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**Promoting Effective Water Management Policies and Practices (Phase 3)- Pilot and Demonstration Activities for India:
Facilitating Irrigation Sector Reform in Chhattisgarh**

**Completion Report
September 2006**

Summary of Activities undertaken

1. WRD Seminar held on 30th March 2004

This WRD seminar was held in Raipur in order to discuss and highlight the problems faced by irrigation departments, and to understand the “vicious cycle of irrigation management” and its systemic causes. The role played by Water Users Associations and changes that needed to be made in the irrigation sector in Chhattisgarh were also discussed. The seminar was useful in taking forward the relationship between the WRD and ADB. Since Chhattisgarh was a newly formed state and the officials had no previous experience in dealing with ADB or any other bilateral, multi-lateral project, this introductory seminar was helpful in putting into context the irrigation sector reform process which was going to be undertaken by WRD and ADB.

2. Two Day National Workshop on PIM: 10th and 11th May 2004

The National Workshop on PIM in Chhattisgarh was organized and facilitated by the World Water Institute in order to provide a platform for the sharing of PIM related experiences from different parts of the country and from within the state of Chhattisgarh, with a view to providing inputs and identifying key elements for the development of irrigation policy reforms in the state.

A total of 75 participants attended the workshop including PIM experts, WUA representatives, NGOs, researchers from various states of India like Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, and Karnataka. International experts and researchers also contributed their experiences.

The workshop was important because it facilitated a dialogue between policy makers and researchers, and farmer representatives who brought into the discussion field realities and

practical experiences. Participants made specific recommendations to ADB for the forthcoming irrigation sector reforms project.

Recommendations from the workshop for the ADB project:

Overall approach of the project:

- The project should be a holistic one including all stakeholders
- Clear and accountable roles must be developed for WUAs and WRD with the capacity to exercise their roles
- Policy and institutional frameworks need to be put in place to support the project activities
- Transparency, accountability, monitoring & evaluation must be built into the project.
- Clarity of objectives for the WRD and WUAs will drive the project in the right direction.
- A committed core group of WRD officials is required to spearhead the project.
- There should be a willingness on the part of WRD to delegate power to WUAs and a legal framework to support this.
- The project framework should be flexible and the provision for adaptation should be built in so that improvements, modifications can be made on the basis of experience and learning as the project progresses.
- Project planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation should be participatory. A number of technologies are available which facilitate participatory planning and monitoring of large projects.
- WRD should recognise the valuable knowledge and experience of the farmers. The State will not progress unless farmers progress and agricultural production increases. Farmers are unwilling to accept new things because scientists and engineers do not treat them as equals
- Capacity building needs to be emphasized and there should be joint training programs for WUAs and WRD.
- It is important to remember that farmers are willing to pay for water and energy that is actually used, for which proper monitoring is required.

Water management:

Water conservation and optimizing water use should be emphasised through training and technical inputs.

Empowerment of WUAs and participation in the project

- WUAs should be empowered to take their own decisions and manage their systems.
- The project must begin with greater involvement of farmers and WUAs with real authority to influence decisions.

- Farmers need to be convinced of the benefits of participation so that they contribute to the project and support the project implementation.
- Systemic incentives need to be created, the WUAs should have substantial stake in the resources.
- At the community level, a supportive social environment needs to be created to enable the WUAs to function effectively.
- The WUAs should be given technical training so that they can perform technical tasks like assessing the area irrigated, supervising O&M activities, taking technical decisions related to O&M etc.

WUA structure

- The WUAs need to be federated to enable participation and dialogue at a higher level in the WRD.
- Realignment of boundaries is required so that each WUA has a maximum irrigable area of 4000 acres.
- WUAs need to be made permanent bodies.
- The term of each elected member should be 6 years. One-third members should retire at the end of 2 years to enable induction of new people.
- There should be one WUA for one tank

Financial aspects

- WUAs need to become self sufficient financially. This is possible if WUAs generate more resources for actual O&M.
- The finances need to be in control of the farmers. Members of WUAs should know how the money and resources are to be utilized.
- If agricultural productivity improves and if returns are high from irrigated agriculture, then farmers will pay for the necessary inputs, including water. This will strengthen the WUAs financially.
- WUAs should be given 50% of the Water Tax.
- WUAs should have resources to hire expertise and access extension services and research support.

Equity

- The WUAs must represent all users, and should not be a select group.
- If the President of the WUA is from the head end then the Vice President should be from the tail end. Vice versa is also applicable.
- WUAs should have active women members; their membership should be encouraged.
- Equity concerns need to be built into the strategy for implementation - the "linkage" approach does not work.

3. Study Tour for senior WRD and GOCH officials: 16th to 20th August 2004

A study tour was organized for three officials, Mr S Minj, Principal Secretary, WRD, Mr N S Bhadoria, Engineer-in-Chief, WRD and Mr S K Sarkar, Chief Engineer, WRD. The main purpose of the study tour was to understand participatory processes and the role of community based institutions in water management. The tour included visits to Karnataka and Maharashtra. In Karnataka, the team met with senior WRD officials, and visited the World Bank funded community based tank management project. In Maharashtra, the team visited Ralegan Siddhi where they had discussions with Mr Hazare, and visited the participatory watershed management project. The team was led by the lead consultant Ganesh Pangare

The study tour helped the WRD officials to understand how donor or bank funded projects work, the concept of a PMU, the roles played by consultants and NGOs. Other learning included

- Awareness of various concepts like....integrated approach to tank rehabilitation
- Importance of leadership
- Interaction between various line departments involved in the program and their interaction with elected local level representative bodies
- Importance of training and whom to target for training etc.
- With proper training and capacity building and the right policy environment farmers are capable of managing irrigation systems on their own.
- The viability and sustainability of a farmer – managed scheme is dependent on the level of institutional capability of the WUA.
- It is very important to involve the farmers from the beginning of the planning process itself. This makes them feel empowered and ensures their support and cooperation in later stages.
- There is still a degree of resistance on the part of some government functionaries who feel threatened by the process of irrigation transfer management. Thus sensitization and reorientation of government line department staff is required.
- Other inputs like market facilities, crop planning and modern agricultural practices will also have to be incorporated into the activities of the WUAs.
- Present program is not just an engineering rehabilitation or physical works program, but also involves social engineering issues, and that farmers have to be at the center of all change.
- The assurance of getting the water whenever they required seems to be the best incentive for the farmers to manage the system and form WUAs.
- Political will is required for reforms and also to maintain the momentum.
- Multi-disciplinary approach and necessary support services to the department for implementing the program.

4. Development of policy documents

Several visits were made by the lead consultant, Ganesh Pangare to meet with the PPTA consultant, WRD and ADB in order to discuss and provide inputs in drafting the irrigation sector reform strategy, a strategic plan for WRD and revision of the PIM Act.

5. Results Dissemination Paper

The Results Dissemination Paper has been prepared which incorporates the learning from the PDA.