

## Degree of Vulnerability of Agriculture Oriented, Female Headed Households: Comparative Study with Evidence from Peninsular Jaffna

K. Tharsana<sup>1</sup> and K. Umashankar<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Vocational Technology, University College of Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka

<sup>2</sup>Department of Agricultural Economics, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka

E mail: sanakunam@gmail.com<sup>1</sup>

*Agriculture and seafood harvesting are the main industries of the Northern province of Sri Lanka and many families in these professions have lost all their belongings and are destitute trying to survive. Some of these families are male-headed and some are headed by females. The study is focused on how well the female-headed families are able to succeed against their male counterparts. It has to be conceded however that female head of a family has a greater variety of complications to engage against their male counterparts. This study is aimed at studying vulnerability, poverty, earning capacity and insufficiency in the female headed families in depth and suggest redress. Accordingly a pre-tested structured questionnaire was administered to the sample of 300 families. An ordered probit and probit regression models were fitted. The age of the head household was significant but exerted a negative impact on the standard of living and wealth index of poverty but it had a positive impact on poverty. Gender was significant and negatively affected standard of living of household. Household size manifested a negative impact on the standard of living of the households. Location of the house also played a crucial role and exhibited a negative impact on the standard of living. Number of years of schooling of the household head correlated negatively with wealth index of poverty and income poverty. The results revealed that female headed households were in general, poorer than the male headed ones. The level of education is inversely proportional to the poverty level. Younger the head of the household greater is the opportunity for employment and consequently greater is the earning capacity. The rural dwellers are poorer than urban residents. Finally the research suggest that the special training and individual provision be supplied to the aged and handicapped that they may make them selves usefully occupied in lite-industry being at home. Provision of training in skills and providing self-employment opportunities mainly for members of female headed families would enable the individuals to get involved in cottage industry and self employment etc. to supplement their regular wages and there by increase household income.*

**Keywords:** female headed household; vulnerability; standard of living; wealth index of poverty; Jaffna peninsula