

The Government Policy Implication on Coastal Poverty in Fishing Communities in Sri Lanka (with reference to Colombo and Gampaha Coastal Belt)

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Poverty is blessed with a rich vocabulary, in all cultures and through history. From an analytical perspective, thinking about poverty can be traced back at least to the codification of poor laws in medieval England, through to the pioneering empirical studies, at the turn of the century, by Booth in London and by Rowntree in York. Rowntree's study, published in 1901, was the first to develop a poverty standard for individual families, based on estimates of nutritional and other requirements.

Sri Lanka has a coastline of 1585 km and a land area of 64,000 km². There are 20 million people live in Sri Lanka. Poverty has been a major economic problem in Sri Lanka, despite various poverty alleviation programmes implemented since independence in 1948. About 7% of the Sri Lanka's population is poor according to the lower poverty line (one US\$ per day), and about 45% according to the higher poverty line (US\$ two per day) . Poverty in rural areas is 31.3%, which is more than three times the poverty prevails in the urban areas, is 8.6%. Over 90% of the poor live in rural areas.

The objectives of this study are to identify the various sectors of poverty, the sources of poverty, the policy implication on coastal poverty in fishing communities and to find out various policy measures to overcome or to mitigate the coastal poverty in fishing communities in Sri Lanka. This study is based on both primary and secondary data. Primary data was collected from five hundred fishing families. Secondary data was collected from relevant documents, books, magazines and so on. It has been estimated a function using the dependent variable as the person who uses natural resources, independent variables as demographic characteristics, socio-economic characteristics of the fishermen and policy implication as a dummy variable. It has been revealed that there are four sectors where poverty is prevailed in Sri Lanka: Rural, Coastal, Urban and Plantation sector. There is less implication of government policies on coastal poverty as a tool for reducing coastal poverty in fishing communities due to political, social and cultural influences. Therefore, taken necessary steps should be taken to reduce these influences to implement government policies properly and it will help to overcome or at least mitigate the coastal poverty in fishing communities in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Coastal poverty; Sources of poverty; Fishing community; Government;
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