

## The Quest for Irrigation in a Semi-arid Area: A Study in Micro-Level Implications

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**ABSTRACT** Traditionally in semi-arid areas, farmers depended upon rain water, tanks and open wells for cultivation. Growing dry crops having different maturation period under mixed cropping formed the mechanism for coping with the uncertain returns of dry cultivation. A shift towards commercial crops, which required more water made the farmers to go for individual borewells and pump sets. Availability of institutional finance as part of developmental programmes further added to this process. With the preference for private borewells, maintenance of tanks got neglected. Open wells got dried up due to the presence of powerful jet pumps in the vicinity which drew water from greater depths. With increasing use ground water, water table is going down steadily, and the sustainability of cultivation is being threatened. The study points out the urgent need for evolving a water use and cropping policy for semi and areas.