

**EVALUATION REPORT ON POCHAMPAD
IRRIGATION PROJECT (1980-82) - 1983**

1. The Study

In 1963, the Government of Andhra Pradesh cleared an irrigation project which, in its revised form, envisaged to construct a 125 ft. high dam across Godavari at Pochampad, a dam across river Manair and a 197 kms. long right bank canal on the southern side, and, to irrigate 2.64 lakh hectares of land in Nizamabad and Karimnagar districts. In view of the resource constraints, the State Government concluded a 'Credit Agreement' with the International Development Association (IDA) whereby the former was to receive, subject to certain conditions, a loan of Rs.29.3 crores over a period of five years (1971-76). At the instance of the Ministry of Finance, the Programme Evaluation Organisation undertook an evaluation study of the Pochampad Irrigation Project in 1980-81. The study report was published in 1983.

2. Objectives

- i) To study the financial aid available from the IDA, the terms of agreement, the award of contracts including organisational and management aspects;
- ii) To study the implementation of various systems and methods stipulated in the agreement for the disbursement of credit, adequacy and timeliness of Aid, its role in the completion of the project;
- iii) To study the cost and time over-run in the completion of work envisaged including the irrigation potential created and its utilization;
- iv) To study the agricultural support programmes for effective utilization of the irrigation potential created and its impact on the cropping pattern, yield, level of income, employment and assets formation; and
- v) To study the arrangements for monitoring the implementation of the project.

3. Sample Size/Criteria for Selection of Sample

Information was collected at three levels-the project, the canal minors and the beneficiaries - by employing the survey method. The study area was divided into two zones. Zone-I included irrigated dry (ID) as well as wet areas while zone-II comprised mainly of ID areas. Within these zones, a three stage sampling design was employed with minors as the first stage, outlets/pipes for irrigation as the second stage and the beneficiaries of the project (cultivation) as the third stage. Three out of the four selected minors were from zone-I and the remaining one from zone-II. From each of the selected minors, two outlets were chosen. A sample of ten beneficiaries was selected from each chosen outlet. Thus the multi-stage sampling procedure resulted in a final sample of four minors, eight outlets and 80 respondents.

4. Reference Period

The field work was conducted during December, 1980 to January, 1981. The data analysed in the report related to the period 1970-71 to 1982-83.

5. Main Findings

1. The project cost which had been estimated at Rs. 55.33 crores at the time of the IDA agreement was revised to Rs.84.47 crores in 1974 due to escalation of cost. It was envisaged that the IDA aid would cover 53% of the total cost of the various items of work. However, due to the revision in cost, the aid could cover only 33% of the total expenditure. The disbursement schedule was strictly adhered to by the IDA.

2. The target of raising the dam to an elevation of 334 metres and the spillway crest to 318.50 metres was achieved. The live storage capacity of 9.243 TMC was also created.

3. The completion of the earth excavation and building of structures for the first 113 kms of the South canal got delayed due to the shortage of explosives. The lining of the main canal was delayed by 2 years, the construction of the branch and distributory canals and minors by 6 years and the construction of internal village roads by 6 years. The delays at various levels resulted in considerable gap between the created irrigation potential and its actual utilisation. The actual availability of water was delayed by 7 years.

4. The State Government, by and large, conformed to the recommendations of the IDA regarding the constitution of various committees to facilitate co-ordination and implementation of the Project. Despite these arrangements, there were slippages in respect of procurement of various inputs. This resulted in considerable time and cost over-run.

5. There was general reluctance on the part of the farmers to take up in advance land development works. This was, to an extent, on account of their ignorance of its utility, the size and location of their holdings and inadequate credit facilities.

6. The Warabandi system introduced in 1979 was a great boon to the farmers in the command area.

7. The maintenance of the water distribution system and field channels was seriously neglected.

8. The authorities introduced localisation of crops in the project area to ensure maximum crop production per unit of water. However, it was not being strictly enforced. There was constant pressure from the farmers for relocalisation of crops.

9. The release of canal water resulted in tangible changes in the cropping pattern, particularly in favour of paddy. The selected beneficiaries in 3 out of 4 selected villages reported that the availability of water had helped them to completely switch over to irrigated cereal crops. The area under pulses and commercial crops expanded at the expense of the area under unirrigated cereal crops. The high yielding varieties of paddy and maize gained ground compared to other crops. Maize was grown as a mixed crop with turmeric during kharif.

10. Recovery of short-term loans showed a declining trend. The T&V system introduced in the command area functioned in a routine manner.

11. The cropping intensity increased in 3 out of the 4 villages varying from 24% to 58%. The increase in the yield rate was more encouraging in kharif for all crops except pulses.

12. There was an overall increase in the income of all size-groups in the range of 36 to 45%. The highest increase of 45% was recorded for holdings upto 1 hectare. Nearly 34% of the selected households reported acquisition of assets on account of increase in their income. A few households purchased radio furniture, watches, etc.

6. Major Suggestions

1. It is imperative for the Project to apply the modern management techniques in order to plan the most efficient use of resources.

2. Besides energising the extension machinery, land development should be made compulsory through legislation and the work may be entrusted to the Agro-Industries Corporation.

3. The Pipe Committees formed for distribution of water and maintenance of channels may be made more effective with the active participation of the official machinery.

4. There is a need for improving the natural drainage system to prevent water-logging and salinity in low-lying areas. Systematic and regular monitoring of the level of ground water is equally essential.

5. Provision of adequate funds for proper maintenance of the water distribution system must be ensured. The Engineering Wing of the CADA may be assigned the task of maintaining the field channels. The expenditure incurred thereon may be realised from the farmers along with the collection of land revenue.

6. The role of the Village Extension Officer should be that of a catalytic agent in all the activities relating to the agricultural operations including water management, Warabandi, systematic land development, training, etc. Demonstration activities should be adequately followed up.

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