



NEERVALAM

FARMERS' NEWSLETTER

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Editorial

This is the first attempt made by farmers' organization in Tamil Nadu to bring out exclusive newsletter on water sector. The issue covers the noble activity of developing Farmers Network for Water sector reform in South India initiated by JalaSpandana-South India farmer's organization for water management based on the model of Pragathi-Farmers Society for Rural Studies & Development in Karnataka. The regular activity of Pragathi members interacting directly with the Government on water sector reform is being recognized by various institutions including International Network for Participatory Irrigation Management as an effective means in the political process of policy formulation and implementation. This recognition comes as boost to the farmers networking concept.

JalaSpandana is formed by farmers from Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu & Pondicherry to address various issues related to water with special emphasis on Participatory Irrigation Management. The organization is the outcome of the workshop "Farmers Organisation & Water Policy in South India" held on Feb 1st & 2nd, 2003 at NIRD, Hyderabad. JalaSpandana along with Pragathi with own resources organized two successful major workshops in April 2003 & Sept 2003 at Tamil Nadu and Karnataka respectively. In August 2003 a brief note highlighting the activities of Pragathi & JalaSpandana was brought to the notice of discussion group on PIM on E-Conference initiated by Mr. Raymond Peter, Executive Director, International Network on Participatory Irrigation Management, Washington D.C., America by R. Doraiswamy, Executive Director Pragathi & Convener JalaSpandana.

The discussions on Farmers Networking for Water sector Reform went on for several months and at the end of December 2003 the concept note prepared by R. Doraiswamy with the guidance of Dr. Peter P. Mollinga, Associate professor, Wageningen University, The Netherlands and constructive inputs from Mr. Raymond Peter. At present Dr. Peter P. Mollinga is a Senior Research Fellow 'Natural

NEERVALAM published by Tamilaga Velaan Neervalu Niruvanam, a non-profit NGO, formed by farmers of Tamil Nadu. This Newsletter is also supported by JalaSpandana. It is basically a platform for farmers' to share their experiences, views and perceptions related to rural development. We invite articles not exceeding 600 words. Authors are responsible for the contents in their article. We request you to become subscriber and propagate subscription among your circle.

Resources and Social Dynamics' ZEF (Centre for Development Research) Walter Flex Str. 3 D-53113 Bonn Germany

INPIM extended its assistance to 'Farmers Network for water sector reform in South India (FNWSR)' to take up activity in Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu & Karnataka. The project was launched successfully on 8th Jan 2004 at Bangalore in the presence of Executive Committee Members of JalaSpandana, Pragathi and Dr. Peter Mollinga. The total Budget for this project for one year is Rs. 16 lakhs.

Staff Selection for FNWSR

JalaSpandana made open advertisement for the post of State facilitators and Project Coordinator. The advertisement appeared in regional and English language in Andhra Pradesh (AP), Tamil Nadu (TN) & Karnataka (Kar), which received good response from three States. A Selection Committee of 5 members that comprise three farmers (Mr. Chanchu Ushanna - AP, Mrs. A.R. Sudhamani Kar, and K.G. Duraiswamy - TN), and two professionals Dr. Peter P. Mollinga and R. Doraiswamy interviewed the facilitators and selected. Farmers in the selection committee enabled to make right choice of the suitable candidates to work in the rural area with farming community.

JalaSpandana has established its regional offices in AP, Kar and TN exclusively to execute the FNWSR project. In AP, the office of JalaSpandana is established in the premises of the office of the SaciWATERS, Plot No. 70, Phase III, Kamalapuri Colony, Hyderabad and the State facilitator Mr. Srinivasulu Barigela operates from this office.

Similarly in Tamil Nadu, JalaSpandana has set up its office in the premises of the office of the Lower Bhavani Farmers Federation, No. 49-A, Sakthi Complex, Abirami Theatre Opposite lane, Erode-638011, Tamil Nadu and the State facilitator Mr. K. Thachinamurthy operates from this Office.. In Karnataka, Pragathis' existing activity of farmers network for water sector reforms in the State is supported to continue and strengthen the farmers network. Pragathi, No: 72, 7th cross, C.T. Street, Vasanth Nagar, Bangalore - 560 052

Participatory Irrigation Management in Tamil Nadu

The formation of water users association (WUA) was taken up with full vigour and these WUAs were registered under Tamil Nadu Societies Registration Act of 1975, as non-profit and service oriented organizations. In order to ensure more representation of the farmers in the WUAs 'Tamil Nadu Farmers' Management of Irrigation Systems (TNFMIS) Act' was enacted under which the farmers organization will be constituted in three tiers namely 1) Water Users Associations at distributary level, 2) Distributary Committee comprising a number of Water Users' Associations and 3) Project Committee at Project Level comprising a number of Distributary Committees.

