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of Sri Lanka.

CITIZENS' VIEWS  
ON  
ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES  
IN  
SRI LANKA

*Prepared by*

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*for*

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# Introduction

To ensure that Sri Lankan citizens' views could be presented to the UNCED several national level NGOs and federations came together on 5th February 1991 and formed a coalition (common front) called the "PUBLIC CAMPAIGN ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT" (PCED). The primary objective of the campaign was to seek the views of the public all over the country, to create a forum for them where none existed and to bring their views to bear upon policy making and implementation.

A steering Committee was established consisting of committed persons from environmental and development NGOs. Funds were raised from four donors, the Environmental Foundation Ltd. (EFL), the Sri Lanka Environment Congress (SLEC), Sarvodaya Shramadana Sangamaya and the Asia Foundation. A Secretariat was established and housed at EFL and a Staff consisting of an Administrative Secretary, a Typist/Clerk and an Office Aide was also found to assist the Coordinator/Executive.

First a team consisting of Coordinator/Executive, the Venerable Keeranthidiye Pragnasekera Thero (a Global 500 awardee of the UNEP), Ranatunga Aiya an impromptu poet, middle-aged farmer and orator and Bhagya, an audio visual technician, commenced a month long tour of the island On 3rd May 1991.

The team travelled from village to village, from town to town and from area to area in a hired van in order to obtain the views of the people throughout the length and breadth of the country. During that month, by districts, they traversed main roads, minor roads and by-roads. At times they ferried across waterways by paddle boats. At other times they walked many miles on gravel roads across hamlets and jungle areas.

Public hearings were held at crowded market places and village fairs. In the evenings they visited "coffee kiosks" where the villagers congregate for gossip. They also visited paddy fields where farming activities were in progress and the beaches where fisherman frequent both for fishing and selling fish. Similarly they met farmers, native physicians, public and local officials, teachers fishermen, labourers and unemployed persons in their own homes. Weaving centres, quarries and schools were not left out. The team visited the village temple where everybody congregates. Also they did not forget to visit large scale development sites, spots where forest are being destroyed as well as places where the environment is being polluted.

Without a distinction between day and night, without considering a place to be safe or improper, this team visited places where the common people gathered. They always endeavoured to get into conversation, dialogue or discussion with them. In the face of unrest, uncertainty and the unsettled environment, they had to make an effort to get close to them. At first certain individuals viewed them with great suspicion. Certain others befriended them quickly. The team became accustomed to having a hot cup of tea at a way side kiosk and join the villagers in their gossip or to get into conversation with the villagers at the market place. Such occasions where 30-40 people surrounded them were many.

"On many similar occasions, in many areas the members of the team identified the problems and needs of the villagers as well as the remedies they expect, not through questioning, but through dialogue. In certain places such dialogues continued late into the night. Often, in this circuit, they spent the nights in temples on a mat or a sheet. Their meals were obtained from a wayside kiosk. Occasionally they were guests of the villagers who became friendly with them. In many places, a king coconut or a cup of tea from a villager was a certainty."

At the end of this month long campaign the team had gathered a wealth of experience, data, issues, perspectives and solutions on the twin concerns of environment and development that the campaign was seeking to address. The experience of the island wide tour became the basis of the further evolution of the campaign.

The next phase was to hold public hearings by way of meetings at provincial level. For this purpose plans were made to work in association with voluntary organizations spread across the country. Spending about one week in one province meetings were organised through people's organizations and social workers in various places. The final meeting in a province, usually in a large hall, constituted the main public hearing. Such meetings were held in five provinces coupled with over 50 sub meetings.

As was done in May, a dialogue was initiated with the people in order to get their views. During this time the PCED had the opportunity to join various people's campaigns. Joining the protest organised by people in Kalawana of the Sabaragamuwa province, against the proposed Kukule Hydropower Project, is one such experience. The time spent with the people in Kalawana going from house to house and from village to village, left an indelible mark in the minds of our team. The team traversed through the country for four months holding meetings in this manner.

Unfortunately, violence and war prevented the campaign from reaching the North and the East of the country and to that extent the citizens' report is not fully representative of the views of all our people. Yet, newspaper advertisements calling for public representations did receive responses from these areas and these have formed part and parcel of the public views that have been incorporated into the citizens' report.

In June 1991, Worldview International Foundation identifying the campaign as being unique decided, to produce a video documentary on the process for the benefit of the peoples of the world. Public meetings from July to September were video taped by them. The documentary was released with the report.

The five month long challenging programme of public hearings ended at Balangoda on 30 September, 1991. Public testimony was recorded onto both audio and video tapes covering over 100 hours of audio tapes and about 40 hours of video tapes. Further, a great volume of written public opinions are available in our data archives. All this testimony was then transcribed adverbim.

During these five months hundreds of rural development, peasant, fishery, labour, womens, youth and religious voluntary organisations and national, local, grassroot level environmental and development NGOs and committed individuals helped PCED in many ways in gathering public opinion throughout the country.

In December 1991 Natural Resources on Environmental Policy Project /International Resource (NAREP/IRG) Group commissioned PCED to translate the collected public opinion into English and organised the material according to major environmental topics. The idea was to disseminate citizens views on environmental issues among NGOs, policy and administrative people, donor groups and other decision makers.

The translated material were next divided into six main issues. Then they were further divided into important sub headings. The issues deriving from the opinion of the public were divided into certifying which the editorial team felt would be of interest to the decision headings of the country.

After a final inspection of the report by NAREP/IRG, PCED completed this report, and submitted copies to NAREP/IRG.

The result of this effort, and the translated hearing record presented here, should contribute to a better understanding by decision makers, environmental professionals, and others, of the environmental needs of Sri Lanka's citizens and the opportunities to meet these needs.

The recording and dissemination of public views on the environment by the Public Campaign on Environment have already gained attention, respect and importance among the policy making community of Sri Lanka. Creating PCED as an NGO common front, going to the people to obtain their views on environmental development, and preparing Sri Lanka's first Citizen's Report for UNCED (the Earth Summit) was a challenging task. Now, a mission which seemed to be impossible to many at that time has been successfully achieved by PCED for the citizens of Sri Lanka.

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# CITIZENS VIEWS ON ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES IN SRI LANKA

## *SUMMARY*

Comments in this report on environmental and related social concerns come from citizens in various walks of life. They illustrate findings in NAREPP's environmental awareness survey of 4,000 urban and rural families in 1993, which found that environment was Sri Lankans' foremost community concern, and that environmental problems of health, water pollution, deforestation, solid waste, deforestation and so forth are widely recognized and deeply felt.

Policy makers, legislators, managers, researchers and journalists seeking to understand these problems and perceptions can identify from this report some of the critical underlying policy questions that need effective responses. They include: how development can respond to socially and environmentally sustainable improvements; how citizens can obtain better and more practical environmental information; whether citizens might meet their long-term employment and income needs with stronger legal rights to environmental resources; how government and political leaders can more effectively meet the daily needs of citizens for sustainable environmental management; how governmental procedures could promote greater respect for law through equal justice respecting environmental management; and how more decisions can devolve to effective local governments.

Citizen comments presented in this report have been organized in separate sections on Land, Water, Fisheries and Coastal Resources, Forests, Mineral Resources, and Human Resources. These comments are summarized below.

## *SECTION 1, LANDS*

**1.1. Traditional Agriculture:** Traditional farming mixed with chena was simpler and more satisfactory before, but farming still offers opportunities for self-help and self-employment, despite its problems.

Farming costs are going up -- for seeds, fertilizers, and pesticides, the profits taken by middle men, needs for bank loans at high rates -- making traditional farming more risky and difficult. Farmers lack the assistance of government extension services, subsidies for fertilizer, and other relief services they once had. Farmers are poorer and more needy than the government seems to believe, and farming is not an economically viable career.

**1.2 Commercial Crops:** Loss of forests for tea, tobacco and other commercial crops has also interfered with other traditional agriculture, such as palmyrah. Cinnamon lands are getting higher prices as building lots, and coconut yields are not as high as before.

**1.3 New Commercial Crops:** Sugar cane production is driving out the traditional farmer and traditional food crops, tobacco is taking away water for paddy cultivation and destroying soils, and gherkin is causing soil erosion and chemical soil pollution. Tobacco is known to be

environmentally harmful, but it can offer a more reliable return than cereals. Seeds for commercial crops, like pumpkin, ghurken, and onions, are expensive, and extensive technical assistance is needed to grow them.

**1.4 Fertiliser and Pesticides:** Despite the increased use of insecticides and pesticides, there seems to be an increase in disease and weeds. But farmers do not know the science behind the usage of pesticides. They may be using more or less than the required amounts, with bad results.

Farmers badly need advice from credible, disinterested agricultural agents, but they are all at the mercy of the chemical salesmen and multi-national companies. Government extension agents are not available to help.

Traditional farming skills have been abandoned and are not remembered, as chemical and fertilizer dependency and new crops have become common. Chemicals have apparently caused myna birds, magpies, squirrels, to leave home gardens. Chemicals and fertilizers have harmed ground water and contaminated soils. Earthworms are not found in some areas.

**1.5 Land Tenure:** Parents have two basic concerns about their children: their need for employment and for land. Unemployment and landlessness are problems for the parents too. Land problems result from increased population, increasingly smaller family land plots, and inequitable land distribution.

Annual land permits and other short-term permits for land create no incentive for investment in lands by the user. Permanent land rights are essential. Landlessness is already a serious problem, and lands given to the private sector should have been given to villages. Even 50 acres of lands given to a village would help.

Implementation of land laws favors the rich, those from Colombo, and those with political influence over those who have cultivated and lived on the lands for years. The favored interests can obtain and use well over 50 acres, including, in one case cited, encroachment on 600 acres of forest land. Land lease payments under land reform laws have been improperly remitted, and taxes for land use have been high. Despite payment of the high taxes, land title has not been forthcoming.

**1.6 Land Development:** The word "development" has bad connotations and should be replaced with the word "improvement," and with policies directly intended to meet people's most pressing problems. Development being promoted by various organizations needs to address problems of garbage along streets, loss of trees, requirements for open space in urban areas, and the dangers of creating desires for possessions that cannot be realized.

## *SECTION 2, WATER*

**2.1 Irrigation Projects:** Citizens need water but lack understanding regarding how, by whom, and under what criteria decisions are made about water allocation.

The Mahaweli scheme, like others project cited, created winners and losers. The Lunugamwehera Project, on the Kirindi Oya, suffered from inadequate planning, need to protect catchment areas of dam projects. Opposition to the Uma Oya Project was based in part on fear of damage to ground water and streams and its great cost.

**2.2 Flood Control Projects:** The Ging Ganga Project was planned in Colombo or elsewhere without consultation with farmers in the area or concern about local impacts.

The Niiwala Project harmed fishermen and others in lower areas of the river; waters are polluted and garbage laden, and although it may protect against flooding it is bad for paddy farming.

**2.3 Hydro Power Generation Projects:** Some fear that the Kukule Ganga Project will cause frequent earthslips, among other adverse impacts of the reservoir. (The ancient kings did not build such tanks in the wet zone.) Others want to be sure to share in the benefits of electricity. But who will benefit, who will not, and what will its impacts be?

The Samanalawewa Project is a failure; it resulted in loss of 2,800 acres of valuable forest, viable paddy, and has caused wells to run dry. Compensation for lost land has not been paid.

**2.4 Water Management:** Citizens have many ideas about how to manage water and watersheds better, including understanding of ancient, still valid, practices, such as construction of small tanks and planting of indigenous trees instead of pinus. Proven practices are not being heeded.

Surface water pollution is serious and comes from all kinds of causes: the Beira Lake receives pollution from everywhere, and surrounding slums suffer health problems; domestic waste pollutes Negumbo Lagoon; liquid and solid waste from the Ekala industrial estates goes into canals and wetlands; and Lunawa Lagoon is even dangerous to the touch. Pollution of rivers results from cattle slaughter houses and waste from the cattle pens. There is a need and opportunity to produce fertilizer from much of Sri Lanka's waste.

## *SECTION 3, FISHERIES AND COASTAL RESOURCES*

**3.1 Traditional Fishing and Over Fishing:** Fishing risks are high, from costly damage to nets, capsizing of boats, and volatile market prices. It is a difficult life. Dragnet fishing out to 7 miles from the land causes serious over fishing; use of lights for night (light post) fishing destroys traditional fishing in the south, but nothing is done about it. Freshwater fishing is now prohibited or discouraged in tanks, yet once corporate societies promoted such fishing; pollution

has eliminated fish that once lived in streams, brooks and tanks.

Tourism is spreading fast, but what good does it bring? It seems to have corrupted youth and destroyed culture. The art of traditional dancing, songs, and mask making has suffered, and degraded dance, art and music are offered to meet the "low taste of tourists."

## *SECTION 4, FORESTS*

**4.1 Deforestation:** The largest scale forest clearing is by the rich, the influential, the politicians, and timber pirates. Illegal poaching is condoned by the government. Forests in Katnapura, Badulla, Monaragala, Galle, the Knuckles range -- these and others all suffer. Feiling is done by large corporations, like the Palwatte Sugar Company, and the Timber Corporation, and for large projects like the Samanalaweva hydroelectric project. Clearing also comes from chena cultivation, although large trees may be spared, from cutting by people for fuelwood, and from bakeries.

**4.2 Wild Life:** When a sanctuary is created people living in the area have no way to earn a living; they cannot take wood, graze cattle, or cultivate. Department of Wild Life officials get no public support for enforcement. Wild animals, especially elephants, damage the settlements that edge the protected areas. There are no buffers. Political intervention permits illegal timber or wildlife poaching.

Because of the Palwatte Sugar Company hundreds of elephants were killed, among other grim incidents. Elephant damage is greater now because elephants have moved from many former habitats. Guns are needed to chase them away, without killing them. Hundreds of houses have been destroyed, but the government has not helped.

**4.3 Introduced species:** Pinus planting, which began in the mid 1970s, has caused loss of water from streams, loss of grassy undergrowth, fire hazards, Cashew, tamarine, and other species should be grown instead of pinus, acacia, or eucalyptus. But "important" people decide to grow these introduced species regardless of environmental impacts.

It may be too late to grow local species where the pines have already destroyed the soils.

**4.4 Biodiversity:** The Singharaja, an ancient evergreen forest which receives two monsoons and intermonsoon rains, is unique for its diversity and contributes nearly all plants used in Ayurvedic Medicine. The Rumassala mountain range near Galle has exotic natural beauty but is being destroyed by tourist hotels.

**4.5 Reforestation:** People plant trees on "Tree Planting Day" but then forget about it. Trees should be planted continuously, but they should be useful -- jak, coconut, breadfruit. "Kumbuk," and "Karanda" are more useful than Mara trees, but they are now scarce.

The wrong kinds of trees are planted under government programs. Cashew cultivation (Kurunegala) has been urged on us, but it is not successful, and the only thing that takes place is an official event. The Forest Department's reforestation with acacia, pines and other trees has harmed villages and farmers.

Village forests are necessary -- even small ones of 35 acres. Maintenance of useful forests for villagers could be supervised by priests. A community forestry project around Hanguranketha Maha Vidyalaya with jak trees have been successful, but it is threatened by government land distribution to influential people.

## *SECTION 5, MINERAL RESOURCES*

**5.1 Gem mining:** Around Ratnapura 75 percent of the people engage in the gem business, but gemming is unplanned, haphazard, and much of it is unregulated. Value added work is carried out by foreigners abroad, mostly in Bangkok, so Sri Lanka does not obtain sufficient economic return. In Sri Lanka the government has yielded effective control of this state resource to private companies, including foreign companies, and it is being wasted, legally and illegally.

Environmental abuse from gem mining is going unchecked -- water pollution, unreclaimed gem pits that breed mosquitoes and malaria, and abandoned paddy fields. Farmers have brought much of this about themselves.

**5.2 Graphite Mining:** Workers in these mines are underpaid and unprotected against dangerous conditions of methane gas, fumes, and dangerous dust.

**5.3 Rock Blasting:** Blasting in the quarry (at Kurunegala) had destroyed aquifers, damaged children's ears, and caused damage to houses and property.

**5.4 Mineral Resource Management:** Unplanned limestone mining and lime kilns create nuisances for residents. Phosphate mining (Anuradhapura) creates health problems from dust and harms the environment as well.

## *SECTION 6, HUMAN RESOURCES*

**6.1 Labour and Self-Employment:** Low pay (Rs 50/day), lack of employment, lack of capital to create self employment, and lack of training/facilities to improve skills, are major concerns. Unemployment or low pay interferes with children's ability to go to school when they must look after their families. But also many youths with O and A level passes are without jobs.

New job opportunities are critical. The Koggala Free Trade Zone will offer employment, but it will be important to have sound rules and regulations for worker health and job security. There must also capital investment in Sri Lanka from these and other export businesses. They

"attempt to maximize their profit," and they should pay workers more.

**6.2 Corruption and Social Degradation:** Severe village problems come from lack of health facilities, A-level teachers, and lack of skills to do the jobs that are available. During the troubled times (1988-89) young men disappeared, 10-12 from Kotapola, Morawaka.

Government continues land policies that discourage land ownership, and it encourages planting of trees people do not want and cannot use (turpentine) on land people do not own. Paddy owners must pay increasing taxes but cannot pay. Grama Niladharis profit on timber. Gam Udawa work has proceeded when more employment benefits could come from work on tank construction. "Law is useless." It is "on the side of money. Justice is for the rich," and "it is the poor who go to court." "Nothing can be done without political support."

"The first problem we face as parents is the employment ...of our offsprings (sic)." Three generations "sit on the land the father got."

The Mahaweli project is a "national asset," but the population once settled must have a feeling for nation, culture and religion. "Drunkness is the major culprit," with new taverns spreading (System "H").

Tourism hurts local crafts and arts. Hotels present dancing and songs that is not traditional.

