

Drought, Migration Patterns and Poverty in Dry Zone of Sri Lanka

W.A.K Ishara

Department of Sociology, University of Colombo

There is no country in the world that is not experiencing first – hand the drastic effects of Climate Change. The interlinked challenges of climate change and sustainable development must be urgently addressed to deliver a stable and secure world to future generations. At present, as a tendency to respond the climatic changes including droughts, there is a growth of migrations based on climatic changes all over the world. The main objective of this research is to study the Socio-economic impacts on women and men in low income families due to drought in dry zone of Sri Lanka. Identifying the gender-based migration patterns and coping strategies that men and women use in their households and researching how the drought has concretized their poverty level are the secondary objectives of the study. Elalla Grama Niladari Division in Hambantota was the study area of this research. To collect primary data in-depth interviews were conducted separately among 40 men and women in low income families (listed from samurdhi program) based on purposive sampling and key sources of secondary data were official documents and representations. The study reveals that, men and women who live in dry zones are more likely to adapt the situation using coping strategies rather than migrating from their own lands during the drought season and drought has increased the vulnerability of the low-income families and it has resulted the families to continue to remain in poverty. However, this cannot be generalized into every individual who caught up with drought and the disaster management policy is sensible on the variations of affects due to the gender roles. This paper will also analyze how we can identify the drought as a gendered experience and the nature of the gendered migration patterns in dry zone of Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Drought, Migration, Gender, Poverty, Vulnerability