The elections to WUAs are being conducted in phases focusing primarily in 19 districts where Water Resource Consolidation Project (WRCP) activities implemented. The first phase of elections are held during January and February 2004 (see table 2). The second phase that was due in April is postponed due to parliament elections. The exercise to form fresh and reconstitute existing WUAs in non-WRCP area is also under vogue.

The field research undertaken by JalaSpandana under FNWSR project shows that water users in TN welcome the commitment of the State department in forming the WUAs. In some parts of the State where WUAs are formed, farmers express that the policy is not discussed in detail and the elections were held in haste. The interested and committed water users lost opportunity to enter into WUAs due to land title deed being in ancestors name & there was no sufficient time to set right these lacunae's. The most frequently asked question is" why the Government hold elections to WUAs in such a hasty manner"?

The structure and functions of WUAs for tank systems has caused inconvenience among the villagers who treat the tank as village property. The standardized rule of 500-750 hectares for forming the tank association has lead confusions over the tank control. There are instances where three to four tanks have been clubbed to form one association. Farmers feel there is a need to reconstitute the tank associations and form one association for each tank irrespective of tank size. Thus, farmers say that there is a need for Farmers organization at State level to discuss water policy and its implementation.

Participatory Irrigation Management Yatra

JalaSpandana, along with regional organizations will be organizing a PIM Yatra series of meetings with officials working on PIM and farmers in AP, Kar and TN to learn and facilitate farmers to initiate discussions for the effective PIM programmes in these States. Mr. Raymond Peter, ED, INPIM participated all through the PIM Yatra starting from Chennai to Dowaleshwaram. The following are the details of the programme.

4th April 2004, Interaction with officers of Govt. of TN in Chennai

5th April 2004, Workshop 'Water and Farmers Network' in Erode, TN

6th April 2004, Workshop 'Water and Farmers Network' in Bangalore, (Organised by JalaSpandana and Pragathi)

7th April 2004, Interaction with officers of GOAP, Hyderabad

8th April 2004, Workshop 'Water and Farmers Network' in Hyderabad, (Organised by JalaSpandana and WALAMTARI)

9th April 2004, Workshop 'Water and Farmers Network' in Dowleshwaram, Rajahmundry, AP

04.04.04 Discussions with Officials of Water Resources Organisation (WRO) at Chennai.

The interactions with the authority in charge on Farmers Organisation and Turnover (FOT) Dr. Elumalai reveals that the state is making efforts to promote farmers participation in water management through formation of WUAs as envisaged in Water Resource Consolidation Project (WRCP). Dr. Elumalai confirms the secondary data obtained by

JalaSpandana on the progress of formation of WUAs in the State. The discussion shows that the processes of holding elections were implemented with the involvement of WRO and Revenue Department.

Water and Farmer Network in PIM - workshop at Erode:

Preparative works for the farmer's workshop:

The list of 130 farmers from 14 districts covering water bodies like major irrigation systems, tanks, rain fed and lift irrigation were prepared based on the fieldwork carried out in the State. These farmers were kept informed about the workshop agenda and the methodology of farmer's presentation, discussion and resolution.

A curtain raiser on the workshop was released to Press highlighting the workshop details. The same was carried by Dinamani a Tamil daily newspaper. Banners regarding the workshop were printed and displayed.

Proceedings of the Workshop:

On 5th April 04, Farmers workshop 'Water and Farmers Network in PIM' was organised by JalaSpandana at Hotel Oxford, Erode, Tamil Nadu. The identified speakers mostly farmers presented the paper, followed by group discussion. The programme of the workshop is as follows



Mr. Raymond Peter inaugurates the workshop

The workshop inauguration commenced at 10 am by Mr. Thachinamurthy (TN facilitator) welcome speech in which he briefed the preparatory exercise undertaken for the workshop and he acted as the comparer for entire event of the workshop.

Mr. Raymond Peter, Executive Director of INPIM inaugurated the workshop symbolically through lighting the lamp (Kuthuvilakku) followed by Mr.

Ramaswamy, President, JalaSpandana, Mr. Velumayil, Joint Secretary, JalaSpandana, Mr. Balachander, president, WUA, PAP project and Mr. Muthukumarasamy, farmer from tank system.

Mr. A. Ramasamy in his keynote address emphasised the departments' attitude in supporting the WUAs and stressed the need for farmer's network that can keep a vigil on the developments of PIM in the State. He also briefed the emergence and success of JalaSpandana in conducting various farmers workshop on water and interacting with concerned Ministers in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. Mr. Raymond Peter, in Guest speech mentioned the global trends on PIM by illustrating examples like Mexico, Philippines, Australia and Vietnam. He emphasised on the growing concern for farmers network in foreign countries and cited example of farmers network in Nepal.

