

## **Reducing coastal poverty through community participation (with reference to Chilaw coastal belt)**

**H.M. Nawarathna Banda**

*Department of Economics, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka.*

**Key words: coastal poverty and community participation**

### **Abstract**

Combating and eradicating poverty is one of the principal priorities of the international community. The UN world summit for Social Development expressed the commitment to this goal as an ethical, social, political and economic imperative of humankind. The UN millennium Declaration adopted by the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly, New York, September 2000, contains the commitment to halve, by the year 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger. The world development report enlarges the traditional conception of poverty encompassing both low levels of income and consumption and low levels of achievement in education, health and nutrition status with two other dimensions, namely vulnerability and powerlessness.

The poor are most affected by environmental damage and live in most degraded areas. The poor affect the marginal natural resource base on which they depend, and may cause further harm by overuse. Failures of policy, markets and institutions are the underlying causes. Poor people are often impoverished by a declining resource base, and thus forced to degrade the environment further by the circumstances eg:, through coastal habitat destruction , sand mining , coral reef harvesting and over-fishing.

Sri Lanka is an island with a coastline of 1585 kilometers. There are four sectors of poverty in Sri Lanka. These are Rural, Coastal, Urban and Plantation sector. Poverty is a major economic problem in Sri Lanka. About 7% of population in Sri Lanka is poor. Poverty in Rural area is 31%, and Urban areas 8.6%. Over 90% of poor live in rural areas. So poverty in Sri Lanka is overwhelmingly a rural issue. The objectives of this study are identify the various sectors of poverty, identify the reasons for coastal poverty, identify the impact of Community Participation on reducing coastal poverty and identify the solutions to overcome or at least mitigate the coastal poverty.

It has been selected hundred families from Chilaw coastal belt for this study. It has been used both primary and secondary data. Primary data was collected from the coastal belt and secondary data was collected from relevant sources. According to the collected data and observation community participation is the best way to reduce poverty in coastal zone in Sri Lanka.