



## Role of Poverty Reduction Programmes and Empowering Women: A Comparative Analysis on Public and NGOs Intervention in Rural Society of Sri Lanka

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### සංක්ෂිප්තය

රාජ්‍ය හා අනෙකුත් රාජ්‍ය නොවන හා පෞද්ගලික යන පාර්ශවයන්ගේ මැදිහත් වීම නිසා ශ්‍රී ලංකාව ඉතා ඉහළ මානව සංවර්ධනයක් සහිත රටවල් කාණ්ඩයට ඇතුළත් වී තිබේ. කෙසේ වුවත් ශ්‍රී ලංකාවේ ග්‍රාමීය හා වතු අංශයන්හි දුගීබව සැලකිය යුතු මට්ටමක ඉහළ අගයක් දක්නට ලැබේ. ස්ත්‍රී - පුරුෂ භාවය මත මෙම දුගීභාවය හඳුනා ගැනීමේ දී පුරුෂයන්ට සාපේක්ෂව කාන්තාවන් දුගීභාවයෙන් පෙළෙන බව මැනකදී කරන ලද අධ්‍යයනයන් ඇසුරින් පෙනී යයි. මෙවැනි පසුබිමක දුගී බවෙන් පෙළෙන කාන්තාවන් සවිබලකරණය සඳහා රාජ්‍ය හා රාජ්‍ය නොවන සංවිධාන විවිධ වැඩ සටහන් දියත් කර තිබේ.

මෙම අධ්‍යයනය තුළින් මූලික වශයෙන් අරමුණු කරනු ලැබුයේ රාජ්‍ය හා රාජ්‍ය නොවන අංශ මගින් දියත් කරන ලද දුගීබව පිටුදැකීමේ වැඩසටහන් සහ එම වැඩසටහන් කාන්තා සවිබලකරණයට කෙතරම් දුරට දායක වී ඇති ද යන්න හඳුනා ගැනීමයි. මෙම තත්ත්වය පරීක්ෂා කිරීම සඳහා අනුරාධපුර දිස්ත්‍රික්කයේ ගලෙන්බිඳුණුවැව සහ මිහින්තලය යන ප්‍රාදේශීය ලේබම් කොට්ඨාශ දෙක අධ්‍යයන ප්‍රදේශ වශයෙන් යොදා ගනු ලැබීය. ප්‍රමාණාත්මක හා ගුණාත්මක ක්‍රමයන්ට අදාළව පර්යේෂණ ක්‍රමවේදයන්, දත්ත රැස් කිරීමේ ශිල්ප ක්‍රම සහ දත්ත විශ්ලේෂණ ක්‍රම භාවිතා කරන ලදී.

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අධ්‍යයන මගින් අනාවරණය කර ගත හැකි වූයේ දුගී කාන්තාවන් ඉලක්ක කර ගනිමින් රාජ්‍ය හා රාජ්‍ය නොවන අංශ විවිධ වැඩ සටහන් සාර්ව හා ක්ෂුද්‍ර මට්ටමින් දියත් කර ඇති බවත් මෙම වැඩසටහන් අතරින් රාජ්‍ය අංශයට වඩා රාජ්‍ය නොවන සංවිධාන කාන්තාවන් සවිබලකරණය කිරීමේ කාර්යයෙහි දායක වී ඇති බවත්ය. විශේෂයෙන් මෙම වැඩසටහන් මගින් ග්‍රාමීය කාන්තා නායකත්වය, තින්දු තීරණ ගැනීමේ හැකියාව, ගෘහීය මට්ටමේ කටයුතු වලට මැදිහත් වීම වැනි අංශයන්හි සැලකිය යුතු දායකත්වයක් ලැබී ඇති බව පෙනී යයි. මේ නිසා ග්‍රාමීය කාන්තාවන් සිය ගෘහීය ජීවිතය තුළ ගත කරන තත්ත්වයට වඩා ඇගේ සාමාජික ජීවිතය තුළ සිය තත්ත්වය ඉහළ දමා ගැනීමක් සිදුව ඇති බව නිගමනය කළ හැකිය.

මුඛ්‍ය පද : දුගීබව අවම කිරීම, කාන්තා සවිබලකරණය, රාජ්‍ය අංශයේ මැදිහත් වීම, රාජ්‍ය නොවන සංවිධානවල මැදිහත් වීම, ග්‍රාම සංවර්ධනය.

## Introduction

In identifying the level of poverty in Sri Lanka, it can be seen that rural poverty is higher than urban poverty. *Poverty Indicators - 2011*, the report of the Department of Census and Statistics revealed that the estate sector poor is 11.4% and the rural sector holds 9.4% and urban poor is 5.3% in 2009/10 (*Household Income And Expenditure Survey - 2009/10, Department Of Census And Statistics - Sri Lanka*). Against this background, the public and NGOs sectors have conducted several poverty reduction programmes to enhance the capability of the poor people in the rural areas. In addition, a number of NGOs and INGOs, such as Sarvodaya, World Vision and Berendina have implemented numerous programmes to improve the capacity of rural community.

People who are living in rural areas have been facing various socio, economic, and political problems as a result of regional disparities. The State has been adopting a number of policies and strategies to reduce regional disparities, especially to reduce rural poverty. Successive governments have sought to reduce poverty through providing free education and health services, targeted grants, employment creation, land redistribution and development and, since the late 1970s, through economic growth. From the 1940s to the 1970s the emphasis was on state planned and managed approaches with a commitment to universal provision of basic needs and services. The ideas of welfare, poor nutrition, small-scale farmers' productivity, landlessness and equity informed programme design rather than a clear conceptualization of poverty. (Tudawe, 2002; 38).

