

## **Environmentally related backwardness in underdeveloped areas of Sabaragamuwa Province in Sri Lanka: a case study**

UA Chandrasena<sup>1</sup> and Nishan Sakalasooriya<sup>1</sup>

There exists a systematic relationship between development, environment, and poverty. The reciprocal and synergistic links between poverty and environmental degradation force what Blikie (1985) describes as the "desperate ecocide" of the poor.

Even with massive development projects implanted in Sri Lanka, there may be certain isolated pockets of backward and stagnating areas, like Sabaragamuwa Province which is also an ecological fragile zone of the country. This situation highlights that certain development intervention with the have not precisely addressed the issues in the region. This study identifies the prevalence of the backwardness amidst growth and development of an area with special reference to Sabaragamuwa Province in Sri Lanka.

Based on the twelve development criteria applied at the Divisional Secretariat Division (DSD) level, the most backward DSDs will be identified. At the second step, the most backward Gramaniladari Divisions (GNDs) in the most backward DSDs were identified and the case study areas were selected among them.

The aim of the study is to identify the relationship between environmental factors and the development backwardness of Sabaragamuwa Province. The main objective of the study was to explore the prevailing backwardness in the rural peripheries. It also explored the ongoing processes and forces, which are attributable to the persistence of poverty in the least developed areas of the district. The study further highlights the possible solutions in order to up grade the less developed areas.

**Key words:** Ecological fragile zone, Poverty, Development, Environment, Backwardness

<sup>1</sup>Department of Geography, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka