

# Impact of Coastal Tourism on Changing Gender Relations within Households: A Case Study of Hikkaduwa in Sri Lanka

Saman Handaragama<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Department of Social Sciences, Faculty of Social Sciences and Languages, Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka, P.O Box 02, Belihuloya. Saman@sab.ac.lk*

---

## Abstract

This paper presents a sociological analysis of gender relations within a household under the influence of coastal tourism in Southern Sri Lanka. The study was carried out in two Grama Niladhari divisions: Narigama - Wellabada and Wewala of the Hikkaduwa Divisional Secretariat in the Galle district of the Southern province. In-depth interviews, case studies and participant observation were used to collect qualitative information and quantitative data. The research problem investigated in the study was whether the tourist industry has made an impact on existing gender relations within a household in coastal Hikkaduwa area. Women received better economic strength and power and are in a better bargaining position through tourism. Industry has helped them to participate more positively in the decision making process of the household. Even though women had received more economic strength, men continue to retain household headship. Although women have devoted their efforts for income earning, they do not receive proper recognition and social status and are not appreciated properly due to established patriarchal attitudes. In the household, both husband and wife cooperated well to increase the family income, but when it came to distributing resources, the husband always had a better share. Hence, it can be observed that the tourist industry affects men and women, but in a different manner.

**Keywords:** Coastal Tourism, Gender Relations

## Introduction

This paper presents a sociological analysis of gender relations within a household under the influence of coastal tourism in Southern Sri Lanka. The research problem that was investigated in the study was whether the tourist industry has made an impact on existing gender relations within a household in coastal Hikkaduwa area. Tourism affects different classes of people in distinctive ways, increasing inequalities of wealth and power, thus retarding the broad-based national development.

Access to tourism related employment is overtly gender biased. There is over

whelming evidence from literature that women occupy jobs, especially those of relatively low skills and low wages. Gender stereotyping is evident and sex segregation at different levels of employment is clearly apparent.

### **Methodology**

This study was carried out in Narigama -Wellabada and Wewala, two Grama Niladhari divisions at Hikkaduwa Divisional Secretariat in the Galle district of Southern province. These particular Grama Niladhari divisions were selected as the field setting since the tourist industry had spread widely there with different types of restaurants, hotels, guest houses, curio shops, communication centers, banks, etc. For a number of years, tourists have patronized these areas.

In-depth interviews, case studies and participant observations were used to collect qualitative information. Forty (40) household units were selected through purposive sampling method for in-depth interviews: twenty (20) from each Grama Niladhari division. Women were selected for case studies based on the requirement of the study. These women were actively engaged in tourist industry.

The emphasis was to obtain detailed information on women's life experiences in order to unravel the intricacies and social relations that prevailed in a tourist area.

Apart from other already mentioned methods, participant observation was also used as a method of research in the study. Living amongst others in two restaurants in the area, the data collected by the researcher through the observation method was useful to receive new insights on tourist related activities. There are many services and facilities that are needed to be supplied for tourists, such as transport, communication, entertainment, tailoring, laundry and dry cleaning, sale of clothes and other items etc. these all create employment for people. It impacts on men and women and their relationships.

### **Gender Relations within a Household**

The term "household" needs to be first explained. Kottegoda (2004) explains the household as a residential unit which is usually formed around kinship and that its members share not only living space, but also a certain set of activities. The Department of Census and Statistics (1987) has defined the term as follows:

The household consists of one or more persons, living together and having common arrangements for food and other essentials of living. They may be

related or unrelated persons or a combination of both. They are, however, expected to pool their incomes and have a common budget to some extent if not totally. Persons who usually live here but are temporarily away should be included as members of a household (The Department of Census and Statistics, 1987).

In this sense, a household can be defined as consisting of members of a family and also who live together which may include even non-relatives such as servants. Moreover men and women living in a household have different positions and control over resources and also play different roles in society. They also have many different needs (Moser, 1993).