When considering the history of public sector intervention for poverty reduction that can be identified, Sri Lanka has a long history of social programmes and food subsidy programmes targeting the poor people. These poverty alleviation programmes have been launched since as early as in the 1930s. Several consumption and production-oriented measures have been taken at different times. Some of these measures are the food subsidy scheme in 1942, milk feeding scheme for free school children in 1944, mid-day meal for school children in 1940, food stamp scheme in 1979, settlement scheme from 1930, land tenure reforms in 1953, fertilizer subsidy, credit for paddy cultivation, etc. These poverty alleviation programmes have been implemented under three major welfare reports, namely the Education Act of 1945 (Kannangara Report 1943); the establishment of the Department of Social Services, 1948 (Jennings Report 1943); and the Health Act of 1953 (Cumpston Report 1950). The implementation of these reports, in public policy terms firmly established the principle of collective provision for common human and social needs through state intervention (Jayasooriya, 1996; 3-6).

Considering to the state intervention for poverty reduction in Sri Lanka, a number of poverty reduction programmes and strategies have been implemented by every government. However, even while identifying that development in the rural areas is crucial for poverty alleviation, the government cannot possibly channel unlimited funds into development plans without constraints, disregarding potential developments in urban areas or more importantly, not considering the state of its overall economy. Therefore, the Sri Lankan government faces a dilemma of pursuing growth that is equitable; trying to promote economic growth without leaving the poor in the rural area behind. Apart from government policies, NGOs can help ease the situation too.

Under the community level strategies the NGOs have played a major role in the poverty reduction process in Sri Lanka. Such NGOs obtain funding from local and foreign donors and use these to provide services to poor people. The role of the NGO in the development process is well recognized today. There are 1029 NGOs registered in the country and all the NGOs participate in the development attempts and relief activities of the country.

The types of services provided vary from social mobilization of communities for empowerment and communal projects, sanitation and water supply through to micro-credit provision. The concept of “small group” formation for various activities has become quite common with

most NGOs as well as the state. NGOs indicate the enormous variety of activities undertaken and show that they work all over the country. In the North and East, for obvious reasons, humanitarian work is a key activity. More widely, agricultural development, small enterprise development, health and nutrition, environmental protection and micro-credit are common activities. While some NGOs target 'the poor' others provide services more generally across the population. However, NGOs have been playing a significant role in the achievement of poverty reduction goals.

Table 01: Number of Registered NGOs-Subject-wise-2011

Subject Area	No. of NGOs		Total
	International	Local	
Poverty Alleviation	35	222	257
Environment	7	65	72
Entrepreneur Development and Training	28	17	45
Training and Education	33	140	173
Health and Sanitation	22	47	69
Rehabilitation and Reconstruction	26	28	54
Reproductive Health	2	8	10
Human Rights	1	28	29
Disaster Management	1	2	3
Rural Development	4	46	50
Protection and Child Rights	24	55	79
Women and Development	2	28	30
Gender Equity	0	1	1
Relief Work	25	31	56
Credit and Mobilization	0	12	12
Any Other	21	68	89
Number of Total NGO	231	798	1029

Directory of Voluntary Social Services organizations-2011

## Objective of the Study

The key objective of the study is to identify the role of poverty reduction programmes which are conducted by the Public and NGO sectors and empowering poor women in rural society of Sri Lanka.

However, this key objective can be further divided and describes precisely by elaborating its scope of the research. They are:

Evaluating the role of public sector for poverty reduction in Sri Lanka through women's empowerment

Understanding the role of the NGO sector and their involvement in poverty reduction in Sri Lanka through women's empowerment

Identifying the women's empowerment process as a poverty reduction strategy

Assess the Efficiency and Effectiveness of women's empowerment activities/programmes in terms of poverty reduction

## Study Area and Sample

The study was completed in two DSDs of Anuradhapura District, Sri Lanka, namely Galenbindunuwewa and Mihintale. Nine GNDs were selected from Galenbindunuwewa and Mihintale DSDs for the study. Selected GNDs are Upuldeniya, Milagaswewa and Janasirigama from the Galenbindunuwewa DSD; and Ruwangama, Bogahayaya, Pothana, Kasamaduwa, Maradankalla and Wellaragama from the Mihintale DSD.

Samurdhi Benefited families were selected as an indicator of poverty in the study areas. Among Samurdhi benefited families of Galenbindunuwewa DSD, the highest number of families were represented in Janasirigama GND. Total families of Janasirigama is 735, among them 252 families are Samurdhi benefited families (34%) (*Resource Profile, Divisional Secretariat Division, Galenbindunuwewa-2013*). Total families in Mihintale DSD in 2012 records 9,179. Among them 2,522 (25.57%) of families have benefited from the Samurdhi programme. Among Samurdhi benefited families of Mihintale DSD, the highest number of Samurdhi assisted families is in Pothana GND. Total families of Pothana GND is 421, and among them 161 families can be identified as Samurdhi assisted families (38%) (*Resource Profile,*

*Divisional Secretariat Division, Mihintale -2013*). The Janasirigama and Pothatna GNDs were selected as study areas in order to investigate into the role of the public sector and their involvement in poverty reduction.

When reflecting on the role of the NGOs in poverty reduction in the study areas in Galenbindunuwewa and Mihintale DSDs, a number of NGOs and INGOs have been playing a significant role in reducing rural poverty in those areas. Among these NGOs, Berendina organization and World Vision were selected to study the role of NGOs intervention in the reduction of poverty. Since Berendina and World Vision are the most related community based organization which have implemented a number of programmes in the reduction of rural poverty in the Mihintale and Galenbindunuwewa DSDs, since they have also specially focused on empowering women in the rural areas. In observing the NGOs intervention in poverty reduction; Galenbindunuwewa, Milagaswewa and Upuldeniya GNDs were selected as study areas because World Vision has implemented number of programmes in these areas. Ruwangama, Bogahayaya, Kasamaduwa, Maradankalla and Wellaragama GNDs were selected in Mihintale DSD because Berendina has covered these areas under their programmes. Samurdhi benefited and non-benefited families and NGOs assisted families were selected by a simple random sampling technique from each of the nine selected GNDs. The total sample size was 302 families.

## **Research Methodology**

Both positivist and interpretivist paradigms were used in discussing the methodological approach. Identifying the nature of rural poverty is one of the objectives of this study. Therefore, the positivist paradigm was used to identify the nature of poverty of the respondents. On the contrary, this study attempted to identify the women empowerment process, against this background, the interpretivist paradigm was used to consider the ideas of people and their perspectives as an important source of data in understanding the women empowerment.

