

Health Implication of Water Poverty: A Study Based on Dehiyattakandiya Divisional Secretariat of Ampara District, Sri Lanka

Riswan, M*

Abstract

Water remains as an essential biological need for all living forms. Although it is now universally accepted that water is vital resource for health and sanitation, recent trends in water supply and management seems to ignore this critical relationship. Access to safe and clean drinkable water is an indicator of development sort in terms of health, nutrition and societal upgrades. However, majority of rural areas in Sri Lanka as well as in many developing countries are still having lack access to good quality drinking water supply hence perpetuating deepening poverty gap, gender inequalities and the prevalence of water related diseases. This paper examines the dimensions of water poverty confronting the study community with their socioeconomic implications. It places specific emphasis on the association between water poverty and health outcomes in the selected rural households in Dehiyattakandiya Divisional Secretariat area, Ampara district. The paper also highlights the mitigation interventions of state and non-state actors and the impact such interventions have had on rural water poverty reduction in the study community. Relevant data for this research were gathered and analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative tools through interviews, questionnaire, frequencies, percentages and cross tabulation. The paper reveals that water poverty in the study area manifests the different health related impacts on different age and sex groups within the social structure, with women and children being the most affected in times of safe water and scarcity within the study area. The result indicates that women and children cover longer vulnerabilities due to this lack of access to safe and portable drinking water in Dehiyattakandiya Divisional Secretariat.

Key words: Water Poverty, Health, Nutrition, Diseases, Vulnerability

To whom correspondence should be addressed: mriswan2008@gmail.com

*Lecturer, Department of Social Sciences, South Eastern University of Sri Lanka.