EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF CHANGE IN PRACTICE

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Report I

Community level Impact of Change Management Training for IAMWARM Project Officials-By Institute for Sustainable Development, Chennai

Change Management Training Programme

The Change Management (CM) training offered to the officials of the constituent State Government Departments of Tamil Nadu Irrigated Agriculture Modernization and Water-bodies Restoration and Management (TN IAMWARM) Project aimed at establishing an enabling environment and sustained demand for change through dialog, public consultations, and capacity-building at all levels of government. The World Bank supported Change Management Training at a micro level to officials working in 20 villages during 2011 and, based on the success of the experiment, decided a medium-scale rollout of the programme in 2014. This report is the assessment of the impact of training, as experienced by the community.

Methods used

The field assessment used the Quantified Participatory Assessment (QPA) technique which converts into ordinal numbers the qualitative responses from participatory assessments such as from Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and other standard tools of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA).

The assessment was conducted in 150 villages selected from nine districts which are part of the project area of the TNIAMWARM Project. Of the 150, 100 are ‘treatment areas’, served by officials who received specialized Change Management Training, and 50 in ‘control areas’, served by officials who had not received such training. In addition, individual farmer interviews were also conducted to check possible biases in group responses. The findings from the earlier survey of 2012 are then compared with those from the current assessment.

Key Findings

The treatment area and the control area differ significantly in terms of the behaviour of officials: Officials who received specialized CMT are perceived by the community as having different attitudes and behaviour compared to officials who have not had such training. Specifically, villagers felt that officials with specialized CMT

i. Visit more frequently
ii. Visit more often with officials from other participating departments
iii. Visit more often whenever there is a need
iv. Meet more stakeholders including small and marginal farmers
v. Met all beneficiaries
vi. Discussed project interventions and gave information on various relevant issues such as farming, water management or overall development of the village
vii. Answered villagers' queries
viii. Listened to villagers' suggestions

In 2015, the Treatment Area officials and engineers performed better than their counterparts in the Control villages, with all differences between the two groups being statistically significant at the 99% confidence level. Crop and Livestock related Officials scored highest for all these questions and significantly higher than the Water Engineers.

Over the period 2012-2015, the percentage of those who crossed the 'benchmark' expectation has increased so also the percentage of those with 'ideal' level of performance while visiting the village.

Wide area coverage and a large portfolio of activities to be looked in to make the officials prioritise their visits to villages or farms, and when the opportunities for interventions are also limited as in this case of a phasing out Project, the officials' visits tend to be less frequent. Despite this situation, the Water Engineers as well as the Crop/Livestock related officials have visited frequently to the villages assessed. In terms of behaviour during the visits, improvements are observed for the Crop/Livestock related officials, but not in the case of Water Engineers. The fact that at the current phase of the project, there wasn't any opportunity to take in to account the suggestions of the villagers and make amendments in the project interventions might have resulted

in the poor performance in terms of discussing interventions, listening to the suggestions or answering villagers' queries by the Water Engineers in the year 2015 compared to 2012, and to the other officials in 2015.

Over the period 2012-2015, the percentage of those who crossed the 'benchmark' expectation has increased so also the percentage of those with 'ideal' level of performance while attending the meetings also. **The officials are no more viewed as symbols of 'authority' by the villagers** when they participate in the meeting, and this change has happened from the way the officials conduct themselves in such public occasions. As perceived by the community, they tend to behave more like part of the community, sit along with the farmers, give 'respect' to farmers, discuss issues with the farmers in a 'friendly' manner, and try to help by channelizing the services from other departments also.

The concept of convergence in service delivery is giving the trained officials an edge over the untrained officials as observations from the field suggest. Besides enabling the officials develop a team spirit, this also helps the community derive better benefits from the government services with the help of the converged efforts of the officials. It may be noted here that the TN IAMWARM project has given the unique opportunity of convergence among the constituent government departments. And such an enabling environment can multiply the effects of the change management training among the officials as well as help realise a high impact at the community level.

