field expenses separately, but they live and eat together. They discuss together about household expenditures. Her daughter also controls the expenditures in her own small family. Her husband will tell her how much money he needs, they will discuss and she will give him the correct amount.

Ms HM Nandawathie (36yrs) decides about most expenditures, especially expenditures for daily needs, schooling, medicines and functions. Children will ask her first if they have any need. Together they discuss about travelling and expenditures for paddy cultivation. He gives her advice, for example how many hired labourers are needed or what kind of chemical to buy. Normally things happen according to what she has in mind. For example, she wanted to buy a tractor with a bank loan and he agreed. It was also her idea to have this deal with the sugar cane company. Now she has started brick making with hired labour for the sugar company. She keeps the accounts in a book. Most of the time she controls all the money, but her husband has some 'black' money. It means that part of the money he does not give her, but keeps himself. He uses that for drinking. He wants to avoid her many questions. She does not know how much he spends for this.

Financial management between spouses does not always happen the way in which it has been described in the above cases. In other households, where there are separate income streams, men and women tend to keep their money separately and spend separately. This happens in the household of Ms RM 8. In other households, the wife does hardly have any access to the revenues of the paddy cultivation except for the rice for home consumption. For example, Mr 12 deals with his affairs alone, while his wife, Ms Sudu Manike, seeks for independent sources of income. She sells coconuts, makes cajuns, cultivates and sells vegetables and sometimes she goes for wage labour.

Both Ms RM Sirimawathie (41yrs) and her husband have a job. They also have paddy land. Before she got a job, Sirima used to work in the paddy land and decide about it. Nowadays she is very busy, heading for a political career. As a consequence her husband works in the paddy these days. Both of them contribute to the household expenditures. If she has money she does not like to ask her husband for money. Her husband has more knowledge about chemicals, therefore he decides about and buys those expenditures. She has more experience with hired labour, therefore she decides about and spends money on that. There is no special person controlling money in the household, as they spent separately. However, she has secret money to use for urgent things. She also had a saving account, but with that money she built this house. Both of them took housing loans, but she has spent a little bit more, as she wanted to build it and she made the plan of the house.

Mr Kalu Aiya(39yrs) sells a share of their paddy stock to pay the credits, but normally, what is left is not enough until the next harvest. Ms Sudu Manike (34yrs) does not know where he got the chemicals and fertilisers this time; she knows the mudalali's do not borrow to them anymore. Last maha Ms Kalu Aiya took a credit of Rs3000 from the through the FO, but he only told her after he had applied the fertiliser. He also took a loan from Mr Dissanayaka's wife. She uses the Sanasa fund to give personal credits, but the interest is very high. Ms Sudu Manike has to ask her husband money for all the expenses, but she is not certain he will give it to her. She thinks the homestead and her highland are the most important sources of income. As he drinks and gambles it is never sure he will keep his promises. She tries to manage their expenses by making cajuns and selling coconut. In the highland, she cultivates gingelli²⁶ seeds and some vegetables to eat. In the weekends, as the elder children can look after her youngest, she tries to go for wage labour. With that money she pays schooling expenses.

Labour

Labour contributions to paddy cultivation are either made on the basis of direct reciprocity or as an obligation. Typically unmarried daughters 'help' their parents in homestead and paddy cultivation, whereas unmarried sons usually 'cultivate' by themselves and contribute paddy or cash to the family income.²⁷ The distinction between cultivating and helping is not always very clear, as helping may sometimes involve a lot of labour, whereas some cultivators still get a reasonable amount of help. This is shown in the case of Mr DM Soomapala. If an unmarried son 'cultivates', his mother and sisters might still provide labour or even attam to that field (and do water diverting) as the case of Mr Sudu Aiya.

Mr DM Soomapala (46yrs) has 4 children, 2 sons and 2 daughters. His youngest son works in the post office and his youngest daughter is still at school. His eldest son (20yrs) is now cultivating his mother's paddy field. He gives the harvest to his parents. His father and mother decide about the paddy stock, but he

²⁶ sesame seeds

²⁷ As a result the contribution of the son (in cash) is more an issue of discussion, than the contribution of the daughter. (in labour)

may say something in the discussion. They want to teach him to do the cultivation and to make the decisions. Mr Soomapala says his eldest daughter (19yrs) is doing nothing special; she helps.

Mr Sudu Aiya (34yrs) is unmarried and lives with his parents. He works whole day as a chemical mudalali. His mother says he is the cultivator. In order that he could participate, they tried to do the harvesting and land preparation also on Saturday. However his contribution turned out to be more additional than essential; the other days the labourers worked without Mr Kumare. Ms RM Sirima, his mother, was not afraid they would not work hard enough. The labourers come from Badulla and they are staying at her homestead under the condition that they first finish her fields. In addition to this she supervises them through one labourer, Mr John Mama. She has developed a kind of mother/son relationship with him. She calls one of her two (married) daughters to help her to prepare the meals for them. After harvesting she selects a part of the paddy to broadcast the next kanna. She makes sure these seeds are germinated before the next broadcasting time. She explained that she has to help her son, because he is working whole days and otherwise their paddy would get delayed.

A similar point has been made by Rajapakse [1992]. She says that the division of agricultural revenue is restricted to male household members, even though unmarried female off-spring performed a lot of work on the farm. Rajapakse mentions the example where the eldest son leased-out his father's tractors and retained a portion of the revenue as he operated the tractors. Yet none of the daughters received payment for their labour. In Medagama mothers generally explain this difference between male and female children by the fact that parents have to spend a lot of money for a daughter's wedding. Although dowry is no longer practised in the area, parents spend a lot of money for jewellery and clothes. They also have to pay for the wedding and provide their daughters with at least some furniture and kitchen utensils.

It is thus rather common for men to ask for and expect their female relatives help in the paddy cultivation, but Ms DM Pryanthi is reluctant to ask her male relatives for help. She fears to lose her land or right over the produce. Therefore she involves her eldest son in the cultivation.

Ms DM Pryanthi (35 yrs) has 3 children, she lives with her parents, who are old and ill. They depend on her. The father from her youngest son is living with her, but this time she does not ask his help. Last time he cultivated with her, he sold almost the whole harvest at his own wish. She did not legally marry him and his mother does not agree he stays with her. Therefore he fears his mother, and contribute the produce of his own cultivation to his own maha giddere. Ms Pryanthi says she cannot expect him to contribute to a household that sustains her parents and 2 children that are not his.

She asks her eldest son who is 14, for help. She says she wants him to learn to do the cultivation. She inquired from the neighbours (Aluth giddere) how to spray. She mixed pesticide and herbicide together, then they only have to spray once. It is just as effective. She does not want to spray herself, because she is still breast feeding her youngest child. Therefore her son sprays. It is the first time he does this. Pryanthi tried to get hired labour for land preparation during two weeks. First she wanted take the labour on credit, that also made it difficult. Now she took loans. Neighbours work for her (for money), but they want to do their own land preparation first. Labourers from Badulla are unreliable. Yesterday she went to bring them tea at 3:30 and they had already left. There is nobody to work with them and check them. She cannot go because of her small child. The other day her son did not go to school to be able to work with them, but they did not show up. She is afraid there will not be enough water in Yala and like this her kanna gets delayed. Her step brother (her mother's son from a previous marriage) sometimes helps her to get loans. However, she does not want to get him involved in the land preparation or in supervising labourers, because then he might try to get that land.

Neighbours and relations of a same generation contribute labour on a basis of direct reciprocity. There are attam groups that are permanent during one kanna. Typically consisting of young men and used during land preparation and harvesting. Ms Ukku Manike's husband belongs to such a attam group. They also pay for expenses for functions etc. together. Ms Ukku Manike used to go for both attam and wage labour, but after the birth of her youngest child she does not go anymore. It is difficult to find someone to look after him.

Most people prefer to work with neighbours instead of with relations, as they are sure neighbours will return the labour. As a consequence the main discussion between spouses is about the number of attam labourers vs. hired labourers for male and female tasks. Attam labourers are easy to pay, because no money is involved. On the other hand, too many attam labourers are difficult to return. This is especially so in the case of women with young children. Both attam and hired labour are not always available in time, which is the reason for the existence of these attam groups. However, not every household uses attam labour.

Ms Sudu Manike (27yrs) does not go anywhere. People think she is bad luck. She has been married for 7 years now, but she is childless. Four years ago her mother-in-law arranged a treatment for her, from which she nearly died. When she recovered, she had her horoscope read. It said how many bad years where for her to come. Still there are 3 bad years left. Therefore she does not go anywhere, she does not sit on high things either. She works in their own paddy field, and she cultivates vegetables on the bunds, but she does not go for attam labour. Her husband does not belong to any attam group. This kanna, he used his own labour plus one labourer for 3 days. Still, he has to spend 5 days.

Decision making is a very complex process. Resources, like land, money and labour are dealt with differently and have different backgrounds in different families. Therefore it should be accepted that one decision maker per household cannot realistically be appointed.

The concept of 'actual cultivatorship' is highly gendered, because men are considered to be either the 'one who works' or the 'one who decides' in irrigated agriculture. Paddy cultivation by only one person, hardly exists. People who do have to cultivate their field with only their own labour, have to face a lot of difficulties, being a men or a woman. The cases show that the mode of production requires female labour as much as male labour, not only for specific tasks or labour substitution, but simply to be able to earn money in this type of agriculture that becomes less profitable every year. With respect to labour contribution, women are as much 'actual cultivators' as men.

As different people are involved in the paddy cultivation, the organisation of production requires them to co-operate. Every persons' contribution and his or her benefits in this co-operation, are subject to negotiation. In the cases showed how this negotiation is further complicated by the interdependence of the household members in other matters. Assuming one single decision maker in irrigated agriculture is a reduction of the organisation of production, and/or assuming that this one decision maker is a man, is a distortion.

Actual cultivatorship in a gendered meaning like here, is thus not a viable criterion for participation in the FO. Attempts to justify (the predominantly male) membership of the FO's by

these criteria, are more based on norms and assumptions, than on practice.

5.3 Participants of the Farmers' Organisation are Heads of Households

Apart from the idea that FO members should be 'actual cultivators', officers do not question the predominant male participation, because they assume the 'head of household' participates. The 'head of household' represents the household's interests in the outside world. The participation of this representative in the FO makes the participation of any other household member redundant. Analogous to Moser [1993], I consider the following three assumptions to be justifying the idea that the head of household is a man:

1. there is an organisation with clearly defined membership called a household
2. it functions as a unit
3. the man is the best representative of the household's interests.

In the Sri Lankan context, it is relevant to add a fourth assumption:

4. a woman is not a suitable representative of the household's interests.

The Household is an Organisation with Clearly Defined Membership.

If the household is an organisation with clearly defined membership it should be very simple to find out who belongs to one household. A constant issue of debate is, however, on what basis people belong to a household. The most simple way is saying that all people who share residence belong to one household. Mr Podi Mahattiya's household and Ms WM Irangeni could be examples of this. One complication, illustrated by the case of Ms WM Irangeni, is that household compositions are not stable over time.

Mr Podi Mahattiya (30yrs) lives with his mother (54yrs) and his wife in a very small two room house. His mother has tenancy ship of 1 acre as a successor of her deceased husband. Mr Podi Mahattiya cultivates this land, but he gives his mother 10 bushels to eat and the landlord 10 bushels. His mother and his wife cook separately. Once Samurdhi mobilizers came, while Mr Podi Mahattiya was not there. They asked his mother and his wife whether they are 1 or 2 households. Two households they replied. However, Mr Podi Mahattiya thinks this is incorrect, they are one household, because he is looking after his mother. (financially)

Ms WM Irangeni (57yrs) is a widow, who used to live with her two sons, their wives and her mentally ill daughter on the same homestead which is on her property. One son, Mr Siri Malli (32yrs), and his wife live in a separate one-room-house. The other son, Mr Punchi Malli (30yrs), and his wife used to live in the Ms Irangeni's house. Mr Siri Malli's wife cooked separately, but Ms WM Irangeni and her daughter cooked with Mr Punchi Malli's wife. There was always a discussion about the division of the rice and the curries. Mr Punchi Malli had been building and improving his mother's house since the death of his father. However, after the Maha harvest, he quickly built a house for himself on another homestead and moved there with almost all the furniture. Before Mr Siri Malli's marriage, -Punchi Malli was not married by then-, all of them belonged to the same household and Mr Punchi Malli was representing them in the FO. After his marriage Mr Siri Malli says they became a separate household, but they lived and cooked together. After Mr Punchi Malli's marriage, Mr Siri Malli started to live somewhere else and cook separately; there were 2 households. Presently there are 3 households, living and cooking separately.

Another basis of defining which people belong to a household is by sharing meals. Ms Ranjinee's household, the KM family and Mr Piyadasa's household are examples.

Ms Ranjenee (61yrs) lives with her daughter (36yrs), who has a job, on her own homestead. After some problems, her husband started to spend the night in a small boutique where he sells illicit liquor. He cooks himself, and they also cook. He has tenancy ship, but he leases his land to someone else. It is very unclear whether they are one or two households.

Ms KM Sirimawathie (27yrs) lives in her mother's house, with her parents, her younger brother and her husband and 3 children. Her younger sister's son is living with them as her younger sister has a job. In the weekends her younger sister and her husband come. Ms Sirimawathie cooks together with her mother, but both she, her sister and her mother contribute to the expenses. Her younger brother got a job recently, but still he doesn't contribute. Paddy cultivation is done separately, but they help each other. They call themselves 3 households, as she is building a house. Her father is going for the FO, whereas the two sisters have membership. For the Death Donation Society her sister and her mother are going.

Mr RM Piyadasa(30yrs) lives with his parents, his wife and his daughter on his mother's homestead. His mother shares this homestead with her brother, but he is not in the village at the moment. They eat together, mainly from the homestead, but Mr Piyadasa says they are two households. He and his mother are making most decisions, but the paddy land is on his father's name.

Yet another reasoning would be to call the people who work together or share finances one household. For this the cases of Ms Punchi Manike, Mr Jayasekara, Ms Pryanthi and Mr Andrew serve as illustration.

Ms KM Punchi Manike (35yrs) is a widow. She lives with her two children with her mother, her mother's 'spare husband'²⁸, who she calls Aiya²⁹, and her younger brother's family in the house of her mother. Her younger brother's wife cooks separately, but she cooks together with her mother for her children and Aiya. Both her younger brother and Aiya cultivate lease land. She helps Aiya in the paddy cultivation. Both she and her mother do wage labour, of which they keep the money themselves. Both she and her mother get Samurdhi³⁰ separately. She also does home gardening for daily needs and she cultivates sugarcane for larger expenses. She exchanges labour in the sugarcane with her mother's other children, who live on the same homestead, but in different houses. Ms Punchi Manike says she and her children form one household with her mother and the husband, but then she withdraws that. She says it is the spirit of the time that everybody takes care of themselves.

Mr HM Jayasekara (33yrs) used to live with his wife in his parents' house. His younger brothers family also lived there. While Mr Jayasekara was in an 'reorientation' camp, his wife and children moved to her parents' place in Badulla. Now he has built a small house plus boutique away from his parents' place. Sometimes his wife and children are staying there, sometimes they stay with her elder brother in her parents' house, who have now died. In order to retain a certain standard of living, clothing, schooling, her elder brother gives her money. Mr Jayasekara says they are a separate household, but his wife is not sure about that.

Ms DM Pryanthi (35yrs) lives with her parents and her 3 children. The father of her first two children disappeared. She did not legally marry the father of her third child, called Mr DM Dingiri Banda (32yrs). Mr Dingiri Banda sleeps and eats at her place, but says he belongs to his mother's household. He participates in the FO, because he likes that.

Mr Andrew (37yrs) lives in a small house next to the paddy field with his 8 year old son. His wife went to

²⁸ Spare husband means boy friend of a married woman, who in this case is a widow.

²⁹ Aiya means 'elder brother'.

³⁰ Samurdhi is a governmental support program for the poorest people.

the Middle East. The son often stays with Mr Andrew's mother. The land on which he lives, is on his mother's name. He says he is a separate household from his mother's.

The point is that there is a large diversity of household compositions and no one single basis can be given on which a household can be defined; characteristics that are relevant in one case, are not always relevant in another case. On the other hand, villagers/household members themselves do not always describe the boundaries of their household in the same way. Whatever they define as one household at a certain time, depends on the specific context in (and argument for) which the concept is used.

The Household functions as a Unit

There are two variations on the idea of unit of representation within the head of household concept:

- a. the household is the socio-economic basic unit that should be represented in the FO; it is a unit.
- b. different ideas on household level are represented by one person; it appears as a unit, because there is harmony.

In the first idea the FO should consist of people who represent the interests of the households. Within the family there are thus no conflicting interests, but there is one single interest of the whole. The family is what Moser [1993] called a joint utility function, maximising both production and consumption, while the welfare of each member is integrated in the family welfare function. Therefore FO is for households, not for individual people. This has been effectively explained by an Irrigation Engineer.

'FOs are participated by women or men is not what really matters to the Sri Lankan family, but what matters is how effective the family interests (not that of individuals) are represented in the FO affairs.'

'The whole exercise is based upon the hypothesis that there could exist divergent (and some time conflicting) interests between male and female members of the farming family, as regards to farming. This arises out of a poor understanding of the Sri Lankan family ... The traditional Sri Lankan family ... works in a group, earns as a group and spends as a group and represents matters to the outside world as a group.'

According to this Irrigation Engineer the whole question as to whom participates in the FO is irrelevant because what matters is the interaction is between the FO and the household. Too much attention to the question who participates is even considered somewhat of a threat:

'... by emphasising an undue importance to the female participation in the FOs are we not inducing an unwanted division into the family and try to disrupt its smooth functioning.'

There are, however, a number of questions regarding the idea that the household is a joint utility function. For example, whether production and consumption is centrally controlled, which is a prerequisite for maximising it? Whether the division of labour really is based on the comparative advantage of each household member? How does preference aggregation of household members in relation to both decision making and resource allocation take place? In response to such questions, Feldstein [in Whatmore 1991] describes the household as a system of resource

allocation between individuals, in which members share some goals, benefits and resources, are dependent on some, and in conflict on others.

In the second variation one simply assumes that the household appears to the outside world as a unit because the household members live within perfect harmony. Conflicting interests will be discussed within the household until one shared view is achieved. It is within this conception of households that it is said that although men represent the household to the outside world, women influence them within the household and there women get their acknowledgement within the household.

Many studies, however, question this perfect harmony among household members and reveal inequalities among household members in Sri Lanka.³¹ They discuss the violence within households, the lack of control of women over their own fertility, the limited scope women have for leaving their husbands even if his behaviour is socially unacceptable. They also discuss the unequal distribution of labour and the restricted mobility of women and girls.

Supposing one could define a household, then still household members should share most of their interests to make the household a sensible unit for FO membership. There should be consensus about what to decide at meetings, but also about whether or not to participate in a particular organisation at all. In most households there is no shared opinion about these two things. Firstly the household's interests and certainly the perception of the household's interests are not always shared. This has already been illustrated in great detail in the cases in the section about 'the actual cultivatorship'. There it is shown that decision making involves many relations and many different kinds of relations (family -, economic -, love relations). Secondly, it is obvious that the costs (and benefits) of participation are quite different for the household member who participates than for the ones who do not. A example of this is the participation in the FO by Mr DM Soomapala.

Mr. DM Soomapala is a president of the FO. Therefore he has to attend a lot of meetings and visit the agencies and other farmers regularly. His wife, although she thinks it is important to do a social service, is not at all that enthusiastic about his participation as Mr. Soomapala himself. She stresses the that his activities outside the household, imply a lot of extra work for her.

The Best Representative of the Household's Interest is a Man.

The third assumption underlying the idea that the head of household is a man, is the idea that there should be only one representative and that a man is the best representative of the household's interests. Therefore once a man is available to participate, it is not necessary that a woman participates. It is assumed that in harmony it is decided that the man should represent the household's interests, because he is generally more skilled to do this, more forward, educated and knowledgeable about both the interests of the household and the outside world. Within this view, it is logical there are less women than men participating in the FO

³¹ See among others, K. Jayawardena [1975], P. Shanti Kumar [1987], M. Perera [1989], D. Rajapakse [1989], K. Peiris and Risseeuw [1983], J. Schrijvers [1985], C. Risseeuw [1988].

In general in Sinhala society it is said that men have more capacity to deal with public affairs in the 'outside world', and women have more understanding of keeping good relations with villagers, neighbours and relatives. It is questionable whether this division of responsibilities really confirms to the respective talents and aspirations of men and women. Due to the every day reality in which men and women live, this division becomes more a self-fulfilling prophecy than a reflection of male and female 'natural' capacities. Another question is how to classify the FO; a village organisation seems to be something in between public affairs and keeping good relations with villagers.

A Woman is not a suitable Representative of the Household's Interests

Complementary to the assumption that a man is a socially and culturally suitable representative of the household, is the idea that a woman is not. As a consequence, only if there is no male representative of the household available and if it is an important matter, then only a woman can be the participant in the FO. Man and women who explain this suitability matter, refer to several things:

-Women should be obedient, not surpassing their husband. Therefore it is not suitable if they come forward in the family. Risseeuw [1988] mentions that there are a lot of negative example in sinhala culture of a woman transgressing her boundaries, asserting her will to power and her desire to rule. It invariably leads to the downfall of her family or even her people. The Vihara Maha Devi³² is the most striking example of great service by a woman. But it is her decision to step down after using her capacities that remains the crucial point in the positive outcome of her role. If she uses her talents for her own benefits, she would be called 'cunning' and is severely censored. It is surprising that even young married women, confirm to this kind of behaviour. Like in the case of Mr. Punchi Malli's wife.

Mr Punchi Malli (30yrs) is very active in agriculture and also involved in many organisations. In fact he is rarely at home. His wife (24yrs), however, is always at home, alone. She doesn't participate in any social activity, except visiting her parents. She stresses she only goes around if there is a need.

-Women should use their time for things that have proven to be useful (to the family). Organisations mostly do not have clear benefits. Men have more possibilities to experiment. This is illustrated by the reasoning of Ms AM Pryanthi.

Ms AM Pryanthi's (58yrs) married son has the membership of organisations in the household, but she didn't see any benefits of any organisation yet. They do not have a say in any organisation. Her son participates at every meeting, but it is not useful. Organisations are only useful for a few people, who get the benefits. Actually she is proud she does not participate at any meeting. She prefers to do useful things. She is very involved in her highland cultivation and her home garden trees. She has grains, fruits, coffee and so many species of her own. If she has spare moments she will weave mats to sell. Her son, however, does think he has something to say in the organisations.

³² The Vihara Maha Devi is a famous queen in the history of the ancient sinhalese kingdom.

-Women should look after the home and the children. Apart from the fact that it is a gendered practice that women look after the home and the children, children are a real barrier to the mobility of women. Although it is also often used as an easy explanation, many of the younger women are tied to the home because there is no one to look after their small children. As soon as the children have reached the correct age, they will send them to the Montessori kindergarten. Ms KM Ukku Manike used to participate in several social activities and work. She was one of the office-bearers of the Death Donation Society and she used to go for wage labour.

Ms KM Ukku Manike (26yrs) lives with her husband and children in her mother's house. Her mother lives with them, but is only at home now and then. Ms Ukku Manike's second child was ill for a long time, she nearly died. Then came her third child. If her mother is not there, it is very difficult for her to go anywhere. Even if she goes to divert water in the paddy field, she has to wait until her eldest child, 7 years, comes home or take them with her. Recently she did a sterilisation operation because she doesn't want any children anymore. Her husband didn't agree, but she can't afford raising more children. After the birth of the children, she couldn't go for hired labour anymore.

