

## Efficient Operation of On-farm Reservoir for Crops Requiring Five Numbers of Irrigation

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### ABSTRACT

The world water day is an occasion to reflect on the great importance of water for the existence of humanity. Without water, there is no life. Therefore, there is no greater challenge facing humankind than the challenge of harnessing and using water wisely and efficiently especially in agriculture sector, which uses major quantity of fresh water and also wastes considerable amount of water due to use of less efficient techniques of irrigation. The present study deals with improvement in water irrigation efficiency of crops requiring Five numbers of irrigations with the use and efficient operation of on-farm reservoir (OFR). The study suggests that out of different manners of use of OFR, there is one particular manner, which yields maximum water irrigation efficiency.

**Keywords:** On-farm reservoir, Irrigation efficiency, Operation of OFR and Efficient path.

Date of Submission: 26-10-2017

Date of acceptance: 04-11-2017

### I. INTRODUCTION

Water is a natural resource of a region whose availability is limited by its topography and climate. Out of so many demands of water, the most outstanding demand in India as per FAO(2003) is for agriculture which consumes about 86% of all the water withdrawals. The other areas like domestic use, industrial and other demands require about 8%, 5% and 1% respectively. A major portion of valuable irrigation water is lost to the atmosphere through evaporation and to the ground through seepage loss during its conveyance from source to the field. This leads to poor irrigation efficiency (Danny et al., 1997). It is therefore necessary to devise efficient techniques, which can yield higher water irrigation efficiency. Though certain amount of water loss can be saved by means of adopting better irrigation methods and

reducing the conveyance distance, however, due to prohibitive initial cost and practical constrains in developing countries, their use is restricted and may not be feasible. It is, therefore, important that water efficiency should be improved so that considerable amount of fresh water can be saved.

### II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

If the capacity of OFR is assumed to be two times the excess runoff, then there can be possibility of filling of remaining capacity of OFR through direct withdrawal of water. Thus, in addition to agricultural needs during each irrigation, if the farmer aspires to conserve water in OFR through direct withdrawal of water in OFR as shown in Fig. 1, the network of supplemental use of OFR water with different rotations of irrigations of crop becomes complex.

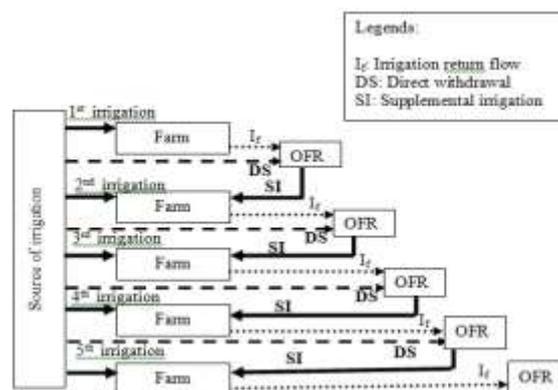


Fig. 1: Flow diagram showing the source of water to OFR and its utilizations

After each rotation of irrigation, the runoff of excess irrigation in the farm will make OFR either partially filled or full, depending on the storage capacity of OFR. The size of OFR depends on the type of crop(s), supplemental irrigation needs, topography and climate of the area (Palmer et al., 1981, Palmer et al., 1982 and Panigrahi and Panda, 2003). Assuming that capacity of OFR is twice the runoff, after 1<sup>st</sup> rotation of irrigation the OFR will be half filled. However, in addition to agricultural needs during each watering, if the farmer aspires to conserve water in OFR through direct withdrawal of additional water through supply channel to OFR as shown in Fig.1, the network of supplemental use of OFR water with different number of irrigations of crop becomes complex. At the onset of the 2<sup>nd</sup> rotation of irrigation, the farmer has various options of using stored water of OFR depending on the filled status of OFR. Any amount of water can be withdrawn from OFR depending on the ambition of the farmer. Assuming that a farmer has only three options of withdrawal of water, so that the OFR remains either full/ nearly full, half full/ nearly half full or empty/ nearly empty. After the 2<sup>nd</sup> rotation of irrigation, the OFR will have different filled status depending upon the adapted withdrawal manner of

