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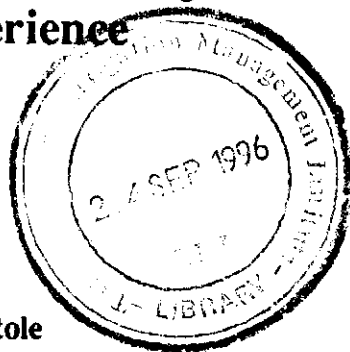
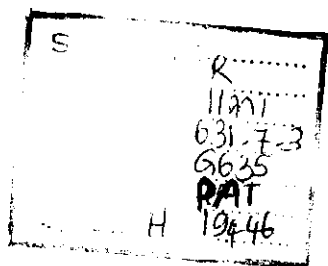
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Status of Irrigation Management Transfer in India

**Water Users' Association in
Parunde Minor Irrigation Project:
Farmers' Experience**



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Foreword

This booklet is one of the series of short narratives about farmers' efforts to create and manage water user associations. The purpose of the series is to provide other farmers in the state with succinct, readable, and interesting information about these efforts that might enable farmers to improve their access to the irrigation services. This study is being published in both Marathi and English. See the back cover for information about the other narratives in this series.

This narrative was written by Sahebrao D. Patole under the guidance of IIMA and IIMI team members. He lived with the farmers described here from October, 1994 to April, 1995. While there, he interviewed and observed the farmers in order to document the water user association and irrigation management transfer process at this site. The information presented here reflects the ideas and opinions of the farmers themselves.

Sahebrao D. Patole's effort was part of the study on Status of Irrigation management Transfer in India being carried out from 1993 to 1995 by the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, and the International Irrigation Management Institute, Colombo, with funding from the Ford Foundation. The study investigated and documented the policies and activities of agencies, non-governmental organizations, and others with regard to promoting irrigation management transfer from the government to farmers. The overall goal was to contribute to formulation of effective policies and programs with regard to irrigation management transfer in India. In addition to this series of short narratives, study results are reported in more traditional research reports and other forms.

The primary members of the IIMA/IIMI study team were Shashi Kolavalli, Amarlal Kalro, Gopal Naik, and S. Ramnarayan from IIMA, and Jeffrey D. Brewer, R. Sakthivadivel, and K.V. Raju from IIMI. Editing in Marathi was carried out by Sudhir Sevekar and Suryakant

Saraf. The edited first draft was translated into English and reviewed by the study team, particularly by Gopal Naik and S. Ramnarayan.

The members of the study team, including Sahebrao D. Patole, wish to thank the people of Village Parunde, concerned government and non-governmental agencies who gave their hospitality and time to answer questions and explain how things work without expecting compensation. We sincerely hope that their experiences will be useful to others.

Jeffrey D. Brewer
IIMI

Gopal Naik
IIMA

Water Users' Association in Parunde Minor Irrigation Project: Farmers' Experience

Parunde is situated 12 km from Junnar and 110 km from Pune. Junnar reminds one of the fort Shivneri where Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj was born. In the Brahmanath temple, Simhastha Kumbh Mela is celebrated every twelve years.

The village is surrounded by hills and many wild animals are found in the area. The village population is between 1500 and 2000. People belonging to various castes and communities live happily together. The Maratha community has a bigger share in the population. Punde, Pawar, and Jadhav are some of the sub-castes. There are brahmins, goldsmiths, barbers, and scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in the village. There is a considerable adivasi population in the village.

Literacy rate in the village is satisfactory. Marathas are leading in education. The least educated are the adivasis. The adivasi children help their parents in work instead of attending schools. They earn their living by working as farm labourers. Adivasi women collect and sell firewood. The economic condition of the village people is quite good.

Adivasis, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes are to economically backward, while the Marathas, brahmins and such higher communities are economically ahead. They take a good crop from their fields. Some villagers own tractor, jeep or thresher which is hired out.

Shoe making, pottery, and carpentry are some of the traditional occupations.

There is a post office and a veterinary clinic in the village. The village is well connected with road transport.

Crop Situation

Different crops are grown in different seasons. Vegetables such as onion, chilly, tomato, potato, etc. are raised in year round.

Farmers also cultivate cereals and pulses in addition to vegetables. Flowers are cultivated generally during the kharif season and fetch a good income for the Farmers. Flowers are sold in the Bombay market.

During the Kharif season, farmers cultivate potatoes which again, fetch good price. Some farmers have taken up animal husbandry in addition to farming.

Construction of Dam and Changes Thereafter

Rainfall is good in the area and lasts about four months. The average rainfall is 1000 -1100 mm but the rain water used to flow away through rivers and rivulets. Water was scarce in the rabi season. Farmers having wells could raise some crops.

The situation has changed now. The rain water is stored in Parunde dam. The stored water is used for Rabi crops. Once barren land is looking green and colourful because of this dam now.

The dam is in good condition. The length of the canal is 2.5 kilometres and there are ten field channels on the canal. Some of them eg. No. one, two and three are not working at all.