-Participation in organisations involves going there, meaning 'going around'. There are two objections against women who 'go around'. First of all it is not decent, secondly there is 'no protection', meaning that it is not safe for women to go around. The second argument is used in particular for unmarried women, who are supposed to safe guard their virginity.

Ms RM Sirimawathie explained that all her daughters married a good marriage, because everybody in the village knew their elder brothers took care the sisters didn't go around. The brothers were very strict; the sisters went only to school and back. If they were invited for functions, they would be accompanied by them or their mother would participate in stead of them.

Despite these ideas that participation is 'not suitable' for women, there are women who are involved in a lot of organisations, like Ms Sirima. The (social) costs of participation for women are difficult to assess, also by themselves. The most difficult problem is that dignity of the family depends on the mothers' behaviour. It is said that if a mother does not behave properly, this will reflect on the children, because society will look down on them. When she grows old, the children will blame their mother that "they cannot face society". Therefore they will not look after her. This is precisely the problem of Ms Sirima, who is politically very successful. If she would have been a father, her success would increase her children's standing, but as a mother she fears the judgement of her children, in particular her daughter.

Ms Sirima (41yrs) is very active in all kinds of organisations. She comes from a rich family with only daughters and she had a good education. She also has a job as the district secretary of the women's' association. With this she is earning a larger part of the income. The job also implies that she is away from home very often, leaving home-management to her eldest, her only daughter. This might be the reason why the daughter is complaining her mother is never at home. Relatives support the daughter, saying that Ms Sirima is not a good mother and not providing protection for her adolescent daughter. To solve this problem, Ms Sirima thinks she should employ her (political) connections to find her daughter a job and keep her happy. If not, Ms Sirima is also afraid that in future her daughter will reproach her, saying she was not a good mother. "She might not respect her anymore."

The dilemma women face is very vivid. There are numerous examples of destitute old mothers, whose sons and daughters live in relative prosperity in the village. I believe the reasoning is much more an easy excuse to get rid of their responsibility, than any thing else. It is difficult to assess the impact of the present behaviour of women on their social position when their children grow up. Will they be praised and supported for their efforts protecting family pride or will they be mocked for their supposed(?) ignorance and backwardness on public affairs?

Participation in the Death Donation Society has an established usefulness in the village. The following three examples show that women do break barriers to their participation, if they really want. It is noteworthy as well that these are not necessarily the most 'educated' women. Ms. Sudu Manike faces quarrels and even abuse from her husband due to her participation in the Society. Ms Piyaseele travels a long way alone to participate, in spite of women's lack of mobility that is often referred to. Ms. SuduAka secures her parents' investments in the Society, even after her marriage in another village.

Ms Sudu Manike (34yrs) does not know how to read and write. When she was a girl she had to look after her 7 younger brothers and sisters. Now she has 5 children herself; her youngest child is one and a half years old. She says: 'He does not want to allow me to go to any organisation. He thinks I should be a real housewife, this means staying at home and preparing his meals. If I go to the Death Donation Society, he complains about the household work. Normally the Death Donation Society meeting is on pooya days. Then he says: 'Can't you stay at home, even on pooya³³ days?' Then I explain: 'If I don't participate at the Death Donation Society they will fine me.' I would like to participate in more organisations because it might be useful to the family. For example some people were able to buy some furniture with Sanasa credits. This is already the third time he put up the foundation of a new house, but he cannot finish it. Now I took credits from Sanasa secretly, through the membership of his elder sister's son, who is a schoolboy. I would like to participate in the women's association also, but he would not allow it. It is because they hold meetings outside the village sometimes, eg in Monaragala.'

Ms RM Piyaseele (28yrs) says she is uneducated. She did not go to school, and she cannot read or write. She does not know anything about organisations because she and her husband go to work and stay on their chena three months per year. (The chena is far away.) For that reason they cannot get involved with the organisations, because they cannot participate regularly. However, she has membership of the Death Donation Society. For the meetings of the Death Donation Society she will make sure she comes back to the village. It is a useful organisation.

In the beginning Ms SuduAka's (28yrs) father had the membership of the Death Donation Society related to Garandi Bakine temple. One day her mother's buffaloes invaded the temple lands. The monk got very upset and since that day he used to scold her family for that. Both her father and mother got angry and they didn't want to participate in any activity of this monk anymore. After that incident her father did not participate in the meetings anymore. Her mother's younger sister, who is also a member of the organisation, thought it was a waste to give up the membership. She advised her, as youngest daughter, to take over the membership. From that day Ms SuduAka participates in the meetings. Even nowadays, after her marriage in another village, she comes to the meetings even now that she is pregnant.

The question is who actually thinks it is not suitable for women and whether these are true concerns. The above mentioned women do participate in organisations to the benefit of

³³ A pooya day is a full moon day. It is a religious Buddhist holiday in Sri Lanka.

themselves, their families and the organisations. There is no good explanation why this so-called 'suitability' matter does not prevent them from participation. Some women have something to 'make up' for their gender, like Sirima who is rich and educated. There are some indications that legal landrights can help women to remove the 'suitability' barriers as well. [Zwarteveen, pers. com 1996] However, there are also women, like Sudu Manike, who are uneducated, landless and with small children, who manage to participate to organisation. This cannot but be attributed to their own courage and their wish to provide a future for their children.

On the other hand, in addition of looking for an explanation in the situation of women, one could also ask whether some things -like eg. the time of meetings in Ambewela (see report on the second component of this study)- are not adapted to make meetings more suitable for women.

The criterion of head of householdship does not at all address the issue of who are stakeholders. It simply assumes that FO's are made for households, and it does not question what happens at household level. No convincing explanation for the choice for a male representative is given either. When the black box of the household concept is opened, these choices are no longer valid. Diversity among households and household relations preclude any definition of the concept household, let alone of the mechanism of representation. The choice for a male representative of the household is directly based upon the idea that the 'inherent female nature' is not capable of such responsibilities or that participation is 'not suitable' for women. It is shown that one of the most difficult barriers for female participation that these notions pose, is their interlinkage with female social security. However, if such ideas continue to prevail, a limited participation of women in organisation will prevent them from learning about the organisations and making arrangements to facilitate their participation. This means that the dependency of women on men continues to be reproduced.

5.4 The Genderedness of Informal Criteria

In this chapter, the two most important informal criteria that regulate access to FO participation have been presented and discussed. These criteria, 'actual cultivatorship' and 'head of householdship' explain to a large extent the limited participation of women in the FO, due to their highly gendered meanings.

The criterion of 'actual cultivatorship' is gendered because it assumes that women are no stakeholders in irrigation management. Stakeholdership is thought to be either the one who works or the one who decides in irrigated agriculture. On the one hand this is a reduction of the organisation of production. As has been shown into detail, many people work and decide in irrigated agriculture. On the other hand, there is no evidence that women should be excluded on the basis of this criterion, because their contribution to the irrigated agriculture is considerable.

The criterion of head of household ship is gendered, because it assumes that women's inherent nature is not suitable for participation in public affairs. In addition to this, the household is assumed a suitable unit for FO participation. This is problematic because it obscures the complexity of the organisation of agricultural production at household level and the influence this has on the participation of male and female farmers in the FO.

Ultimately, in the discourses and practices about FO attendance, power relations are reproduced in which women are subordinate, inferior and dependent upon men for all public affairs. In view of equity, a policy should change, instead of strengthen such a status quo.

CHAPTER 6 PRACTICES OF ACCESS TO PARTICIPATION IN THE FARMERS' ORGANISATION: THE CASE OF FO RANKS

6.1 Introduction

The influence of formal and informal criteria on the selection of participants in the FO is exerted through practices both at household level and above it. They are not the only structuring principle for agency, because criteria are also redefined by the different actors involved. Access to participation in the FO as a member is not (yet) very much contested, therefore the criteria are not (yet) in a process of redefinition. The last cases in the section on 'women's suitability' are some examples of redefinition of criteria.

Access to FO ranks is much more contested, however. FO members do not take part in all negotiations and decisions. Every FO has a committee consisting of a president, secretary, treasurer and 3 or 4 committee members. Whereas members only have a say in the monthly general meeting about their D-channel, committee members have a separate meeting every month in addition to that. The three office-bearers also have a say in the PMC (project management committee) meeting, a monthly meeting about management on system level, between the office-bearers of all D-channels and officers from the Irrigation Department. In addition to this office-bearers frequently have contact with officers from the Irrigation Department and the Department of Agrarian Services to discuss problems or new programs. In theory any problems of farmers should be solved at the FO level, and if this is not possible, with the agencies but through the FO office-bearers. A rank in the FO thus implies a certain power and control over FO affairs and farmer/agency interaction. In addition to this, a position in an organisation such as the FO provides opportunities for villagers to make a (political) career at village level or even beyond that. Because of these benefits from a rank in the FO, the construction of access to ranks in the FO involves much more criteria. And more criteria are subject to contestation in the case of ranks. The practices involved with the construction of access to ranks in the FO are partly illustrative for the practices of access to the FO in general.

Although the FO was newly founded by the Irrigation Department, not just anybody could have become and became an office-bearer. First of all not just anybody likes to have a rank in an organisation and nor has the economic means for it. Office-bearership does not only imply power and contacts, it also demands a lot of time, work and yields criticism. The people who do obtain ranks in village organisations, generally do not do so overnight; they gradually take control over different organisations in the village. As a 'people's organisation' formed by the government, the division of the ranks in the FO was the result of both the government practices and the processes on village level. Initially the FO was formed according to the intervention of the Irrigation Department. In that process of organising people for the FO, contacts and flow of information were crucial. After the establishment, the organisation became part of village politics. Then the capacity of individuals to mobilise government resources became a factor to determine the access to FO ranks. Again contacts played an important role, but also political affiliation.

In this chapter access to the FO ranks will be discussed. Gender is one of the factors determining an individual's chances of developing a career within organisations. Although there are some

women who get elected, there are very few who succeed in keeping their position for a long time. FO office-bearers are practically all male³⁴, even relative to the number of female members in the FO the number of female office-bearers is small. In general those people who are influential in village organisations already have considerable power and political influence within the community. At the same time one's position in an organisation such as the FO can considerably add to one's influence and power in the community as a whole. Therefore first the influence history of the FO on access to FO ranks will be discussed, and then the influence of the interaction between the FO and village politics.

6.2 The History of the Farmers' Organisation, a Process of Organising People.

In principle the FO is a democratic organisation. Office-bearers are supposed to be elected through democratic vote by a majority of the FO members. Generally, however, office-bearers are selected through consensus, which means there is no real vote as such. Instead, a number of persons are proposed and when there is no opposition to them assuming a position, they are elected.

The FO is formed by an outside agency, the Irrigation Department. At first FO participation and selection of FO officials was therefore very much influenced by whom the I.E. decided to first approach and provide with information.³⁵ Sure, the president, secretary and treasurer were officially elected in a general meeting, but who was present at those initial meetings was merely a result of their effort. In addition to that, they were the most suitable (legitimate) leaders at that point in time, simply because they had the best understanding of the new organisation, and they already worked for it. This could only happen because they were the first to be approached in the village.

In Hakurusimbalaya Ela FO information actually started with a letter the I.E.³⁶ wrote personally to Mr HM Soomapala. It was not accidental that the letter was written to him. Mr HM Soomapala has a long history in irrigation management and ranks in organisations.

In 1968 Mr HM Soomapala got involved with irrigation management for the first time. He became the leekam of Govi Karake Sabaha³⁷. His job was to control the water distribution and distribute the shares for channel clearing. With the change of government in 1977 he became palake leekam³⁸, for the same duties. In 1983 a farmers' council was made under the waga niladari, cultivation officer under the Department of Agrarian Services; that council worked more or less as the Govi Karake Sabaha. However, Mr HM Soomapala stayed the palake leekam. The difference was that now he should report to the waga niladari instead of to the District Officer, the main officer at the department of Agrarian Services. At the same time he also became a gramodemandle, the president of an organisation consisting of the presidents of village organisations. In 1990 he got involved with the FO. This is because he knows the officers from the Irrigation Department Monaragala from 1960's onwards. He used to visit the office at least twice a month.

³⁴ Compare the figures given in table 1

³⁵ This is understandable. The I.E. had a terribly difficult job when he had to form the FO's, simply because there are a lot of irrigation systems in Monaragala district. It is only logical he employed his contacts in the communities for this.

³⁶ The I.E. means Irrigation Engineer.

³⁷ Leekam of the Govi Karake Sabaha means secretary of the farmers' committees. There is a whole history of village organizations and organizations related to agriculture in Sri Lanka. This was one in the row.

³⁸ Palaka leekam is another term for secretary of the farmers' committee. The name was changed after a change of government.

Therefore the I.E. sent him a letter personally to explain about the FO and to request his help in mobilising the farmers.

As a consequence Mr HM Soomapala was the source of information about the FO for the people of Hakurusimbalaya D-channel and logically he became the president.

Mr HM Soomapala helped the I.E. by going from house to house to inform the people. As a result of this the first meeting was held in December 1990, 14 people were present. At that meeting the Technical Assistant (TA)³⁹ explained for the first time about the rehabilitation. In that meeting also the office-bearers were selected, and Mr HM Soomapala became president. Mr HM Soomapala is living in the village on the other side of the river, Puhulkotuwa, therefore initially all the office-bearers came from Puhulkotuwa. In another meeting 6 days later the TA gave the constitutional report about the FO. At those meetings no women were present, because they didn't have an understanding about the FO, Mr HM Soomapala said.

Those farmers known and trusted by the I.E. are usually male farmers. Female farmers are not normally considered by the Irrigation Department staff to be knowledgeable and competent enough to assume leadership positions. As a result, the initial flow of information almost exclusively went to influential male farmers, who were already known to the Irrigation Department. As explained in previous sections, due to informal criteria for participation most ID staff and many male farmers did not consider women as potential members, let alone office-bearers of the FO. Since the initial flow of information almost entirely went to a few men, the FO started off as a predominantly male organisation. The very fact that few women are involved now in itself forms a reason for women not to participate.

Although he was the one who had to explain the objectives of the FO to the villagers, Mr HM Soomapala explained the low participation of women in the FO by the lack of understanding among villagers, especially women, in the beginning:

'Out of the 105 farmers under HSE, only 14 people came. At that time people did not understand the objectives of the FO. No women attended that meeting. If men do not come, how can we expect women to come?'

While men got informed about the FO through male networks, women used their contacts with other women to get access to the FO.

Ms Sirima was a good friend of the wife of the secretary of Hakurusimbalaya FO, Mr RM Dissanayake, because both are a committee member in the same women's association. As Mr Dissanayake's wife did and still does all the reporting, Ms Sirima borrowed the constitution of the FO through her. At the next general meeting, in May 1992 (!) Ms Sirima was present, together with Ms Ranjinee. Both were elected as committee members of the FO. However, most of the meetings were held without their presence.

To become a FO office-bearer a person needs a certain authority. In the initial phase of intervention authority was derived from two claims: being a good farmer leader and being knowledgeable. As has been explained in the sections on 'actual cultivatorship' and 'the best representative is a man', to be a good farmer or good farmer leader is a very gendered notion. As

³⁹ The TA works under the I.E. at the Irrigation Department.

a consequence, very few women qualify for it. Knowledge about the new program, however, comes from the Irrigation Department. Due to practical limitations at the department, the information was diffused with the help of a few male farmers. As a result of this method, no female farmers were informed directly. It was the information provided in the initial phase that proved to be the distinctive feature among male farmers and on that basis office-bearers were selected. Although some active female farmers gained access to the ranks in an informal way, their number remained small.

6.3 The Farmers' Organisation as Part of Village Politics

After its establishment, the access to the FO ranks became more than just the result of intervention; it became part of the theatre of village politics. Village power relations were shaped long before the FO was created, therefore this paragraph will first explain some backgrounds about the village power relations, after that it will explain how the FO fits in.

For a long time power relations on village level have been mainly determined by high-caste, more specific walauwe men. The very first expression of this fact in Medagama is that there are hardly any low-caste people left in the village at all. Almost all who obtained land under the tenancy act were high-caste people. As a consequence low-caste people went to the settlement areas later on.

Among the high-caste people who settled in the village on individual basis, there is the walauwe family of Mr KM Karunaratne, nick-named 'Wew Leekam'. This family has relatively more sin acre land in the village. Initially this walauwe family had control over all the government programs.

Mr KM Karunaratne (92) is from that walauwe family, he is still living in their maha giddere⁴⁰. His father was the Korale, at that time a kind of Divisional Secretary controlling the administrative heads of the villages. His father was also a police officer. As a schoolboy Mr Karunaratne was already involved with the Rural Development Society. At that time Upatissa monk from Happoruwa temple was the pioneer of the Rural Development Society, he was also the president. He helped the monk to prepare the documents for the society. At that time not many people could read and write. Especially girls could only go to school if there was a female teacher. In 1944 he became a teacher himself and in 1946 he obtained one acre of government land through the Rural Development Society to build a school. He also arranged sponsorship for training through the member of parliament (MP). At that time Bangalawatte, a part of the village, was a jungle. Through the Rural Development Society they got help from the government to clear that land and divide it among landless people.

In 1953 Mr Karunaratne became a government servant. He served under the GA⁴¹, but 'no special tasks were assigned to him'. Then he appealed to his GA and asked help to restore Karawila Kotuwa tank (a minor tank). Many people got land under this tank. Consequently Mr Karunaratne became the 'minor scheme maintenance officer'. The rank was called 'Wew Leekam'. He had to maintain the channel system and report to the cultivation officer. He also had to investigate tanks. There were 7 wew leekams in Uva province at that time. He was the wew leekam of Buttala. He could earn a lot of money, bonuses for staying out etc. He also controlled the contracts. In 1977, after the new government, the rank of wew leekam disappeared. The UNP⁴² considered it unnecessary. He was transferred from the Irrigation Department to the highway department. (That was under the same ministry at that time.) He complained, but when they

⁴⁰ Maha giddere means the original place of his family.

⁴¹ GA means Government Agent, the administrative authority on district level.

⁴² UNP = United National Party

did not acknowledge his request, he got a pension according to a medical report. In the mean time he was involved in all kinds of organisations, the Rural Development Society, Death Donation Society, co-operative shop and the village council. The village council was a remainder of the British time. They should charge lease for paddy land and body tax for every adult male, except monks. It existed until Mr Premadasa's government, then it became the Pradeshi Sabaha. Now he is only the president of Rural Development Society, a member of Samate Mandale and the Gramodemandale⁴³. The Samate Mandale is a kind of village court. They should give advice on issues, for example on problems between husband and wife. There are 20 people in the Samate Mandale, also some police officers. The Gramodemandale is the head of all village organisations. He is elected from all presidents in village organisations. He is gramodemandale for 10 years now, but still he has no special thing to do. This is because the government is PA⁴⁴ and the Provincial Council is UNP. The gramodemandale is under the Provincial Council. There is a small allowance for the gramodemandale. He arranged financial support for all these three organisations, he says, because he has a good contact with those people through the Hatton Bank.

For a long time Mr Wew Leekam was able to mobilise government resources for the village, while creating jobs for himself. In spite of Mr Wew Leekam's favourable career and family background, he did not become president of the FO, however. Due to the turbulent times after which the FO was formed, Mr Wew Leekam was surpassed, and a younger person with far less status took control. It happened when at that time Mr Wew Leekam and some other members from the walauwe family, who did have land under Garandi Bakine, were not in the village because of the JVP uprising in '89/'90.

Mr Punchi Malli's parents got land under a government program in Bangalawatte. His father died of a snake bite and his mother remained with 8 children, of which 7 were sons. He is thus not from a very prestigious family. During JVP all were actively involved, Mr Punchi Malli and one of his elder brothers in particular. Later his elder brother disappeared. In order to establish Garandi Bakine FO the I.E. contacted Mr DM Heemapala, who doesn't have land under Garandi Bakine. Mr Heemapala introduced him to Mr Punchi Malli. He told: 'Mr Heemapala came with TA Sumanadasa to his house by jeep. Then Mr Heemapala told TA Sumanadasa: 'This is a good farmer. If you give the responsibilities to this man, he will do it correctly.' Then TA Sumanadasa told him: 'Please help me to gather these farmers.'

It is noteworthy that Mr Punchi Malli mainly mobilised younger, male farmers and they selected him as the secretary. As a result Garandi Bakine FO is the only FO with younger office-bearers. Mr Punchi Malli became a much more important person at village level. He was able to marry the granddaughter of a respectable family and he built a new house.

In Medagama Ela FO the I.E. informed Mr HM Mutu Bandara, and Mr Mutu informed the other (potential) office-bearers. They first met at his place and then they organised a general meeting between themselves, where they were selected. Although Mr Mutu was one of the established 'organisation dealers' on village level, and although he managed in this way to obtain the ranks of many organisations, he is not one of those organisation dealers who is capable to keep/use their position. Party politics and drinking are causing his defeat. Mr Mutu Bandara and his wife, Ms Nandawathie, are involved with many organisations, but their careers stagnated after the change of government.

⁴³ The gramodemandale was intended as a coordination of activities at village level, but in Medagama it is very inactive.

⁴⁴ PA= People Alliance, the ruling party in Sri Lanka today.

Mr Mutu Bandara's father was a very respectable person, he was a JP, justice of peace. The JP used to be a justice at village level; it is an extremely honourable position. His brother is a gramasevaka niladari, a mayor. Mr Mutu and Ms Nandawathie try to involve with any organisation that deals with the government, because this enables them 'to get the officers to the village and make them do something'. They identified the Rural Development Society, the FO and a women's 'association started by the AGA as such. However after the change of government they started losing their control over the organisations to Ms RM Sirimawathie who is PA whereas they are UNP. Mr Mutu is still the president of the FO. He has been working with the Irrigation Department for about 15 years; before the FO's he was the president of the farmers' committees. Mr Mutu is the secretary of the Rural Development Society, and Ms Nandawathie also has membership. As the credit is issued in equal amounts for every member, they can get more credit if two are members. Now it is not possible anymore to get two memberships per household, but they managed it somehow. Ms Nandawathie built a Montessori school through the Rural Development Society. It is built on her land, but still it is not being used. Ms Sirimawathie also built a Montessori school through her women's 'association and that one is used. Ms Nandawathie's children go to a Montessori in another village. Ms Nandawathie is the treasurer of another women's 'association. The association was formed by the AGA, he had to form 29 women's 'associations in Buttala division. They got some credits, but after that there were no activities. Ms Sirimawathie invited them to join her women's 'association, but she does not want that. Both Mr Mutu and Ms Nandawathie were involved with Sanasa, but it collapsed. After that a new Sanasa was started handled by Ms Sirimawathie, but they refused to participate in that. The only organisation in which they participate together with Ms Sirimawathie is the Death Donation Society, because they do not want to lose the benefits. First Mr Mutu was a member of Death Donation Society, now Ms Nandawathie is his successor.

Although her husband is officially more involved in organisations and politics, Ms Nandawathie considers Ms Sirimawathie as her personal rival in village politics. Ms Nandawathie is an example of what Schrijvers [1986] would call 'the hidden character of women's political entrepreneurship'. However, her husband is not a very respectable person anymore, because he is usually drunk at meetings. Therefore Ms Nandawathie is educating her eldest son. She expects a lot from him in future.

It is striking that with so many and so different people involved in village organisation politics, there are so few women who make career themselves. There are women who contribute a lot of labour to organisations. Both the cases of Ms DM Pryanthi and Ms KM Ukku Manike serve as examples.

