

ABSTRACT

Water pollution is the main cause and concern for people as it makes them ill or lead to deaths. Lack of potable water and sanitation is the reason for common tropical diseases transmitted by mosquitoes, other insects, parasites and other water related disease elements. About eighty percent of all illness in the developing countries is a result of unsafe and inadequate water supplies.

Signs of environmental stress in Sri Lanka are now a cause for serious concern. They include contamination of waters, and rising levels of water pollution. Significant new laws and programmes have begun to shift this by avoiding costly environmental abuse. Actual results will depend on what stakeholders know about the conditions of natural resources. Also the impact of environmental and economic dimensions of development is a matter for careful evaluation by decision makers.

Water resources related to Kelani river which is the second largest in the country, are affected by various physical and chemical dumps discharged into the river directly or indirectly. These consist of nutrients from sewage or fertilizer, pesticides from cropland; sediments from cleared lands and effluents and toxic metals from industry. In Kelani river most significant source of pollution is from land.

In this study water quality, comparisons were made by considering, related parameters in literature. Court cases have been utilised to ascertain the legislative enactments and their enforcement. Informal interviews of all stakeholders such as officials related to Environmental Authority, environmental lawyers and people living in the Kelani banks and those consuming Kelani waters have been conducted.

The administration of the law is another issue. There are serious flaws related to the legislation and its enforcement. Research shows Kelani water has not been monitored systematically. Therefore the implementation of pollution control measures is difficult, without monitoring at more close intervals of time, and physical locations and their intensity of damage.

A unification of all laws and agencies is essential to proceed towards an effective enforcement strategy. Unstructured and haphazard planning, political decisions involving development often lead to environmental pollution of the Kelani river. Sand mining of Kelani to cater the most of nation's construction industry is directly related to development. Saltwater intrusion and stagnation of flow in Kelani waters is a direct consequence of sand mining.

The ignorance of the law is another dimension to combat water pollution. Therefore education of the public is essential. There are several social issues related to water pollution. As a result politicians are very sensitive to them. Lack of faith in the litigation process is a result of high costs and long delays in the pollution control system. This has led to people acquiring laws into their hands to block implementation efforts.