Moser's and Kottegoda's interpretations are important to understand women's role and status in a household. Kottegoda (2004) describes five types of activities that are performed by households. They are production, distribution of materials, transmission of assets, reproduction and coresidence. According to Moser (1993) men and women's roles in a household are reproductive work, productive work, community managing and community politics. She states that the first three are the triple roles that women perform while the role of community politics is played by men.

Jayatilake (1998) analyses the changing power relations within a household by addressing the question "Who has the right to take household decisions?". She says that in this regard, both husband and wife take decisions. Yet, according to the importance of the decisions that need to be taken, the ones who take the decisions would vary. Jayatilake (1998) talks about four types of decisions. They are as follows:

- a) decision-making done by the wife unilaterally
- b) decision-making done jointly by husband and wife together
- c) decision-making done by the husband unilaterally
- d) husband and wife take decisions but on different matters

The interpretations of Moser (1993), Jayatilake (1998) and Kottegoda (2004) are helpful to understand the power relations within a household. These views would be used to analyze the nature of gender relations within households in Narigama-Wellabada and Wewala.

Gender relations within the household could be analyzed in relation to its division of labour, roles, status in a household decision making process and distribution of resources and assets within a household. Thus, to begin with, the gender division of labour and gender roles would be analyzed to understand the power relations within a household. In an analysis of gender rela

tions within a household, it is necessary to understand the different roles performed by men and women. The performance of different roles and who takes responsibility is an indication of power that prevails Reproductive work.

Moser (1993) and Kottegoda (2004) both defined reproductive work in their publications. Moser says, the reproductive role comprises the child bearing/rearing responsibilities and domestic tasks undertaken by women, required to guarantee the maintenance and reproduction of the labour force. It includes not only biological reproduction, but also the care and maintenance of the workforce (husband and working children) and the future workforce (infants and school-going children) (Moser, 1993).

Kottegoda explains reproduction in terms of mandatory socialization and enculturation of children that usually goes on in family households (Kottegoda, 2004).

According to the definitions above, reproduction is not only of child bearing. It is a wide and complex process that should not be confined only to women. Both men and women have the ability to engage in reproductive work within a household, yet in society's eyes, the reproductive role is seen as a 'woman's task'. Reproduction is a woman's mandatory duty.

Social division of labour is present in all human societies. Most, if not all, use gender to assign different sets of tasks (centred around biological reproduction) to men and women. Physiological differences are reinterpreted to enforce social and cultural differences, dividing tasks necessary to human survival as such that the tasks themselves become typed as masculine and feminine. As long as little surplus is created, tasks may be gender typed without resulting in one gender's being exploited by the other (Muszynski, 1996).

This situation is evident in Narigama-Wellabada and Wewala too, as men's contribution to reproductive work is very modest, even though both men and women play an equally important role in production activities. This is clearly revealed from Chandrakanthi's case study which follows.

### **Case Study I. Chandrakanthi**

Chandrakanthi is thirty nine years old (39) is a Roman Catholic. Married to a Buddhist, she has three sons. Chandrakanthi has four brothers and a sister. Her mother is still alive although her father passed away. Her parents had joined the government service as trained teachers and held positions as principals at time of retirement.

Chandrakanthi had studied at Christ's Church College, Baddegama and presently is an English teacher in a school near Hikkaduwa town, where only primary classes are being conducted. She has followed the National Certificate of English conducted by the Technical College in Galle and has been appointed as an English teacher in 1990, after being selected from a written examination.

Her husband operates a grocery and a communication centre that faces the Colombo-Galle road. The land on which it is situated was given to him by his parents. The grocery runs in a big scale and the building is large and two storeyed. All goods that have a good demand from foreigners and the local upper class are available in this grocery, though it does not cater to the demands of ordinary people in the area.

