

Environmental and Economic Impact of Mangrove Deforestation: Case Study of Vadamarachchi East, Sri Lanka

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Abstract : The study was conducted in Vadamarachchi-East in Sri Lanka. Data collection was done for a period of two months from June to July 2011. The main focus of this study was to examine factors contributing to mangrove deforestation within the study area, and resultant impacts from deforestation. The study found that, the main factors that have contributed to deforestation include: Long civil wars in the region, poverty which pushed people to clear the forest to earn income through the sale of firewood and timber among others, industrial development, increasing demand for farm and settlement land, limited knowledge within the local community, weak government policies and implementation strategies, and natural disasters especially the 2004 Tsunami destruction. The impacts presented are those that impact both on the environment and the economy including; loss of income sources, loss of biodiversity, climate change, desertification, conflicts in the use of forest products and loss of land productivity due to reduced fertility caused by soil erosion. However, a few strategies have been put in place by the government to ensure the sustainable use of mangrove forest products, though these have not proved successful in reducing deforestation. The recommendations make suggestions to the government and other stakeholders to work together in ensuring sustainable use of natural resources, for example implementing laws and regulations aimed at controlling deforestation among others.

Keywords : deforestation, impacts, actors, environment, economic, sustainable development

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