**6.3 Human Development and National Prosperity:** Traditional values offer answers to social problems. The traditional concepts of the tank, dagaba, village and temple gave peace and harmony to the old society of Sri Lanka. Even today, "[t]his is a country with a Buddhist discipline" and people know they "...should live in harmony with the environment."

But traditional religious and cultural values are endangered. There is a conflict with the western concept of development. "Leadership has slipped away from the temple," and "religious leadership has slipped from the village." The value and virtues of the village have deteriorated. "Commercialism invades the villages." School education is "commercially-oriented."

Tourism has brought AIDS, but if people lived with the five precepts in Buddhism AIDS can be prevented. People have lost faith in indigenous medicine, but it has "... a cure for every disease."

The Free Trade Zones -- Katunayaka today, Koggala tomorrow -- offer short-term solutions to unemployment. They change patterns of life for young men and women and endanger culture and civilization.

# 1. Lands

## I. Traditional Agriculture

### **A citizen from the area- Monaragala-91-05-30**

In the past here we mostly got lime and oranges. They are no more now. Cane cultivation gives the people a better income.

### **Sadhadhananda -Small scale businessman- Monaragala- 91-05-30**

Ques.: What outlook does farming take in the Monaragala District?

Answ.: Here vegetable growing is largely done. In addition, shifting cultivation.

Ques.: What quantity of vegetable does this area supply?

Answ.: Cannot say for certain. We do farming mostly. Sometimes crops fail and at other times they are a success. The Monaragala District as a whole supplies a considerable quantity of vegetables to the country.

Ques.: What is the collection per week?

Answ.: A considerable quantity. But a larger quantity is bought by big traders. We buy about two sacks.

### **A woman - Minipuragama- Elaheera- 91-05-22**

Ques.: What is this village?

Answ.: Minipuragama

Ques.: You grow gingelly for one season in the year, isn't it so?

Answ.: yes

Ques.: In which months does that season fall?

Answ.: In February

Ques.: How much seed you broadcast to get this harvest?

Answ.: We do it in about 1/4 of an acre.

Ques.: What will be income of this harvest?

Answ.: Here there are about 1 1/2 or 2 bushels

Ques.: How much it would fetch?

Answ.: Now the prices are lower. When we broadcast we got seeds at the rate of Rs 30/- a kg. Now we can give at about Rs. 17/- a kg

Ques.: Gingelly cultivation has no problems of water has it?

Answ.: We do it under rain-fed conditions.

- Ques.: Do you get rain in time?  
 Answ.: Yes. This time there's not much rain.
- Ques.: These crops are called "Katusara" crops?  
 Answ.: Yes
- Ques.: These crops do not need government subsidies? Do they?  
 Answ.: No. People themselves do their work
- Ques.: What work you do, if you get loans?  
 Answ.: If we get loans, we can do farming.
- Ques.: What would you cultivate?  
 Answ.: Cereals
- Ques.: What else?  
 Answ.: We need chemicals and fertilizer
- Ques.: Is the land not fertile enough?  
 Answ.: Not enough
- Ques.: What fertilizer would you use?  
 Answ.: Chemical Fertilizer and other chemicals.

**Ratnasiri Pathirana- Thalammehera- Pannala- 91-08-20**

This area comes under the Katugampola electorate in the Kurunegala District in North-Western province. About 75% of the people in this electorate live by farming. Paddy, coconut, betel, and banana are the main crops. We don't get enough water to do the paddy cultivation in both seasons Yala and Maha. Rain water is not sufficient. Today a situation has emerged where the paddy farmers cannot pursue their farming activities. Coconut and betel growers face a problem of a market to sell their products at a reasonable price.

**Environmental Solidarity Movement- Kurunegala- 91-12-10**

(from a letter)

In a land of about 15 acres in extent, belonging to the Janatha Estate Development Board, near the Inter tropical rain forest at Kankariyamulla, within the Pannala Divisional Secretary's region in the Katugampola electorate, a private company has set up a coconut factory and the release of waste into the tract of fields nearby, has threatened to destroy hundreds of acres of fields

This tract of fields belonging to the villagers, Iriyagolla, Minuwangamuwa, Nedalgamuwa, and Kandanegedera is about 150 acres in extent. This tract which brought a very rich harvest in the area was cultivated in both seasons Yala and Maha with water from a water course. To the farmers whose mainstay is farming, this stream is an asset. With the setting up of the factory in the upper region of the tract, there are signs that farmers are going to be deprived not only of their living but also of their fertile earth, which is the heritage of the tillers of soil.

**A citizen - Pansiyagama- Kurunegala- 91-09-20**

I don't think that by putting up a factory these people will give up their farming and join the factory. All have been born with farming. Our hope is to live by farming.

**A citizen - Kurunegala- 91-09-20**

Agriculture cannot be eliminated. The person who wants to do it, will do it. It is good; if with that, such things as business opportunities are available.

**A citizen - Pansiyagama- Kurunegala- 91-09-20**

Cattle manure is good. If it is available, it gives a better yield than that obtainable by using chemical fertilizer. We also can make manure by using leaves, straw etc. But we have a lesser cattle population.

**A citizen - Pansiyagama-91-09-20**

The farmers in the past had a series of relief measurements, loans, fertilizer on subsidy etc. All these were gradually removed. Even such organisations as the Paddy Marketing Board were scrapped and activities handed over to the private sector. State sponsorship is there. Those who do trading win and enjoy the fruits.

**A citizen - Pansiyagama- 91-09-20**

How can we do farming now? A mamoty costs Rs 275/- A poor farmer has to sell 2 1/2 bushels of paddy to buy a mamoty. A bag of fertilizer costs Rs 550/- By the time we take it to the fields it would cost us about Rs.575/-. The poor are always in a tight corner. They cannot come out of it. On the other hand all the farmers are indebted to the banks.

**A citizen - Pansiyagama- 91-09-20**

A trader here, gives small loans to the farmers who can afford to pay it back. He is the person who decides the price here. We have to give him at his price. However good our products are, he decides the price.

**A citizen - Kalawana- 91-05-24**

The lands which look like fields on both sides of the road leading to this place were really fields in the past. There was no proper irrigation system. When it rained in those days, the streams and water courses were no lower down as to day and when they overflowed things could be adjusted. Today the streams are lower and it is difficult to get water to a farm. In those days when those water bodies were getting logged, people were not disinterested. At least a rubber tree was planted. Today those fields have become highlands. People like to do farming. But there are difficulties in getting water. If proper irrigation facilities are there, I know that farming is better than growing tea.

**A citizen - Kalawana- 91-05-24**

The present lands have to be re-cultivated. They have become fallow. I don't think that these lands need a large scale irrigation scheme. If there are 20 acres there are ways to get water for these 20 acres. There are water courses, which if properly developed can provide water for cultivation. During the last the years, these have not received the attention of the government. When the fields don't get water they become logged with soil. So people put down something on those lands.

**A citizen - Ampegama- 91-09-07**

With the improvement of new technology in our country new varieties of paddy are produced at agricultural centers. They are sent down to the farmers. Gradually our traditional varieties have disappeared. In the Galle district there is not a single place where Kurakkan, Ahu and Meneri are grown. In the past they were grown in our villages. They have gradually become extinct.

**A farmer- Angunakolapelessa-91-09-10**

In every cultivation season we transact business with the bank. Every season we take loans and pay it back. We have to settle the loans after selling the paddy yield to the private traders. Now we have to go through innumerable problems. We have to force the paddy on the traders. They refuse to buy. They advance various reasons and attempt to down the price.

**Wijeratna- Mahaveli "H" area- 91-05-22**

What we say is this. We all get loans from the banks and somehow manipulate it. We have to pay it back. We are not big-timers. We should keep that money but we can't do it. We have a lot of problems. Today labour hire charges and the fertilizer prices are very high and these have to be paid. If we do not pay, the next season is held up, because we can't get loans. I suppose you understand it.

**A citizen - Thalawa- Anuradhapura- 91-09-23**

We did Chenas earlier. We mainly depended on Chenas for living, because in the Maha season water is not there in the village tank to do paddy. (Tank) Before Mahaveli introduced it was through Chena cultivation that people did well in their life.

**A citizen - Karagahawewa- Thalawa- 91-09-23**

In the North Central province water was scarce in the Yala cultivation season. People anticipated that they would get enough water in the Maha cultivation season. So people thought that if the Mahaveli Project developed they could pursue their cultivation. These hopes have not been realised today. In the past as water was scarce, people did some limited cultivation in Yala. If they had 10 acres they could. They collectively divided the land among themselves and did the farming.

### **A citizen - Kahatagasdigiliya- Anuradhapura- 91-09-24**

As poor farmers we cannot live isolated from the environment. Destruction of the environment affects the farmers most. When the soil becomes infertile, the rich man sued Chemical fertilizer to enrich the soil. When water is scarce, the man who has money goes to the city and start some business activity. But cannot do that. We have to live by farming. Just because water is scarce we don't abandon our paddy fields. No water; no fields; but we have to live in the village.

### **Ariyasinghe- Siyambalagaswewa- Circuit in May**

We did rain-fed farming in the past. Now the old tanks are filled with earth. With the slightest rain tanks overflow. No water remains in the tank. Water enough to do paddy farming does not retain in the tank. Rain too is not quite enough, what is lesser is the volume of water in the tank. There are about 100 acres of paddy fields. Water that the tank contains is not enough. The tank has become a land

### **Ratnaweera- Kadawarawewa- Polonnaruwa- 91-05-07**

- Ques.: Is the yield of these fields not enough?  
Answ.: We get a yield but not a good price
- Ques.: How much does a bushel of paddy cost here?  
Answ.: A bushel here is Rs 5/50. Government has increased it to Rs 6/50. But still we haven't been able to sell at Rs 6/50. Not a single farmer has been able to do that.
- Ques.: How can the paddy cultivation be improved in this village? How should it happen? Is it according to the say of the government? What are your suggestions?  
Answ.: An arrangement can be made by the Farmers Organization in consultation with the farmers.
- Ques.: What sort of arrangement?  
Answ.: At the beginning of the season, all can decided to cultivate according to one method in one tract. Now one sows the seed while another transplants. To do the sowing and ploughing together. We cannot do that now. farmers have a lot of economic problems. They are a serious impediment to the farmers. Prices of fertilizer, implements and labour charges are high. Ploughing needs Rs.2000/- per acre. Fertilizer is Rs.498/-. How can we do farming now?
- Ques.: Is there any farmer organisations in the village?  
Answ.: There is
- Ques.: What sort of things are done by the farmer organisations?  
Answ.: It attends to clearing of canals, making them properly and deciding on the quantity of water.
- Ques.: Is it through that farmer organization requests are made?  
Answ.: Yes. It takes action on things related to farming.

Farming practices of yesteryear are no ore today. When we were children, we can remember using cattlebones as fertilizer and cultivating fields. Things used for fertilizing the earth and for insect control were not damaging. There were no tractors but buffaloes. New things have come now. We use tractors now, and chemical fertilizer and insecticides too. All these things make the earth young(?) After some time it becomes impossible to do paddy farming. In those days officers from the department of agriculture came here and taught us how to use chemical fertilizer in the fields, to plough with the tractor, and to use the plough. Today they say, chemicals are bad and they want us to use compost fertilizer.

### **A farmer - Matale-91-05-23**

Ques : What's your name?

Answ : Kamal

Ques : You, put up at Pallegama?

Answ : Yes

Ques : Are you satisfied with farming?

Answ : Yes

Ques : Are all the youths doing farming?

Answ : Yes. Even the employed do farming

Ques : Do you have less hopes of going to cities like Colombo to do a job, in the new way?

Answ : We can earn more here

Ques : From farming itself?

Answ : Yes

### **Mudalihamy- Matale- 91-05-22**

Ques : Grandfather, In your time you might have done cultivation. Today's farming was there then, isn't it?

Answ : In our time we didn't have the cultivation we have today.

Ques : What did you do at that time?

Answ : We did paddy farming and chena cultivation

Ques : What crops were grown in the Chenas?

Answ : Kurakkan, Chillies, Maize, Gingelly etc

Ques : Did the crops suffer disease then, as they do now?

Answ : In those days there were no diseases

Ques : To vegetables, other crops?

Answ : No! No!!

Ques : Did you use chemical fertilizer then?

Answ : No. We used only cattle manure.

- Ques.: You did not require the chemicals and fertilizer available for sale?
- Answ.: We did not require anything.
- Ques.: Did you get a good yield?
- Answ.: What are you talking? We had a good crop.
- Ques.: Isn't the harvest lesser than that at that time?
- Answ.: If we don't use chemical fertilizer and insecticides we get a lesser harvest
- Ques.: Can't we do without these imported fertilizer and chemicals and resort to the farming practices we had earlier?
- Answ.: We cannot do now. Those paddy varieties are no more available.
- Ques.: How did those seed paddy disappear?
- Answ.: Because of these new projects
- Ques.: Who has started these new projects?
- Answ.: The paddy provided by the government. The department of agriculture replaced the old varieties with new
- Ques.: What were the reasons those officers adduced to introduce new paddy varieties?
- Answ.: They said that it was for a better yield
- Ques.: A better yield was required to feed more mouths. By trying to do so, don't you have to spend a sizeable share of your income on chemical fertilizer and insecticides?
- Answ.: We have to
- Ques.: Are you satisfied with the profits?
- Answ.: No. It's a loss. Only a small share is left

**A farmer- Bandarawela- 91-05-23**

In the past we did farming without using chemical fertilizer. The sinhala farmer had cattle-neat cattle and buffaloes. For paddy cultivation buffaloes were used as draught power. Cattle manure turns to fertilizer for the field. In those days transplanting was not done. Paddy was sown. The Japanese method of transplanting was introduced recently. With that people started using chemical fertilizer

**A member- Neo Synthasis Research Centre- Bandarawela- 91-05-29**

Farmers who did well in farming, before fertilizer prices were increased in 1989, have given up their farming. They say they cannot do farming because of the increased prices of fertilizer. They now work as labourers in farms of rich people. This is a living example in this area. It is both an environmental problem and an economic problem of the people

**A farmer- Pahala Mirahawatta- Bandarawela- 91-05-29**

All of a sudden fertilizer price increases are announced. We cannot bear such increases. We don't show it. We cover ourselves with a piece of cloth as we cannot go naked along the road. We just survive as human beings. There are things at the market and we say that we are self supporting but we must have money to buy those. Whatever is imported, and how much is available in Colombo do not matter to us. Money is what is necessary to purchase those stuff. If the crop of a farmer is to be destroyed either by excess rain or by a disease, that is the end of that farmer.

**A farmer- Bandarawela- 91-05-29**

Fertilizer is now used according to the new method. In this way vegetables are grown in one cultivation season. After that the paddy cultivation. Here there is a small anicut from which we take water. When there is rain there is a little water. In the event of a drought, the paddy crop is parched. There's not a drop of water.

**Dissanayake- Diganatenna- 91.05.29**

- Ques      What are your views about tenant cultivation?
- Answ      We have the problem of water. The irrigation scheme affects this area most.
- Ques      What should be done about that?
- Answ      An irrigation scheme should get under way with government assistance. Farmers have no problem about employment. Here all are farmers. The government should not worry about their employment problem. If an irrigation scheme is arranged, their unemployment problem is settled. All these are people who live by farming.

**Chandrasena- Bandarawela- 91.05.29**

I do farming. From my birth I have been living at Mirahawatta. From the days of our childhood, we inherited farming from our parents. Mostly we do vegetable cultivation. Paddy is done, in addition. It is done once a year. For the most part we grow cabbages, beans, potatoes, carrot and beet-root.

**Asilin Dissayanake- Bandarawela**

Small farmers have no facilities for their farming. We face problems of getting fertilizer, credit and problems of marketing our products.

**A farmer - Pansiyagama, Madahapola, Kurunegala - 09.20.'91**

There is no relationship between us, the farmers and our national level agro-scientists. They only plan. The farming activities can be bettered if they co-operate with the farmer listening to the practical experiences of the farmers.

A farmer - Pansiyagama, Madahapola, Kurunegala - 09.20.'91

The farmer today greatly differs from his counterpart of the past. The farmer in the past had everything he wanted. Farmer today is a person who turns out trade products.

**A farmer - Pansiyagama, Madahapola, Kurunegala - 09.20.'91**

There were a lot of cattle here. Now there are paddy fields where a cattle has never trodden. Nothing can be done to these fields. Some have a couple of bulls. Some have none. All are now used to tractors. Even the man who has cattle them and purchase a tractor.

Firstly, if we get rid of these chemical fertilizers, people will then get used to our natural manure

**Udaya Liyanage - Mirahawatta, Bandarawela - 29.09.'91**

It is said that Uma oya is to be diverted to Kiridi oya through a tunnel. On a rainy day, a person on the bank of a river can see the quantity of mud floating in the water. If this area is dammed, this mass of mud gets deposited on the bottom of the reservoir. Before long the reservoir will be filled with mud.

People did not learn farming from another. They have the knowledge gathered from tilling the soil for a long time. They know the time of the wind and rain. They are now far removed from this earth. Their ethics, the cultural heritage and the human rights all have been eroded. Then such people become the wretched of the earth.

**A farmer - Diganatenna - 29.05.'91**

Now we use fertilizer in cultivation, in one season the vegetables and in the other, paddy. We get water from the anicut, but only when there is rain. We don't have irrigation. We do rainfed farming. But we have to pay acreage tax.

**Disanayaka - Diganatenna, Bandarawela - 29.05.'91**

Paddy thrived for about four years. In the past people did not make the springs dry up. There were natural springs. They did not cultivate on a large scale when economic problems emerged they started vegetable growing to earn money. They dug the springs deep to get water. So springs dried up.

**W.H.Siripala, a farmer - Siyambalagaswewa - Anuradhapura - 22.05.91**

Ralapanawewa, Siyambalagaswewa and Palugaswewa (wewa = tank) were in a ruined state. The villagers got together repaired the dams and rehabilitated the tanks. We made the canals to feed the paddy lands and high lands. I dammed a stream which runs by the side of my land and put up a small tank. Now I can cultivate in both seasons.