Moreover, the communication centre has become very popular among foreigners as it is well equipped with all facilities such as local and IDD telephone facilities, Internet, E-mail and Fax. Apart from these facilities, it also sells film roles for cameras, batteries and there also is a photo-laboratory. Chandrakanthi's husband owns a luxurious van which he uses for his own and family purposes. Apart from this, he earns much by hiring it out to tourists.

Residing in the second floor of the building, they use the ground floor for business activities. Five females and three males work in the grocery and communication centre. After returning from school and during school vacations, Chandrakanthi helps her husband's business. Her husband works as cashier in the grocery and communication centre. Therefore, when Chandrakanthi is at the place of business, he gets a chance to go out for business purposes and when he does, Chandrakanthi has to fulfill the role of cashier as well as engage in supervisory duties.

When her husband is at the business place, Chandrakanthi helps to sell goods to customers. She guides and supervises the sales girls and boys. When her husband is not around, Chandrakanthi has to sign the cheques for the purchasing of goods from delivery vans. Chandrakanthi contributes her best to the development of the business. When workers are on leave, she works hard to compensate for the shortage in staff. Sometimes because of the absence of workers, she stays at home taking leave from school and spends her whole day at the grocery and the communication centre.

When the three children were small, Chandrakanthi was not able to engage in the business. However, she is able to work now in the business, since their youngest son is eight years old. When she is free from business activities and especially during the night, the children are able to get their mother's support for their home work. Apart from this, she has arranged individual

classes for her children to gain extra knowledge on their subjects and they have their classes in the house.

She prefers to do business than teaching, because it is financially more profitable. However, Chandrakanthi and her husband have decided that she should work as an English teacher, since they believe that it brings higher honour and social status. With this on mind, she got a transfer to a primary school close to the house and having fewer responsibilities, is quite happy to work there.

Generally, Chandrakanthi wakes up at 5.00 a.m. during week days and gets the children ready for school. The meals are prepared by her. The children go to a national school in the town of Galle. She comes home at about 2.15 p.m., takes lunch and then goes to work in the business.

She contributes a lot to the business. Only male employees work till late while sales girls leave at 5.30 p.m. Chandrakanthi, therefore replaces them by working till late as tourists keep roaming around mostly at night time. Therefore, it is profitable to keep the grocery and communication centre open till mid-night.

Chandrakanthi as a housewife is lucky enough to own most of the modern equipment and electrical appliances for her kitchen. She explains that it is possible because of the income they earn from their large scale business. She very happily talks about being able to do her domestic work easily and effectively. As she says, if they did not engage in this business, they would not have been able to achieve economic upliftment being only a government employee.

Chandrakanthi says, she gets her sons to ask their father everything and has allowed her husband to decide on important matters with regard to the children. She always prefers to do what her husband requests and performs a traditional female role. Her husband has sole authority to make decisions on behalf of the family and in respect of expenditure.

Chandrakanthi, her husband and their children all have savings accounts. Her salary goes to her account in full. Yet, she does not obtain a single rupee for her contribution to the business. What they earn from the business goes to her husband's savings account. They have bought the vehicle in the husband's name. Chandrakanthi's husband bears the responsibility of guiding and supervising their work and it is he who prepares and maintains the salary payments for workers. Although Chandrakanthi works at the shop and contributes to the business, her labour is unremunerated.

Chandrakanthi is a typical example of a female who carries out bulk of the reproductive work parallel to the demands of productive work that run in the family. Obviously, the success of her reproductive activity largely depends on her dedicated contribution to the productive work which has brought satisfactory income and prestige. Taken time wise, she has to fulfill a dual career. Chandrakanthi is a caring and a loving mother to her children catering to the economic, educational and emotional needs of her children: Dawn is spent cooking and making children ready for school, morning as a teacher, evening works in the grocery and nights once again provides care and emotional attachment to family members. This makes a fine blend of both productive and reproductive work. As a mother, her responsibility for the children's enculturation, both at home and in school, may have been doubled since they live in a morally unstable social environment which is a by-product of the tourism industry.