Ms DM Pryanthi is an unmarried mother. Being unmarried gives her relatively more freedom to decide herself where to go and when. She is involved in many organisations since her childhood. Mr Wew leekam introduced her as a secretary of the Samate Mandale. Like this she earns Rs250 per month, if she participates every meeting. The meetings are held every Saturday. In 1986 she became the secretary of the Rural Development Society through Wew leekam. He knew the office-bearers of World View, an NGO. World View provided Rs400 credit for the farmers and they also gave instructions how to make a revolving fund out of that. This gave rise to the reorganisation of the Rural Development Society, now it is giving credits to the people again. Wew leekam also introduced her to one of the office-bearers of World View. He had explained them about her problems. Finally they gave her a donation of Rs2500 to start a small boutique. It is in front of her house. After some time it failed. She was trying to marry a man, but he was 'taking' cigarettes from her boutique.⁴⁵

Ms Pryanthi has had ranks in several village organisations, but she never really kept ranks for a long time. She is popular with other women for her knowledge about organisations and procedures, but her

⁴⁵ As she is an unmarried mother, a husband is very important. Therefore she had to accept his behaviour.

motherhood reduces her mobility and her social status is low. She's a committee member in Death Donation Society, a treasurer of women's association, secretary of Samate Mandale, she was the secretary of Rural Development Society, but she gave up that rank after getting a baby. She was also involved with Sanasa, but now that is not active anymore. Nowadays she's head of her Samurdhi group. She also considers to give up her position in Samate Mandale. She thinks it is a lot of work for very little money.

Ms KM Ukku Manike (26yrs) cultivates her mother's tenant land. She also uses her mother's membership in various organisations. Ms RM Soomawathie, Ms KM Ukku Manike's mother, already took credits with the co-operative shop in 1971. When the Rural Bank started in 1977, she also took membership there and she got credit from them. The membership from the Rural Bank is shares, the more shares the more credit you can take. Now she takes credit in her name, but Ms Ukku Manike uses them and repays them. After the Rural Development Society was reorganised Ms Ukku Manike also took credit through her mother's membership there. It only provides money for harvesting expenses. Ms Soomawathie also joined the Death Donation Society when it was funded 12 years ago by Garandi Bakine monk. Now her daughter goes to the meetings. It is the organisation in which they have the most influence. This is because their budget is very clear and they keep a record of everything. Ms Soomawathie used to be a committee member of the Death Donation Society. The past two years Ms Ukku Manike took that rank, but now she gave it up. She liked it, it was about keeping accounts. She gave it up because the committee always has to meet quickly if there is a death. One day when she went in the night, she was troubled by a drunken man. After that her mother and husband thought the rank is not suitable for women. Her mother also has a membership of the FO, but as there are only men going to the FO, Ms Ukku Manike thinks her husband should go. He, however, does not go. She thinks that it is a useless organisation, otherwise she would go.

The women in the above cases are both active and clever. Other women value them for these qualities. However, they gave up their involvement in village organisations. Apparently they were unable to gain enough influence to turn their office-bearership of the organisations to their own benefit. Their situation is in great contrast with the career Mr Punchi Malli, secretary of Garandi Bakine FO, was able to make. It should be noted that they are of the same age group and have a similar educational level. Ms KM Ukku Manike has a similar family background as well.

The most important function attributed to the FO president is that of negotiating with outside officials in order to mobilise financial support and other services. The following example of Ms Sirima's election shows that political affiliation and the ability to mobilise government resources may override gender barriers. Ms Sirima also had attributes to make up for her gender; she is related to the walauwe, she comes from a rich family, she is educated and her father used to be involved with village politics.

When the FO and its objectives became known among more people in the area, the division of ranks became more an object of struggle. In this struggle the electorate was not completely passive, but still mainly instrumental to the objectives of certain individuals. In HSE the office-bearers were changed after some time. The main reason was that the people under HSE belong to two gramasevaka divisions, with a river between them. As Mr HM Soomapala lives in Puhulkotuwa, all office-bearers came from Puhulkotuwa. People from Medagama were dissatisfied with this. They felt they were deprived from information (especially financial information) because they were too far away. By selecting Ms Sirima they expected to get the control over the FO to Medagama. Ms Sirima, on her turn, needed to improve her relations with government officials. It is striking she employed a female network for her election.

In Ms Sirima's family there were 7 children, only daughters. Ms Sirima married in bina, so she still lives close to her maha giddere. Her father's mother came from a walauwe family. She became involved with organisations through her father. He was the president of the village council, and he was part of the co-operative cultivation committee. Ms Sirima is a real organisation dealer in the village. She is the secretary of the Uva bureau of the women's association, consultant of the Youth Association, a Samurdhi Nayamake, involved with the Human Rights Society, member of Death Donation Society and she was involved with Sanasa. Before the PA came into power, her women's association was politically rather active. They organised a rally against high prices of milk and female harassment. The rally was forbidden by the UNP, saying they wanted to protect the women. They demonstrated against the compulsory sale of land to the sugar company. After the sugar company came they organised a strike on the sugar company for higher wages. Some people were arrested by the police.

When she became FO president, she was the vice-president of the Human Rights Society. She organised a meeting in the village (in Medagama), because she wanted to make a Human Rights Society in the village. At that meeting people listed all the problems and they mentioned the FO. When the secretary Mr Dissanayake got to know that they wanted to write about it to the Human Rights Society, he said he would organise a meeting quickly. They organised a general meeting at Aluthwela temple (a quarter of Medagama) to select new office-bearers. Aluthwela monk said he organised that meeting, because he wanted to change the office-bearers. However, the office-bearers refused to hold the election in Aluthwela temple, because the majority of the people did not show up. They postponed it and held an election in Puhulkotuwa school. At that meeting the monk could not come, but he said he had instructed the farmers to go there and vote for Ms Sirima. Ms Sirima got elected over Mr HM Soomapala with 17 votes versus 16. Mr RM Dissanayake's wife (secretary's wife) told there was an unexpected number of people from Medagama at that meeting, among them many women. Mr HM Soomapala did not want to comment on his defeat. He said it was a political thing, because Ms Sirima is PA and he is UNP.

Although Ms Sirima was elected the president, the secretary was still Mr RM Dissanayake and Mr HM Soomapala was one of the committee members. The treasurer came from Aluthwela, but he was only involved instrumentally by the other committee members. To regain the rank, - important for both Mr Soomapala and Mr Dissanayake- they started to contest/undermine Ms Sirima's position as a presidency. The fact that she is a woman make her more vulnerable of being criticised; her case shows that many arguments pertaining to the fact that she is a woman are used in the inter village struggle to gain control over the FO.

In reality Ms Sirima does not seem better nor worse than Mr HM Soomapala. Her hidden agenda for joining the FO was to make a political career. She has several ranks in organisations, but not in many governmental organisations, which is favourable for a political career. After her election she held a general meeting and presented the budget of the FO. At that time the construction contracts were almost finished, but the remaining contracts were taken by FO members from Medagama. To retain her rank in the organisation Ms Sirima seeks support for her position with the Irrigation Department and the gramasevaka. She will inform them first about her decisions and she tends to confirm to their decisions. She also avoids to hold the election meeting, or she does not show up.

According to Ms Sirima Mr HM Soomapala (the former president) and Mr RM Dissanayake still work together. If she proposes something, they will always disagree with her. In this ways they are always trying to postpone the construction work. Officers from the Irrigation Department asked them to finish the construction before the end of 1995, but Puhulkotuwa people wanted the construction later. She gave 2 contracts to Mr Jayasekara from Medagama. Mr Dissanayake told, she gave that contract to Mr Jayasekara because he is her relation. He is her father's sister's son. People do not dare to complain, Mr

Dissanayake says, because Mr Jayasekara is very aggressive. He used to be a member of JVP. People consider Ms Sirima's family as walauwe.⁴⁶ First Mr Dissanayake and Mr Soomapala told her the officers from the Irrigation Department were cheating her. They said she does not know how to deal with them. By agreeing to this construction, she would have to postpone the water issuing date. She told it was not a problem, because the Irrigation Department was also going to do construction during that time. After that there was an anonymous letter saying Mr Jayasekara was cheating the FO together with officers from the Irrigation Department. They sent a copy to the I.E.. Then she called a general meeting, she said everybody can investigate into this problem and tell how to correct it. When she went to Monaragala the I.E. told her the letter had been sent by Mr HM Soomapala. There was also an anonymous letter sent to her husband, saying that she had spare husbands.

Mr RM Dissanayake said: 'Ms Sirima has too much work. She is clever and educated but she has no time. Now people from Medagama also know she is the wrong person. Before they thought they would get more incentives through her. Normally farmers have leisure time in the evening, so at that time they want to show their problems. She does not have time, if she is at home she is busy with household activities. Therefore she asks him, Mr Dissanayake: 'a nei Malli⁴⁷, you go and look with this person.' She gives priority to her women's association, because she is paid for that and she can declare all her trips. Now she also wants to declare her trips to the FO fund. She thinks it is a government organisation, therefore it does not matter, she does not consider it is their own fund. He says she is not the cultivator, although she is the member. She does not even know all the paddy fields. As a secretary it is not his duty to inspect the channels, Mr HM Soomapala used to do it.⁴⁸ Ms Sirima never did it. She thinks it is difficult to go around in the hot sun.

Aluthwela monk does not support her anymore, because they have become competitors for a rank in the Human Rights Society. Now he is the president, because people prefer the monk, according to the monk. He says: 'Ms Sirima cannot bear that FO rank. If there is an urgent thing, she should go to that place directly. She should not consider whether it is hot sun or night⁴⁹. Ms Sirima liked to take the rank in the Human Rights Society, but she loses control over the villagers.'

An older lady (68yrs), who does not have land under HSE, says Ms Sirima is a bad mother, disobedient wife, a miserable housewife and a bad character woman.

However, many people from Medagama still feel that she would represent their interests better than office-bearers from Puhulkotuwa. They say she is clever in getting assistance from the agencies. The main way to obtain authority now is to mobilise resources from the government for the community. In that sense authority has become more an 'achieved' status than an 'ascribed' status.⁵⁰ This creates more possibilities for active farmers, thus also for active female farmers, to obtain a rank in the FO. However, female farmer still have to face more difficulties, as their capacity to mobilise resources from the government is limited due to other constraints posed by their gender.

⁴⁶ In fact Dissanayake and Soomapala also divided the contracts among their friends/relations. Besides about 50% of the FO members in Medagama are in some way or another Sirima's relation.

⁴⁷ A nei Malli, means 'oh younger brother'. Mr Dissanayake wants to say that Ms Sirima transfers the unpleasant jobs to him by referring to their intimate relationship.

⁴⁸ In fact RM Dissanayake inspected only those parts of the channel that were supposed to convey water to his part of the command area. He is a tail-end in HSE, so it is his interest. Sirima's yaya is situated in the head-end.

⁴⁹ Women are said to be weak. They cannot support hot sun like men can. It is also said that women cannot go out at night because there is no protection. It means men would harass her. This is partly true, as hardly any women are found on the road at night and many men are drunk. It is however a strange argument for proving somebody is not suitable for FO president. Male presidents do not go out at night for the FO's sake either. After all it is only an unpaid job!

⁵⁰ It should be realized that office-bearers are evaluated by the members on the basis of what they contribute to the organization, only in the case that the organization becomes to mean something for them. In all other cases members are just not interested at all and office-bearership remains 'ascribed'.

6.4 The Genderedness of Access to the Farmers' Organisation Ranks

Initially the selection of individuals for ranks in the FO was very heavily influenced by ID officers in charge of organising farmers. After the FO's became established, the outcome of the competition for FO ranks was more determined by village level politics. In this family background is important. However, those people who are seen to be influential and successful in dealing with government and non-government organisations have most chances of obtaining and keeping ranks. They are also the ones who invest a lot of time in organisations, because of the personal benefits they get. Women generally do not obtain ranks, as they are not associated with leadership and mobilising government resources. There are women who deal with organisations through their husbands who are office-bearers, but there are very few women who succeed in making a career in village level organisations themselves. Unless, like Sirima, they have some important attributes, like status, education and family background, and they have proven their political cleverness before. (Like Sirima in the women's association.)

Considering the history of office-bearers and organisations on village level, power relations in the village did not change very much. Although the FO was appropriated by a number of people who were relatively new to village politics, like Ms Sirima and Mr Punchi Malli, these people did not question the position of the people they represent. Mr Punchi Malli could have used his power for young, non-walauwe people, Ms Sirima could have promoted the participation of women in the FO. None of them questioned the authority of the ID either. To the contrary, the new faces continued the old struggle between the political parties, UNP and PA. Thereby any other discourse representing problems of members is impossible, because it becomes reduced to party politics. This point will be elaborated further in chapter nine, discussing the FO as empowering organisation.

CONCLUSION TO PART II

In this part it has been shown how the FO was constructed as a male interaction domain. Firstly, it was shown that membership is based on the criterion of legal cultivatorship. There are not only less women than men who have the status of legal cultivator, but this status quo also persists because women have less chances to become a legal cultivator. Secondly, it was shown that behaviour of men and women towards participation is regulated by the informal criteria 'actual cultivatorship' and 'head-of-householdship'. The deconstruction of these criteria showed that their gendered meaning, even though that meaning may not always correspond to actual practice in paddy cultivation. In the third section on practices of access, attention was drawn to the way in which people obtain the authority to become office-bearers. It has been described how information is initially disseminated and how the FO is embedded in the village politics, that are highly politicised. The practice reveals that no efforts are made to include women in the organisation, because they were not defined as stakeholders.

On the basis of the information provided in this part, one can see that the FO could also have been constructed as a differently. Practices in the organisation of irrigated agriculture show a quite different picture of male and female participation than the assumptions on which the FO is constructed. The legitimisation of the present FOs could therefore be questioned. One could also question the legitimisation of the present FO because it reproduces power relations in which women are dependent upon men for public affairs. Women do not get the opportunity to learn about organisations, to develop skills nor to explain what kinds of arrangements could facilitate their participation. A government committed to equal chances for men and women, should aim its policies at changing these dependency relations.

PART III

INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE FO

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INTRODUCTION TO PART III

In the previous part, it was discussed how the FO was constructed as a male interaction domain, how this affected the involvement of female farmers, and how this reproduced the dependency of women on men for public affairs. It has been shown that -either consciously or unconsciously- female farmers were not considered to be qualifying for participation. The only way in which women could qualify for participation in the FO seems to be by challenging these criteria for access. It should therefore be examined whether there is any reason for women to do that. After all the motivation for people to participate actively in the FO depends in the first place on the activities of the FO, or in other words, the kind of organisation the FO is.

It is important to realise that it is not obvious that male and female farmers will have an incentive to participate in FOs. Over the past 50 years there have been many 'rural development programs' in Sri Lanka and farmers have become quite sceptical of the benefits they may get from government programs.¹ The statement of one of the Institutional Organisers illustrates this quite well:

One of the IO told that in 1991 the Irrigation Department started the FOs with the funding for NIRP. At that time the farmers did not like the formation of FO's. They told: 'We have been cheated several times like this.' At the beginning there was a small allocation given by the government to the Irrigation Department for the maintenance of the anicut. The farmers were not satisfied with the maintenance. They thought that the ID staff puts that money in their pockets. Besides that there were some maintenance labourers, whose salaries were also paid by this money. According to the farmers they did nothing but receiving this money.

This part aims to describe the possibilities the FO offers to male and female farmers to solve their own problems through the FO.² Obviously the perception of male and female farmers about the FO depends very much on its present activities. As has been described in chapter 2, there are multiple perspectives on the function of the FO: the FO as an organisation governing a common pool resource, as an organisation linking farmers with the Irrigation Department and as an organisation empowering farmers. For each approach it will be elaborated which male and female actors use what kind of possibilities to solve their own problems. These incentives can be gendered in three ways: in gendered needs, gendered practices of the FO or gendered costs of participation. The implications of the actors activities on the objectives of the FO from the viewpoint of each perspective will also be discussed.

¹ Some previous government interventions related to irrigation management are briefly described in annex 4.

² This is not to endorse any accusation nor to criticise any individual. The mere objective is to reflect about and learn from the practices of the FO's.

CHAPTER 7 THE FARMERS' ORGANISATION AS AN ORGANISATION MANAGING A COMMON POOL RESOURCE

7.1 Management Functions of the Farmers' Organisation

Formally each MANIS scheme has a part time project manager, generally the TA from the Irrigation Department. The project manager is assisted by the work supervisors and institutional organisers. Under the MANIS program, after turn over, management on D-channel level should be done by the FO's and the main canal should be operated by labourers from the Irrigation Department. In the Project Management Committee the FO and the Irrigation Department could jointly decide about system management. (see figure 5 for the organigram of Buttala scheme) Improvement of management would be the incentive for farmers to participate in the FO. The management by the FOs on D-channel level includes waterdistribution and mobilisation of resources for O&M. [IRMU/NIRP, 1996]

7.2 Water Distribution

In the MANIS management program, which is used for Buttala anicut, the FO is responsible for water distribution downstream of the D-channel inlet. Formally, however, the FOs in Buttala anicut do not have a responsibility in water distribution³, because the system is designed for continuous flow. (See the water issue schedule in annex 3 for illustration) It is claimed that every plot has received a tube inlet of which the diameter depends on the size of the plot and the height at which the tube is located of the location in the system. In addition to being a continuous flow system, Buttala is not a water scarce system. The system is an anicut from a perennial stream and almost all D-channel command areas drain again on the main channel. Knowing it is not a waterscarce system, it is surprising to find fallow and vegetable plots in an area where paddy cultivation is still considered to be the most significant crop. Although there is no watershortage in the system as a whole, there are local water shortages resulting from a water distribution problem. There are 3 reasons for this:

- a. Farmers do not always want continuous flow⁴
- b. Not all farmers and all yaya's have tubes⁵
- c. Some farmers manipulate the flow although they have a tube⁶

To accommodate for the fluctuations in demand, farmers should, ideally, inform the FO office-bearers, who should inform the Irrigation Department, who should tell the labourers to let more water in their D-channel. The office-bearers can control gates in the yaya's⁷ themselves. However, the above procedure is rarely followed. An example of how the flow is adjusted is the case of Garandi Bakine Ela; everybody adjusts the flow according to their own needs. The

³ Unless in the rare occasions that there is a water shortage and a rotation schedule has to be made.

⁴ There are periods during the growing season farmers do not want water continuously because of specific operations, like land preparation, harvesting, spraying. Another reason for not wanting water continuously is to control pests and diseases. A devastating stemborer, eg., is controlled by a water issue once in 3 days, in the case of rats and snails one controlling method is to quickly cover the whole land with a reasonable amount of water.

⁵ There are three possible circumstances in which tubes are missing for fields:

- Some field share a tube, a situation similar to a quarternary channel.
- Some field are irrigated by excess water.
- Some fields are in parts of the system where no NIRP structures at all were made.

⁶ There are three circumstances in which people manipulate the flow although they have a tube:

- They want to take water quickly and prevent other people from interfering with 'their' water.
- The water level in the channel is too low to take water through their tube.
- Their structure is not good, too small, too highly placed, at the wrong place etc.

⁷ Yaya's are tracts or tertiary channels.

command area of Garandi Bakine D-channel is rather small (78 ac.) and there are only 3 yaya's. Bakamuna Yaya, Garandi Bakine Arawa and Bakini Arawa.

One day the secretary closed Garandi Bakini D-channel again, but Ms RM Sirimawathie (68yrs) wanted to get water. Her field is under the same yaya as the secretary's field. Therefore she told Mr John mama (45yrs), a labour who has been working with them for years, to block the door at the main channel with banana stumps. By driving up the water, she managed to get more water into their D-channel. As there was hardly any water in the main channel left, downstream Mr Mahattiya Mama (58yrs) could not get water. He came to remove Ms Sirimawathie's block and she put it again etc. etc.

One would also expect the FO to solve the problem that some plots do not receive sufficient water. Those farmer do inform the office-bearers of the FO, but it does not yield much. As the problem is mostly caused by other farmers taking too much water and/or disturbing the levels in the channels, the problem cannot be addressed without creating a lot of trouble. In addition to this, the FO office-bearers lack the legal power to really correct these people and official procedures involve a lot of time and costs. It is not surprising individual office-bearers do not have an interest in correcting upstream farmers. Therefore most people solve their own problem, if they do not get enough water. In most situations the principle of 'the survival of the fittest' is applied and whoever does not manage to get water in that way, has to follow a different strategy. Ms Padma, for example, had a watershortage because her field was in the very tail-end of the D-channel. She had to walk all the way to the head end of the Hakurusimbalaya yaya to remove the barriers other farmers put in the channel. This became difficult when one of her children got ill. She gave up her land and took lease land somewhere else in the system. Ms RM Piyaseele also has water problem because she has a tail-end plot. Most of the time she irrigates at night, but when the competition for water becomes too fierce, she asks her brother to irrigate. She assumes that people will not as easily steal his water because as man he can threaten people more.

Ms RM Piyaseele depends on excess water for irrigation. Normally she irrigates once per week, at night. It is not a problem, because the field is rather close to the homestead of her parents. It takes her about 12 hours to divert water, because the discharge is very small. She has to keep an eye on it, otherwise other farmers will block the drainage channel.

During the land preparation time she tried to divert water three times, but without success. Then she asked her brother to divert water. Her husband was working in the sugarcane at the moment. He is a tractor driver, therefore he does not have much time. She handles the cultivation mostly by herself.

She says her problem is that the upstream farmers are all impolite. At the land preparation time they blocked the channel and they did not allow her to take water. Now there is too much water. She has to divert the water to the river otherwise it stagnates in her field.

People do not expect that the FO changes existing power relations in waterdistribution. Some even try to actively prevent the FO from controlling the water, for example, by removing the doors. The view the (new) position of the office-bearers mainly as: 'They have a better personal relation with the officers, while others are further removed from the officers as all problems have to be solved through them.' Most male and female farmers still consider the officers the ones who have the final control over waterdistribution. They say that the government remains stronger than the FO. Ms KM Ukku Manike's tube was too high to convey water. She mentioned this once to the FO office-bearers, but they did not take it up. Now she just cuts the channel bunds again, like before the rehabilitation. The secretary said he could not put the tubes lower, because the fields are high.⁸ Mr KM Danapala used to be a committee member, but he stepped out of the FO. He

⁸ I think the mistake they made was that they desilted all the channels up to the design level, whereas the fields have also been silting. Therefore they now have a problem to get a water level high enough to get water on their fields.

is a rich farmer and he says he does not want the FO to have anything to say about the amount of water he takes. The structure was a point of dispute within the committee of the FO; the president and secretary were against it because their field is downstream of the structure. This damaged structure is one of the main reasons why the tail-end of Aluthwela channel cannot be cultivated in Yala.

From the above description it is clear that the majority of the people, both men and women, solve their water problems outside the FO. To talk with Ostrom [1992], operational rules fail, but this does not result in a collective making of new operational rules. There are exceptional cases, however, in which the FO does become the interaction domain for struggles about water rights and responsibilities. In the following two cases, the struggle about water becomes part of the office-bearers' personal interests. Mr JM Soomapala's case resulted in a confrontation between the treasurer and the secretary. The secretary wanted to marry the granddaughter of other party at the time. While Mr Soomapala himself is married to the treasurers' mothers' younger sister. In Ms Heemawathie's case the president used the dispute to strengthen her own position, while the former president used it to show she is not competent. The secretary argued that he was directly affected by the fact that Ms Heemawathie took water.

