

**INSUFFICIENCY OF MANDATORY LAWS FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF
INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES IN AGRICULTURE SECTOR: A CASE
STUDY IN WET ZONE, SRI LANKA**

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There are 32 flora species and 7 fauna species that are of current priorities as invasive alien species with ranking the impact caused by these species as the second most serious threat to the biodiversity of many countries while doing many social, economic and environmental problems. But, the dispersed legal enactments to control entry and spread of invasive aliens in Sri Lanka do not directly address this growing threat. Hence, the study was conducted to identify the requirement of mandatory legal principles to address all these inadequacies. The study used combined qualitative (interviews - 20 respondents) and quantitative (survey - 50 respondents) research methodologies to collect and analyse the data. Descriptive statistics counted that more than 85% of respondents representing Ministry of Education, Ministry of Agriculture, Sri Lanka Custom, Plant Quarantine Division of DoA, Attorney General's Department, Universities and farmers agreed with massively impact of alien invasive species in wet zone agriculture in reducing biodiversity (89%), altering and degrading the environment (62%), affecting the productivity of agricultural ecosystems (70%), and limiting the ability of producers to access export markets (60%) which altogether hinder sustainable economic growth and development of the country. Moreover, the thematic analysis identified the gaps in the level of compliance towards the invasive issues in Sri Lanka. Thus, 86% of respondents proposed that regulations remain inadequate and the prevailing situation may facilitate the entry and spread of invasive alien species. Overall, 93% of the respondents suggested a well-coordinated mandatory legal provision as effective control of invasive alien species with the collective participation of individuals. Considering the inadequacy of the current legal framework to successfully face the growing challenge of invasive alien species in the country, it is of vital importance to adapt a mandatory legal provision to protect unique biodiversity for the future generation in the wet zone.

Keywords: Biodiversity, Invasive Alien species, Legislation, Mandatory laws