Considering what she does, it seems as if she is employed in all the three work places - home, school and grocery. Yet, over two thirds of her working hours are unpaid. She starts her domestic chores at 5 a.m. and continues late into the night. Such productive and reproductive work, as long as they take place attached to the family environment, is considered an obligation of a married woman. The work is considered to be a form of assistance to her spouse and commitment to reproductive work is little evaluated. Chandrakanthi does not complain about her overloaded work. She feels it is her duty. Despite the fact that teaching is the only source of an independent income, Chandrakanthi prefers the unpaid work assisting her husband. As the case points out, when children are small, caring becomes a full time commitment for women. Even when the children grow older, the responsibility will largely remain at their hands. Chandrakanthi had to assure that children met the proper educational standards and such responsibility is kept away from the husband.

Thus when compared to men, women's contribution is very high in the reproduction process. Although in contemporary society due to economic enhancement women are able to use electrical appliances to ease their reproductive activities, they do not receive any relief or sufficient contribution from men in domestic activities. Walby in her 'Theorising Patriarchy' (1989) discuss the patriarchal mode of production. As explained by her a women's labour is expropriated by her husband within the marriage and household relations. In this relationship the wife's labour is not rewarded with money. It is seen as part of the marriage relationship between a husband and wife. In Chandrakanthi's case it even went beyond the households to the business where her labour. This was also seen as a part of the marriage relationship. Chandrakanthi herself felt similarly.

PERMANENT REFERENCE  
Sabaragamuwa University Library

## **Productive work**

As the reproductive work, production work too is important for the household's survival. Moser explains productive work as follows:

The productive role comprises of work done by both men and women for payment in cash or kind. It includes both market production with an exchange value, and subsistence/home production with an actual use-value, but also a potential exchange value. For women in agricultural production, this includes work as independent farmers, peasants' wives and wage workers (Moser, 1993).

Kottegoda takes a broader view on productive work by saying production which is defined as human activity that procures or increases the value of resources-includes housekeeping and domestic labour (Kottegoda, 2004).

The newly emerged employment opportunities for men and women as a result of the tourist industry in Narigama - Wellabada and Wewala were discussed in the previous chapter. Most women in these two villages were engaged in work which is emphasized by Moser (1993) and Kottegoda (2004) as productive work. In addition to the traditional productive work that women were involved, women today are engaged in new economic activities resulting from the expansion of tourism in the area. Women have been exposed to a number of new employment opportunities which have brought better income rather than the limited employment opportunities that were available prior to tourism. The following case study would reveal women's contribution to productive work.

### **Case Study 2. Pavithra**

Pavithra is thirty five (35) years old and is a mother of one child; a girl. Pavithra's father's house is situated at Patuwatha. She lived there until she was three (3) years old and afterwards had lived in a rented house at Narigama. In 1976, Pavithra's father received government land, where they live now. In 1980, Pavithra's father received the government deeds for the land and Pavithra was named the successor. In 1997, Pavithra's father died and thereafter she became the owner of this land. She doesn't have any brothers and sisters and Pavithra's mother lives with her.

Pavithra has received her early education at Bodiraja Vidyalaya, Thiranagama and from Year six onwards to the General Certificate of Education-Ordinary Level (O/L) she attended Prajapathie Balika Vidyalaya, Ambalangoda. In order to sit for the General Certificate of Education-Advanced Level (A/L) she joined Devananda Vidyalaya, Ambalangoda. Studying Biology, she had obtained one credit pass and two ordinary passes. After her formal education she had attended a private English class and a typing class.

