



RAITHA PRAGATHI

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Editorial

This 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 result of the detailed 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 in E-mail initiated by Mr. J. Raymond Peter, I.A.S, 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 by Mr. J. Raymond Peter. At present Dr. Peter P. Mollinga is a Senior Research

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RAITHA PRAGATHI is published by Pragathi - Farmer's Society for Rural Studies and Development, Bangalore a non-profit NGO. It is basically a platform for farmer's 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.

INPIM extended its assistance to 'Farmers Network for water sector reform in South India' to take up activity in Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu (Pondicherry) & 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.

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 (One each from AP, Kar & TN- Mr. Chanchu Ushanna, Mrs. A.R. Sudhamani and K.G. Duraiswamy), and two professionals namely Dr. Peter P. Mollinga and R. Doraiswamy interviewed and selected facilitators. Farmers in the selection committee could make right choice of the candidates suitable to work in the rural area with farming community.

JalaSpandana has established its project 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, Near K.G. Hospital, Mettur Road, Erode-638011, Tamil Nadu. In Karnataka, Pragathis' existing activity of farmers network for water sector reforms in the State is supported to continue and strengthen. Pragathi, 72, 7th Cross, C.T. Street, Vasanthnagar, Bangalore-560052.

PIM in Karnataka

The actual empowerment of Water Users Cooperative Societies (WUCs) in Karnataka with Legislative Back up came in the year 2000. The State amended its Karnataka Irrigation Act of 1965, making provisions for users institutions at various levels of irrigation system namely WUCs at primary, distributary and project level federations and Apex body at State level. The WUAs in Karnataka are registered under Cooperative Act and this called as WUCs.

The WUCs are empowered to decide on the cropping pattern, fix and collect water charges based on the volumetric supply and conflict resolution. The WUCs are entrusted the task of carrying out Maintenance work and Water Management through formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Irrigation Department and WUCs. In addition, the WUCs were given other rural development works like laying roads to farm lands called as Our road our farms '*Namma Holla Namma Rasthe*'. WUCs are also encouraged to take up other income generating activities like fertilizers and pesticides dealings, and other agri inputs. Under Major and Medium Irrigation Systems, there are more than 2000 WUCs.

The State has formed water users institutions at project level in two major irrigation systems namely Malaprabha and Ghataprabha irrigation systems in Krishna Basin in North Karnataka and third one is almost ready for registration in Harangi Irrigation System, Cauvery Basin. The authority to release the water rests with project level users institution.

State has made subsequent amendment to Irrigation Act and enable tank restoration programme to be implemented in convenient manner that villagers think is deemed fit. The tank restoration programme is entrusted to four types of users

institutions like Gram Panchayat, Gram Panchayat sub committee, Gram Sabha and Village level tank users society registered under Karnataka Societies Registration Act. JalaSamwardhana Sangha has target of 2005 tanks in 9 districts and 34 taluks in Karnataka. Similarly the watershed project called Sujala Watershed Project assisted by World Bank is also executed similar to that of JSYS.

PIM in Andhra Pradesh

The Andhra Pradesh Farmers Management of Irrigation System Act of 1997 has undergone considerable reform processes in the span of six years. The major attention in the reform process in this Act is given to Institutional aspect i.e. the structure and functions of users institutions with more emphasis on its tenure of office. As per the APFMIS Act of 1997, initially the tenure of office was for three years, which was extended to five years. Later, the tenure of office was extended to six years. After the completion of first term of office of WUAs, there was a gap of 18 months. The Government of Andhra Pradesh with held elections for WUAs in the entire and WUAs were not even given the caretaker powers to carry out the activities of the WUAs. In the meantime the informal farmers organizations in the State made representations to the Government to hold elections or give them caretaker powers, as the response to PIM at field level was picking up and there was demand for WUAs.

The Government of Andhra Pradesh further brought an amendment to APFMIS Act of 1997, which again focus on the institutional aspect. In this attempt WUAs was seen as the permanent institution one like that of Rajya Sabha model in the central parliament in which the term of office of members are fixed and each elected representatives will move out of executive committee of WUAs and new members come into executive committee of WUAs.

The mode of elections for the president is changed from direct elections to indirect elections meaning that the representatives of territorial constituency (normally referred as TC members) are directly elected by the land holders coming under the purview of members and they in turn elect president once in two years. The term of office for TC members as per the latest amendment is two, four

and six years, with this the users institution, become permanent institution.