The fact that Change Management Training has been taking place in the TN IAMWARM Project since 2010 has resulted in the presence of at least one trained official in many of the villages which were considered as 'control' for this impact assessment study. Thus, a contamination in the control villages giving positive results in terms of the parameters assessed in the study. This influence cannot be controlled as the officials are governed by the independent line departments and not by the Project.

The findings from the 2015 study, however, may have shown a greater contrast had the design and timing of the study been different. The fact that the study assessed official behaviour only during a four month reference period (from September to

December 2014) meant that the works done by officials in the earlier periods were not captured. The study reference period was one where the Project was phasing out and most officials had completed their field support activities by early 2014 (after being trained in the period since 2010). Also, the agricultural season (November – January) was on-going and thus agricultural marketing officials whose role began after the harvest had no reason to be visiting the field, while Water Resources and Agricultural Engineering Department officials had already completed their visit in the pre-sowing period.

There was also high level of awareness among individual farmers from the treatment area about selected project interventions, and the fact that the Government officials emerged as the major source of information confirms the additional efforts taken by trained officials**.**

Conclusion

Overall, village communities perceived a significant difference in the behaviour and attitudes of officials who had received change management training. The positive change over the period 2012-15 is an indication of the scope for spread and sustainability of the training impact.

The fact that the contrast between Treatment and Control villages is less in 2015 than in 2012 also points to a degree of 'contamination' of the sample, as officials trained since 2010 were present in most of the project villages by 2015. The difference between Treatment and Control thus only shows the impact of the two rounds of specialized CMT provided from May-September 2014 to officials in the 100 Treatment villages.

Thus, the comparison with the 2012 really implies that the CMT provided in the early part of the project (i.e., since 2010) has had a sustained impact – causing an improvement in the results from the 'control' villages in the 2015 study.

Community Survey Results
Community Perceptions of Village Visits

Compared to the officials in the control group, the village community perceived treatment group project officials to:

i. Visit more frequently, and more often with other department officials

ii. Visit more often when there is a need

iii. Meet more stakeholders including small and marginal farmers

iv. Answer villager queries and listen to their suggestions

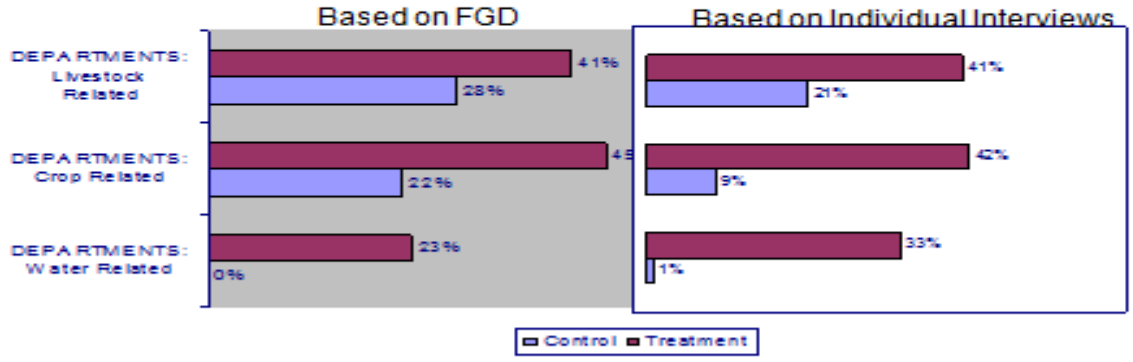
v. Behave as if they were part of the community, sitting along with the farmers sharing the same platform, and encouraging them express their views

Community Perceptions –Sample Results

The difference is significant

How often did these officials visit the area?

