

ACCELERATION OF THE FLOOD THREAT AND ITS IMPACT DUE TO DECLINING ECOLOGICAL ETHICS (A CASE STUDY OF THUDAWA GRAMANILADHARI DIVISION IN MATARA)

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Introduction

Ecological ethics can be simply defined as man must take a virtuous view on environment at all times. However, most environmental problems arise due to decline of ecological ethics. Flood threat is a case in point. This situation can be clearly identified in Thudawa Grama Niladhari Division in Matara, which is situated in low country wet lands. The main objective of this study is to examine the acceleration of the flood threat and its impact due to decline of ecological ethics. Qualitative study method is used as the major methodological approach. Primary data as well as secondary data and qualitative information were used in the analysis and presentation. Interviews, questionnaires, field observations and photographs used as primary data. Web sources, books, magazines, maps are used as secondary data sources. The study area of this research is incessantly affected by the flood threat because of its natural position. But its impact became incessantly severe due to human activities. Some identified human activities are the use of low land for human activities, poorly planned development projects, complicated building designs, disposed of garbage to water sources, human activities in river flood plains and destroying forests in water shed areas of the highlands. It is concluded that Thudawa South Grama Niladhari Division is severely affected than the area of Thudawa North. It is contended that, this sharp distinction is a result of declining of ecological ethics.

Trees, forests, mountains, valleys are utilized by humans in their living areas that are considered as human environments. "Living environment that they are using is more useful for their idyllic lifestyle." Lord Buddha also uttered this very truth as "*Patirūpadēsawāsōca*". The ecological ethics simply means that man should treat environment with

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comparing with all times. The environmental friendly attitudes clearly show in Buddhism. "Trees are the biggest benefactors. They supply shelter to people even who come to cut or destroy them. Trees supply food to people who eat fruits but destroy the branches of it." (Dhammapala Thero, 2009).

People who engage deforestation seem to move rapidly away from ecological friendly attitudes which are part of the teachings in Buddhism. It can be argued that the major cause for environmental crisis. Flood threat means overflowing of rivers natural banks and that water affecting the people who live in the flood prone area. (Rathnayake. M, 2007) According to Buddhism, entire world consisted with earth, water, splendor, air and space. Lord Buddha taught that the flood threat occurs from an intolerance of water.

Problems

- What is the impact of declining of ecological ethics towards the acceleration of flood threat?
- Are ecological ethics declining in modern society?
- Is it reasonable to argue that the impact of flood threat become more severe due to decline of ecological ethics?

Objectives

- Study acceleration of flood threats and to decline of ecological ethics, and whether a causal relationship between them can be found.
- Identify the ecological attitudes in the teachings of Lord Buddha related to the issue of floods.
- Identify the connection between decline of ecological ethics and flood threats.
- Identify the impact of floods in the study area from a Buddhist perspective.

Study area

Divisional Secretary's division of Matara situated in low the country wet lands between $5^{\circ} 56'$ North latitudes and $80^{\circ} 32'$ Eastern longitudes. Sixty six Grama Niladhari Divisions belong to Matara Divisional

Secretary's Division out of which Thudawa Grama Niladhari Division is selected for this research.

Methodology

According to physical features, Thudawa area belongs to coastal low lands in low country wet zone. Nilwala River is the major water source of the area. This area yearly gets high rainfall and subjected to continual flood threat. Qualitative study approach is used here as the main methodology of the research. Collecting data and information, analyzing and presenting is done to attain the stated objectives of the research. Collection of data consisted of two main parts. That is primary and secondary data collection. Interviews, questioners, direct observations, photo collection are used as primary data sources. Web sources, books, magazines and maps are used as secondary source of data. Information gathered for the research are presented through data tables, photographs, maps after analyzing the qualitatively.

Analysis

The reason for acceleration of flood threat is acting on environmental impact assessment reports when implementing development projects. Nilwala project operated in 1968 was the major development project came out in this area. The object of the project was reducing the flood threat. But unfortunately flood threat was accelerated due to the project. The building structure in this area is very complicated and that is also a reason for the increment of flood. Lord Buddha instructed his *Bhikkus* to build their temples according to environmental, social and economic situation of that time. Lord Buddha further advised that it will help them to avoid illnesses and can gain well managed life style. *Sēnasanakkhandha* mentioned it as follows,

"Vihara will destroy cold and heat. This will exclude barbaric beasts, serpents, flies and mosquitoes, cold winds and rains" (Vinayapi aka, 2005) Other issue noticed in this research is polluting natural water resources by humans. This is also a reason for increasing floods. Lord Buddha advised follows,

"Stop disposing faeces and urine, impurities, impure foods on green grass. If one do so, it will take as violation of *paciti* offence." (AriyawimalaThero, 2009)

Destroying of forests in high water feeding areas is also a reason for flood threat. *Aggaññasutta* shows the ways of arising social crisis and environment facing different distortions by using it improperly. This sutta clearly described how peoplesactivities affected to nature and how nature reacted for them.

Conclusion

According to the studies concluded, it can be concluded that Thudawa South area was severely affected from flood than its North part. The main reason for this situation is the high population density in that area and their behavior. The sharpness of difference is a result of decline of ecological ethics. Study area clearly shows that human activities are the major reasons for increment of flood than natural reasons. Specially, increment of filling of low lands increased with high population. With this situation, the nature lost their places of storing access water. Finally it comes out as a threat.

Keywords: Natural disasters, Ethics, Flood threats, Thudawa Division in Matara

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