The Government of Andhra Pradesh with these reforms conducted elections for WUAs in October 2003 in 13 districts namely Srikakulam, Vizayanagaram, Vishakapatnam, East Godavari, West Godavari, Chittoor, Mahabubnagar, RangaReddy, Medak, Nizamabad, Warangal, Karimnagar, and Adhilabad. Major part of these 13 districts comes under the Godavari Basin. It is presumed that the reason for not conducting election in other parts of the State is the water scarcity issue turning out to be drought like situation. The District highest authority i.e. District collector was given the task of conducting elections.

In these 13 districts, out of 6237 WUAs notified with 43830 TC members under Major, Medium and Minor Irrigation Projects, elections were conducted for 6107 WUAs for 43110 TC members. In these territorial constituencies the results were announced for 42224. Among which 31710 territorial constituencies the elections were unanimous. In 13 districts in which elections are conducted, there are 634 WUAs under Major projects, 232 WUAs under Medium projects and 5171 WUAs under Minor projects. Actually the elections would have been conducted for 6237, but the elections were conducted for 6107. Due to technical problems the elections were not conducted for rest of the WUAs.

The elections for Presidents of WUAs of 6045 were unanimous. Among which 599 are under major projects, 169 are under medium projects and 4109 are under minor projects. The total unanimously elected presidents are 4969 [82 percent].

The interaction with the Water Users in both areas where elections are already held and in areas yet to be held reveals that there is a need for Farmers Network all over the State to review the APFMIS Act of 1997 & its subsequent Amendments & implementation. Some of the issues that need immediate attention both at the Policy level as well as ground level are the tenure of WUAs representatives, volumetric supply & pricing, mechanism of fixing & collection of water charges and maintenance.

PIM in Tamil Nadu

The formation of water users association was taken up with full vigor 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 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 water users associations. 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 water users associations 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 feel that there is a need for Farmers organization at State level to discuss water policy and its implementation.

Organic Farming

Pragathi organized an excursion to Vasundhara Farms to study practically the practices of organic farming, drip irrigation, vermiculture and bio-fertiliser adopted by farmer Smt. Sumangalla Veerabhadrappa family. Pragathi strongly believes in the approach of 'Farmer to Farmer technology transfer' as an effective tool in bringing perceptible change in agriculture and management of natural resources. This farm, which is about 80 acres is the practical demonstration of how the scarce water can be effectively utilized. The farm owners explained the techniques adopted in their farming and the speciality of the farm is that all the droppings from the plants and trees is put at the bottom of the trees and made to rot with the help of the drip. Farmers from different districts of Karnataka participated in the programme and expressed this farm could be the best model agriculture institution that can educate farmers on how to conserve soil and water for better future of farming community.

Participatory Irrigation Management Yatra

JalaSpandana, along with regional organizations and State governments institutions organised PIM yatra – a 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. J. Raymond Peter, participated all through the PIM yatra starting from Chennai to Dowleshwaram. The following are the details of the programme.

4th April 2004, Interaction with officers of GOTN 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 (arranged by ID, GOAP and organized by JalaSpandana).

Information Communication Technology

Pragathi has successfully completed the task entrusted by Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore

to prepare the CD in bilingual i.e. Kannada and English to disseminate information on the Malaprabha Irrigation System. The idea of making information available to various stake holders in water sector mainly farmers is the initiative of Prof N.J. Rao, Chairman, Department of Management Studies, IISc, Bangalore. The exercise is to bridge the gap in the knowledge system on the irrigation system, which is essential to reap the benefits of the project more productively than now. The CD consists of information on Malaprabha like history, hydraulic particulars of the project, rainfall, evaporation, water release data from reservoir over the years, national and state water policy, participatory irrigation management, water users associations, malaprabha water users association federation, articles related to irrigation, etc. These information will be uploaded in the website www.malaprabha.org for general public with supporting software to access both in English and Kannada.

Nominations to Karnataka Pradesh Krishika Samaja

Sri. H.K. Patil, Hon'ble Minister for Agriculture, GOK has identified the commitment of the executive members of Pragathi in water sector and rural development activity both at policy and field level has nominated Mrs. A.R. Sudhamani (Secretary, Pragathi and JalaSpandana) and Mr. S.M. Patil (Hon. Chairman of Pragathi and EC member of JalaSpandana) as director of Karnataka Pradeshha Krishika Samaja (KPKS).

KPKS is a Karnataka Agriculturists Society for which the chairperson is the Minister for Agriculture, GOK. The objective is to evolve effective agriculture policy with the involvement of farmers from different pockets of the State.

