

# **A Study of Issues related to Empowerment of Female-Headed Households in Rural Areas in Sri Lanka**

W.M.G.N. Panampitiya<sup>1</sup>

## ***Abstract***

*Empowerment refers to the process of stimulation of potential powers, capabilities, abilities, and skills of individuals and communities. It plays a significant role to support active life through promoting the independent voice of disadvantaged and vulnerable communities. Hence, women empowerment enables women to identify their latent potentials and skills in decision making, active participation and implementation of policies and programmes. Women-Headed Households (WHHs) is a new form of the household and this new form of the household has become a significant phenomenon in both the global and national level. Although WHHs have occupied a prominent place in development discourse globally, very limited researches have been conducted regarding women empowerment related to WHHs in Sri Lanka. Accordingly, the main objective of this study was to identify the social issues related to empowerment of women heads in rural areas. This empirical research was conducted in five Grama Niladari divisions of Galgamuwa divisional secretariat division which conveyed a marked increase of WHHs in Sri Lanka. Data were collected from a hundred WHHs through purposive sampling method. Questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were used as primary data collection techniques. The research was conducted based on the survey method and case study method. Data were analysed based on thematic analysis and descriptive method. Power and authority are attributed in most patriarchal societies to women mainly due to the disappearing of the male person of the household. Thus, it could be identified that power and authority to make decisions in most cases of WHHs are not result of mobilization or empowerment but, women have no choice other than deciding on her household after assuming headship. Membership of community organizations illustrates a significant cross-cutting of the social profile of individuals. A majority (99%) of WHHs had*

---

## **<sup>1</sup> Corresponding Author**

Assistant Lecturer, Department of Sociology, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka

E-mail: gnpanampitiya@gmail.com

*obtained membership of death donation organization and Samurdhi organization (79%). But importantly, it could be identified that majority of WHHs (80%, 66%, and 55%) had not obtained memberships respectively of the women development organization, water organization, and farmers' organization. Only a few proportions of women heads (10%) had participated for self-employment training. Lack of motivation towards new trends of income-generating sources and unwillingness to change their familiar safe-zone had highly influenced the limited tendency to involve in activities related diversification of income-generating sources and livelihood of WHHs. Most of the current government programmes have related to the financial and physical allowances and has influenced to create a dependent mentality and to decrease the motivational factors among WHHs. As a result of that, a larger percentage of WHHs (75%) had requested more programmes on financial aids. Based on these findings it has been suggested to introduce integrated projects based on participatory development approach and methods of social inclusion to enhance opportunities to build self-esteem and self-confidence and to identify adaptation and mitigation actions to reduce hardships and issues through empowering latent potentials and skills of WHHs.*

**Keywords:** *Female-Headed Households (WHHs), Empowerment, Women Empowerment, Decision- making, Authority*

## **1. Introduction**

Women empowerment enables women to identify their latent potentials and skills in decision making, active participation and implementation of policies and programmes. According to that, the main feature of empowerment process is having the power to control materials, wealth, intellectual initiatives and ideologies and this process has related to welfare, upliftment, community participation and poverty alleviation (Batiwala, 1995). Female-Headed Households is a new structural form of household and this type of households have become a significant phenomenon in the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century (Baros, Fox & Mendonca, 1994). “Female-Headed Households are households where either no adult males are present, owing to divorce, separation, migration, non-marriage or widowhood, or were men, although present, do not contribute to the household income, because of illness or disability, old age, alcoholism or similar incapacity” (ABC of

women workers' rights and gender equality, 2007:81). It has demonstrated a very comprehensive idea of female headship. Thus, there are so many reasons for a woman being the head of the household. It can derive from being unmarried, separation, divorce, being widowed, and temporarily absentness and also no contribution to the household income due to serious illness, disability or similar causes. Recently, it can be identified as a marked increase of Female-Headed Households in Sri Lanka.

