

## **Demarcating Problem of Reference Boundary for Coastal Zone and Shoreline: The Case of Sri Lanka**

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“Coastal Zone” and “Shoreline” have become popular and widely used terms among environmentalist, policy makers and planners around the world from ancient times. Coastal areas have been identified as one of the geographical regions that consist with different types of natural resources which provide required impetus to economic, social, cultural and environmental development of countries particularly island nation like Sri Lanka. And also, there are evidences that over utilization of resources or unplanned use of coastal zones have already created different types of problems too. Coastal erosion, degradation of ecosystems and destruction of built environment are the main issues that have emerged due to over utilization of resources through shortsighted human activities.

Understanding the importance of the coastal region and the intensity of problems, protection and conservation the coastal environment has positioned at the forefront task of the government of Sri Lanka from 1980s. Establishing the Coast Conservation Department can be considered as the turning point of the sustainable utilization of coastal resources. Yet, the problems of coastal belt in Sri Lanka are still increasing. One of the main reasons leading to this situation is the uncertainty about the exact ground reference points for the Coastal Zone and the Shoreline.

It is natural that the boundaries of coastal zone and shoreline are changing spatially and temporally. The main objective of this paper is to discuss the reasons for change the concerned boundaries and adjoining problems. Field survey, library survey and interviews were used to collect data and basic statistics was employed to analyze data. Demarcation of exact boundaries would help to protect and pave the way to sustainable use of coastal environment.

*Key Words: Coastal Zone, Shoreline and Sustainable Use of Coastal Resources.*

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