

The impacts of rural poverty on human development in the Kandy District

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This study has examined the impacts of rural poverty on human development in the Kandy District. It is obvious that the two concepts 'human development' and 'poverty' have a close relationship. Therefore it is important to identify this relationship to overcome poverty and increase quality of human development. The study used both quantitative and qualitative research methods. Also relevant data for the study were gathered from the secondary as well as primary sources. The main primary data collection methods were questionnaire survey, household interviews and key informant interviews.

The result shows that most of the villagers' main economic activity is agriculture and at the moment they have faced a number of difficulties due to unfavorable climatic conditions of the area. This situation adversely influenced people's living standard. Due to this situation, they used various types of livelihood strategies in order to escape poverty and to secure survival. But the study revealed that most of these livelihood strategies are not sustainable. Also in terms of assets they are in a vulnerable situation. This situation has influenced their present level of poverty and human development condition. The present situation of the village is a result of number of factors which directly or indirectly affect the rural economy in Sri Lanka. The study found that the main reason for their poverty situation is low income. Low income is connected to the employment situation of the village.

In term of the human development situation the lack of educational attainment of the elderly people of the village has negatively affected their present living standard. Also the study focused on the peoples' perspective of present poverty alleviation program (Samurdhi). The result shows that many of the people do not have a trust on the program's potential to overcome their poverty situation. It seems that many people use the benefits they are receiving from the Samurdhi only as a way of survival. Those who try to overcome the poverty situation through the Samurdhi program are limited. Further peoples' personal views on poverty and their plans to overcome poverty situation and upgrade their human development were examined through the interviews. The final result revealed that many people don't have any clear idea about poverty. But according to their ideas they have experienced poverty in many ways. Many of them expressed poverty as lack of basic needs. Also they have no any reliable plans to overcome the problem.