PIM Concept

Issues and Challenges

Dr. Jasveen Jairath, Hyderabad

Consultation on Water Rights, Equity and Water Law Reforms in India, 19 April 2008, organised by the International Environmental Law Research Centre (IELRC)
Historical Overview

- **Mid – 70s**  Canal Irrigation Reform  user participation at outlet level for water sharing, O&M and Conflict Resolution
- **Mid – 80s**  Experimentation with pilot WUAs – Gujarat, Maharashtra with supported though Ford Foundation, USAID etc
- **Early – 90s**  Handing over smaller and sub-systems to Farmers.
- **From 1997**  Donor funded state level restructuring APFMIS Act of 1997 – Big Bang Approach
WHY PIM?

- Irrigated agriculture → 70% of water consumption
- Post Independence Investments under Plans
  Surface Irrigation Projects
  23 million ha                               72 million ha
  1952-53                                        1996-97

Problems that Emerged are:
1. Difficult to O&M
2. Poor Cost Recovery
3. Poor utilisation of potential
4. Low efficiencies of water use
5. Low productivity
Desperation to deal with problem of poor performance of large scale public irrigation projects due to

- Population Pressure
- Food demands etc.

The institutional crisis –

Poor water distribution systems
Through dilapidated canal networks leading to head/tail and small/big farmer inequities.
PIM is a response to those problems.

**Objectives**
- Cost Recovery
- Increase Water Efficiency
- Physical Rehabilitation

**Through**

Decentralised management by Participation of users.

Equity was not a major motivation

User responsibility cum authority at various levels

Variety of managerial options –

Maharashtra / Gujarat - bottom up - in Andhra Pradesh it is top down.
Degree of Success and Gender Mainstreaming

- Small scale WUAs established through intensive NGO input in Maharashtra and Gujarat are still functional but only about 200 in each state.

- By end of 9th plan in 2002 over 37mha of irrigation potential created – not even 1% is under PIM/IMT through all large scale efforts.

- PIM in AP – reversal of control by bureaucracy
  - Witnessed a financially inspired participation till funds lasted
Gender Concerns

- Remarkable instances of women taking the lead in WUAs, however as isolated examples.

- Land based WUA membership – excluded women by and large
- Examples worth emulating
  - ASA from MP – Full voting rights to spouse in WUA
  - Women Sub-committees
- ASA – WUA strategy included
  - Capacity building for Women
  - Gender Sensitization for Men
- MP amended its act to give full voting rights to spouse
- In MP 98 women elected as presidents and 830 as members of WUAs (in Sample study area) but were not active as group members.
- Social and Practical barriers to their participation that requires Pro-active intervention.
- Role of NGOs critical for encouraging Gender Mainstreaming
Two Concepts of PIM

1. Managerial/Bureaucratic
   - Division of labour – “Involvement” as distinct from “Participation” of Users
   - Coordination between separate divisions
     - Efficiency overtakes Equity
   - Drawbacks
     - Land Based – Gender Exclusive
       - Agency Based
     - Isolated Irrigation Input
     - Rules of water allocation violated
     - Apolitical and top down
2. Reorient Governance based on Rights Approach
   - Based on equity (Gender and Class)
   - Water requirement derives from Social needs.
   - Planning – Creation – Distribution and Consumption of water are in response to these needs.

■ Advantages
   - Integrated
   - Rules of allocation are socially sanctioned ∴ sustainable
   - State meets users on a common platform for shared responsibility
   - Politically nuanced approach as water is contentious issue

■ Essentials
   - Social mobilisation
   - Transparency
   - Negotiated Struggle
Plugging the Holes - Key Challenges

- Pilots → Scaling up
- Iterative
- Advocacy for Water Rights
- Campaign for good governance → Struggle with Bureaucracy
- Main System Management – Assure Water Supply at outlet.
- Gender Mainstreaming – Critical for Socially Inclusive PIM
- Empowerment of WUAs because social differentiation/power relations/discrimination reproduce within WUAs
- Inculcate Culture of Grass Root Democratization
Practical Suggestions

- Local Buffers
- Water for Tail before Head
- Crops to be limited by Water → Liaise with Agriculture Policy / Department
- Proactive efforts to encourage women as decision makers while planning for water.