

People's perspective on water resources management in Sri Lanka

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The availability of water varies from place to place and season to season. The water availability in some areas is augmented by diversions such as trans-basin diversions and building reservoirs. The temporal and spatial variability in the availability of water resources are thought to influence the water users differently. Therefore, the management of water resources and related aspects could also be viewed differently by different communities. A study was carried out in two different climatic zones to evaluate people's perspective on different aspects of water resources management, and to compare and contrast the differences in the people's perspective on water resources management. The study areas selected were two Grama Niladari (GN) divisions each from the wet zone (Welanhinna and Amuwathugoda in Rathnapura district) and the dry zone (Namal Oya colony and Makulla in Monaragala district). Twenty five households were randomly selected from each GN division and a questionnaire was used to collect data on the people's perspective on water resources management.

The wet zone community understands that toilet pits pollute water wells but the dry zone community does not as they do not have individual wells or their toilets and wells are widely spaced. Contrary to that, the dry zone agricultural community understands the agricultural pollution and water related diseases better than the wet zone communities due to chemicals they use and diseases they suffer. Due to temporal water scarcity, the dry zone community has to fetch water and more females contribute to fetching water. As water has to be fetched from far localities, the water accessibility is once a day for many households in the dry seasons in the dry zone. In the wet zone, the people who live on hill tops have to fetch water only during the dry spells. Both communities do not have an understanding on water related legislations and institutions, they are unwilling to reuse wastewater and do not understand the users of water other than the human beings. In both the communities, there are people who are willing to pay for good quality drinking water if a water supply project supplies water to their houses.

Key words: Water resources management, wastewater, pollution, community