Table: 1 Demographic Characteristic of Total Households in Sri Lanka

Characteristics	2009/2010	2012/2013	2016
Number of Households	4.9 million	5.1 million	5.4 million
Male-Headed Households	3.8 million	3.9 million	4.0 million
Female-Headed Households	1.1 million	1.2 million	1.4 million
Percentage of WHHs	23.0%	23.5%	25.8%

*Source: Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) Final Report, 2009, 2012/2013 and 2016*

According to the Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) 2009/2010, out of 5.1 million in number of households, 1.2 million (23.0%) female-headed households were there in Sri Lanka (HIES Final Report, 2009/2010). HIES 2012/2013 final report has mentioned that, out of 5.1 million households, 23.5 percent of households were female-headed in Sri Lanka (HIES Final Report, 2012/2013). According to the most recent Household Income and Expenditure Survey 2016, out of 5.4 million households in Sri Lanka, 1.4 million households or 25.8 percent of the households were women-headed (HIES Final Report, 2016). In contrast, it can be identified that there are very limited researches have been conducted in Asia. In particular, review of the researches and library studies done in the field of issues related to empowerment of WHHs in Sri Lanka shows that there are inadequate sources to access issues descriptively related to WHHs. Even though many development projects and programmes including small, medium and large scale have been implemented in Sri Lanka, WHHs are out of the main development discourse. Therefore, our country has not yet been able to absorb the full potentials of the community sustainably and effectively.

### 1.1 Research Problem

The concept of women in development is not only concerning issues related to safety and protection of vulnerable groups but also, the importance of utilizing and improvement of experience, skills and capacities of women to strengthen them by prioritizing the actions and their perspectives in the development of social and economic fields (Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, 1992). As well as, it seeks the empowerment of women through stimulating their latent potentials to improve the living standards of individuals. The absence of comprehensive attention, knowledge, regarding issues related to empowerment of WHHs has prevented women leadership and empowerment in the society in rural areas in particular. In accordance with the preceding context, “What are social issues related to empowerment of WHHs in rural areas in Sri Lanka?” was the research problem of this study.

### 1.2 Research Objectives

The main objective of this research was to identify the social issues related to empowerment of women heads in rural areas of Sri Lanka. Specific Objectives were to identify changes in authority and decision making after assuming the headship of the household, to study root causes and interrelationships among those issues related to empowerment of WHHs in rural areas and to identify issues related to programmes and projects which have implemented to empower WHHs.

## 2. Methodology

This research was conducted in five *Grama Niladari* divisions namely *Molewa, Kallanchiya, Koonwewa, Wadugama and Medawachchiya* in *Galgamuwa* Divisional Secretariat division which has situated in Kurunegala district, North-Western province. Survey and Case study methods were used to obtain a deep understanding of complex issues through both quantitative and qualitative manner. In sampling, purposive sampling method under non-probably sampling was used to select WHHs from other population in the area. Then, cluster sampling under the probability sampling method was used to select women from the list of WHHs in *Galgamuwa* division.

The researcher divided the population of WHHs in a *Grama Niladari* division into separate groups such as widows, separated women, divorced women, women heads who live with a disabled spouse and never-married women. Then a simple random sample of clusters was selected from the population, based on statistics of each *Grama Niladari* divisions. Data were collected from 100 WHHs through questionnaires and 10 case studies among 100 WHHs through semi-structured interviews to explore and get a thorough understanding of complexity and patterns of issues related to empowerments of WHHs. Besides, the observation was also used to obtain an acute insight into the research problem.

### **3. Results and Discussions**

#### **3.1. Changes in Authority and Decision-Making after Woman Assuming Headship of the Household**

Generally, the head of the household has power and authority to apply control for family affairs and it has originated from moral conditions or legal obligations. According to Mencher, there are four elements of the concept of the head of household. They are Authority or Power, Economic Power, Decision-making and Rights to the Children (Rochelle, 2007). In traditional households, power, authority and responsibilities have attributed to the head of the household. Especially, in patrilineal societies male (farther, husband, elder brothers or sons) has the ownership to use power and authority of the household than female. According to the concept of head of household, in the situation of female headship, women should have the authority and power in the decision-making process and other affairs within the household. But there is a question whether there is the same extent or space of power and authority to make the decision and family affairs when women become head of the household.

