

## Water Management in Major and Medium Projects

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*The present paper deals with the problems of water management in the surface irrigated areas based on the experience in Maharashtra. The paper reviews the prevailing management system in Maharashtra. The focus of the paper is directed more towards participative water management system as against directed water management institution having higher bureaucratic control. The approach followed for the purpose of analysis is a practitioners approach, which comes out of the experience from managing such a system. It is concluded that most of the weaknesses of the present water management systems could be remedied by assigning management to the farmers' societies. These societies can sell water on equitable basis. In other words, the users will themselves be made responsible to fix the price of water depending on its availability.*

### Introduction

In our country what is practiced under the concept of water management is not management, but administration. Management scientists make a distinction between administration and management, in view of the significant differences. While administration is more concerned with administering the rules, keeping in view the equity among the different classes and individuals, management is principally concerned in achieving the stated objectives within the parameters defined by the policy makers. In both the cases, the resources (inputs) are given, but in the case of administration there is a further constraint of 'rules', while under management there is a limited freedom for reallocation of resources to achieve the stated goals. So in management there is the concept of cost effectiveness, within given resources. Second, under administration, the penalty, if any, is in the form of fear of audit from the superiors or from designated external agencies; the manager, on the other hand, has to worry about performance and the realisation of the stated objectives. Third, the administrators are accountable to the superiors, with no obligation to the users, while the managers are accountable to users in direct, as well as, indirect way, though they are answerable to their superiors. In brief, management assigns paramount importance to achievement of objectives and cost effectiveness, while administration is concerned with carrying out the business within the prescribed rules and regulations with little attention to cost effectiveness or service to the users/clients.

### Water Management

Viewed in the context of the above analytical framework, what goes on in the name of water management in our country is more akin to administration. When the dams and reservoirs were built, the then policy makers had framed certain rules and regulations of water distribution in the context of agricultural scenario then prevailing. Even though the scenario of agricultural technology, market situation, social and economic needs of