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## ABSTRACTS



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# **MAKING MINOR IRRIGATION SCHEMES SUCCESSFUL THROUGH COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT – AN EXAMPLE FROM WEST BENGAL**

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*West Bengal Accelerated Development of Minor Irrigation Project*

## **ABSTRACT**

Under the “West Bengal Accelerated Development of Minor Irrigation (WBADMI) Project”, state water resources department has rejuvenated or constructed new minor irrigation schemes and handed them over to the community via Water User Associations (WUAs) for operation and management. We have looked into WUA’s effectiveness as an institution and its impact on the success of minor irrigation schemes. We also compared it with similar other government schemes which do not have WUAs. We find significant increase in cropping intensity, crop diversity and yield for project farmers in comparison to the non-project farmers in schemes without WUAs. The creation of infrastructure and water storage is critical but would be of little use if it is not properly managed. WUA can be an effective institution for that purpose. Lack of proper planning and control, leads to water misuse, low fee collection and lack of maintenance. It threatens long term sustainability of the infrastructure. Positive outcomes in WBADMI schemes are also due to adoption of new technologies and better agricultural practices, which have been facilitated by effective agricultural support services, in terms of additional training and input support from the project. Our results indicate that community involvement in the form of WUAs and agricultural support services will definitely add critical value towards similar minor irrigations schemes of the government. Through proper convergence with other government development schemes and making scheme operation more centralized under WUAs, there is scope to sustain WUAs in the long term and get added benefits from water infrastructure.

**Keywords** : agricultural support services; minor irrigation infrastructure; participation; water management; water user associations