When considering deeply, it is clear that power and authority are attributed in most patriarchal societies to women mainly due to disappearing of the male person of the household. Thus, this is not a result of mobilization or empowerment and women have no choice other than deciding on their own household after assuming the headship.

Box 1: Abstraction from the Case Study 1

Age: 54

Grama Niladari Division: Molewa

“Now I am divorced for 30 years. I have no children. It was an arranged marriage. He came drunkenly in most situations. He quarrelled with me and assaulted me. One day, I could not tolerate it anymore, and I came to my parents' home. Thereafter, most decisions were taken by my father. But now they have died, and I have to make all decisions and responsibilities by myself.”

Source: Filed Data, 2018

It could identify that there was also an attitudinal issue inside women. They identified authority and power to make decisions as a difficult responsibility rather than an opportunity.

Box 2: Abstraction from the Case Study 10

Age: 49

Grama Niladari Division: Molewa

I do both paddy and Chena cultivation. And also, I work as an agricultural wage labour. One day, because of the personal crisis he went from home. Thereafter, he did not come home again. When he was at home, he made decisions on family affairs. Sometimes, we both discussed together. Thereafter he separated and he never looked after our family or even our children. I have to make all decisions and hold the responsibility of my family and children. Now, my children have got married and separated from the household. But, in most situations, before I make decisions I discuss with my elder son.

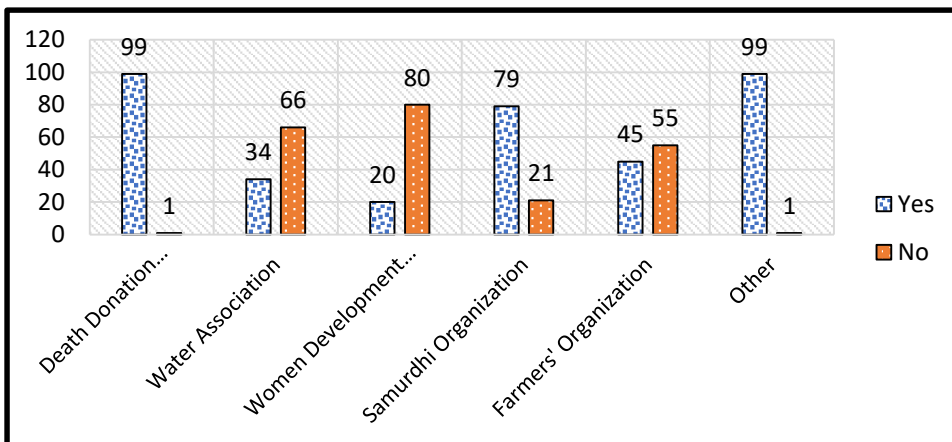
Source: Filed Data, 2018

Considering the above statements, it is evident that women have a little space for the power and authority of the household in traditional rural societies. Even after assuming the headship of the household, women have tended spontaneously to depend on others specially on a male figure as soon as possible. This is mainly a result of subordinate mentality which has created from childhood in male dominant societies through the socialization process.

### 3.2. Membership of Community Organizations and related Issues

Social capital is related to social supportive systems and social resources such as memberships of groups and associations, social networks and access to a wider institution of society (Tesfamariam, 2007). Social capital is significant to enhance opportunities to access social networks, sharing information, enabling social safeguard and protection, motivation and empowerment of women. Sense of connectivity and social relationships are also important indicators to measure the quality and well-being of individuals. Hence, membership of community organizations illustrates a significant cross-cutting of the social profile of individuals. According to research data of the study, status of membership of community organizations can be displayed as follows.