In the beginning, Pavithra's father had worked as a Manager in a co-operative store. Thereafter, he has worked as Manager in a petrol shed and later in a mill. Pavithra's mother has been always a house - wife and spent her entire life engaged in domestic activities. Although after school education Pavithra has been expecting a teaching appointment, she did not manage to get one. Afterwards, she married according to her wish. During that time Pavithra's husband was a Police Constable. During the time Pavithra got married, her father had resigned from his job and was running a guest house in the land that was received by the government. Apart from that, he had also put up a restaurant and given it out on lease. After a year's time of marriage, she was pregnant and during this period her husband was transferred to Pothuvil. Pavithra has asked him to resign from the police, as working in the Pothuvil area, due to the ethnic conflict, was a threat to his life. Since Pavithra was the only child of the family and her father owned a restaurant and a guest house, she had the strength to suggest to her husband to leave his job, knowing that one day she will own the property whereby she would get some authority to do as she likes. Listening to Pavithra, her husband resigned from his job and to day Pavithra and her husband are engaged in running and managing the guest house and restaurant.

Pavithra spent money obtained from a roster scheme (*Seettu*) to buy necessary equipment such as tables, chairs, crockery and cutlery for the restaurant. By then, Pavithra had certain household equipment such as a fridge, blender, gas cooker, etc. Along with her husband, she started the restaurant in a simple manner. But gradually they have built a complete restaurant and a two storeyed guest house along with a residential house for them. Apart from this, they have bought a new van and there are three employees working in the restaurant and the guest house. Pavithra legally owns the restaurant and the guest house because they were constructed in the land she inherited from her father. Yet, the new van was bought in the name of her husband. The money to purchase the van is what both of them earned, but in this particular respect, male dominance is to be seen. A driver was recruited for their new van, which is given out on hire for foreigners to travel to the air-port and for pleasure trips. Pavithra's six year old daughter, who studies at a government school in Galle, is looked after by Pavithra's mother during the tourist season. Both she and Pavithra supervise the child's school work. Due to her business especially during the season, she can only assist in the work amidst great difficulty. Pavithra gets up at about 6 a.m. during the season and after having prepared her daughter for school, she goes to the restaurant at about 7 a.m. First, she cleans the compound occupied by the restaurant and the beach. Thereafter, she cleans the restaurant and the place where the food is prepared. Then she arranges the wooden beds, mattresses and chairs

for foreigners to sun bath. For this type of work and also for work in the restaurant, one of Pavithra's husband's brothers has been recruited. Apart from this, used clothes need to be removed and replaced with new ones. Pavithra has to clean the toilets and bathrooms. Usually, tourists come for breakfast to the restaurant and leave for the beach at about 8.00 a.m. After having a look at the menu, they order various food and beverages. Pavithra and her staff have to work hard to prepare the ordered food within about 20 minutes. While breakfast is being prepared and supplied, those foreigners who are in the sun also order various beverages. During the afternoon they order lunch and in the evening they order various other food and drinks. During the nights they order various items of food for dinner and after having the meal would only leave the place at midnight. On certain days tourists would stay in the restaurant sipping liquor and having other food until about 3.00 a.m.

Pavithra and her husband have an employed cook in the restaurant for the preparation of food. Although there are helpers, Pavithra has to supervise all the work and fulfill other tasks connected with the business, such as the preparation of food and its serving, accepting payments, issuing bills, cleaning the crockery and cutlery and also sweeping. She has to also attend to the buying of fish, vegetables, fruits, etc. that are bought to the restaurant by various people. Sometimes she has to go to the Hikkaduwa town to purchase certain food items for the restaurant. On occasion of her husband's presence, her responsibilities are less.

In addition to the above, she has to talk to the foreigners who arrive at the restaurant and provide them with required facilities and rooms. She stated that "There is multiplicity of work in the restaurant round the clock and I have no time even to eat, take a bath or go to the toilet at times. It is only when I am free that I could attend to them".

Also, recording the daily income and the preparation of accounts are done by her. She attends to all administrative work. She said "I am the one who is keeping accounts. We are very happy about our success, although there are some mistakes and shortcomings". She says that even if her husband is away, she can run the business: "I can run this business alone even if my husband is away". This shows that Pavithra is a courageous woman, being the legal owner of the property and is capable of earning good money.