The key objective of this study was to identify the role of Public and NGOs sectors and their involvement for poverty reduction process and empowering poor women in rural Sri Lanka. Both qualitative and quantitative methodologies were used in this research. Qualitative methodology supported in exploring real life situations and studying behavior patterns and the reasons behind social interactions of the

respondents. Qualitative methodology allows researcher to incorporate respondents views or opinions and their voice on these programmes.

Nevertheless, quantitative methodology was used to study the nature of poverty in the study areas. Specially, the quantitative methodology supported in identifying the level of poverty and reduction of poverty after the implemented poverty reduction programmes among selected samples.

Research methods may be understood as all those methods/techniques that are used in conducting the research. Research methods or techniques thus refer to the methods the researchers use in performing research operations. The case study method, comparative method and statistical method were used as the research methods in this research.

Since both qualitative and quantitative data were used in this research, qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques too were utilized. In collecting the qualitative data in this research, it employed several participant-oriented data collection techniques such as structured interview, key informant interviews and focus group discussions. Quantitative data were collected through the employment of a structured questionnaire with some open-ended questions.

Understanding the women empowerment process more often possible through collection of qualitative data, and the poverty reduction process can be identified through the quantitative data. Therefore, this research designed and incorporated both qualitative and quantitative data analyzing tools and linked them together as highly desirable. Furthermore, to analyze the qualitative data, the qualitative data analysis methods were used such as analytic comparisons, codes and coding, graphical and tabular analysis methods. On the other hand, poverty reduction can be identified as a major variable in this research; as a result many of the statistical data collected relate to the poverty reduction process in this study. Therefore, statistical data were analyzed by using the Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS).

## **Result and Discussions**

Identifying the women's empowerment process as a poverty reduction strategy through public and NGO sectors involvement is key objective of this study. Women's empowerment as a strategy in poverty reduction is still a new enterprise in Sri Lanka. The literature on women and

poverty abounds with evidence that women are disproportionately subject to the economic and socio-cultural effects of poverty. Research in Sri Lanka and other countries has revealed that women are more likely to suffer from poverty than men and, it would seem likely, that women would experience chronic poverty at higher levels than men.

When inspecting this objective in the study areas, the women's empowerment process is utilized as a poverty reduction strategy by the public and NGOs sectors in the study areas of the Galenbindunuwewa and Mihintale DSDs. Analyzed data revealed that the public and NGOs implemented several programmes targeting poor women such as; assisting women in income earning activities like small businesses and animal husbandry, providing loan facilities, supporting vocational training, assistance on health for women, assisting women under the social security programmes and creating self-help groups. Leadership training, teamwork and social work etc have been developed among them through these SHGs.

World Vision, Berendina, and Samurdhi programmes have assisted women in small businesses through different ways such as providing loan facilities, equipment and training for organizing and sustainability. Out of a total sample, 18 families were assisted to start small businesses. It can be divided as seven families in Galenbindunuwewa and 11 families in Mihintale. Among the beneficiaries for small businesses, 15 were women and 3 were men. Among the beneficiaries 5 were selected from Galenbindunuwewa and 10 were selected from the Mihintale DSDs. Under the follow-up programme, eight (8) families in Galenbindunuwewa received loans, equipment and training from World Vision to improve their businesses and among them 6 or 75% of the beneficiaries are women. Berendina also assisted five (5) families in Mihintale to improve their businesses. Among them four women (80%) were assisted by Berendina to improve their businesses. In addition, five families received loans to develop their businesses under the Samurdhi programme and all of them are women. The data revealed that the NGOs have focused on women than the public sector relating to improving the small businesses.

Table 02: The Organizations, Types of Assistance and Benefited Persons by DSDs, GNDs for Small Businesses



DSDs	GNDs	Assisted Institution	Type of Assistant					Benefited Persons			
			Loan facilities	Provide equipments	Provide training for organizing and sustainability	Other	Total	Husband	Wife	Daughter	Son
Galenbindunuwewa	Upuldeniya	World Vision	2	2	2	-	6	2	4	-	-
		Total	2	2	2	-	6	2	4	-	-
	Milagaswewa	World Vision	1	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-
		Total	1	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-
Mihinthale	Ruwangama	Berendina	1	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-
		Total	1	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-
	Pothana	World Vision	1	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-
		Berendina	-	1	-	-	1	-	1	-	-
		Samurdhi	4	-	-	-	4		4	-	-
		Berendina	2	-	-	1	3	1	2	-	-
		Total	7	1	-	1	9	2	7	-	-
	Maradankalla	Samurdhi	1	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-
		Total	1	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-
Grand Total			12	3	2	1	18	3	15	-	-

Field Data-2015

Under the income earning activities, such organizations have assisted women in animal husbandry. Especially Berendina, World Vision and Divinaguma Programme had provided subject oriented technical training in refreshing and improving the technical knowledge of Goat, Poultry and Cattle breeding. Four families participated in the capacity building training conducted by World Vision and two of them were women. Respondents revealed that World Vision has conducted that training programme in 2001 and they had attended the programmes. Seven families participated in the training organized by Berndina organization and among them five were women. Berendina had organized that programmes in 2003. Two family members have participated in training under the Divinaguma programme and one among them is a woman. This programme had been conducted in 2012.

Table 03: Capacity Building Training for Animal Husbandry by DSDs, GNDs and Assisted Organizations and Benefitted Family Members

DSDs	GNDs	Assisted by	Capacity Building Training	Benefitted persons			
				Husband	Wife	Daughter	Son
Galenbindunu wewa	Milagas wewa	World Vision	4	2	2	-	-
		Total	4	2	2	-	-
	Janasir igama	Divinaguma	2	1	1	-	-
		Total	2	1	1	-	-
Mihintale	Bogaha ayaya	Berendina	2	-	2	-	-
		Total	2	-	2	-	-
	Potheana	Berendina	4	1	3	-	-
		Total	4	1	3	-	-
	Maradan kalla	Berendina	1	-	1	-	-
		Total	1	-	1	-	-
Grand Total			13	4	9	-	-

Field data-2015

In addition, World Vision, Berendina and Divinaguma Programme had provided animals for the women. Table 04 indicates the type of animals provided by the several organizations. Berendina provided Milk Cows, Goats, Chicken and Pigs among the ten (10) households where six are women. World Vision had provided Milk Cows, Cattle and Chicken among the four (4) families, two of them headed by women. Eight (8) families obtained animals from the government especially under the Divinaguma and Samurdhi programmes. The Government has distributed animals among four women. Total women beneficiaries for animal husbandry were 14, among them 12 women were assisted by NGOs and 4 women by the Government.