Figure 1: Percentage of WHHs by Status of Obtaining Membership



Source: Field Data, 2018

Above figure illustrates that a vast majority (99%) of WHHs had obtained membership of *Death Donation Organization* of the village and “other” category is related to *Dayaka Samithiya* of the temple. A considerable proportion of WHHs (79%) had been members of *the Samurdhi* organization. But importantly, it could be identified that majority of WHHs (80%, 66% and 55%) had not obtained memberships respectively of the women development organization, water organization and farmers' organization. According to the above data, it infers the idea that most of WHHs had obtained membership of community organization based on their benefits not because of any other motivational factors.

For instance, obtaining membership of *death donation organization* and *Dayaka Samithiya* considered as essential in a village community. As well as membership of the *Samurdhi* organization is essential for *Samurdhi* beneficiaries, farmers' organization's membership for farmers and membership of water organization underwater sources or drainage board. But when considering women development organization, they had not considered the importance of becoming members of women's organization. Personal development, women leadership or women empowerment had not been a significant or essential part of living of the majority of WHHs.

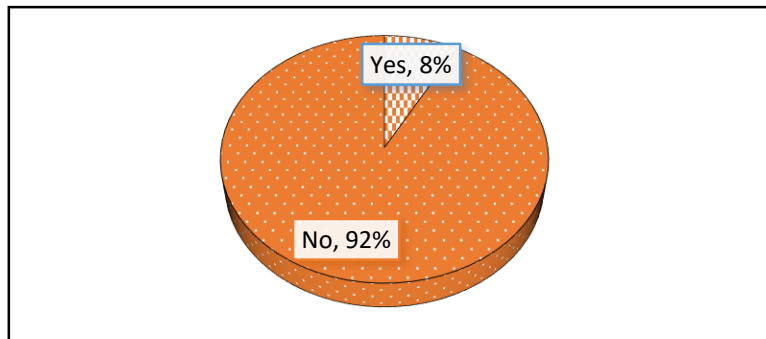
On the other hand, mainly women development organizations are empowered and authorized by the divisional secretariat in the area. Hence, it is illustrated the factor of lack of effectiveness of existing empowering methods in the community to stimulate women leadership, skills, latent potentials and to enhance involvement of decision making and improving infrastructures to enhance the stability of living standards of WHHs. Awareness of a programme for self-employment training and other capacity-building was raised through women development organizations of the village. Unfortunately, it had caused to decrease the participation, the fact that of the majority of WHHs (80%) had not become members of women organization in the village denying the objectives of leadership and skill development of women heads and ultimately to increase the low level of living standards among WHHs. Hence, it is illustrated the factor of lack of effectiveness of existing empowering methods in the community to stimulate women leadership, skills, latent potentials and to enhance involvement of decision making and improving infrastructures to enhance the stability of living standards of WHHs.

### **3.3. Status of Leadership of WHHs**

Woman heads had reported that even if the male partner was present in the household, they had taken part in some community organizations. But the present issue is they have no enough time to participate for them actively with other responsibilities of children, and livelihood activities in the household. When considering deeply it could be easily noticed that economic burden had become a major barrier to participate actively in community organizations and to obtain a position in community organizations. Therefore, they have become only members of them namely.



Figure 2: Percentage of WHHs by Status of Obtaining Positions of Community Organizations



Source: Field Data, 2018

Above pie chart illustrates that the vast majority of women heads (92%) had not obtained any kind of positions in community organizations. The least amount of WHHs (8%) had obtained different types of positions such as president, vice president, secretary, secretary, consultant etc. Most of them had positions, particularly in *Samurdhi* organization. Considering reasons for not obtaining positions in community organizations, unwillingness to take additional responsibilities, limited time for engaging in community activities, conflict of household responsibilities, lack of willpower to take leadership and to make decisions and lack of motivation could be identified through the research. Consequently, it had reduced opportunities to access leadership and decision making in the community. On the other hand, it had promoted the dependency, mentality and subordination among women heads.

### 3.4. Employment Status and Related Issues

Employment or livelihood activities are main factors which influence to decide living condition or status of an individual in society. On the other hand, employment status or livelihood strategies of individuals directly affect the level of income and economic stability of a household. According to the findings, the majority of employed WHHs have engaged in agriculture (45) and work as manual labours in the agriculture sector (28). A few numbers of women heads (2) employ in a brick-kiln and a tile mill as non-agricultural wage labours. This type of employment refers to hard physical activities for relatively low wages. Most often they are in the informal sector with a lack of job security and the risk of being expelled from work without prior notice.

