

## **THE ROLE OF VILLAGE TANK SYSTEM IN TOURISM LIVELIHOODS IN *HIRIWADUNNA* VILLAGE, SRI LANKA**

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Over time, the village tank system (VTS) has been facilitating dynamic livelihoods in the rural dry zone of Sri Lanka. Rural life and VTS are popular tourist attractions near tourism hotspots enabling tourism livelihoods. However, it is still lesser known, the role of VTS on tourism livelihoods and what determines people who are living in VTS to choose tourism livelihoods. Hence, this study aims at investigating the VTS' contribution to livelihoods along with their determinants of tourism livelihoods. A survey was conducted using a structured questionnaire to collect data among 29% of randomly selected households in *Hiriwadunna* VTS in the vicinity of the ancient Sigiriya fortress. Additionally, key informant interviews and field observations were performed to triangulate the collected data. Data were analysed using cross-tabulation and multinomial logistic regression techniques in SPSS 20. Findings revealed that the livelihoods were related to farming (F), tourism (T), and others (O) (neither farming nor tourism) activities and the households were diversified into seven livelihood strategies; F only, T only, O only, F&T, F&O, F&T&O, and T&O, of which tourism livelihoods were benefited from the provisioning and cultural services of many VTS components than others. Compared to households with non-tourism livelihoods, households' social capital significantly determined T only, T&F, and T&F&O livelihood strategies, whereas financial, human and natural capitals significantly determined the T&O livelihood strategy. Concluding that VTS provides diverse ecosystem services for tourism livelihoods, the study suggests enhancements in households' social, financial, and human capitals to diversify livelihoods to gain benefits of VTS-based rural tourism.

**Keywords:** Cascaded tank-village systems, Livelihood capitals, Rural tourism, Sustainable livelihood framework