The workshop inauguration was followed by business session of presenting the papers followed by group discussion. In order to facilitate the healthy discussion among the participants the seating arrangements were changed to roundtable in which participants could interact each other effectively.

Paper 1.

'Water Policy and PIM Act in the State' K. Vadivelu, Secretary Lower Bhavani Project farmer's federation, Erode.

In his presentation explained the process in which the farmers learnt the PIM policy in the workshop organised by Government of Andhra Pradesh at NIRD, Hyderabad in 1998. Initially it was the group of farmers from Tamil Nadu picked up the APFMIS Act Of 1997 and presented before the then Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu and urged for similar policy in the State. The government of Tamil Nadu passed an exclusive Act called TNFMIS Act of 2000, which followed the footprints of Andhra Pradesh original Act. The necessary rules and regulations required to ground the Act was framed and passed in 2002. The rules and regulation is called as TNFMIS rules 2002.

Mr. Vadivelu narrated the process in which the water users councils were formed under CADA programme few years ago and the attempts by the State department to reconstitute these water councils under the framework of new Act. He mentioned that the policies are not fully discussed with the farmers while

enacting and implementing. He stressed that there are several models of PIM available in India and farmers should be aware of all these models. The success of the PIM lies in the level of farmer's participation. He also urged the need for farmers to start working on the policy issues, for example, afforestation, ground water governance, interlinking of rivers, watershed management, tank restoration programme, etc.

Paper 2

'PIM and its Implementation Processes in TN' Mr. AVS. Velumayil, Secretary, Peikulam Tank WUA, Tuticorn.

Mr. AVS. Velumayil highlighted the formation of WUAs in the State over the years and also explained the traditional tank institutions in the State. He cited example of his tank association, which is effectively functioning in term of water management and other agriculture related issues for last 135 years. With regard to the implementation of TNFMIS Act of 2000, he listed out the improper way of holding elections for WUAs. Some of them being the time frame of the entire process of holding elections for WUAs, more number of associations for one tank, lack of dissemination of information on new Act to the farmers etc.

Paper 3

'Farmers Network in strengthening PIM in the State'
Mr. K. Balachandar, President, WUA, PAP

Mr. K. Balachandar emphasised the use and misuse of PIM by the State mercenaries for the benefit of gaining political mileage. He highlighted the importance of farmer's participation in water management in the backdrop of sufferings faced by farming community in getting water for Irrigation. He quoted an example of Mr. Raymond Peter's appeal to the farmers of Andhra Pradesh by saying that the government by formulating APFMIS Act of 1997 is coming down to hand over the management of irrigation systems to farmers and it is now the turn of farmers to rise and take the management in their control.

He expressed that the formation of WUAs could be for several reasons, one note worthy of it is to satisfy the donor agencies. As in the case of Andhra Pradesh, though project committee was envisaged in the APFMIS Act 1997, the government did not form the

project committee. Thus, he urged it is the responsibility of farmers to form network for water sector reform to keep a close watch on the PIM policy and its implementation in the State. He stressed that the lack of State organisations of farmers for water management would lead PIM programme to the whims and fancies of the department officials.



Group discussion during the Workshop

Paper 4

'State Farmers Organization for water Management independent of JalaSpandana' Mr. R. Doraiswamy, Coordinator, JalaSpandana.

Mr. R. Doraiswamy explained the myth of participatory process adopted in the present trend of participatory resource management where there is hardly any involvement of users in policy formulation and implementation. He narrated the background of the emergence of Pragathi A Farmers Society for Rural Studies and Development, Bangalore and the successful interaction between its members (water users) and the concerned Ministers in the Government. The organisation gained appreciation by the Minister and others professionals for producing workable feedback. Water being State subject and with the back drop of several complexities of water in these States including unresolved water disputes, he listed out the merits of having independent State organisation and the demerits of JalaSpandana a South India Farmer's Network working on State issues.

'Newsletter for Water Management: Need and Practicalities' Mr. M. Chenniappan, Vice president of Lower Bhavani Project Farmers Federation, Erode.

Mr. M. Chenniappan sharing his vast valuable

knowledge on the publication of Newsletter enlisted the basic requirements like the importance of subject matter and commitment from the members to publish Newsletter regularly. He mentioned that the newsletter is one of the effective tools in negotiating knowledge system from afar. He cited the role of Newsletters used by Mahatma Gandhi in bringing awareness during the freedom struggle. The clarity on the issues like, target group, subscribers, committee and Editorial board solves great amount of problems that may emerge during later days. The procedures to register the Newsletter at Indian News Registration (INR) New Delhi to get the title deed, concessions on the stamps and get wider recognition, which are foundations for the sustainable publications of Newsletter. The daily news papers bring out the current news on various issues, an exclusive Newsletter focused on any particular issue, in this case water will enable to go into the details of the issues that are grave concern of the farming community. One another advantage of the Newsletter as an effective tool is that it keeps the members, subscribers and the organisation in integrity. Thus, he appealed the members to commit sincerely in producing the Newsletter, which will help the farming community.