Mr JM Soomapala and Ms RM Ukku Manike have 7 ac of lease land under Garandi Bakine ela. It is situated downstream of the other paddy field. It does not have a separate channel or tube to get water, they irrigate entirely through excess water. If there is a shortage of water they use to cut the bunds from the fields upstream to his field. There used to be a channel, going through the fields, collecting the drainage water of a lot of fields. Many farmers with similar plots like Mr JM Soomapala took water like from that channel. The drainage channel ended at the field of Mr Soomapala and Ms Ukku Manike. However, one rather powerful farmer close to the D-channel, Mr Bandara Mama took the part of that channel passing his field and incorporated it in his paddy field. Now the channel does not give as much water as it used to do, because it is interrupted.

Mr Bandara Mama's son says he does not know whether that channel has ever been there, but he thinks it is unfair to ask them to provide their own land for such a channel. The treasurer of the FO wanted to construct a separate field channel to solve the problem. Ms Ukku Manike is his mothers' younger sister. The secretary of the FO did not agree. He said the FO would only construct the channel if it would be lined, otherwise it would take too much space. The secretary of the FO wanted to marry Mr Bandara Mama's grand daughter at that time.

Now the secretary argues that Mr JM Soomapala and Ms RM Ukku Manike do not have a right to ask water from Garandi Bakine ela for two reasons. First their land is situated in Giragelle yaya, officially it does not belong to Garandi Bakine yaya. When the NIRP was started there was a suggestion to join Giragelle, where their paddy field is situated, with Garandi Bakini ela. The other farmers taking water from that drainage channel opposed the idea as well, because it would lead to a lot of conflicts in Yala. One of the other farmers taking water from that drainage channel is Mr DM Soomapala, the president from the FO. Now Giragelle belongs to Attalawela yaya, meaning HSE, another D-channel. Officially they should use drainage water coming from the fields of Attalawela yaya.

The other reason why Mr JM Soomapala and Ms RM Ukku Manike are not entitled even to ask for water according to the secretary is because they are leasers. They are not FO members therefore they do not have a right to ask anything from the FO. They should ask for water from their landlord.

In addition to the water problem, the secretary says, there is a problem about the land for the channel. Therefore the FO could never solve this problem. Even officers could not solve it, because they only have a right to decide about the reservations. Landlords should agree to give this land, but it is not likely they would like to provide this land for a channel to get water to land that does not belong to them. Another possibility is that tenants give this land unofficially. The FO could mediate.

The problem result in a lot of discussion between Ms Ukku Manike and her Mr Soomapala. Ms Ukku Manike thinks the field entails too many problems. In addition to the water problem, they always have to wait until all farmers finish their broadcasting activities, in order to be able to broadcast. If they do not wait, their seed paddy may be washed away as water keeps entering their field. The result was that last kanna they were late to broadcast and at the end of the kanna the rain destroyed their paddy. This kanna,

Ms Ukku Manike did not want to cultivate the land, but her husband wanted to cultivate. He said he would 'somehow' manage to get a good yield. To cultivate paddy is his pride. Mr Soomapala used to be a paddy farmer with a reasonable amount of land, he even used to be in charge of water distribution in his D-channel. When he left his first wife for Ms Ukku Manike (his first wife became ill and infertile), the arrangement was that he would already transfer all his land to the children of the first marriage. (In case he would get children with Ms Ukku Manike) As Ms Ukku Manike did not have paddy land, only homestead land, they suddenly became paddy landless. Therefore they took this leaseland.

Ms Heemawathie needs to cultivate this land to be able to provide her own food and expenses. She is a widow and she wrote all the land she inherited from her husband to her children. Her married daughters and their families live with her on the homestead, but she does not want to depend on them completely. Her son did not look after her, therefore he left the homestead.

She claims she does not understand the problem, because her field drains again to HSE D-channel. In Maha she cannot control the water in her field; it keeps on flowing through the holes of crabs. Recently she received a letter from the FO, then she found out that Ms Sirima is the president. Now she wants to go to see her.

Mr Dissanayake complained about her, but Ms Sirima argues that the FO should allow her to take water, because she is a widow. Ms Sirima's field is upstream of Ms Heemawathie's field. Mr Dissanayake's field is in the tail-end. He uses the 'scientific' approach to convince Ms Sirima. He says: "Ms Heemawathie cultivates the reservation of the channels. The bund should be 4ft. wide, but she cuts the bund up to 2ft. That is at the 39th to 41th chain. She does not listen, she just argues it is not bad for the channel. The FO should take legal action and complain to I.E. She has a tube of 6 inches, but she cuts the bund over 3 meters."⁹ He advised her to stop that practice. He claims that there are about 50 farmers downstream who get affected. He says he learned these things at the training for office-bearers. Ms Sirima did not attend such a training therefore she does not know.

The whole problem of Ms Heemawathie has actually become more of a conflict between Ms Sirima and the other office-bearers about Ms Sirima's capacity for office-bearership, than a conflict about the right of Ms Heemawathie to take water. On the one hand Ms Sirima is uncertain about how much Ms Heemawathie's behaviour affects downstream water levels. On the other hand she knows that this is becoming a Medagama/Puhulkotuwa conflict and that she cannot disappoint 'her' people from Medagama. It is thus this constellation of power and personal interests of office-bearers, that causes the case of Ms Heemawathie to become part of the FO.

It is interesting and important to note that water distribution in a water abundant scheme with continuous flow like Buttala, is not as unproblematic as it would seem. There are uncultivated plots because of a local lack of water, there are people unable to cultivate paddy due to a lack of (timely) water. Ostrom [1992] argues that increasing visibility of water distribution through design is a strategy that improves the sustainability of WUA's. In this line of thought the lack of visibility of the distribution and the denial of the Irrigation Department that something like a water distribution issue exists might be one of the reasons no initiatives to redefine the operational rules. In addition to this, the fact that people think that the ultimate authority over the system lies with the Irrigation Department and the established interests of some people in the present situation have a major influence.

The Irrigation Department tried to solve the water distribution by making very rigid structures, but the water distribution below the D-channel outlet happens mostly through individual manipulations of the flow. Eventually, waterdistribution is done on basis of the 'survival of the fittest' principle. This is not a complete anarchy, but a reproduction of existing power relations in which less powerful people ultimately give up the cultivation of paddy. A similar point is

⁹ This is not true, she cuts a waterway of about 50 cm wide.

made in Mollinga and Bolding.[1996]

Because the water distribution is not regulated through the FO, the limited participation of female farmers does not appear to affect their access to water in either a positive or a negative way. Of course waterdistribution practices are gendered in itself. No cases of gendered needs with respect to waterdistribution were found, but the principle of survival of the fittest sometimes has negative outcomes for women, because water conflicts are sorted out at night in a rather violent way. Still one should be careful to conclude that women are powerless in sorting out water conflicts at night, as the cases of Ms Piyaseele and Ms Heemalatha illustrate. Conclusions on the genderedness of waterdistribution practices in case the FO would regulate them, as well as statements on the incentives related to that, remain speculation.

7.3 The Mobilisation of Resources for Maintenance

Under the MANIS program, after the turn over, FOs become responsible for the mobilisation of resources for maintenance of the D-channel. In the O&M manual [Buttala O&M Manual, NIRP] it is stated that the FO has responsibilities for:

- controlling weeds and clearing of channel bunds
- desilting and maintaining canal profiles
- filling scours and attending repairs of structures
- repair and painting of gates
- maintenance of distributory and field channel roads
- maintenance drainage channels
- maintenance channel devices

Labour for D-channel maintenance should be provided by the members of the FO, while additional maintenance costs are to be paid out of the FO fund. Membership and entrance fees have been collected for the creation of such a fund. During the construction work 5% commission has been collected for the FO fund as well. Many FO funds did already acquire quite an amount of money. Spending of the FO fund is mainly discussed between the office-bearers, but members participate more or less in the discussion about labour obligations. All members have maintenance obligations based on shares assigned by the FC representative, but the interest of members in maintenance is very much dependent on the location of their plots in the system. This means that tail-enders are most interested. Most members still think the real authority over the irrigation system lies with the government. Therefore many people also expect that the government will continue to help them financially if something needs to be done about the system.

At present none of the FO's did any repair work yet. In HSE there is a conflict between the office-bearers about the repairs works. Sirima wants to do repairs, but the former office-bearers do not like to spend the FO fund. They claim that repairs are useless as people will break the structures again. This seems partly true -as the structures were not broken without reason-, but there are also parts of the channel that were not yet rehabilitated still. They do not want to spend money for that either. According to Kloezen [1995] office-bearers of FOs do not want to spend money on repairs because they expect the Irrigation Department will continue to help and because it is no priority to them. Ms Sirima uses their reluctance to spend money to show that the former president of the FO does not want to spend money on problems of people from Medagama, her village. She insinuates he wants to keep the money for the people from Puhulkotuwa, his village or worse, for himself. The former president and the secretary use the

situation to show Ms Sirima wastes and they insinuate Ms Sirima is stealing money.

Besides doing repairs, the FO is responsible for cleaning the channels. Although everybody is aware of this and of the fines, most people pretend not to know which share is theirs. Most channels were not cleaned, or partly cleaned by a shramadana of the tail-enders. In HSE, the secretary Mr Dissanayake actually determined the labour obligations. He reported the names of some of the people who did not clean their share to the president, Ms Sirima. It is his personal interest, because his fields are in the tail-end. Formally the FO should report this to the DS, who should fine the free-riders afterwards. Mr RM Dissanayake, together with some of his friends (Mr Kalu Aiya) proposed Ms Sirima not to report the names. They would take the cleaning as a contract and afterwards they would receive the money of the fines. In most other FOs the upstream farmers do not clean the channels and the down-stream farmers clean alone, as it is in their interest. Mr RM Dissanayake and his friends are down-stream farmers so in order to get water they would clean the channels anyway. Through this construction they were finally able to get money. A problem arose when the free-riders didn't want pay the fine. Mr RM Dissanayake reported to Ms Sirima. She made up a story, that she wrote a letter to the people saying that she had informed the DS¹⁰. (In fact she did not inform him.) After that Ms KM Heemalatha went to see the DS and Ms RM Heemawathie came to see her.¹¹ Ms KM Heemalatha claimed that she is not obliged to clean the channel, because she's irrigating with excess water. She takes water from Ms Kalu Banda's field, but also from Mr Dissanayake's field. She always breaks the field bunds. This may be the reason that Mr Dissanayake asked Ms Sirima to write a letter.

Ms Heemalatha ama (60 yrs) has one acre of paddy land in the tail-end of HSE yaya. She irrigates with drainage water. She gets excess water of about 10 acres to her field. Therefore water stagnates in her field during heavy rains. Normally she breaks the field bund gates of upstream farmers to get water. There is a drainage channel, but her sons, who cultivate fields upstream from her paddy field, steal the water from that channel. She has a very difficult relationship with her sons, because some married against her wish and others do not want to marry at all. Therefore there is no woman (wife from one of her sons) to look after her. She says her sons do not look after her.

Due to the difficulty in the water situation, she has to go to divert water in the night. Sometimes this is very inconvenient for one of the upstream farmers, Mr Kalu Banda, who has a small job. The day after the night that Ms Heemalatha ama had broken all his field bund gates again, he had taken leave to spray chemicals. However, he was unable to spray, because she had been diverting water through his field. Mr Kalu Banda got a little bit annoyed, but he will not scold her because she is an old lady and a little bit pitiful. Besides, her mouth is very sharp.

Mr RM Dissanayake, the secretary of the FO, is also annoyed by the fact that Heemalatha breaks the field bunds. He reported to Ms Sirima that Ms Heemalatha did not clean her share of the channel. Ms Heemalatha knows she has to clean a share of the channels, but she cannot mobilise the labour of her sons. She did not even manage to do her land preparation in time and she also had to clean her drainage channel. Therefore she claims that she does not need to clean because she does not get water from the D-channel.¹²

When she received the letter from Ms Sirima, saying that her name has been given to the DS to fine, she went to see the DS. She asked Ms Elange Piyaseele to come with her. They went to the DS and he said that of course Ms Heemalatha ama cannot clean the channel herself, her sons have to clean it for her. He also told Ms Heemalatha ama cannot understand this problem, therefore she has to sent her son to discuss with

¹⁰ DS means Divisional Secretary

¹¹ It is striking that these reported cases were both old widows.

¹² Heemalatha ama is not an exception by not cleaning the channel. Only the farmers who otherwise do not get enough water actually cleaned channels.

him. Then Ms Heemalatha scolded him very badly¹³ and she also scolded the gramasevaka. The gramasevaka happened to be there and he heard it. He got very upset and told that -although she is an old widow- next time he will not send a letter to her about cleaning the channel, but he will directly make a case for her. Ms Elange Piyaseele told she would never accompany Ms Heemalatha again, as she was very embarrassed that she addressed the officers like that. Finally Ms Heemalatha said she paid the fine to one of her sons, who is the treasurer of the FO.

Although the responsibility for mobilising resources for maintenance and repairs below D-channel inlet, officially has been transferred to the FO, nobody is eager to take the responsibility. Formerly the Irrigation Department financed these activities either by paying labourers or by giving contracts to the farmers to do maintenance. The transfer of maintenance responsibilities is considered an extra burden to the farmers and office-bearers, not only financially, but also the burden of organising labour and money. The local officials of the administrative service, like the DS and the gramasevaka, do not really support the transfer either. They consider it a lot of trouble for something that is impossible to solve anyway. Even the local ID officers argue that it is not a good arrangement, because farmers do not have the knowledge to maintain the system properly. At first sight it thus seems an undesirable situation, because locally nobody has an interest in the transfer. One could also question, however, what about the interest the FO are supposed to have allocating maintenance and repair funds as they wish. (cf. chapter two) I believe that due to the present state of the infrastructure and water distribution practices, that it would almost impossible to achieve at collective benefits from improved maintenance. In addition to this, transaction costs for office-bearers to co-ordinate this, would be extremely high.

A second reason for the lack of interest in the transfer of the maintenance responsibility at local level, is that both officers and farmers continue to believe that the government will give support for irrigated rice production in future. This is not surprising considering the history of state intervention in irrigated agriculture. This has been characterised by a protective and paternalistic attitude towards and high investments for the sinhalese peasants, irrigated rice production in particular. According to Moore[1985], state intervention always consisted of financial allocations, rather than price incentives or efficient delivery of services. He argues that contrary to the general believe, the net subsidy to farmers is lower than believed and partly outweighed by the transfer of income from rice producers to consumers. This gives some food for thought considering the question of Kloezen [1995] whether the FOs can generate enough income to pay maintenance in the long term.

Turning at the activities that the FO does undertake in the domain of maintenance. Like in the activities on water distribution, these interlink close with the personal interests of the two office-bearers of the FO, the secretary, who has land in the tail-end and the president who wants to prove her legitimacy as a president representing Medagama village. Both the gramasevaka and the DS try to keep out of this kind of conflicts. It is sad, but not surprising that it is Heemalatha who is the ultimate loser in this interaction.

7.4 Gendered Incentives from the Farmers' Organisation as an Organisation governing a Common Pool Resource

In spite of its water abundance and continuous flow, there is an interest in water distribution in Buttala anicut. The operational rules underlying the infrastructure do not govern water

¹³ She told him he should fuck his mother. Afterwards Piyaseele told us that this was a very bad thing for a woman to tell to a man. A woman could bear to be scolded like this, but a man loses his face to get scolded about the respectfulness of his mother.

distribution at all. Incentives Meinzen-Dick and Subramanian [1996] mention (cf chapter 2), as more efficient and reliable water delivery, augmented farm productivity and quicker resolution of water conflicts are not realised. Their absence does not result in a collective redefinition of these rules for two reasons. Firstly, the transaction costs of changing these rules would be very high, because some farmers profit from the present situation. Secondly, both male and female farmers do not expect that the FO will (be able) to enforce other operational rules. They do not think office-bearers have the power to counter political powerful farmers. They also think the office-bearers use their own position for their own benefit. Members do not have a means to make office-bearers accountable to them, which implies that office-bearers do not have an incentive to engage in 'a lot of trouble' for the sake of system management.

The lack of involvement of the FO in resource mobilisation for maintenance is first of all explained by the complete absence of interests for this transfer at local level. Again the incentive mentioned in chapter two, improvement of O&M allocations does not occur. Apparently there is no need to address this issue at a higher level, because there is little to gain with the present infrastructure and water distribution. It is easier to simply ignore the issue of maintenance.

The only activities the FO does undertake in these two spheres, are closely interlinked with the personal interests and strategies of the office-bearers of the FO. This means that the average male or female farmer has very little scope for solving his or her problems through the FO. Only if he or she succeeds in enrolling an office-bearer in her own problem, it may be discussed at the FO. It is clear that this has a lot to do with political power and very little with participation in the FO.

CHAPTER 8 THE FARMERS' ORGANISATION AS A LINK WITH THE AGENCIES

8.1 Linkage Functions of the Farmers' Organisation

From the side of the Irrigation Department as well as from the side of the Department of Agrarian Services, assistance and training programs for farmers are carried out. All these programs now want to use the FO as their vehicle. In the context of the NIRP rehabilitation project, a whole package of assistance and training was presented to the farmers through the FO. Another example is the recently started AMA program, a program that started in Anuradhapura district and Matale district. Under the AMA program the Agrarian Service Centres will be presided by a committee consisting of FO presidents. [Ms Sumanasekara, pers. com. 1996] The ASC will facilitate the distribution of agricultural credits to farmers and provide training. The program intends to spread over whole the island. In Buttala a similar initiative was launched by the Department of Agrarian Services in Buttala in co-operation with the AMA group. Apart from their function as governing a common pool resource, the FO is thus also seen as a link between farmers and the government. In that capacity the FO might identify target groups for government intervention, disseminate knowledge among its members and inform government agencies about farmers' needs.

8.2 The Identification of Target Groups for Training Programs and Incentives on the Basis of Needs

Through the FO training is given about -among other things- construction, accounts, pests and diseases. There are also programs to support farmers in a material way. In order to increase the effectiveness of these programs the FO office-bearers were expected to identify the appropriate target groups for both the training and several incentive programs. For incentives programs this means either to distribute all incentives in an equal way or to identify those people who have most necessity for incentives. For training programs this means to identify people who are knowledgeable, but have a need for training. In practice there is no incentive for office-bearers to do so. (In practice these objectives are not pursued, nor made explicit.) This results in rather ineffective programs. The fertiliser program is an example of what happened to an incentives program; the NIRP training an example of a training program. In both cases, office-bearers identified their own connections and themselves as appropriate target group.

It was possible to get fertiliser from Department of Agrarian Services with a recommendation letter from the FO office-bearers. It was an important program, because most mudalali's do not give fertiliser on credit anymore. However, very few people knew about this facility to get fertiliser incentives through the FO, because the office-bearers used it as a personal favour to their friends and relations, most of them belonging to the more well-to-do part of the village. In addition to that hardly anybody who received this incentive repaid the credit after the harvest. The delay in repayment has lasted two kanna's now. The FOs argued that the farmers could not pay, because part of their harvest failed. It is the FO who should urge these defaulters to pay. That is unrealistic, because the mayor defaulters are the FO office-bearers themselves.

Some other office-bearers say that the Department of Agrarian Services should not try to give credit etc. through the FO, because they know it does not work. People are not suitable for this kind of system. They do not want the responsibility for the repayment, because they do not have the means of power. The mudalali's have power, therefore people do not easily default their loans

there.

In the ignition of the NIRP, training has been given on various subjects, eg. construction, water management, the use of chemicals. Five training programs have been conducted on O&M. Officers of Galgamowa¹⁴ held a general meeting in Buttala town. The office-bearers from the FO had to select 2 or 3 persons from every FO. Those people went on a training for 2 days in the NIRP building, close to Buttala, by the officers from Galgamowa. In almost all cases the president, secretary and treasurer went for the NIRP training. Women never attended any training and the agencies did not request that either. There are, however, numerous examples of women who meet the criteria for training, (knowledgeable farmer, intelligent), but they are not invited. The office-bearers and their friend are also the farmers that use to do experiments with Department of Agrarian Services to test new paddy seeds.¹⁵

The perspective of the FO as a link with the agencies is most commonly used by the intervening officers, and it is also very compatible with what many villagers see as the most important function of organisations: that of mobilising resources from the government. However, there are no motivations for office-bearers to altruistically define target groups for government intervention nor to enforce strict regulations on defaulters. Office-bearers consider the incentives and the training as a personal reward for their efforts by the officers. In addition to that, they use their 'distributive' function as a means to enforce political and personal alliances. Therefore this kind of activities of the FO are not considered as an incentive for participation neither by male farmers nor by female farmers. Only those people who are close to the office-bearers benefit from it, but they do not need to participate in the FO meeting for that.

As most of the office-bearers are men, the participants of the training programs are usually male as well. It is considered very uncommon that women participate and no arrangements are made by either the agencies or the FO to facilitate their participation. In chapter nine it will be shown that this lack of training later on has been used to justify that hardly any women got involved with construction contracts. In another scheme, Manankattiya wewa [see the report on the second component of this study], women were only allowed to participate in training after their explicit request. It is noteworthy that there is a female senior DD supporting women's involvement in that scheme. Almost all farmers -male and female- like training, especially the younger people do. It is therefore a pity that female farmers never have been explicitly invited for such programs.

8.3 The Dissemination of Information through the Farmers' Organisation

If information is conveyed by office-bearers to other farmers, officers can work more efficiently. In this way officers can easily reach all the farmers, by talking to the office-bearers. Office-bearers should communicate the knowledge they obtained from the agencies to all the other members at the monthly FO meetings. However, most FOs do not manage to hold meetings every month and most farmers ask neighbours and mudalali's selling chemicals for advice on diseases. Only office-bearers who have a close relationship with the officers, go to ask them for advice. For example, Mr Dissanayake (secretary of HSE FO) goes to see Department of Agrarian Services with his infected plants. The office-bearers do go for training, but they think it is not possible for them to give this training again to other farmers. Besides that, they mention, there

¹⁴ Galgamowa is the training institute for people of the ID

¹⁵ It is noteworthy in this context that in many households it are women who select paddy seeds and who germinate them before broadcasting.

is no pay. This is what Mr RM Dissanayake tried to explain at one FO meeting.

Mr RM Dissanayake, an FO secretary, accused the officers of being lazy at a meeting. He said: 'If we get training from the Irrigation Department, we cannot tell those things to normal farmers. The training is only given to the office-bearers. To tell to other farmers is a bother and other farmers don't accept the advises by office-bearers. Officers should not try to tell their advises through them, but come to the meetings and give their advises directly.'

Information is thus not spread at FO meeting, but to a lesser extent information is disseminated mouth to mouth. The networks through which this information is exchanged are to a certain extent gendered: both men and women talk more with people from their own gender. As it are mainly the male office-bearers who maintain contact with the officers and who go to training, there is reason to believe that female farmers have relatively less chances to benefit from this information than male farmers. This might explain why many female farmers are extremely negative about the possibility to obtain useful information through the FO; they prefer to obtain their information from neighbours. Mr HM Jayasekara says he always gets informed by Mr Dissanayake about the FO at his boutique. Ms Pryanthi gets her advises through neighbours.

Mr HM Jayasekara has a boutique half way Aluthwela channel. Therefore he always gets informed by Mr Dissanayake about FO affairs. Mr Kalu Aiya, Mr Piyadasa and Mr HM Kalu Banda also gather at his boutique (to drink illicit liquor).

Ms DM Pryanthi inquired from the neighbours (Aluth giddere) how to spray. She mixed pesticide and herbicide together, then they only have to spray once. It is just as effective. She does not want to spray herself, because she is still breastfeeding her youngest child. Therefore her son sprays. It is the first time he does this.