**Ven. Wiyanthuduwe Ariyawansa Thero - Rajanganaya Kalaoya  
Priest, Physician - 22.05.91**

Today the radio and the press give publicity that the country is self-sufficient. An insight to the society reveals the truth. Not that there are people who have earned something. Most of the people live from hard to mouth. A day's earning is just enough for the day. Where is a saving ? It is only if they get water in time for the season's paddy cultivation, that people can be a little better off.

**A citizen - Village gathering - Viharapalugama - 22.05.91 -  
Punchali Ariyasinghe, Keerthipala, P.G. Menike and others -  
Anuradhapura - 22.05.91**

We in the seven villages descend from the generation of Prince Bodhigupta who came here when the Sri Lanka Bo tree ( the sacred Bo tree) was brought down. We live on our own efforts. We do rainfed farming and have no irrigation facilities in our villages. We told the Minister to make some arrangements for us to get water from the water course in the village. We informed this to the chief Priest of the eight sacred places. So far nothing has happened.

**A citizen Meeting of People's representatives - Kurunegala  
-20.09.'91**

Traditionally we do paddy farming and subsidiary food crops. What does the Government give us ? Bank loans at 12% interest. Only a few can get even that.

Tea growers are given assistance in tens and thousands (Rs). The activities of companies such as Nestle have enough aid. Without providing us, the paddy growers even with the little water we want, we are charged the water tax ( maintenance and operation charges )

If we insure the crop and prove crop damages we get some meagre indemnity. If not we don't get even that. Does the Government have a programme to preserve the environment ? Really no. If the Government wants to protect farming, the environment is left deliberately to be destroyed, how can farming be pursued ?

No one does farming willingly. They do it since they have else to do. Farming is not an economically viable career.

A question arises whether there is a connection between the increasing insects, the weeds and the production of new chemicals. Insects did not proliferate in the past at such increasing speed. There were no weeds. It was after those chemicals were introduced that such plagues emerged. We talk about what we see.

**A Farmer - Pansiyagama - Madahapola, Kurunegala - 20.09.'91**

Even if we get water from the wells sunk in the absence of rain water or tank water, the expenses on chemicals and seeds are beyond our means. Without using chemicals and fertilizer nothing can be grown. Earlier we only planted a tree or seeds and did not use any fertilizer at all.

In those days, we prepared our own seeds. Today it is not so. Onions, chillies, potatoe, tobacco and all are cultivated according to the instructions of various companies. They don't like the seeds to be made here in Sri Lanka. Seeds for tobacco was brought by the tobacco company. When the planted onion seeds do not grow, they send tobacco plants. They ask us to grow tobacco saying that onion seeds have not been good. Such a programme prevailed in the Dambulla area in the past.

#### **D. Seneviratne - Bulatsinhala, Galahitiya - 27.05.'91**

Today an ordinary man can not do farming. How can one purchase the new paddy seeds, chemical fertilizer and other chemicals without a big sum of money? After sowing the paddy land, having got the seed paddy with difficulty, we then come across the problem of fertilizer. Today 50 kg of fertilizer cost Rs 500/=

#### **Farmers' Meeting - Hanguranketha, Rikillagaskada - 15.05.'91**

Despite the cultivation of vegetables at a heavy expense, there was no return to the investment because of the scarcity of water. The little water we have is what flows down these mountains. When there is water farming prospers. But water is scarce for most of the time. Madugawela tank completely ran dry last year for want of rain. Rain is less because rainy clouds do not persist. The trees and creepers are destroyed now. The felling of trees near the streams on montane lands contributed to decreasing rainfall and dried up springs which fed our lands. Meanwhile after these new trees were grown ( eucaliptus, pine ) even the few springs available have begun to dry up.

#### **Abayakoon Banda, a farmer - Rikillagaskada**

Farming is an independent career. This is the career we have inherited from our ancestors. I have ten children who help me in my farm. I do my own manuring and even the work on the threshing floor.

#### **A farmer - Bandarawela - 28.07.91**

Farming has no future. When the fertilizer prices increase day by day no one can do farming. Only the monied people can do large scale farming. No ordinary farmer can plant measures of seed beans except a handful. Fertilizer prices are unbearable. We are small farmers. Only a large scale farmer can do this. He only can bear the expenses.

#### **A farmer - Diganatenna, Bandarawela - 28.07.91**

Our major problem is scarcity of water. If we are provided with water at Government cost, it is not necessary to find employments for us.

**A farmer - in a tract of field, Angunakolapelassa - 10.09.'91**

We have to take a loan to do our cultivation. Once the harvesting is done selling is rather difficult. When we after the harvest to the traders they create numerous problems. They get our crop at rock-bottom prices and we repay the Bank loans with that money.

Once the loans are settled we are left penniless.

**Kamal - Matale, Laggala Pallegama - 20.07.91**

Paucity of officers is a problem for the farmers. There is enough water. If there is less water, at least a motor can be used. But when the crop is attacked by insects there is no one to give us advice as to what chemical should be used. All sorts of chemicals are tried out until the money on hand is all exhausted.

**Mudalihamy - Pallegama - 20.07.91**

In those days we cultivated chenas and grew paddy. In the chenas Kurakkan, chillies, maize etc. were mostly grown. Then the vegetables were not prone to diseases. Chemicals and fertilizer were not required. We have now grown the high yielding paddy varieties discarding the traditional varieties. But they are not resistant to diseases.

**Ven. Maraluwawe Gunananda Thero - Mahaweli "H" area - 22.05.91**

Before the Mahaweli project got under way, the farmers here lived by chena cultivation. Under the project, the farmers commenced their farming in terms of a certain system. The problem is the farmers cannot do their farming the way they want. It has to be according to the needs of the officers. When the farmers can grow chillies they are asked to do B-onions. When they can do B-onions the officers want them to do paddy. Seeds are very expensive. Marketing the products is no easy task. The middlemen carry the crop at rock-bottom prices.

**A farmer - Mahaweli "H" area - 22.05.91**

Water waste is due to wrong water control. Water management leaves much to be desired. Half of the water is wasted. Because of these water shortages we cannot get a good income from the tract of fields.

**A villager - Rajanganaya - 22.05.91**

There is a small water course down here for us to get water. If an arrangement is made to get water from this, a number of acres can be cultivated.

**Seneviratna - Rajanganaya - 22.05.91**

We do cultivation only in the Maha season. There is no rain in the Yala season. Then the water level in the tank drops down and we cannot do any cultivation. If an arrangement is there to get water both seasons can be cultivated.

**A villager - Kalawewa - 22.05.91**

We get water only in the Maha season. Water is released for 15 days, 20 days and now for 14 days. With water for 14 days we cannot do our farming number of days are decided by the higher officers of the Mahaweli

During the Vesak and Poson seasons all the water in Kala wewa is released to the tanks at Anuradhapura. It is for the benefits of the pilgrims. That is why the tank has run dry. Therefore the farmers are in trouble

**A farmer - Bambaragama , Bandarawela - 29.05.'91**

The tobacco processors for the Ceylon Tobacco Company, brick makers and tile makers and bakery owners who own kilns cut down the trees around these tanks. In dry periods the small tanks run dry in two weeks. In droughts, they are like playgrounds. In Puwakpitiya where I lived earlier there are 4 tanks. Both seasons can be cultivated. Now not even one season can be cultivated. People live close to the tanks. They plan large reservoirs and are not concerned about the farmers.

**A farmer group with Ratnayaka - Devala Deniyagama - 20.07.91**

The vegetables we grow can be given only to the Department of Agriculture. The rest is given to cattle or just thrown away. There is no sale. The vehicles don't come as the road is bad. The vehicles come to that side of Elehera. They don't come to this area through the Rattota road. They don't like to get their vehicles damaged

**A citizen from Pahala Mirahawatta, Bandarawela - 28.07.91**

There is no way to get the maximum use of the village resources. We get no co-operation from the Government. We cultivate vegetables but we have no avenues for sale. Lorries stop at various places and drop down some sacks. We have to give the vegetables at the prices they determine. We don't get a reasonable price. Fertilizers are not reasonably priced.

**A group of farmers - Hakgala, Nuwara Eliya - 26.07.'91**

The small farmers face marketing problems. They get our products at prices below the market prices. If the market price is Rs 30/= we are offered Rs. 10/= . Between the farmer and the consumer there are about four middlemen seeking profits. They get the price reduced. We become helpless. If a Government guaranteed price is there for our products this does not happen. If a guaranteed price scheme is there collection centres will come up, where we can sell our products.

**Villager - Karagahawewa, Anuradhapura - 25.09.'91**

Ques : Do you like to give up farming ?

Answ.: No! No! We will not give up cultivation. With farming we should have another self-employment which we can improve along with farming.

**A villager - Devale Deniyagama - Matale - 20.07.91**

Ques.: Do young people, those who are educated pursue farming?

Answ.: Even if we are educated we do not give up cultivation. About 90% of the employed people do farming here

**A farmer - Sarvodaya Centre, Matara - 11.09.'91**

A farmer here produced his own seed onions and did the cultivation. It was successful. Chemicals and fertilizers are not necessary.

**A farmer - Diganatenna - 28.07.91**

If a irrigation scheme is introduced with Government assistance there will be no unemployment problem here. All these people live by farming.

**A farmer - Angunakolapelassa - 10.09.'91**

One cwt. of fertilizer which cost Rs. 150/= a few days back now costs Rs. 510/= . Water is released in limited quantities. When tractors are used, we have to pay different charges. Chemicals involve a large expenditure. During the harvesting time the private traders stop purchasing paddy. They exploit us. It is a strategy to lower the price. Later they purchase paddy at rock-bottom prices

**A farmer - Angunakolapelassa - 10.09.'91**

Every season we transact business with the Banks. Every season we get loans and pay back. We pay back the loans after selling the paddy to the private traders. We have to sell them our product with a lot of difficulty. Sometimes we offer them and they refuse

**D.M. Abeyratna - Polonnaruwa - 22.06.'91  
(Excerpt from a letter)**

People in this area are farmers by birth. Now about 40 families own paddy lands. All the others feed their families by growing subsidiary food crops in one season of the year under rain-fed conditions. These people have become despaired because they don't have paddy lands with necessary irrigation facilities

**A farmer - Matale, Bambaragahawatta - 05.07.'91**

We have to do farming. We cannot do without it. Manual labour brings in only Rs. 70/= . Today a family needs about Rs. 5000/= at least. Food and clothing are required. Can we do all these with Rs. 70/= ? If these two small tanks are made for us to get water and if we have a piece of land to cultivate that's enough

**A farmer - Pahala Mirahawatta, Bandarawela - 29.05.'91**

The cost of one cwt. of seed potatoes has risen to Rs.3,500/=. To cultivate one cwt. of potatoes today, a farmer has either to mortgage his paddy land or the jewellery he has. They have to be pawned at the Bank to get money for cultivation.

**A farmer - Bandarawela - 29.05.91**

There is no other segment of population in this country than the farmers who suffer. How can they purchase a packet of fertilizer? They contemplate overnight over these things. They cannot sleep peacefully and undergo untold suffering

**A farmer - Bandarawela - 29.05.91**

Farmers go through a series of difficulties and send the vegetables to the market. The middlemen make capital one of it. Farmer gets only a small share. It is because of these little men that vegetables have gone up in price.

**M. M. J. Wijeratne - Dehewwa - Matale - 20.07.91**

Just because that they are in Mahaweli, farmers do not differ. Some farmers earn than those who work using Mahaweli water. The man who has 2.5 acres, sometimes has no paddy for his consumption. But one who has no land and does nothing has paddy for the whole year. We don't have 2.5 acres we sink cultivation wells to do our farming. We cultivate the Yala Maha and the Mid season. At the time of harvesting paddy prices are lower. We have the products but not a marketable price.

**A citizen - Kandy Arts Theatre Hall - 21.07.'91**

We impose rules and regulations asking people not to do shifting cultivation. But they have no way of living. They have to be given some sort of relief or provided with water. Our parents did shifting cultivation in the past. But now we know the repercussions of shifting cultivation. There are 10,000 cardaman farmers in the Knuckle's range. If they are removed, they have no way of living.

## **II. Commercial Crops**

**W Piyal Harischandra- Kalawana- 91-09-23**

Kalawana area alone produces about 100,000 Kg of green tea leaf per day amounting to 3 m kg per month. Every year around 300 new acres are added. At the rate tea is grown here, late Mr Ranjan Wijeratna, when he was the Chairman of the Agriculture Development Authority had said that one day Kalawana area would become on tea estate

**A citizen- kalawana- 91-05-24**

If the government provides subsidies for the tea cultivation in the Kalawana area, it can be improved well. But some rules did not allow this to happen. When money came into the hands of our people, they felt jealous. In this Ratnapura area, Madalagama, Colony, Gawaragiriya came to be well developed. The officers who came in recent times recommended to the government that the tea growing in the Kalawana area was unsuccessful.

**Welikala- Kalawana-91-05-24**

Local scientists say that if we grow tea in this way using Chemical Fertilizers we can do that only upto 20-25 years, and thereafter the lands will become so infertile that we will not be able to put down any crop. They have found out that the quantity of fertilizer we use is excessive.

**A citizen - Pilagoda-91-09-03**

In those days, those were lands with forests. This land was cultivated with tea. Later the crop was lost. Now this is a land cultivated by the government. In the lower area, there is palmyrah and in the upper part there is tea. When we were children people tapped the Palmyrah three for toddy. They lived from that income. We made treacle and jaggery. With the introduction of the tea cultivation that system was lost.

**A citizen - Sarvodaya-Matara-91-09-11**

Coconut is an agricultural crop, spread over everywhere in the south. Every part of the tree is made use of. Now coconut trees are not grown at the rate they are felled. In future we may have to import coconut. Today's coconut tree does not yield a good crop.

**A citizen- Meeting at Hanguranketa Community Centre - 15.05.91**

The tea cultivation over a long period of time has drained the fertility of our lands. The soil is destroyed, and washed off. Farming was not done systematically. We were left uncared. They did not think of the environmental damage. What we have is a polluted environment.

**A citizen - Hanguranketa - 15.05.91**

The environmental situation at Hanguranketa is not that good. Diyatalagala is completely devastated. In the past all these were forests. Tea growers have abandoned these lands and now they say these lands are of no use. The lands have been distributed to the people? they are having a hard struggle with the earth as to how they can do farming there. Even the tobacco growing is not very successful now. Therefore they are now trying to use even the paddy lands.

In a leaflet issued by multi-national companies the farmers are asked to put tobacco in their paddy fields first and then paddy. It says that this will result in a better paddy yield. It is a big lie, a crime. They are encouraging the people to grow tobacco in paddy fields. Now they are stepping into the paddy fields. We do not know what would happen even to the paddy fields in the future.

**A citizen - Pansiyagama- Kurunegala- 91-09-20**

First, red onions thrived here. When people were earning a little from the crop, a disease wiped it out. After that we cultivated chillies. Even the income from the chillie crop is now decreasing. The 'B' onion crop also came, but still we have not been able to get a good income from it. Farmers are in severe difficulties. They are indebted to the Banks now.

**Wijesundera- Muthiyangana Temple- Badulla- 91-05-20**

Ques        What is the common life style of the people in Badulla?

Answ        Farming

Ques        What are the problems associated with farming?

Answ        The water problem affects farming. City area is not that affected. It is the village. Most of the paddy fields are rain-fed.

Ques        Has this problem affected the fields since a long time?

Answ        No. This is a result of the tea plantations which dominate the Uva Province.

Ques        Did you all have this problem since you were children?

Answ        No. We did not have this problem then. With the tea plantations, there were the forests. There were forests on hills. Later, the village people used those. Illicit felling was done. The more the population increased, fewer became the forests. Now there is no water.

**Nagahagoda , Nindana - ( An excerpt from a letter )**

Most of the people in this area are engaged in cinnamon processing and manual labour. Cinnamon can turn out about 35 by-products. Landlessness has adversely affected this area and land owners with considerable extents of cinnamon and rubber are tempted to block out and sell their land in blocks of about 20 perchs at higher prices. These small blocks are used for house building and such crops as cinnamon have begun to disappear. Mostly cinnamon is not newly grown and this situation is a threat to the cinnamon cultivation.

### **III. New Commercial Crops**

#### **Ven Wekumbure Devananda Thero - Badalkumbura Sudharmarama Temple- Monaragala-91-05-30**

Because of their money-motivated activities people have destroyed the few lands they had. There were forest reservations here; but to-day they are no more. The destruction is complete today. In this area there were two kinds of forest reservations. Here they call it (roda) the scrub. All scrubs have been cut down and the land planted with sugar cane. There were no protective measures whatsoever. Growing of food crops has dropped to a greater extent. This does not augur well for the future.

In the past people did slash and burn cultivation here. This means, people grow every cereal they wanted. All such lands are today covered with the sugar cane crop, which means a financial income in one season per year. This cannot give a solution to the problems of the people.

The area allocated for Pelwatte in the Monaragala District was a wild life sanctuary. Destruction of that area now will result in the area becoming a desert after about 30 years' time. People grow sugar cane by leaps and bounds. They need money for their day to day needs and they run after money.

Pelwatte Sugar Company has very badly hit the small scale crusher owners. Since the company buys cane in large quantities, the crusher owners do not get cane. The entire crop at the village level is purchased by the company. This situation is a heavy blow to the village-level industries. Since the cane crop gives a good income, people are unconcerned about the environment or about other cultivations. Sugar cane cultivation inflicts a serious damage on the environment. We should stop this and make the people aware of the worth of other cultivations. People in the villages are not educated. They grow cane because of their desire to earn money, but they are unaware of the final outcome.

