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සමාජීය විද්‍යාපති භූගෝලවිද්‍යාව උපාධියෙහි අවශ්‍යතාවක් පූරණය කරනු පිණිස කැලණිය  
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## **Abstract**

Drought is a hazard that has received national and international attention. Drought has caused many social, economic and environmental impacts in Sri Lanka. This has a greater impact on farmers who make a living from agriculture, especially in the dry zone. The impact of drought is also seen on the farmers in the Mahaweli development areas, where most of the rice cultivation area in the country belongs. In spite of providing water under heavy irrigation, the Yala season has to be subjected to the constraints of drought. The main objective of this study is to examine whether rice farmers in Mahaweli Development Areas have adapted to drought hazards. The sub-objectives are to identify the strategies adopted for such adaptation, to examine the success and failure of those strategies, as well as to determine how drought affects the quality of life of the people in the study area. For this purpose, Rotalawela unit belonging to Girandurukotte division of Mahaweli C zone was selected as the study area. This unit includes three domains of village services. The sample was selected using the stratified random method, and 120 sample units were selected in the stratified method both in terms of villages and generations. Questionnaires, interviews, telephone discussions and case studies were used for data collection. Both statistical and descriptive methods were used in data analysis. The study confirmed that rice farmers in Mahaweli development areas are drought-adapted. For that, they need to clean and maintain canals properly, guard water system, re-use surplus water after use from the cultivated land, start the basic land preparation before irrigation with rain, change the cropping season calendar and cultivate short-duration seeds. Successful techniques of doing and bethma method, seed sowing and traditional cultivation techniques have also been used. Thus, in addition to rice cultivation, the study confirmed that the effect of drought on the people's life is also there. Thus, it can be concluded that rice farmers in Mahaweli development areas are adapting to drought and most of the tactics used for that are successful.

**Keywords** - Mahaweli Development Areas, Drought, Adaptation, Rice Farmers, Watersheds