Thus, as meetings are not held once a month, it is very difficult for office-bearers to convey their messages. In practice, information is disseminated mouth to mouth, through networks. As these networks are gendered, men generally have more knowledge about the FO affairs than women. This is not reflected in incentives for participation though, because information is mainly disseminated mouth to mouth.

8.4 The Communication of Needs for Programs and Incentives through the Farmers' Organisation to the Agencies

Effective training and incentive programs are based on 'real needs' of the population. If FO could serve as a mechanism through which those needs could be identified and communicated, government programs could be adjusted to the needs of the population and thus expect a better response. The principle would be that office-bearers communicate those needs to the officer that they identified on the basis of direct questions of members and their day to day experience. One could question the effectiveness of this idea, like one of the poorer farmers did. She said:

'Mudalali's control the prices of paddy, therefore the FO should get involved in marketing. The FO office-bearers are rich and they have (economic) connections with the mudalali's, therefore most of them do not make a genuine effort to do marketing in the FO.'

In practice, office-bearers generally do communicate the need for programs (preferably benefits not training) to the agencies, but it is questionable whose needs these are. This is illustrated by the case of Mr Punchi Malli, whose suggestions are quite in line with his own plans for the future.

Mr Punchi Malli is a very ambitious young man. He says he wants to improve his standard of living quickly. He is searching ways to do a business with paddy in future. The main constraint is that he needs a place to stock the paddy.

Recently somebody from the World Bank came, a Japanese lady, but 'she smokes and lives in the United States', Mr Punchi Malli said. She came with the officers from the Irrigation Department. She asked what should be done now to strengthen the involvement of farmers in the FO. Mr Punchi Malli told her that they need (money to built) a place to stock the paddy, then they can start a paddy stock business with the FO.

Another reason to question the effectiveness of the idea to use the FO to communicate needs to the agencies, is that the policy of agencies is still defined in a very top-down manner. As a result, nor the implementing local agency, nor the farmers from the 'target group', openly question the need for the top-down programs. A common agreement is that programs are better than no programs, because programs involve the allocation of resources to both the department and the farmers. In the same way as office-bearers depend upon the existence of programs for their legitimacy, local departments do. There is a wide-spread argument of ID officers that if the Irrigation Department does not quickly provide some new programs, 'all the farmers they mobilised will join the programmes of the Department of Agrarian Services'. Implicitly this will mean a failure for the Irrigation Department. In addition to this, office-bearers feel they should accommodate the wishes of the officers and departments. The example of Ms Sirima illustrates the attitude of office-bearers towards new programs.

*Ms Sirima told there was a meeting in Buttala for all presidents of FO's only in order to form the 'Buttala development council'. The participation of the presidents was compulsory and they could not be represented by anyone else. Therefore she felt she should go, as a president of her FO. The meeting was organised by the assistant commissioner of Department of Agrarian Services with support of the AMA district group. The meeting was sponsored by Madura Peruma Traders, a big chemical mudalali in Buttala. They provided refreshments and they showed a so-called information video on chemicals for paddy cultivation.*¹⁶

Ms Sirima cannot remember exactly what the meeting was about. They called it 'integrated approach'. She says it means they want to involve everything in their program. Members of the FO can take incentives for many things through their presidents. She does not know what will be the follow up, that remains to be seen.

Thus it is not obvious that the FO serves as a mechanism to communicate real needs to the agencies, nor that the agencies will be able to make fruitful use of this information. Not only is the design of policies (still) very top-down and centrally organised, there is also no real incentive for office-bearers to perform this task. Ordinary farmers think they have less influence over the government programs after the establishment of the FO. The communicative function thus does not play any role in the incentives for male and female farmers to participate and consequently no statements can be made about its genderedness.

8.5 Gendered Incentives from the Farmers' Organisation as a Link with the Agencies

It is typical for this kind of organisation that the leaders depend upon the government for their legitimacy and power towards the members, as both are based on the resources the governments provide to the organisation. In return the leaders are supposed to be loyal towards the government agencies. In fact a patron-client relationship is created both between officers and office-bearers, and between office-bearers and (some) other members. Grindle [in Long 1992] speaks in this context of 'long-term commitments'. She argues that these personal alliance

¹⁶ Sirima said it was an propaganda video.

structures are critical for both the success of the farm leaders and the field officers. Although these long-term commitments certainly exist, the Sri Lankan context is more politicised than Grindle's example. This is the reason why after the elections some of the office-bearers changed from UNP to PA supporters. The officers felt that they should work with government supporters and the members felt that government supporters have better chances in obtaining incentives for the organisation.¹⁷

This chapter showed that the nature of the link between farmers and the agencies depends mainly on the office-bearers. It is decided by office-bearers who is suitable for training and incentives programs. Dissemination of knowledge takes place through the networks of office-bearers and officers depend on office-bearers as their main source of information. In this function of the FO office-bearers thus get an exorbitant responsibility, whereas effective accountability mechanisms are unworkable due to (the created) patron/client relationships. In addition to this the benefits of the FO are not divided at the FO meetings, but through networks. According to Moore [1985] this is precisely the form of assistance to the Sinhalese peasantry that prevents them from the articulation of their needs in relation to the state and government agencies. "State assistance to smallholders has mainly taken the form of individual subsidies over whose allocation enormous political and administrative discretion can be exercised."

As benefits of the link are not divided through FO meetings, it does not provide much incentives to participation either. Some gendered impacts exist because the network of office-bearers is predominantly male. The village is still organised in such a way that men talk mainly to men, and women talk mainly to women. Consequently information flows in that way. If this practice continues it is unrealistic to expect to reach women through male office-bearers.¹⁸

It is too simple to discard this as corruption only; it is part of the rationale of the organisation.

¹⁸ The idea of many implementing officers is that once male participation is established female participation in the FO will follow. For this argument the DDS is often cited as example, because in the DDS many male members were replaced by female members over time. Considering these relatively separated networks it does not logically follow that female participation will follow male participation in the case of the FO. In addition to that the replacement of male members by female members in the FO mainly happened because people did not want to lose their investment in the DDS, while participation is considered a burden.

CHAPTER 9 THE FARMERS' ORGANISATION AS AN EMPOWERING ORGANISATION

9.1 Empowering Functions of the Farmers' Organisation

There are no policy documents explicitly stating the empowering functions of the FO under Participatory Irrigation Systems Management, nor do individual officers mention empowerment as an objective. Moore [1985] says the performance of canal irrigation in Sri Lanka is especially poor because of the relationship between cultivators and the Irrigation Department. He points to the lack of strong FOs to challenge the definitions of problems and behaviour of the ID staff. He also stresses the ideological subordination of farmers, in which farmers are seen as backward and ignorant people. As irrigated agriculture is considered the essence of the Sinhalese culture as well. Therefore the government ideology is that they are the best spokesmen of the farmers' interests.

There are also various official documents and people who mention the benefits that would arise from the use of farmers' knowledge and farmers' preferences in system management. Many people also expect benefits from improved communication between farmers and the Irrigation Department about water, for example in the Project Management Committee. If this potential of the FO is to be realised it implies that ultimately farmers' decisions have to be respected by the agencies. It means that the FO has to be considered as an equal partner in system management and rehabilitation, and that the power balance has to shift in favour of the FO.

In practice the FO has an empowerment potential for farmers in relation to the state in construction, decision making about water and extorting accountability from the Irrigation Department.

9.2 The Construction of their own System

Ideally the NIRP project intends to enable farmers to rehabilitate the system according to their wishes. Farmers were to be involved in the planning and construction phase of the project and engineers would design the system according to farmers' demands. It will be examined to what extent farmers were able to exert influence in the NIRP construction during its different phases:

1. assessment of needs for construction
2. design and allocation of funds
3. the presentation of the plan at the general meeting
4. contracts
5. construction

Assessment of Needs for Construction

One of the requirements of the NIRP rehabilitation was that farmers would be involved in the assessment of needs for construction. In that way they could determine the kind of structures they wanted and the priorities for construction. This idea was developed in Colombo, but no arrangements were made to facilitate the communication between farmers and engineers about this issue. As a result the communication merely took place between office-bearers and officers. Especially in the FOs where the office-bearers were not very powerful, the terms of interaction were mainly determined by the officers. In Medagama Ela FO most construction sites were decided upon by the officers. Normally the office-bearers did not know that the officers were to come to identify the needs for NIRP. Suddenly they would come and collect the office-bearers

to show some sites. Therefore the office-bearers did not always have the opportunity to participate. Only after signing the contracts they knew exactly what kind of structures they would to get.

In the FOs with somewhat stronger office-bearers, the ID officers were confronted with their ideas. Still the participation remained limited to the office-bearers, as the following case on Hakurusimbalaya FO shows.

Mr Dissanayake's wife: "At one meeting the officers from the Irrigation Department Monaragala explained about the soil contracts. Then they challenged the farmers: 'Can you do this, or can't you?' Normally farmers become afraid if such questions are asked. They are afraid to take the responsibility. Officers say they are big works and they need a lot of knowledge. They expect the farmers to say: 'Ah nei, Sir, you make, please.' Mr Soomapala did not say that. He has experiences with officers, therefore he said that we can manage. When the cement works had to be started, officers from the Irrigation Department asked that same question, 'Can you or can't you?' Then the committee-members told: 'Somehow the paddy lands and the channels are our land, we will try to make it.' When the I.E. came to measure the channel, Mr Soomapala showed where to construct and where to put regulators, diversion points and tubes."

The kind of interaction in the above mentioned case, took place in a public meeting. It confirmed the idea among many farmers that a 'clever' president was needed to obtain any control over the project at all. The result was, however, that in the case of Hakurusimbalaya, the major part of the construction needs were identified by Mr HM Soomapala, the president at that time. Hardly any ordinary members were involved. After its formation the FO was inactive for two years. In those years HM Soomapala had contacts with the ID officers about the construction sites. Only when they issued the money, the IO and the I.E. told him to call a meeting.

Design and Allocation of Funds

As the office-bearers from HSE felt they did not have the control that the Galgomowa officers had promised, they went to the Irrigation Department to discuss about the design and allocation of funds. The following case does not only show the lack of power of office-bearers in their relations with officers, but also their relative power in comparison to other farmers. Because the office-bearers were the intermediaries between the Irrigation Department, who controlled the money, and the other farmers, it was difficult for the latter to find out what was really going on.

After the measurements, FO office-bearers says that the TA made the design of the rehabilitation construction behind his desk. When the plan was presented there was no money allocated for Aluthwela. When Mr Dissanayake found out, he asked about Aluthwela channel. The TA did not even know it existed according to Mr Dissanayake¹⁹ Then the TA told, first you start this construction then we will provide some extra money for Aluthwela. Now the Irrigation Department says the money is finished.

Mr Andrew is a male head of household. He is living with his small son at the paddy field. Mr Dissanayake is the secretary of the FO. In the tail-end of Aluthwela channel is a water shortage. There are no structures in that part, because Aluthwela has only been rehabilitated up to the middle part of the channel. There are three fields at the tail-end. One field is only partly cultivated with vegetables, the other part is fallow. Mr Andrew's field is partly cultivated with paddy and partly with vegetables, because of the lack of water. However, Mr Dissanayake cultivates his whole field with paddy and he even encroached some extra land to cultivate paddy.

¹⁹ Aluthwela is a branch channel of Hakurusimbalaya D-channel, therefore it should be called a yaya (tract). However it is a rather long channel providing water to 54 acres.

After Mr Dissanayake has irrigated he will tell Mr Andrew that he can irrigate, this means Mr Andrew can only irrigate after him. If Mr Andrew wants to solve some problem he usually tells Mr Dissanayake. Mr Andrew does not have a right to speak at the FO because his mother has the membership. She lives beyond the river. (In Yudaganawa) However Mr Dissanayake cannot solve his water problem. They did not separate inlets to their fields. Mr Andrew says Mr Dissanayake does not want to argue about it. Mr Dissanayake said the money was finished. If Mr Andrew diverts water he has to stay there the whole night and walk up and down the channel to prevent other farmers from blocking the channel. He thinks the people are more a problem than the structures. The FO cannot prevent the head-enders of Aluthwela from wasting the water.

The Presentation of the Plan at the General Meeting

The presentation of the final rehabilitation plan at the general meeting is considered the guarantee for farmers' participation, because all members have to sign that they agree with the plan, before it can be accepted. In some other schemes it worked like that, but not in Buttala anicut. The following case illustrates the opinion of most male and female farmers that the plan was not a suitable tool to discuss the layout and place of the structures. This prevented effective participation in decision making.

Ms DM Irangeni has land under HSE D-channel. She used to be a committee member of the FO, but after a heart-attack she could not anymore. The structure to her yaya is completely broken. One of the other farmers on her yaya broke it. It was built wrongly. A plan had been presented at the general meeting and all FO members had to put their signature for approval, but at that time nobody complained. The plan was very general. It did not provide a correct understanding about the structures.

The Contracts

After the construction plan is agreed upon, the work is divided. This is done in the form of contracts. Officially the contracts are given to the FO, but within the FO contracts are divided among contractors, mainly members. A regulation of NIRP is that 10% of the costs of the rehabilitation have to be borne by the beneficiaries, the farmers. This 10% can be discounted from the payments of every single contract, or the FO can organise a general shramadana to give 10% labour contribution. If somebody takes a contract, this person should be able to mobilise quite some cash money, because the payment of the contracts is quite slow. In addition to that, only 85% will be paid of the estimated amount of money needed for the contract until the TA has approved the work. Therefore TA's were not allowed to take construction contracts. Many farmers expected to earn money by taking contracts and providing labour, but only a few of them actually succeeded in making a profit. A lot of farmers had taken loans to be able to start a contract, and were unable to repay them in time. There were difficulties due to their inexperience, but also with estimations of prices of materials, eg cement, that suddenly became short in supply and expensive. Kloezen [1995] also mentions the difficulty farmers had due to these reasons to complete the structures within the estimated costs. Farmers also felt that the officers were trying to discourage them to take the contracts by delaying the payments. In addition to this some TA's took contracts from the FO under somebody else's name. Which resulted in the situation that the contractor had to inspect his own work at the approval stage. This increased the suspicion among farmers on the payment practices of the Irrigation Department.

In Medagama Ela FO the TA did not encourage the farmers to do construction according to the farmers. They say he tried to get farmers uncertain about the construction, by making unclear regulations (15% deposit; 10% shramadana; 5% to the FO fund), delaying the money and pretending the construction is a too difficult thing for them. Some other TA's, however, are still

highly praised by farmers who know them for their interest and attention to the work, and their ability to explain farmers about the construction.

There were a large number of women who contributed to the shramadana, but when the contracts had to be divided, Ms Sirima was the only woman who got a construction contract. All other women retreated from their involvement in the rehabilitation from that moment on. There is no real explanation why this happened, except for the statement that they did not participate to the training, but many male farmers, who did not either, still were able to take on contracts. Office-bearers explain this by saying that the construction contracts are too difficult for women.

The Construction

Many people who had been unable to influence the decision making expected that they could have some influence during the actual construction. They tried to influence the labourer and/or the people who had taken on the contract. Sometimes this resulted in problems, but sometimes they succeeded. They stayed at the site all the time and corrected it when something was not according to their wishes.

After the rehabilitation construction was finished many people remained unsatisfied about the infrastructure. To get a system as they like, two kinds of strategies were employed, influencing the FO or the Irrigation Department to adjust the structure yet or to adjust the structures themselves. The following cases are an illustration of the first strategy. Some people proved more successful than others, depending on their personal relationships with the office-bearers and the officers.

It had been decided under the rehabilitation that Ms DM Pryanthi and her downstream neighbour would share one tube. She did not agree because she does not have a good relationship with him. Therefore she wrote a letter to the TA. Now both have their own tube, but he still takes water through the bund between her channel and his field.

Mr Seneviratne's house is built next to Hakurusimbalaya D-channel. During the NIRP the flow of the channel has been changed a little bit and several retention walls have been built. Now his home stead land gets eroded. In the general meeting of February '95, on which Ms Sirima became president, he presented his problem. Ms Sirima promised to solve his problem. In the meeting of January 30 1996 he presented his problem again. As no attention had been given so far, he approached the new I.E. to come and have a look at his problem. On the way home from the meeting, the I.E. and TA came to look and they promised to solve it quickly. When nothing was done, MR Seneviratne told Ms Sirima he would be willing to spent his own money for a retention wall, if they would allow and help him to design. In August 1996 nobody had done anything. Mr Seneviratne fell seriously ill, so he did not present his problem to anybody anymore.

After the Construction

Another group of people started changing the structures personally after the construction was finished. Either they made new constructions on personal expenses, or they broke the existing structures. The latter is also suggested by the IRMU study [IRMU, 4/1995] to be cause of differences in maintenance of the irrigation system after turnover. In the initial years after turnover, the system deteriorates faster than under the Irrigation Department, but later on the maintenance stabilises. The initial deterioration is thought to be caused by farmers who did not agree with the construction. Under the HSE channel, many yaya inlet structures have been removed. The keys of those doors are with the FO office-bearers, but the farmers from the yaya's did not except the fact that the FO could close them. This strategy is illustrated by the following cases.

Mr Dingiri Banda and Mr Badulla Aiya are at the same FC in the head-end part of Aluthwela. There are 7 people sharing a tube. Before NIRP they used to get water through a culvert, blocking Aluthwela channel. Under NIRP they got the tube and the culvert had been closed with cement. As they could not get enough water, they organised themselves and broke the culvert open again. This means Mr Dingiri Banda can take water within 2 hours, but one of the tail-enders in their FC has a lot of difficulty to get water. Last (maha) kanna the fields of the latter dried out.

Mr RM Dissanayake's wife inherited one acre tenant land under Unupotuwela. All her brothers and sisters also inherited land at the same place. As the land was originally one plot, they received only one structure together. However they think the structure is incorrect and they do not like to depend on each other. After mentioning to the office-bearers and to the officers, they now decided to wait until the TA has given his approval for the money to be issued. After that they will break the structure.

The interest in the rehabilitation construction was very high, both male and female farmers had (and still have) ideas about the improvement of the irrigation infrastructure. The construction is seen as the most important activity of the FO. Although the presence of a large investment was appealing to them, the fact that some farmers financed their own construction after the rehabilitation, shows that there is some genuine benefit. Their interest stems from the fact that a lot of labour time is involved in water diversion. As the system has been designed for continuous flow all the inlets are fixed tubes and all heads are very small. Therefore it is difficult to obtain the same amount of water in a shorter time. Because there is a relative water shortage, in for example, the tail-end of HSE, these people walk upstream the channel to manipulate the flow. As a result nobody is sure whether there is really water flowing to his or her fields. To ensure that they get enough water, they have to come to the field very often. This is the reason that many people would like to have concrete structures. On the other hand, once that kind of structures are made, some other people come to destroy them.

The objective of the Irrigation Department to solve the waterdistribution problem with continuous flow, could not avoid those problems. In addition to this, control over the rehabilitation construction was not shared with farmers and only in some cases office-bearers had a say. In the end the most powerful farmers constructed their own system through the FO or by breaking structures. The possibility to construct their own system was thus a very powerful incentive to both male and female farmers to participate in the FO. However, the limited influence and the uncertainty of information made that the effective incentive was not very large. Another consequence was that the image of the FO as something in which participation is useful, was severely affected by the above practices.

The interest in the construction itself does not differ between men and women, but the construction became a male dominated activity, once money became involved. Female farmers said that they were not invited. As they did not participate in the discussions about the design, nor were identified to participate in training, they were unable to participate in the contracts. As a result, their influence over the construction of their system, was even less than it was to male farmers. In addition to this, female farmers see the FO as a male dominated organisation, because its major activity, the construction, was dominated by male farmers.

9.3 Decisions about Water at System Level

Officially decisions about water on system level are made within the Project Management Committee and the kanna meeting. At the kanna meeting a planning for the kanna is made, 'all farmers' (undefined) are entitled to participate. The Project Management Committee meetings are held with the office-bearers only, in order to address issues during the kanna, for example

the need for a rotation.

On 19 March 1996 the kanna meeting for yala 1996 was held. (a detailed description of the kanna meeting can be found in annex 2) For two months the Irrigation Department had been indecisive about the data for holding the kanna meeting, but suddenly it was held. Out of the 1600 people, only 27 men came to the meeting. The reason was that this was a very busy season and in addition to that it was not clear who should have informed the people. Therefore, most people were unaware of the meeting. Some office-bearers wanted to postpone the meeting because of this low attendance, but the ADS, the Additional District Secretary, prevented that. Even though there was a lot of discussion during the meeting, decision making was very much dominated by the officers, they set the agenda for the meeting, and the data they proposed, were finally chosen.

What happened in the field, was also determined by the Irrigation Department. The water issuing day was delayed, because there was a World Bank mission coming for NIRP that wanted to visit Buttala. Farmers were not properly informed about this, thus about 10 different stories were explaining the delay. Only when one farmer, who has a lot of political support phoned the I.E., the water in the main canal was issued again. The water issuing date of Maha kanna 1995 had also been postponed by the Irrigation Department. For these reasons male and female farmers do not consider the FO to be a way to get more power over water decisions at all, they consider political power the only viable means.

9.4 Exerting Accountability from the Irrigation Department

As a partner in system management, the FO should be able to exert pressure on the Irrigation Department to adhere to the regulations and the decisions made at the kanna meeting and the Project Management Committee meeting. The FO is not successful in this, but this is not a surprise to anybody. Farmers attribute the lack of power of the FO to the following points:

1. they cannot 'catch' the officers.
2. later on the office-bearers again depend on the same officers.
3. the office-bearers tend to be loyal to the ID officers instead of to their members.

The Farmers' Organisation cannot 'catch' the Officers

Catching the officers refers to the problem that encounters with officers are difficult to arrange and that the official documentation about decisions is done by officers. The Irrigation Department always decides on the dates for meetings and gives only very short notice. As the Irrigation Department controls this information, they can influence who is present at meetings by informing only those people they want to meet. Agenda setting for these meetings is done by officers, and minutes are kept by them as well. Obviously all these conventions inhibit the FO to discuss their matters of dispute with the Irrigation Department in public.

Individual officers are difficult to 'catch' as well. They may promise to come to an FO meeting or a farmers' field, and never show up.²⁰ If farmers or office-bearers go to the office to meet officers, they may well be unable to encounter them. As travelling to the office takes time and money, it is unlikely that a farmer has the possibility to come every day.

²⁰ It should be noted that this is partly due to the fact that officers often have too many responsibilities and too little means to live up to these responsibilities.

In the following case, the confusion about the date of the Project Management Committee meeting illustrates the hide-and-seek behaviour of the Irrigation Department towards encounters with farmers.

It is unclear when the last Project Management Committee has been held, but most farmers said no meeting had taken place after September 1995. The I.E. and TA are very indefinable about the time of the next Project Management Committee meeting. Sometimes they tell farmers have to decide about the date of the next meeting. Other times they say it is difficult to hold this meeting, because farmers are complaining and they still did not get extra funds from the Irrigation Department Head Quarters to solve the remainders and errors of the rehabilitation. Once they said a meeting had been held during our absence, but the office-bearers said that no officers were present at that Project Management Committee meeting of 17/2. The office-bearers said that TA never held a Project Management Committee meeting after 9/95. However, the present TA contradicted this.

Ms Sirima, president of HSE FO, told she participated only to one Project Management Committee meeting, the meeting on the 28th of September 1995. She says the Irrigation Department has the practice to give some date for the meeting and postpone it just before the meeting, repeatedly. They never consult the farmers about an appropriate date. This results in frustration and uncertainty on the part of the FO office-bearers as is illustrated below.

