



PRIVATE SECTOR PARTICIPATION IN SHAHID YAGHOBI MINOR IRRIGATION NETWORK

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1- PREFACE AND OBJECTIVES:

Shahid yaghobi dam's irrigation network went under operation in the year 2000.

In development and promotion of modern irrigation methods, specially pressurized networks, to obtain defined efficiencies in the main irrigation network, design stage studies of 3rd and 4th grade network, started. emphasizing the importance of the design stage of 3rd and 4th grade irrigation networks, conforming to the demands of farmers, required public participation in the process of studies.

During the studies, the consultant insisted on accomplishment of public participation studies which have a controlling role in studies of minor irrigation networks, and consequently the contract of public participation was concluded.

The study area is located in central region of Khorasan province and South-east of Torbat-e-heidarieh town, where Shahid Yaghobi irrigation network is located. The area have arid and cold climate, with respectively cold winters accompanied by rain, and hot-dry summers. Mean annual rainfall of the area is about 240 mm, which mostly occur in winters.

The major surface water resources of the region are Kal-e-salar river, which is regulated by Shahid Yaghobi dam and supplied to farmers through main irrigation network canals. Ground water resources, as 13 wells supply 560 lit/sec of water.

Four villages, named; Ahmad abad, Mohammad abad, Malikabad, and Sangan are located in this region.

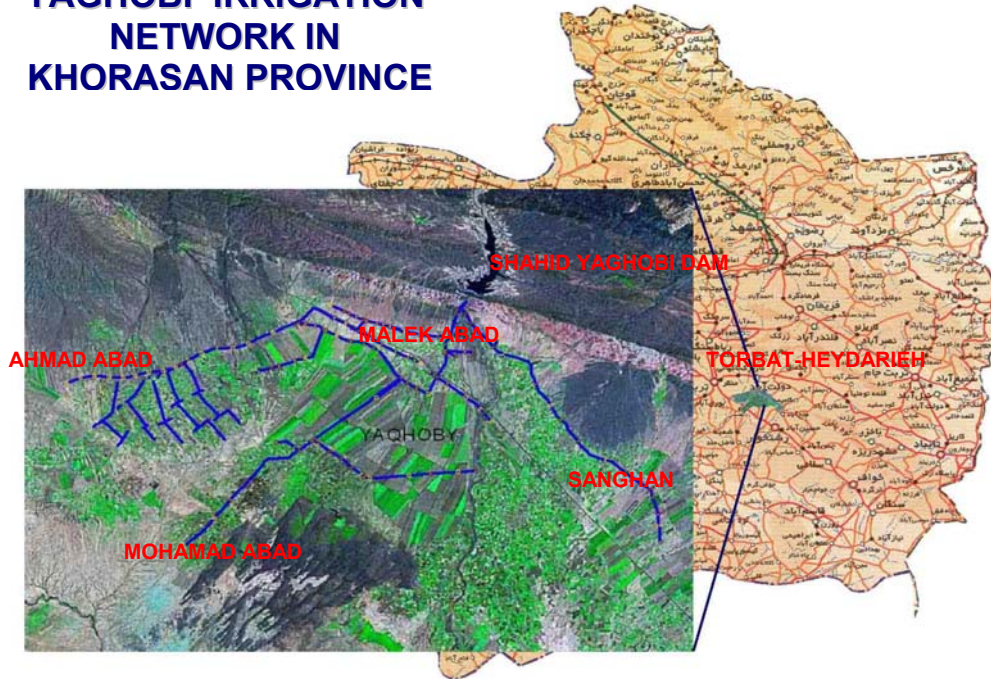
The area of the lands having water rights is 2810 ha, which belongs to 866 farmers, and grouped in few parts.

There are 30 groups that have water rights from Shahid Yaghobi irrigation network, comprising of persons, companies, case farms, and rural farmer groups. The main activity in the area is agriculture, in which land and water are of great importance to people. Agriculture is dignitary of the economy of the family in the network area. The order of operation in these four villages is on the basis of petty land ownership, and water rights of each village from the dam is the amount previously taken from the Kal-e-salar river plus extra water purchased.

