

Sri Lanka

Impact Evaluation on Walawe Left Bank Irrigation Upgrading and Extension Project Phase(1)(2)

Study period from March 2009 to July 2009

Summary of the Evaluation

This evaluation analyzes the impact of the irrigation upgrading project on social development. Specifically, using a quantitative impact evaluation method, it aims to test the conventional hypothesis that irrigation-related projects lead to social capital* accumulation through the formation of water user groups, etc.

The evaluation results are expected to yield lessons learned that are useful for the sustainability of infrastructure projects, which will in turn be fruitful for the effective implementation of similar cooperation.

Background and Objectives of the Evaluation

Since 2001, former JBIC has been continuously collecting data through household surveys and conducting impact evaluations in the project area. The data showed that irrigation construction contributes to poverty reduction. In light of the results and data, this evaluation aims to conduct a more detailed analysis of the impact of the irrigation construction project on social development.

From a social development perspective, contributing to social capital accumulation among farmers is important in terms of

the smooth operation of water user groups and reduced transaction costs, with impacts on the sustainability of irrigation infrastructure. Yet to date, no impact evaluation has closely examined whether irrigation infrastructure construction can promote social capital accumulation among farmers.

This evaluation takes accurate measurements of social capital, and examines the effects of irrigation construction on social capital accumulation.

Evaluation Method and Preliminary Results

Questionnaires have generally been used to measure social capital. Due to large measurement errors, however, the accuracy of subjective data has often been questioned. To obtain an accurate assessment of social capital, this evaluation used various methods from experimental economics that has recently been making great strides, and directly observed and collected indicator measurements. Specifically, social capital data was collected by conducting experiments that measure peoples' trust and cooperation. By including the households that were continuously surveyed to date, the evaluation can access detailed panel data collected over a long time.

Initial analyses based on these data finds a positive correlation between irrigation construction and social capital level. It is shown that the more years of access to irrigation, the more accumulated the social capital is. Moving forward, JICA intends to refine the analysis method and conduct a detailed analysis of the causality between irrigation construction and social

capital accumulation.



A banana market. The area is now a major producer of bananas because of the project.

* The concept of social capital is multidimensional and lacks a uniform definition, but includes trust, norms of reciprocity, values, social networks, and citizen participation. Reports of JICA and the World Bank have previously presented definitions such as, "social factors that influence collective action necessary for the achievement of the development objective, either within a society / group or among societies and groups" and "social and cultural cohesion, norms, and values that shape the interactions between people and the organizations / institutions in which they belong."