At the 20th of May 1996 there happened to be a Project Management Committee meeting. At least, office-bearers from several FO's had received a letter from the I.E. saying that a Project Management Committee would be held on the 20th at 10 am. Some office-bearers, however, did not receive a letter. They waited until 11:30 p.m., but the I.E., TA and IO never showed up. They became very angry together and decided to go to the police. They told the new I.E. had said that now they would forget about the FO's and start working together in a new way. They said that the FO's are inactive due to this kind of behaviour by the officers.²¹

Male and female farmers who observe this inability of the FO to 'catch' officers, are confirmed in their idea that 'real' authority about the system remains with the Irrigation Department. They say that somebody who expects to make the Irrigation Department accountable by participation in the FO is not only wasting his or her time, but also stupid. A government dependent organisation like the FO can never become a critical organisation in their view.

The Office-bearers of the Farmers' Organisation depend on the ID Officers

Under the NIRP rehabilitation, design, payments and final approval of construction are controlled by the Irrigation Department. The last authority in case of disputes is the head of the Irrigation Department. This means that ultimately, the FO depends on the Irrigation Department. As the Irrigation Department is an extremely hierarchical department, and the only government department in which assignments to the department are for life, officers of the Irrigation Department have the tendency to seek harmony and promotion with the Irrigation Department. Higher officers nearly always protect their subordinates, and lower officers do not question the decisions of superiors. In disputes the Irrigation Department therefore has the tendency to favour own employees over external people. The opinion of many farmers is therefore that contradicting officers does not yield anything. It is better to maintain a very good relationship with officers.

Mr Punchi Malli, the secretary from Garandi Bakine FO thinks, that if farmers were united as a union they could deal with the arbitrariness of the paddy marketing board. The FO cannot be such an organisation, because they need the officers again. Officers can delay issuing the money or disapprove farmers'

²¹ There are many more reasons for the inactiveness of FO's, but this might be one of them.

constructions. For example some farmers complained about a structure to the Ministry of Irrigation. Somebody from the ministry came to see that structure and told the TA to make it again. The farmers who had asked this from the Minister were also contractors of other structures. After that this TA had to approve their structures. He told them that their material was not good, that they should get other material etc. Therefore, the best way for the office-bearers is to work friendly with the officers.

The FO's sent petitions about the TA to the DD, especially the Unupottuwela FO. However, the I.E. interfered. He sent the same TA to examine the problematic structures. Therefore there was no solution. The office-bearers went to the Irrigation Department to discuss the matter. First they talked to the DD, and he promised to solve it. They went home and waited about 6 months. Then they went again to the Irrigation Department, but they were a little reluctant to bother the DD again with this problem. He might get upset. Therefore they talked to the ADD (Assistant to the DD). He told the Irrigation Department was working on their problem and that it would be solved in the next month. That was 3 months ago.

There were also some cases in which the balance of power shifted to the side of the FO, but this was only temporarily. The following case show that the hierarchy within the Irrigation Department causes that the Irrigation Department is always stronger than the farmers in the end, because the latter are much more divided.

According to many office-bearers all the officers of the FO's, TA's and IE's were good, but they were just doing their duty. However one former I.E. was exceptional because he took the side of the farmers in a conflict with the DD. He wanted to do the construction correctly. In the beginning, the DD did not like to give the construction to the farmers. The ADI, assistant to the DD, said in 1991 the construction could not continue with the FO's, therefore they should hire a contractor. However, in the project regulations it was said the construction was for the farmers. The DD said the farmers were not capable, but I.E. De Silva stood up against him. He said: 'Somehow I will try to work with these farmers.' Finally he was replaced by another I.E.. Farmers wanted to keep him, but it did not happen. Due to this discussion, it took until 1993 until the actual rehabilitation started.

The FO wanted to get a road constructed in the NIRP along the main canal, but the Irrigation Department did not agree. Therefore they sent a petition to the president.²² As a consequence of that petition the DD of Monaragala asked him to come for a discussion. At that discussion all the responsible persons were present and they promised to do it. Although the DD had told the TA to do this in order to improve the NIRP, it never happened. Then the FO sent a letter to the DD to change their TA. They got a new TA, but this one is also a contractor.

As all conflicts have to be solved within the Irrigation Department and as the FO depends on the Irrigation Department for many matters, the bargaining position of the FO is obviously very weak. This is recognised by the farmers, who -as a reaction- prefer to solve their problems directly with officers by employing their political connections, in stead of through the FO. According to Somaratne and Gosselink [1996] this practice directly undermines the sustainability of the FO. Both male and female farmers follow this direct strategy, but male farmers tend to have more political connections as they are more involved in organisations.

The Office-bearers of the Farmers' Organisation tend to be Loyal to the ID Officers in stead of to the Members of the Farmers' Organisation

A prerequisite for the FO to exert pressure on the Irrigation Department is that the FO takes one line and preferably also, that all FO's of the scheme take the same line. In the chapter 7 and 8, it was already mentioned that office-bearers are not very loyal to their members. Office-bearers consider benefits as their personal reward for helping the officers in their job. After all, they say,

²² I saw the correspondence.

there is no pay. Office-bearers, among each other, do not take the same line either. This is one of the major problems at the Project Management Committee. Decisions taken at the Project Management Committee may be evaded by the Irrigation Department, if one of the FO presidents agrees to co-operate with the Irrigation Department. This is what the president from Narawana FO did.

The Irrigation Department had promised that after the rehabilitation the FO's could take the cleaning of the main canal as a contract. There is money allocated for that. The TA asked several office-bearers to sign a petition to the Irrigation Department to do the main canal contract, but they refused. Only the president from Narawana FO signed, therefore all office-bearers are angry with him at the moment.

The following case shows that if the Irrigation Department is confronted, it is not that difficult to mobilise people.

In August 1996 a rotation was decided upon in Buttala anicut. The reason was that a lot of water would be needed for the Kataragama Perrahera (an annual religious celebration in a town downstream of the anicut) and that the year had been very dry up to then. All farmers were against a rotation at the Project Management Committee, but the Irrigation Department had to decide upon a rotation between the D-channels because of Kataragama. Within each D-channel, a rotation system had also be designed as well. A general FO meeting was held for this purpose in Hakurusimbalaya FO and many people came, but no agreement could be reached. Then five office-bearers got together and made the rotation on D-channel level.

As one of the water issue labourers also had paddy land, the D-channel serving his land got water first. The office-bearers from Hakurusimbalaya FO complained that they wanted water immediately and this resulted in a conflict with the I.E.. The I.E. then ordered that HSE would not receive water. Then the president, Ms Sirima and the secretary, Mr Dissanayake organised some people to break the inlet of the D-channel. They succeeded to break the inlet and got water, which resulted in an enormous increase in their popularity in the village. However, the I.E. went to the police. The whole situation was hushed by the police. They did not do anything. Now the remaining conflict is about who should repair the broken inlet.

Due to the fact that the FO is not capable to make the Irrigation Department accountable, the FO remains to be seen as an extension of the Irrigation Department and the Irrigation Department remains the final authority. All encounters between the Irrigation Department and the FO are initiated and dominated by the officers and ultimately conflicts are settled in the interest of the Irrigation Department. Communication between office-bearers and officers appears to be communication between a superior and a subordinate of the Irrigation Department. However, there is no salary for the office-bearers. Individual male and female farmers find that office-bearers are only loyal to the Irrigation Department and themselves. In practice, accountability from the Irrigation Department can only be exerted by farmers with the help of political connections. This whole situation results in a lot of stress for all parties and it undermines the credibility of the FO.

In this male dominated game, the majority of the female farmers remains way behind. Their political connections are limited in comparison to men's and they are never invited. In addition to this most encounters between the FO and the Irrigation Department were related to the rehabilitation construction, from which they were excluded as has been discussed in section 9.2. While male farmers may thus expect to solve some of their problems through connections related to the FO, female farmers generally do not expect anything from the FO in this respect.

9.4 Gendered Incentives from the Farmers' Organisation as Empowering Organisation

Empowerment of the FO is a very powerful incentive, because almost every farmer has some unsettled issues with the Irrigation Department. Empowerment is also a very sensitive issue, though. The crux of the problem is that if the FO is to be empowered, the Irrigation Department has to release power. This process has not yet started. The FO has an empowerment potential in three domains: construction, water decisions and accountability of the Irrigation Department.

Although all farmers have ideas about the improvement of the irrigation infrastructure, effective influence in the rehabilitation construction was limited to a small group, which had only a small impact. This resulted in a number of problems, like the destruction of newly built structures by farmers. It seemed as if no arrangements were made to facilitate the influence of farmers on the construction, and in particular no efforts were made to facilitate the participation of female farmers in the decision making and construction. As a result the whole process of rehabilitation construction was a male dominated activity, in which the Irrigation Department had the final say. As the rehabilitation construction is considered the most important activity of the FO up till now, this further contributes to the construction of the FO as a male interaction domain. The absence of women in the activities and the lack of female office-bearers further discourages women to participate.

The effective power of the FO in decision making about water is almost nil. Kanna meetings and Project Management Committee meeting are held sometimes, but this is more as a matter of form, than to facilitate the participation of the FO in decision making. In addition to that, decisions taken in such meetings are frequently changed by the Irrigation Department without consulting the Project Management Committee. The only effective influence on decision making and access to information about water by farmers is exercised through political connections, not through the FO. The privilege of being able to use political connections for this purpose, is reserved to some farmers only. These are mainly male, due to the fact that women are less integrated in village politics. An exception is the president of the women's' organisation, as she has a lot of connections with the ruling party.

The possibilities of the FO to exert accountability from the Irrigation Department is constrained in a number of ways. The most important fact is that the Irrigation Department is the last authority for the FO in a number of matters concerning the rehabilitation contracts, design and payments. In addition to that both information and communication between the FO and the Irrigation Department, is controlled by the Irrigation Department. As office-bearers are not on the same line and tend to be loyal to the Irrigation Department, there are always opportunities for the Irrigation Department to avoid confrontation. Female farmers do not take part in this play, as the few confrontations are discussed and settled with a few politically involved men only and further through male friendship networks.

Expectations of the empowerment potential of the FO are small to men, but zero to women. However, even to men this does not provide an incentive for participation in the FO as that is not the place where matters are decided.

CONCLUSION OF PART III

There is quite some disagreement and confusion about the present and future functions of the FO, and how to realise these. In this part these were referred to as 'multiple perspectives.' While the dominant perspective in Colombo and among scientists may be the function of the FO as an organisation governing the irrigation system, farmers and local officers tend to stress the function of the FO as a link with the government. In practice, this link is reduced to the mobilisation of government resources that are distributed through political networks and patron/client relations. The cases in this part showed that the linkage practices in this form systematically undermine the empowerment potential of the FO. The cases also show that this empowerment is a prerequisite for the success of the FO in its function for Operation and Maintenance. The same points about the nature of the state/farmer relations in Sri Lanka have been made by Moore [1985] and suggested as by Kloezen. [1995]

The major shortcomings of the FO contributing to the overall lack of incentives and in particular to the lack of incentives to female farmers, may be the ultimate dependence of the FO on the Irrigation Department, the confusion and room for manipulation in the procedures of interaction between the FO and the Irrigation Department, and gendered practices due to the overall failure to recognise female farmers as stakeholders.

Ultimately the FO depends on the Irrigation Department for its decisions and there is little to support to believe that the Irrigation Department will release its power in future. As influence on decisions by the FO cannot be exerted within the formal framework, political networks gained importance in the FO. These networks are less accessible for female farmers than for male farmers, as most of them are male dominated. The influence exerted through these networks is based on reciprocity, not in the least reciprocity between office-bearers and officers. The benefits that are provided in the linkage function of the FO with the agencies, further strengthens this type of relationship. Office-bearers get an exorbitant power and responsibility as they have something to divide, eg. training, material benefits, contracts. It is not surprising that female farmers, who are less involved in this game, profit very little from these benefits.

Under the MANIS program, the responsibilities of the Irrigation Department changed from managing the system and system infrastructure, towards a joint management with and support for FO's. The procedures for the interaction between farmers and the Irrigation Department were not given due attention, and in practice, there is a lot of confusion. This created room for both the Irrigation Department and the office-bearers to manipulate information and decision making respectively in relation to office-bearers and in relation to other FO members. Ordinary male and female farmers were unable to get a hold on the events and to defend their interests in this setting. In this context the resource management function of the FO turned into a failure, because the male and female farmers who were harmed by the FO's activities simply adjusted the flow and structures without the FO.

Due to the above mentioned problems, the majority of the activities related to the FO are not very significant to male and female farmers at the moment. This is the reason why the gendered realisation of needs does not pose that many problems to women at the moment. However, once activities gain some importance, they tend to become male dominated. This is due to the fact that almost all practices related to the FO are gendered. The reason for this is that hardly any officer or male office-bearer considers women as stakeholders. As a result, female farmers have more

difficulty to get information, and are never invited independently of their husbands, by male office-bearers or officers for FO activities. In addition to this, no arrangements are made to facilitate their participation in training or kanna meetings or Project Management Committee meetings. Later on, this lack of training and involvement is used to explain that there is only one female office-bearer and hardly any female contractors.

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CHAPTER 10 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 Introduction

In the first chapter of this report research questions were formulated as follows:

Q1. Is access to participation in the FO gender specific and how?

Q2. Does gender specific access to the FO affect the capability of the FO to reach its objectives in the context of Participatory Irrigation Systems Management?

In this final chapter, the answers to the research questions will be discussed. As tentative conclusions have already been drawn in part two and three, only a short summary will be given of these in section 10.2 of this chapter. In section 10.3 general conclusions will be drawn and in section 10.4 some perspectives on for gender analysis in irrigation management in relation to this research will be discussed. In section 10.5 an attempt will be made to formulate some recommendations.

10.2 Access and Incentives of Participation in the Farmers' Organisation

The success of the Participatory Irrigation Systems Management Policy depends on the people who enact the policy. Ultimately these are the members of the FO. Therefore the question who participates in the FO is crucial to its performance. The basic assumption in this research was that in principle all men and women above 18 years and living in the village are possible stakeholders in the FO and should thus be eligible for participation. Any subgroup of this group is considered a selection and the criteria of a selection should be justified in terms of equity and the objectives of Participatory Irrigation Systems Management. This research focuses on gender selections.

In this research, the perspective is used that the selection of participants is both passively, by a regulation of access to the FO, and actively by the decisions of potential participants as a result of incentives for participation. These two processes have formed the present FO, because participants have a very large impact on the activities and performance of the FO.

Access

In this report it has been shown how access to participation in the FO was gendered in three ways, access to membership, access to participation and practices of participation. As a result the FO has been constructed as a male interaction domain and power relations are reproduced in which women are dependent upon men for public affairs.

Firstly, access to membership is gendered due to the fact that the formal criterion for membership, legal cultivatorship, is gendered. At present, women only have landtitles of about 30% of the paddy land under the three D-channels in Buttala Anicut. In addition to this it was shown that in their life cycles men have much more chances than women to obtain paddy land. The majority of the female legal cultivators only obtained this status after the death of their husbands, as a successor of their husbands. Although paddy land is highly valued by both men and women, parents usually favour sons in inheritance of (paddy) land. Men do also obtain more paddy land by their own efforts, especially before their marriage. Women usually do not obtain paddy land before their marriage, because their economic independence is restricted in the parental household.

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Secondly, participation of female legal cultivators is constrained by the informal criteria regulating actual attendance to the FO meetings. These informal criteria are 'actual cultivatorship' and 'head of household -ship'.

The criterion 'actual cultivatorship' is related to either the one who works or the one who decides in irrigated agriculture. However, the meaning of the criterion 'actual cultivator' is very gendered, because status of 'actual cultivator' is automatically attributed to men. In this report it is shown that the organisation of agricultural production is much more complex than the above statements imply. There are hardly any plots that are cultivated by one person only. Both labour contribution and the allocation of other resources, land, capital, water, knowledge, are subject to negotiation at household level between parents, children, brothers and sisters, and husbands and wives. In spite of the existence of an ideological division of labour, the allocation of labour is more related to the specific circumstances of each household.

The criterion of 'head of household ship' depends on three assumptions, that the household is an organisation with clearly defined boundaries, that it functions as a unit and that the best representative is a man. This makes the meaning of the criterion 'head of household ship' gendered as well. In the report it is shown that there exists a large diversity in households and that there is no single basis to define the boundaries of a household. In addition to this it was shown that there are a lot of different interests between household members and that the cost of participation are much different for the participant than for the other household members. Representation is not the automatic result of male or female participation, nor are men more talented to participate in organisations. However, women who use their talent are subject to much more critical attention. Therefore women are very critical about the benefits of the organisation that could legitimate their participation. In addition to this, women have more difficulty than men to transfer their responsibilities to other household members if they want to participate.

Thirdly, access to participation in the FO is gendered by the very processes/practices in which the FO was constructed. These processes are partly different for access to FO membership than access to FO ranks, because the latter became more part of village politics and was more contested. Initially, however, the Irrigation Department mobilised the people they already knew to mobilise other farmers. These were men, who controlled the diffusion of information and used their male networks to mobilise male farmers. Female farmers were mostly not invited for FO activities and no efforts were made to facilitate their participation. Office-bearers were selected through consensus, not by vote. Therefore the majority of the persons who were approached by the ID became office-bearers of the FO. In addition to this the authority of office-bearers is based on very gendered notions, e.g. being 'a real farmers'. Like the notion 'actual cultivatorship', these notions automatically refer to men. After its establishment, the FO became part of village politics. The capacity to mobilise government resources was crucial in obtaining FO office-bearership. The few new faces continued the old struggle on party politics, however.

Incentives

Incentives of participation in the FO are related to the function of the FO, and their utility and meaning for male and female farmers. It is, however, important to recognise that there are multiple perspectives on the functions of the FO. As a result, different people have different objectives with the FO and it is questionable whether these are compatible. In this report three common perspectives on the function of the FO were examined, the FO as an organisation governing a common pool resource, the FO as a link with the government agencies and the FO

as an empowering organisation. For these three perspectives, the incentives for male and female farmers were examined. The overall picture was that in spite of the relevant issues that are put forward in these perspectives, incentives to farmers remain related to the distribution of government resources through the FO. As these resources are distributed according to networks and patron/client relations rather than on the basis of participation, the activities of the FO do not form an incentive for participation in the FO. In addition to this, women have even less reasons to expect benefits from the FO than men, because the networks through which these resources are distributed, are predominantly male.

The perspective on the function of the FO as governing a common pool resource, has potential benefits to farmers in the sphere of water distribution and improved management. At present, operational rules do not function as agreed. Structures are broken and plots remain uncultivated. These benefits are not realised because the transaction costs of (collectively) redefining the failing operational rules are too high. Reasons are that some people benefit from the existing situation and that the office-bearers lack the power and incentives to really change the behaviour of these people. In the addition to this, the ultimate power lies in political connections. Only if the personal interests of office-bearers are at stake, they engage in discussing the problems of farmers in the FO. The benefits in improved management are also not realised, because many people expect that the government will continue to assist them. This idea is further spread by the fact that hardly anybody at local level supports the transfer of maintenance responsibilities to the FO.

The perspective on the function of the FO as a link with the governments fits more in the Sri Lankan tradition of government intervention than any other perspective. However, as the benefits are mainly distributed through personal alliances, this does not form an incentive for participation. As the office-bearers depend upon the government for their legitimacy and power, they tend to be loyal to the government officers, instead of to the villagers. There is a broad consensus that a bad programme is better than none, though, because programmes always involve the allocation of government resources to the village. As a result programmes continue to be defined very top-down.

The function of the FO in an empowering perspective is severely limited by the above mentioned practices. Due to the politicisation of the FO and the inability of members to make the office-bearers accountable, the FO does not succeed in articulating the interests of its members in relation to the Irrigation Department. The majority of the farmers were unable to appropriate decision making on the rehabilitation construction. The FO does not have any effective influence on water issue at system level, either. The meetings that have been created for this purpose, the kanna meeting and the Project Management Committee meeting, are merely a matter of form. Final authority over rehabilitation, design, payments and the final approval of the construction remains with the Irrigation Department. In case of a dispute the head of the Irrigation Department is the final authority. Hierarchy and mutual protection within the Department is very extensive. Solidarity between farmers is not very strong, however. There is nearly always at least one person who does not comply. Therefore, in practice, accountability from the Irrigation Department can only be exerted with the help of political connections. Somaratne and Gosselink [1996] have shown the power that farmers may exert on water issues in this way.

From the above it is clear that participation of women in the FO is squeezed in two ways. To create room for their participation at household level women should define their participation

as a duty for the family well-being. To claim this, their participation in the FO should result in clear benefits. However, their success in the FO is limited by their lack of male networks and their lack of authority in this male interaction domain.

10.3 General Conclusions

In this report it has been shown how existing gender categories and hierarchies are reproduced in new forms of social organisation. These categories and hierarchies are constituted by different actors to distinguish between the people that are suitable for participation in the FO and the people that are not suitable. The criteria for FO participation have been used to constitute FO participants as male categories. Therefore men almost automatically qualify for participation while women have more difficulty to legitimise their participation.

It was shown that several claims on truth were used to define the criteria for FO participation. However, these claims are not applied in the same way to the practices of irrigated agriculture as they are applied to FO participation. Female contribution of labour, money, land and knowledge proves to be very important in the irrigated farming and livelihood system. Sons inherit most paddy land, because they are expected to take care of the parents when they grow old. However, female labour and care is considered essential by old parents. Therefore they are reluctant to transfer land to their sons if they do not marry. Women who do not work in the paddy field are socially sanctioned by calling them 'lazy' or 'proud', but according to the criterion 'actual cultivator' they are only helping and their labour is insignificant. Women are supposed to make both ends meet in the household, but according to the criterion 'actual cultivator' there is only one decision maker at household level, who is male. A man is seen as the best representative of the household, but women are responsible for the household domain.

It may be clear that these categories and hierarchies by which we -people- legitimise our actions are not ontological truths but created by people. The fact that there is a peculiar and persisting tendency to create them in such a way that men are considered superior to women and that women have difficulty in entering the public domain, should therefore be considered the collective responsibility of different actors. The reproduction of unequal gender relations of power is a choice and cannot be legitimised outside our own moral position.

Gender categories and hierarchies both constrain and enable men and women. In most cases, both men and women tend to use them strategically in stead of challenging them directly. Struggle for gender equity therefore takes place at two levels:

1. strategic use of existing categories and hierarchies
2. challenging existing categories and hierarchies

Strategic Use of Existing Gender Categories and Hierarchies

The concepts that Villareal [1995] uses in her study on a women's organisation in rural Mexico allow a description of the strategic use of existing categories and hierarchies. Central is the concept of enrolment. Enrolment refers to the ability of actors to create room for their own projects. Room is created by negotiation with other actors about the meaning of their activities and thus the rights and responsibilities of every actor in relation to the other. Villareal shows that these negotiations take place within interaction domains and that in each domain there are particular ways of interaction. In addition to this the authority of actors differs in different interaction domains.

For example, in order to participate in the FO a woman has to create room for this in at least two domains, the household and the FO. (She may also have to create room in other domains, e.g. her parents place.) She will try to redefine her participation in such a way that other household members will agree that her decision is legitimate or in their interest as well. The degree of contestation of her decision depends on the power this other actor has in relation to her and the claims that he or she may lay on her. This power may also be physical power, like in the case of Ms Nandawathie. She is really proud of her ability to avoid these conflicts by formulating her ideas as if they are only for the sake of her husband. Her real intentions may be quite different, however. The negotiation is such that she tries to define her action in positive and appropriate labels for her specific position as a wife and a mother.

