

A STUDY OF VILLAGE ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING CONCEPT IN RELATION TO ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS IN DRY ZONE OF SRI LANKA

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Environmental planning is a process of identifying, assessing and coming up with solutions to environmental issues to improve the quality of the environment and the health and welfare of people. When exploring village environment of the North Central Dry Zone, various natural and manmade hazards can be found easily. These hazards could result in the destruction of life, property and livelihoods of the community and it could create disasters to the society. Though there is national level effort to manage hazards, there is no village based hazards identification and management system in Sri Lanka. Hence, this research attempted to introduce village level environmental planning concept so that communities understand their own environmental hazards and propose solutions. Trails were carried out in a dry zone village called Diulwewa in the Thirappane Divisional Secretariat area of North Central province. Thirty households were selected randomly and questionnaire based survey, group discussions and field observation were used in data collection. Data were analyzed using MS Excel and SPSS Software packages. Droughts, drinking water problems, elephant attacks, poverty, lack of external relations, were some identified hazards. It also emerged that relevant government officers do not pay attention to these hazards while dealing with villagers. There is no village based planning team and if it is established there is a high possibility to overcome some hazards faced by villagers. Therefore, it is essential to establish and make aware about village environmental planning concept in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Disasters, Hazards, Impacts, Village, Village environmental planning concept