1- TOOSSAB Consulting Engineers Company

The major land owner of the region is Astan-e-Ghods Razavi. Most of the farmers have participated in the construction of the main irrigation **network** canals by receiving a loan.

POSITION OF SHAHID YAGHOBI IRRIGATION NETWORK IN KHORASAN PROVINCE



2- OBJECTIVES:

- Design of minor network, considering water users opinion.
- Empowering the villagers.
- Establishment of water users associations.
- Establishment of proper grounds for negotiations between members of associations and relevant authorities and organizations.

3- METHODOLOGY:

This is done through field methods and negotiations with managers and experts involved the project and farmers of the region, using participatory rural appraisal methods and techniques in villages based on principles of theoretical modern approaches of participation.

- Field visits
- Negotiations with project's managers and experts

- Holding participatory workshops in villages and negotiation with people to reconsider problems, finding solutions, introducing project's objectives and accomplished works, explaining the activities necessary for utilization of available resources and facilities, consideration and comparison between orders of concentrated planning, and participatory rural appraisal, causes of foundation, background and evolution course, methods of participation, national and international experiences of public participation in management of resources, directing the negotiations towards establishment of farmers and water users associations, motivating people to take responsibility and participate in local society affairs.

3-1- WORK PROCEDURE:

- Attending meetings in villages;
- Inviting people to attend the workshop;
- Talking to participators about their life and activities in the villages;
- Finding problems and their prioritization;
- Providing proper solutions;
- Finding executive mechanisms to solve the problems;
- Derivation of problems and considering orders of state planning, and participatory rural appraisal;
- Reviewing the reasons of establishment of participatory rural appraisal planning methods and its history and its evolution course in Iran and in the world;
- Talking about the reasons of attendance of participatory working groups in villages and absorbing attention of attendees for participation in conversations, and making appropriate decisions to consider problems and how to work as a group to solve them.
- Field visits of Irrigation networks
- Creating proper grounds to establish farmers and water users associations.
- Talking about completion of irrigation network and construction of minor networks with the participation of the government and villagers by using bank facilities and preparing the people to supply some of the money required in this regard.

3-2- THE PROCEDURE

The workshops held in villages within the project area were carried on as the following; Establishing close and friendly communication with the participators, absorbing their attention into topics discussed, and using the working tools such as; A0 size papers and large sized pens to practice participation methods and problems, solutions, maps, layout plans of the farms and conventional irrigation networks were recorded on those papers.

Some part of work was done by the group providing facilities, and the remaining part of the work by the participators themselves. Through practicing these methods, the villagers were able to think about their own and group problems and learn how to solve them.

During the workshops, participators could provide their opinions, paving the way of participation in future decision makings and implementation of activities.





4- AHMADABAD VILLAGE:

The work procedure in Ahmadabad village included the followings;

- Participation of villagers, especially farmers in the workshop.
- Obtaining trust and confidence of villagers through sincere negotiations with them.
- Stating their own and group problems;
- Provision of appropriate solutions to remedy problems by the villagers;
- Preparation of irrigated lands and water wells layout by participators;
- Negotiations about effective role of farmers in progress of construction of irrigation network project;
- Guidelines of participation of farmers in preparation of plans and implementing projects;
- The reasons why and how to form water users organizations and selection of its board of directors.
- Arrangement and compilation of scope of services of water user organizations.