water by the farmer from OFR. Similarly, after the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> rotations of irrigation, there can be various possibilities corresponding to half filled or completely filled or empty status of OFR. On the onset of the 5<sup>th</sup> and the last irrigation, farmer would have to, in any case, empty OFR, otherwise stored water would be wasted, without any utility. Thus a network can be drawn considering these possibilities as shown in Fig.2. for a crop requiring five number of irrigations, which is self-explanatory. In Fig.2, columns 'i', 'k' and 'l' together, 'n' and 'o' together and 'q' and 'r' together as well as 's' represent status of OFR after 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> rotations of irrigation, respectively. Here, columns 'l', 'o' and 'r' correspond to direct filling of OFR through supply channel. Columns 'j', 'm', 'p' and 's' indicate options of withdrawal of water. The number of possible strategies for this frequency crop is ninety seven.

Once the network of various strategies is drawn, the problem is, thus, to identify the most efficient strategy or path of operation, which would lead to maximum saving of water. The most efficient strategy of operation is identified and explained with the help of an illustrative example.

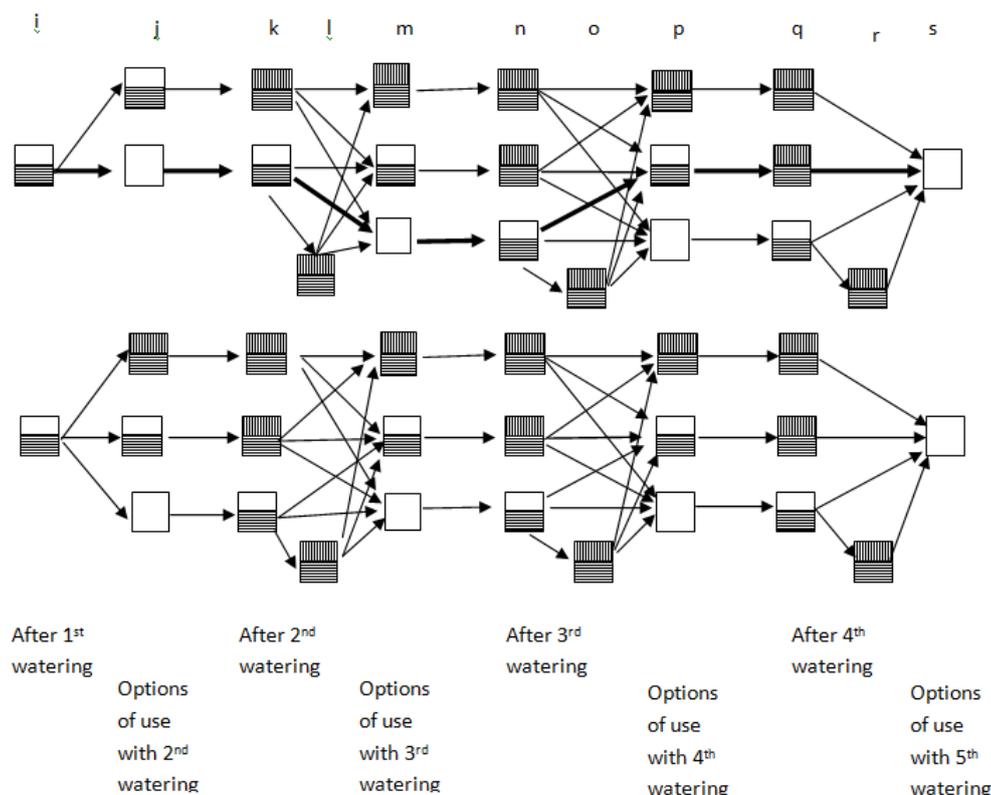


Fig. 2: Network for a crop of five number of irrigations

### III. ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLE

Consider a farm having a lined OFR at the end corner of the field as shown in Fig. 3(a) and

3(b). The OFR can be filled by agricultural runoff collection from the field and directly through the supply channel. Let the total area of the field be 1

hectare excluding the surface area of OFR. It is assumed that the crops grown require 50 cm of water in 5 numbers of irrigation. It is given that water application efficiencies through field and supply channel are 75% and 90 %, respectively. The respective coefficients due to evaporation, deep percolation and runoff are assumed as 0.25, 0.25 and 0.50. It is also assumed that during entire crop period, there is no rainfall and application efficiency of OFR is 100%.