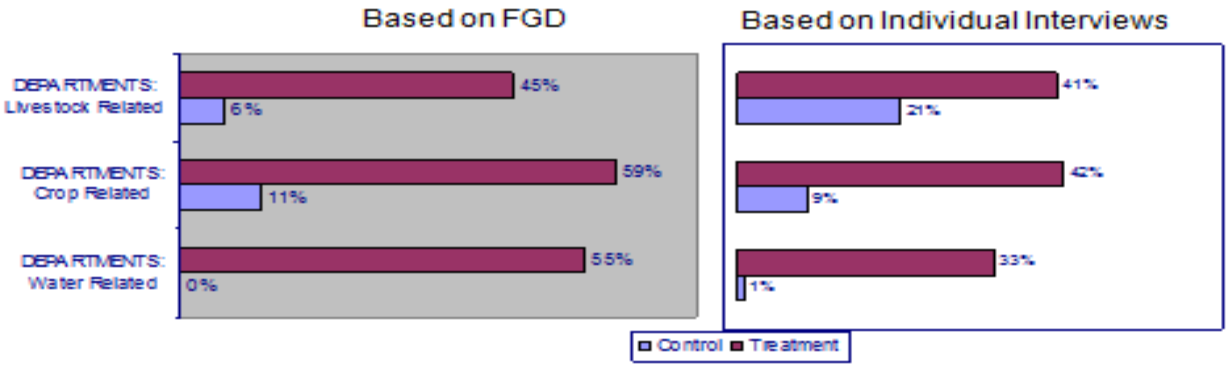
*% Response with **Score 50 and above**: These officials came at least once and met all stakeholders including small and marginal farmer*



Community Perceptions –Sample Results

How did the officials behave during these visits?

*% Response with **Score 50 and above**: These officials came at least once and met all stakeholders including small and marginal farmer*



Impact on Project Performance

Agriculture (% Change between 2011-2012)

	Villages under Control Group Officials	Villages under Target Group Officials
Area under SRI Paddy (ha)	144 %	1027 %
SRI Yield (tons/ha)	8 %	51 %
Area Maize (tons/ha)	5 %	516 %
Maize Yield (tons/ha)	21 %	45 %
Area Pulses (ha)	81 %	4775 %
Pulses Yield (tons/ha)	19 %	15 %
Area Groundnut (ha)	350 %	926 %
Groundnut Yield (tons/ha)	14 %	28 %

Impact on Project Performance

Agriculture Engineering, Horticulture and Water Resources
(% Change between 2011-2012)

	Villages under Control Group Officials	Villages under Target Group Officials
Soil Tests Performed	-4 %	66 %
Horticultural crops (ha)	3 %	20 %
Drip Irrigation (ha)	87 %	102 %
Mulching (ha)	400 %	367 %
Ave veg yield (tons/ha)	8 %	27 %
MIS (ha)	317 %	980 %

Report II

Anecdotes from the Behaviour Change Initiative of the 'Tamil Nadu IAMWARM Project' in INDIA

CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

The Change Management programme under the IAMWARM project is a unique experiment that has been able to successfully deliver on project outcomes by helping officials overcome departmental boundaries and innovate for change. The experience with the CM programme holds significance because it demonstrates that for departments to work together and work better for the communities they serve, there needs to be a shift in behavioral norms that define the relationships between officials, between departments, between ranks, and with the public that these officials serve. Unless these norms change, it is extremely difficult to affect collaboration on the ground, and with communities. This becomes doubly important given a context of the bureaucratic labyrinth that defines India.In a discussion with the authors, Mr.Nayar, Project Director, aptly summed up the progress of the initiative as follows:

> "I think the way to think about this initiative is to think about the issues we face in delivering services today, and these could be any services. Then think whether this training or such a platform would address some of these issues, how and whether it would do so holistically in a manner that is scalable, sustainable, is cost effective and is replicable across sectors and states. Some of these initiatives may even have the result of tweaking the service delivery system.
>
> Under IAMWARM, the biggest challenge we have faced successfully is accepting farmers' feedback. We have provided ourselves and the farmers, a platform where we can give them the flexibility and choice. The engineer serves as a bridge between the haves and the have-nots. Those with limited voice can approach this platform and seek a solution. So if a crop is not working for them, can we change it? For example, in some villages, we have encouraged farmers

to grow organic grass before planting rice. This has improved the nutrient quality of the soil and has helped them change from a single crop to three crops.

