Tech that saves 35 percent of water to grow paddy

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Representational Image

Hyderabad: A new technique developed by Professor Jayashankar Telangana State Agricultural University could change the way paddy is cultivated in the State. Called Alternate Wetting and Drying Irrigation Practice (AWD), it is expected to reduce 30-35 per cent of water required for growing rice and helps in early maturity. The technique involves irrigating the paddy for a certain number days and after disappearance of water from the field, it is re-flooded. To implement this technique, all that a farmer requires is a 30cm long PVC pipe of 15 cm diameter. The pipe is drilled with holes of 5mm diameter spaced 2 cm apart and later the perforated side of the tube is buried in the paddy field while removing mud from it. The paddy fields are later irrigated up to 5cm above the soil and water is left to drop to 10 cm below the soil surface in the field tube. The AWD irrigation can be started a few days after transplanting the paddy into the field. Depending on the type of the soil, weather conditions and crop growth stage, re-flooding is done between one day and seven days after transplantation till the end of the life-cycle of the paddy. According to the university, which has conducted research, about 3,250 litres of water is required to produce one kg of paddy in the State and the new technique can save up to 660 litres of water per kilogram of paddy. In all, 35 per cent water can be reduced for cultivating the paddy. It is also considered as a climate smart agriculture practice and helps farmers to cope with declining water levels in wells and unforeseen water scarcity situations. This apart, as the paddy fields are periodically irrigated unlike continuous flooding, it reduces emission of methane, a potent greenhouse gas that causes global warming. It also helps increase the net profit as farmers use less water and power besides bringing down labour requirement. “The new AWD technique has been developed as per requirements of farmlands in the State. It reduces water consumption for cultivating paddy and also emission of greenhouse gases. The varsity has demonstrated the techniques to the farmers in 15 districts and is being promoted in largescale across the State,” Dr V Praveen Rao, Vice-Chancellor, Professor Jayashankar Telangana State Agricultural University said.

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