#### **Nihal Gunasiri- Hansa Club- Kekunagahakotuwa- Bandarawela**

The multi-national sugar companies at Monaragala, Buttala and Pelwatte have deprived the farmers of the use of rivers, streams and water courses. Against this background, a future danger can emerge. Sugar cane cultivation can eliminate the local farming. The low lands near cane cultivations become infertile. So this crop should be removed from the south-western region. Because of this even the Menikganga is polluted. The cane cultivation in the valleys in Haputale, Bandarawela, and Passara has caused soil erosion which in turn has resulted in the drying up aquifers. Steps should be taken to stop the sugar cane cultivation in such places.

**A citizen - Hanguranketa 15.05.91**

Tobacco cultivation was introduced to this area in the recent past. This was known as Diyaliaka Kcrale(Korale- an administrative unit) The area has been named so, because there was seeping water every where. Today, the water resources in the area have been destroyed, because of this tobacco cultivation. This was an area where paddy cultivation thrived. Today there is no water to pursue paddy farming. The vegetable farming could be done well here. Area was known as the best vegetable producing region. Today all these are lost, because of the use of chemical fertilizer, insecticides and fungicides. Because of these very dangerous chemicals the earth is degraded.

**A citizen - Hanguranketa - 15.05.91**

Tobacco cultivation was introduced to this area in 1952. The multi-national companies first said that they would do this cultivation here only for 20 years. They said this at meetings at Hanguranketa and Walapane. 40 years have now lapsed and the tobacco cultivation expanded gradually. It is true that people earned money. But the soil of the earth worth millions more than they earned, has been destroyed. They say that area is good or this area is good despite the tobacco cultivation. But ultimately we have ourselves caused a great disaster.

**A citizen - Kurunegala - 91-09-20**

Ques To what extent gherkin is spread now?

Answ To a considerable extent. It is a crop that should be 'damned'.

Ques Why?

Answ No one who did it was benefitted by it. It was exported. Only the man abroad was benefitted.

Ques Has gherkin cultivation destroyed the environment?

Answ Yes

Ques How?

Answ Soil is washed off. Because of the excessive use of chemicals living organisms conducive to farming have been destroyed. Bee colonies have been destroyed because of growing gherkin near them.

**A citizen - Meeting At Ampegama Galhenkanda School- 91-09-09**

Our fertile lands have been used for the tobacco cultivation. Because of this soil have become infertile. both forest resources and wild life resources have been destroyed. Today at every market colourful photographs and banners about the cigarette are vividly displayed. Such display boards are there too. I request that all advertising about smoking and narcotics in media be stopped. Sponsorship of National Games or foreign games by the Ceylon Tobacco Company should also be stopped.

**Ven. Niyandara Saranatisa Thero Shantipura, Nuwaraeliya - 23.07.'91**

For the last 15-20 years the tobacco cultivation was done profitably and on a large scale. Cultivation of traditional crops ceased. Everyone liked to get a bigger income. After a few years they have realised that the soil has become infertile and the soil is washed off. During the rainy season earthslips occur. This happens since a long time at Hanguranketha and Gonagalakanda.

**Gunapala Pathiraja - Katugampola Colony - 20.09.'91**

Today we have such new crops as Gurkin and Dubai Pumpkin. The seeds are not available here. Dubai Pumpkin seeds have to be brought from the company. A Gurkin crop on a holding of 1/4 of an acre gave me a profit of Rs. 30,000/= some time back. I put a second crop following these scientific instructions to the letter. One man came to give instructions in the morning (daily) and left in the evening. I had a chat with him and cultivated Gurkin on a 2 1/2 acre land. He came even at the time of harvesting the crop. When the agents came with the lorries, the crop was graded: grade 1

Rs. 75/=, 2 Rs. 45/=, 3 Rs. 10/= But the next heap was graded as grade 1 Rs. 45/=, 2 Rs. 15/= and 3 Rs. 10/= of 100 plucked Gurkin fruits they purchased only about 30-40 fruits. The venture cost me Rs. 120,000/= But I netted in only Rs. 80,000/=

**Uditha Ratnayake - Puttalama - 21.05.'91**

About 2-3 years ago Gurkin was introduced. It is grown on a large scale along the coastal line. The crop absorbs a large volume of underground water. The water of that tank is pumped out. Water pumps are loaned by companies. There are five companies such as Bayer, to buy the farm products. If this continues, the coastal belt is likely to be destroyed completely. Our petitions have had no effect and the officers are deaf to our complaints. They cannot override the activities of the companies because they are salaried employees of the Government. Earlier onions and chillies were cultivated here. With the cessation of such cultivation prices of chillies and onions went up.

**A citizen - Public Hearing - Kandy Art Theatre Hall - 21.07.'91**

Today, the easiest investment of the respectable people is in tobacco cultivation. They get permits for this cultivation and are provided any amount of bank loan facilities. These Banks are reluctant to help the cultivation of crops and vegetables which is of much use to the majority of the country. But they do not hesitate to give loans to the tobacco cultivation which has no food value at all and which destroys the environment. This course of action should be stopped.

**K.A. Ariyaratna - Kahatagasdigiliya, Horowpatana - 24.09.'91**

Tobacco growing is a major problem that has affected farming. It is harmful to the environment. We know it. But tobacco fetches a stable price. Cereals and such like do not have a stable price.

**Saddhananda - Pelawatta, Wellawaya - 30.05.'91**

Pelawatta sugar company has affected our lives in two ways. Firstly the person who goes to work there cannot cultivate his homestead. Secondly, the sugarcane cultivation has no use for us.

**W.D. Dharmaratna - Member, Wellawaya Pradeshiya Sabha - 30.05.'91**

People in this area are geared towards agriculture. Since of late the life style of these people have undergone changes, because of the Pelwatta sugar company. They have become settlers of this company.

**A farmer - Dehewwa - 20.07.91**

Dehewwa has a farmer organisation. We get down the required seeds through this organisation. Seeds required by the farmer should be brought. But what happens is to the contrary.

Last time onion seeds were distributed. They assured that they were 100% certified. They did not think about the farmer. They did not make farmer aware of the duration of the crop and the quantity of water required.

Water is released for three months. Onion seeds required a growing period of six months. So what happened eventually. People started calling them "mortar" onions. This time there are no seed onions, the farmer requires. They are available at private places at a cost. There is no use in our joining the farmer organisation. Seeds are brought down only when money is deposited in advance. Whatever is brought we have to buy.

**A citizen - Kahatagasdigiya- Anuradhapura - 91-09-24**

Tobacco cultivation is really harmful to the environment. Everyone knows it well. But we have no alternative. If we grow some cereals we have to sell it to the middleman. Therefore farmers are tempted to do tobacco which always enjoys a stable price. Facilities are available to do this crop. Farmer received no relief from any quarter if he resorts to a cereal crop. That is why farmers prefer to take to tobacco in the absence of options.

**IV. Fertiliser and Pesticides**

**Ranjith- Danawalakoralaya - Galle - 26.05.91**

There is another group of traders. They, sell fertilizer at various prices. Each trader charges his own price.

**A citizen - Kahatagasdigiliya - Anuradhapura- 91-09-24**

From the time the tobacco seed is planted various organisations use very strong insecticides. Insects deep down in earth are destroyed, along with the earth. There's no water and no trees grow. Not only the growers will have to face the ill-effects. The government should be able to take a clear policy without embarrassing these multinational companies. They should be chased away.

**A citizen - Katugampola, Kurunegala- 91-09-20**

In the past wild animals or insects did not reach our paddy crop or the vegetable crop. Then, those weeds too were not there. It is only after the introduction of chemicals that all these have increased. More the chemicals are used, more the weeds and insects grow. One produces something or grows a crop, having created the market or the atmosphere to dispose of those. Otherwise it is useless. We have a small problem. We do farming. We are talking in this way, not with a knowledge of science or technology. We talk about what we see at village level. When we see now, what was not present in those days we think that there is a relationship between the increase of insects and weeds and the use of new chemicals.

**A citizen - Pansiyagama - 91-09-20**

The officers of the department of Agriculture are the victims of multi-national companies. Even the A.I travels in the van of a multi-national company. If a chemical is to be used he asks us to use the chemical of a particular company. That chemical is invariably more expensive than that of other companies.

**A citizen - Ampegama- 91-09-09**

The beautiful "myna" bird, the magpie and the squirrel which haunted our home garden in those days are no more in our surroundings. Why this has happened? In our fields all mainly use chemicals and insecticides. Then we use pesticides and weedicides. We also use these in our cultivation. Because of these poisons our friends of nature have gone away from us, for ever. I know that these animals the porcupine etc could only be seen at the Dehiwela Zoo in the near future. If those insecticides are added to the atmosphere, the animal species will be destroyed completely.

**A Youth- Galahitiya- Malkawa-91-05-27**

Purchase of fertilizer for farming is a big problem today. In this area, the fields on both sides of the road are cultivated. After sowing, farmers cannot do anything thereafter. They cannot afford to buy fertilizer. Money spent on paddy is same. Farmers can do nothing. Such problems would not arise if some relief measures are available for the paddy farmers.

**A woman - Angunakola,pelessa- 91-09-10**

Ques        Is the paddy crop good?

Answ        Not good

- Ques.: Why?
- Answ.: Always the paddy crops are stricken with diseases
- Ques.: What diseases?
- Answ.: Various diseases
- Ques.: Why, such diseases attack the crop?
- Answ.: Don't know
- Ques.: Because of that does the family have a hard time?
- Answ.: Yes! To a considerable extent
- Ques.: How do you buy the chemicals etc? Are they expensive?
- Answ.: Very expensive. Considerable expensive
- Ques.: Do you suffer a loss from the fields?
- Answ.: A considerable loss
- Ques.: Always? What are the reasons for persistent losses?
- Answ.: Last time a disease attacked the crop
- Ques.: What is it?
- Answ.: A disease. I had only 14 amunu (unit of measurement) of paddy.
- Ques.: Isn't there a cure for that disease?
- Answ.: We used Chemicals but in vain

**A representative - Neo Synthesis Research Centre-Bandarawela-91-05-28**

After 1950 such crops as potato have been introduced for local consumption. Along with these came agro-chemicals, new fertilizers and all. People have started using these in a very big way. Some overuse these inputs. Now insects and others have got used to these creating a problem. At times, these companies do some jugglery. They put to the market, a chemical with good concentration and after a few months or a few years, they lessen the concentration. Because of such problems, the living standards of the farmers drop.

All the traditional practices have become extinct now. The farmers now use manioc, sweet potatoes and other local varieties grown here in the past are not more now. Since the attitudes of the people are startlingly changing, we can say that ecological issues have taken a turn for the worse.

**A farmer- Bandarawela- 91-05-24**

A bag of fertilizer costs Rs 425/- A farmer can get such a income, if he can produce a measure of beans. Sometime a kg of beans fetches only Rs.5/-. Today it is between 50-80. Tomorrow it can drop to Rs 5/- So one bag of fertilizer costs around Rs 400/- and one packet of insecticide would cost about Rs 100/-. Pesticides or some other would again involve a sum of Rs.60/- or Rs.70/- So if we don't get a crop of beans we lose. When the fertilizer prices go up, farmers will have to suffer serious losses.

**A farmer- Bandarawela- 91-05-28**

Fertilizer prices are too much for us. When we spend on fertilizer and chemicals we just break even. In short we get only 5% of what we earn, for our consumption needs. The rest go to others, outside. Fertilizer and chemical prices are much more than they were before.

**An old citizen - Mirahawatta, Bandarawela - 28.05.91**

There were no insecticides in the past. Now sometimes the insecticide sprayers are washed in tanks. Cattle drink such water and we too drink that water.

**A youth - Galahitiya, Molkawa - 27.05.'91**

In this area lies Maguru Ganga. This area does not get under water in the Yala season. But insect attacks prevail. It is difficult to get a harvest enough for sustenance.

**A citizen - Kahatagasdigiya, Horowpatana - 24.09.'91**

Anuradhapura is a district where a large quantity of insecticides and weedicides are used in a year. These chemicals have got mixed with the underground water. Very strong chemicals are used from the day a tobacco plant is put on earth. Insects deep underground are destroyed. Trees don't grow, water is scarce, the environment is polluted. Not only, the tobacco growers all have to face the repercussions.

**A citizen - Shantipura, Nuwara Eliya - 23.07.'91**

The mainstay of the villagers is vegetable growing. Farming is done throughout the year. The earth is not given a rest or respite. Farmers are used to start a new cultivation immediately after harvesting a crop. The soil becomes infertile. Chemicals are widely used. It appears that insecticides and fungicides are not used according to accepted standards. Not only the earth and the working farmers, but also the consumers all over the country who buy these vegetables have to face serious dangers. When the fungicides are used the farmers do not take precautions to use it in a harmless manner. In the use of insecticides this area takes a predominant place. There is no organisation to advise the farmers on this. It is imperative to look for alternative methods and reduce the use of insecticides.

**Kanakaratna - Hakgala, Nuwara Eliya - 06.07.'91**

Not even within an inch of land can an earthworm be found in Hakgala. If we think for a while we can realise the worth of the earthworm. The insecticide destroyed the earthworms. If this was controlled systematically this situation would not have happened. The earthworms would have stopped the soil from becoming infertile. Even the vegetable seeds sent to us have been made to suit this condition.

Ques            What sort of condition ?

Answ On chemical fertilizer. These seeds grow because of chemical fertilizer and I don't think that with the seeds sent to us we cannot preserve the old method. If we do that we have to suffer a loss. I faced that situation trying to experiment

## **V. Land Tenure**

### **A citizen - Katugampola- Kurunegala-91-09-20**

We cannot get even an inch of land here. All the lands here are already in use. When we came here in 1962, a block of land was given to a family with at least six members. There were 70 families each with six members. That was in 1962. Now in 1991, their third generation is now in existence. There has been a considerable increase in the population. As parents, the basic problem we face is, jobs for our children. People of two generations own the 05 acres of land originally received.

### **A citizen - Pansiyagama-Madahapola-Kurunegala-91-09-20**

People have this problem of ownership. In the absence of this ownership, people do not like to grow a perennial crop. Therefore people just do a commercial crop, short-term. They don't go for jack, coconut, breadfruit and such like perennial trees. They grow something that yields a harvest in about 6 months. What we say is these lands should be given to the people permanently.

### **Karolis- Rambuka- Kalawana- 91-05-25**

Everyone has the problem of landlessness. So the people in the lines, live in those lines. People who had come from villages have only their house on a plot of land 1/4 or 1/2 acre in extent. It has coconut, Jack or breadfruit cannot be grown there. They have no land to be handed over to their children.

### **A woman- Rambuka- Kalawana-91-05-25**

About 30-40 Sinhala families live in the lines. They are in the Lankaberiya Estate. They don't have even an inch of land.

### **Samarasinghe- Kalawana-91-05-25**

Landlessness is a serious problem. Tea cultivation is done mostly. There are lands. But they say these lands belong to the Plantation Corporation or to some other party.

**A citizen - Kalawana- 91-05-25**

The major problem for us is landlessness. Unemployment too is seriously affect us. There are ample resources here in this area. If we go up about a quarter of a mile in this environment, there is a large forest with enough resources. We know how to use those resources without damaging the environment. But we don't get a chance to use these resources. These resources have been handed over either by the government or by some other administrative machinery to a private party. There is this "Morning side". They have made it their kingdom. It is a cardamon garden. They overuse the land. This land borders the Sinharaja bio-reserve. This "morning side" garden is even there within the bio reserve. As we know there are three owners each having 50 acres. So by right they can claim the only about 150 acres. But, now they have encroached on about 600 acres within this forest. Some people say it is more than 800 acres. However legally they have a right to 150 acres only. If an ordinary person were this way, there will be deadlocks, legally. Such instances have been common. There is no one to look after the poor people. When the trees were felled, the department of Forest Conservation sent the officers here and they prepared a report. That was the end of it. There was no inquiry.

**A citizen - Rajanganaya - 15.05.91**

Permits of these lands have to be renewed every year. Still we haven't got permanent permits. We have a temporary permit. For our 1 1/2 acre plot we have to pay Rs 30/- every year. We did not pay this during the last couple of years because during the period of the J V P tension officers had been destroyed and set on fire. All the deeds have been burnt. Until these are prepared anew we have not paid the money.

**A woman- Thalawa- Anuradhapura- 91-09-23**

I was born at Thalawa, bred at Thalawa and got married and lived here. All my brothers and sister got land. I didn't get land. I have inherited a 20 perch block of land from my mother. I wrote to Mahaweli asking for a land but did not get one to do farming.

**A citizen - Bandarawela- St Joseph's College- 91-07-23**

Those who can wield political influence have 100 or 50 acres. The financiers get land because of their money and capabilities. We know well they have got deeds. The government can distribute these lands among the poor people for them to do their farming and can impose restrictions. Farming acts have been passed into law. Today's law is not for every tenant cultivator. Lands cultivated for 50 years by tenants are taken back by the owners who file law suits. The farmer is helpless.

**Wijesundera- Badulla- 91-05-30**

The rich have everything. The poor has no lands. Such problems exist. Recently there was a land commission. By the time the Commission was appointed a large extent of land has already been acquired. At Bandarawela, all of a sudden, land prices went up. So people have acquired every mountain. They are not the landless but those who have land.

**A citizen - Bambaragama - Bandarawela-91-05-28**

The private sector has been given a lot of lands- each 10,15,20 acres. Those were lands that should have been distributed in the village. Even if this 50 acre land is alienated among the villagers, it will be of much use. People have adequate water. There are skilled farmers but the problem is landlessness.

**Dharmapriya Samarasiri- Passara-Badulla- 91-09-02**

(from a letter)

The lands now left out as unsuitable for tea, should be distributed among the people in the area, after the government has done the basic land development tasks such as access roads, and soil conservation. Giving these lands without such basic needs is like "casting pearls before swine".

**Asilin Disanayake- Bandarawela - 27.07.91**

The two serious problems we face are landlessness and unemployment. The lands with development potentials should be distributed among the villagers.

