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Sustainable economic development with particular reference to diversion of Mau Ara to Malala Oya basin

Over exploitation of water resources in Malala Oya basin - one of the driest basins in the country; has created severe water shortages. Consequently the cropping intensity has reached 0.7 over the years and nearly every year there has been a shortage of drinking water while water wells go dry.

Further, almost all employment opportunities of the inhabitants within the basin is in agriculture and due to lack of water there is very little agriculture and consequently there is hunger and also unutilized labor. The land resource available for development in the basin is about 20,000 ha.

Hence a decision was made to divert Mau Ara water to Malala Oya basin by building a reservoir across Mau Ara and feeder canals from there. This type of project did not attract foreign funding and hence the GOSL decided to invest local funding SL Rs.725 Million.

Finally all the work has been carried out using all local engineering, labor and other resources and is nearing completion. This is sustainable in all respects as about SL Rs 200 million has been paid to local labor from the villages, the GOSL is not indebted to foreign countries and the job has been completed well within the estimated cost, while the project has trained 30 young engineers, hundreds of skilled personnel from the surrounding villages during the construction process.