

## Improving Knowledge of Riparian Dwellers on Physical Process of the Drainage Basin Water Cycle: The Experience of Sri Lanka

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### *Abstract*

Human activities are the paramount factor that determines the nature of the river basin. There are direct and indirect relationships between human activities and the characteristics of the run off, sediment budget, quality of water, ecosystems and soil layer of the catchments area. Therefore, human activities should be controlled in order to maintain the equilibrium of the environment of river basin. The only possible way to do this is to improve the knowledge of riparian dwellers on physical process of the drainage basin water cycle.

Improving knowledge on this issue is useful in many ways. For instance, maintaining the river flow rate, ground water storage, control flood and landslide, the ecosystem, increase the productivity of ecosystem, agricultural products and hydro electricity. On the other hand, environmental conservation and management programs can be implemented effectively if the river basin users are educated about the physical base of the river basin. In many cases, in Sri Lanka as well as many Asian countries, environmental policies, plans and laws are away from the real world. Therefore, many related programs are limited only to papers. This situation leads to degradation the river basin, waste the funds, misuse water resources and create dispute among upstream and downstream communities.

There are seven institutes; nine projects and around ninety enactments governing over the river basin environment in Sri Lanka. The prime objectives of this paper are to examine the functions of these sources and assess the level of contribution to improve the knowledge of the riparian dwellers.