**P B Herat- Naulla, Demodara, Bandarawela - 27.07.91**

Landlessness is a grave problem among the rural folk. Some time ago, lands were not alienated, but that is not at all adequate. Despite the fact that lands are available political deadlocks, impede alienation.

**Liyanaige- Hakgala-Nuwara Eliya- 91-07-26**

These lands should be given permanently. How can a change be effected when we have lived on these lands for 25 years? These were the lands we encroached on in those days. We ask the government for land. Now our children have no lands. He is there temporarily, but he cannot be asked to go. Can he step on to the road with his children? Two families, live in one house and we have no lands to farm. It is said that we will get lands from the tea estate or from the hilly areas. This has not happened.

### **Kanakaratna-Hakgala-Nuwara Eliya- 91-07-26**

Our argument is this, as a matter of fact a man needs a dwelling to live in. To put up a house the government should give us a block of land or the government should make houses for us. Or else at least one perch block should be given to a man who can put up a house. If not we have to find a land from somewhere to do farming, for our existence. We have to live for another 30 to 40 years at least. We have to get married, procreate and if one has eight children, all of them cannot live in the same house. We have to make more houses and they need land. The influential has 05 acres and those who do not have the influence do not get even 20 perches. In many instances there is political influence.

### **A farmer- Rikillagaskada- Hanguranketa- 91-05-14**

A considerable crowd has come here, keeping in mind the land problem relating to the Hanguranketa estate. We have come to know that there is no friendly settlement to this problem. From the time this estate was taken over, a situation has come where the people in the estate have to leave it. There is a considerable number of people who own paddy lands. Earlier they had a lease system, where they paid Rs 10/- or Rs 15/- This gradually increased to Rs 150/- - Rs 200/- and Rs 300/- Recently this has increased to Rs 3,000/-, Rs 6,000/-, Rs 10,000/- and Rs 15,000/- If this is not paid the farmers are asked to leave or another is asked to pay the sum and take the land. Most of us cannot pay this and we are facing a serious problem.

### **A farmer-Rikillagaskada- Hanguranketa- 91-05-14**

There is a considerable crowd here who want to voice their ideas about the paddy lands which belonged to the Hanguranketa estate. At present, we work these lands and four generations have done so. When Mr Zoysa was the Superintendent, he has given over these paddy lands to our grandfathers at the rate of quarter of an acre. But our parents had spent their labour, money and through various difficulties had got that extended to one acre. In those days about a quarter of the harvest was paid as lease. Later this has changed to half of the harvest of the tenant farmers. After the lands were taken over by the government in 1976, we paid the money to the Grama Sevakas (village level officer). We came to know that this money has not been remitted to the proper places. However we made out payments to the proper authorities in terms of the laws of the land. In those days we paid this money according to our living standards. We have to make these payments to the Land Reforms Authority and to its relevant office at Kandy Kachcheri (LRC) they charge an exorbitant lease from us. People who work these paddy lands are very poor. Some of them are Janasaviya beneficiaries. That means, the poorest of the poor are working on these lands.

We got a letter that a tax is to be paid for these lands. When we went there, they wanted us to pay, without a receipt and not in agreement with any law. They had prepared letters to charge Rs 9,000/-, Rs 10,000/- and Rs 15,000/- per acre. We got the second reminder. We got the final red notice. Farmers have to say with regret that some had to sell their jewellery to pay these monies for the paddy lands. Some had to cancel the lands in the change of banks for the future benefit of the children in order to save the paddy lands.

Paddy land ownership today is for a couple of years, not for generations. The people who work these lands today are not those who had the ownership rights. Outsiders have paid small sums of money and they are working these lands; farmers have come here seeking a solution to this burning problem. These farmers have paid their leases. We make an earnest request here. The Land Reform Commission has charged us money stating that we will be given deeds. We are awaiting that decision. Are we to receive those deeds or not? Shall we get back the money we paid or not? If not what are we to do? If the government takes any other decision, we have to make an agitation. We have either to do a murderous armed struggle to save those paddy fields or lose those lands.

**A farmer- Rikillagaskada- Hanguranketa- 91-05-14**

Three years ago the Land Reform Commission acquired our lands. We don't know, but it is said that the commission had acquired the lands. Since then the levy of tax has stopped. Officers did not come to collect taxes. The Land Reform Commission examined the situation and they accounted the arrears for the period for which the tax was not paid, at the rate of Rs. 100/- per bushel. At this rate for a paddy field which fetches 30 bushels a year we have to pay Rs. 3000/- If the defaulted period is three years, it amounts to Rs. 9,000/- It is said that, after this payment is made, we are to be given a deed of permanent ownership.

**Kiribanda- Rikillagaskada- Hanguranketa- 91-05-14**

As the eldest son, I inherited the paddy land from my father. I am 82 years old. Even for such a long period I have had no problems. About 7 or 8 months have passed since I ran into debt for these things. I made about seven trips to the Kachcheri. The Notary said he would give the deeds that month or the month following. We paid the money but did not get the deeds. It is for that I came here. We must know what is happening after such a long time since we paid our payments.

**A villager - Rajanganaya - 15.05.91**

Since 1969 we have been asking for ownership of these lands. We haven't get it still.

**A villager - Bambaragama, Bandarawela - 29.05.'91**

The land that should have been commonly alienated in the village has been distributed in extents of 10-15-20 each. Even if this land of 50 acres is distributed among the villagers, it can be put to greater use. People have enough water, there are farmers, There is no land to cultivate.

**A teacher - St. Joesph's College, Bandarawela - 29.07.'91**

The Tamil people in the estates have asked for at least 1/2 an acre each from the estate. If the state lands are so distributed, the villagers trapped in the villages in between have no place to go.

If a farmer who owns 1/2 an acre of land has four or five offsprings the family will not get disintegrated. In some of our villages have no place for a burial ground. Even the burial ground is encroached on.

**A farmer - Rikillagaskada, Hanguranketha - 14.05.'91**

We paid all the arrears of tax on our lands. We were told that we would be given ownership rights once we paid the tax. Six or seven months have lapsed. We haven't got our deeds.

**A citizen - Shantipura, Nuwara Eliya - 22.07.'91**

These lands have been given to people from Colombo. We who were born brought up here have to purchase lands at Rs 30,000/= They buy these lands on the influence of hires up. After the supporters of the politicians had procured those lands, they sold them to the others. We were caught in that net.

**Charlis- Diyaluma Ella- 91-05-30**

Ques What are the problems you have in this area?

Answ People have shortcomings of dwelling places. Then the land problems are there too.

Ques What do you mean by land problems?

Answ People have not yet got lands.

Ques What are the problems of housing?

Answ We have no place to live.

Ques Then where do you live?

Answ Here, in the boutique.

Ques Is the grandfather in the boutique?

Answ It is there where all the families live.

Ques Do the children go to school?

Answ Three girls go to school.

Ques How far do they go?

Answ About 05 miles.

Ques Are there buses?

Answ Buses are there, but not regular. They go on foot also.

## **VI. Land Filling**

### **Upali Ahangama- Kalutara, Pulinathalaramaya Temple- 91-05-03**

The water bodies in the city of Colombo are today totally blocked and polluted. That is the repercussion of development. Development is not our word- Even the word itself has polluted the environment. Let us replace this word with "improvement" and environment with "nature" The backdrop for development has to be prepared with the temple playing a lead role. The present day development has overlooked the most needy problems. Unnecessary problems are ironed out. Even gambling is pursued for development. Development suppressed the environment. The canal at the Saranankara Road, Kirulapona is about 1/2 acre wide. Now a school has come up there. Attidiya tract of fields was reclaimed. The birds died. Today's development does not suit this country.

### **A citizen - Kalutara, Pulinathalaramaya Temple- 91-05-03**

Garbage is dumped by the side of the Galle Road Cross roads are full of garbage. There are potholes on the by-roads. Various organisations give assistance to develop the environment. But they are not properly used on environmental development.

### **A farmer - Rikillagaskada - Hanguranketa - 14.05.'91**

So far four generations have worked these paddy lands. When these lands were given from the estate, there had been about 1/4 an acre of paddy land. But our parents have some how or other increased that up to about one acre. At that time about a quarter of the paddy crop had been paid as tax. When the lands were taken over by Government in 1976, the Grama Sevaka charged the taxes payable for the paddy lands. We paid the taxes but came to know that the monies, have not gone to the correct places. Again we have to pay taxes to the Land Reform Authority for the period in which we lived on these lands. They charge an inexorbitant tax from us. Poor people who cultivate these paddy lands cannot pay it. Some got those paddy lands with the money obtained by selling their jewellery.

### **A citizen - Matara Sarvodaya Centre - 11.09.'91**

Property Trade Companies do a lot of damage to the lands in our country. They obtain a sizeable extent of land, and sell those lands at large profits. Environment is completely destroyed. The Property Trade Companies have procured lands to build tourist guest houses and hotels along the coastline in the south. At certain places mangroves have been destroyed. Tourist hotels and aquaria have been set up. A rigid policy regarding the control of land is necessary.

**A media person - Alvitigala Flats, Narahenpita - 05.12.'91**

Buildings are coming up rapidly. The environment has been over looked when these are put up. Even in this housing premises there are not much of trees and creepers. Less trees are more buildings means a threat to our health. In these flats there is no place for the children to run about. Even the available space is littered with waste. The surrounding is not maintained well. Gardens should be there for the benefit of the flat dwellers.

**A housewife - Alvitigala Flats, Narahenpita - 25.12.'91**

Our T.V. has oriented our people to a pattern of life that does not suit them. It has created in them a desire to possess the inaccessible.

## 2. Water

### I. Irrigation Projects

#### i. Mahaweli Project and Ancient Tanks

##### **A citizen - Anuradhapura- 22.05.22**

We don't get water from the Kalawewa. The volume of water there is not adequate in terms of lands to be fed. They are ancient tanks, which cannot store enough water to feed the new settlements. If in the past, the tank fed 1000 acres now it feeds 25,000 acres. So farming cannot be done. We get water for the Maha season. In Yala only a section gets water. That too is only for a half of 2 1/2 acres. The cultivated lands become fallow and are lost even the little we have. Some have taken bank loans. They work and wait for water in vain.

##### **A Youth - Anuradhapura- 22.05.91**

Ques: How does mud come into the tank?

Answ: There's no soil conservation. All is washed off.

Ques: How can the erosion be stopped?

Answ: Stone banks can help. Grass and trees should be grown. The forests should be allowed to grow not felled. Even the forests have dwindled. The Mahaweli has destroyed the forests.

Ques: Mahaweli did not do so?

Answ: It cut.

Ques: Where?

Answ: Kotmale. All the trees around were felled. We were children then. But we know.

Ques: What is your village?

Answ: Kotmale. All the trees were cut for the reservoir.

Ques: Did the rainfall decrease after those trees were cut?

Answ: It was also a cause.

##### **A Youth - Anuradhapura- 22.05.91**

There is water when a Minister or some other important person comes. The fields are filled with water. The bureaucrats do this. A pump house was put up, and two engines were put up along with two pipe lines, to provide pipe-borne water. But Water was not issued. The engines were also missing. Later, two machines were brought down from some country. They left it in Colombo and fixed two old machines here. They cannot be started. The engines are dead. Later they were also removed and taken back.

**A citizen - Karagahawewa- Thalawa- 91-09-23**

The management of Mahaveli leaves much to be desired. Therefore the environment has been badly affected. The other problem is it is rather difficult for the people to find means of livelihood. Water is a basic issue. People now cut trees for such purposes as fuel wood. But planting is not done. Problem of water affects us on one side. I remember that the old people claim that when they did shifting cultivation then, they did not go anywhere for water. They say that they sank a well in the Chena itself and got water. That means that they would have got enough water for the Maha Season. How good the environment had been?

**A citizen - Kahatagasdigiya- Anuradhapura- 91-09-24**

This village had seven tanks. Since five years back, from the time the Mahaveli commenced, these tanks have begun to dry up. During the last season there had been no water cut even for bathing. The reason as we see, is the deforestation that took place here.

**A citizen - At Bandarawela St Joseph's College- 91-07-29**

A large water supply scheme commences from Wirahawatta. Bandarawela- the Matavilla canal which is about 7 miles long. This commenced about 40 years ago with international assistance. This scheme has failed completely. The land coming under the command area of the tank has not been distributed systematically. This project which swallows down public funds should be regularized and without debasing the environment, the project should be restructured to be a benefit to the farmers.

**A citizen - Karagahawewa, Talawa - 23.09.'91**

Ques : Have these mothers been living here for long ?

Answ : Yes.

Ques : For how long ?

Answ : Thirty to Forty years.

Ques : Thirty to Forty years! Before Mahaweli Came ?

Answ : We came here before the Mahaweli.

Ques : Did you have water in those days ?

Answ : Yes. We had. Although Mahaweliya had not commenced, the tanks had water.

Ques : Isn't the water sufficient here ?

Answ : Not sufficient.

Ques : For the Maha and Yala Season !

Answ : In the Yala season water is released in very small quantities.

Ques : Then you cannot do paddy farming ?

Answ.: Can. But on a small scale. Generally we have 2 1/2 acres, only 2/3 of that is farmed.

Ques : Didn't earlier farmers have paddy lands to do cultivation in this way ?

Answ.: No, they hadn't

Ques.: No ! not enough paddy land for the community?

Answ.: Paddy lands do not increase, to the extent the population increases. In the past we had paddy lands. When the families increased land extent decreased

### **Nalandala Wasantha - Sinnikulama, Thalawa - 24.09.'91**

The major problem in this area is shortage of water. Mostly highland farming is pursued. Paddy farming too is done. About 10-15 years ago, it was said that the area would get water from the Mahaweli project. Not only that. Even the boundaries were marked to dig the canals. Yet water was not given. In the neighbouring village the people can eat rice, because they get Mahaweli water. We sell our labour for them. We can farm, only if we get rain. There is no rain in this month. It is uncertain next month too. Only if God makes rain, that we can get a relief.

### **K.A.V. Alpitiya - Gangoda Walawwa, Rambukwella, Teldeniya - 31.05.'91**

For those who were on highlands which were not submerged by the victoria reservoir, very little compensation was given in respect of paddy lands that came under the reservoir. Blasting of rocks near the houses to build roads caused severe damages. A part of the compensation paid for such damages was misappropriated by the officers. Result of all these was the destruction of our Dumbara valley, which was once a fertile area.

### **A citizen - Talawa, Karagahawewa - 23.09.'91**

Several tanks like Karagahawewa and Kumbukgahawewa are left to remain. Some time back all these tanks were cut and cleared. Then the work stopped. Even for bathing people should have several tanks. Then people had to go to Kalawewa for this purpose. In this period of drought wells have run dry. In the tanks Salvinia (water plant) has come up.

### **A mother - Talawa - 23.09.91**

We have been here for about 30 - 40 years. We came here before the Mahaweli Scheme commenced. At that time there were water in tanks. But we had no sufficient water. We used the available water for cultivation. Now after the Mahaweli Scheme started we get more water.

**A citizen - Talawa - 23.09.91**

In the Maha season there is enough water to do paddy cultivation. In the Yala we don't get enough water to cultivate paddy lands. Tanks contain less water in that season. No we don't get rain as before.

**A citizen - Dangahakadawala - 24.09.'91**

Ques.: For how long this tank has remained without water?

Answ.: Only in the three rainy months, water is there

Ques.: Has it been the situation from the time you can remember ?

Answ.: From the time Mahaweli was diverted this area has not got water

Ques.: But no long, period has passed since the beginning of the Mahaweli ?

Answ.: It was after Mahaweli started that we lost even the little water

Ques.: What did you have in this area in those days ?

Answ.: It was the jungle. Tank had water. It never ran dry

**A citizen - Dangahakadawala, Talawa - 24.09.'91**

The canal is diverted. We don't get water to do cultivation twice at least to give us a feeling of satisfaction. This is our biggest problem. There is a tank up there named Koragaha. That tank was diverted to get water to the latter. Today there is nothing left. If that Koragahaveva was provided with water, there are paddy lands in the lower area. We lead a miserable life and we cannot cultivate our paddy lands at least once a year. There are no lands to do shifting cultivation. The land available are desolate, dry plains. They cannot be farmed in the absence of water.

**ii. Lunugamwehera Project**

**Sirisena- Bambaragama- 91-07-29**

This dam is constructed to get water from the Kirindi Oya which runs across Bambaragama. I am sorry to say that to preserve that stream which provides water to the Lunugmavehera Project the government has spent about 2064 m (Rs.) in three stages. But the beginning of this Kirindi Oya is at Wasgamuwa. If you all can come I can show you how Kirindi Oya begins and where it commences. The river valley 4500 feet in height, is in the area called Paradaeliya. A small water fall falls from here. It has 43 other main streams, the reports of my village are available at the Environmental Protection Society. These 43 streams add together to make the Kirindi Ganga. You may have seen the beautiful water wall called Bambaragama Ella. This breaks off from another fall at Bambaragama. Because of this dam, all the 43 streams in the Bambaragama area are today dying along with trees and creepers. Soil is washed off when 2064 m are spent on the Lunugamvehera Project, not a single cent has been spent to preserve the catchment area of Kirindi Oya in Bambaragama.

**D K Piyasena, Chairman, Bambaragama Environmental Protection Society - Bandarawela- 91-05-29**

(From a letter)

Neglecting the catchment area of Kirindi Ganga which provides water to the Lunugamvehera Project has resulted in very serious damage. Several herbariums which had existed from the time of King Walagamba, have gone to destruction. Even today a large number of herbs can be seen. The land which was full of such valuable timber as Ebony, Milla etc have become fallow lands. The environment is damaged in several ways. Birds, beasts and aquatic life unique to the area are facing extinction. There are no preservation arrangements. Prompt action is necessary. Because of the unsuitable farming practices adopted by the farmers through their ignorance, soil erosion occurs on a big scale. There are no arrangements to preserve the soil or to educate the people.