Table 04: The Organizations and Types of Animals Given by DSDs, GNDs and Benefitted Family Members

DSDs	GNDs	Assisted by	Types of Animals Given					Benefitted persons			
			Milk Cows	Cattle	Pigs	Goats	Chicken	Husband	Wife	Son	Daughter
Mihinthal	Galenbindunuwewa	World Vision	1	2	-	-	1	2	2	-	-
		Divinaguma	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-
		Celinco	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
		Total	2	2	-	-	2	4	2	-	-
	Janasirigama	Divinaguma	-	-	-	-	2	1	1	-	-
		Total	-	-	-	-	2	1	1	-	-
Mihinthal	Ruwangama	Berendina	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
		Total	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-

	Bogahaya ya	Berendina	-	-	-	2		2	-	-	-
		Total	-	-	-	2		2	-	-	-
	Pothana	Berendina	-	-	1	-	3	1	3	-	-
		Samurdhi	1	-	-	-	2	1	2	-	-
		Commercial	1	-	-	-		1	-	-	-
		Divisional Secretariat	-	-	-	-	1		1	-	-
		Other	1	1	-	1	2	2	3	-	-
		Total	3	1	1	1	8	5	9	-	-
	Kasamaduwu	Berendina	-	-	-	1	1	1	1	-	-
		Divisional Secretariat	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-
		Other	-	-	-	1	-	1		-	-
		Total	-	-	-	3	1	3	1	-	-
	Maradankalla	Berendina	-	-	-	1	-		1	-	-
		Total	-	-	-	1	-		1	-	-
	<b>Grand Total</b>		6	3	1	7	13	16	14	-	-

Field data-2015

The Public and NGOs sectors have provided loan facilities to women. Considering the credit utilization within the households, the money has been utilized by the wife, husband and children (over 18 years). Of the credits receivers 50.7% have been controlled and utilized by the wife, while 47.6% of them have obtained loans and given it to the husband for his utilization. 1.7% of the credit has been controlled and utilized by children over 18 years for their purposes.

Table 05: Loans Provided, Institute and Control and Utilization of Loans within the Households by DSDs, GNDs (Field data-2015)

DSDs	Organization providing loan	Who utilized and controlled						Total	
		Wife		Husband		Children age more than 18 years		No	%
		No	%	No.	%	No	%		
Galenbindunuwewa	World Vision	4	100	-	-	-	-	4	100
	Samurdhi	22	100	-	-	-	-	22	100
	Personal	1	50	1	50	-	-	2	100
	Bank of Ceylon	3	18	14	82.4	-	-	17	100
	Rajarata Bank	1	50	1	50	-	-	2	100
	Housing Aothrity	2	67	1	33.3	-	-	3	100
	Commarcial Bank	5	56	4	44.4	-	-	9	100
	Sanasa	1	50	1	50	-	-	2	100
	Commercial Credit	2	50	2	50	-	-	4	100
	Leasing, Finance Comany	-	-	7	87.5	1	12.5	8	100
	Peoples Bank	2	17	10	83.3	-	-	12	100
	Forces	-	-	2	100	-	-	2	100
	<b>Total</b>	43	49	43	49.4	1	1.1	87	100
Mihinthale	World Vision	3	60	2	40	-	-	5	100
	Berendina	6	55	4	36.4	1	9.1	11	100
	Samurdhi	28	80	7	20	-	-	35	100
	Personal	3	38	5	62.5	-	-	8	100
	Bank of Ceylon	5	42	6	50	1	8.3	12	100
	Rajarata Bank	1	13	7	87.5	-	-	8	100
	Housing Aothrity	1	20	4	80	-	-	5	100
	Commercial Bank	2	33	4	66.7	-	-	6	100
	Sanasa	-	-	1	100	-	-	1	100
	Death Donation Society	1	100	-	-	-	-	1	100
	R D Bank	1	50	1	50	-	-	2	100
	Commercial Credit	-	-	1	100	-	-	1	100
	Leasing, Finance Comany	-	-	3	100	-	-	3	100
	Peoples Bank	1	100	-	-	-	-	1	100
	Forces	1	100	-	-	-	-	1	100
	Paragathi Seva	-	-	2	100	-	-	2	100
	<b>Total</b>	53	52	47	46.1	2	2	102	100

Furthermore, the public and NGOs have assisted women in vocational training. They provided training courses for women to improve their capacity. World Vision and Berendina have provided vocational training focusing on women. Self employment, agriculture and training for animal husbandry conducted by World Vision in Galenbindunuwewa, 31.7% of the participant are female and Berendina has conducted self employment, agriculture and computer training in Mihintale, where 65.6% of the participants were female. Further, the Government provided several vocational training programmes in Galenbindunuwewa and Mihintale where 57.1% of the participants were women.