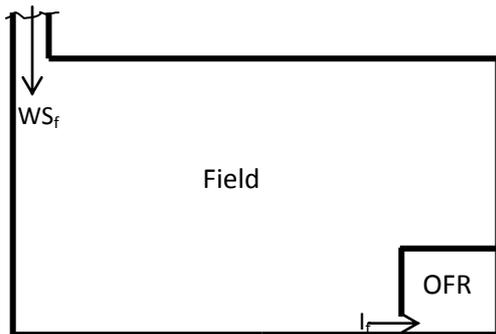


Fig. 3.a Plan of field and lined OFR

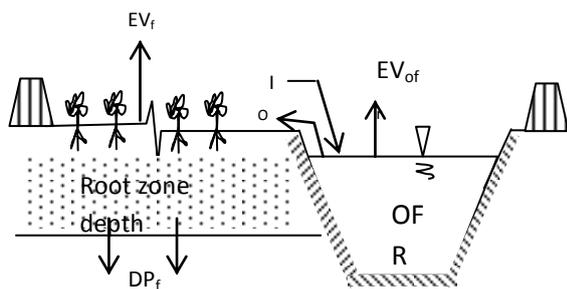


Fig. 3.b Cross-section of lined OFR with flow details

#### LIST OF NOTATIONS

Let us use the following notations and equations for the convenience, as shown in Fig. 3.(b).

$DP_f$  = Deep percolation loss from field in  $m^3$

$EV_f$  = Evaporation loss from field in  $m^3$

$EV_{ofr}$  = Evaporation loss from surface of the OFR in  $m^3$

$I_f$  = Inflow to the OFR from field as irrigation return flow in  $m^3$

$O_f$  = Outflow or withdrawal from the OFR into field to supplement irrigation needs in  $m^3$

$WS_f$  = Water supply in the field in any particular irrigation in  $m^3$

$C$  = Storage capacity of OFR in  $m^3$

$C_p$  = Percolation coefficient

$d$  = Total depth of crop water requirement in m

$f$  = No. of irrigations of the crop

$K_f$  = Coefficient of water loss from field

$K_{ofr}$  = Coefficient of water loss from OFR through evaporation

$NS$  = Net storage in OFR in  $m^3$

$R_c$  = irrigation return flow coefficient

$TWR$  = Total water required for the particular crop in  $m^3$

$WR$  = Water required by the crop in any particular irrigation in  $m^3$

$\eta_f$  = Water application efficiency of the system. In terms of these notations, the following relationships hold good.

$$WR = \frac{TWR}{f} \quad (1)$$

$$WS_f = \frac{TWR}{\eta_f \cdot f} = \frac{WR}{\eta_f} \quad (2)$$

$$DP_f = C_p \cdot (WS_f - WR) \quad (3)$$

$$EV_f = K_f \cdot (WS_f - WR) \quad (4)$$

$$I_f = R_c \cdot (WS_f - WR) \quad (5)$$

Water balance model of the OFR was run by considering all the inflow and outflow components of the OFR. The inflow is irrigation return flow from the field coming to the OFR and the outflows are evaporation, seepage and percolation and supplemental irrigation supplied to crops in the field. The various components of the OFR water balance model are:

$$S_i - S_{i-1} = NS_i = I_{fi} + P_i - EV_{ofri} - SI_i - DP_{ofri} \quad (6)$$

Where:

$S_i$  is the OFR water storage at stage  $i$ ,  $m^3$

$I_{fi}$  the volume of irrigation return flow from the field to the OFR,  $m^3$

$P_i$  the volume of direct rainfall in the OFR,  $m^3$

$EV_{ofri}$  the volume of water lost as evaporation from the OFR,  $m^3$

$SI_i$  the volume of water used as supplemental irrigation in the cropped field,  $m^3$

$DP_{ofri}$  the volume of water lost as seepage and percolation from the OFR storage,  $m^3$

$i$  is the time index taken as the time interval between two consecutive irrigations.