The feedback loop has also been operative between officials on the ground and at the top level. At the top, it reflects in the government orders [GOs] that we have enabled, in a manner to speak. For instance, there was a GO that all construction activity undertaken by the WRO would be subject to a social audit, post which the construction would get an OK card. This has been adopted in earnest across the state. In other words, even the top system has responded to feedback from the ground.

Similarly, among officials on the ground as well, there is an increased culture of talking to one another. Take the Panchayati Raj Institutions [PRI] and Water User Associations for instance. They are different entities, but we have tried to bring them to the same room for a water visioning exercise. Interestingly, the PRI representatives are excited as well because they prefer to work with officials rather than a non-government organization [NGO] who would be called in for the same exercise. If a Panchayat President finds officials coming, he feels empowered.

The need for change is now accepted – it was not so when we started. In fact the fastest acceptance of change and for change has come from the man on the field."

Yet, if you ask me overall things may not appear to have changed as much. It is a typical government program. I think the only thing that distinguishes it is continued leadership, and a fluid approach at the bottom. We haven't gone for major publicity, and have not ruffled any feathers by threatening major power shifts. Rather, the approach has been one of empowering officials to shift service delivery".

As far as the scale of operations is concerned, in area we have covered more than half the state (about 600,000 hectares and 1.2 million families). The training has touched nearly three-fourth of all staff working in these 7 departments. We have brought in drinking water people in our exercise, although they were not a

part of the original project design. We have also reached out to other states, have conducted trainings there and have brought officials from other states to see our model villages.

Going forward, however, the CM initiative faces some intractable issues that may slow down its march if not completely bring it to a halt.

For one, change management is a continuous process that requires constant handholding. For this reason, the initiative needs a carrier (a project that can house it) so that it doesn't work in isolation. To its detractors, its sustainability may seem suspect once the IAMWARM project comes to a close or once the top leadership moves on. Mr.Nayar however disagrees.

> "I have done this experiment twice, first in TWAD Board [from 2004] and now under this project. In both cases, I was not the power center or the CEO of the concerned department. So in a way, we were forced to think about how we can create leaders from within the line departments. Whether this experiment is sustainable, I can't say. In a way it is reflection of life with all things unequal. But I think it at least helps in increasing the baseline for everyone, both believers and non-believers."

Turnover of staff that has been trained is another issue that the initiative grapples with. In a bureaucracy where lower level staff is often shuffled around, what is the guarantee that an official who has received the values training, is able to carry on work within the project? Here, the Project Director candidly admits that while nothing has been done to address the turnover issue, the initiative hopes that officials trained under the programme carry with them lessons from the innovation and pollinate other departments. And at least some of the officials spoke of a spillover effect into the 'new' departments that they had been assigned to.

Thirdly, a focus on model villages perhaps takes away attention from other villages under the project, leading to focused activities by officials only in select villages. The Change Management team however believes that such focused attention can (and does) have demonstration effects for others.

