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**IMPACT OF SEASONAL FLOODING ON LIVELIHOODS IN TWO
SELECTED URBAN LOW INCOME COMMUNITIES IN COLOMBO
DISTRICT**

A PROJECT REPORT PRESENTED BY

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Abstract

Impact of Seasonal Flooding on Livelihoods in Two Selected Urban Low Income Communities in Colombo District

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This study attempts to understand the impact on the livelihoods of urban poor during flooding and post flooding periods. The natural increase of population and population migration towards the cities due to “pull and push” factors adds to an extended urbanization process in cities. The poor are compelled to occupy physically more vulnerable areas of flooding due to their economic incapability to afford physically safer land and land scarcity in the city. The high frequency of flooding and retention of water in the settlements over extended periods have affected the overall life conditions of the urban poor, especially their livelihood options.

The study highlights that the livelihood options of people are critically affected during times of flooding due to the absence for work. The major income source of the poor is from the informal sector and the income which they earn is often insufficient to meet their basic needs. The income source of self-employed and shop owner within the own settlement is highly vulnerable as their physical properties invested are exposed to risk. In addition the people affected by flooding spend a considerable amount of money to mitigate the impact of flooding on their houses. The damage caused to the assets and semi permanent houses is not recovered for a long period of time, sometime as much as four to five years. The continuous expenses on health related issues, as a result of the flooding, tend to affect the people’s livelihood patterns. Therefore, the seasonal flooding limits the poor from the upward mobility on the economic ladder.

People have devised their own coping mechanisms and self reliance methods that help them to deal with the problems that are created as a result of the flooding such as forming a community organization to cope with floods, hanging their belonging on roof rafters.

The government has to interfere and uplift the living conditions of people and also create stable income sources for the people. The community should be educate and empowered to mitigate and meet the flooding collectively. The UN agencies and other community base NGOs could assist the identified sectors such as sanitation facilities which need to be address immediately, with the coordination of the government.