

Socio-economic Status and Adaptation Strategies of Flood Victims in Selected *Grama Nilaghari* Divisions in Lower Valley of Kaluganga

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Flood is the most frequently experienced natural hazard in Sri Lanka that can affect the socio-economic status of the number of communities living in flood-prone areas in the country. Kaluganga (River Kalu) valley is situated in the wet climatic zone of Sri Lanka which experience severe monsoon rainfall. The lower valley of Kaluganga is highly prone to frequent flash floods. Villagers living in GN Divisions in lower valley of Kaluganga have been facing number of socio-economic problems due to these frequent floods. Adaption to frequent floods is highly essential and a challenging issue. A study was conducted to explore the magnitude of the socio-economic impacts caused by floods and the manner in which the villages adapt themselves to the situation. Paraduwa and Diyagama GN divisions situated in lower valley of Kaluganga are the most affected areas. Therefore Paraduwa and Diyagama GN Divisions were selected as study area for this study. 90 households out of 613 families in these two GN Divisions were selected as the sample by using simple random sampling technique. A household survey was conducted using structured questionnaires and the data was analyzed qualitatively and simple statistical parameters were used. It was revealed that, seasonal floods directly affect the household of the above mentioned GN Divisions. According to the socio-economic assessment, 79% of the people are employed as labourers in sectors such as sand mining (45%), masonry (27%), rubber industry(12%), carpentry(8%) and related industries and most of the people are engaged in agriculture. Damages to agricultural activities and damages to their houses and working places are crucial issues. Results showed high adaptation in terms of housing construction measures, moderate adaptation for crop adjustments and protection of valuables while low adaptation in keeping boats. There are number of social problems faced by the villages such as insecurity, spreading of diseases, disturbances to education of children and mental depression. Deterioration of water quality and sanitation facilities are also serious problems. It can be concluded that villages should further strengthen to enhance their adaptation capacity as well as to overcome above mentioned problems faced by them during the times of floods.

Keywords: *Adaptation, Flood, Socio-economic status*

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