A STUDY ON THE PRESENT STATUS AND DEVELOPMENT OF RUGAM IRRIGATION COMMAND AREA OF THE BATTICALOA DISTRICT

BY

ABDUL CAREEM RIFAS

FACULTY OF AGRICULTURE

EASTERN UNIVERSITY

SRI LANKA

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ABSTRACT

Irrigation scheme development is one of the most commonly practised strategies to secure food self-sufficiency in most of the developing countries. Therefore, it is necessary to assess the impact of the irrigation intervention on the different members of the community. This research aims at assessing the impact of irrigation intervention on crop cultivation, livestock production, health and environment. These parameters will tell us a lot about the situation of the farmers' livelihood and socio-economic aspects in general.

This research was conducted at the Rugam command area between November 2009 to February 2010 using a questionnaire based study system. For the study purpose the command area was divided into three regions namely head, mid and tail based on the distance from the tank. Secondary data review, key informant interview, and questionnaire survey were used as methods of data collection. Both qualitative and quantitative research methods were used for the data analysis.

Study proved that among the three regions, paddy is the main crop planted in large scale farming. Most of the farmers (62.5%) owned less than 5ac extent of land. Nearly 30.8% of farmers owned 6-10 acres of land including high lands. From the study it was revealed that, about 95% of farmers from head are doing twice a year production and also most of the farmers (90%) using tank water as major source. After the end of internal war extent of cultivation land is now increased however, irrigation water availability and rain fall are the controlling factors. There is no difference in socio economic and livelihood of the farmers among the head, mid and tail. Though the living status of farmers increasing through the Rugam scheme.

The irrigation helped the farmers to get pasture and fodder for their livestock through increased straw and increased natural vegetation during the dry period, though which is controlling factor for the livestock development in command area. However still besides the positives impacts of the schemes it is also result in some environmental change; especially salinity and soil fertility decrease. Women benefited a lot from the schemes by producing vegetables and renting their land on the command. Though the living status of farmers increasing through Rugam scheme but the women participation (5%) was not at desirable level. Irrigation activities associated with major problems in managing the socio-cultural issues in the command area, maintenance, water allocation, water distribution, it is found that, the intervention of irrigation schemes highly benefited the farmers in improving their livelihood. It could be observed that 82% of the farmers were sufficient in the food production as well, but the management systems are very poor so that a many negative environmental impacts have been observed.

Keywords: Irrigation, Command area, Rugam tank, water, Management, livelihood

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