Table 06: Assisted Organizations and Type of Vocational Training and Benefited Family Members by DSDs and GNDs (Field data-2015)

DSDs	Assisted by	Type of training							Benefitted by				
		Self employment	Computer training	Training in agriculture	Training in sewing	Training in masonry	Training in animals	Fishery programme	Total	Husband	Wife	Son	Daughter
Galenbindunuwewa	World Vision	15	-	25	-	-	1	-	41	28	13	-	-
	Samurdhi	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	2		2	-	-
	Government	4	2	5	3	-	-	-	14	5	7	-	2
	Other	1	-	-	2	-	-	-	3	1	2	-	-
	<b>Total</b>	21	2	31	5	-	1	-	60	34	24	-	2
Mihintale	Berendina	3	25	33	-	-	6	-	67	20	22	3	22
	Government	1	4		1	-	4	1	11	5	3	1	2
	Samurdhi	-	-	-	-	1			1	1			
	Other	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1		1		
	<b>Total</b>	5	29	33	1	1	10	1	80	26	26	4	24
<b>Grand Total</b>		26	31	64	6	1	11	1	140	60	50	4	26

Also, public and NGOs supported women in their health. The study covered 47 families in the Milagaswewa in Galenbindunuwewa DSD, among them 23 respondents obtained medical assistance from World Vision, and among them 15 were women. Further, World Vision conducted medical clinics focusing on malnourished pregnant women and breast-feeding mothers, and 6 women have benefitted under this assistance. In addition, they were provided food rations to supplement their nutrition intake.

Table 07: Type of Assistance and Assisted Organization for Health of Women by DSDs, GNDs (Field data-2015)

DSDs	GNDs	Assisted by	Type of Assisted						Total	Benefitted Members			
			First aid programme	Regular medical clinics			Dental clinics			Husband	Wife	Daughter	Husband/Wife
				Cataract Operation	And assistance for malnourished mothers and children	Provision of spectacles	Assistance for						
Galenbindunuwewa	Milagaswewa <sup>a</sup>	World Vision	-	6	10	6	1	23	7	6	1	9	
		Total	-	6	10	6	1	23	7	6	1	9	
	Upuldeniya <sup>a</sup>	World Vision	-	4	-	-		4		4			
		Total	-	4	-	-		4		4			

Mihintale	Janasirigama	Government	1	-	-	-		1			1	
		Total	1	-	-	-		1			1	
	Pothana	Government	-	-	-	1		1		1		
		Total	-	-	-	1		1		1		
Grand Total			1	10	10	7	1	29	7	11	2	9

At the same time public and NGOs have conducted programmes to provide financial assistance to poor women to minimize their expenditure at the time of sudden disasters, deaths, illnesses etc. as well as they have provided financial support for essential social activities such as family marriages, child births etc. Analytical data revealed the type of assistance under the social security programmes, and under the Samurdhi programme 12 women have been assisted in death related issues, marriages and births. Berendina has assisted in child birth in Bogahayaya.

Table 08: Social Security Programme by DSDs, GNDs and Assisted Organizations, Assisted Type and Benefitted Members (Field data-2015)

DSDs	GNDs	Assisted by	Assistance Provided for				Benefitted Members			
			Deaths	Births	Marriages	Illnesses	Husband	Wife	Daughter	Son
Galenbindunuwewa	Upuldeniya	Government	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-
		Total	-	1				1	-	-
	Milagaswewa	World Vision	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-
		Samurdhi	-	2	-	-		2	-	-
		Government	-	-	-	-			-	-
		Other	-	2	-	1	1	2	-	-
		Total	-	4	-	2	2	4	-	-



	Janasirigama	Samurdhi	3	3	2			8	-	-
		Government	1	1	-	1	2	1	-	-
		Other	1		-			1	-	-
		Total	5	4	2	1	2	10	-	-
Mihinthale	Ruwangama	government	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
		Total	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
	Bogahayaya	Berendina	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-
		Other	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
		Total	1	1	-	-	-	2	-	-
	Pothana	Samurdhi	1	-	-	1	-	2	-	-
		Government	1	2	-	3	-	6	-	-
		Other	4	-	-	2	-	6	-	-
		Total	6	2	-	6	-	14	-	-
	<b>Grand Total</b>		13	12	2	9	4	32	-	-

When identifying the women's empowerment process in the study areas, the most important factor is the formation of core-groups. These group activities have been playing a significant role in strengthening the poor women in the study areas. When examining the group saving activities in the study areas, several organizations have formed SHGs to empower poor women. Group of five families have been formed at village level under the Samurdhi programme. Also World Vision and Berendina have formed small groups at village level in the Galenbindunuwewa and Mihintale DSDs respectively. They have conducted several activities to empower women under these SHGs.

Table 09: The Group Saving Activity by Divisional Secretariat Division, Grama Niladari Divisions and Type of Group Saving Activity (Field data-2015)

Type of Group Saving	Galenbindunuwewa			Mihintale						Total
	Upuldeniya	Milagaswewa	Janasirigama	Ruwangama	Bogahayaya	Pothana	Kasamaduwa	Maradankalla	Wellaragama	
Samurdhi Small Group	2	6	16	1	2	30	2	2	5	66
World Vision Small Group	0	-	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
Berendina Small Group	-	-	-	1	1	2	-	1	1	6
Seettu	0		0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Not involved in Group Savings	9	41	84	6	10	56	8	8	5	227
Total	11	47	100	8	13	91	10	11	11	302

According to this objective, it can be identified that the women's empowerment process is being utilized by the public and NGOs sectors as poverty reduction strategies in the study areas. Analyzed data revealed that NGOs have implemented several programmes focusing on women and they have paid considerable attention to empower poor women in the study areas. In addition, the Government too has conducted several programmes targeting poor women. Especially the *Samurdhi and Divinagama* programmes consistently focused on women. However, when the involvements of the public and the NGOs in the process of women's empowerment are comparatively analyzed, the NGOs can be seen playing a more considerable role than the public sector.

One of the main objectives of this study is to examine the role of the public sector and NGOs sector on empowering women through their programmes. Identifying the effectiveness of women's empowerment in the study areas is a difficult task, because women's empowerment is difficult to measure with the use of standard tools. However, domestic decision-making on child related issues, decisions relating to leisure time, marketing, daily meals etc. are resorted to as a means to measure the level of women's empowerment; in addition to their involvement in secondary education, participation in paid employment, participation in community based organizations and leadership positions.

