

Impact of Coastal Erosion as a Disaster in Sri Lanka

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Coastal erosion is not popular as other disasters in Sri Lanka due to many reasons. Among them, three factors are significant. First, the destruction and affected areas are not usually large and visible enough to get national level attention as flash floods or landslides. Secondly, the spatial and temporal distribution of the impacts is not equal. Third fact is, since the impacts of coastal erosion disperse into vast array of geophysical and socioeconomic spheres such as lithosphere, biospheres, hydrosphere and socio-economic milieu of the respective coastal dwellers, real destruction cannot be recognized or understood at once through naked eyes as the Tsunami devastation. However, the accumulative impacts of coastal erosion would be larger than other disasters.

Secondary sources of data and field observation utilised in this study to identify the severity of the impact of coastal erosion. It was recognized that the coastal erosion has been a very serious problem in Sri Lanka for a very long time that destroys and destructs the socio- economic and environmental potentials of the country. 45 to 50 percent of the coastline of this country is subject to erosion. The land area lost annually due to erosion has been estimated from 200, 00 to 300,000 M²/ year. In addition, approximately Rs. 1,520. millions have been invested to manage shoreline erosion.

Cost of losing land and destruction of physical properties belong to private and government can be calculated. Yet, scenic beauty and destruction made to cultural values and ecosystems of the coast cannot be estimated. Therefore, the real loss of coastal erosion should be estimated before long to name coastal erosion as one of the main disasters in Sri Lanka.

Key words: *Disasters, Intensity and Impacts of shoreline erosion*