If  $A_{field}$  is the field area given as:

$$A_{field} = FA - A_{ofr}$$

Where:  $FA$  is the farm area

$A_{ofr}$  is the area of the OFR, the value of total water required ( $TWR$ ) for any crop is estimated by multiplying depth of water required ( $d$ ) by the crop with  $A_{field}$ .

With  $C_p = 0.25$ ,  $K_f = 0.25$ ,  $R_c = 0.50$ , and  $K_{ofr} = 0.1$ , and using the data given in the illustrative example and invoking Eqs.(1), (2), (3), (4), (5) and (6), we get various quantities during first irrigation event at node “i” as :

$$\begin{aligned} WR &= 1000.00 \text{ m}^3 \\ WS_f &= 1333.33 \text{ m}^3 \\ EV_{ofr} &= 33.33 \text{ m}^3 \\ I_f &= 166.67 \text{ m}^3 \\ I_c &= 166.67 \text{ m}^3 \\ WS_c &= 185.19 \text{ m}^3 \\ O_f &= 0 \end{aligned}$$

$C = 2 \times I_f = 333.33 \text{ m}^3$  (Assuming that the maximum storage capacity if OFR =  $2 I_f = C$  i.e after two irrigation events OFR is full provided there is no evaporation loss).

Using the same equations, procedure and the network drawn for a crop requiring five irrigations as shown in Fig. 2, the calculations for saving in water against the respective paths have been produced in Tables 1. The number of possible strategies for a crop of five numbers of irrigations is ninety seven. It is further verified that the most efficient path or strategy for a crop of five numbers of irrigations also remains unaffected by change in the of values of various parameters, such as d,  $\eta_f$ ,  $\eta_c$ ,  $R_c$  and  $K_{ofr}$ .

**Table 1: Saving of water**

Strategy No.	Strategy of operation	WS with OFR (m <sup>3</sup> )	WS without OFR (m <sup>3</sup> )	Net Saving (m <sup>3</sup> )	Saving (%)
1	ij1k1m1n1p1q1s1	6400.00	6666.7	266.67	4.00
2	ij1k1m1n1p2q2s1	6346.67	6666.7	320.00	4.80
3	ij1k1m1n1p3q3s1	6373.33	6666.7	293.33	4.40
4	ij1k1m1n1p3q3r1s1	6466.67	6666.7	200.00	3.00
5	ij1k1m2n2p1q1s1	6280.00	6666.7	386.67	5.80
6	ij1k1m2n2p2q2s1	6286.40	6666.7	380.27	5.70
7	ij1k1m2n2p3q3s1	6304.53	6666.7	362.13	5.43
8	ij1k1m2n2p3q3r1s1	6384.59	6666.7	282.08	4.23
9	ij1k1m3n3p2q2s1	6263.47	6666.7	403.20	6.05
10	ij1k1m3n3p3q3s1	6270.93	6666.7	395.73	5.94
11	ij1k1m3n3p3q3r1s1	6328.59	6666.7	338.08	5.07
12	ij1k1m3n3o1p1q1s1	6478.51	6666.7	188.16	2.82
13	ij1k1m3n3o1p2q2s1	6425.18	6666.7	241.49	3.62
14	ij1k1m3n3o1p3q3s1	6451.84	6666.7	214.82	3.22
15	ij1k1m3n3o1p3q3r1s1	6545.18	6666.7	121.49	1.82
16	ij2k2m2n2p1q1s1	6266.67	6666.7	400.00	6.00
17	ij2k2m2n2p2q2s1	6261.87	6666.7	404.80	6.07
18	ij2k2m2n2p3q3s1	6281.60	6666.7	385.07	5.78
19	ij2k2m2n2p3q3r1s1	6364.14	6666.7	302.52	4.54
20	ij2k2m3n3p2q2s1	6238.93	6666.7	427.73	6.42
21	ij2k2m3n3p3q3s1	6259.20	6666.7	407.47	6.11
22	ij2k2m3n3p3q3r1s1	6326.81	6666.7	339.86	5.10
23	ij2k2m3n3o1p1q1s1	6416.29	6666.7	250.38	3.76
24	ij2k2m3n3o1p2q2s1	6362.96	6666.7	303.71	4.56
25	ij2k2m3n3o1p3q3s1	6389.62	6666.7	277.04	4.16
26	ij2k2m3n3o1p3q3r1s1	6482.96	6666.7	183.71	2.76
27	ij2k2l1m1n1p1q1s1	6525.92	6666.7	140.74	2.11
28	ij2k2l1m1n1p2q2s1	6472.59	6666.7	194.08	2.91
29	ij2k2l1m1n1p3q3s1	6499.26	6666.7	167.41	2.51
30	ij2k2l1m1n1p3q3r1s1	6592.59	6666.7	74.08	1.11
31	ij2k2l1m2n2p1q1s1	6392.59	6666.7	274.08	4.11
32	ij2k2l1m2n2p2q2s1	6395.26	6666.7	271.41	4.07
33	ij2k2l1m2n2p3q3s1	6413.92	6666.7	252.74	3.79
34	ij2k2l1m2n2p3q3r1s1	6494.81	6666.7	171.85	2.58
35	ij2k2l1m3n3p2q2s1	6371.26	6666.7	295.41	4.43

