

---

## **Effects of Recent Land-Use Changes on the Livelihood of the Displaced Residents in Hambantota Urban Area**

S.K. Madarasinghe<sup>a</sup>, K.K.A.S. Yapa<sup>a</sup> and L.P. Jayatissa<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup>*Department of Physics, Faculty of Science, University of Ruhuna, Sri Lanka*

<sup>b</sup>*Department of Botany, Faculty of Science, University of Ruhuna, Sri Lanka*

Corresponding author: kanthi@phy.ruh.ac.lk

Dramatic land-use changes have taken place in Hambantota urban area in the Southern province, Sri Lanka in the recent past, after the Tsunami in 2004 and war eradication in 2009. Development projects (e.g. Hambantota port and Mattala airport) contributed to changes in land-use architecture, while affecting some communities to be displaced. Therefore, a questionnaire survey was conducted in 2019 to investigate the effects of land-use changes on the environment as well as on residents' well-being. Data were collected randomly from 36 resettled families in the two Grama Niladhari Divisions in Hambantota urban area, Siribopura and Keliyapura, through interviewing the heads of households. The survey questions aimed at four main areas; peoples' perspectives, economy, goods and services and environment. A Principal Component Analysis (PCA) was performed on the 'Likert scale' questionnaire. Demographic data reveal that all respondents are provided with grid electricity in their houses and 97.2% are supplied with tap water. PCA discloses that people appreciate the progress that the city has made in new businesses, development projects, in the fishery industry and in the agriculture sector. Improvements in many public and private sector services in the city are acknowledged whereas agriculture and fishery industry are recognized as main economy boosters. Public transport system and facilities for education are two major sectors that need to be improved further. Though many programmes function to keep the environment healthy, respondents voice (91.7%) that environment has been compromised to recent development projects. Google earth satellite images prove this by revealing that 380ha of scrub forest had been cleared to establish housing schemes in the city. Hence, it is necessary for authorities to take prompt action to recover the green cover loss by implementing replanting programmes/urban forestry to turn the city into a sustainable green city.

Acknowledgement: RU/SF/RP/2017/03

*Keywords: Environmental degradation, Green city, Land-use change, Urban development*