

**BUSITEMA**



**UNIVERSITY**

**FACULTY OF ENGINEERING**

**MASTER'S THESIS**

**IDENTIFICATION OF POTENTIAL IRRIGATION DEVELOPMENT  
SITES IN THE UPPER ASWA CATCHMENT, NORTHERN UGANDA**

**BY**

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## ABSTRACT

Development of irrigation systems requires information on available water supply, terrain, soils, land use, climate and socio-economic factors. This research aimed at identification of potential irrigation infrastructure development sites within the upper Aswa catchment through determination of suitable water abstraction points, quantification of river flows available for irrigation and selection of optimum irrigation method for each of the sites. Suitability criteria for water abstraction points was the presence of surface water accumulation points at the outlet of sub-watersheds of the catchment, soil of moderate infiltration, presence of arable land as well as relatively gentle slopes. The DEM, land use, slope and the soil map of the catchment were obtained and processed. SWAT in QGIS 2.6 environment was used to burn the streams onto the already processed DEM and to divide the area into sub-basins. Twenty three sub-basins were delineated in which eleven sites evaluated were found to be highly suitable for irrigation infrastructure development on the basis of land, soil and slope factors. These sites are located along the three main river systems; Agago, Moroto/Aswal and Aswa II that drain the catchment.

Hydrological Assessment was done by constructing the flow duration curves for historical river discharges for the three main river systems within the study area. A high variability in the daily discharges was observed, depicting unstable flows. The 80% reliable flow for Agago was less than  $1\text{m}^3/\text{s}$ , Aswal (Moroto) was  $0.1\text{m}^3/\text{s}$  and that of AswaII was slightly more than  $5\text{m}^3/\text{s}$ . Comparison of the longterm average monthly discharges with the monthly irrigation requirements of rice crop for small (<100ha), medium (100-500ha) and large scale (>500ha) irrigation development showed that there is need for off-farm storage infrastructure to cater for the December-March dry season corresponding to the lowest discharges and highest irrigation requirements of  $9.5\text{mm}/\text{day}$ . For this period the storage requirement for the river systems in  $\text{m}^3$  are 1436572, 2205610 and 1730241 for Agago, Moroto and Aswa II respectively as determined by subtracting the seasonal irrigation water need to the available discharge throughout the season allowing 25% environmental flow.

Optimum irrigation methods were determined using analytical-technical and technical-economic steps in which the acceptability indices for drip, sprinkler and surface irrigation methods against crop, field and human factors were compared at each of the sites to generate the VIMs of the different irrigation technologies. Across all the sites, surface irrigation method was the most adaptable with VIM ranging from 4 to 5.5. This was followed by sprinkler with VIM ranging from 3 to 4 and the least adaptable method was drip with VIM of 2 to 3.

In conclusion, whereas upper Aswa has expansive land area suitable for irrigation, the acreage that can actually be irrigated is limited to less than 1% due to low river flows during the dry season. Therefore, to increase the acreage under irrigation, it is necessary to consider conjunctive use of groundwater, construction of surface reservoirs alone can increase the irrigation command area by a very small margin.

## DECLARATION

I, **OKETCHO Yoronimo**, declare that this research is my original work and has not been submitted for any award to any other Institution or University before. Any other author's work that was used in creating an establishment for the study reported in this thesis has been duly acknowledged.

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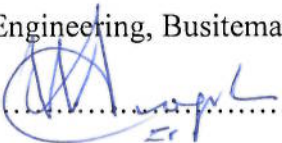
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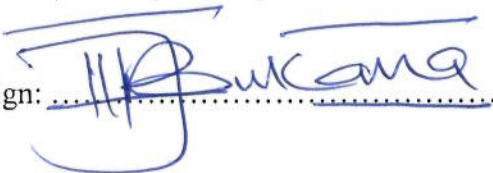
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## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my dear wife Irene Gift; my parents and the entire family.

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## LIST OF ACRONYMNS

AfDB	African Development Bank
Cumec	Cubic meters per second
DEM	Digital Elevation Model
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIS	Geographic/Geospatial Information Systems
GoU	Government of Uganda
GWP	Global Water Partnership
HEST	Higher Education in Science and Technology
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
IFAD	International fund for Agricultural development
ILO	International Labour Organization
IUCN	International union for Conservation of Nature
IWRM	Integrated Water Resources Management
NEH	National Endowment for the Humanities
NDP	National Development Plan
O&M	Operation and maintenance
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
RFWH	Runoff Farming Water Harvesting
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SDSS	Spatial decision Support System
SMCE	Spatial Multiple Criteria Evaluation
SRTM	Shuttle Rader Topography Mission
SWAT	Soil and Water Analysis Tool
UK	United Kingdom
NASA	National
UKAID	United Kingdom Agency for International Development
UN	United Nations
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VIM	Value of Irrigation Method
WGS84	World Geodetic System 1984
WMZ	Water Management Zone
WRM	Water Resources Management

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) two aims at, by 2030, attaining sustainable food production systems and implementing resilient agricultural practices that increase production and productivity, help maintain ecosystems, strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change, extreme weather and other disasters and that progressively improve land and soil quality. It further aims to increase investment, in rural infrastructure, agricultural research and extension services and technology development (UN 2030 agenda for sustainable development, 2015). Irrigation is thus a precursor to achieving this goal.

In Uganda, agriculture employs about 66% of the working population and contributes about 22% to total GDP, 71% of the working population is engaged in subsistence agriculture as their main occupation and 68% of households depend on it for their livelihoods (UBOS, 2014). Therefore, agriculture remains a fundamental part of Uganda's economy. Agriculture in Uganda, which is predominantly rain-fed, is increasingly adversely affected by the climate change and variability manifested in erratic rain patterns, prolonged dry spells, and floods. As a result, farm-level productivity is far below the attainable potential for most crops. Under these conditions, irrigation is critical in aiding farmers against climate change and plays an integral role in transitions from subsistence to commercial farming by ensuring year-round production and farm employment (Wanyama *et al.* 2016).

From 2003 to 2005, Uganda undertook a Water Resources Management (WRM) reform study with the objective "to establish an effective framework for Water Resources Management in Uganda to ensure that water resources are managed in an integrated and sustainable manner." The study led to preparation of a WRM reform strategy which recommended paradigm shift in WRM from centralized to Catchment/Basin. Consequently, Upper Nile, Victoria, Kyoga, and Albert WMZs were delineated. One of the priority issues highlighted by the Upper Nile WMZ stakeholders during the review study was the need to develop the irrigation potential and assuring of food security in the region (MWE, 2011). Despite previous efforts by the Government of Uganda to promote irrigation, less than 1% of agricultural households practice

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