



Differentiations of development standards of the colonists settled under the Mahaweli Development Programme in Sri Lanka; A comparative study of Teldeniya and Uttalapura villages

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Abstract

Mahaweli development program is considered as a successful project implemented in Sri Lanka. People from different parts of the island were provided lands and the main objectives of this multipurpose development project are to reduce the density of the population in the wet zone, increase food production, reduce poverty, and increase hydropower generation. Consequently, The number of people moved from marginal areas of the wet climatic zone to newly irrigated lands of Dry Climatic Zone in Sri Lanka. This comparative study examines the contrast of economic, socio-cultural, and political development of these new settlers in Dry Zone and people who stayed at their traditional villages in Wet Zone. A clear understanding can be obtained here, as to who has achieved a higher development level. The study has been carried out both in The Uttalapura village which belongs to the Mahaweli System- “C” in Ampara District, and in the Teldeniya in Kandy district. Primary and secondary sources have been used in collecting data. In this study, 20 families were chosen from Uttalapura village and another 20 families were chosen from the Teldeniya under a random sampling method. The results clearly show that the settlers who were settled earlier under the Mahaweli scheme had slow progress of development than traditional villagers who have stayed in their marginal settlements. On the other hand, there was a drawback in their educational and social development compared to the villagers who remained in their native places. Future more there is a tendency for people to get into early marriages. Though there is a low level of socio-cultural development in their infrastructure facilities. People who remained in areas like Teldeniya depend on the salary drawn from their respective employers. They have less opportunity of earning an additional income. But the people who were settled under the Mahaweli development project can grow other crops which bring them an additional income in addition to paddy cultivation. They are also provided with modern machinery by the government and they carry on various other business affairs with the help of the government. Because of these reasons they are economically developed. The conclusion is that the people who settled in Mahaweli development areas are liable to adjust themselves to new situations than those who remained in their traditional villages and therefor their socio-economic development and educational development level will gradually improve in the future.

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