36	ij2k2l1m3n3p3q3s1	6376.59	6666.7	290.08	4.35
37	ij2k2l1m3n3p3q3r1s1	6432.59	6666.7	234.08	3.51
38	ij2k2l1m3n3o1p1q1s1	6604.43	6666.7	62.23	0.93
39	ij2k2l1m3n3o1p2q2s1	6551.10	6666.7	115.57	1.73
40	ij2k2l1m3n3o1p3q3s1	6577.77	6666.7	88.90	1.33
41	ij2k2l1m3n3o1p3q3r1s1	6671.10	6666.7	-4.43	-0.07
42	ij2k3m4n4p4q4s2	6585.19	6666.7	81.48	1.22
43	ij2k3m4n4p5q5s2	6531.85	6666.7	134.81	2.02
44	ij2k3m4n4p6q6s2	6558.52	6666.7	108.15	1.62
45	ij2k3m4n4p6q6r2s2	6651.85	6666.7	14.81	0.22
46	ij2k3m5n5p4q4s2	6451.85	6666.7	214.81	3.22
47	ij2k3m5n5p5q5s2	6455.59	6666.7	211.08	3.17
48	ij2k3m5n5p6q6s2	6471.05	6666.7	195.61	2.93
49	ij2k3m5n5p6q6r2s2	6554.07	6666.7	112.59	1.69
50	ij2k3m6n6p5q5s2	6421.99	6666.7	244.68	3.67
51	ij2k3m6n6p6q6s2	6440.12	6666.7	226.55	3.40
52	ij2k3m6n6p6q6r2s2	6491.85	6666.7	174.81	2.62
53	ij2k3m6n6o2p4q4s2	6663.70	6666.7	2.97	0.04
54	ij2k3m5n5o2p5q5s2	6610.36	6666.7	56.30	0.84
55	ij2k3m6n6o2p6q6s2	6637.03	6666.7	29.64	0.44
56	ij2k3m6n6o2p6q6r2s2	6730.36	6666.7	-63.70	-0.96
57	ij2k4m4n4p4q4s2	6451.85	6666.7	214.81	3.22
58	ij2k4m4n4p5q5s2	6398.52	6666.7	268.15	4.02
59	ij2k4m4n4p6q6s2	6425.19	6666.7	241.48	3.62
60	ij2k4m4n4p6q6r2s2	6518.52	6666.7	148.15	2.22
61	ij2k4m5n5p4q4s2	6318.52	6666.7	348.15	5.22
62	ij2k4m5n5p5q5s2	6343.59	6666.7	323.08	4.85
63	ij2k4m5n5p6q6s2	6359.05	6666.7	307.61	4.61
64	ij2k4m5n5p6q6r2s2	6434.96	6666.7	231.70	3.48
65	ij2k4m6n6p5q5s2	6351.59	6666.7	315.08	4.73
66	ij2k4m6n6p6q6s2	6363.32	6666.7	303.35	4.55
