

## ABSTRACT

The environmental values and services of Negombo estuarine system have come under threat during the last decades as the increased demand for various resources and pollution. Hence, a drastic change of the environment profile, significant environmental degradation and unplanned development have become clearly visible even for laymen.

Various management efforts have been taken by several organizations in order to improve the environment and socio economic situation of this estuarine ecosystem. Number of projects and programmes have been implemented to enhance environmental and socio economic conditions of the estuarine ecosystem through various management concepts, policies, strategies and activities. Of them, the implementation of regulatory mechanism can be described as one of the management measures.

There are several government agencies responsible for conservation and management of Negombo estuary ecosystem and many laws and regulations were implemented and enforced by them for the conservation and management of Negombo estuary ecosystem under their jurisdictions.

Therefore, it is of paramount importance to evaluate the success of these implementations to make sure that the interventions were feasible so that they can be adopted for other lagoon and estuarine systems in the future. So far there is no proper study to evaluate the effectiveness of regulatory mechanisms in coastal resource management of Negombo estuarine system. In this respect, this research was carried out to evaluate the effectiveness of one of the most important management strategies taken, namely, the implementation of regulatory mechanism for managing the coastal resources of the estuary. Primary and secondary information were collected over a period of 06 months from March 2016 to September 2016.

In conclusion, according to the findings of the study, effectiveness of existing regulatory mechanism for managing coastal resource management in Negombo estuary was low. It was analyzed through the main requirements such as existing laws and regulations, institutional arrangement for implementation of regulatory mechanism, punishment system for violation of laws /regulations, monitoring system.

Although adequate legal provisions were there, implementation of existing provisions in the acts and regulations were not adequate. Therefore one of the recommendations for the improvement of the current system is to strengthen laws and regulations. The current study recommends establishing an integrated special unit for the proper coordination and implementation of regulatory mechanism instead of compartmentalized separate efforts currently implemented by various organizations.

In addition, monitoring and follow up systems implemented by government agencies for Coastal Resource Management initiatives in Negombo estuary was negligible. Implementation of proper monitoring mechanism and establishment of special sub unit for monitoring & supervision of all illegal activities as well as strengthening and updating the

punishment system for violation of laws/ regulations are major requirements for proper management of coastal resources in the system are of utmost importance.

Rapid increase in illegal activities was reported during initial stages of the implementation of regulatory mechanism especially before 90's. However, the analysis of past data in relation to the illegal activities such as encroachment, unauthorized filling, construction, habitat degradation and pollution, shows that the implementation of regulatory mechanism has not had adequate positive impacts on the estuarine environment and socio economic status.

However, it was identified that the implementation and strengthening of regulatory mechanism in paralleled with other management measures, has brought in positive results on the environment, through the decrease of illegal activities in considerable amounts in present days compared to incidents reported during early decades .

It is highlighted that the strengthening of existing regulatory mechanism and implementing it in parallel with other management options are of utmost importance to improve the environmental condition of the estuary improving socio-economic conditions of the communities that depend on it.