Labels are very gender sensitive. Therefore some activities entail positive labels for men and negative for women, e.g. 'being active' for a man and 'going around' (for what...?) for a woman. This affects their ability to have authority in an interaction domain like the FO. For example an FO leader who talks loud and convincing, may be considered 'knowledgeable' if he is a man and 'proud' (which means arrogant) if she is a woman. In addition to this, the same labels are not attached in a similar way to every man or woman. If it is a man of low-status who talks loud, he may be called 'impolite'. If it is a female engineer, she may be called 'educated'. However, it requires much more effort to have authority for women than for men in an interaction domain like the FO.

One could imagine numerous interaction domains in addition to the household and the FO, e.g. the bathing place or a structure in the field. For each domain the terms of interaction differ. It is most interesting which interaction domains men and women use to solve their problems and what kind of strategies they use. It is also interesting to find out how women can improve their access to crucial interaction domains and how they can change the terms of interaction to their own favour.

Challenging existing Gender Categories and Hierarchies

The crucial question is of course who determines the labels. Real empowerment and change for women means control over their own livelihood. This can only take place by redefining labels, because the majority of the labels allow only a very limited number of roles for women in society. Therefore real empowerment of women needs to challenge existing categories and hierarchies.

It is clear that transaction costs and risks of challenging existing categories hierarchies are higher than using them strategically. In addition to this the constellation of power in a household may be such that some women benefit from gender inequalities. For example a mother-in-law benefits if her daughter-in-law is obedient to her son, because the mother controls her daughter-in-law through her son.

To challenge existing categories and hierarchies women need means of power. The advantage of positivist theory is that it provides such means by showing for example the amount of labour contribution of women and claiming that there is a different truth than the prevailing gender biased picture on farmers and irrigated agriculture. Foucault's theory cannot provide such a legitimate claim on a new truth. It emphasises impact of different claims on truths on social relations of power and the own choice of every actor in either reproducing or changing these social relations. It is obviously more strategic to try to make other actors to change their choices within the first kind of theories.

10.4 Perspectives on Gender Issues and Irrigation Management

Gender Issues in Irrigation Management

Following Zwarteveen [1994], gender analysis in the context of irrigation management addresses the following two questions:

1. How do irrigation policies, institutions and practices affect gender relations?
2. How do gender relations affect the achievement of irrigation performance activities?

According to Zwarteveen this implies asking if and how meeting gender needs and interests are compatible with meeting the objectives of the irrigation system. She then explores the possible practical and strategic gender needs following Mosers distinction between these. It is questionable, though, whether the concept 'gender needs' is sufficient to analyse the above presented questions.

Gender needs in irrigation management are related to the position of men and women in the agricultural production. This does not only refer to their respective rights and responsibilities, but also to their decision making power regarding the allocation of resources, land, water, money and labour. If needs are gendered, it is of course important that both male and female needs are addressed in irrigation management. The most prominent examples for this argument are needs related to domestic duties, e.g. water quality needs because fetching clean drinking is a very static female responsibility.

The collective needs of women are additional or even opposed to collective needs of men. The needs arising from the activities of men and women in agriculture, are more about the practices of irrigation management than about the agenda though. First of all the position of men and women in agricultural production is not static, but subject to negotiations and the specific situation of a household. Too much emphasis on gender needs suggests a static division between male and female needs in irrigation management. This would imply that gender needs can be met simply by adding female needs to the irrigation management agenda. Secondly, while men and women may have similar needs in irrigation management in their capacity as farmers e.g. to get water to their field for land preparation, the realisation of their needs may still be opposing. In irrigation management, it is not only whether water distribution in general is on the agenda, but also whether water distribution to my particular plot at my particular desired time is on the agenda. Whether men and women do or do not succeed to solve their problems in irrigation management has thus very much to do with their capacity to get their individual issues on the agenda. It is this capacity that is gender specific.

Irrigation Management

In this report three different perspectives on the function of the FO have been discussed. In all three perspectives the FO proved to be unable to become sustainable in the long-term. From all three perspectives design principles or criteria for sustainable FOs have been suggested. [e.g. Ostrom 1992, Merrey 1994] These criteria overlap to a certain extent. As Ostrom rightly points out, these principles can only help to develop effective FO rules.

A major weakness in these design principles is the limited attention that is given to the new role of the agencies after turnover. Ostrom mentions for example 'the minimal recognition of rights to organise'. Merrey [1995] mentions accountability of officials. The radical changes he foresees on national level in Egypt, are equally required on local level in Sri Lanka. In my opinion this requires a new definition of the subject of discussion when talking about sustainable FOs. If the

irrigation management system before turnover includes male and female farmers and officer of the agencies, the definition of new roles after turnover should include male and female farmers and officers of the agencies as well. Therefore the sustainability question has to include officers of the agencies, and an analysis of transaction costs of the development of sustainable rules should include them as well.

More than only design principles, research on participatory irrigation management should focus on the methodologies for negotiation between officers and male and female farmers. I am quite convinced that Sri Lankan male and female farmers have enough knowledge to provide a set of design principles for sustainable organisations, considering their experiences with organisations. The problem is, however, how these different men and women can have a real say in the construction of an organisation like the FO.

10.5 Recommendations

In this report a lot of problems regarding the FO and the participation of female farmers have been mentioned. It is clear that the legitimisation of the present FO is under strong pressure from many sides. However, the FO could also have been constructed differently. If there is really a long-term commitment to the future of the FO, choices should be made about its function and its position in Sri Lankan agriculture. It is clear that not all perspectives on the function of the FO can have the same priority and that the choice for a function of the FO implies a choice for new roles of all actors, including ID officers. In this section, some practical recommendations will be suggested.

First of all, to improve the participation of women, especially of young and middle-aged women, it is important to adjust the membership criteria. As the majority of the female legal cultivators are elderly women, both young and middle-aged women are excluded from participation. There are examples of Who's in which both husband and wife can take membership or in which a person can represent someone else in his or her family. This does not only do more justice to the fact that several household members are involved in irrigated agriculture, but it may also improve the overall participation in the FO. This point is mentioned by Illo [1988] in her discussion on participatory irrigation development in the Philippines. In this project a proxy system was used, which enabled the household members to spread the costs of participation, while ensuring the benefits.

Secondly, there are several examples of projects in which a women's organisation is used to strengthen the participation of women in a mixed organisation. [Kano project in Kenya, 199.] [Evertzen, 1995] These organisations are a means for women to develop skills and to articulate their own needs and interests. Shanti Kumar also stresses the need for women to develop skills. There are, however, two general problems about women's organisations. As has been discussed in the second report of this study, women's organisation sometimes fail to address the reasons for the lack of participation of women in other organisations, instead they become an alternative to the participation of women in mixed organisations. In that case this kind of women's organisations result in the marginalization of women rather than their empowerment. Another problem about women's organisation is that many people try to use them for political purposes. Then these organisations become political rather than addressing the problems of women or helping them to come forward in society.

There are, however, also positive examples about women's organisations strengthening the participation and position of women in mixed organisations. The above projects are an example of successful women's organisations, and in the Netherlands there has also been a case in which a women's organisation has strengthened not only the participation of women in the mixed organisation, but also the performance of the mixed organisation as a whole. The reason is that women became very active and very committed to the organisation, which caused men to put more effort in as well.

An alternative to the women's organisation for strengthening female participation is a women's support group. This group could consist of a smaller number of women with the special purpose to investigate and formulate recommendations of female farmers for improvement of the FO. They could e.g. call a meeting for women only to give their opinion on improvement of the FO and they could have two¹ special chairs in the FO committee. If women have a special extra chance to give their suggestions and if they have a real influence in the committee, they may be committed to the improvement of the FO and their participation may increase. If that case, men may be challenged to participate and to improve the FO as well. A prerequisite is of course that the FO will have the legal authority and power to make decisions.

In the Kano project [199.] a minimal quorum of female committee members was required. Female committee members are expected to improve the participation of women, because they would have more chances to discuss with women and women would more easily ask them their questions. From the cases in this report it was clear that informal diffusion of information is very important to the FO. However, the networks through which information is diffused are gendered. It is, however, important to create some kind of support for female committee members, like a support group, to avoid that they become marginalised in the committee like in the ignition in Hakurusimbalaya FO. Senior female officers may also have a positive effect on the access of female farmers to the FO.

A major problem in the FO is its internal accountability. Office-bearers are selected by consensus. This is not very democratic, especially in a society where open criticism is considered offensive. If members could select their office-bearers through anonymous vote, people could at least vote for their true preferences. Another suggestion for improving the power of the members of their office-bearers and to avoid long-term commitments is to rotate office-bearership. In other words, limit the number of years that one person may be part of the committee. In this way more people will have the opportunity to get a thorough understanding of the FO and they will have more ability to control the office-bearers.

Another major problem of the FO is its lack of power. If an organisation does not have enough power to execute decisions, people will quickly consider participation is useless. Therefore procedures should be developed to improve the power balance between the FO and the government agencies. In the well-known example of the Philippines, the National Irrigation Agency has become dependent upon the irrigation fees paid by the farmers. In Sri Lanka there are no irrigation fees, but there may be other ways to give the FO a say in the performance evaluation of the agencies. Another possibility would be to transfer some of the authorities of the Irrigation Department outside of the Department, like the payment of rehabilitation contracts.

¹ It is important to provide TWO place in the committee, because Sri Lankan women prefer to go together.

Similar some of the authorities of the Department of Agrarian Services could be transferred to outside the department. The FO could for example be given the right to request training or suggest a program for a fixed number of times per year. The contents of the training or program could be decided upon in the FO meeting. After which the specific contents and arrangements could be elaborated by the agency and some male and female farmers together.

A major problem to the participation of women is the opinion of some officers, certainly not all!, about women. It is crucial that officers recognise the importance of women in irrigated agriculture and their right to participate in the FO. It is very important that both men and women are invited independently of each other to participate in training, programmes or meetings. Evertzen [1995] gives some very practical suggestions to make women participate more actively in meetings when they are present:

- to explicitly welcome both men and women
- to ask women to come to sit more to the front, if they are seated in the back
- to look at women and to address them when speaking in order to make them feel involved in the issue
- to explicitly encourage women to give their opinion as well to the discussion -to address women on their specific knowledge or experience (e.g. in the germination of paddy seeds)
- to ask women about the date, time and place that are convenient for them

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Medagama Ela Farmers' Organisation: Membership lists, reports on committee meetings and general meetings, letters and contracts

ANNEX 1 DESCRIPTION OF SOME RESEARCH METHODS

Wealth Ranking

For wealth ranking cards were made containing homestead names, official names of household members and in most cases also their nick names. Consequently, about 14 people were asked, individually, to sort the cards on 5 piles. Every pile representing a wealth class. Further more these people were asked to give some characteristics of each wealth class. It was also discussed how and to what extent class mobility is possible.

As people who participated in the session turned out to have more accurate information about their close neighbourhood, we asked people from several parts of the village to do the wealth ranking. We tried to choose people from all classes, ages and gender.

Initially the electorate lists were used to identify households and household members. However, we found quickly that people were more familiar with nick names than with official names. In addition to that, the electorate lists turned out to be not very up to date. Therefore we were forced to first identify homesteads, homestead names and official names and corresponding nicknames in order to obtain reliable information. For that purpose we used a number of maps made by villagers of different parts of the village.

With the information, we assigned homesteads in the wealthiest pile number 10 and in poorest pile number 1. Combining the information from different wealth ranking sessions, we were able to assign each homestead an average number representing its wealth.

MAP OF ALUTHWELA CHANNEL AND HOMESTEADS FOR WEALTH RANKING



Household Decision Making

Discussing household decision making involves a lot of issues. I decided to use drawing cards for this discussion for a number of reasons:

-I expected that the cards would make a complex discussion a little more clear. We found out that a large number of women were unable to read or write, pictures would enable them as well as me (I do not read Sinhala either!) to understand. I also thought that pictures would make the discussion a little bit more exiting.

-I hoped that the game would enable us to get a lot of information about household decision making in a relatively short time. I also expected that the number of cards would enable us to sort out relatively fast the resources available to the household and to know who are the owners of these resources.

-I wanted to discuss strategies of coping with problems with the help of the cards. I expected that people would appropriate the discussion faster if they control the cards. (literally)

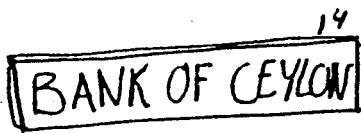
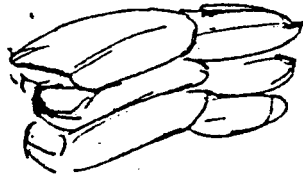
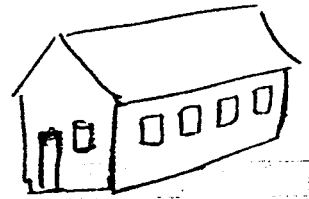
The procedure was as follows. First, the person was asked to sort the expenditure cards. It was discussed what are the most difficult expenditures, who is responsible to take care of the different expenditures, and who decides. Secondly, the person was asked to sort out the resources that were owned, and those that were available to the household. Then it was discussed what are the most important resources for the family according to the person. Consequently, it was discussed who owns these resources, what they are used for, who uses them, what are the important decisions, who has a say, what happened last time, what his or her opinion about it is. etc.

Many of my expectations came true in using this game. However, some interviews were more successful than other. There were two major drawbacks. Firstly, the drawing cards tended to attract public in some cases. This would spoil the discussion to a certain extent, because then major conflicts in the household could not be discussed freely any more. On the other hand, the interaction and discussion between the different people about the cards also provided interesting information. Secondly, it took a lot of discussion between myself and my interpreter before 'optimal' use of the method could be made.

CARDS ON HOUSEHOLD DECISION MAKING

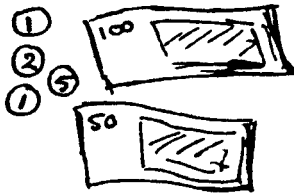
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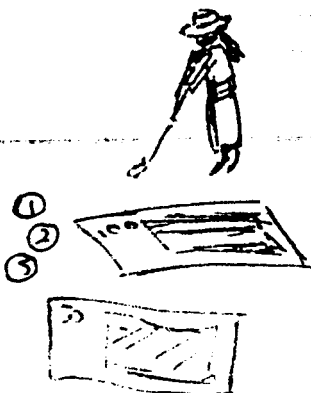


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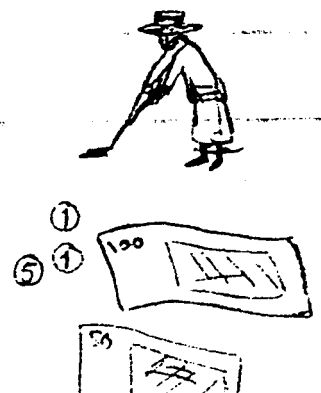


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ANNEX 2 KANNA MEETING OF MARCH 1997

The kanna meeting of Yala 1996 was held at the 19th of March 1996, which was a very busy period because of the harvest. It was held at a school in Buttala town and to be starting at 2 pm. The meeting was meant for all farmers in Buttala anicut, about 1600 household, but only 27 men turned up. Although Mahattiya Mama had received an invitation for the kanna meeting dated on the 1st of March, most villagers were not aware of the meeting. Mahattiya Mama, who is not in any FO committee, received that invitation personally from the DS of Buttala, because he has good political connections. Before going to the kanna meeting he told RM Sirimawathie that the water would be stopped on the 25th of March and issued on the 10th of April.

A number of office-bearers did not receive a letter. Most people heard about the meeting only at the last moment, eg. at 12 o'clock that day. The men had informed each other. RM Dissanayake and HM Soomapala, the office-bearers from HSE who are living in Puhulkotuwa, had come. However, the president, Sirima, living in Medagama, did not know about the meeting. Seneviratne, a member from MDE FO had been informed by Mahattiya Mama, and he had informed Banda, living in the same area. The president from Naranwana FO had informed his relation, RM Karunaratne, who has land under Garandi Bakine Ela. The five (5) gramasevaka's whose divisions have land under Buttala anicut were present. The DO, TA (PM of the system) the Assistant of the DS in Buttala and the officer from the Agricultural Development Authority were also present. The meeting should be presided by the DS, but he was not there. Therefore his assistant (ADS) presided.

One farmer, Kalu Banda proposed to postpone the meeting, because there were so few farmers present. He said: 'We did not know about this kanna meeting. We were not informed in time and we did not receive any letters. In these days farmers are going for attam, therefore they cannot come to the meeting. For these two reasons I propose to postpone the meeting.' Many people agreed. They told when they had been informed and how, and how inconvenient this time was for a kanna meeting. They told the DS should inform them at least 15 days in advance about the meeting. The ADS replied: 'We can make a decision without all those other people, no?' He said the letters have been sent the 1st of March to stick everywhere. We sent them to the gramasevaka's and to Mahattiya Mama to publish in the village.¹ Farmers replied that he should have sent them to the FO's.

Then Mahattiya Mama said he did not agree to postpone the meeting, but Kalu Banda told then you hold your meeting alone, we want to do attam these days. The ADS calmed the audience and said:

'This is not a problem for us. We do not have any problem to postpone the meeting, we can come any day, but if you postpone the meeting you cannot cultivate this Yala kanna. If you try to postpone this meeting it will take at least 15 days before another kanna meeting can be held. The DS does not have the power to cancel the kanna meeting. He should get permission from the District Secretary, but these days he is not in Sri Lanka. Therefore you should wait until he gets back to get a new date for the kanna meeting and his sign and his permission. This means it will be delayed at least one month.' Then most farmers said please let's hold the meeting today.

The ADS told the DS could not come for the kanna meeting he has another appointment. Therefore problems in Buttala anicut cannot be discussed today. At this meeting, he said, there can only be discussed about cultivation calendar in Yala. Mahattiya Mama proposed to issue the water at the 10th of April and finish the broadcasting activities before the 15th of May, but the latter was changed to the 20th of May. Then it was decided by consensus to cultivate the whole command area and to cultivate the 3,5 month cultivar. Kalu Banda, who is the vice-president of a tail-end FO, told they would need water until the end of March to be able to finish their cultivation, but the TA said we are not discussing about that, do not worry about that. Kalu Banda also told the big mudalali's in their FO never listen to them. They do not clean their channels. He would like to fine them Rs100. 'That is confirmed,' the ADS said. At the end Mahattiya Mama took half of the time of the meeting to scold the TA and his government. He said they should not stop the water in the channels completely, but only in the D-channel where they want to work. He said they should start and finish their construction work in time and not delay, and in the end postponing the water issue date like the other times. He said: 'Somehow we want 2 inches of water continuously. We want to take bath. We cannot go to the river, there is no road to go there. April is a very dry season. We want to drink... our cattle also needs water. We need to take bath every day. I cannot imagine what you have to do in these channels.' Then the TA told: 'No, no, Mr. Mahattiya Mama, you should understand we want to make another retention wall.' Then Mahattiya Mama got very angry. He

¹ In fact they sent them to the DO who sent them to the gramasevaka's. The gramasevaka's only stuck the notices in their own offices.

said: 'What's wrong with you? What did you do in the last four years? During four years you are making, making and still you cannot finish. We should face to problems, due to your activities. If you are interested in the rehabilitation work you can do it correctly, but you are not interested in it. Five or four days before the water should be issued you are going to start the construction works. By that time you should be finishing.' Then somebody in the back stood up and said: 'You should not scold this TA, he is new. You should scold the TA from your government; he did the construction. Now he is abroad.' Then the ADS hushed up the matter.

Kalu Banda wanted to discuss about the people in the upstream D-channels who still cut the bund to take water. Therefore they face water problems. Also in his D-channel people cut the bund. The FO does not have the power to do something about it. The ADS said we cannot discuss this matter now. Jayasekara from a middle end FO told: 'He's a tail-ender. There are no any improvements in our D-channel. I get only 40-50 bushels per kanna, but I want to get 100 bushels. YOU (the TA) should concentrate on that channel. You did not plan anything for that channel.' Two or three persons got up and said: 'You should propose this problem to your FO, it is the former TA who spoiled this with the office-bearers.'² However, the ADS said: 'We should not debate about this. Farmers also make mistakes, they do not come to the meetings. Always we see the same faces. The officers cannot do everything 100% correctly. We also face inconveniences. We cannot get money for the construction as we like; it is issued by the government. We cannot force them. Sometimes IE is not there. Sometimes the TA is absent. Problems arise. We have to consider all these things and work together. Somehow we held this kanna meeting. As we decided in the meeting we will work together. I wish you a very successful Yala kanna! And this was the end of the meeting.

Water had been issued on the 20th and stopped again on the 23rd. Finally the water issuing date had been delayed until the 27th of April. There were many different stories in the village why this happened like that. A farmer from HSE FO said the TA wanted to postpone the water issuing date. Therefore he made a deal with some office-bearers to sent a petition to the DD to postpone the water issue. A farmer from MDE FO said the water issue was delayed because some farmers could not prepare their threshing floor in time due to the rains at the end of March. Therefore their harvesting work was delayed. Dissanayake said it was not clear to him why the water had been issued and consequently stopped again. There had been a rumour some visitors wanted to see the scheme. Anyway it was difficult to really understand what had happened, because those days it had been raining a little also and normally the Irrigation Department closes the anicut intake if it rains. Mahattiya Mama said he had phoned the Irrigation Department why they had delayed the water. Then the DD told him some foreigners wanted to visit the channels. He said he did not see any foreigners. He had phoned the IE and he told him to issue the water immediately otherwise he would make a case against him. Then the water was issued.

In Maha kanna 1995 the water issuing date had also been postponed from the 24th of October to the 5th of November. At that time officers from the Irrigation Department had asked Sirima to sign a petition to postpone the water issuing because the construction was not yet finished. In fact the TA had taken a construction on the MC that was not finished in time. Everybody was angry with Sirima because of that, especially the former president of the FO.

² They are correct. Jayasekara is from Unupottuwela FO, it is the most inactive FO from the whole system; they have never held any meeting.

