NUWARA ELIYA LAKE: PRELIMINARY RESULTS OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL SURVEY

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The degradation of the Nuwara Eliya lake over the recent past has been a cause of some concern. More serious is the increased agricultural activity that has mushroomed around its perimeter posing a threat of entry into the lake of agro-chemicals through seepage and its feeder streams.

A multidisciplinary study was instituted by NARA to assess the present status of the lake and its environs, and to serve as a model for future studies on enclosed water bodies. This paper presents the preliminary results of the environmental studies done on this man-made lake.

The study identified eighteen points through which water and silt enter the lake. Of these, three streams in particular contribute the most significant volume of water to the lake besides natural seepage. Water was sampled from selected feeder streams based on estimated flow and an initial sampling of all incoming sources of water. Water samples were also collected from random areas within the lake as well as from the single spill-way. some feeder streams were found to carry appreciable nutrient loads and in some instances large bacterial loads. A hydrographic survey carried out as a prerequisite to the study has revealed that the N'Eliya lake is a shallow body of water and all information points to it been highly eutrophic and in urgent need of planned rehabilitation. Visual evidence of this is readily apparent from the explosive growth of unwelcome water plants and weeds that threaten to obliterate the lake surface which once had great recreational and fishery potential.