In 1980, the Parunde minor irrigation project was approved by the Maharashtra government at a cost of Rs 19.21 lakh, rupees. Work on the dam began in 1986 across river Meena. But the project affected people created problems for the government and the construction work was stopped for about two years.

The project affected people insisted on lift irrigation because the dam was being constructed in a different village, and the intended beneficiaries

were different. The government acceded to the demands of the project affected people by sanctioning lift irrigation.

How the Society was Formed

The project was completed in 1989. The villagers got water from the dam from the rabi season of 1990. In that year water distribution was done by the irrigation department. At the same time, one of the officials thought of forming a water distribution society for the village. He started meeting the villagers and explained to them how such a society would be beneficial to them. Some of the villagers were convinced while some were inspired by his talk.

The farmers began talking to each other about water distribution society. Raghunath Maruti Pawar, present chairman, of the society Janardan Punde, vice-chairman and Bharat Jadhav, secretary played on active roles in this communication exercise. While explaining the importance of the society they always emphasized cooperation. They arranged several meetings to prepare the idea. Initially, 30-40 farmers purchased the shares of the society priced at 50 each. But this was not sufficient to form the society. The chairman spent Rs. 5000 of his own and enrolled other members. A deputy engineer helped them in registering the society in 1992. The people decided to form the society at last. The year 1992 dawned in this way. A executive committee having eleven members was formed.

Water distribution work was done by the irrigation department in the first year of the society i.e. 1992, because farmers were totally ignorant of the procedures. The irrigation department guided them on how water should be distributed. The chairman himself distributed water that year, as the society had no patkari. Distribution of water began from the tail end of the field channel. The chairman himself intimated the farmers about the water distribution timetable. He saw the farmers every evening and reported them of his day's work. Each time he was careful to ensure that the farmers liked the society's working.

Working of the Society

The society started its real work in 1992 or in 1993 ? Since in 1992 irrigation department distributed water ? The chairman called a meeting of the farmers to communicate the method of water distribution. The farmers would have to repair their field channels themselves.

The main canal was to be looked after by the irrigation department. If the field channels were not repaired by some farmers, they would be denied water in the next rotation.

This threat worked and the farmers immediately started repairing their field channels. As was usual, a meeting called before the 1994 rabi season. An important point discussed in this meeting was repairing the field channels. Many farmers had not repaired their field channels.

The patkari complained that the farmers cursed and swore at him whenever he tried to remind them of the rule. The chairman resolved that one who abused the patkari would thereafter be fined by the society. Another important point discussed in this meeting was reporting of acreage for purposes of paying water tax. Some farmers reported in the application lower acreage so that they would pay less water tax. The chairman accused the members that this would not take place in future. Water supply during day and night was discussed. Some farmers did not favour water supply owing to indement weather or the presence of snakes in the field.

The first water rotation began in the last week of November. Water was supplied during day and night. But soon the night supply was stopped as much water was wasted.

The chairman and vice-chairman have to shoulder many responsibilities. Work such as supervising the repair work, selecting application forms for water before the rabi season, collecting water tax, keeping accounts, etc are handled by a clerk.

Water Distribution

The society takes water from the government irrigation department on volumetric basis. Farmers have to pay less for water because of this. Whenever chairman need arises, they write to irrigation department. The government patkari lets water into the canal. The opening and closing of canal water is noted and is counter signed by the society chairman. Water level at the time of opening is also noted.

Once water is in the canal, the society patkari does his job of distribution. Water distribution starts from the tail end of the field channel No. 7 because it covers the maximum area. The Society has two or three patkaris. They distribute water to farmers according to their turn. They warn those farmers breaking the rules. If somebody ignores the warning, a complaint is sent to the chairman. Some farmers avail water twice in the same rotation. Some farmers avail water when they absolutely don't need it. In spite of breaking of rules, conflicts among farmers are less thanks to the society. Sometimes water storage in the dam is low. At such times, the society supplies water only to the wheat crop which is sown late.

Repairs and Maintenance

Repairing the main canal is the responsibility of the irrigation department. In Parunde the society itself does it and is paid Rs. 40 per ha. The society earns Rs. 4480 from the repair work every year. The irrigation department and the society co-operate with each other and farmer gives an opportunity to the latter to earn an income. Repairs to the main canal are done before the rabi season. Repairing channel doors and, broken pipes, removing the weeds in the canal bed, etc.

Implementation of Rules

The society has framed rules for allotting water. But many farmers do not follow the rules. Some farmers are totally ignorant of the rules. At such times, the society takes help from the irrigation department and the tahsildar.

During the first rotation (1994-95) farmers covered by the channel no. 5 had not repaired their field channels. The section officer visited the place and threatened to stop water supply if the repairs were not done. The farmers immediately repaired the channels.

Income and Expenses

The society earns income from many sources. The membership fee is Rs. 50 and the entry fee Rs. 5. If the water tax is paid on time, the irrigation department gives 20 per cent discount to the society. The Government gives to the society Rs. 40. per ha for main canal repairs.