In particular, those wage labourers are most vulnerable to health and physical risk. A few proportions of female heads (6) having engaged in self-employment. Considering agricultural labours, high risk of stability has been related to their employment because their employment has depended on agricultural process and production. Employment in the private sector refers mainly to women who are working in garment factories. A fewer number of WHHs (2) work as pre-school teachers and teaching assistants in pre-school. Thus, it infers that few of WHHs in the sample work in the formal sector. According to data, the percentage distribution of WHHs by occupation, the majority of WHHs (48) in the study area depends on agriculture, largely on paddy cultivation and crop cultivation (*Chena* cultivation). Some households combine both agriculture and off-farm activities; a small proportion does not have any connection with agriculture or farming.

Lack of water, inadequate labour and agriculture extension services are major factors to create issues related to livelihood activities, particularly in paddy and crop cultivation. Lack of rainfall and lack of capacity of irrigation systems to stock water for long term droughts have mainly influenced to create difficulties against livelihood activities in rural areas.

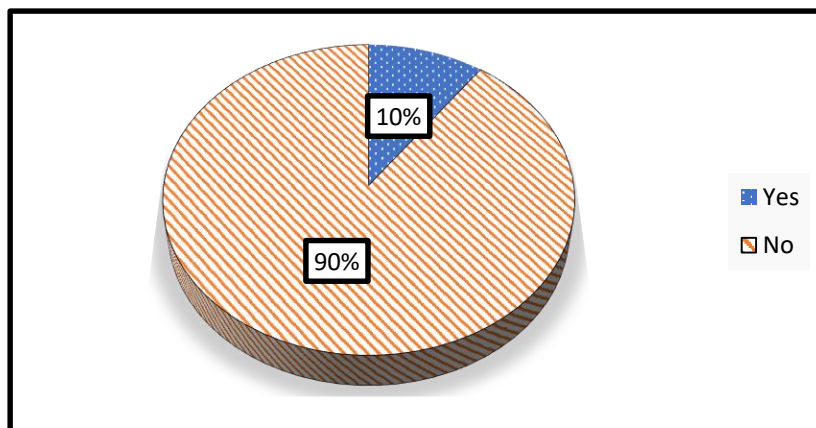
Physical subsidies such as seeds, fertilizers have distributed from government institutions. But lack of alternate supportive mechanisms of agricultural provisions, guidance, training and awareness programmes have influenced negatively on the sustainability of livelihood activities of WHHs. Because of the lack of awareness of climate-resilient agricultural methods, they have to mainly depend on traditional methods and have to struggle with climate challenges.

#### **3.4.1. Lack of Confidence for Diversification of Livelihood Activities**

Not only external socio-economic factors but also, internal factors have influenced to decide the condition of living of people. Some external social and economic impacts can reduce through relevant and sustainable actions and mechanisms. But internal crisis which bonded with attitudes of individuals is difficult to minimize and need a strong motivational process to reduce those. Although women heads are facing many difficulties and vulnerabilities in poverty due to lack of sustainable employment and livelihood activities, it is proved that they are reluctant to change their livelihood activities due to lack of confidence and motivation.

Although they confront many difficulties in agriculture and manual labour, they do not tend for diversification of livelihood activities because of familiarity with both paddy and dry farming and as well as manual labour works are easy to find. In one hand, they have limited in a demotivational attitudinal framework due to lack of choices, opportunities and educational and vocational qualifications. On the other hand, due to familiar daily livelihood activities, they do not much confidence about new income-generating sources such as self-employment or commercial activities.