**A citizen - Bandarawela - 31.05.'91**

This is a jungle area, fed by small tanks. The area had a self-sufficient farming system. Then we had no economic problems. After the Lunugamvehera was introduced the settlers faced the problem of lack of water. The new families brought down had virtually to resort to begging. Some left the area. A large extent of coconut lands in the area were destroyed by bulldozers. The volume of water in the Kirindi Oya is not enough to meet the needs of the people in this area. If water is released to Kirindi Oya through some other source, this can change to better. If we cultivate in one season, water is not available in the other.

**Somadasa - Bandarawela - 31.05.'91**

In 1991, our land was taken over for the Lunugamvehera project. Later we were settled in this area. In those days we cultivated our paddy fields with no difficulties. Now, the drought has rendered cultivation impossible. We are given water only once a year. Pelawatta Sugar Company is one reason as to why the Lunugamvehera tanks do not get water. They tap the water for their use.

**Seemansingho - Bandarawela - 31.05.'91**

Lunugamvehera provides water to our lands. When the grains are maturing they stop water. This is a problem for our farming. In the past cultivation was done under five tanks get water. But to a group of farmers, water has not been given for them to get a matured crop. The farmers in the Karandaveva area can do only high land farming. For want of water they cannot do paddy farming. Earlier this area was a small forest, fed by small tanks. The area was self-sufficient. Then we had no economic problems. After the Lunugamvehera project got under way, the settled families had no water even to drink. The new families had almost to beg. Some left the area. Several coconut lands in the area were destroyed. The Kirindi Oya does not provide water enough to meet the needs of the people in the area.

**Sumanasekara - Bandarawela - 31.05.'91**

After this Lunugamvehera project commenced, people face problems from elephants. Before that we had no threats from elephants. In those days they had enough jungle land. These lands today are villages. Elephants had no habitat to live.

**Indrasena Jayasinghe - Tissamaharamaya - 29.09.'91**

Lunugamvehera reservoir constructed recently meant to cultivate about 30 000 acres. But now, cultivation cannot be done in Yala and Maha both. The reason is, the volume water required for the reservoir is not received from the Kirindi Oya. Because of clearing large extents of land for paddy cultivation, these areas have become very dry. Various organisations encourage the farmers to grow commercial crops. This is a serious threat to the paddy cultivation.

**Ven. Pannasara Thero - Koholangala- Hambantota- 91-06-14**

Under the Lunugamvehera Project now excess water of the tract of fields towards Hambantota off the Adalla hills is drained into this lagoon. As a result twice or thrice a year, lagoon is filled with water and the surrounding area is inundated. Therefore the Kiripattiya and Udawalawa tracts of fields get salt water and the lands here become saltish.

**iii Uma Oya Project**

**A Farmer- Bandarawela- 91-05-29**

We are against damming the Uma Oya to take water to Labugamwehera. We cannot live in another different environment. When we think about the Victoria Dam where construction is complete, we are uncertain of the future. Victoria project was launched with a lot of great aspirations. But today we see only the bottom of Victoria. The submerged buildings are clearly visible. When such a situation occurs, people lose all their hopes.

**A farmer- Bandarawela- 91-05-29**

If a reservoir is put up by damming the Uma Oya, after some time Sri Lanka will have to import vegetables. As we understand the dam is to be put up in 4 stages from place to place. So about 4000 families will be deprived of their places of dwelling. It is said that 6000 families are to be settled under the Lunugamvehera. But no good profit would be derived. It is also said that a tunnel is to be cut to Ravana Falls in Uma Oya. From where this would; is it from the Bandarawela town; no one knows. People say, that after the passage of time, the springs would be drained by the tunnel and the stream in the area would get dried up. This is the fear that we have.

**Ajith Lokuge- Neo Synthesis Research Center- Bandarawela- 91-05-29**

When we consider the nature of the soil in this area, people say it is 'makul soil'. The soil is not that strong, mostly yellowish white in colour. It is very often not pressed enough, the water is drained in and the surface layer is like a piece of bread soaked in water. It starts breaking down. If a reservoir is put up in this area, it will worsen the existing environmental issues. People say that there are many reasons for that. Since the Mahaveli and other schemes appear to have failed, people started making agitations against these. They say because of such agitations these projects are rushed through. There are several questions floating around. It is rumored that this dam is to be built up. One rumour is that Matutilla and Delgolla streams are to be dammed at Sangili Ela. People say it was the first site. But that decision has to be changed because such a course of action will end in inundating most of the areas in the Welimada town and the Welimada Central College. It is said that a large number of people will have to be re-settled then. Therefore, it is also rumored that the dam is to be put up in stages

**Chandrasena- Pahalameegahawatta- Bandarawela- 29.07.91**

Uma Oya reservoir will inundate Puhulpola. In our side Wellawela, Allewela, Fiehahettiya, Malitta, Kurukela get under water. On the left Sangiliella, Puhulpola, Dikkapitiya, Balatotaella, Pahalamirahawatta and Thotawela will be submerged. According to the earlier plan Welimada would have been submerged. The bund approximating with 6525 feet or 200 meters under water will submerge the Uma Oya. Later another plan was prepared to save the Welimada Central College and the town. Now it is linked to Maha Oya. After putting up the main dam, another small dam will be made on our side to save the Central College and the town. They are ready to destroy the people on this side.

**A farmer - Pahala Mirahawatta - 27.07.'91**

The Government intends to send us to Lunugamvehera. But we have been living here from the beginning. Even from the time of our grandfathers and great grandfathers we have been living by cultivating of crops. We cannot go there and start a job of that sort, at once. The weather differs. Despite the intention of the Government to implement this, we have no intention of leaving this village. Even if the lands are submerged, we'll stay here and do something else to earn my living. That's my decision.

**A farmer - Bandarawela - 27.07.91**

This is a useless thing. Just like flogging a dead horse. Money is lost; the dam is lost and it is of no use to the country.

**A farmer - Bandarawela - 27.07.91**

This is never a successful project. The entire village is finished. Just destroying the village for nothing. What happens is we may have nowhere to go.

**Puhulpola Chief Priest - Oma Oya - 29.05.'91**

I have certain objections for Uma Oya. The traditional development of these village people which runs back to thousands of years is submerged under water. By setting these people in another area, their economic, health and moral development will suffer completely. In reality, people will face an economic downfall. According to the present economic conditions, these people cannot come up. Their health condition too has suffered. The diseased-free health conditions these people have inherited by birth in this area, will not be there in those areas.

**A farmer - Pahala Mirahawatte, Bandarawela - 29.05.'91**

Now this area is good. We are now used to the climatic conditions in the area. If we take our kids they fall victims to malaria, stomach ailments and other diseases. We can tolerate these mosquitoes. How can those children stay ?

**II. Flood Control Projects**

**i. Ging Ganga Project**

**A citizen - Ampegama, Galhenkanda School- 91-09-09**

Ging Ganga scheme was set in motion here for the farmers to get a better yield. But the planning was not done here in the villages, but in Colombo. It is said that the project was planned by a Chinese organization in China. They made the plans there and here they worked according to that plan. Here they did not see whether the farmers would be benefitted or not.

**A person from the area- Ampegama, Galhenkanda School- 91-09-09**

Floods damaged the crops. That means farming did not yield a harvest. But this Ging Ganga scheme was planned in Colombo. It is not possible to work here according to such plans. But what they did was they made the dam according to those plans. What happened was hundred of acres which would give a good harvest were deprived of that harvest. Those, today are infertile lands. This is what has happened.

**Priest Representative Sub Committee, Galle - Sri Lanka Environment Congress Sarvodaya Centre, Matara - 11.09.91**

Ging Ganga project is a scheme constructed with financial assistance from the Republic of China with the primary objective of eliminating floods. But today we have to encounter a completely different situation. Under this scheme today more lands than those cultivated are affected by floods. If not the paddies are damaged by stagnant rain water, I see these as major environment issues.

## **ii. Nilwala Project**

### **N.P.Punchiheva- Thotamuna- Matara- 91-09-23**

(From a letter)

The Nilwala Project pushed the fishermen of Thotamuna, a fisheries village, into untold hardships. To those in lower areas of the Nilwala river, even the pleasant name 'Nilwala' has become a bitter word. The reasons are: the water does not drain as in the past- Pollutor. of the river with sewage drained into the river through pipe lines- absence of a current to facilitate the flow of water.

### **Southern Lanka People's Conference- 91-09-27**

(From a letter)

The Nilwala Scheme which aimed at stopping the floods has led to another danger. The water does not flow into the sea and the river mouth is blocked making the river just like a tank. Water is polluted and the garbage that is collected has lessened the depth of the river. If the situation continues the Matara Town will face a serious environmental disaster.

### **A citizen - Matara - 11.09.'91**

Today Nilwala is not a river. It is a massive dirty hole. How many drains lead to the river on both sides? I fearlessly say that the Nilwala river project was responsible for this.

### **A citizen - Malimboda - Sarvodaya Centre, Matara - 11.09.'91**

This Nilwala project is of vital importance and necessity to the South. The present Nilwala Scheme has done us immense harm. I saw a plan about this scheme at the Kachcheri. The plan indicates storing of water, releasing the excess water to the Hambantota District and getting water from outside when necessary. But there is no such a system now. When we ask the officers they say that this is what they have got, which is a scheme for eliminating floods. The real Nilwala Scheme was contemplated when Mr. Dudley Senanayaka came into power in 1965. We accepted that proposal. This problem affects both Matara and Hambantota districts. The fertile paddy tracts here now lost their fertility. We have become helpless and worse off. Even I sowed 15 Kurunies (a unit of measurement of paddy) recently. It was completely damaged. I request that this scheme be operated in the correct manner.

### **K. Ratnasekara - Malimboda, Sarvodaya Centre, Matara - 11.09.'91**

We know that some time back areas close to the Nilwala river were inundated. Paddy fields were damaged. At present a drainage system has been put up. Nilwala today is only a flood eliminating scheme. It is not planned to get water to the paddy fields.

### **III. Hydro Power Generation Projects**

#### **i. Kukule Ganga Project**

##### **A Teacher- Kalawana- 91-09-26**

The Kakule Ganga Project, when considered from a geographical view point appears to cause some damage. Our area is subject to frequent earthslips. Sudden spells of rain are always common. No one can say when an earthslip would occur. Hills collapse. So we cannot say what damages would follow the construction of such a reservoir. So it is better to be concerned about this and look into this situation.

##### **A Teacher- Kalawana- 91-09-26 (Kukule Ganga)**

The majority of these people depend on tea cultivation. As I know 34 lakhs(kg of tea) come out from one factory per month. There are 12 such factories. Kalawana is a source which provides a large sum of money to the national income. This is the area in the Sabaragamuwa Province which cultivates tea mostly. Apart from the area which is under tea, the land owners who are to put tea are discouraged. Government will be deprived of a large income to the national coffers. People greatly fear that these areas are flooded.

A large reservoir will dry up the existing springs. This Sinharaja tropical forest is an asset to our country. If this is destroyed, our country too would be of no use. This reservoir will lead to the destruction of several resources.

##### **A citizen - Kalawana - 24.05.'91**

They just mention the Kukule Ganga (river) project and make the people scared. At times it is said that the tank will run upto Wekandura area. Then again it is said that it will be only in Kukulagama area. We don't know the real situation and we are helpless. The people in the area are indifferent about environment because they have no correct reply to this situation. We do not know what they are going to do ?

##### **Premaratna - Kalawana, Pattiyakanda - 24.05.'91**

Removing these people from Kalawana means dumping them in 'hell'. We have no objection to the tank being built. We cannot stop the fast developing world. If it is meant to get water only, I think it is enough to put up the tank up to that bridge in Kukulagama. Otherwise what happens is, electricity will be generated from Kalawana to light the other areas and we will wither away here in darkness. If a reservoir is to be built, put us also into it. It is no sorrow for us. No pain for us. When we consider the similar fates of those who had been removed for putting up tanks it appears that at least not even 01% are in happiness.

**A citizen - Kukuleganga - 26.09.'91**

My name is Jayakody. I am a member of the regional council. The major city of Kalawana is Manana. As we have heard, if the Kukuleganga project is launched, this city will be inundated. During the last 10-15 years, this area has witnessed a vast development. So, if this project commences that development will be washed off. It is said that the project will cover over 5000 ha. Of that 3000 ha are well developed tea and paddy lands. A large extent of tea, coconut and rubber lands will get under water. Houses of nearly 2000 families will also get under water. Some of these houses are worth lakhs of rupees. Even in that respect people have to suffer a great loss.

**A lady teacher - Kalawana Central College - 26.09.'91**

Gems fetch a large amount of foreign exchange. This resource is found in Ratnapura, Kalawana, Kukulegama, Weddagala and Habaragala areas. It brings an income to our country. When this income is considered, it is obvious, that the local products in this area can be of greater use than the power plant. On the other hand, the development in the country or the coming up of factories are of no use if there is no development in us, and if there are no fresh air and water for the people. So we express our displeasure on this Kukuleganga project.

**Ven. Panapola Sirinanda Thero - Weddagala, Kalawana - 29.09.'91**

Earthslips occur along these mountains. Unlike the ranges of mountains we see, other precipices are there in between. The water flows through such places and finds its way into places not expected by us. Water can pass through Mudikanda and destroy that area. On the other side Wewalkandura area can be washed off. Here we have Palle Pattu. Water flows there. It can go towards Morapitiya and destroy the Kalurara area. This is what will happen, if the reservoir is built.

**A citizen - Peoples' Meeting at Kalawana Gamini Maha Vidyalaya - 26.09.'91**

A large number of power projects generate electricity. We see that from the Kukuleganga project it is expected to give electricity to the southern province on a large scale. But the Minister for environment and planning stated here that there is enough electricity for the south, to the areas like Koggala. If so, the need is not so dire.

**A citizen - Peoples' Meeting at Kalawana Gamini Maha Vidyalaya - 26.09.'91**

Our Sinhala kings did not build such tanks in areas in the wet zone, because these can end up with earthslips. In the dry zone they put up tanks to store water and cultivated the land. Even today those tanks exist. Accordingly we think that if this

Kukuleganga project gets under way, there will be more disadvantages, than the advantages expected.

**A citizen - Peoples' Meeting at Kalawana Gamini Maha Vidyalaya - 26.09.'91**

Some geologists came here to examine the areas where the landslides occurred. Along with them we went to see all the mountains in the entire electorate which caused earthslides. We must stress, that there is no suitable site here in the Kalawana Electorate, for a reservoir. That hill began to slide after about a week's rain. There are drains near the place washed off.

**A citizen - Peoples' Meeting at Kalawana Gamini Maha Vidyalaya - 26.09.'91**

Thanks to the Sinharaja Forest we have rain. During a period of heavy rains, if those hills tumble, we may have nothing to eat. That water hole will no more be there. Because of this reservoir about 20,000 families suffer in this area.

**A citizen - Kalawana, Kukulegama - 26.09.'91**

I am Piyasena Muhandiram. Grama Niladari, Kalawana West. I was born here. Kalawana people have a great fear about this Kukuleganga project. It has badly affected the people in the Kalawana area. Because of that uncertain situation an economic decline is seen. I think there will be a collapse in the economy in the future. Already the cultivation activities have come to a halt. Even in Janasaviya ( Poverty alleviation ) campaigns, we hear people ask why they should do all these if Kukuleganga project is to be launched. The people are not prepared to take any undertaking directly.

**Principal - Kalawana Gamini Central College - 28.09.'91**

I am the Principal Kalawana, Gamini Central College. This school is a cluster headquarter. There are 14 other schools in the cluster. The area associated with these 14 schools fall within the Sinharaja region. These 14 schools also fall within the area earmarked for the reservoir of the Kukuleganga project. In addition a large number of other clusters too are included. These 14 are developed schools with a large number of students on roll. The area has some other clusters of schools. Even these schools are in the danger of being destroyed because of this project. The Sinharaja is of environmental value in this area. The area has an economic value too, and the loss of the existing schools, places of religion worship etc will be felt seriously. The people in this area have not suffered problems and have come up on their own. If they are faced to leave the place because of this project, it is a loss not only to them, but to the entire society.

**A citizen - Kalawana - 26.09.'91**

Even during the last period of terror, the area witnessed a minimum of terrorist activities. Now farming fetches a good income. About 95% of the people have tea. I too am a tea planter. Every youth has his tea, rubber land, the farm land or a gemming licence. Gemming too gives them an income. Therefore, if we talk about this area

which gets submerged in Kalawana, no one can fathom the resources underground. During the past 10-15 years this area developed rapidly. A person who was here about 10-15 years ago will vouch for it. Gemming and tea have contributed to that development.

**A student - Kalawana - 26.09.91**

If the Kukuleganga reservoir is put up here, an economic asset the parents can inherit us is lost. The social communion we have with our relations and friends will be constrained, just like a glass is broken into smithereens. We will be thrown into various places in the country. This will badly hit our cordiality mutual cohesion. It is rumored that when the reservoir is put up we will be shifted to the dry zone. Then what will happen to our higher education?

**Liyanamahattmaya - Environment Protection Organisation of Sinharaja**

We have now come to Kos-athu Ganga which is considered as a significant juncture of the Kukule Ganga Project. We consider Uman Ella of Kos-athu Ganga as a gift from Nature which has an archaeological value.

In this place there is a large river which starts from the canal beyond and which flows through the rocks. About a quarter of a mile from here it has formed into a large river. We are sad to say that, because of the Kukule Ganga Project, places like this which has an important archaeological value will be lost to us.

**A citizen - Nivitigala, Kalawana - 26.09.'91**

In 1983 heavy rain occurred and continued for about six or seven days. The river overflowed along this road. When we woke up in the morning, we found that the road had sunk in instalments, all over, making it impossible for vehicles to go. If a reservoir like this one is built because of its gravity it is possible that the surrounding hills may crack and the water may seep through thereby creating a dangerous situation. As a miner I am able to talk about it. In our mines there is what is called mica which is found above parugala. A stream flows between parugala and mica. Mica is a type of soil mixed with graphite which is found in this area. That is why frequent earth-slips take place. We know this from experience.