The society collects water tax depending on the crop Rs. 350 per acre for vegetables Rs. 290 per *acre* for wheat and Rs. 190 per *acre* for gram.

During 1992-93, the society's income was as shown below:

Members share	Rs 7,450
Entrance fee	585
Deposits	770
Bank interest	116
Total	8,941

During 1993-94, the income was as follows:

Savings	Rs 596.25
Water tax	16,695.00
Bank Saving	8,324.00
Canal repair grant	6,710.00
Total	32,325.25

Expenses during 1993-94 were as follows:

Government water charges	Rs 16863.00
Canal Repairs	6181.00
Stationary	1435.00
TA/DA	300.00
Phone Bill	258.00
Patkari Payment	600.00
Total	25637.00

The society has no office of its own. It rented a small room for Rs. 50 per month.

Benefits to the Farmers

Many farmers have reported higher incomes after the formation of the society. The society's water planning has helped the farmers. The society saves some amount every year. It plans set a fertilizers shop. It has helped the farmers to be aware of their rights. The farmers do not have to worry when their turn would come because this is announced on the gram panchayat board. Water distribution is announced at least a day earlier. The society gives water even to those farmers which are not members ; however they charged higher.

It plans to buy agricultural equipments in future for hiring out to the farmers.

Formation of the society has brought a new vigour in the farmers. Quite interestingly they take part in all the activities of the society. Unity is being strengthened because of the society.

Medium and black soil is found generally in the command area. Next to it is rocky land which is less fertile. Yield is low though much water is used. Channels No. 1, 2, and 3 do get sufficient water as the land level there is uneven. The society is thinking of levelling the land.

The Adivasis and those belonging to schedule castes and schedule tribes get permanent employment within the village. Their economic condition is also improving. Owing to ample employment opportunity within the village, people have stopped migrating. Many villagers have their vegetable and fruit shops in Bombay. Some go to Bombay for employment. Transportation has developed for transporting the agricultural produce. The farmers are using modern techniques in farming. Traditional equipments are less in use now. Some farmers are engaged in animal husbandry.

With improved home conditions, the proportion of school going children has increased. Literacy level in the village is going up. However the adivasi, scheduled caste, and schedule tribe children prefer to help their parents in their jobs.

There is no doubt that the society has played a major role in ushering in prosperity in the village will change in future. The society plans to bring maximum land under water. This will help the villagers' income go up. The Kolhapur type weirs are being built by the zilla parishad outside the command area. The well water level has gone up and the crops are getting enough water.

List of case studies published in local languages under Irrigation Management Transfer Project

Case Studies conducted in Gujarat and published in Gujarati

1. Water Users' Association in Ankla Subminor, Mahi Kadana Project: Farmers' Experience
2. Water Users' Association in Right Bank Canal of Pingot Medium Irrigation Project: Farmers' Experience
3. Water Users' Association in Left Bank Canal of Baldeva Medium Irrigation Project: Farmers' Experience
4. Water Users' Association in Bhestan Minor (Mohini), Ukai Kakrapar Project: Farmers' Experience
5. Water Users' Association in Bhima Lift Irrigation Scheme: Farmers' Experience

Case Studies conducted in Maharashtra and published in Marathi

1. Water Users' Association in Phulewadi Lift Irrigation Scheme: Farmers' Experience
2. Water Users' Association in Kadoli Lift Irrigation Scheme: Farmers' Experience
3. Water Users' Association in Minor 7, Mula Project: Farmers' Experience
4. Water Users' Association in Parunde Minor Irrigation Project: Farmers' Experience
5. Water Users' Association in Hadshi Minor Irrigation Project: Farmers' Experience
6. Water Users' Association in Minor 17, 18, 18A, 19 and Distributary 1, Waghad Project: Farmers' Experience
7. Water Users' Association in Minor 10, Bhima Project: Farmers' Experience

Case Studies conducted in Tamil Nadu and published in Tamil

1. Water Users' Association in XIth Branch Canal, Periyar Vaigai Project: Farmers' Experience

2. Water Users' Association in Kedar Tank: Farmers' Experience
3. Water Users' Association in Dusi Mamandur Tank: Farmers' Experience
4. Water Users' Association in 28L and 29R Outlets of Mettupalayam distributary in Lower Bhavani Project: Farmers' Experience
5. Water Users' Association in Malayadipalayam Distributary of Parambikulam Aliyar Project: Farmers' Experience
6. Water Users' Association in A9 Mahilanchery Channel (Saliperi), Cauvery-Valappar Project: Farmers' Experience
7. Water Users' Association in Panchanthangipatti Tank: Farmers' Experience
8. Water Users' Association in Pillayarkulam Tank: Farmers' Experience
9. Water Users' Association in Vagaikulam Tank, North Kodaimelalagian Channel, Tambraparani Project: Farmers' Experience

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