

### **Food security - an imminent days need**

Self sufficiency in essential food is mainly responsible for the sovereignty and integrity of a country. In the Golden era of our ancient kings which extends to more than 2500 years, through a systematically planned and managed hydraulic development we were self sufficient in our staple diet.

Due to foreign invasions, collapse of kingdoms, and reasons yet to be unknown, with the neglect and collapse of Irrigation net work, we were forcibly dragged to a dependency syndrome for food, through which we were left in the lurch and are still struggling to get out of the danger, since independence.

In the latter part of 18th century, British's on realizing the value of Irrigated Agriculture instituted the Irrigation Department in 1900. During the past century Irrigation Department was able to reactivate the devastated and dilapidated ancient Irrigation Net Work. Further to cater the demand for food, unemployment in the recent past since independence several multipurpose new constructions like Senanayake Samudra, Rajangana, Lunugamwehera, Inginimitiya, Mau-Ara were successfully commissioned.

There are 560 ha of Irrigated Lands under agencies Irrigation Department, Mahaweli Authority and Provincial Councils. Recorded annual harvest of paddy from the Irrigated Agriculture is

around 130 M. Bushels. The National value of the product is around Rs 50,000 million which is about 25% of the countries annual revenue.

Sri Lanka being an Asian Country, people are inherited with Rice as the staple Diet. Spontaneous switching over for artificial diets has proved to be allergic to the system. However, findings from the statistical data of the Central Bank report reveals that still we are depending on wheat flour to a percentage of around 20-30 of the annual food requirement.

Incurring an annual expenditure of more than SL Rs 12000 million on the import of wheat flour. It is apparent that rice export countries like china, India, Burma, Vietnam etc. may reduce the exports in the near future due to internal demand for food. In such a complex scenario Irrigation Department has launched an intensive programme of participatory Irrigation Management with the extensive support services from FOO, Dept. of Agriculture, Agrarian Services for increasing Water & land productivity