



REPORT
ON
MINOR IRRIGATION WORKS
(West Bengal)

COMMITTEE ON PLAN PROJECTS
(Minor Irrigation Team)
NEW DELHI
(February, 1963)

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

M. THIRUMALA RAO, M.P.,
Leader, Minor Irrigation Team,
Committee on Plan Projects.

Planning Commission,
21st February, 1963.
New Delhi.

My dear Shastri ji,

The report of the Minor Irrigation Team on the study of minor irrigation works in West Bengal is sent herewith.

The report reveals the disparity that exists in the performance of the minor irrigation works of the pre-Plan period and those completed in recent years. Some of the minor irrigation works completed in the First and Second Plan periods have apparently been vulnerable to a sort of casualness in their planning, execution and operation. In heavy rainfall areas, as in northern parts of West Bengal, there seems little justification for their provision.

Another significant observation made out in the report pertains to the State tubewell programme, now in hand in West Bengal. As also brought out in the Team's report on the study of State tubewells in Uttar Pradesh, financial self-sufficiency of State tubewells in heavy rainfall areas appears problematic. Unless concerted efforts are made to have a multiple crop pattern adopted and sustained on these tubewells, it is doubtful, if they will attain financial self-sufficiency. The Team has, therefore, advised due caution to be exercised in the expansion of tubewell programme in West Bengal.

Minor Irrigation Works in West Bengal are handled by more than one department. The Team has suggested that unitary control on minor irrigation works will go a long way in improving their performance. Another item needing attention is water distribution through properly laid out field channels. The Team has drawn attention to this point quite pertinently. Besides, the legislation in the State affecting irrigation works also appears outmoded. It has, therefore, been stressed in the Report to bring out fresh legislation, so as to enable greater utilisation of irrigation works in the State, by and large.

Keeping the above factors in view, a number of recommendations have been incorporated in the Report with a view to maximise production from irrigated agriculture in West Bengal. These will also help in formulating and sanctioning further programme of irrigation expansion in the State.

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I also take this opportunity of expressing our thanks to the State Government and their officers for the co-operation, they extended to us in supplying information and for the facilities they afforded us for study of the works in the State.

Yours sincerely,

M. THIRUMALA RAO

**Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri,
Minister for Home Affairs,
Government of India,
New Delhi.**

Preface

Minor Irrigation Team appointed by the Committee on Plan Projects undertook the study of minor irrigation works in West Bengal as part of the programme laid down in the Terms of Reference, communicated *vide* committee on Plan Projects Memorandum No. COPP/ (4)/17/58 dated the 4th August, 1958 appearing on page 63 of this Report. The Team comprised Dr. A. N. Khosla, *Leader*, Shri Lal Singh, Retd. Director of Agriculture, Punjab, Shri Baleshwar Nath, Chief Engineer (Addl.), *Members* and Shri Mahavir Prasad, Irrigation Adviser, Ministry of Food and Agriculture, *Member-Ex-Officio*.

Dr. A. N. Khosla relinquished Leadership of the Team on December 12, 1960 and Shri M. Thirumala Rao, M.P. took his place.

Shri Lal Singh ceased to be Member of the Team with effect from July 28, 1960 and Dr. Arjan Singh, Retd. Director of Agriculture, Punjab was appointed Member in his place.

After the studies were initiated by Dr. A. N. Khosla in a meeting held at Calcutta (*vide* Minutes—*Appendix XIV*), the Team toured different parts of the State and made field studies on a number of minor irrigation works. A significant feature of the study is critical appraisal of deep tubewell scheme taken up in the State, recently. Utilisation of the potential so created will involve vast changes in the existing agronomic practices and their traditional background. Its financial implications too, are significant. The Team has, therefore, touched upon these aspects and has stressed upon the fact that progressive irrigation schemes should be financially self-supporting.

Discussions were held with the State officers from time to time, and the Team's report has been finalised after a conclusive meeting between the Team and the Ministers and officers of the West Bengal Government, held at Calcutta on February 14, 1963 *vide* minutes given in *Appendix XV*.



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