

Socio-economic evaluation of lift irrigation structures in three villages surrounding Udaipur, India: Amarpura, Kumhardpada, Ranpur

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In 2003 and 2004, three lift irrigation structures (LIS) were constructed and completed with the goal of providing increased irrigation benefits to small and marginal farmers. A cost-benefit analysis was conducted as part of the empirical analysis to show the purely financial aspect of the lifts and their impact. Furthermore, qualitative analysis of the social consequences of the LIS was performed to assess the impact on gender roles, health and education. The objectives also focused on analyzing the dependency of the village on external expertise, the assessment of management structures aimed at utilizing the LIS, and examining any conflicts or problems arisen from the development of the LIS. A triangulation of three methodologies was used: the administration of questionnaires to sample the beneficiaries from each irrigation system (to measure changes in productivity); key-informant interviews with leading members of the villages; focus-group discussions with Water Users Groups and women of each village. Results indicated that the financial benefits of the LIS were substantial – supporting the development of agricultural production and productivity of the land. The social consequences of the LIS suggest a decrease in migration and increase in responsibility/labour work for the women of the village. No direct link to the health or educational status of the village beneficiaries was found. The results indicated management for the LIS varies from formal to informal. Each village differed on various fronts such as the criteria and scheduling of water distribution, charges for lift use, repair strategies, irrigation structure designs, and contributions made to the Gram Vikas Kosh (GVK). Future recommendations include the development of regular meetings concerning the lift, as a means to ensure proper management and access. Additionally, suggestions pinpoint the role of Seva Mandir in encouraging the collective gathering of funds to pay for the building of more channels and providing a supportive engineering service when necessary.