

F-04 Assessment of farmer's preference for mobilization of resources for irrigation management using contingent valuation technique

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Participatory irrigation system management was the major irrigation management policy in the 1990s. The main outcome of the policy is irrigation management turnover to farmers, in which full responsibility for mobilization of adequate amount of resources towards irrigation management from field channel to distributory channel lies on farmers.

Past research findings suggest that, there is a deficiency between level of resource mobilized by farmers for system Operation and Maintenance (O & M) and actual requirements. The objective of the study is to assess the level of farmers' willingness to mobilize resources using contingent valuation technique and to propose necessary policy changes.

The research was conducted in 2 major irrigation schemes (Rajangana and Mee-Oya Irrigation Systems) during Maha 1995. A structured questionnaire and informal discussions with key informants were main methods used to elicit necessary information.

The findings reveal that, there is Willingness to Pay (WTP) among farmers for O & M. The level of WTP is Rs. 90/acre/year at 1995 price in addition to current level of labour mobilization. The WTP in terms of cash and materials with current level of labour mobilization by farmers alone is not sufficient for sustainable irrigation system maintenance. It will be adequate with current level of resource mobilized by the line agency. However, there is no mechanism adopted by farmer organizations (FOs) to capture the farmers WTP towards irrigation system management. Unless otherwise, government provides necessary guidance to FOs in this regard, the long term sustainability of the irrigation infrastructure is doubtful.