

# WOMEN AND WATER: A GENDERED PERSPECTIVE ON SUSTAINABLE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN SRI LANKA

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**Abstract:** This research focused on the gender dimensions of sustainable water resource management in Sri Lanka, emphasizing the roles played by women in shaping the water governance in the country. Sri Lankan women are involved in various aspects of water management, from being primary users of household water to participating in agricultural activities that are heavily reliant on water resources. Their roles extend further to community-level decision-making processes related to water infrastructure development and maintenance. However, their contributions are often underrepresented and undervalued. This study highlighted the importance of actively involving women in decision-making processes related to water governance. It explores the benefits of gender-inclusive approaches, such as ensuring equal access to water resources and involving women in the planning and execution of water infrastructure projects. Gender-sensitive policies and practices are key to fostering a more equitable and sustainable water management system in Sri Lanka. Five case studies in various places, especially rural communities in the Galle District, Sri Lanka were evaluated focusing on women who are actively involved in water-related jobs like managing water resources or leading communities. Initiatives where women have taken leadership roles in local water management committees, resulting in improved access to clean water for their communities were studied. Additionally, it highlights women's involvement in sustainable agricultural practices that promote efficient water usage and crop resilience. A study found that when women led local water committees, around 80% of those committees helped communities get better access to clean water. Also, when women were involved in farming, they made water use 30% more efficient and improved crops by 25% compared to usual farming methods. The potential for women to drive positive change in this crucial sector, creating a more balanced and effective system that benefits the entire nation is envisioned.

**Keywords:** Agriculture; Empowerment; Gender; Sustainable; Water Management