

Water is literally the source of life on earth. Therefore, people tend to cluster in areas where water is available. Though, Monaragala is conventionally considered as a dry zone district, its northwestern part shows a wet zone climate. This study was conducted to investigate the impact of population distribution pattern on water resources of the district. Thanamalwila, Buttala, Wellawaya and Kataragama divisional secretary's divisions were considered as dry areas. Bible, Madulla Madagama, Monaragala, Badalkumbura and Siyanbalanduwa divisions were considered as wet. Secondary data were collected on population, Samurdhi recipients, unemployment rate and infrastructure facilities.

The Wet region has a higher population density than the dry region. Infrastructure facilities are less in the wet region. Though, unemployment rate is slightly higher in the wet region, percentage of Samurdhi recipients in the region is significantly lower compared to the dry region, indicating availability of water ensures better living standards even with less infrastructure facilities and high unemployment rate.

The wet region is located in the upper watershed area of six important river basins. Increasing the population in this area could adversely affect the water resources in the district. Population density in the wet region might further increase in the near future, as the percentage of the people below 14 years of age in Monaragala district is high when compared to the national average. Increasing population has fewer options other than encroaching the virgin lands in watershed areas causing more damages to the watersheds.