

The implementation of the Tsunami Livelihood Restoration Project – Progress report 2005- by Priyantha Jayakody and P.G. S. Somarathne

Background

Just after the tsunami devastation, International Water Management institute (IWMI) addressed the issue of helping people affected by the tsunami to rapidly recover from the shock and start their normal day-to-day livelihood activities. Under the tsunami relief program a research team from the IWMI headquarters launched a program to assess the impact of the tsunami on livelihoods of people in Hambantota district. Hambantota was selected as the IWMI intervention area as IWMI's benchmark river basins, where its research activities are concentrated, are located in the Hambantota district. Through the use of Rapid- Rural- Appraisal and other methods community needs were assessed and with the understanding that agriculture sector receives less attention of the various intervention programs implemented in the area by NGOs and other parties, it was decided that IWMI should use its relief fund attention to restore agriculture related livelihood activities.

In discussion with the farmers, farmer organizations, the Range Director of the Irrigation Department, Hambantota and other agency officials, IWMI decided to assist in the following activities contributing to livelihood restoration of the affected people:

- Rehabilitation of Paibokka and Karagasara anicut.
- Providing a revolving fund for the Andaragasyaya “Ranketha” Farmer Organization.
- Providing funds to build a permanent store house for Magama “ Shakthi” Farmer Organization.

In the following section, the progress of the activities being implemented by IWMI using the relief fund is reported.

Rehabilitating Paibokka and Karagasara anicut

The Tsunami damaged a number of small irrigation structures in the Hambantota range. Two anicuts that were damaged by Tsunami were selected by IWMI for rehabilitation. These two anicuts serve for about 500 acres (200 ha) of irrigated lands. IWMI has provided Rs 818,000 to rehabilitate these two anicuts and the access roads to them. The proposal was prepared by the Irrigation Engineer of Hambantota, and the Irrigation Department has kindly agreed to undertake the work. IWMI is to monitor the activity until the rehabilitation is completed.



On behalf of IWMI, Priyantha Jayakody handing over a cheque for Rs 818,000 to the Range Director, Irrigation Department, Hambantota (2005/7/03)

Paibokka Anicut

This is the one of the tail-end anicut in the Ridiyagama left bank irrigation canal. The, anicut has four gates that had been damaged by tsunami. The number of households depending on this anicut is around 55 and the area cultivated by them in both seasons is around 40ha. The main crop cultivated by these households is paddy. Access road to this anicut was in dilapidated conditions due to which people in the area faced difficulties in transporting their goods and harvests etc. The ID has by now fixed newly built four gates and rehabilitated the access road. Gabion wall and the channel over- crossing have yet to be completed as agreed with IWMI (figure 02 & 03).

Figure 02 : Paibokka anicut before and after rehabilitation



Figure 03: Access road to Paibokka anicut before and after rehabilitation



Karags ara anicut

This was not directly affected by tsunami but most of the farmers who cultivate lands under this anicut were severely affected. There are 375 of households depending on this anicut under which 150ha are cultivated. This was a four-gate anicut, and one gate was completely damaged. Access road to this anicut was also in bad conditions. As agreed with IWMI, ID has rehabilitated (figure 04) the road and the gates are yet to be fixed.



Figure 04: Access road to Karagas ara anicut before and after rehabilitation



Provide funds to build a permanent store for Magama “Shakthi” Farmer Organization

Members of this farmer organization who are highland farmers have also been badly affected by the tsunami. Their cultivation plots are along the Kirindi Oya river bank. This is a strong and active organization with funds mobilized by the community. Their urgent need is a fertilizer store and a community hall for their Farmer Organization (FO). IWMI has provided them funds up to Rs 200,000 in stages for the material cost of the building. Members of the organization provided voluntary labor for construction work. The building has been constructed up to roof level and within the first half of next year, they are to complete the whole building.

Figure 05 : Members of the “Sakthi” FO actively participating



Provide a revolving fund for the Andaragasyaya “Ranketha” Farmer Organization

Agrarian Services Department has established this organization mobilizing farmers in Andaragasyaya area affected by tsunami to improve their conditions. They have been given agricultural implements by agriculture Department, but the FO required financial support to meet their day-to-day farming needs. The IWMI has donated Rs 200,000 to this FO to be utilized as a revolving fund to provide micro-credit facilities to these farmers. The IWMI has also provided support through training to improve the management capacity of the organization to mobilize members and involve in credit and other financial management activities to improve the effectiveness of the organization.

Figure 05: Dayasena and Premachandra of IWMI conducting a training course and handing over the required books for administration.



Felicitating ceremony

Farmers in the Andaragasyaya area held a felicitating ceremony in October 2005. Farmers thanked the organizations who help them at the devastation. IWMI, CARE, WFP and World Vision INGO's are the leading organizations who provided relief assistance. Around 200 people including agency officials, village leaders and the INGO representatives were present at this event. Schoolchildren brought splendor to this occasion by dancing and singing songs.



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