

REPORT
ON
MINOR IRRIGATION WORKS
IN
BIHAR STATE



सत्यमेव जयते

MITTEE ON PLAN PROJECTS
IRRIGATION TEAM
NEW DELHI

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LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

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Committee on Plan Projects.

Camp: Care Hotel Wyndham,
42 West 58th Street,
NEW YORK-19.

Dated the 27th November, 1965

My dear NANDA JI,

Studies of minor irrigation works in Bihar State taken up by the Irrigation Team have since been completed and a report thereabout is sent herewith for your perusal.

The bulk of minor irrigation works in the State are constructed under the Bihar Private Irrigation Works Act, 1922 on the basis of 50 per cent subsidy and 50 per cent loan. After completion, maintenance and operation of such schemes becomes the responsibility of the beneficiaries—presently through Panchayats. Usually Panchayats are unable to maintain the works satisfactorily. Utilisation remains poor in spite of the fact that there is no irrigation charge.

Recovery of loan is not yet effected in most of the cases. Arrears towards the end of 1963-64 stood at a figure of about Rs. 1.28 crores. Policy with regard to financing, maintenance, operation and irrigation assessment of such works in the State needs to be reviewed as suggested in the report.

There are two other Codes, namely, Bengal Irrigation Act of 1876 and Bihar Public Irrigation and Drainage Works Act of 1947, which govern minor irrigation works also. It will be advantageous if a unified Act is framed for the purpose.

There are about 1000 State tubewells in the State. Their performance, particularly that of North Bihar zones, is very poor. Financially the State is incurring an average loss of about Rs. 6000 per tubewell per year. For every acre irrigated the State loses over Rs. 80 in North Bihar and Rs. 25 in South Bihar. This financial position can improve if scientifically planned irrigated agriculture is practised on State tubewells, where ready-at-hand supplies are available all the year round.

A number of other recommendations have been made in the Report. Their implementation could help in optimising production from irrigated agriculture in Bihar. These could also help in planning and prospecting future programmes of irrigation expansion.

I take this opportunity to express our thanks to the State Government and their officers for the cooperation extended to us in conducting the studies.

With best regards.

Yours sincerely,
M. THIRUMALA RAO

Shri Gulzarilal Nanda,
Minister of Home Affairs,
NEW DELHI.

P R E F A C E

Irrigation Team, Committee on Plan Projects, Planning Commission took up the study of minor irrigation works in the State of Bihar in accordance with the Terms of Reference communicated *vide* Committee on Plan Projects memorandum No. COPP/(4)/17/58, dated 4th August, 1958 (Appendix I). The team comprised:

Shri M. Thirumala Rao, M.P.—Leader.

Shri Baleshwar Nath, Chief Engineer—Member.

Dr. Arjan Singh, Retd. Director of Agriculture, Punjab—Member.

Shri Mahavir Prasad, Irrigation Adviser, Ministry of Food and Agriculture—Member (*Ex officio*).

2. Preliminary discussions were held at Patna on August 26, 1964 (Proceedings given in Appendix II), and field studies were initiated thereafter,

3. The Team in their subsequent visits during 1964 and 1965 looked into planning, operational, organisational, maintenance as also financial and agricultural aspects of the various types of minor irrigation works, essential details of which have been discussed in the report.

4. Discussions were held concurrently with the State authorities at appropriate levels during the field studies as also subsequently. The recommendations as emerged out of the study have been summarised at the end of the report under a separate chapter, which bring to light policy matters needing special attention, apart from the details pertaining to individual works given in the report.

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