

**SOCIO ECONOMIC IMPACTS ON
CONSERVATION OF FORESTED
AREAS IN MULLATIVU DISTRICT IN
SRI LANKA**

**EKANAYAKE JAYASUNDARA
MUDIYANSELAGE**

JAYASURIYA KUMARA EKANAYAKE

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirement for the Master of Science Degree in
Environmental Science

OPEN UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA

SRI LANKA 2014

Abstract

Mulathive District has a vast forest wealth that plays an important role in providing environment services and livelihood security of the people live in Mulathive District. After the last war of the Northern area the most of the people who were the living in Mulathive District they has been need lands for settlement, shelter for living, employment for a livelihood, as initially necessity while then next infrastructure facilities for health, education, and other welfare development and socio economic development for solution of poverty. Heavily resettlement programme due to for displaced people within the last conflict in North area of the Island. Currently now started the resettlement and physical development activities from socio economic based. However the development imperatives continue to put pressure on large forest tracts. This study analysis various argument in the debate between forest conservation and resttling the people and conomic dependencies. The study also discusses the impact of settlement on the environmental conservation. This will require a shift in paradigm from being a regulator of forest land to a more holistic natural resources Manager. Diversion of forest land cannot be viewed in isolation.

The vegetation of Mulathive District is semi deciduous types often referred to as dry Monsoon forest. Dry Monsoon forests have a distinct seasonal rainfall peak from October to January, within North – East Monsoon. Mulathive District solely depended or depends on rain water for its water supply by catchment area covered by natural forest throughout the year. It is unfortunate to note that almost all the forest reserves including dense forest, open & sparse forest, scrublands, mangrove areas within Mulathive District have been disrupted with settlements, cultivation road construction, and establishment of Army Camps. In addition to such activities legal/illegal activities such as logging and mining practices have been are taking place. All these activities are no doubt is threats to the wellbeing of the natural forest of the district. With resettlement programmers' increase in population and the proposed future development programmer would aggravate the situation much further. As such it is suggested that the authorities demarcate the existing natural forested areas categorizes as Reserved Forests and have them elevated to the state of Conserved Forests under section 3 of the Forests Ordinance. Under this category maximum legal protection will be given to the Forests and no activity other than research and visitations is allowed within. In the event there are settlements / villages adjoining such forests it would be best to establish buffer zones. These buffer zones be planted with the participation of the villagers with plant species that are required by such people for construction, fuel wood, food, fruits and other wellbeing requirements. Measures should be taken

to make sure that road construction are not made or implemented through the proposed Conserved Forests.

The Open & Sparse Forests and the Scrubland found within Oddarattakulam should be left to regenerate under the guidance of the Forest Department making sure these forests become part of the proposed Conservation Forest.

In the event the Army Camps are to be removed in the future, the authorities should take measures of establishing plants found around in the forest as suggested. Establishment of villages, resettlements, land required for agriculture, development of tourist resorts should be strictly be restricted only to specified areas.

Considering the mangrove vegetation is great economic value. The fishery production of the lagoons depends on the well being of the mangroves that fringes them. Villages around the lagoons depend on the mangroves for their lively-hood. With all this importance mangroves of the lagoons mentioned up till now have not received its due attention in terms of rational management. As such Mangroves should be preserved.

In addition the socio-economic impact to the forested are in Mulathive District within the development activities , resettlement programme and legal/illegal login and mining activities for human needs as the mention above can be manage with awareness programme for fringe community and other stakeholders such as government and nongovernment sectors of the Mulathive District. All land use needs for development activities and resettlement programme can be managed with proposed buffer zone and other state forest separated from main forest body of the forest reserves in the Mulathive District. Capacity building programme, Strengthen Forest-Product base industries and offers incentives for integrating forest species into the management of cultivated land; within Agro forestry wood lots and farmers-woodlots etc..can be manage over exploited forest and non forest timber product of day to day need of village community of the fringe areas. Legislation related to the conservation of Forest reserves and wildlife sanctuary is very raids. Therefore, the number of people breaking the law by continuing traditionally established Forest conservation activities practices is high. The need of the Fringe communities to meet there survival needs from forest products and the task of the state to protect the Forest reserves and wildlife sanctuaries come into conflict; and therefore neither is achieved to a satisfactory level. Neither the folk law or the state legislation have been accepted or fully enforces. A join effort is needed to bring the state sector together with the people.