

Impacts of disaster waste on human environment: post Tsunami Sri Lanka

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Disasters cause substantial damage around the world every year. There has been an increase in natural disasters over the past few years, and their impact in terms of human, structural and economic losses also increased considerably. Generation of waste and its impact on human and natural environments after a disaster is unavoidable. This is not an exception to a developing country like Sri Lanka which was heavily affected by the Asian Tsunami in 2004. This paper critically reviews causes impacting on human environment and strategies adopted on domain of post disaster waste management. Scope of this paper is restricted to a single case study, the Asian Tsunami of 2004 and further geographically, to the Galle Municipal Council area which is a highly affected city in Sri Lanka. Major issues addressed through this paper covers causes which impact on health and safety of victims in absence of proper waste management strategies and approaches adopted to minimize risks of victims' health and safety. Further, the paper focuses on impacts on natural environment in a nutshell. Comprehensive literature review, documentary review and field survey are selected as methods of data collection. Survey revealed that main causes are poor implementation of prevailing rules and regulations; lower standards of local expertise and capacities and inadequate funds. Further, it revealed that poor waste collection mechanisms, burning of waste, polluted water as factors directly impacting on health and safety of victims. Ultimately, this paper presents alternatives and creative approaches to minimize risks of health and safety of victims that will significantly minimize poor waste management practices.

Key words: Post disaster, Waste, Human environment, Tsunami

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