**D.A.D. Dharmaratne (Postal Peon) - Kalawana - 26.09.'91**

I am a resident of Kukulegama. This project existed before I was born. For many years research has been going on. We do not see anything definite. Since 2 1/2 years ago news has been spreading to the effect that the dam was being built again. The public do not like this exercise because nobody likes to leave this exercise because nobody likes to leave this village which is where they were born. People do not like to lose their farmsteads and the valuable trees and crops thereon.

**A citizen - Kalawana - 26.09.'91**

There is a detailed report to the effect that earth slips have taken place in nine constituencies in Ratnapura district due to the 1983 rain. About ten hills have been subjected to earth-slips around the Kukulegama Project area. Around here, earth slips have occurred in about ten hills. Closeby, Neethagama College has been subjected an earth-slip and the whole building has collapsed. Aldehyde and Habarangala hills have come down. Earth-slips have occurred in Handunkanda and Bedikanda hills as well as Delgoda and Udawatte area. All these are Kukuleganga associated areas.

**A teacher - Gamini Central College - Kalawana - 26.09.'91**

Twenty two colleges including ours will be submerged due to the Kukuleganga Project. Twenty two colleges mean a great resource. They are the centres which provide education to the children of the poor people in this area. In the Sabaragamuwa province, tea is mostly grown in the Kalawana area. A large portion of the people here live by means of tea cultivations. Each factory brings in a revenue of about 34 lakhs per month. There are 12 factories in this area. The national income receives a large contribution from the people are now discouraged. A great fear and excitement exists to the effect that this area will get submerged.

**A teacher - Central College, Kalawana - 26.09.'91**

We do not know about a correct plan relating to Kukuleganga. People do not have a definite knowledge about where the boundaries are. As a result since about six months ago our developmental activities have suffered a great set-back. Cultivators stopped their cultivation. People who were building houses stopped such work. They have been dragged into a state of mere day to day living. I think this is an obstacle of our economic development.

**Mr. Hemaratne - Kalawana - 26.09.'91**

It is much better to get drowned in this reservoir and die here than to go to difficult areas and suffer where it is difficult to live, because of the Kukulegama Project.

**A citizen - Kalawana - 26.09.'91**

If an arrangement is made to carry water by constructing a tunnel in Kukule-ganga - Hanwella area the same effects be go then from Samanalawewa Project will necessarily befall Sinharaja. As a result of Samanalawewa Project a situation has arisen whereby a large number of people are unable to obtain water. It has become necessary to transport water in bowsers

**ii. Samanala Wewa Project**

**A citizen - Katawana- Gamini Vidyalaya- 91-09-26**

Samanala Wewa was put up to generate electricity. But it is a failure. It involved a large sum of money. Now that is not possible to settle those. They say they have been pushed from outside. The investors who eye the Free Trade Zones, make various devices to get power for their intended ventures.

**A citizen - Balangoda - 29.09.'91**

I came to know that about 2000 acres of forest were cleared for the Samanala project. We are not going to raise any quarry about that. But our question is this. The forest so destroyed helped the environment for generations. In place of these thousands of acres of forest, have we yet considered of an alternative to maintain the ecological balance?

**D.M. Jinadasa Banda - Central College, Balangoda - 29.09.'91**

In excavations, a considerable part of the Samanala wewa area got dried up. The community life in areas like Rajawaka, Bowatta, Imbulamura and Badagiriya got disorganised. They could not pursue their paddy farming. Large trees were destroyed. I know that in our villages, Kumbuk trees with girths of about 15-20 feet died.

**A lady teacher - Kalawana Central College - 26.09.'91**

In our area a development project named Samanala has got under way. People complain that after this project came into being they lost even the little water they had in their wells.

### **A.K. Karunawathie - Balangoda Central College - 29.09.'91**

I was originally residing at Kinchigune area. We were evacuated from there in order to move earth for the Samanalawewa Project and were settled in Samanalagama. Paddy cultivation was the main activity at Kinchigune. We lived by doing good cultivation. Because of the Samanalawewa we had to leave behind our villages and come to Samanalagama. Living here is quite different. The environment that prevailed at Kinchigune is not existent at Samanalagama. It is an extremely dry climate that exists here. There are several wells. The water in them has run dry. We who came from Kinchigune have not received compensation even for an inch of land. People who lived in villages such as Kichigune, Pilipatha, Palawelpe, and Imbulpe have been plunged into a situation of extreme helplessness because of the Samanalawewa Project.

## **IV. Water Management**

### **i. Water Distribution**

#### **Ratnasiri Pathirana- Pannala- 91-09-20**

During the last election period the opportunist politicians pledged a water supply scheme to the north western province and very craftily looted people's vote. No one talks about that scheme now.

#### **A citizen- At Bandarawela St Joseph's College-91-07-09**

In the Matale canal area there was a spring named "kattamal". It was a large spring. Today houses have come up in that place. Only a very small part is left. When we were small children our buffaloes grazed there. Today there is not a single spring there. Around there are pine trees and houses. Some have sunk wells to take the water. When the water is drained to these wells there is no water to the neighboring areas. There was another spring left, called "Minuwan" spring. It was given to a government officer and he has put up a house there. Spring has been covered. When the officer used the water for his needs, the entire tract down was deprived of water.

#### **Sadhdhananda- Monaragala- 91-07-30**

- Ques        How can the water problem here be solved?
- Answ        A suitable irrigation scheme should be introduced. The entire area can be farmed here. The Kohongahagala canal can be dammed to make a tank to provide water in both seasons.
- Ques        Had that tank been there in the times of ancient Sinhala Kings?
- Answ        Yes. In those times there had been an irrigation system. It helped to cultivate this area.
- Ques        Is that tank now in ruins?
- Answ        Yes.

**A Farmer- Bandarawela- 91-05-24**

In addition to the rain water we have water seeping from the hills for some time. Later it ends. In the past there was more water. Reason for the scarcity may be the growing of pines and turpentine. Now springs have begun to dry up. Such a destruction has happened. Earlier we got water inspite of the fact that there wasn't a forest. After these pines and turpentine trees were grown the cold in the atmosphere has disappeared. People in these areas feel that

**A citizen - Bambaragama- Bandarawela- 91-05-29**

Answ. Streams on tops of hills should be preserved.

Ques. In what way?

Answ. Trees should be planted on both sides of the streams. Those trees should be protected. Two tanks have been covered now. They are in extent about 4 acres. They should be rehabilitated to get water for cultivation.

**Gunasekera- Bambaragama- Bandarawela- 91-05-29**

Ques. What's your name?

Answ. Gunasekera.

Ques. Are you employed?

Answ. I do farming. Paddy and vegetables.

Ques. How much paddy lands you own?

Answ. 2 acres.

Ques. You do not do any job here. Tell us of what use this tank is for you?

Answ. All our water needs for our cultivation are procured from this tank. For all purposes, to bathe and to drink we get water from this tank.

Ques. You said that the water level is the same everyday. Do you think that this tank should be protected as a major tank that feeds other tanks below?

Answ. Springs up are all cleared now. It is good if trees are planted so that the water is retained.

**A citizen - Bambaragama- 91-05-29**

Earlier this was Divulgastenna, a large catchment area. It is now mostly dried up, because of the growing of pines trees. Earlier a stream flowed to this place. There was a tea factory up. Factory's needs of water was met by the Divulgastenna reservoir. Welibissa, Patana is completely washed off. Now only rocks are there.

**L W de Mel- Bandarawela - 29.07.91**

(From a letter)

A main spring near the public playground in the Bandarawela town is being covered with earth. The reasons are dumping garbage and earth, the city's sewage being linked to this spring, growing of foreign plants which absorb excessive water, and the setting up of a bathing spot below the spring. A situation can arise where the use of this water by the people may result in plagues.

The age-old water springs in the lower part of the Bandarawela city, in front of the temple too are being covered. The reason for this is dumping earth here and the construction of a latrine. Prompt action has to be taken to protect these two main springs.

**G M Nandawathie- Ambegoda- Bandarawela- 91-09-29**

(From a letter)

A large variety of vegetables grown in the upcountry can be grown here. This has been avoided because of the problem of water. In the absence of water some paddy fields are left uncultivated for 2 to 3 years. Some influential people have cut down the large trees on reservation areas and have used those lands for farming. They are not bothered about the damage. It appears that pine growing too is a reason for the scarcity of water in our area. Even drinking water is hard to find.

**G A Prabathkumara- Badulla- At the Colombo Environmental Open Seminar - 14.09.91**

(From a letter)

The springs that provide water to the farmers in the lower Welimada area have been destroyed at Ohiya, Pattipola and Nuwara Eliya by the influentials and politicians who have cleared these lands for farming. The farmers are facing a serious scarcity of water.

Not taking action to preserve the Rawanaella reservation area which has the sources of water, coming down from the Ella area in the upper Uva, before developing the Kirindi Oya has resulted in waste of money and the pollution of environment. Reforestation should be done immediately in the Rawanaella area to protect these catchment areas so that the natural water springs are protected.

**Asilin Dissanayaka- Shanti Stores- Bandarawela - 28.07.91**

Ambegoda, Ginigathhena and Mywatta areas have no water. Pipe borne water is released for half an hour from 6.30 to 7.00 in the morning. That's all for the entire day. This is the basic problem we have. Most of us believe that growing pines is the reason for the scarcity of water.

**J M Jayaratne- Degannathenna - Bandarawela - 28.07.91**

A part of the reservation has been turned into a field. It has been done by an influential person in the area at his discretion. The reservation had valuable kinds of trees in an extent of about 2 acres. A considerable part of this has been put under cultivation. This clearing has badly affected an area of about 40 acres in extent. In this area paddy is done in Maha and vegetable in Yala season. Vegetable cultivation has suffered the most serious damage. About 10 years ago we had water pouring out in a thickness of about 4 inches now we have just a trickle of one inch.

**A D Gunasiri- Makul Ella- Bandarawela - 29.07.91**

Our fields were rain-fed or we got water from the tank. Pines growing has cried up the springs. Increasing population has made the government to distribute the patana lands among the people. In those lands pines have been grown. Water has been diverted to Keragala tea estate. Therefore, the biggest problem for the people at Makulella is water. Tea cultivation has no problem of water. This problem has seriously affected the paddy and vegetable cultivation.

Over 20 years have passed since the pines growing was started. We do not know what purpose these trees were grown. In those days we were not aware of the problems this cultivation would create. If we knew, we would have protested. Things talked about as development have not benefitted us at all. The village now has electricity. But people have no money to get their connections. If the water that goes to the estate is diverted to the village, problem of water can be settled to a certain extent.

**Woman - Hakgala- Nuwara Eliya- 91-07-29**

- Ques: What are the problems in the village?
- Answ: There are problems. Lack of water. Water is available but not properly distributed. Water is not available to do cultivation properly. Water is collected to one place and distributed from there through pipe-lines. On some days there is water, on other days not.
- Ques: Who does the distribution?
- Answ: There are some officers for those.
- Ques: That's a basic issue. Is this difficulty only for farming?
- Answ: For both for cultivation and for drinking. Difficulty is for this area.
- Ques: Serious difficulty?
- Answ: Yes, On some days there's no water at all.
- Ques: What do you do then?
- Answ: We go to places where there is water and fetch it.
- Ques: About how far?
- Answ: Some to up to Hakgala Gardens.
- Ques: How far is the gardens from here?
- Answ: About five miles.

**A citizen - St. Joseph's College, Bandarawela - 29.07.'91**

We turned a Government into power. It is in power. Now, we want to know what is going to happen to us. That's all. The people in the eight villages I mentioned are in fear and doubt. In this area, and in Heela Oya, Katugaha, Matigatenna, water is scarce after the diversion tunnel was made. We fear whether we too have to keep barrels and collect water. This has now happened at Balangoda. Every house has barrels. A road has been cut to every house. The Electricity Board gives water. This is the fear and doubt that haunt us.

**Dharmaratna - Monaragala - 30.05.'91**

An ordinary man cannot purchase a tube well. It is costly. Because the salinity level is high, the water cannot be used for drinking purposes. That is an unsuccessful project.

**Indrasena Jayasena - 15.09.'91 Secretary - Environmental Project, Tissamaharama**

( An excerpt from a letter )

Construction of the public bus stand at Bandarawela has destroyed the main water springs of the Kirindi Oya. In strips of land close to Kirindi Oya, soil is washed off and the water level of the river has dropped rapidly. Felling of trees in reserve land on both sides of Kirindi Oya has precipitated this situation.

**A citizen - Malimbada - Sarvodaya Centre, Matara - 11.09.'91**

The water in far off areas as Malimbada, Akuregoda is drained rapidly and the streams and water courses in these areas have begun to run dry gradually. The reason is the absence of an irrigation system planned to suit Sri Lanka, having considered the past and the present. We had an irrigation net-work which marvelled even the foreign experts who know nothing about our country, these projects are rather adverse to the country.

**A citizen - Matara - 11.09.'91**

Because of floods, fertility in paddy lands is lost. Even with fertilizer these paddy lands cannot be cultivated as economically viable holdings. Salinity is a problem in the fields in Godagama and Maduwa areas. The Department of Agriculture has washed off that soil by pumping water. Yet those paddy fields did not yield a good crop. If a Government with technology and capital resources at its disposal could not cultivate the paddy lands near the Nilwala river, do I know what we should do?

## **ii. Waste Disposal and Water Pollution**

### **A teacher - St. Joseph College - Bandarawela - 28.07.'91**

Environment is a very wide term. We say that the success of a human life, is dependent on a good social environment. I gear my children to a place where there is a good social environment. Then we say a religion environment is necessary. We should be able to create a good and healthy community of people. Let us forget the social environment and the religious environment and focus our attention on natural environment conversation with a Buddhist priest at Matale, Kaludewela. Still the Town Council dumps the waste near the river. I have fought hard against this. Even the waste of the slaughtered cattle is dumped into the river. I have fought to stop this pollution of the river. I did a hunger strike for 8 days. Having fasted for 8 days, I thought if self-immolation on the last day and was ready with petroleum. The only weapons I had was pen and paper. What I wrote was published in the papers, both in Sinhala and English papers, Divayana, Dawasa, Daily News, Sun - People bathe in this river. In the past we used this water for drinking. The night soil collected by the Town Council was earlier buried in a pit. Later they started dumping that too into the river. Even the dead cattle are thrown into the river.

### **A citizen - Meeting at the Colombo New Town Hall, 14.09.'91**

All the waste in Colombo is dumped into this Beira lake. I have seen many people bathing in this lake. Carts are washed and even the bull is bathed. On the other side, the people bathe. Maradana and Maligawatta areas get under water. Why even a heavy shower submerge these areas? There are no drains. From time to time holes are made on the roads. Then they are closed. Drains are damaged. Slums have worsened the health hazards. Malnutrition and cholera prevail. Even diarrhea is not uncommon. Since the slum dwellers are deprived of health facilities, such problems emerge.

### **Rohana Stanley - Meeting at the Colombo New Town Hall - 14.09.91**

Even the Negambo lagoon has turned out to be a lavatory for the residents around it. Industrial waste from the main factories drained into the lagoon. Channel, from the Gurkin factory is directed to the Mathurajawela. At some places you cannot step into the lagoon. Water has become poisonous with more mercury content. A large quantity of unprocessed waste is released to the lagoon through the channel.

### **A citizen - Christchurch College, Matale - 20.07.'91**

Waste disposal is not properly attended to by the employees concerned. After a couple of days mosquitoes breed and diseases spread. When waste is carried in the municipality vehicles, it is dropped on the way side. The vehicles are not in the proper fashion. Waste drops through damaged places.

**A citizen - Christchurch College, Matale**

The waste that is transported through the Matale city is dumped into the surface drains which drains the excess water in the city. These drains are lead to the channel. This dumping site caused loss of life. Such diseases as cholera has taken the lives of five or six people. The flies go about one mile and perch on dishes in the houses and breed the germs that cause cholera.

**A Citizen - Matale - 20.07.91**

My personal view is that a disease affects the entire community of people. Our request is that waste should be deposited in a suitable place. It is dumped here improperly.

**A citizen - Matale - 20.07.91**

Make arrangements to produce fertilizer through processed waste to improve farming to suit the increasing population. All must have the ability to use scientific and technical methods. If not, that is a sign of weakness in administration.

**A citizen - Minuwangoda - 19.09.'91**

Channels around the city are polluted. Some, up there have no lavatories. They use both sides of the canal for that purpose. All the drain from the houses on either side of the road are turned into the canal people down, bathe in this water.

**A youth - Flats, Serpentine Road, Wanathamulla - 05.12.'91**

There is a canal in front of this flat complex. The people who live in huts across the road use this canal as a lavatory. The water in the canal flows slowly and human waste does not flow down. It stinks. Diseases break out and mosquitoes breed. Even recently one was afflicted with malaria.

**Wasanthi Wickremaratna-Bombugamma-Divulapitiya-91-09-26**

Waste released from the Ekala Industrial complex has polluted several areas in the surroundings. Chemicals mixed with oils, polythene bags, pieces of tyre from tyre manufacturing concerns, pieces of rags from garment industries, asbestos dust are dumped into the Kolugoda canal and the swamps around. These areas now face complete environmental pollution. On rainy days the people have to face serious difficulties as these water bodies are blocked and then begin to overflow.

**A citizen - Sarvodaya- Matara- 91-09-11**

As the gentleman of the Moor street, Dickwella said, there is a cattle slaughter house. A cattle pen too is there. The waste matter drains into that canal. As a result filariasis has increased to a great extent. The largest number of filariasis patients are found among the Moor street people. To stop this menace, the canal has to be cleaned. Slaughterhouse has to be shifted elsewhere. The canal is always filled with waste matter. Our earnest request is that these should be got rid of.