### **Household's decision-making ability for daily meals**

Women's ability to decide on the daily meals can be identified as a key indicator regarding women's decision-making ability at the household level. According to the qualitative data, the majority of the men in the study areas were engaged in income earning activities. In this situation, women's decision-making abilities at the household level have increased. When comparing the Galenbindunuwewa and Mihintale DSDs on women's participation in decision-making on daily meals, Galenbindunuwewa showed higher percentage than that from Mihintale. Out of the total sample, 90.4% of the respondents emphasized that the preparation of meals is the wife's responsibility while 5.6% of the households stated that both husband and wife were involved in the decision-making on daily meals. Among the 158 families covered by the Galenbindunuwewa DSD; 151 (95.6%) families said that preparation of meals is the wife's responsibility. The total sample from Mihintale is 144 families, and among them 122 (84.7%) mentioned that preparation of meals is the wife's responsibility.

Table 10: Number of Families by DSDs, GNDs and Ability to Decide on Daily Meals (Field data-2015)

DSDs	GNDs	Assisted by	Assistance Provided for				Benefitted Members			
			Deaths	Births	Marriages	Illnesses	Husband	Wife	Daughter	Son
Galenbindunuwewa	Upuldeniya	Government	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-
		Total	-	1				1	-	-
	Milagaswewa	World Vision	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-
		Samurdhi	-	2	-	-		2	-	-
		Government	-	-	-	-			-	-
		Other	-	2	-	1	1	2	-	-
		Total	-	4	-	2	2	4	-	-
	Janasirigama	Samurdhi	3	3	2			8	-	-
		Government	1	1	-	1	2	1	-	-
		Other	1		-			1	-	-
		Total	5	4	2	1	2	10	-	-
Mihinthale	Ruwangama	government	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
		Total	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
	Bogahayaya	Berendina	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-
		Other	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
		Total	1	1	-	-	-	2	-	-
	Pothana	Samurdhi	1	-	-	1	-	2	-	-
		Government	1	2	-	3	-	6	-	-
		Other	4	-	-	2	-	6	-	-
		Total	6	2	-	6	-	14	-	-
	Grand Total		13	12	2	9	4	32	-	-

### Household's decision-making ability for marketing

Where decisions regarding marketing are concerned, women can be seen to have power in make decisions on purchasing some households items. From the total families covered in Galenbindunuwewa, 80 (50.6%) respondents revealed that women have the power to make decisions on purchasing some households items. In Mihintale it has shown 58.3%. When considering the total sample 54.3% of the women and 35% of the husbands control the decisions regarding marketing activities, while 8.6% of both husbands and wives took the decisions regarding marketing activities. Against this background, it can be seen that women have greater purchasing powers than men.

Table 11: The Number of Families by DSDs, GNDs and Ability to Decide on Marketing (Field Data-2015)

DSDs	GNDs	Decision about Marketing								Total	
		Husband		Wife		Both Husband & Wife		Son or Daughter		No	%
			%	No	%	No	%	No	%		
Galenbindunuwewa	Upulde niya	3	27.3	6	54.5	1	9.1	1	9.1	11	100
	Milagas wewa	22	46.8	19	40.4	5	10.6	1	2.1	47	100
	Janasirigama	39	39	55	55	4	4	2	2	100	100
	<b>Total</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>40.5</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>50.6</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6.3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>100</b>
Mihinthale	Ruwangama	1	12.5	7	87.5	-	-	-	-	8	100
	Bogahayaya	7	53.8	6	46.2	-	-	-	-	13	100
	Pothana	21	23.1	55	60.4	13	14.3	2	2.2	91	100
	Kasama duwa	5	50	4	40	1	10	-	-	10	100
	Maradan kalla	6	54.5	5	45.5	-	-	-	-	11	100
	Wellaragama	2	18.2	7	63.6	2	18.2	-	-	11	100
	<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>29.2</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>58.3</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>11.1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>106</b>	<b>35.1</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>54.3</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>8.6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>302</b>	<b>100</b>

## Households' decision-making ability on children's education

When considering the households' decision-making ability on their children's education, 72.5% mentioned that it is the mother's responsibility. However, a small proportion of households (4%) mentioned that deciding on the child's education is the husband's responsibility. A total of 158 families were covered by the Galenbindunuwewa DSD; and among them 115 (72.8%) families said that the decision-making ability on the children's education is the wife's responsibility. Total sample from Mihintale is 144 families, and among them 104 (72.2%) mentioned that the decision-making ability on their children's education is the wife's responsibility.

Table 12: Number of Families by DSDs, GNDs and Ability to Decide on Child's Education

DSDs	GNDs	Decision about Child Education										Total	
		Husband		Wife		Both		Husband	Son or Daughter	Absent	Studying	No	%
		No	%	No	%	No	%						
Galenbindunuwewa	Upuldeniya	1	9.1	5	45.5	1	9.1			4	36.4	11	100
	Milagaswewa	1	2.1	39	83.0	1	2.1			6	12.8	47	100
	Janasirigama	2	2.0	71	71.0	6	6.0	1	1.0	20	20.0	100	100
	Total	4	2.5	115	72.8	8	5.1	1	.6	30	19.0	158	100
Mihintale	Ruwanga	1	1.2	6	75.0					1	12.8	8	100

	ma		5							5		0	
	Boga haya ya			1 0	76 .9	2	1 5. 4			1	7. 7	1 3	10 0. 0
	Poth ana	5	5. 5	6 6	72 .5	1 0	1 1. 0	3	3 .3	7	7. 7	9 1	10 0. 0
	Kasa mad uwa	2	2 0. 0	4	40 .0	2	2 0. 0			2	2 0. 0	1 0	10 0. 0
	Mara dank alla			1 0	90 .9					1	9. 1	1 1	10 0. 0
	Well araga ma			8	72 .7					3	2 7. 3	1 1	10 0. 0
	Total	8	5. 6	1 0 4	72 .2	1 4	9. 7	3	2 .1	1 5	1 0. 4	1 4 4	10 0. 0
Grand Total		1 2	4. 0	2 1 9	72 .5	2 2	7. 3	4	1 .3	4 5	1 4. 9	3 0 2	10 0. 0

Field Data-2015

Households' decision-making ability on leisure time  
Examining the decision-making ability regarding leisure time, a considerable number of respondents (57.9%) said that both husband and wife were engaged in the decision-making on leisure time. A total of 158 families were covered by the Galenbindunuwewa DSD; and among them 104 (65.8%) families illustrated that both husband and wife were engaged in decision-making on their leisure time. Total sample in Mihintale is 144 families, and among them 71(49.3%) mentioned that both husband and wife were engaged in decision-making on their leisure time.