67	ij2k4m6n6p6q6r2s2	6424.30	6666.7	242.37	3.64
68	ij2k4m6n6o2p4q4s2	6554.07	6666.7	112.59	1.69
69	ij2k4m5n5o2p5q5s2	6500.74	6666.7	165.93	2.49
70	ij2k4m6n6o2p6q6s2	6527.41	6666.7	139.26	2.09
71	ij2k4m6n6o2p6q6r2s2	6620.74	6666.7	45.93	0.69
72	ij2k5m5n5p4q4s2	6328.12	6666.7	338.55	5.08
73	ij2k5m5n5p5q5s2	6343.59	6666.7	323.08	4.85
74	ij2k5m5n5p6q6s2	6359.05	6666.7	307.61	4.61
75	ij2k5m5n5p6q6r2s2	6434.96	6666.7	231.70	3.48
76	ij2k5m6n6p5q5s2	6327.05	6666.7	339.61	5.09
77	ij2k5m6n6p6q6s2	6351.59	6666.7	315.08	4.73
78	ij2k5m6n6p6q6r2s2	6422.52	6666.7	244.15	3.66
79	ij2k5m6n6o2p4q4s2	6491.85	6666.7	174.81	2.62
80	ij2k5m5n5o2p5q5s2	6438.52	6666.7	228.15	3.42
81	ij2k5m6n6o2p6q6s2	6465.19	6666.7	201.48	3.02
82	ij2k5m6n6o2p6q6r2s2	6558.52	6666.7	108.15	1.62
83	ij2k5l2m4n4p4q4s2	6651.85	6666.7	14.81	0.22
84	ij2k5l2m4n4p5q5s2	6598.52	6666.7	68.15	1.02
85	ij2k5l2m4n4p6q6s2	6625.19	6666.7	41.48	0.62
86	ij2k5l2m4n4p6q6r2s2	6718.52	6666.7	-51.85	-0.78
87	ij2k5l2m5n5p4q4s2	6518.52	6666.7	148.15	2.22
88	ij2k5l2m5n5p5q5s2	6522.25	6666.7	144.41	2.17
89	ij2k5l2m5n5p6q6s2	6537.72	6666.7	128.95	1.93
90	ij2k5l2m5n5p6q6r2s2	6620.74	6666.7	45.93	0.69
91	ij2k5l2m6n6p5q5s2	6488.65	6666.7	178.01	2.67
92	ij2k5l2m6n6p6q6s2	6506.79	6666.7	159.88	2.40
93	ij2k5l2m6n6p6q6r2s2	6558.52	6666.7	108.15	1.62
94	ij2k5l2m6n6o2p4q4s2	6730.36	6666.7	-63.70	-0.96
95	ij2k5l2m5n5o2p5q5s2	6677.03	6666.7	-10.36	-0.16
96	ij2k5l2m6n6o2p6q6s2	6703.70	6666.7	-37.03	-0.56
97	ij2k5l2m6n6o2p6q6r2s2	6797.03	6666.7	-130.36	-1.96