Pavithra further says that they do not go on pleasure trips during the seasonal period. They only do so during off season: "Only after the season we would even go on a trip". When there is a wedding during the season the husband attends. When there are funerals in the village they attend them only at midnight. Else, they send their mother. "There is no time for recreation. No time even to watch T.V. or listen to the radio. Even though the weekend

newspapers are bought, there is no time to read them". Sometimes as a result of the enormous amount of work, Pavithra is exhausted and falls ill. She says that "On many occasions, beverages have to be supplied to the foreigners who are on the beach. My limbs ache at times because of the over-walking and even when I fall ill, nothing can be done as we think of the future. However, since money can be earned, we are satisfied".

Pavithra said that during the season she is unable to participate in the needs of their neighbours and relatives. As they know the nature of business, they don't expect them to participate in such activities. She also said that she feels guilty as she has no time to care for her daughter: "When the daughter goes to sleep, she calls me. Yet, I can do nothing. She sleeps with my mother after crying for sometime".

When inquired about decision making in the family, as a business partner she said: "During those days, whatever father and mother said, we needed to say "yes". But now it is not so. On many occasions, we take decisions after a discussion. We keep away from misunderstandings. Even about building the house, the idea is his and the plan is mine. The vehicle was bought in his name. We have to visit various offices for work and I have no time for that. There are savings in my name too. As the land belongs to me, bank loans are given in my name. My husband and I have good relationship with banks and other business institutions". This reveals an important fact of ownership: since Pavithra owns the land by inheritance, she has more power and strength than other women who do not own land and property.

She says that engaging in this business has given her a strong economic status which is recognized by others and therefore she occupies a better position and recognition than her mother had during her days. Although she is invited for various social functions, she does not take part in them during the season. Yet, during off season she accordingly takes part and says that her main objective is to develop the business and provide her daughter with a good education. The most significant fact among women like Pavithra is that they have made great effort to enhance tourism related economic activities. They have accomplished that in addition to domestic duties and child care. Therefore they are subjected to great physical and mental depression. Yet on the other hand, women like Pavithra are empowered. They are today capable of doing various money transactions and also controlling, saving and handling accounts.

The case of Pavithra strongly challenges the myth of the male provider by justifying the fluidity of gender roles. Coming from a traditional patriarchal family background, Pavithra too had inherited the father's property and has been financially successful despite the fact that she lives in highly patriarchal social arrangement. Also her success can be viewed in terms of the female

capacity for making important adaptations for survival.

Having seen the awaiting opportunity, Pavithra has been courageous enough even to ask her husband to quit the job. She is confident enough to even run the business alone without her husband's support. Yet, her behavior as a wife and mother is well depicted in the case as she assigns certain property to the husband, thereby tactfully getting the support while assuring family harmony. In addition to all the reproductive work she bears as a mother, she is engaged in a range of productive work. Pavithra herself is the manager and financial controller of her business. Meanwhile, she plays the role of cleaner and helper too, when necessary. Her productive work simply is not restricted to any one aspect of work.

Pavithra seems to be caught in a role conflict as she spends extended hours engaging in the business while feeling guilty of the lack of attention to her child. Although she may emotionally suffer due to the motherly instinct of care giving, she is with strong belief that she could be more successful in her reproductive role as she reaches for better financial heights through productive work. Even still, she does her best to balance both productive and reproductive work, irrespective of the severe stress she encounters.

With the increased contribution to her family in terms of productive work activity to the extent that she overpowers the husband's contribution, she has been capable of maintaining her power and status within the family even though her labor is unpaid. She is not living with the mind set that she is assisting her husband. Rather, the opposite takes place in Pavithra's case. This hints at the fact that as long as women's economic contribution through productive work remains high, she is less likely to lose her status and power within the family.