Figure 3: Percentage of WHHs by Participation for Self-employment Training



Source: Field Data, 2018

Above figure shows that only a few proportions of women head (10%) had participated for self-employment training and a vast majority of women (90%) had not taken part in them. According to responded women, self-employment training on creating bags, boxes, purses and doormats, composing compost, making wicks and incense sticks had been conducted by Divisional Secretariat Office. Inadequate awareness of the advantages and opportunities of self-employment, lack of motivation towards new trends of income-generating sources and unwillingness to change their familiar safe zone had highly influenced the limited tendency to involve in activities related diversification of income-generating sources and livelihood of WHHs. It was identified that very few proportions of women heads (6) have engaged self-employment. Although they can engage in self-employment in addition to their primary occupation, the majority of women are reluctant to take challenges with new trends such as self-employment.

### **3.5. Community Development Project and Programmes Related to WHHs and Issues**

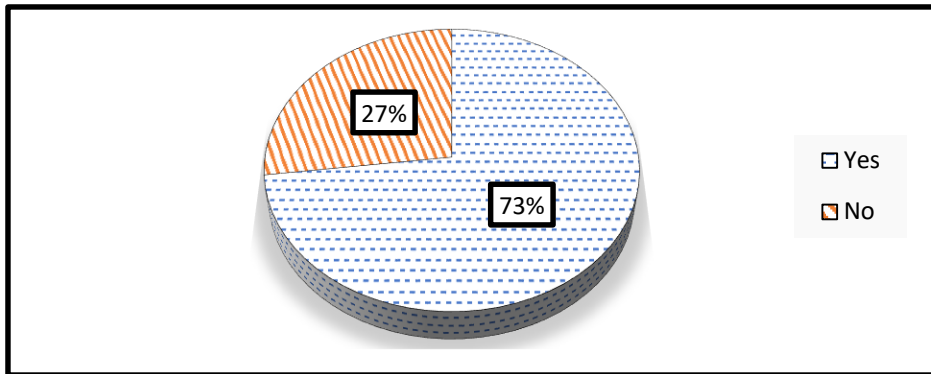
Community development seeks to empower individuals and groups of people with stimulating people's potential powers, capabilities, abilities and skills. Community development involves changing the relationships between ordinary people and people in positions of power so that everyone can take part in the issues that affect their lives. It starts from the principle that within any community there is a wealth of knowledge and experience which, if used in creative ways, can be channelled into collective action to achieve the communities' desired goals. Although the prevalence of many socio-economic difficulties and psychological issues negatively influenced livelihood and living conditions of WHHs, any kinds of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) had not been working in the research area. It was a highlighted factor in this sector of the research conducted. Hence, government programmes had related to WHHs household in the sampled location. Monthly financial aids programmes such as "*Samurdhi*", allowances for disabled persons, and allowances for old aged poor people called "*Pinpadi*", Distribution of books for poor children, drought subsidies, health clinics particularly for kidney disease, fertilizer subsidies, distribution of retail goods, self-employment training and low rate loan systems through women development organizations for self-employment had been identified as mainly highlighted programmes conducted under government intervention monitored by Galgamuwa Divisional Secretariat office.

#### **3.5.1. Programmes for Monthly Financial Allowances**

The figure 4 convinces that majority of WHHs in the sample (73%) had been benefitted by any kind of public financial source such as *Samurdhi*, allowances for disabled persons or "*Pin Padi*". In one hand, it has become a great contribution to their household income. On the other hand, it has influenced to create dependency mentality among most of the women as most of women heads had become suggestive of getting more financial or physical aids and subsidies from the government than believing their own potentials, strengths and skills.

Data related to WHHs receiving monthly financial allowances can be indicated as follows.

