

REJUVENATING LIVES

Narratives of success among farming communities that integrated sustainable systems and strategies



ADVANTAGE LIFT IRRIGATION



Thirty-six acres of land in village Moida in Barwani district of Madhya Pradesh, which until 2012 lay dry and uncultivated, came to life when 14 farmers came together and pushed for lift irrigation (LI) technology, connecting their fields with a government *talaab* (pond) constructed in 2011-12. At a total cost of ₹5,61,000 and support from Action for Social Advancement (ASA) and Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana, this LI took shape, enabling farmers to increase food production and incomes and gain multiple benefits.

Quick facts

- **91** lift irrigation systems installed
- **1102** hectares land irrigated
- **1321** households benefitted

(Data as on Feb. 2015; ASA's operational area covers the states of Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Bihar and Jharkhand)

Tapping Resources

ASA has been instrumental in tapping resources under government schemes such as Water Resources Development for funding lift irrigation programmes in all its operational areas. ASA also supports Gram Panchayats for utilisation of funds from Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme for this purpose. Where cost sharing is involved, beneficiary farmers contribute either in kind like sand, stones, transportation etc. or in the form of labour.

Fundamentally Right

Lift irrigation systems enjoy the advantage of minimal land acquisition problem and very little water losses. Site selection is an important aspect when installing lift irrigation systems. ASA places emphasis on this and involves experts in this task. Proximity to water source, availability of water especially during the dry season and contiguous land holdings are a few vital factors. In Moida, the LI is built on a high altitude in the undulating plains and the fields that it irrigates is on a low-lying plain. Pressure and gravity act together to allow the water to reach the fields.

Multifold Benefits

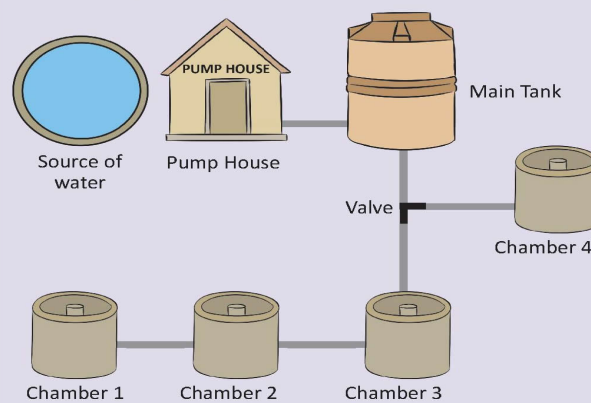
Sustainable lift irrigation systems have resulted in a rise in net sown area and gross cropped area as also in cropping intensity, crop productivity and biomass availability. The number of livestock, with a marked preference for improved breeds, has also seen growth.

Farmers accessing water from lift irrigation systems not only undertake irrigated cropping during both *Rabi* (winter) and *Zaid* (summer) seasons, but cultivate a wider range of crops, such as wheat, paddy, gram, pulses and vegetables.

As a result of year-long cultivation, migration has reduced. This has had a positive impact on the education of children who have begun attending school more regularly.

The income generated from irrigated agriculture has also led to a range of other activities, such as savings and credit, milk production, floriculture and vegetable cultivation.

How lift irrigation works



Water User Groups (WUG) formed to operate and manage encourage local decision-making by granting authority to farmers for management functions. ASA facilitates the formation of WUGs and undertakes capacity building of the groups on financial and administrative management, thus ensuring their sustainability. Irrigation management through participatory arrangements also promotes local initiative and cultural diversity.

The Maa Narmada Water Users' Group (WUG) in Moida, which comprises 14 farmers whose lands are directly irrigated by the LI, took responsibility for its operation and maintenance. Each member contributed ₹1000 initially for the upkeep and maintenance and this amount has been deposited in the local State Bank of India. In addition, each member pays ₹200 per acre per season (*rabi* and *kharif*) as irrigation fees.

Lift irrigation technology has brought small farmers in western MP together in managing existing water resources in the village in a sustainable and optimum manner, thus showing them a way out of agricultural distress and poverty.

Bidding adieu to difficult days in Ratlam

A 30-year-old pond constructed by the government has breathed new life in village Rajpura of district Ratlam.

"The pond would be brimming with water throughout the year. This water was lying unused. The ASA team discussed with the SHGs in the village about this and suggested an LI," recounts Kalo Bhabar.

Following ASA's discussions with the SHGs, the farmers decided to apply for an LI. The LI scheme irrigates 25 acres of land. Of these 25 acres, 15 acres had never been cultivated and lay dry always. The remaining 10 acres was rainfall-dependent, and only soya bean was grown here. The LI is irrigating fields as far as 900 feet away from the pond.

The WUG named Mahadev Jal Upbhokhta Samiti, which consists of 11 members, is responsible for the operation and maintenance of the LI. It meets every month and each member contributes ₹100 to the group.



Bhabar is one of the members who has begun using the water from LI to cultivate his 1.2 acres of land. For the first time in his life, he grew *rabi* crops, cotton and wheat, in addition to *kharif*. He has also begun maintaining a kitchen garden that boasts of spongegourd, bottlegourd, ladyfinger and other greens. His is a household that is now food-secure and not dependent on the local moneylender. A big relief for him and his family is that he no longer has to take those migratory trips to the city in search of work.

Revival and relief in Jhabua

In the Bhil-dominated village of Lambela of district Jhabua, 50-year-old Magan Gumla's dug well is the source of water for the LI here. The dug well was renovated with support from ASA in the year 2012. While ASA contributed ₹22,000, Magan Gumla contributed ₹50,000. It was Magan who requested ASA to support the farmers in his village for an LI, the source of which would be his dug well.



The LI in village Lambela is irrigating a total of 13 acres of land. An amount of ₹1,85,000 came through Tata Trusts and ₹46,080 was contributed by the 12 farmers who became members of the Water Users' Group named Swaraj Jal Upbhokhta Samooh.

Thirty year-old Nana Manna is one of the 12 member-farmers. He is a small farmer whose 0.8 acres of land are irrigated by the water from the LI. He says, "When the rains are inadequate, like it was in 2014, I used the water from the LI for my *kharif* crops."

Nana Manna grew chickpea, maize and wheat during *rabi* and maize and rice during *kharif*. Last season, he harvested 10 quintals of wheat. He held back 5 quintals for household consumption and sold the remaining for a total income of ₹7,000.

Magan Gumla's income too has increased following assured water supply from the LI. He supports his wife and nine children. He bought a healthy buffalo worth ₹57,000, which produces 8 litres of milk daily. Of this, he sells 4 litres for an amount of ₹160 and keeps 4 litres for household consumption. He also constructed a *pucca* house and has admitted his grandsons in a private school in the nearby town Pitol.

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