

IMPACT OF ANTHROPOGENIC ACTIVITIES ON SOME ASPECTS OF BATTICALOA LAGOON

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Lagoons are an important part of the cultural landscape of Eastern Sri Lanka. Batticaloa lagoon is the largest lagoon in the Eastern province. This lagoon provides livelihood for the fishing population in this region. An attempt was made to assess the impact of anthropogenic activities like agriculture including shrimp farming, waste water discharge and solid waste disposal on the Batticaloa lagoon. A questionnaire survey was conducted with a randomly selected sample of 50 households who do fishing in the lagoon. The investigation revealed that the high level water pollution at lagoon was due to the unplanned disposal of waste from hotels, households, auto mobiles service stations, hospitals, municipal wastes, shrimp farming and agriculture. Nearly 86 percent of the households reported that municipal waste disposal caused pollution to lagoon water. Nearly 70 percent of the respondents believed that the agricultural activities caused water pollution and as a result a reduction in fish catch was observed. The results indicated that there was a significant difference ($P < 0.01$) between the average catch ten years ago (33.1 kg/day) and to-day (3.54 kg/day) which is a drop by ten times. Further 35 percent of the respondents reported that the lagoon water was polluted due to kitchen waste whereas nearly 10 percent was of the view that it was due to shrimp farming. The result clearly indicated that the lagoon was under threat from anthropogenic pressure and it is essential to take necessary steps to arrest the pollution and to conserve the lagoon for the sustainable livelihood of the dependents.

Keywords: Anthropogenic activities, Fish catch, Lagoon, Unplanned waste disposal