# Abstract6-2-2

Viewpoint – Ignorance, error and myth in south Asian irrigation: Critical reflections on experience

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ABSTRACT: As a researcher in South Asia in the early 1970s, I was allowed to be seduced by the (then) neglected topic of water management and small-scale irrigation, which opened the door to a whole orchard of low-hanging fruit, much of it to be plucked simply by wandering around. This led later to time working on canal and other irrigation with the Ford Foundation in Delhi. There I was bemused by the close agreement of the World Bank and the Indian Government, dishonest research, and absurdly impractical policies, until I began to understand the relationships and interests at play, my earlier naiveté justifying a consultant saying "you have to understand, this is India". This was an India I did not wish to recognise. With hindsight, I regret my reticence and timidity: whistleblowers are needed.

KEYWORDS: canal irrigation, critical reflection, error, ignorance, myth, research, water management, World Bank, India, Sri Lanka

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