

Impact of water scarcity on socioeconomic and environmental wellbeing in Karachchi
Divisional Secretariat, Kilinochchi

P. Krishanthan

Department of Geography, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka

Water scarcity has become a serious problem in many parts of the world. The Kilinochchi District, Sri Lanka is not an exception to this scenario and this scarcity is already identified as a main constraint in many parts of the Kilinochchi district. Water scarcity has severely affected the socioeconomic and environmental wellbeing of the resettled communities in the Karachchi DS division. Thus, the main objective of this study was to explore the impacts of water scarcity on the socioeconomic and environmental wellbeing of the study area. Both qualitative and quantitative approaches were applied in this study. Data were mainly collected through a household questionnaire survey. Employing the simple random sampling technique one hundred and six households were selected from five Grama Niladhari Divisions for the questionnaire survey. Moreover, structured interviews were conducted and secondary data were collected from relevant sources. Collected quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics while qualitative data were analysed using content analysis. The findings of the study revealed that overcrowded existence, theft of water containers, overconsumption and conflicts among water collectors were the major social issues that emerged due to water scarcity in the study area. Further, nearly 60% of the households mentioned that their daily activities, especially household chores, were interrupted due to lack of water availability. It was also reported that as a result of regular water fetching, nearly 74% and 67% of the respondents often contracted spine and hip pain respectively. Furthermore, approximately 68% and 64% of household food production and livestock activities, respectively, were affected due to water scarcity. Decline of water level of sources, loss of vegetation cover and wild animals, and drought events, were highlighted as adverse environmental impacts of water scarcity in the study area. In conclusion, this study clearly revealed that water scarcity has adversely impacted the socioeconomic and environmental wellbeing of the resettled communities in the study area. Therefore, this issue should be addressed without delay to ensure the sustainable wellbeing of the resettled communities as well as the development of the country.

Keywords: *environmental, socioeconomic impacts, water scarcity, wellbeing*