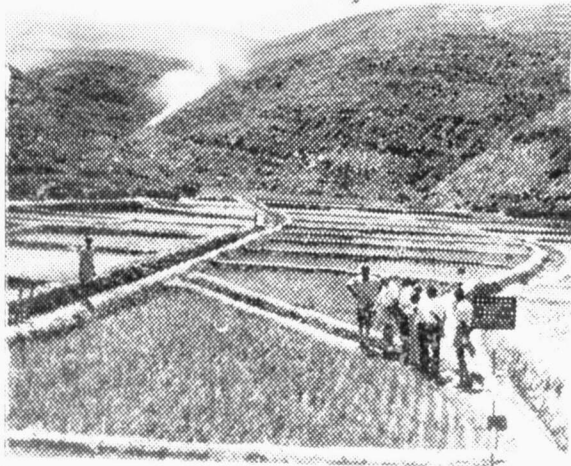


"Everything Living Is Created From Water"

That quote from the Koran captures the incredible importance of water, for without this vital resource there is no life. The two basic natural resources in agriculture are water and land. One becomes the prime resource when it is limited, relative to the other, and this demands a more efficient use of the limited resource. Water is the more scarce resource in the 12 districts of the dry zone which produce more than 60 percent of our paddy which is also the mainstay of the dry zone economy. It is of crucial importance therefore that water resources in these areas are efficiently managed and put to the best use. Infact, the ultimate development of agriculture in Sri Lanka depends on water availability and its optimum use. Irrigation development and efficient water management have received a fresh impetus in recent years in connection with the Mahaweli Development Project. Hitherto the main emphasis has been on the supply of irrigation water but today it's effective management as a scarce resource is gaining importance. The pictures on this page illustrate some of this varied practices and techniques being adopted to derive maximum benefits from these scarce resources.



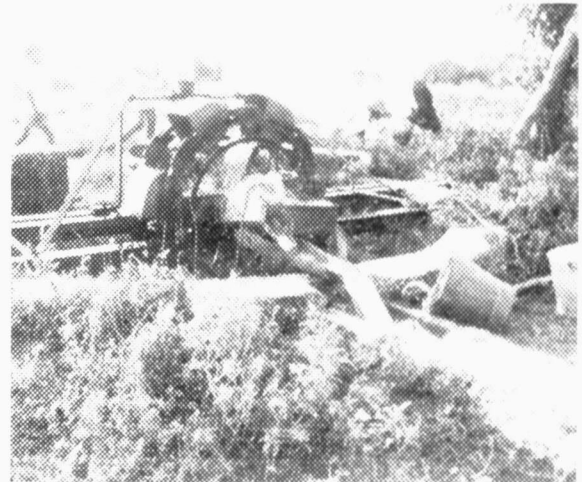
The standard method of farm ditches which were used to divert and distribute water to the small fields in the hill country of Sri Lanka depicted above. This pattern can particularly be seen in the irrigation efforts taken to distribute water from plot to plot.



Some of the indigenous devices used by the farmers at Vavuniya to control water in the fields coming under lift irrigation are seen above. Methods practised include the 'ridge and furrow' system, and the 'basin' system; the latter seen being adopted here.



Dry zone farmers are today alive to the serious problem of water scarcity and its efficient use. Under the traditional practices either draft power or human labour has to be employed to draw water. This has created a sense of appreciation of the value and importance attached to the efficient use of water. The pictures above and below depict farmers adopting such practices.



The above picture shows the take over of the importance of traditional modes of water use by modern inputs such as pumps and machinery. Studies done in the Vavuniya district revealed changes in values related to water and water use with the adaption of modern technology.