

## **Gender Sensitive Waste Management in Sri Lanka: Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices**

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Waste Management is a growing problem in all developed and developing countries because of concerns related to both public health and environmental damages. As a result, more successful, humane and environmental friendly waste management programs and activities have been carried out for many years. However, since most of the waste management programmes are concerned about the technological aspect, it can be clearly identified that most of the time, the social aspects of waste management processes have been avoided. Gender can be identified as the main social factor which has been so avoided from the national policies and programmes of waste management processes in Sri Lanka. However, waste management is not a process which affects only to males or females and the effectiveness of waste disposal initiatives can be improved through incorporation of an understanding of gender differences and inequalities. However, although most of the discussions regarding gender are merely limited only to culture and social phenomena, the status they own, and as a result of the roles they play, they take mutually different forms according to the way how the males and females connect with the natural environment. In this background, the main objective of this study was to search the form of contribution of women for an environmental friendly waste management process and their contribution towards a gender sensitive waste management process. This study was mainly carried out as a comparative study which was conducted in both rural and urban sectors representing Julampitiya Grama Niladhari division (Wallasmulla Divisional Secretariat) in Hambantota District, and Navinna Grama Niladhari division (Maharagama divisional Secretariat) in Colombo district. 30 families were selected representing each sector consisting total sample of 60 families. For collecting data for the study, they have been intensively interviewed and observation and experience in their lives were also taken into account. According to the findings of the study, the contribution of female towards waste management in both rural and urban areas was higher than male. In addition, it was also revealed through this study that according to different social and urban characteristics of women, such as their employment, level of education, place where they live it has taken a different form in waste management. Accordingly, it was possible to identify that women's contribution can be obtained for successful waste management process in Sri Lanka and it was also identified that when formulating policies and programs for future waste management programs, this fact is a very significant matter for attention of the policy makers.

**Key words:** *Environment, Socio – cultural environment, Waste management, Women, Gender sensitive*