

Socio-economic and Environmental impacts of International Cricket Stadium at Sooriyawewa

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The Sooriyawewa International Cricket Stadium is located in Sooriyawewa area in Hambantota district which was established under a mega project in Sri Lanka. Though it is 8 kilometers from the Hambantota town, the Stadium stands 204 kilometers away from the commercial capital of Sri Lanka – Colombo. To study the socio-economic and environmental impacts of the Sooriyawewa International Cricket Stadium on the communities in the project area, Meegahajandura (88.33%) and Sooriyawewa (11.64%) GN divisions were selected as the sample for the study. After reviewing secondary data and conducting a case study, different forms of data collection methods were used to collect primary data. The youth, business and farming populations were selected near the stadium because those were the populations that were affected as a result of the project. Simple random sampling method was used to get a sample from each population and the sample size was 20 for each. To represent the farming population, samples were taken from the Meegahajandura area and to represent the business population, samples were taken from the Sooriyawewa area. Both Meegahajandura and Sooriyawewa areas were used to collect the samples from youth population. Pre-tested questionnaires were used for data collection. To investigate the social impacts, three populations were questioned on the impact of the stadium on the education of the schools near the grounds, the changes in social status of the people in this area, the cultural changes, and the changes in land ownership after preparing the grounds. According to the results, there is no significant impact on the education of the schools near the Stadium after preparing the ground. Most of the people have agreed that they get more access to income sources and new job opportunities through this project and that it directly enhances the social status of the communities. The results revealed that social problems, food habits and youth dress styles have changed due to the impact of the stadium. There has been no significant change in land ownership. To identify the economic impacts of the communities, data were collected by focusing on job opportunities, extra income sources and loss of income sources. The young population has got new job opportunities, and farming and business populations have obtained extra income sources. Nevertheless, Chena cultivators have lost their income sources due to the impact of the Stadium. For the purpose of investigating the environmental impacts data were collected. According to secondary data, the land was of a bushy type and Chena cultivated land had a total extent of 46.51 ha. The density of animal population and vegetative cover, and the density of medicinal plants have been reduced due to the establishment of the Stadium. It can be concluded that there are both negative and positive impacts due to this project. While some clusters of the population have enhanced their socio-economic status, a few clusters of the population have diminished status relatively.

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