

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of the National Oil Spill Contingency Plan (NOSCOP). The existing NOSCOP mechanism was analyzed in depth to ascertain its applicability and the capabilities against the potential threats that Sri Lanka encounters. Another aim was to identify the weaknesses and gaps of the present mechanism in providing an effective service. The research concluded by providing recommendations to overcome the identified drawbacks.

Considering the nature of the subject matter, qualitative methods and secondary data sources were extensively applied to analyze the effectiveness of the NOSCOP. A postal questionnaire was utilized to obtain direct responses from the stakeholders. The questionnaire was distributed among 27 agencies and only 9 responded to the same. First hand information on the present mechanism was obtained through interviews.

The results of the study disclosed that the present NOSCOP is incapable of addressing an oil spill effectively. Though the NOSCOP follows the pattern functioned by other countries, the negative support of the stakeholders in terms of Equipment, Manpower and poor commitment were significant. The absence of the support of a fully fledged Coast Guard Unit has further contributed to this situation.

The principal conclusion of the study were that the present NOSCOP has to be strengthened in terms of Equipment, Manpower, Training, Research and Development capabilities, Technical Assistance, Professional Assistance and Financial stability. Strengthening the present NOSCOP, restructuring to the Marine Environment Protection Authority and developing the Coast Guard Unit as the operational arm of the Marine Environment Authority were identified as the viable and achievable solutions to counter the identified weaknesses. The recommendations to increase the effectiveness of the NOSCOP were identified based on addressing the above three aspects.