Table 12 : The Number of Families by DSDs, GNDs and Ability to Decide on Leisure Time (Field data-2015)

DSDs	GNDs	Leisure Time										Total	
		Husband		Wife		Husband & Wife		Daughter		Other relevant		No.	%
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
Galenbindunuwewa	Upuldeniya	2	18	4	36.4	5	45.5	-	-	-	-	11	100
	Milagaswewa	3	6.4	4	8.5	39	83	1	2.1	-	-	47	100
	Janasirigama	6	6	29	29	60	60	2	2	3	3	100	100
	Total	11	7	37	23.4	104	65.8	3	1.9	3	1.9	158	100
Mihinthale	Ruwangama	-	-	3	37.5	4	50	-	-	1	13	8	100
	Bogahayaya	-	-	5	38.5	8	61.5	-	-	-	-	13	100
	Pothana	9	9.9	36	39.6	38	41.8	4	4.4	4	4.4	91	100
	Kasamaduwala	2	20	1	10	6	60	-	-	1	10	10	100
	Maradankallala	1	9.1	3	27.3	7	63.6	-	-	-	-	11	100
	Wellaragama	-	-	3	27.3	8	72.7	-	-	-	-	11	100
	Total	12	8.3	51	35.4	71	49.3	4	2.8	6	4.2	144	100
Grand Total		23	7.6	88	29.1	175	57.9	7	2.3	9	3	302	100

## Membership in community based organizations

When considering women's participation in community based organizations, the membership of women could be seen being higher than that of the men. Table 13 indicates that among the total sample of over 18 years, 54.6% have participated in community based organizations. Among them 68% were women and 32% were men. Considering the status of the Galenbindunuwewa DSD, the total memberships of CBOs is 239 and among them 145 are women and 95 are men. In the Mihintale DSD, 174 women have obtained membership in CBOs while 58 men have obtained membership in CBOs. Data revealed that membership of women in CBOs is higher than that of men. Regarding the leadership skills of women, the positions were significantly lower than that of the men. When considering women's leadership positions in village societies, the percentage is 1.9% as President, 0.4% as Secretaries and 0.2% as Treasurers. Statistical data revealed that the men's leadership positions are as President 2.1%, Secretaries 2.6%, and Treasurers 3.0%. The researcher observed that most of the women (90%) have participated as members of village level societies. Therefore, there was no significant relationship between women's participation in community based organization and their leadership positions.

Table 13: Respondents Representation in the CBOs by DSDs

DSDs	GNDs	Leisure Time										Total	
		Husband		Wife		Both Husband & Wife		Son or Daughter		Not relevant		No	%
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%		
Galenbindunuwewa	Upuldeniya	2	18	4	36.4	5	46	-	-	-	-	11	100
	Milagawewa	3	6.4	4	8.5	39	83	1	2.1	-	-	47	100

	Janasiri gama	6	6	29	29	60	60	2	2	3	3	100	100
	Total	11	7	37	23.4	104	66	3	1.9	3	2	158	100
Mihinthale	Ruwan gama	-	-	3	37.5	4	50	-	-	1	13	8	100
	Bogaha yaya	-	-	5	38.5	8	62	-	-	-	-	13	100
	Pothan a	9	9.9	36	39.6	38	42	4	4.4	4	4	91	100
	Kasam aduwa	2	20	1	10	6	60	-	-	1	10	10	100
	Marad ankalla	1	9.1	3	27.3	7	64	-	-	-	-	11	100
	Wellar agama	-	-	3	27.3	8	73	-	-	-	-	11	100
	Total	12	8.3	51	35.4	71	49	4	2.8	6	4	144	100
	<b>Grand Total</b>	23	7.6	88	29.1	175	58	7	2.3	9	3	302	100

Field data-2015

### Women's participation in development activities

Analysis of the women's participation in the development activities revealed that they have engaged in the development process at different levels. The majority of the women (84.7%) participated in the development process at group level. In addition, 24.1% of the women have engaged in development activities at an individual level. When considering women's participation in development activities at national level, it could be seen as a very low percentage (1.3%) when comparing the Galenbindunuwewa and Mihintale DSDs.

Table 14: Respondents' Attitudes to Level of Women's Participation in Development Activities in the Area with respect to Preference Order

Preference Order	Household Level Participati on		Individual Level Participati on		Group Level Participat ion		National Level Participati on		CBO Level Participati on	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
First preference	1	100.0	73	91.3	216	84.4	4	66.7	7	3.1
Second preference	-	-	5	6.3	32	12.5	1	16.7	198	87.2
Third preference	-	-	2	2.5	8	3.1	1	16.7	22	9.7
Total	1	100.0	80	100.0	256	100.0	6	100.0	227	100.0

Field data-2015

### Women engaging in activities in study areas

In observing the effectiveness of women's empowerment, the activities that the women engage in could be taken as an indicator. Relating to the survey data, it could be identified that the majority of the respondents illustrated that women in the study area have engaged in home-based farming or agricultural activities (98.6%). A total of 158 households were covered in the Galenbindunuwewa DSD, and among them 156 (98.7%) respondents highlighted that women are engaged in farming activities. In The Mihintale DSD covered 144 families, and among them 142 (98.6%) families expressed that women are engaged in farming activities. In addition, a small proportion of women have engaged in self-employment and social welfare activities. The engagement of women in political activities shows a very limited percentage (0.3%).