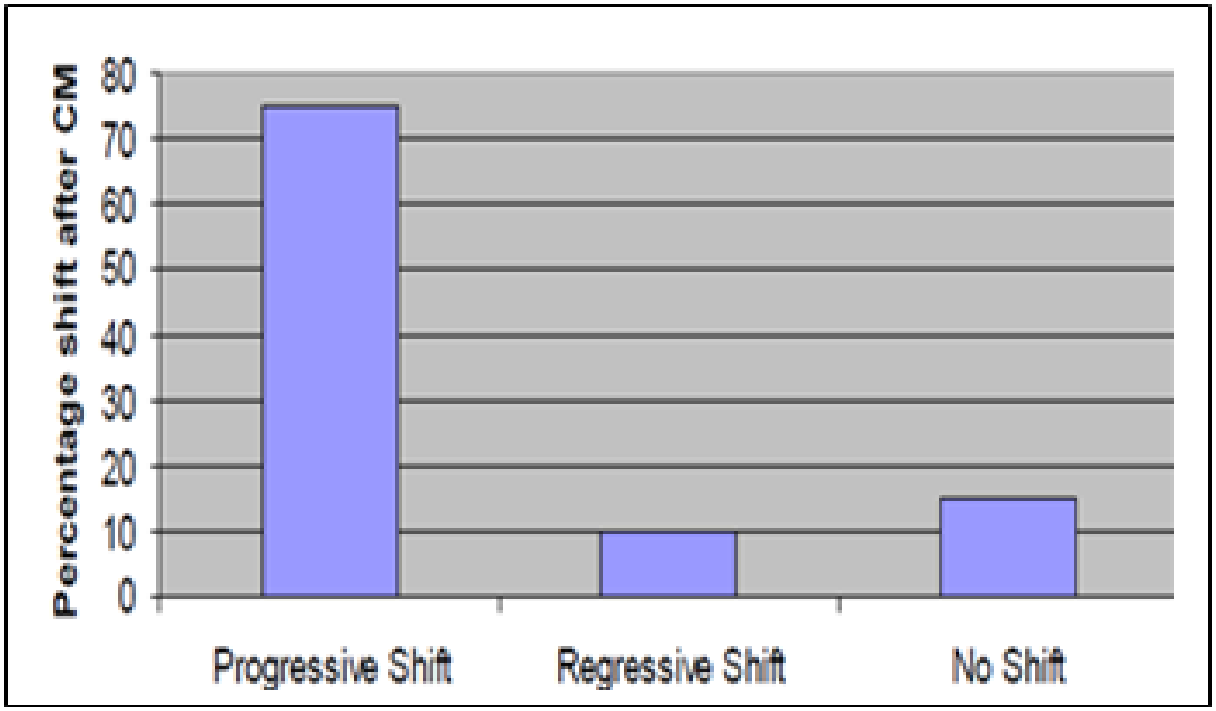
Finally, the outcomes of the initiative have not been tracked using some preordained indicators over time. While an overview of the CM programme shows shifts in values, and anecdotes from villages suggest an improvement in officials' attitudes and behaviors, the program has had no internal MIS to track changes within officials. As the program scales up to other large publically delivered schemes, it would be important to develop some common indicators to monitor the change process. That would help support continued advocacy and would help ensure that the initiative reaches a critical mass or threshold from where it doesn't need dependence on a standalone project.

It would appear that continuity of leadership at the top (provided by Mr.Nayar), the long tenure of the initiative (nearly 10 years from 2004 to 2015) and the space provided by the project (with a cross cutting theme of water which served as a unifying factor across departments), were crucial in sustaining change management. In a sense, the initiative was able to ride on the platform provided by the project to experiment. Grant funding from the World Bank also gave ample room for learning and innovation through experimentation.

Whether it would continue as well in the future depends, however, not only on the commitment of government officials involved in this initiative, but also on funding and the political and bureaucratic support received. While funding may not be a major constraint, with several Departments having funds for Information, Education and Communication (IEC) activities and capacity building, political and bureaucratic support are subject to the individual perceptions and inclinations.

Still, the state of Tamil Nadu can be proud of having developed a unique resource: a growing group of government officials committed to work for change at the very grassroots, irrespective of monetary rewards or the social prestige of promotions and positions.

Evaluation by 'Values Technology, Californiaon Values Shift amongst officials of Eight Departments under IAMWARM Project (Report III)



Values shift with CAN in TN Water Utility (2007)
Source: Joy. L, 2007.

While studying a shift in values amongst officials across eight departments (all of which followed the **Change Agents Networks (CAN**) model in Tamil Nadu) evaluators reported to the World Bank (**Values Technology California, 2012):**

a) The change training did indeed create significant life-changing shifts in public officials' values. This was expressed both by individuals and by the target cohort.
b) The change programme supported officials in aligning personal values with the values of the public service as explored in the programme and securing their foundational values.

A similar external evaluation **(Joy, 2007**) done in the **Tamil Nadu Rural Water Supply Program (TNRWS) in 2007** reported significant shifts in the values of engineers who have worked with the change management (CAN) model. The evaluation goes on to report

'We conclude that, without doubt, the premises of the Change model are sound and that the programme is effective in shifting values as it is designed to do. This suggests

validity for the hypotheses that change can come from within the field-level arena of the public sector to improve public service delivery by changing personal values'

(Values Technology, California, 2012).