

Present Status and Development of Unnichchai Irrigation Command Area of Batticaloa

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ABSTRACT. Understanding and analyzing the irrigation related problems in a broader context of both technical and social realities, is necessary for an irrigation scheme development and management. In this view, this study was conducted at the Unnichchai command area of Batticaloa district during September 2009 to March 2010 to assess the status of the agricultural production, socio-economic and livelihood conditions of the farmers.

The study shows that there are range of variations in socioeconomic and livelihood of farmers in the command area that determined the involvement of farming activities. Women's participation (12%) was not at desirable level and there are misunderstanding of farmers in water use and allocation for their cultivation. Most of the farmers (80%) are having a moderate level of socioeconomic status because of irrigation schemes. Only few farmers (14%) are involved in large scale farming. As the livelihood is concerned, the farmers depend on alternative sources for income like inland fishing,

The availability of grazing lands is the major constraint for livestock development, because during dry season most of the grazing lands are dried due to unavailability of water. Due to this the livestock farmers are shifting their livestock to other places. In crop development, the major constraints are the threat of wild animals, unpredictable rainfall pattern and water scarcity in tail region. It also revealed that, crop and livestock sectors of command area are growing exponentially after the end of the war by increasing the extent of cultivated land. However, awareness programmes related to community participation especially women's participation in command area development, efficient water use and water allocation will assist to improve the present conditions of the Unnichchai command area.

Key words: Command Area, Irrigation Scheme, Community Participation, Cultivation.

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