Table 15: Respondents' Attitudes on Women Engaged Activities in the Study Areas

DSDs	GNDs	Women Engaged Farming Activities		Women Engaged Livestock Activities		Women Engaged Social Welfare Activities		Women Engaged Small Business Activities		Women Engaged Self-employment Activities		Women Engaged Political Activities	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Galenbindunuwewa	Upuldeniya	11	100	1	100	-	-	-	-	2	100	-	-
	Milagaswewa	47	100	1	100	6	100	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Janasirigama	98	100	-	-	11	100	-	-	1	100	-	-
	Total	156	100	2	100	17	100	-	-	3	100	-	-
Mihinthale	Ruwangama	8	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	100	-	-
	Bogahayaya	13	100	3	100	2	100	3	100	6	100	-	-
	Pothana	90	100	12	100	5	100	16	100	24	100	1	100
	Kasamaduwa	10	100	3	100	1	100	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Maradankalla	10	100	-	-	3	100	-	-	4	100	-	-
	Wellaragama	11	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Total	142	100	18	100	11	100	19	100	37	100	1	100
Grand Total		298	100	20	100	28	100	19	100	40	100	1	100

Field data-2015

## Women and occupation

When examining the women's participation in paid employment it could be revealed that the proportion of women's participation in the agriculture sector as occupation declined significantly. Observing the occupation category and gender in Table 16, it shows that the majority working in agriculture are men (88.5%). However, female self-employment can be seen at a higher proportion among the total female occupation category (25%). They have engaged in small businesses, animal husbandry and farming as their self-employment in the study areas. The proportions of men employed in the government sector, private sector and the armed forces are also slightly higher than the proportions of female employed.

Table 16: Occupation Category and Sex of the Sample (Field data-2015)

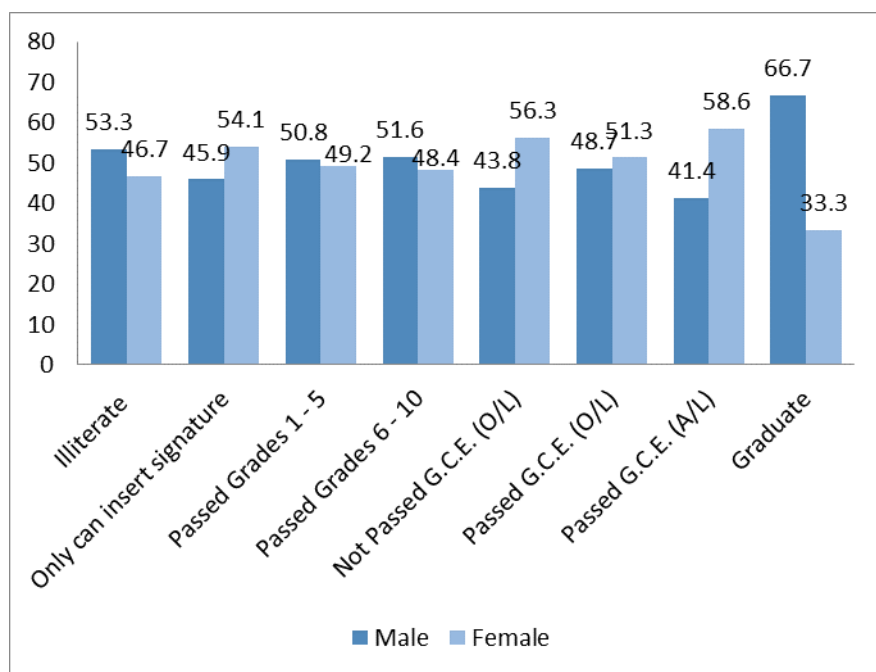
Occupation Category	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Cultivate Own Land	163	88.5	21	11.5	182	100.0
Agriculture Labour	5	83.3	1	16.7	6	100.0
Non Agriculture Labour (Trained)	3	100.0	-	-	3	100.0
Non Agriculture Labour (Not trained)	13	86.7	2	13.3	15	100.0
Fishing	10	100.0	-	-	10	100.0
Textile Weaving	1	50.0	1	50.0	2	100.0
Animal Husbandry	1	33.3	2	66.7	3	100.0
Commercial Activities	5	55.6	4	44.4	9	100.0
Government / Administrative Grades	2	100.0	-	-	2	100.0
Government Sector/Other Grades	16	76.2	5	23.8	21	100.0
Private Sector/ Administrative	1	100.0	-	-	1	100.0

Grades						
Private Sector/Other Grades	29	67.4	14	32.6	43	100.0
Armed Forces	36	97.3	1	2.7	37	100.0
Police & Home Guard	4	100.0			4	100.0
Self Employment	20	54.1	17	45.9	37	100.0
Skilled Labours	25	100.0	-	-	25	100.0
Pensioner	4	100.0	-	-	4	100.0
Not Employed	57	15.7	306	84.3	363	100.0
Total	395	51.3	374	48.7	769	100.0

### Women and education

Women's involvement in secondary education was another indicator to measure the level of women's empowerment. Graph 01 summarizes the educational attainments of the sample and sex. It shows that the female education level is 50.1% and male education is 49.9%. It shows that female education is higher than the male education. In addition, data revealed that the total who had passed the G.C.E (O/L) and G.C.E (A/L) were 95 or 9.0% of the total sample without children aged less or equal to 5 years. Among them 55 (57.8%) were women and 40 (42.2%) were men. When considering the degree level, male education can be seen as higher than the female education. Total graduates of the sample are 9, among them 6 (66.6%) are men and 3 (33.3%) are women.

Graph 9.1: Level of Education and Sex of the Sample



Field data-2015

## Conclusion

The study revealed that there are many poverty reduction programmes and activities being implemented by the public and NGOs sectors at macro and micro levels while focusing on poor women. However, when the role of the public and NGOs involvement in the process of empowering poor women in their programmes are analyzed comparatively, the NGO sectors have played a more significant role than the public sector. Although, these programmes have played a significant role in increasing women's participation in household decision making and access and control over family resources, they have not caused any improvements on the women's social status beyond the family.



It is evident that these programmes which are conducted by the public and NGOs sectors have assisted in increasing women's decision-making abilities at the household level, but has not on a large scale changed their status at the community or regional levels such as in improving the women's status in the areas of leadership positions, community-based activities, political participation, paid employment and participation in development activities. Against this background, it can be concluded that these empowering programmes have afforded many opportunities to women to improve their family status within their families rather than their social status within society.

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