

# DROUGHT AND ADAPTATION STRATEGIES OF THE PEOPLE IN THE NORTH CENTRAL PROVINCE OF SRI LANKA

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## ABSTRACT

There are numerous definitions for drought and it is hard to understand due to its complexity. Drought is considered as socio-natural hazard because occurrence of drought is the result of combination of both natural and human induced factors. People in North Central Province (NCP) of Sri Lanka are frequently undergone to drought and many problems related to deficiency of water. Hence, researcher aimed at to identify the nature and severity of drought in the NCP, to identify perception of people on drought and to recognize various adaptation strategies used by people to cope with drought impacts. Three Divisional Secretariat (DS) divisions named *Rambewa*, *Thirappane* and *Medirigiriya* were selected out of 29 DS divisions as the sampling area. Questionnaire, interviews, group discussion, direct observation were used to collect primary data and secondary data were collected from various sources i.e. institutions, books, journals, and websites. Standardized Precipitation Index (SPI) was used to identify drought in the NCP where two meteorological stations i.e. Anuradhapura and Angamedilla covering 60 years and 40 years period respectively were used to calculate SPI Values. Data were analysed quantitatively and qualitatively. Results highlighted that majority of the families i.e. more than 72% in NCP are practicing agriculture and they receive low income. Severity of drought impacts is high and meteorological, hydrological and agricultural droughts lead to create socio-economic drought in the NCP. 31% people believe that drought is occurred once in every year and 41% people believe that drought is occurred once in every 2-3 times. Months of July, August, September undergone to severe drought and most of people believe that reason for drought is the various human activities. Frequency of occurring drought in the NCP has been increased therefore, providing water for agriculture, drinking water, and other purposes has been become challenge. Both on farm and off farm adaptation strategies are being used by the people to cope with effects of drought. It is time to involvement of government to mitigate drought impacts through drought policy.

**Key words:** Drought, impacts, adaptation strategies, peasant families, mitigation.