ANNEX 3 TABLE OF THE WATER ISSUE SCHEDULE

BUTTLA DIVERSION SCHEME

WATER ISSUE SCHEDULE FOR MAHA - DISTRIBUTORY CANAL LEVEL OFFTAKES

| OFFTAKES/ TRACT/LOT NO.: Qd | EXTENT: :No. of :days open:Day of:Time of:Closing of: | TURNOUT CONTROL DETAILS | | WEEK NUMBERS DISCHARGES Cfs/Sec/Sec | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|---|-------------------------|------|--|------|------------|------|-------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| | | :per week | :Day | :week | :Day | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 |
| | | | | | | :open week | :Day | :week | :Day | :1 | :2 | :3 | :4 | :5 | :6 | :7 | :8 | :9 | :10 | :11 | :12 | :13 |
| A1 | 60 | 7 | 1 | 6 AM | 1 | 6 AM | 35 | 133 | 136 | 103 | 93 | 92 | 91 | 93 | 95 | 96 | 99 | 103 | 105 | 107 | 109 | 110 |
| A2 | 69 | 7 | 1 | 6 AM | 1 | 6 AM | 41 | 153 | 155 | 119 | 107 | 106 | 105 | 107 | 110 | 111 | 115 | 119 | 121 | 124 | 126 | 127 |
| A3 | 25 | 7 | 1 | 6 AM | 1 | 6 AM | 14 | 54 | 55 | 42 | 38 | 38 | 37 | 38 | 39 | 39 | 41 | 42 | 43 | 44 | 45 | 46 |
| A4 | 111 | 7 | 1 | 6 AM | 1 | 6 AM | 64 | 241 | 245 | 187 | 169 | 167 | 165 | 169 | 173 | 175 | 181 | 187 | 191 | 195 | 199 | 201 |
| A5 | 120 | 7 | 1 | 6 AM | 1 | 6 AM | 69 | 238 | 263 | 200 | 181 | 179 | 176 | 181 | 185 | 187 | 194 | 200 | 204 | 209 | 213 | 215 |
| A6 | 45 | 7 | 1 | 6 AM | 1 | 6 AM | 26 | 99 | 100 | 76 | 69 | 68 | 67 | 69 | 71 | 71 | 74 | 76 | 78 | 80 | 81 | 82 |
| A7 | 87 | 7 | 1 | 6 AM | 1 | 6 AM | 50 | 187 | 190 | 145 | 131 | 129 | 128 | 131 | 134 | 136 | 140 | 145 | 148 | 151 | 154 | 156 |
| A8 | 81 | 7 | 1 | 6 AM | 1 | 6 AM | 47 | 177 | 180 | 137 | 124 | 122 | 121 | 124 | 127 | 128 | 133 | 137 | 140 | 143 | 146 | 147 |
| A9 | 48 | 7 | 1 | 6 AM | 1 | 6 AM | 28 | 105 | 107 | 82 | 74 | 73 | 72 | 74 | 76 | 76 | 79 | 82 | 83 | 85 | 87 | 88 |
| Main Canal | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Releases | | | | | | | 441 | 1655 | 1683 | 1283 | 1159 | 1145 | 1131 | 1159 | 1186 | 1200 | 1241 | 1283 | 1310 | 1338 | 1365 | 1379 |

NOTE:- ISSUE COMPUTED ON THE BASIS OF Qd NO - RAINFALL Qd PRODY - MAHA IN FULL EXTENT WEEKS 1-4 LAND PREPARATION; WEEKS 22,23 NO IRRIGATION

WATER ISSUE SCHEDULE FOR YALA - DISTRIBUTORY CANAL LEVEL OFFTAKES

| OFFTAKES/ TRACT/LOT NO.: Qd | EXTENT: :No. of :days open:Day of:Time of:Closing of: | TURNOUT CONTROL DETAILS | | WEEK NUMBERS DISCHARGES Cfs/Sec/Sec | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|---|-------------------------|------|--|------|------|-----|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-----|
| | | :per week | :Day | :week | :Day | :1 | :2 | :3 | :4 | :5 | :6 | :7 | :8 | :9 | :10 | :11 | :12 | :13 | :14 | :15 | :16 | :17 |
| A1 | 60 | 7 | 1 | 6 AM | 1 | 6 AM | 36 | 141 | 145 | 116 | 112 | 115 | 116 | 118 | 120 | 118 | 118 | 117 | 125 | 120 | 87 | 21 |
| A2 | 69 | 7 | 1 | 6 AM | 1 | 6 AM | 40 | 157 | 161 | 129 | 125 | 128 | 129 | 132 | 133 | 132 | 132 | 130 | 139 | 133 | 97 | 24 |
| A3 | 25 | 7 | 1 | 6 AM | 1 | 6 AM | 15 | 58 | 59 | 47 | 46 | 47 | 47 | 48 | 49 | 48 | 48 | 48 | 51 | 49 | 36 | 9 |
| A4 | 111 | 7 | 1 | 6 AM | 1 | 6 AM | 66 | 256 | 263 | 211 | 204 | 208 | 211 | 215 | 217 | 215 | 215 | 213 | 227 | 217 | 159 | 39 |
| A5 | 120 | 7 | 1 | 6 AM | 1 | 6 AM | 71 | 275 | 283 | 227 | 219 | 224 | 227 | 231 | 234 | 231 | 231 | 229 | 244 | 234 | 170 | 41 |
| A6 | 45 | 7 | 1 | 6 AM | 1 | 6 AM | 27 | 106 | 108 | 87 | 84 | 86 | 87 | 89 | 90 | 89 | 89 | 88 | 93 | 90 | 65 | 16 |
| A7 | 87 | 7 | 1 | 6 AM | 1 | 6 AM | 51 | 198 | 204 | 163 | 158 | 162 | 163 | 167 | 169 | 167 | 167 | 165 | 179 | 169 | 123 | 30 |
| A8 | 81 | 7 | 1 | 6 AM | 1 | 6 AM | 48 | 189 | 194 | 155 | 150 | 154 | 155 | 159 | 160 | 159 | 159 | 157 | 167 | 160 | 117 | 28 |
| A9 | 48 | 7 | 1 | 6 AM | 1 | 6 AM | 28 | 103 | 112 | 90 | 87 | 89 | 90 | 91 | 92 | 91 | 91 | 91 | 96 | 92 | 67 | 16 |
| Main Canal | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Releases | | | | | | | 449 | 1750 | 1797 | 1441 | 1394 | 1425 | 1441 | 1472 | 1487 | 1472 | 1472 | 1466 | 1549 | 1487 | 1084 | 263 |

NOTE:- ISSUE COMPUTED ON THE BASIS OF Qd NO - RAINFALL Qd PRODY - YALA IN FULL EXTENT WEEKS 1-4 LAND PREPARATION; WEEKS 18-23 NO IRRIGATION

ANNEX 4 GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION IN IRRIGATION IN SRI LANKA

Since the abolition of 'rajakariya' (work performed by the people for the king), the Sri Lankan government has taken up responsibilities in irrigation management. (annexation of the Kandian Kingdom for the first time in **1815!** - by the British)

In **1932** the Irrigation Department became responsible for the construction, improvement and maintenance of minor schemes.

British rule 1795- 1947

Independence 1947

In **1948** there was the first post-independence prime minister, DS Senanayake. There were Land Development officers, also LDO mahattiya, also idam samwardene niladari. Settlers would get land under a temporary permit by the Land Rehabilitation Board, also idam catchery. Permit holders cannot sell and cannot divide this land for e.g. inheritance. Permits can be inherited.

In **1956** there were elections. Mr. Bandaranaike (father of the present president Ms Chandrika Bandaranaike) got into power for the SLFP. At that time the Paddy Lands Act (kumburu panate) came, this act provided legalized rights for tenants. Leasers obtained the right to become a tenant if they cultivated a certain land for 4 kannas or more, continuously.

In **1958** the Department of Agrarian Services (DAS) was established. With the enactment on the Paddy Lands Act of 1958 in **1960**, DAS was entrusted with all minor irrigation schemes. [Abeyratne, 1990]

In **1959** the president, Mr. Bandaranaike was assassinated.

In **1960**, Mr. Bandaranaike's wife, Mrs. Sirimava Bandaranaike came into power with an SLFP government. Under her governance, changes in government intervention in agriculture did not occur.

In **1965** the UNP party came into power. Dudley Senanayake, son of DS Senanayake, became president. Under his governance, agricultural production was to be boosted and the economy to be liberalized. The 'Green Revolution' packages were promoted by his government. The so-called land-army was also created. Under the landarmy were productivity committees, also farmers' committees, also palawardene samittees, also govi karake sabaha.

Since the issuing of the Irrigation Ordinance of **1968**, major and medium irrigation schemes used to be the responsibility of the Irrigation Department. The ordinance stipulated the following arrangements:

- Farmers were responsible for cleaning and desilting field channels.
- Seasonal planning decisions were to be made jointly by farmers and government officers at

Cultivation (= kanna) Meetings.

-All other responsibilities, operations, planning of waterdistribution, maintenance of distributary channels and main systems were the responsibility of ID. Users were not required to pay any fee. [Brewer, 1994]

In 1970 Mrs. Sirimava Bandaranaike came into power again with a coalition government of SLFP and leftist parties. The UNP party of Dudley Senanayake had lost support, because it wanted to abolish foodsubsidies. Mrs. Sirimava Bandaranaike's government aimed at import substitution.

In 1971 there was the first JVP insurgency. The government called the state of emergency, and this stayed until 1977.

In 1973 (after the insurgency) Land Ceiling Act was made. No person was allowed to have more than 50 acres of land.

In 1977 UNP government came into power for 17 years. Mr. Jayawardene became president. He wanted Sri Lanka to become one of the Newly industrializing Countries (NIC's). For this purpose he liberalized the economy. He improved the infrastructure in Colombo, introduced the free trade zones, built villages with cheap houses and started the Mahaweli project.

In 1978 a new constitution was accepted by the government. The electorate system was reformed into a system of equal representation by MP's.

In 1978 the function of Gramodele Mandela was created. Before that there were village councils (= gansabaha's) in every village, after the gramodemandle came, these village councils disappeared.

In 1978 the DD of Kandy, created a joint project committee consisting of farmers' representatives and members of the Irrigation Department, in order to repair a system. [Brewer, 1994]

According to the Agrarian Services Act no. 58 of 1979, minor irrigation systems are those 'irrigation works that serve up to 200 acres (80 ha.) of agricultural land.'

In 1981 the Agrarian Research and Training Institute (ARTI) developed a organizational structure for the participation of farmers in the rehabilitation project of the Gal Oya Left Bank System. Under pressure of donors, especially the World Bank, a pilot project on participatory management the "Water Management Program" was created on the basis of the model used by the DD of Kandy and the ARTI.

In 1984 the Integrated Management of Major Irrigation Schemes (INMAS) program became the follow-up of the "Water Management Program". The key elements in the INMAS program were the Farmer Organizations and Joint Management Committees. Informal Field Channel Groups (FCGs) select the Farmer Representatives (FRs) to sit in the Distributary Channel Committee. This

committee governs the Distributary Channel Organization (DCO) and is considered to be the FO. The structure of Joint Management Committees (JMCs) is above the FO and is made up by FR and officers from relevant agencies. The JMCs are represented in the Project Management Committee (PMC), that operates at system level. Through this structure farmers should work together with the government irrigation agencies to take responsibilities for system management.

In addition to the creation of the FOs, an irrigation fee was imposed in major irrigation schemes. In compensation for the fee improved services were promised to farmers. For the collection of that fee, the Irrigation Management Division (IMD) was created by the Ministry, separate from ID. However, as the government was not able to live up to the promise of improved services, collection rates of the irrigation fee dropped very rapidly. [Brewer, 1994]

In the years **1987-1989** a second JVP insurrection took place.

In **1988** Mr. Premadasa succeeded Mr. Jayawardene as president for a UNP government. The policy of liberalization became a policy of privatization. Subsidies on agricultural inputs were abolished under Mr. Premadasa. Large-scale multinational companies in e.g.. tobacco and sugar obtained land for cultivation. [Sprang, 1993]

In **1988**, the Government of Sri Lanka adopted the "participatory irrigation system management policy". The policy was considered a key element of the future development of irrigated agriculture in Sri Lanka. [IMPISA 1991, in IIMI 1995] Full responsibility for resource mobilization and O&M of field channels and distributary channels of the major irrigation systems is to be turned over to Farmer Organizations (FOs) and in return for that no irrigation fees will be imposed. The final responsibility for O&M of headwork, main channels and branch channels remains with the ID.

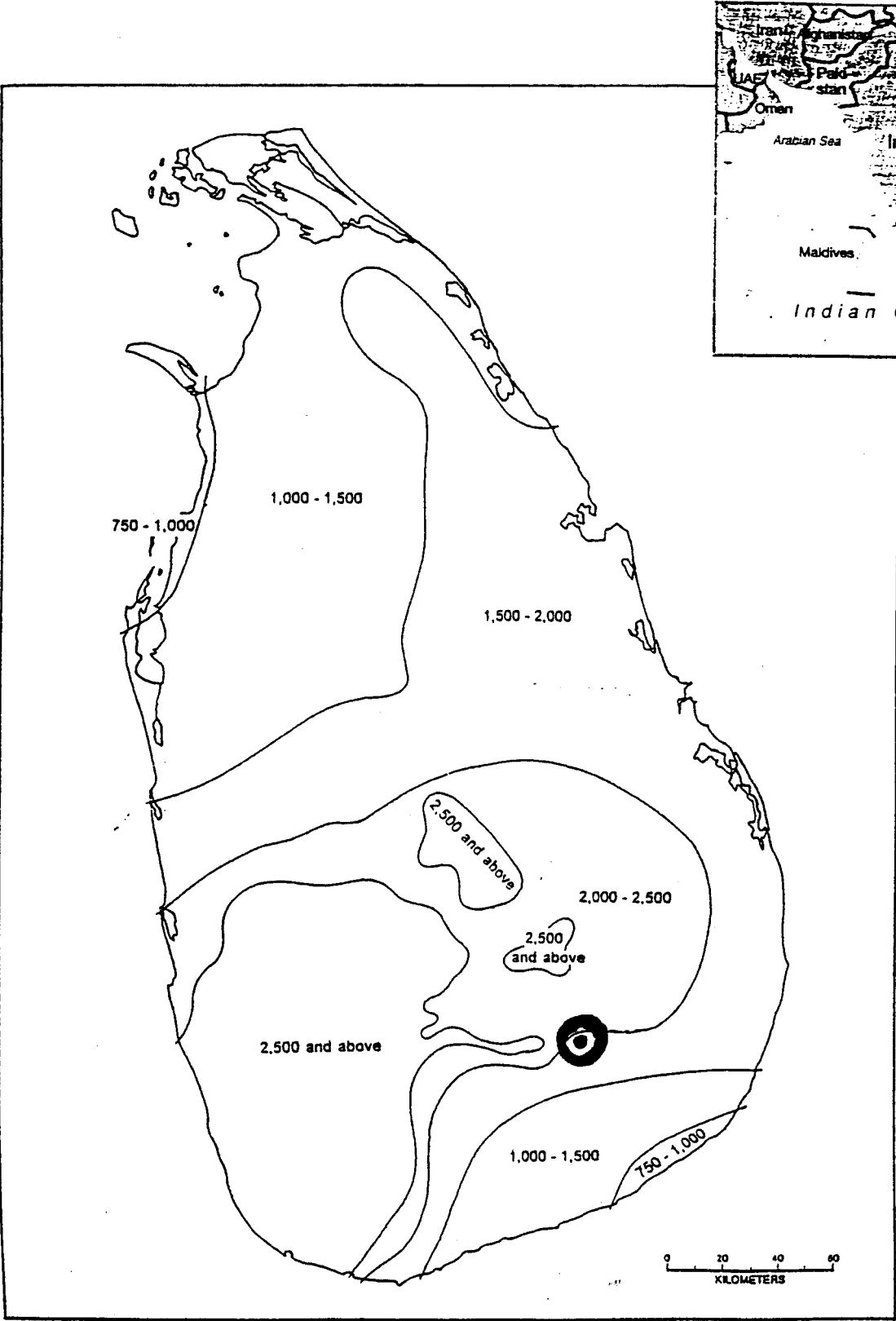
The last subsidy on agricultural inputs, the subsidy on chemical fertilizer was abolished in **1990**.

In **1993** Mr. Premadasa was murdered. He is replaced by Mr. Dingiri Banda Wijetunga, who appointed Mr. Ranil Wickremasinghe as prime minister.

In **1994** Ms Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaranatunga, daughter of Mr. Bandaranaike and Ms Sirimavo Bandaranaike, becomes president for the People's Alliance (PA).

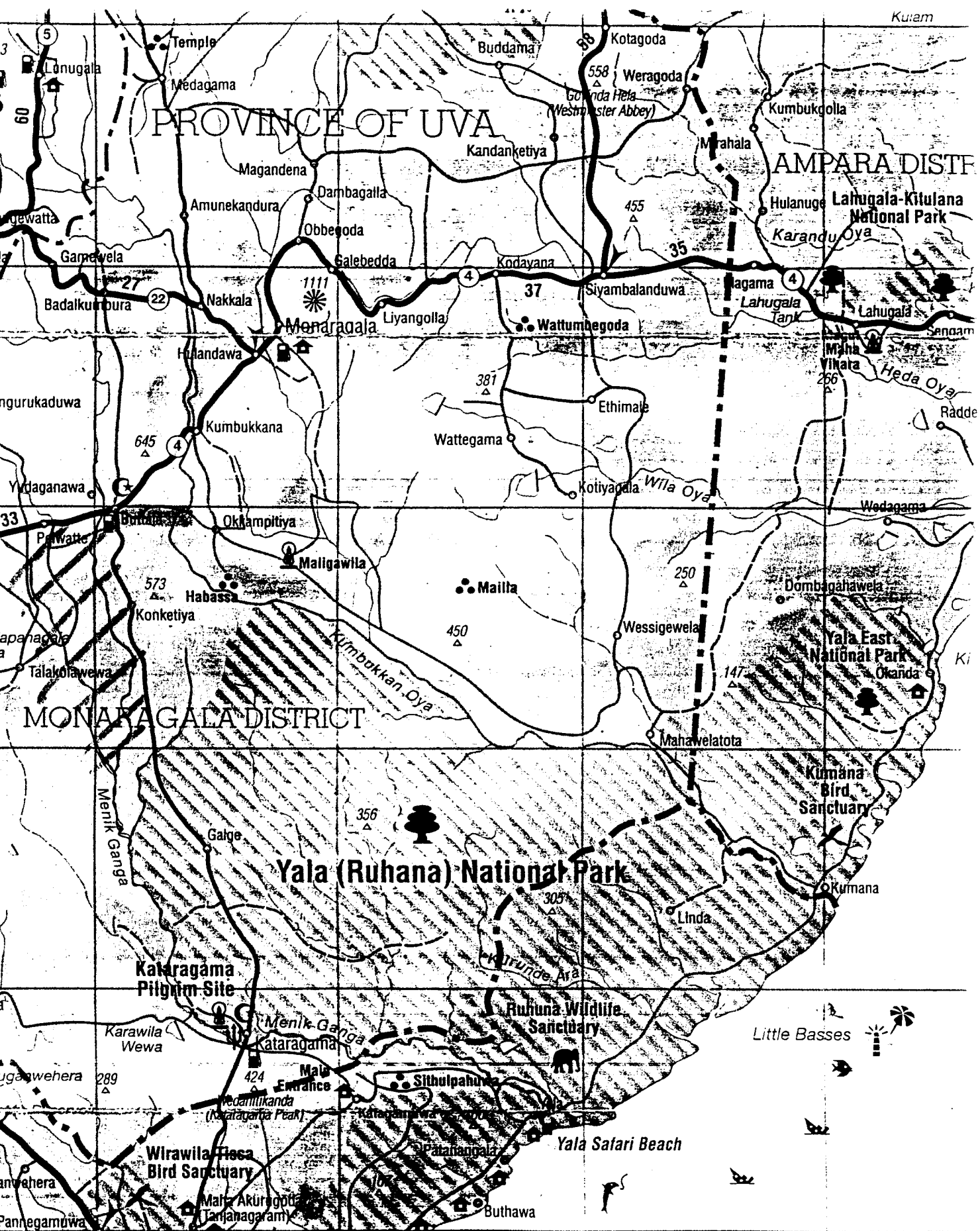
At present, (**1996**) the "participatory irrigation system management policy" of the Government of Sri Lanka includes three programs: INMAS, MANIS and Mahaweli. INMAS is the program for major schemes and the Mahaweli program deals with irrigation systems under the Mahaweli Agency. The MANIS program, under which most NIRP project schemes are, was designed after the INMAS model, with some adjustments. Instead of concentrating on major schemes, MANIS focuses on medium size irrigation systems. The MANIS program is implemented in about 160 schemes with an average size of the command area of 369 ha.

Figure 1



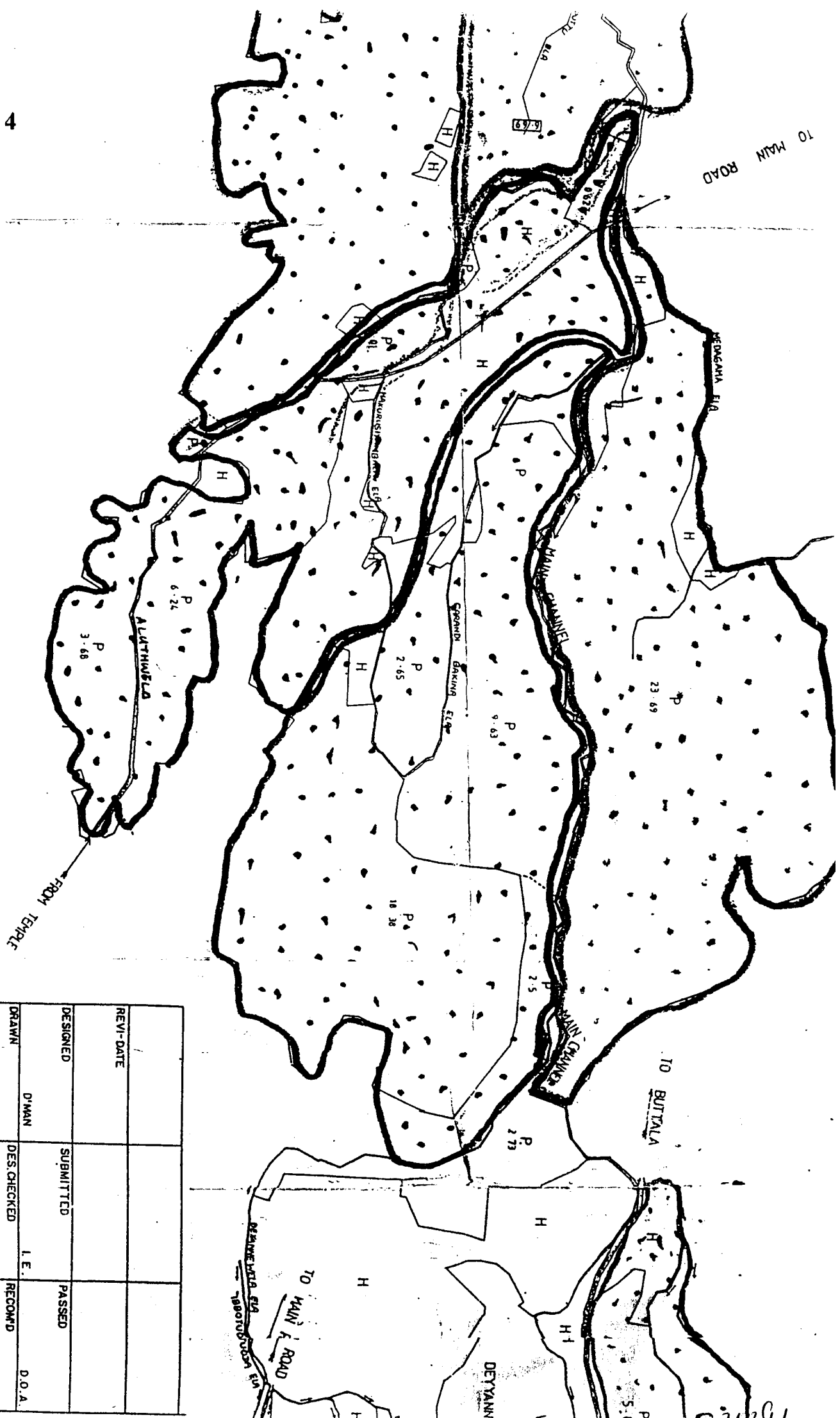
Note: Rainfall values given in mm.
Source: Survey Department 1988.

Figure 2



[illegible]

Figure 4



| | | |
|--------------|--------------|----------|
| REVISED DATE | | |
| DESIGNED | SUBMITTED | PASSED |
| DRAWN | DES. CHECKED | RECOMM'D |
| CHECKED | D/CHECKED | APPROVED |
| D. MAN | D. MAN | D. D. I. |

IRRIGATION DEPARTMENT

Figure 5

BUTTALA DIVERSION SCHEME

ORGANIGRAM

FOR THE PROPOSED FARMER ORGANIZATIONS
AND PROJECT COMMITTEE

