

## Politicized Environment and Man-made Disasters in Sri Lanka: A Sociological Reading

Abeywardhana D M Y

Department of Sociology, University of Colombo

dinuyapa93@gmail.com

Politics are the crucial factors that influence on society in various ways and in the present world the politicized environment has become a more decisive factor than previous decades. Therefore, the exceptional relationship between politics and politicized environment is being discussed in environmental politics. Since politics influence on society, it has been contributing to the disasters and it creates a number of politicized disasters. Even though the hazards are the events which are appearing as natural phenomena, they have been increasingly appearing as man-made disasters. Therefore, this paper makes an attempt to develop a discourse on the influencing of power relations to the disasters through their behavior in ongoing disaster context, pre-disaster context and post-disaster context. The research was conducted by using explorative methodology and the scheduled field for data collection was Kohilawatta, Kolonnawa in Colombo district. Present study inquired about the flooding incident in May 2016 as it was a crucial disaster that can be identified in the recent period.

The state can be identified as the main actor who is responsible for environmental management as well as environmental degradation in Sri Lanka. The actions of politicians which are based on patron-client relationship thoroughly influence on environmental degradation and it directly affects the flooding in respective field. Illegal constructions on environmental sensitive areas are the main evidences that proving these happenings. Apart from that the disaster events are being becoming a media of maintaining images of politicians. On the other hand, the development projects which are highly politicized are also the reasons to politicized disasters. Mass media, NGOs and other influencing groups (religious, community-based) also can be indicated as power groups which are emarginated through disaster contexts.

**Key words:** *Disasters, Environmental politics, Politicized environment, Patron-client relationship, simulation*