

## **ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIO - ECONOMIC ISSUES DUE TO MINING OF SANDS - A CASE STUDY IN ALUTHGAMA GN DEVIATION, KURUNEGALA DISTRICT.**

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Mining is the extraction of sand, usually from an open pit. It can be excavated from sand dunes, beaches, rivers, water streams and even ocean beds. Today, mining is a major economic activity in developing countries which has created various environmental and socio-economic issues. The main objective of this study is to identify the environmental and socio-economic issues created by illegal sand mining in Aluthgama GN division in the Kimbulwana Oya basin. This study was conducted based on primary and secondary data with cross-sectional mix methods combining both quantitative and qualitative research methods. A questionnaire and field observations were used to collect primary data. Collected qualitative and quantitative data was analyzed using Microsoft excel software. Secondary data were collected from various sources. According to the analysis, the banks and the bed of the river have been eroded immensely due to the sand mining. A sloping road has been constructed for the passage of vehicles to the river bed. Due to continuous dumping of sand, bank erosion and uprooting of surrounding vegetation can be seen and the size characteristics of river sediments have been changed. The biodiversity of the environment has been greatly damaged. The plant systems on the banks of the river have been destroyed, the life cycle of aquatic organisms has been damaged, and certain food webs and chains have been broken. This creates socio-economic impacts in the area as a means of generating income. Water scarcity has become a serious problem in many areas along the river during the dry season. Lack of clean water for bathing, loss of land, frequent conflicts between miners and fishing communities due to rapid decline in fish stocks. Finally, it helps to educate people about the environmental, socio-economic values, guide authorities to consider the long-term consequences of sand mining and contribute to the formulation new policies. It can be used to protect and preserve rivers and valleys from sand mining.

**Keywords:** Sand mining, River, Environment Socio-economic, Impact, River bed

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