4-1- SOME COMMENTS OF FARMERS REGARDING THEIR PROBLEMS ARE;

- Always we have been forced to do something, as, at the time of lands improvement plan, the lands were transferred to us by force and now, they are going to take it back.
- We are unable to pay installments for water shares we bought.
- 200 farmers have got 15 million Rials loan from the bank for construction of Shahid Yaghobi dam. At the present, considering that no water has been given to us from the dam, the recent draught has deprived us to pay our installments.
- Previously all villagers had water shares from Kal-e-Salar River, but now, we have to buy needed water for our lands from the dam.
- By construction of the dam, it was agreed that the farmers can use the water of the dam till their first income from their products to pay their installments, but Khorasan Regional Water Authority forgot his promises.
- Khorasan Regional water authority do not permit us to bore any water well and the region is restricted for this purpose.
- As we have got a loan from Agriculture Bank and we are due to pay it, we can not get a loan again to electrify our water wells.
- Water fees are high.
- Although we do not use water from the dam, we have to pay annually 340,000 Rials to guard the dam.
- If the dam water is ours, then why they are selling it to the others.

4-2- PROVISION OF APPROPRIATE SOLUTIONS:

In the second meeting, participators were asked to find out appropriate solutions with the help of experts. The statements concerning proposed solutions by the farmers are as the following:

- Water authorities should give us permission to dig wells.
- Our water rights shares should be given completely; otherwise, our losses must be indemnified by water authorities;
- Water authorities should show us the proper procedure to pursue.
- Our loans must be postponed and Agriculture Bank would not ask for extra Interest for repayments;
- Water authorities must solve our loan problems with Agriculture bank;
- The interest of late installments should be postponed.
- Water rate should not increase;
- Hygienic problems of public baths should be considered seriously.
- This problem would be solved by digging water wells.

- Water authorities may help us to solve our water deficits.
- Lands having no water are useless, so, water problem must be solved.

4-3- PREPARING AGRICULTURAL LANDS LAYOUTS:

At this stage, participating farmers in the workshop draw layouts of farms based on field parting and 40 group ownerships, and the leader's name of each group was noted for each land piece. In this way, it was noticed that there were 200 land owner farmers divided into 5 groups of 40 farmers; Mean-while, reminding plan's aims and the necessity of participation and cooperation of farmers in rural affairs.

They have been told that cadastre maps of their farms will be prepared very soon if they provide accurate information to surveying team to maximize the precision of maps, and to minimize the problems of determining lands ownerships.





4-4- COMPILATION OF FUNCTIONS OF RURAL ASSOCIATIONS:

As mentioned before, the main obligations of these studies and practicing participation methods in villages locating in the project area, are to establish associations and empowering people to accept responsibilities gradual transfer of affairs relating to operation and maintenance of irrigation and drainage networks to them.

In this regard, it was tried to obtain such results through practicing participation methods.

At the end of discussions, the villagers introduced 5 persons, all of them being leaders of farmers groups, as their representatives of association.

These representatives, in reply to the farmers confidence, and through various methods, considered all aspects of the work and activities and compiled their scope of work.

5- CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS:

Implementing the 1st stage of land improvement, country's rural management underwent changes in different aspects. Before that, the village which was considered as a natural, economical, social and cultural unit, was managed under supervision of the owner or his representatives.

Presence of the government in villages to cover absence of the owners management by establishment of organizations such as; cooperative societies, ..., has not been successful in bringing villages in order based on customs and legal conditions, and faces with different problems everyday.

Considering the presence of about 67000 villages in the country, the government is unable to help socio-economical development of villages to fulfill their needs. Therefore, transferring jurisdictional affairs to people and avoiding these matters by the government, and consequently, estimating acceptable social advancement of the project, will clearly define the role and importance of participatory activities for the authorities. Indeed, It is required that the government supervise implementation of the work without involving itself directly.

As we concentrate on an approach of public participation and rural matters, planning would be highly technical and pivoted on human resources. Therefore, the most important function is to prepare appropriate conditions to involve in projects creation and integrated planning by local and regional authorities and people. Even, it is required that, an expert of participatory methods come to the village to guide people at least once a month.

At the end, it can be concluded that, rural points are considered as the focus points where special facilities and amenities should be settled there to create a base for stimulation of other regions. Accessibility of proper and effective services, sustainable development gradual social discipline and proper training among the villagers are vital.