

## **The Causes and Associated Socio-Economic Effects of Floods in Ratnapura**

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Sri Lanka is mostly affected by weather-related hazards as being a small island in the Indian Ocean in the path of two monsoons. Recurrent floods are one of the most common and frequently experienced hazards in Sri Lanka. It is affecting thousands of lives, livelihoods, and damages to properties. Ratnapura is among the severely affected districts from floods in recent decades. In this paper, an attempt was made to analyze the causes and associated socio-economic effects of floods in Ratnapura, Sri Lanka. The micro-level analysis was conducted in the active floodplains of Ratnapura Town West and North Grama Niladhari Divisions. The study employed a descriptive study approach and a sample of the population included the respondents in the bank of Kalu River in Ratnapura with a size of 150 respondents. Structured interviews were used to collect data and responses indicated that a wide range of actions has been employed to reduce the effects of floods. But these actions have not been perceived to make specific adjustments to mitigate the losses caused by floods. The findings of the research revealed that the floods occurred during the monsoon season is because of the activation of heavy rainfalls in the study area. Moreover, the intensity of the floods increased as a result of releasing of water from small and medium reservoirs, which rose the water levels of rivers and water streams by causing a heavy influx of flash floods. This triggers tremendous losses to housing, agricultural lands, standing crops, and other properties. The study found that The Disaster Management Authorities have only implemented limited structural mitigation measures. In addition to structural measures, it is recommended that land-use zoning and flood abatement strategies would largely help in reducing the adverse consequences of this recurrent phenomenon.

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