

Analyzing Practices of People on Drought Adaptation Strategies in the Dry Zone of Sri Lanka

Bandara K.M.S.M.*, Dias R.A., Dissanayake H.P.P.M.

Department of Environmental Management, Rajarata University, Mihintale, Sri Lanka
**shanikarjt36@gmail.com*

Abstract

Drought is one of the severe natural hazards described as a period of below-average precipitation in a certain area, leading to long-term water shortages. This is a problem exacerbated by climate change, which leads to harm to agricultural subsistence and the livelihood of the people. As this disaster is a major issue in the 21st century it poses large-scale issues for humans from every perspective. In the Sri Lankan context, this situation has increased in the present period especially in the dry zone in a high manner. With this sort of background, this study was done to analyze the practices of people on drought adaptation strategies in the Dry Zone of Sri Lanka. This study was carried out in a literature survey based on previously published articles, journals, proceedings and other publications to find out the most common drought impact in the dry zone of Sri Lanka and the practices of people on drought adaptation strategies in the dry zone of Sri Lanka. According to the literature survey, in the dry zone of Sri Lanka, the most common impacts of the drought were recognized in three sections Environmental impacts, Economic impacts and Social impacts. The most common Environmental impacts were recognized as an increase in average temperature, dry flora, a decline in surface water and groundwater and less soil fertility. Less-income families are one of the most common economic impacts of drought followed by fewer savings and economic benefits. The most common social impacts can be seen as, conflicts related to water, changes in lifestyle, and less food security. Farmers are using different adaptation strategies to mitigate the impacts of drought over 1000 years as the Dry zone in Sri Lanka is a water deficiency area and paddy cultivation could be highly vulnerable to climate change. The most used drought adaptation strategies by people are harvest storage, paddy cultivation, bethma practising, paddy monoculture, agro well usage and preserving food and seeds. Referring to the perception people of drought adaptation strategies in the dry zone of Sri Lanka 57% of people have started to use the Chena cultivation method instead of the paddy cultivation method for the sake of the uncertainty and understanding the shortage of rainfall in the area especially in Yala season compared to Maha Season. Most people have reduced their dependence on rice as the growth of the paddy is affected by the drought. Farmers have started growing less susceptible crops to the drought as they are aware of the less cultivation due to the drought and have started installing various types of rainwater harvesting in each house. At present people in the dry zone prefers to use less water consumption agriculture, alternative crops and cropping of drought-resistant varieties.

Keywords: Drought, Practices, Strategies, Impacts, Dry zone