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**Socio-Economic Conditions of Female Headed  
Households in Rural Areas in Sri Lanka**

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**Abstract**

In every human society, household performs numerous significant functions in the socialization process and integrates generations into the norms and the value system of the society. As a result of various social and economic causes, the modern household has undergone significant transformation in its structure. The Female Headed Household (FHH) is a new form of household and FHHs have increased worldwide in both developed and developing countries. Although FHHs have occupied a prominent place in development discourse globally, very limited research had been conducted regarding social and economic conditions related to FHHs in Sri Lanka. Accordingly, the main objective of this study was to identify the social and economic conditions of FHHs in rural areas. The empirical research study was conducted in five *Grama Niladari* Divisions of *Galgamuwa* divisional secretariat division which indicated 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 based on the survey method. The study revealed that the majority of responded FHHs (42%) had attended school from grade 6 to Ordinary Level (O/L). A lowest rate (6%) had only completed Advanced Level (A/L) while 8% of women reporting no schooling. Remarkably, a higher number of employed FHHs (51%) had engaged in agriculture. The monthly income distribution of the sampled households ranged from a low of Rs. 1,500 to a high of Rs, 38,950. More than half of the responded women headed households (53%) that are in the lowest income category (Less than Rs. 5,000). A considerable proportion of FHHs (33%) had obtained loans or borrowings for various purposes intending to eradicate poverty from their household. Low conditions of houses and related facilities, some legal issues related to residence, inadequate social supportive mechanisms in the community were prominent among social and economic conditions and related issues.

**Keywords:** Households, Female Headed Households (FHHs),  
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