

Management Issues in River Basins of Sri Lanka A Stakeholders View Based on Maha Oya River Basin



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Maha Oya River

Inter-provincial River

**flows through four provinces - Central, Sabaragand,
North Western and Western
five districts. - Kandy , Kegalle, Kurunegala,
Puttalam, Gampaha**

Main Uses – Domestic Water , Sand and Clay

**Minor Uses – Industrial Water , Hydropower, Irrigation
(tributaries)**

Weakness in legal provisions

- ❖ **No specific Act for river or river basin management**
- ❖ **Legal provisions are scattered in number of acts (State Land Ordinance, National Environment Act, and Water Supply & Drainage Board Act etc:**
- ❖ **Number of agencies involved in various activities, but lack co-ordination.**
- ❖ **Difficult to find a law imposing authority for some activities.**

Administrative complications



Rivers are more often boundaries of provinces

Provincial administrations apply different rules for one and the same subject.

(e.g : NWP restrict sand mining but Sabaragamuwa allows.)

Central Environment Authority (CEA) is responsible for pollution control. but, CEA has no machinery at field level to enforce.

Local bodies have a substantial role in environment management but weak in implementation.

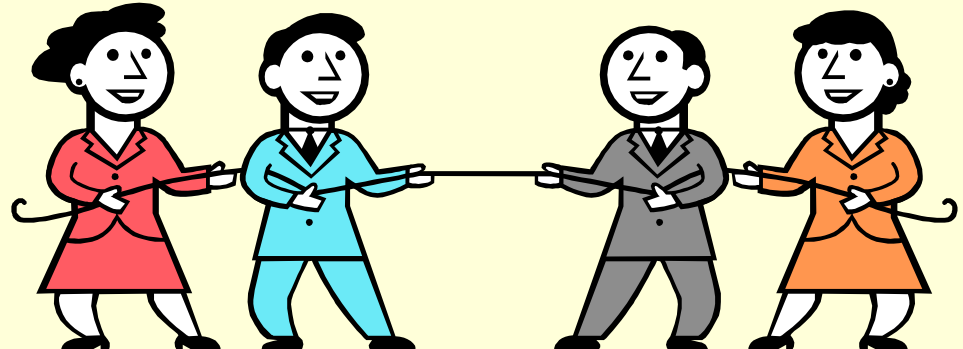
Certain Govt. rules prohibit provision of basic facilities for some category of persons. (e.g : Provision of latrines for encroaches.)

Lack of co-ordination among local level Government Institutions, Local Bodies and Stakeholder Groups.

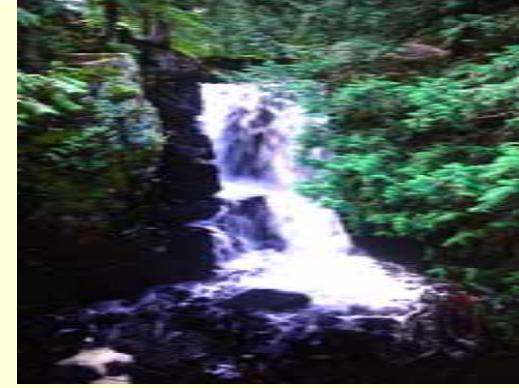
Village level govt. officer(Grama Niladari) is not functioning as a law enforcement officer.

Political Issues

- ❖ Problem arises when Provincial Council and the local body are represented by two rival parties.
- ❖ In most cases they do not compromise for a common cause.
- ❖ Members to are elected on the preferential voting system.
- ❖ The members do not have specific wards.
- ❖ Therefore they are not responsible over a particular area.
- ❖ They can avoid issues as they have no wards.
- ❖ When the party politics operate in the villages, villagers do not co-operate for common programmes.
- ❖ Politicians sometimes do not co-operate with Govt. Officials.
- ❖ Politicians help and cover up law breakers.



Water Resource issues.



- ❖ The average flow of Maha Oya is very high.
- ❖ However river goes dry in some months (February, March, June, July, September)
- ❖ Creates sever problems for drinking water supply.
- ❖ Out of 18 Water supply schemes only 8 provide 24 hours service.
- ❖ Catchment area is cleared with population expansion.
- ❖ Urgent need for a regulatory reservoir in the upstream.
- ❖ Some studies have carried out for a regulatory reservoir, but the progress is slow.
- ❖ Domestic water needs are increasing with urbanization.
- ❖ Locating new industries need to be considered carefully with the increase in domestic water needs.

Water Quality issues.

- Disposal of toilets direct to the river by certain communities.
- Some families on river banks use the river as toilet.
- Sometimes urban garbage is discharge into the river.
- Local bodies more often arrange garbage disposal through contacts.
- Contractors dump garbage at places convenient to them.
- Most local bodies do not have proper places to dump garbage.
- Sometimes industrialist release effluents without treatments.
- Dumping of saw dust and rice husk by millers.
- Bathing of a large number of elephants daily. (Pinnawala)



Degradation of the River Environment

- ♣ **No reservation areas along the river in Privately owned lands.**
- ♣ **Private persons build houses up to the river bank itself.**
- ♣ **Uncontrolled Sand mining even during low flows.**
- ♣ **Collapsing of River Banks due to sand mining and encroachments.**
- ♣ **Clearance of source areas in the upstreams.**
- ♣ **Lack of re-forestation programme in the upper catchment.**



What is needed for Better Management !

- ❖ **Understanding the role of each Organisations.
(Govt, Local bodies and NGOs)**
- ❖ **Build sound co-operation between govt. local govt. and NGO Institutions.**
- ❖ **Use community based organizations to improve river environment.**
- ❖ **Create vigilant groups to arrest damaging incidents.**
- ❖ **Launch reforestation programmes in the upper catchment and river banks with community based organizations.**



Thank You

The text "Thank You" is rendered in a 3D, blocky font. Each letter is a different color, following a rainbow spectrum: 'T' is magenta, 'h' is red, 'a' is orange, 'n' is yellow, 'k' is light green, 'Y' is blue, and 'o' is purple. The letters are slightly raised from the surface, casting soft, grey shadows to their left and slightly forward.