

Identification of constraints and solutions in a rice farming system pertaining to water management

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The farmers in *Muthukandiya* scheme have encountered severe problems pertaining to water management, and as a result, limitations prevail in production enhancement of crops, specially rice. This study attempts to identify constraints and possible solutions by undertaking Participatory Rural Appraisal exercise. The field investigations were launched during Feb-March, 2003. Six focus group interviews and free scoring techniques were employed to gather data. In each such forum, 12-15 farmers (total 75-90) participated. The results reveal that management and monitoring aspects in the irrigation system were largely neglected. As examples, siltation of main canal and field canals, damage to canal banks by tethered cattle, encroachment of canal reservation, shortage of irrigation water to certain fields of commanded area, lack of farmer participation in maintaining the system; etc. can be highlighted. This situation warrants urgent irrigation rehabilitation programme and further, establishment of effective monitoring system. It is also necessary to receive farmer participation for irrigation management through community based organizations as some of the problems can be removed through integration of beneficiaries to the system management.

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