

## **POLITICS OF DEFORESTATION AND SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF FOREST RESOURCES A CASE STUDY - AMPARA DISTRICT OF SRI LANKA**

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### **Abstract**

*Depletion of natural resources has come to pose a threat to human life in the presence as well as future more than that of the economic and social issues of the world today. Forest, one of the natural resource plays an important role in economic development and environmental balance, faces serious issue of deforestation. Deforestation started from the colonial era in the 18<sup>th</sup> century with the opening of plantation sector in hill country and from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, again a large amount of forest cover removed for colonizing people locally under the land settlement and major irrigation projects in dry zone of the island.*

*Increasing demand for timbers and firewood due to growing construction industries and population, pressurizes on forest resources. In other side, land hunger chases the people towards deforestation. Beyond this, the political factors also contribute for deforestation in a significant level.*

*This study focuses on the factors contributed for deforestation, impacts of deforestation on economy and society and alternative measures implemented to maintain the forest in a sustainable way in the area. Special attention will be given how the political factors such as land policies, colonization and major irrigation have contributed to deforestation. Essential data for the study were collected from secondary well as primary sources such as interview, group discussion and site visit. There are cost and benefits form deforestation. Economical and social benefits generated from deforestation suffer due the ethnic conflict, clashes and power sharing cold war among communities developed due deforestation in the district. It is clear that the cost of deforestation is stronger than the benefit achieved. Land policy introduced by government in the past, has caused not only the deforestation but also ethnic issues, which still remain unsolved. Forest management policies have to be re conceptualized with the concept of peace and harmony through forest management and with community participation.*

### **Key words:**

*Deforestation, politics of deforestation, colonization, land policies and sustainable management of forest*