

## **The Role of Women in Environment Management in Kilinochchi District: With Special Reference to the Ambalnagar GN Division**

**P. Kirishanthan**

Department of Geography, University of Colombo

The natural environment of the Northern Province of Sri Lanka is threatened and polluted in several ways as a result of the civil war, resettlement and development projects etc. Now we have to take action to rehabilitate and manage the natural environment in the war-affected areas. Gender plays a major role in environment management in this areas. This study examined the role of women in environment management in Kilinochchi District with special reference to the Ambalnagar Grama Niladhari Division. The principal objective of the study was to identify to what extent women have played a role in environment management after resettlement. Primary data was generated from a questionnaire survey, interviews, group discussions and observation, while secondary data was mainly collected from previous research and annual statistical reports. One hundred women (between 18-70 years) were selected via a simple random sampling method for the questionnaire survey from 767 total individuals. The majority of the women, about 63%, were involved in agricultural activities. Among them, 40% have engaged in agriculture for more than 4 years after resettlement. For agriculture, 80% and 65% of women respectively used organic fertilizer and pesticide. About 90% of the women have an adequate knowledge of soil degradation and its management methods. During the last 5 years after resettlement, 78% of the women have planted more than 10 multi - purposes trees on their land. 90% of the women planted fruit trees, while others planted shade, flower and herbal plants. Women have a good knowledge of solid waste management at household level. 40% of the women re-use polythene and plastics wastes, 33% sell the latter for recycling purposes, while 27% dispose of these carelessly. 73% of the women clean their surroundings by sweeping and weeding. Half of the women acquired their knowledge about the environment from their parents, while 30% learned of it in school and 16% through training programs. 87% of the women participated in at least one environmental protection program or event. 36% of the mothers teach their children about the importance of planting, 34% teach about environmental cleaning, while 20% teach about the protection of biodiversity. After resettlement, women play a more significant role in environmental management than men through farming, tree planting, and resource and solid waste management. The burden of household work (44%) was the major cause for lack of women's participation in environmental management in this area. Education, awareness, training programs, as well as instruction about solid waste management and rain water harvesting methods should be further encouraged among women for environment management and the creation of a greener environment. This will lead to the achievement of sustainable development goals in the war-affected regions.

**Keywords:** Agriculture, Environment management, Resettlement, Women participation