

Management options for the diminishing mangroves in Kaluwanchikudy, Batticaloa

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The extent of mangroves in Sri Lanka has been estimated to be about 6,000 – 8,000 hectares. Of these, about 1421 hectares occur in Batticaloa District including Kaluwanchikudy area. The dominant mangroves present in this area are *Excoecaria agallocha*, *Sonneratia caseolaris*, *Acrostichum aureum*, *Pandanus tectorius*, *Cerbera odollam*, *Thespesia populnea* and *Ceriops tagal*. At present, the mangrove stands in Kaluwanchikudy area are threatened by anthropogenic activities including deforestation.

A survey was carried out at Kaluwanchikudy area to assess the impact of mangrove destruction with a view to offer management options. This survey included the collection of primary and secondary data. The primary data including those of the importance of mangroves were collected through face to face interviews with the stakeholder parties including fishermen and others. The secondary data with respect to land use patterns and the extent of mangroves etc., were collected from maps, internet based surveys and from the Divisional Secretariat in Kaluwanchikudy.

Based on the survey, several management options were proposed. These include, declaration of mangrove protected zones, restoration of mangrove denuded areas, launching mangrove re-plantation programs, and holding public awareness programs to stakeholder parties in the area including fisher community and school children on the importance of mangroves.

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