

The coastal pollution management strategies used in Sri Lanka and their impact on the coastal societies

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The coast is the physically dynamic edges between land and sea and comprises of numerous physiographic forms such as dunes, deltas, beaches and wetland. It also has a wide range of ecosystem such as coral reefs, mangroves, sand dunes, sea grass beds, estuaries and lagoons. The coastal area serves as a habitat for countless flora and fauna. More importantly coastal areas are the locus of an incredibly diverse range of human uses and activities. Pollution is the introduction of contaminants in to the natural environment that causes adverse change. Pollution can take the form of chemical substances or energy, such as noise, heat or light. It could be a point source or a non-point source. Coastal pollution is a global phenomenon and is mainly anthropogenic. Sri Lanka's coastal management dates back to the 1920s. Such efforts were mainly focused on seeking engineering solution to control coastal erosion problems by construction of coastal protection structures. The realization that a comprehensive approach to coastal resource management was required led to the establishment of the coast protection unit in the Colombo port commission in 1963. In 1981 Parliament enacted the Coast Conservation act No .57 of 1981 and this act came in to operation from October 1983. The act required the Director General to have a survey made of the coastal zone and on the basis of the result of the survey to prepare a comprehensive Coastal Zone Management Plan for Sri Lanka. The main objective of this study is to identify the coastal pollution management strategies used in Colombo district coastal areas and their impact on the coastal societies. This study is mainly based on data which were collected from Coastal Zone Management Plan for Sri Lanka. Interviews and observation were used as data collection techniques. Findings indicate that the main source of coastal pollution in Sri Lanka is from land-based development and human activities outside the coastal zone. There is currently a thrust for infrastructure development that is likely to exacerbate existing issues of pollution. In addition, increasing development in the coastal zone itself from tourism, industries and settlements are causing point-source pollution. The sources of marine pollution are ballast and bilge water discharges from ships and boats, as well as oil. There is also an increasing threat of oil spills in the area. This research will help to plan reducing coastal pollution and their impact on coastal societies.

Keywords: *Coast, coastal zone management plan, point sources, non-point sources*

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