Past and Present Role of Water Management to reduce the Impacts of Droughts and Floods in the North Central Province of Sri Lanka

L.M.A.P.Gunawardhana[1]

Although Sri Lanka claims a long history, only after the arrival of Aryans in the 6th century B.C. Sri Lankan civilization was started. Normally during the south-west monsoon season i.e. months of May to August North Central Dry Zone (NCDZ) receives low rainfall and faces droughts while in the north east monsoon season, especially months of November to January receives high rainfall which leads floods. Aryan built small village tanks to provide water in the dry period. Later, they had to build large scale tanks in the NCDZ to cater for expanding needs. In the ancient times, tanks were built with high technology to reduce impacts of droughts and floods. But at present, the ancient water management system and technology is not being followed and the impact of droughts and floods is increasing. The objective of this research was to identify past water management technology within the tank cascade system and to identify the present status of water management in the NCDZ of Sri Lanka. Researcher used both primary and secondary data. Key interviews, groups discussion were used to collect the primary data. Books, magazine, internet were used to collect secondary data. Qualitative analysis was used to analyze the data and text was the mode of data presenting. Results highlight that the impacts of droughts and floods in the NCDZ could have been reduced using rich water management technology used in the ancient time. All the tanks have been placed as the way of cascade. But at present, the impact of droughts and floods has been increasing especially due to poor water management. Hence, it is time to re-introduce the ancient water management process and technology for the betterment of present and future generations.

Key words: Droughts, Floods, Impacts, Tank Cascade, Water Management.

1Department of Social Sciences, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Mihintale, pradeeplmap85@gmail.com