According to the above presented contexts, women who engaged in tourism related activities, actively participated in both productive and reproductive work. Hence, they performed an over-burdened and unbearable workload. This overloaded work environment has badly impacted on women's health as well. As Herath (2002) points out until structural changes are brought in a households and such structural changes are accepted by the society it is hard for women to come out of the oppressed situations. However, more than in past, these women had received better recognition and reputation because of their improved economic status. Women who have ownership rights received enhanced social status and authority in the household. However, women's asset and resource ownership has been received via inheritance rather than procured investments from business activities.

Women are confident and are capable of handling and facing challenges in their way. It is observed that these women are empowered and that they have increased their social status based on economic strength. However, the tourist industry is exposed to many external-factor based fluctuations. Accordingly under such circumstances, women's present socio-economic status may also change. It is viable that they may fall back to their previous state and would not gain social empowerment, since certain unequal gender relations and patriarchal attitudes still remain in contemporary society.

### Distribution and Transferring of Resources and Assets

Kottegoda (2004) points out that certain studies on households have brought the concept "unity and harmony" in the analysis and have made the assumption that members of the household made common decisions regarding issues such as 'sharing', 'pooling', labour market participation, resource management and transference of property.

Kottegoda correctly criticizes such notions of justifying sexual division of labour within the family, assumptions on homogeneous household preferences and common economic interests of the family. Kottegoda also raises questions on the system of distributing the products of sexual division of labour, different access to productive resources and altruism within the family. Her analysis brings out the importance of power relations which have a bearing on the status of household members. In this respect, Sen's (1990) analysis on 'Cooperative Conflict' is useful. He says,

members of a household face two different types of problems simultaneously, one involving "cooperation" (adding to total availabilities) and the other "conflict" (dividing the total availabilities among members of a household) (Sen, 1990).

Both Kottegoda and Sen's arguments are relevant for the analysis of households in Narigama-Wellabada and Wewala as there was an unequal share in the distribution of resources and assets among household members based on gender. Household resources could be classified as moveable and immovable. Movables include vehicles, savings, clothes, furniture and electronic, electrical and domestic equipment while immovable assets are land and buildings. The direct and indirect means of various income earning avenues that had emerged after the tourist industry for both men and women. By using such ways of income, villagers have acquired various movable and immovable resources. With regard to immovable resources, in many cases, the husband is the legal owner of land, vehicles, houses and new business places. With regard to moveable assets, more valuable items such as motor car or van are purchased in the name of the man. However, women are capable today to purchase household equipment and electrical appliances to ease

their domestic work. Men are not interested in these items as they are free from domestic chores.

With regard to savings too women are disadvantaged. Although women contribute heavily for the family income they do not get equal share in the savings. Savings from business activities are generally in the name of the husbands.

The nature of the consumption pattern is another important indicator to understand power relations within a household. A clear difference in the family was evident in a households that were studied. Unlike men, women are more concern about the other members in the family than on their own well - being. They are very concern about children's well-being and would do anything for that. This is not the case with men. Although they too are concern about children, they are more irresponsible and concern about their own enjoyment. Men are in the habit of smoking, drinking alcohol and going on leisure trips etc. Women on the other hand do not spend money for their personal needs and would rather spend for the family well - being. It is therefore very clear as Sen (1990) argued that there is much cooperation between husband and wife to earn for the family, but at the time of sharing the earnings there is unequal treatment.

Women engaged in tourism related economic activities do a bulk of the work than men, without any time to rest or engaged in entertainment. Women have no time even to watch television during the tourist season. Even more, they do not have time to participate in weddings, funerals or any other function in the village. If they do, their businesses will be affected and or even may be neglected. Tourists would also be dissatisfied and will find other places of business. This will cause problems in terms of their family income and their welfare. During the tourist season, they have no time to rest even when ill. On the other hand the husbands have enough time for leisure and entertainment and they participate in weddings, funerals, etc.

The information gathered from analyzing the interviews and case studies emphasizes that women engaged in tourism related economic activities are only rarely subjected to domestic violence. This may be because the women actively participate in the family business and has certain power within a household. The women have strength to react against domestic violence. Moreover domestic violence will also reflect very badly in the business activities and upon others in the family. If such a situation occurs, the husband will not be able to successfully continue with the business. In fact, cooperation is well revealed in households that are engaged in tourist related economic activities. Creating domestic violence is an oppressive situation for men and brings bad results for the family.