Workshop Resolutions

After the papers presentation by the respective speakers the detailed discussions took place, which enabled all the participants to express their views and perceptions on the subject. The discussions in all the sessions was very encouraging for the workshop. The following resolutions were derived after the consistent arguments over the pros and cons of the points during the discussions.

The Govt. ought to workout a water policy involving farmers that ensures the secured water resources for agriculture sector with the backdrop of growing demand for water from various sectors that deprive the water for the agriculture. This in turn has a direct bearing on the employment and food security of farming community.

This workshop feels that there is need for some changes in terms of structure and function of users institutions to be brought in the present TNFMIS Act and its implementation processes. The participants urged JalaSpandana to organise a state level farmers

workshop on TNFMIS Act and which rules and regulations. Further, they stressed the need for taking farmers in the committees that are set up by the Govt. to formulate the water policy by which the gap between the potential created and realised is narrowed down.

'Main system management by the farmers' is another important issue that needs detail discussion from the policy perspective.

The participants appeal for a wider circulation of PIM documents in regional language with pictorial descriptions.

The training programmes for capacity building of the farmers for water management through users institutions should be organised at district level and cater to wider to large farming population.

The general belief among the participants from non-WRCP area is that the implementation of PIM in the State is confined to WRCP area. They suggest that the PIM programme should be adopted and implemented through out the State. Further, they demand an interactive workshop with the government officers and representatives of WUAs in non-WRCP areas.

The participants welcome the initiatives and the efforts taken up by the government in formation of WUAs through conducting elections for 1575 WUAs in parts of 19 districts where WRCP programme is implemented. However there is a need for evolving effective strategy in consultation with the water users in conducting elections. The present mode of elections was in haste, which led to poor participation of the farmers.

In the wake of increasing water scarcity, this workshop recommend the Government to promote and strengthen the water conservation technologies like tanks, watersheds, Check dams, Farm ponds, roof top harvesting etc. In addition the modern water saving technologies like sprinkler and drip Irrigation methods should be encouraged through government support.

The workshop appealed the Urban and Industries to make economical and judicious use to preserve water for Irrigation.

This workshop after detail discussions felt the need for State organisation of farmers to work on water and rural development. The workshop decided to form the

farmer's organisation in Tamil Nadu. The name of the organisation is "Tamilaga Velaan Neervalu Niruvanam (TVNN)" meaning Tamil Nadu Farmers Institute for Water Resources. The 11 members executive committee of the organisation was democratically and unanimously elected with representation to various districts participated in the workshop. Further, the participants finalized fee structure and other status. The life membership fee is Rs. 250/-. The Newsletter for the Organisation finalised in the name of "NEERVALAM".

The following are the list of Executive committee members of TVNN

Name & District Post

AVS. Velumayil, Tuticorin. - President
 R. Eswaramoorthy, Erode - Vice President
 Baby Kalvirayan, Villupuram - Vice President
 K. Balachandar, Coimbatore - Secretary
 M. Samidurai, Thiruvannamalai - Joint Secretary
 E. Krishnan, Thiruvallur - Joint Secretary
 D. Muthukumarasamy, Thiruvannamalai-Treasurer
 R. Narayanasamy, Vellore - E. Committee
 M. Murugan, Madurai - E. Committee
 M.K. Karuppaiah, Pudukkottai - E. Committee
 P.V. Paranthaman, Erode - E. Committee

WATER & FARMER

As mentioned in the tour plan, the State level farmer's workshop 'Water and Farmer' was held on 8th April 04, at WALAMTARI, Hyderabad. The major out come of

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the workshop are formation of State farmers organization for water sector called "Andhra Pradesh JalaSpandana" and publication of Newsletter titled 'JalaVani' meaning Water Herald.

PIM in Karnataka

Karnataka is moving one step ahead in PIM by forming project level users institutions and handing over the water management including the decision making on the opening and closing the gates of the canal for irrigation, drinking and eco-system. The system of volumetric supply, fixing and collection of water charges is in practice. The memorandum of Understanding between WUAs and Water Resource Department is signed for maintenance as well as water management (mentioning the quantum of water and the water charges and other conditions). So far two project level federations are formed in the State and third is one almost ready for the registration they are Malaprabha, Ghataprabha (Krishna Basin) and Harangi (Cauvery Basin) projects respectively. Pragathi- Farmers Society for Rural Studies and Development, Bangalore is working on water sector reform in the State.

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