

**COPING STRATEGIES ADOPTED BY DROUGHT AND FLOOD
AFFECTED PADDY FARMERS IN PADAVIYA DIVISIONAL
SECRETARIAT AREA, ANURADHAPURA DISTRICT**

A.V.W. Abhayagunasekara and Y.M. Wickramasinghe

*Department of Agricultural systems, Faculty of Agriculture, Rajarata
University of Sri Lanka, Puliyankulama, Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka*

This study attempts to elucidate livelihood and coping strategies adopted by the farmers in Padaviya Divisional Secretariat area in Anuradhapura District during the incidences of droughts and floods. The study used both quantitative and qualitative data gathered from a random sample of 150 farmers who were affected by drought during *Yala*, 2013 and *Maha*, 2013/14 and flood during *Maha* 2010/11 and *Maha* 2012/13 and key-informants. Both drought and flood damaged their crops. Study revealed that, during the last few years, rainfall pattern of the area has changed significantly. Erratic weather patterns, general increase in temperature in the region and reduction in rainfall were the climatic changes observed. Increase in average temperature and decrease in rainfall during the Northeast monsoon season has caused debilitating effects on the farming community. Farmers have switched over to *Chena* cultivation during *Yala* season instead of cultivating paddy, because of drought. During this period, paddy farmers have adopted a range of livelihood and coping strategies for survival. The coping strategies adopted have changed over time in response to the changes experienced in natural hazards. Selection of appropriate production zone, building embankments and making drainage canals were common coping strategies adopted against floods. State sponsored social support systems were also there to assist farmers. Reduced food consumption and changing food consumption pattern were the strategies adopted during droughts. Majority of people have moved away from agriculture and have sold or mortgaged their jewelry and household assets as a solution to the financial problem they faced due to natural hazards. Some, including young children, have temporarily out migrated. Therefore, it is necessary to make the community aware on climatic change, its possible hazards and coping strategies. Furthermore, agriculture sector should diversify with drought tolerant crop varieties, while improving drainage and waterways to minimize flood damages.

Keywords: Coping strategies, Drought, Flood, Livelihood, Paddy farmers