



# Sustainable development framework for an environmentally fragile zone

The case of Sabaragamuwa Province, Sri Lanka

Submitted by

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## **Sustainable Development Framework for an Environmentally Fragile Zone; the Case of Sabaragamuwa Province, Sri Lanka**

### **Abstract**

This Study investigates the factors, processes and causes, to consider in developing a sustainable development framework for environmentally sensitive areas, using three villages of in Sabaragamuwa Province, Sri Lanka. By examining relationship between social systems and ecological systems that existed in the study area for the last 100 years, the existing social-ecological system in environmental sensitive areas of Sabaragamuwa Province in Sri Lanka has been conceptualized. The study clarifies the issues, which are being faced by the permanent settlers in the region and attempts to forecast the situation that may occur in the immediate future, finally suggests the possible solutions for the issues.

The livelihoods of the people of Sabaragamuwa depend highly on biophysical environment of the province and its surrounding hilly areas. In this manner, sustainability of social systems depends on sustainability of biophysical environment. Proper understandings of the biophysical environment helps in understand the peoples' quality of life and the issues and potentials to enhancing the quality of human life.

Mainly this study depends on political ecological perspective to understand the exiting political ecological problems in the communities, two main theses of political ecology, called the degradation and marginalization thesis and the conservation and control thesis, applied. This study depends on both secondary and primary data with qualitative approach. The case study villages were treated as social-ecological systems in the study.

Main argument in this thesis is that sustainable development requires that development programs must, to the extent possible, integrate the local peoples' requirements, desires, motivations, and identity in relation to the surrounding landscape. It also means that local people, those responsible for development initiatives, their effect on the immediate environment and the surrounding landscape design, must participate equally and fully in all debates and discussions, from the local level to the national.

Keywords: Sustainable Development, Environmental Sensitive Area, Sri Lanka, Fragile Zone