

**Seminar on Women in Environment and Development  
(JFY 2003)**

**Country Report  
*Submitted to the ERD***

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1. Name of the seminar: **Women in Environment and Development**
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3. Name of Organization: **Central Environmental Authority**

**Coverage of the Report**

1. Introduction to the Country

The Island, the Republic of Sri Lanka, located in the Indian ocean between the latitudes of 5°, 55' North and 9°, 55' North and the longitudes of 79, 41°, East and 81, 53° East, covers an area of 65,610sq.km(25,000sq.miles).

Sri Lanka has a population of nearly 19 million and 49% female and 51% male. The literacy rate for women is 83.8% compared to 90% for men. The labour force participation rate for women is 33.5%. This is nearly half the rate for men (65.3%). 41.5% of the employed women and 35.4% of employed men are engaged in agriculture and allied sectors.

2. The most serious environmental problem which also gives negative impact especially to women in our country.

Since 1948, environmental problems in Sri Lanka were increased with the economic development simultaneously. With the introduction of the Open Economic Policy in 1977 to Sri Lanka, the development activities such as agricultural, industrial and urbanization were accelerated. On the other hand, the increasing population pressure adversely effected especially urban and semi urban environment of Sri Lanka.

It was identified that the major environmental issues facing in Sri Lanka are as follows:

- **Land degradation, mainly due to soil erosion.**
- **Haphazard waste disposal**
- **Inland water pollution.**
- **Loss of bio diversity.**
- **Depletion of coastal resources.**

The waste disposal is a most serious environmental problem in the urban and semi urban area of Sri Lanka. Women in Sri Lanka have an intrinsic and directly interconnection with the environment as a housewife, mother, labour and employee in the agricultural, industrial and the service sector etc. This leads various negative impacts to the women as well as to the society. The nature of the negative impacts are vary according to it's locational difference such as plantation sector, coastal area, urban and rural area. Generally, ultimate result of the solid waste disposal are water, land and air pollution. This leads respiratory diseases such as Tibiculers, Asthma, and Concer, Filaria, Malaria, Dengu, Diarrhea, Blue Baby etc. There are high probabilities to effect from these diseases to the women, since their direct involvement with the environment. Therefore, Women's roles are most vital to mitigate this problem.

### 3. The nature, context, and any background of the problem.

Due to the lack of sanitary landfill or other solid waste disposal facilities, many local authorities simply dump solid waste on vacant lands. Such open dumps are often found close to low-income settlements since they are the least insistent on their civic rights. Low-income settlements account for one third (33%)of the urban population in the Western Province, the most densely populated region of the country.

This open dumping without environmental consideration has become a serious problem and caused air and ground water pollution. Further, it leads to various health hazards such as bad smell, smoke, fire, files and mosquitoes breeding. The surrounding area becomes unhygienic and unpleasant to live in thereby resulting public outcry. The main constrains in finding solution to this problem is the lack of funds and public awareness.

Some statistics with regard to solid waste disposal are given below.

- The estimation of the total waste generation in Sri Lanka is around 6.400 tonnes per day.
- Daily collection of the solid waste is around 2.500 tones out of which the westren Province contributes up to 57%.
- An estimated 85% of the Local Authorities throughout the country collect less than 6 tonnes of waste per day.
- Hazardous waste was estimated at 40,617 tones in 1996, hazardous waste generated in year 2010 is estimated at 80,420 tones.
- In Colombo Municipal Region there are more than 41 open dumping sites and most of them are small in extent, with around 70% being less than 1 ha. 46% of the sites have a remaining life time of less than 3 years.
- In 1996, over 95% of the clinical waste generated in Colombo was disposed of in open dumps with no form of pre-treatment.

### 4. The countermeasure(s) taken by government, NGOs, or the relevant organizations for the above problem which is now being implemented or is planned to be carried out.

- The Government of Sri Lanka accelerated various legislative, institutional and policy frame work participating non - governmental organization, local authorities, private sectors and general public.
- The Government of Sri Lanka analyses the possibilities to amend the National Environmental Act to mitigate the polithine usage in Sri Lanka.
- Environment related government organization decentralized their function towards the divisional secretariat level (Example: Central Environment Authority's regionalization process)
- The Central Environmental Authority, which function directly under the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, is the law enforcement agency. Both agencies conduct their mandated activities through interagency coordinating meeting at which concerned government and NGO representatives participation.
- A specialized Environment Emergency Team including **women's participation** to tackle environment disasters and implement immediate counter action plans for the country is to be established by the Central Environment Authority shortly. As part of this program, measures will also be taken to operate an environmental hot-line to record and report on environmental problems as well as natural disasters occurring through the country.
- The Central Environmental Authority and the Ministry of environment and Natural resources extended multi-awareness programs to minimize the waste disposal and educated the solid waste management techniques. The said Institution introduced Composed Barrel and Cloth Marketing Bags, Fuel efficiency stone with fire wood.
- The Central Environmental Authority introduced and implements the National Solid Waste Management Strategy 2000.
- Introduction of cleaner production technologies among polluting industries by the Central Environmental Authority.
- The Central Environmental Authority initiated Greenery's Program among the house hold women to keep their vicinity clean and green .
- The Ministry of Policy Planning formulates the strategies with regard to the Gender Equity Guideline in every policy decision in connection to the environment.

Counter measures can be summarized in to the following diagram.

