HOUSEHOLD WILLINGNESS TO PAY FOR SAFE DRINKING WATER IN AMPARA DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

Presently drinking water has become a critical global issue. In Ampara district, with tropical climate and long dry season which creates a greater demand for safe drinking water. The district is rural and primarily agricultural, relying on a large irrigation network of reservoirs and canals for farming. However, there are water quality and scarcity issues with the traditional water sources due to intensive farming and resultant fertilizer, soil and chemical run-off. It was also found that consumption of unsafe water creates a negative impact on health such as diarrheal and renal calculi problems. In order to improve the health status of the people residing in these areas, there is a vital need to study the existing status of drinking water and to estimate their willingness to pay for safe drinking water. This study was conducted to assess the household willingness to pay for safe drinking water in Ampara District. This study was done in 120 households in three D.S. Divisions viz., Navithanveli, Pottuvil and Thirukkovil of Ampara district. Contingent Valuation method was used for valuation.

Results revealed that average age of head of household was 40.7 years and the mean family size of a household was 4.7 persons. The average household income was Rs 23,142 per month. The average household expenditure was Rs 21,233 per month. About 68% of household used unsafe drinking water and 48% households were affected by diarrheal disease due to the consumption of unsafe drinking water. Households spent Rs.624/month for treating water related diseases. Majority (55%) of households were using well water for their daily use. 46% of households used water with good quality but the use of excellent quality water was very low (1%) at household level. Majority of respondents in Navithanveli D.S. Division used poor quality water (62%) compared to Pottuvil and Thirukkovil.

Multiple linear regression analysis was used to determine the factors that influence Willingness to Pay of households for safe drinking water. The mean willingness to pay of households was Rs. 134.17/month. The result showed that Age and availability of water throughout the year were significantly and negatively influences the value of household willingness to pay and Samurdhi recipient was significantly and positively influence the value of willingness to pay. The mean willingness to pay of households was Rs. 134.17 per month. While the minimum and maximum willingness to pay of the households was recorded to be only Rs 50.00/month and Rs 350.00/month respectively. From the result it's recommended that households must be educated with proper water purification methods and awareness on importance of safe drinking water. And it is recommended to improve the water supply system in Ampara district.

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