Figure 4: Distribution of WHHs who are Receiving Any Kinds of Public Financial Allowances

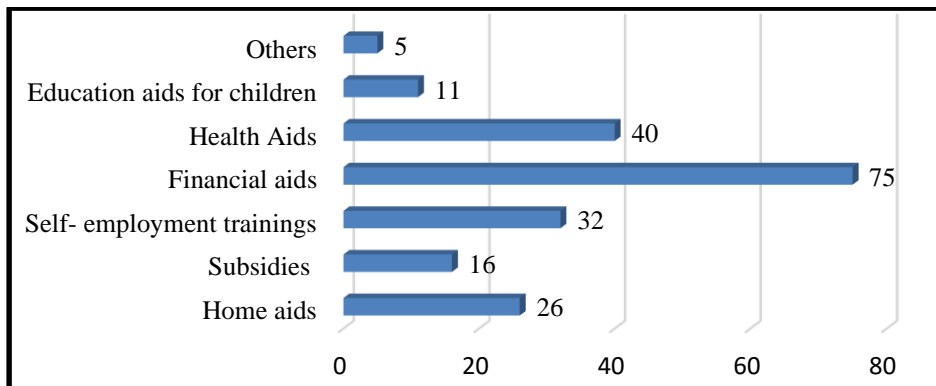


Source: Field Data, 2018

### 3.5.2. Promoting Dependency Mentality

In a deeper perspective, it could identify that most of the current government programmes had related to financial and physical allowances. It has influenced to diffuse dependency mentality and to decrease the motivational factors among people. WHHs’ views on how to design future programmes and projects related to them can be illustrated as given below.

Figure 5: Percentage of WHHs by Requesting Types of Programmes



Source: Field Data, 2018

Above figure has convinced that a larger percentage of WHHs (75%) had requested more programmes on financial aids. Considerable percentages of WHHs (40% and 32%) had indicated that programmes based on health aids and self-employment training had been important respectively.

Home aids and subsidies for agriculture, animal husbandry and retails goods and educational aids for their children had been requested to some extent. "Other" category includes that requirements of programmes specially focused on social security regarding WHHs. Above data indicates that the majority of WHHs had limited awareness of community development projects and programmes implemented towards a constructive change in them. It infers that the low level of motivation and empowerment, inadequate awareness about skills and potentials of them and limited knowledge on true sense and importance of community development components had affected to create a negative impact within them.

### **3.5.3. Lack of Specific Programmes with Specific Reference to WHHs**

Above mentioned projects and programmes are common for all people and specific programmes with specific reference to WHHs could not be identified in the research area during the study. As identified in this study the key issues to be addressed by those projects and programmes could be listed as follows: Lack of government, private or non-governmental programmes especially relevant to female-headed households, lack of effectiveness of those programmes and strength of existing empowering methods in the community to stimulate women leadership, skills and latent potentials and to enhance involvement of decision making and improving infrastructures to enhance the stability of living standards of female-headed households. Therefore, it is important to introduce integrated projects based on participatory development approach and methods of social inclusion to enhance opportunities to build self-esteem and self-confidence and to identify adaptation and mitigation actions for reducing hardships and issues through empowering latent potentials and skills of WHHs.

## **4. Conclusion and Suggestions**

After considering all the above data and information, it is evident that the lack of confidence for diversification of livelihood activities is one of the key issues related to WHHs. Most women are reluctant to change their livelihood activities due to lack of confidence and motivation. Most women heads do not have economic stability due to their spouses or they have or had not engaged in the formal employment sector. The tendency of WHHs to obtain membership of community organization has mainly based on their individual benefits not because of motivational factors.

WHHs have obtained membership of community organization based on their benefits not because of motivational factors. Personal development, women leadership or women empowerment do not become a significant or essential part of living of the majority of WHHs in rural areas. This has caused to decrease the participation, leadership and skill development of women heads and ultimately has increased the low level of living standards among WHHs. Low rate of obtaining positions in community organizations has been caused by unwillingness to take additional responsibilities, limited time for engaging community activities, conflict of household responsibilities, lack of willpower to take leadership and to make the decision and lack of motivation.

Low level of participation for self-employment training programmes can be identified among WHHs and inadequate awareness of advantages and opportunities of self-employment, lack of motivation towards new trends of income-generating sources, unwillingness to change their familiar safe-zone have influenced to the limited tendency of diversification of income-generating sources and livelihood activities of WHHs. As identified in this study the key issues to be addressed by those projects and programmes could be listed as follows:

- I. Lack of government, private or non-governmental programmes especially relevant to female-headed households,
- II. lack of effectiveness of those programmes and strength of existing empowering methods in the community to stimulate women leadership, skills and latent potentials and to enhance involvement of decision making and improving infrastructures to enhance the stability of living standards of WHHs

Based on the findings of the study, suggestions to reduce issues related to WHHs and to enhance potential skills, capacities and strength of WHHs to sustain the living of WHHs can be illustrated as follows.