In addition, Water and Land Management Institute, Dharwad is also making use of the services of Pragathi member in providing training programmes to disseminate information on PIM programme in the State. Pragathi welcomes the government move to nominate and make use of the rich experience of Pragathi members in water and rural development issues. Pragathi congratulates Mrs. A.R. Sudhamani and Mr. S.M. Patil.



Mrs. A.R. Sudhamani

Book published

'The politics of Irrigation Reform - contested policy formulation and implementation in Asia, Africa and Latin America' edited by Peter P Mollinga and Alex Bolding is published by Ashgate publishers, England. The book takes a 'look inside' the process of irrigation reform occurring in different parts of the world. These reforms involve the devolution of management functions from government agencies to water users groups and the institutional and financial reform of irrigation agencies. The eight chapter in this book *'Capture and Transformation: Participatory Irrigation Management in Andhra Pradesh, India'* by Peter Mollinga, R. Doraiswamy and Kim Engbersen deals with the irrigation policy reform in Andhra Pradesh. The study was conducted in Tungabhadra Right Bank Low Level Canal System in Andhra Pradesh.

Seminar Announcement on PIM

The Seventh International Seminar on Participatory Irrigation Management, sponsored by the Ministry of Agriculture and Food and the World Bank and organized by INPIM and the Project Management Unit (SIDRP), will be held in Tirana, Albania from June 13-18, 2004. The theme of this seminar is "Enabling Environment for Productive and Sustainable Water Users Associations" and will highlight the diverse experiences of the host country of Albania, other nations in the Eastern European and Central Asian region, as well as

select nations with best practices in water user association sustainability through out the world. The seminar offers opportunity to learn about the latest developments in irrigation reform; network with irrigation professionals, policy makers, and donors from around the world; and see first hand Albania's approach to improving irrigation services.
Source: INPIM Newsletter No.13

Table 2 shows details of the elections to WUAs.

District	District wise details of coverage of Elections			
	WUAs	Villages	TCs	Command (ha)
Chennai region				
Kanchipuram	276	306	1218	47905
Tiruvallur	21	39	102	4248
Vellore	229	391	1022	33472
Dharmapuri	47	159	256	15791
Tiruvannamalai	154	387	734	30753
Villupuram	80	233	381	22461
Cuddalore	78	313	430	25094
Sub Total	885	1828	4143	179724
Madurai region				
Pudukkottai	1	1	4	84
Dindigul	17	34	81	4637
Madurai	56	433	337	72563
Theni	32	65	176	11824
Virudhunagar	9	35	53	7197
Ramanathapuram	69	218	369	21577
Sivagangai	82	246	402	34034
Thuthukudi	66	152	317	16401
Tirunelveli	162	536	793	65685
Kanyakumari	46	158	285	25955
Sub Total	540	1878	2817	259957
Pollachi region				
Erode	49	135	288	49993
Coimbatore	101	507	603	119887
Sub Total	150	642	891	169880
Grand Total	1575	4348	7851	609561

T.C: Territorial constituencies.

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The following table shows the details of the elections for WUAs held in 13 districts of Andhra Pradesh during Oct 2003.

Water Users Associations						Territorial Constituencies elections						
District	Major Project	Medium Project	Minor Project	Total	Postponed	Elections Conducted WUAs	Elections Conducted T.Cs	Postponed T.Cs	Unanimous T.Cs	R	U	Elect ed Per centa ge
Chittoor	0	10	582	592	25	567	3612	3462	172	3290	2983	91
West Godavari	131	19	226	367	0	367	3048	3048	63	2985	2773	93
Vizayanagara	0	53	444	497	14	483	3312	3228	46	3182	2799	88
Srikakulam	100	6	416	522	11	511	3768	3702	3	3699	3003	81
Adilabad	33	38	260	331	3	328	2412	2394	18	2376	1782	75
Mahabubnagar	39	5	535	579	29	550	3738	3564	160	3404	2467	72
East Godavari	182	17	211	410	5	405	3654	3600	121	3479	2630	76
Warangal	85	22	658	765	10	755	5232	5280	144	5136	2602	51
Nizamabad	85	16	279	380	6	374	2886	2850	20	2830	2267	80
Karimnagar	163	18	495	676	6	670	5142	5094	31	5063	3891	77
Medak	0	14	550	564	13	551	3468	3378	24	3354	2098	63
Ranga Reddy	0	5	184	189	1	188	1164	1158	16	1142	708	62
Visakapatnam	16	18	331	365	7	358	2394	2352	68	2284	1707	75
Total	834	232	5171	6237	130	6107	43830	43110	886	42224	31710	75

Source: Saagu Neeti Sangham, issue 5 of Volume 5-6, 2004

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