Most tourism related commercial places of self-employment are legally owned by men. Sometimes the wife and children would own the business place on account of the husband's death. Generally men control and maintain business places and later at old age transfer the related fixed assets to the next generation giving priority to sons. This male-centered resource distribution and transmission was in evident in Narigama-Wellabada and Wewala. In such an instance, although the wife owns the property it is controlled and maintained by the husband. However, there a few instances where women own land and the business. In such instances husband has come to reside with the wife through a *Binna* marriage.

Thus, it is clear that women involved in the tourist industry have gained economic power that has helped them to obtain a better voice, strength and power in household and social relations. However, due to persistent gendered values, attitudes and patriarchal-based ideologies, unequal power sharing among household members is still evident. This also negates the view of a linear development; that economic independence would lead to social empowerment as Jayatilaka quotes from Herath's study (2002) to say.

Economic independence in the face of family crises does not reduce the gender differential unless accompanied by a transformation in social attitudes, especially those of men, including a government welfare strategy to assist women in searing employment (Jayatilaka, 1998).

As Agarwal (1994) argues, women get relative bargaining power within the household when they get into business and establish themselves well financially. This study accepted the Agarwal's argument.

### Decision Making

This is a very important aspect when one considers the status of women engaged in tourist related activities. Agarwal (1994) analyzing intra-household relationships talks about the bargaining positions of the household members. According to her ones bargaining position rests on two important conditions. They are (1) the strength of the person's fall back position and (2) the degree to which one's action is socially legitimated. Bargaining power increases with one's economic strength. This is to be seen in Narigama -Wellabada and Wewala where women's economic power as increased due to their active participation in the economy. As Agarwal (1994) says, the fall back position of women in Narigama-Wellabada and Wewala has increased due to their economic contribution to the family and this has given them more bargaining power, which allows them to take decisions in the family. However, due to patriarchal values and attitudes men still receives the headship in a household. Therefore he remains to have more power than other members in the family especially when taking important family decision.

## Conclusion

In a households that were studied a difference between households could be seen. Firstly, it was clear those women who had economic strength had better bargaining position and had more role to play in household decisions. Secondly the greater the economic strength women had they made a greater positive impact on their capacity in taking decisions. As for example women who had ownership to the land, house or business were better placed in the decision making process. Thirdly, even with women's economic strength, the society accepts the man as the head of the family and that gives the man a better status to over power women in household decisions. Thus once again reveals the importance of patriarchal values in power relations between men and women.

## Reference

- Agarwal, B. (1994) *A Field of One's Own: Gender and Land Rights in South Asia*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Herath, S. (2002) "Wada, Rakiyawa ha Sewaya", *Winiwida*, 2002 Janawari Kalapaya, pp: 1-13.
- Jayatilaka, R. (1998) *Globalization and Rural Women*, Colombo: Centre for Society and Religion.
- Kottegoda, S. (2004) *Negotiating Household Politics, Women's Strategies in Urban Sri Lanka*, Colombo: Social Scientists' Association of Sri Lanka.
- Moser, C.O.N. (1993) *Gender Planning and Development*, London: Routledge.
- Muszynski, A. (1996) *Cheap Wage Labour: Race and Gender in the Fisheries of British Columbia*, Kingston: McGill - Queen's University Press.
- Sen, A.k. (1990) "Gender and Cooperative Conflicts" in, Tinker, Irene, Ed., *Persistent Inequalities*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 123-149.
- The Department of Census and Statistics, (1987) *Labour Force and Socio - Economic Survey 1985*, Colombo: Sri Lanka Ministry of Plan Implementation.
- Walby, S. (1989) "Theorising Patriarchy", *Sociology*, v. 23(2), pp. 213-234.