

# FARMERS' PERCEPTION ON ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE

JMSB JAYASUNDARA  
Department of Social Sciences, RUSL

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## ABSTRACT

There are many factors constraining adaptation to climate change in agriculture in the developing world, one important aspect is the understanding of the people of the climate change, its effects and potential mitigation and adaptation measures without which any planning could not be successfully implemented.

Objective of this research is to assess the perception of climate change in settlers in Mahaweli H zone. Stratified random sample of 156 dwellers in the Mahaweli H zone was selected. Structured questionnaire with close-ended questions were administered by the researcher. Data was processed and analyzed using SPSS.

The results of awareness survey shows that people are aware of the present rhythm of climate change as it has been established by the science as increase of temperature, decrease of rainfall in the dry zone, and shifts in rainy season. Nevertheless, the source of knowledge demonstrates the kind of failure of media, education and training programs launched to educate people on the changes. Own experience has become highly dominating source of knowledge. This fact confirms again when one looks at the perception of the causes of climate change. Most people believe that deforestation is the major cause which is experienced by them in their locality. Industrialization, where the most responsible factor in climate change- enhanced green house effect- has been identified by a very low number of respondents. Usual acceptance that rural people rely on God has not been proved by this study. Encouraging result was found in the survey of attitudes that people have the courage and readiness to face effects of climate change. People's perception, knowledge, attitudes and adaptation measures to climate change in Mahaweli H zone basically of their own experience and very little effect of all measures taken by all relevant organizations. All the efforts in educating, training and provision of technologies and integrated planning are needed to be intensified to strengthen rural livelihood to meet the challenges imposed by climate change. Any such programs would meet success as the people possess required readiness.

**Key words:** Climate Change Adaptation, Perception, Sri Lanka, Mahaweli