The strategy of operation of OFR for a crop requiring five numbers of irrigations for maximum water saving is given in Table 2.

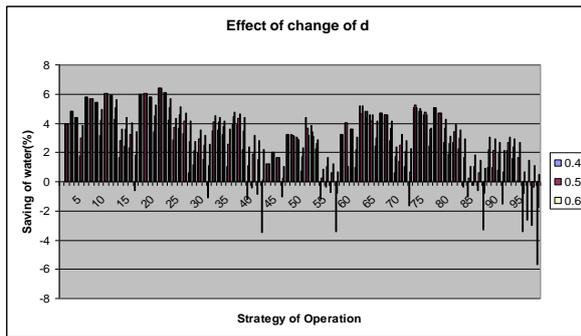
**Table 2: Strategy of operation of OFR for five frequency crop**

Stage of watering	Operation required
After 1 <sup>st</sup> irrigation	Conserve excess irrigation return flow in OFR
With 2 <sup>nd</sup> irrigation	Use entire OFR water as supplemental irrigation
After 2 <sup>nd</sup> irrigation	Conserve excess irrigation return flow in OFR
With 3 <sup>rd</sup> irrigation	Do not use OFR water

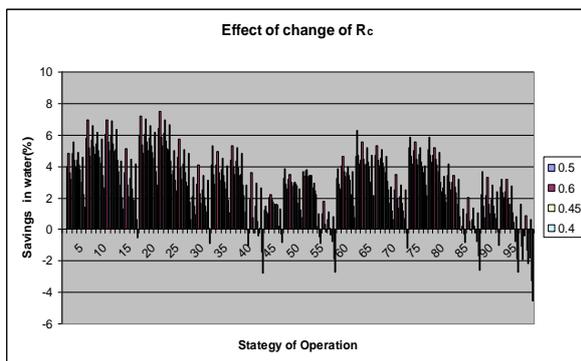
After 3 <sup>rd</sup> irrigation	Conserve excess irrigation return flow in OFR along with the previous storage
With 4 <sup>th</sup> irrigation	Use entire OFR water as supplemental irrigation
After 4 <sup>th</sup> irrigation	Conserve excess runoff in OFR along with the previous storage
With 5 <sup>th</sup> irrigation	Use entire OFR water as supplemental irrigation

**Effect of change of parameters on the most efficient path**

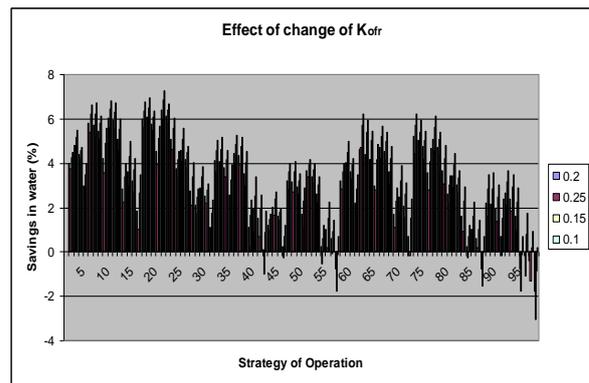
To study the effect of change of various parameters such as  $d$ ,  $\eta_f$ ,  $\eta_c$ ,  $\eta_{ofr}$ ,  $R_c$  and  $K_{ofr}$  on most efficient path the same procedure was used. The results of the effect of change of  $d$ ,  $\eta_{ofr}$  and  $R_c$  have been graphically represented in Fig. 4(a)-(c). It can be seen that irrespective of the value of these parameters chosen the critical path remains the same. Thus, whatever is value of these parameters, the critical path is always the same as highlighted by bold arrows in Fig.2.



**Fig. 4 a:** Effect of change of depth  $d$  on saving of water



**Fig. 4 b:** Effect of change of Runoff coefficient  $R_c$  on saving of water



**Fig. 4 c:** Effect of change of Evaporation coefficient  $K_{ofr}$  on saving of water

**IV. DISCUSSION**

From the illustrative example, it is, therefore, appreciated that, use of lined OFR and storage of irrigation return flow and its subsequent use leads to better water application efficiency. This is due to the fact that excess irrigation return flow water of each rotation of irrigation is being utilized rather than being allowed to be wasted as surface runoff loss. The proposed methodology does reveal that use of OFR leads to better water application efficiency. However, OFR water must be utilized in a particular fashion so that the irrigation efficiency is maximum.

**V. CONCLUSIONS**

If the farmer aspires to conserve water in OFR through direct withdrawal of water to OFR in addition to agricultural needs during each irrigation, operation sequence of OFR is investigated for supplemental irrigation use in case of crops requiring five numbers of irrigations. Based upon the experiments shown herewith, use of OFR water as supplemental irrigation leads to improved irrigation efficiency. It is expected that the farmers and stake holders of water would encourage the use of OFR to achieve to improved irrigation efficiency.

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International Journal of Engineering Research and Applications (IJERA) is **UGC approved** Journal with Sl. No. 4525, Journal no. 47088. Indexed in Cross Ref, Index Copernicus (ICV 80.82), NASA, Ads, Researcher Id Thomson Reuters, DOAJ.

Dr. Sanjeev Kumar Gupta. "Efficient Operation of On-Farm Reservoir for Crops Requiring Five Numbers of Irrigation." *International Journal of Engineering Research and Applications (IJERA)*, vol. 7, no. 9, 2017, pp. 14–19.