

Assessment of environmental impacts due to river sand mining

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After the tsunami disaster the demand for sand is increased significantly. Urbanization of the country also contributed to increasing the demand of river sand and due to non implementation of policies and procedures lots of problems are occurred in sand mining's. This high demanding market of sand led to mining the sand drastically in lots of areas; not only the rain sediment sand also river bed sand and river bank sand mining are increased. mining of river bed sand and river bank sand have caused serious problems to various sectors of natural and anthropogenic environments such as, natural systems, livelihoods of people, field of construction, agriculture, health, small industries, causing land and air pollution, inflow of sea water into the rivers, causing droughts & flooding, reducing sand barriers against to sea surges and tsunamis. Study was conducted to identify present situation of the environmental issues due to river sand mining in main river basin areas. The study revealed that river sand mining activities will have an impact upon the river's water quality and as well as groundwater in the river basin areas. Maha Oya is the main river that suffering most of the illegal and rapid sand mining. There are some other rivers also facing to this problem in various scales. Daduru Oya suffered lot in illegal sand mining and after series of public movements and protests government had to totally band the sand mining. Nilwala River in Matara district causes many problems like salanization of Matara drinking water due to the intrusion of sea water into the river and electrical conductivity of the river change up to 2000 micro siemens per centimeters.

Key words: River basin, Salinity, Intrusion, Agriculture, Groundwater

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