

## **A Study of Social and Health Conditions related to Female-Headed Households in Rural Areas in Sri Lanka**

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### **ABSTRACT**

In every human society, the household is one of the most significant social institution. Female-Headed Households (FHHs) is a new structural form of household and this new structural form of household has become a significant phenomenon in both global and national level. Although FHHs have occupied a prominent place in development discourse globally, very limited researches had been conducted regarding social and health conditions related to FHHs in Sri Lanka. The main objective of this study was to identify the background and issues related to social and health conditions, root causes, and interrelationships among those issues of FHHs in rural areas. The empirical research was conducted in five *Grama Niladari* Divisions of *Galgamuwa* divisional secretariat division which conveyed a marked increase of *FHHs* in Sri Lanka. Data were collected from hundred *FHHs* through purposive sampling method. Questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were used as primary data collection techniques. The study revealed that the inadequate education and vocational qualifications, low level of tendency to enter to formal employment sector, unsustainability of livelihood activities, low conditions of houses and related facilities, some legal issues related to residence, inadequate social supportive mechanisms in the community, lack of leadership and empowerment were prominent among social conditions and related issues. Unavailability of toilet facilities (19%), unavailability of drinking water in the own household (45%), prevalence of long-term affected health issue (49%) were the key issues of health and sanitary facilities related to FHHs in the sample. Based on these findings it has provided suggestions to improve social well-being and to improve health sanitary and infrastructure facilities, to reduce prevalence of non-communicable and communicable diseases as well as health risk and to improve quality of life and mental well-being among FHHs.

**Key Words:** *Female-Headed Households (FHHs), Social Conditions, Health Sanitary and Infrastructure Facilities, Leadership, Empowerment.*

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