

Village tank cascades and criteria for rehabilitation

The procedure adopted at present for small tank rehabilitation under cascades is the same as that developed by the Irrigation Department a few decades back. Criteria for selection of tank for rehabilitation was first mooted in 1980 with the World Bank assisted Village Irrigation Rehabilitation Project (VIRP), Medium Irrigation Rehabilitation Project (MIRP), and finally under the national Irrigation Rehabilitation Project (NIRP). During the implementation of the VIRP, certain attempts were made to rationalize the approach, but it was not possible to arrive at a more rational approach that takes into consideration a proper diagnosis of both technical and institutional problems. If proper criteria for selection of tanks had been evolved during the VIRP before the implementation of the NIRP, destination of the NIRP would have been somewhat different and more meaningful. This paper makes an attempt to highlight a more rational approach to adopt criteria in selection.

The purpose of this paper is to highlight the finding of this study for the benefit of engineers of the Irrigation Department and other agencies involved with future tank rehabilitation program. The study is based on the investigation of 96 cascades and more than 1000 tanks in the dry zone of Anuradhapura District.