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Water distribution efficiency over right bank canal – Lunugamwehera irrigation scheme

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The Lunugamwehera Irrigation Scheme was planned and constructed to increase paddy production. However; farmers in different areas along the irrigation canal complain about poor and inadequate water distribution. This study was designed to assess the adequacy and timely supply of water along the right bank canal of Lunugamwehera irrigation scheme. The data were collected from two villages; Samanpura and Ellegala. Samanpura is located at the tail end and Ellegala at the head end of the canal. Thirty farmers from each village were selected according to the stratified sampling technique. A questionnaire survey and informal discussions were conducted to collect data other than the secondary information.

According to the results water conveyance efficiency of Ellegala and Samanpura are 86% and 52% respectively indicating that head-end farmers get better access to water. Farmers in Ellegala receive higher water volumes. 89% of Ellegala farmers are satisfied about the adequacy of water. However, both villages receive water on time, but reported discrepancies in water volume ($P = 0.00$). Productivity of paddy in Samanpura is comparatively low for both yala and maha seasons. 79% of Samanpura farmers are not satisfied about the management and water distribution efficiency of the scheme. In contrast 86% of Ellegala farmers have a positive perception on water distribution. This has restricted Samanpura farmers from crop diversification resulting in limited choices of income sources compared to Ellegala farmers. Proper maintenance of reservoir and canal, improvement of the water distribution schedule for tail end, introduction of rain water harvesting system to tail end are some suggestions by farmers to mitigate the disparities in the water distribution over the right bank canal of the Lunugamwehera irrigation scheme.

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