The current situation of WHHs is a prevalence of subordinate and dependency mentality in power, authority and decision-making process among most women heads. Even though they have attributed the headship of the household, women have tended spontaneously to depend on others especially on a male figure as soon as possible.

Therefore, it is important to introduce programmes to improve mobilization and empowerment of women heads to achieve skills and potentials in decision-making, women leadership and active social participation. In a context of most women heads have engaged in agricultural-related livelihood activities it is essential to have an alternative mechanism to support unexpected but long-term challenges in agricultural societies. Hence, better adaptation and mitigation methods and climate-resilient actions such as disaster-resilient water systems and road systems, advanced technological agricultural methods, disaster-resilient genetically improved seeds, rain-water harvesting methods should be introduced to sustain the livelihood of WHHs by responsible government and non-governmental bodies. As well as enhancing capacities, awareness, skills and knowledge on sustainable livelihood activities are important than welfare mechanisms. Therefore, Agriculture extension services such as improving guidance, training and awareness programmes are crucial, parallel to distributing supportive physical materials in agriculture to improve the sustainability of livelihood of WHHs.

Improving access to the market, public transportation and infrastructure and low rate loan systems, updating reasonable rate of commodity price for products, increase motivational factors and empowerment are important to increase the tendency of diversified livelihood activities such as self-employment among WHHs.

Introducing government, private or non-governmental programmes with especially relevant to WHHs is significant to stimulate women leadership, skills, latent potentials and to enhance involvement of decision making and to the stability of living standards of female-headed households. And also, it is significant to introduce more effective community development programmes or project based on the bottom to top approach. Because community members are the core of community development and they are well-awarded and have numerous experiences on their own matters other than external bodies. Therefore, it is important to introduce integrated projects based on participatory development approach and methods of social inclusion to enhance opportunities to build self-esteem and self-confidence and to identify adaptation and mitigation actions to reduce hardships and issues through empowering latent potentials and skills of them.



Finally, this study signifies that typical rural development approaches mainly based on top-down supply had not responded adequately to the complexity of rural contexts in the past decades and suggests an approach to Participatory and Negotiated Territorial Development which offers concrete answers to the challenges of improving trust among female-headed households in the research area, strengthening social cohesion and promoting a systemic territorial development.

## References

- ABC of Women Workers' Rights and Gender Equality, Second Edition (2007), Geneva, International Labor Organization Publication.
- Baros, R., & Fox, L. (1997). "Female-Headed Households Poverty and Welfare of Children in Urban Brazil", *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, Vol. 45, No. 2, Chicago, Published by The University of Chicago Press.
- Bathiwala Srilatha (1995) *The meaning of womens Empowerment*, Harvard, Womens World Publication.
- Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs (1992), *Women in Development: Women 2000*: No:01, Division of the Advancement of Women, Austria, Vienna International Centre.
- Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) 2009/10, *Final Report*, Department of Census and Statistics, Sri Lanka, Ministry of Finance and Planning.
- Household Income and Expenditure Survey 2012/13, *Final Report*, Department of Census and Statistics, Sri Lanka, Ministry of Finance and Planning.
- Household Income and Expenditure Survey 2016, *Final Report*, Department of Census and Statistics, Sri Lanka, Ministry of Finance and Planning.
- Rochelle, R. (2007) *Contesting Development: The Experience of Female-Headed Households in Samoa*, New Zealand, Massey University Palmerston North. (Unpublished Document).
- Tesfamariam, T.W., (2007), *Livelihoods and Coping Strategies - A Study of Female-Headed Households in Mekelle*, Ethiopia, Erasmus University Rotterdam.