

## KIRLOSKAR PUMPS YIELD BUMPER CROPS IN LAO PDR



Pontoon Mounted MFP Lao PDR

### Introduction

In the 1980s the Mekong River was untapped and the country relied on rain water for their rice production. In 1984, the Indian President gifted 22 Kirloskar Diesel Pumps to the President of Lao PDR. The pumps worked effectively to increase the rice production during the dry season.

### Challenge

The main problem was that the crops were washed away due to heavy rains and consequent floods. This forced the government to increase the imports. An auxiliary problem was the hilly terrain of Lao PDR which made it difficult for the pumping stations to suck in water as the water levels from the Mekong River fluctuated in the monsoons and the dry season.

### Solution

The Government of Laos implemented an aggressive water policy and allocated funds for the import of irrigation equipments which included electric and diesel engine driven pumpsets. Kirloskar Brothers Limited (KBL) was chosen amidst stiff international competition for the supply of equipment complete with all accessories mounted on pontoons as KBL pumpsets were economically viable and technically superior. The Ministry of Agriculture & Forestry, Lao PDR placed its first order of 1410 pumpsets ranging from 7 HP to 100 HP with KBL and thus began a long and fruitful association. There are more than 7500 Kirloskar pumpsets along the 18 provinces around Mekong River on the Laos landscape which pump water from the river in order to irrigate the adjoining fields.

### Learning

The best way to solve the problem of the fluctuating water levels was to mount the pumpsets on the pontoons. Some of the advantages of pontoon mounted pumpsets as against permanently fixed pumpsets were found as below:

- No costly civil work is required to build pumping stations to house the pumpsets making them less expensive.
- Such pumpsets are portable and can be towed from one place to another depending on the fields to be irrigated.

- Pontoon mounted pumpsets can be effectively operated even in varying river water levels. This proves to be a major benefit over the permanently fixed pumpsets, housed in pumping stations which cannot operate in falling water levels due to their inability to suck water from great depths.

### **Conclusion**

After the supply of Kirloskar pumps, the land under irrigation in Lao PDR has grown from 15,000 hectares to 1,40,000 hectares. With a manifold increase in the Rice production, from 20,000 tons to 5,00,000 tons Laos PDR is steadily heading towards self sufficiency in rice production. Certain provinces have started exporting rice due to surplus production. A series of well placed and well executed orders by KBL have boosted the economy of Lao PDR for the better.