**Jayalath Balasooriya - New Town Hall, Colombo - 14.09.'91**

A report by the climatology unit of the Peradeniya Campus says that the P.H. value of rain water in Ratmalana has dropped to 4.5. The lagoon, specially the Lunawa lagoon and the canals leading to it are all polluted. If we trace the history of this pollution, in about 1986 we came to know through the mass media that the fish in the lagoon were dying. In about 87, it was known

that the water had a scratch effect and it was impossible to bathe there. Today the water has become so poisonous, that if any one even touches the water in the Lunawa lagoon there is the possibility of getting bruises on the skin. Today it stinks and mosquitoes breed. If the waste released from these industries are not processed according to approved standards the factory should be closed. Laws should be made to have waste processing unit.

**Justin Wilpattu - Kotugoda - 19.09.'91**

There is a (C Kem) gum factory. The waste of the factory is directly turned into the lands below. This situation affects our wells. Having absorbed this waste, the well water turned black. Even our drinking water was polluted.

**A citizen - Kotugoda - 19.09.91**

There is a gurkin processing centre here. They dissolve about 25kgs of salt in water in barrels and later emptied on land. We cannot drink the well water, since it is mixed with salt and Acetic Acid. Even bathing is impossible; the water has salinity.

### 3. Fisheries and Coastal Resources

#### I. Traditional Fishing and Over Fishing

##### **A fisherman- Nilwella Harbour- 04.05.91**

Dragnet fishing is a serious problem. It is not allowed up to 7 miles from the land. A permit costs twenty thousand (Rs.) Now we have no fish. This is a serious problem that affects our income. It is not good to allow the use of unnecessary equipments. This situation will make us go a begging. We ask for facilities, in vain.

##### **A fisherman- Balapitiya- 91-11-09**

Our grandfathers and great grandfathers had done this very same job. Whatever the pains and sufferings are, we like this sea career.

##### **A Citizen - Pollanruwa - 15.05.91**

Angling and netting can be done at the tank. Earlier we had societies. But we were not members. Fresh water fishing is prohibited. Those societies are no more. There are no fishing Corporation Societies. Now anyone can do fishing. In the Yala dry spell, many lived by fishing.

##### **Bandula Perera - Kalutara Pulinatalaramaya - 03.05.'91**

In the past the fish were not frozen. Using luffiferce (spicy fruit used in cooking) fish are dried to be use in tidal periods. The coconut tree was a several advantages. With the coconut shell ladles were turned out, coir with the coconut husk and ekels were used to make brooms. Leaves were used for thatching houses. Scarcities at houses were rare. The needs were fulfilled. There was no showy way of life.

##### **Balapitiya Fisheries Coast - 12.09.'91**

Ques : Please explain the light post method ?

Answ.. Light post method means a net is cast around a light. Light is already on its way. Then we sink the under correlight. The other goes in the bigger boat and surround the catch. When the two corners of the net are collected and dragged, the fish is trapped inside. Even in this competition the small boatman is at a loss. The big man exploits the situation. To his net even the fish from the far off sea is dragged.

How many people earlier lived by catching cuttle fish ? This fish is no more there. Light post system destroys the small fish. About 100,000 people from Hikkaduwa to Beruwala will have to live like slaves of the light post people in the near future. If we cast a net it is cut. We cannot fight with those people. How the areas where there

are no light post methods have developed ? Balapitiya fisheries harbour is in a very bad state of decline. People have virtually to starve.

If the light post method is got rid of we can develop ourselves. We can get a good income. Then we don't need assistance from the Government. What it offers can be saved. The Government does not consult the people when they do things. The light is at the wrong place. It dazzles us and makes it difficult to identify land. Sometimes the bulbs are fused. They have been stolen not by the people, but by the Government workers. The boatmen are in serious danger. Boats capsize and with lot of trouble we manage to get on to land. Before this light system was introduced, Boats gave us an income of Rs.2000/= to Rs.3000/= . The five or six light post boats had the entire catch. We argued with the Minister. Then the Asst. Government Agent, Hikkaduwa called us discussæd matters and reduced the number of light host boats from 22 to six. No licences are given to Ahangama, Kathaluwa areas. Licence is given only to this area. Now even those from Hikkaduwa too come to our area. They can't do it there and they are ready even for murder. We don't need any assistance if this course of action can be stopped. Fishermen request in one voice to stop this. When we discussed with the Minister two of them took down notes. The Government just deceives us.

## **II. Selling, Marketing and the Industry**

### **A citizen - Meeting at the Ampegama Galhenkanda Vidyalaya - 91-09-09**

How the local fish resources have been destroyed today? This is the fish that have lived in the streams, brooks and tanks, around us. today in a stream near a field not even a small fish is there. Various toxic matters are released to the environment and we have lost this resource.

### **A fisherman- Nilwella harbour- 04.05.91**

In this area, some go fishing in the sea; some deal in fish. Some go to the sea at noon and come back in the evening, while some spend a couple of days in the sea. Even in the off-season we go in boats and make a catch. Blood fish is special to our area. This is the mainstay of almost all the villagers. The village has over 2000 families. About 30 of them own boats. We have been members of Fishermen's Co-operative since 1970's. But we have gained nothing and I don't want any of my children to pursue this job. What we want are boats.

### **A fisherman- Hunukotuwawatha area- 04.05.91**

There are about 35 families in this area. Most of them have settled down here recently. These lands were given after 1977. They come here to settle down because they don't have any other land. The government bought the private lands and gave such to us.

Ques.: What are the shortcomings here?

Ans. There is a problem of water. There is no water here and the government is not interested at all. It is the step-motherly treatment.

**A fisherman- Hunukotiwawatha area- 04.05.91**

We wrote a letter to the Fisheries (Department/Ministry) asking for relief aid in off-seasons. Even if we do coir work, there are times we cannot market coir products. They said they would consider. But nothing happened. We gave it to the relevant officer at Dickwella. He said he would look into it. That's all.

**A fisherman- Balapitiya Fisheries Beach- 91-09-12**

No measures are taken. All the MPs have a look and go. Just to satisfy us. All of them who come to power by our votes come here, examine the place and depart. Work is never done. The people just die. Last week three people died because their boat capsized. Early in the morning our boat capsized. On that day the sea was very stormy. Two boats went from the beach to Galle. People in those boats were killed.

**A Fisherman- Balapitiya Fisheries Beach- 91-09-12**

Market prices change unusually. One day prices may go up. The following day the prices hit the rock bottom. If this continues for about one week, we don't have a market. Then what we have to do is go begging. If the oil prices go up we like that. But the market does not change. Prices drop to the lowest or remain static. Today a net piece costs Rs 3,100/- To make it a net it costs another Rs 1500/- If a ship goes over the net, it is the end of the trader and the end of us. We have to stay on land for a couple of days until the damaged net is repaired.

**A fisherman-Balapitiya- 91-09-12**

More profit is for the trader. When the traders come and hold the auctions, even if they don't ask for Rs 50/- we do not take the catch back. We give it to them because we can't take it back and sell. So we give them the catch at whatever price they ask for. So the traders are profited. We take that Rs.50/- and distribute it among us. Here the gain is for the trader.

**A fisherman- Balapitiya- 91-09-12**

How many MPs came here? A large number from every political party, from the SLFP, Samasamaja and the UNP. But the village has achieved nothing. We are not finding faults with politics. What we have to say is that whatever the party is, it is of no use for us. They do nothing for the innocent fisherman in the south. They are still at the starting point. We have no solace from anybody. There is no one to make our grievance to.

**Hashtini Jayaratna de Silva- Balapitiya- 91-11-09**

We have nothing. We burn about 10-15 gallons of fuel. Nonsense! that credit is useless. When this happens for 4 to 5 days, our catch has no use for us. We do this job always taking loans. The big vendors are useless. The closest town is Balapitiya. All the fishermen here on the beach are from Beruwela. They go even to Tangalle and Galle to do their job. Their income makes those cities to thrive. They purchase even a sarong or two there and do not make their purchases here. This is a large electorate but has not seen any improvement.

**A fisherman- Nilwella - 04.05.91**

In this village the earth is sandy. We cannot even put up a house. We take in sands along with our meals. When we take our meals sometimes the sands come in with the wind and get mixed with meal. If we have the means we too like to lead a good life. We do not want to live in this way. We have no boats. We go with outsiders. Even if they a share of Rs. 10,000/- per month. Outsiders are paid about Rs 200/- per month. They have to be satisfied with it. We cannot be so. They get even commissions from the boatmen. The haves are together here. This is our beach. There are about 60 fisherman families.

**N G Punchihewa- Thotamuna, Galle- 91-09-13**

Collection of sand at the Nilwala river mouth (estuary) has deprived our villagers who lead a miserable existence doing the fishing industry, of a ferry to pursue their career. This situation was brought to the notice of every successive government, and to the Minister of Fisheries of the present government, having taken him to the river mouth. Their promises have just become a dream.

**A citizen - Weligama - Hunukotuwawatta - 04.05.91**

There are jobs to do when we don't go to sea during tidal periods.

But there are no facilities and no good incomes. The money procured from such sources is not enough for expenses. We have to borrow on credit. If we have good boats we can go to sea even during the period of tides.

**A citizen - Dickwella - Nilwella Harbour - 04.05.91**

We don't need any extra assistance from the Government. We can earn for the day's living. Some go to sea, some others more, we save something. Some go to sea. Some others are traders. This is the source of income of all the villagers. Even during tidal periods we go in boats and get a catch. When fish was scarce here. We went to Trincomalee. The Tigers shot at our boats. Several were killed. We escaped.

**Velayudan, a fisherman - Keerangalla, Puttlam, Chilaw - 21.05.91**

We had our jobs at Mulaitivu. We cannot stay there because of the (community) troubles. For about three years we had not gone there. We are here temporarily. We will again go to Mulaitive, when things turn good.

**A citizen - Dickwella - Nilwella Harbour - 04.05.91**

When we explained our difficulties, the Ceynor Company put up the Cold Storage Plant. It was thought to provide employment to about a thousand of people. But the work did not continue. Today there is a pre-school at the stores complex. There were 3 fisheries societies here. A Mother Society was formed at Matara having amalgamated 12 such societies. From 1977 to 1991 nothing happened. The New Minister wants new societies formed. It is said that assistance will be given to them. The old societies get step motherly treatment.

**A fisherman - Balapitiya - 12.09.'91**

We face difficulties for six months. It is during this six months that the sea here gets stormy. In storms we cannot row the boats. The fish prices badly fluctuate and there are no controls. Because of this situation, the fishermen have to go begging today. To launch a boat, about Rs 600/= are required for meals, fuel etc. Earlier the fisherman was given fuel at a subsidized rate of Rs 33.50 per gallon. Today it costs about Rs 75/=. We cannot incur such expenditure.

**A fisherman - Balapitiya - 12.09.'91**

The Aid Schemes are of no use today. A small boat costs about Rs 1,50,000/=. A loan of Rs 1,25,000/= is given. But for bank interest rates we have to pay back another Rs 1,25,000/= to the bank. Under the so-called Aid Scheme, we have to pay Rs 2 1/2 lakhs within a period of five years. There is no relief at all.

**A citizen - Fisheries Coast, Balapitiya - 12.09.91**

The poor fishermen have no place to buy their fishing gear. A ball of twine is Rs 29/= But we have to buy it at Rs 49/=. This is the blackmarket price. But we have to buy it. We use such twine to stitch the net. The traders have business here if the fisherman goes to sea. Even the barber awaits us. The tea kiosk is waiting for us.

**M. Jayaratna - A fisherman, Balapitiya - 12.09.'91**

If the trader has the stuff at least we can buy that on credit. If not, there are times when we don't get even rice and a pinch of salt with chillies. We have to starve in the day and night or we just manage with something. We have no other jobs. Only is fishing in the sea.

**A fisherman - Fisheries Coast, Balapitiya - 12.09.'91**

If a price control system is introduced, you should buy our fish at such controlled prices. We will show you how it can be done. Here there is no price control system. They come to control us, so we have to give our fish.

Isn't there a Corporation here ?

No. If there is a Corporation, we can sell our catch straight to the Corporation. We will give them at the price they fix. If there is such an arrangement it is better.

**A fisherman - Balapitiya Fisheries' Coast - 12.09.'91**

To get a spare part to a boat engine we have to go either to Colombo or to Tangalle. Mechanics are available here, but not the spares. The innocent fishermen in the South are not looked after. Every assistance is given to those in Chilaw and Negambo areas. The innocent fisherman on this side of Galle, are still in the position they had at the beginning. There is no improvement. No relief from any quarter. There is no one to present our grievance to.

**Peoples gathering - Balapitiya Fisheries' Coast - 12.09.'91**

- Ques: Are many of the people here involved in the fisheries industry ?  
Answ: Yes. Many of the people are involved in the fishing industries.
- Ques: How many families ?  
Answ: It is not possible to tell the exact number of families. Up to Beruwala, as far as eye can see, they do fishing.
- Ques: You have been doing it from the time you know ?  
Answ: Yes. Even the child struggling to be born attempt to do this job. Even if they are forced to stay at schools they come back to this job.
- Que: What suggestions you have to make to the Government to improve the living condition of those engaged in the fishing industry?  
Ans: We expect one more. Our only hope is to put our catch to an auction where we can fetch the highest price. A new fisheries harbour should be planned and built. That is of special necessity. A branch of the Fisheries Corporation should be set up here so that it will buy our catch at higher price.

**Peoples gathering - Balapitiya Fisheries Coast - 12.09.'91**

- Ques: Tell us your difficulties in the fishing industry ?  
Answ: One difficulty is the absence of a harbour. The equipment has to be dragged up with a lot of physical strain. We have no harbour to keep these boats in.
- Ques: Why here ?  
Answ: They cannot be kept here. Here, it is not deep. Therefore they remain there. If one slips his foot,..... it is difficult to select a place.....
- Ques: What do you mean ?  
Answ: In periods of tide always a couple of boats break down here. We escape with a lot of difficulties. Our life is not certain.
- Ques: If a harbour is made for you ?  
Answ: There is a heap of stones. A bund should be made in that area. After that another good layer (concrete) should be on top, just as in a harbour. As we think, if and when a harbour is built there will

be no problem. A gust of wind above will leave a destruction here. Day before yesterday three people died in a storm.

### **III. Coastal Resources and Related Industries**

#### **A citizen a- at the Ampegama Galhenkanda Vidyalaya - 91-09-09**

Beach now belong to various people and the beach associated resources are lost. When beach conservation programmes are set in motion, trees of the bamboo family can be planted to produce bamboo based products. This will boost such production giving a thrust to the local products and will help to ease the unemployment problem of the rural people to a certain extent. Also, it will help preserve the environment.

#### **A limestone worker- Hunukotuwawatha - 91-05-03**

Limestone industry is done on a large scale here. Some time back a man fell into a pit and died and the people stopped work. On private land they get a permit and do this. We are daily paid workers. To loosen the layer and remove stones we are paid Rs 100/- per day each with meals. This is a difficult job. Others get Rs 75/- or Rs 70/- and a woman is paid Rs 60/-.

#### **A woman- Balapitiya- 91-09-12**

Coir is brought to our places. We give Rs 4/25 per kilo. Three of us make one kilo of ropes per week. That is how we exist. Very difficult to earn even for a meal. Sometimes, we miss three or four meals. I have no proper job. Husband is no more. With three children I suffer this agony. What I earn is not enough to maintain the family. They have to be sent to school, their schooling needs have to be looked after. When they want a book or a pencil we cannot afford to buy it for them. They ask for shoes, says that they lack this or that, hesitates to go to school. Once they did not go to school for 02 weeks, to escape punishment. It is with great difficulty that their needs were brought collecting Rs 2/- and Rs 5/- etc. I feel sorry that I don't have a job.

#### **A citizen meeting at Sarvodaya Centre - Matara-91-09-11**

Tourism is fast spreading in the south. They say that tourism fetches large income to our government and our country. I would like to know what good, this industry has done to the country, or else what bad? As I know, the industry has not done any good. The youths and the adults in our country are used specially to drugs and liquor and people in our country have fallen prey to various social diseases. In addition, the culture and the civilization of the country are destroyed.

**A citizen meeting at Sarvodaya Centre - Matara- 91-09-11**

Certain industries have badly affected the local arts. The south was famous for traditional dancing, specially for eighteen item devil dancing. What has happened now? Those who do not know the local dancing tradition, present dances, songs and music in the guise of local traditional dancing to cater to the low taste of tourists at tourist hotels. See what has happened to the local mask making. It has fallen down to the level of a business. All these have deteriorated. The art is turned into a business and people earn money by selling the art of mask making.

**Southern Sri Lanka People's Confab- 91-09-27**

(From a letter)

So far as the Southern province is concerned, setting up of tourist hotels in the coastal areas has resulted not only in the pollution of the environment, but also in the degeneration of culture. The limestone industry has contributed to the erosion of the coastal areas where people live.

**Piyasena - Nilwella - 04.05.91**

The gentlemen had rented out a big house at Mawella. First they said they make the lagoon to breed prawns. When the Ven. Priest explained matters people from all the villages turned against the construction of the Power House.

Since 1965, we have been asking for a harbour. This is a natural harbour and is deep about 10-20 fathoms. A good wind, ideal for seafaring is available here.

**Ven. Kottegoda Upananda Thero - Nilwella Minikirula Temple - 04.05.91**

The Ministers of Government go abroad and accept every plague. They don't consider whether (it) suits the country or the nation. If the Coal Power Plant was put up, it would have been similar to the bombing of Hiroshima.

**A citizen - Dickwella - 04.05.91**

If a Power Plant was constructed at Mawella, that would have been the end of us. The priest told us how the country and the sea would be destroyed. It became a desperate situation. The work of the plant commenced having put up tanks in the lagoon. The news was that they were planning to breed prawns. The boys liked it. But later they expressed their dissatisfaction. The entire village rallied round.

## 4. Forests

### I. Deforestation

**Martin Wijesinghe - Sinharaja - 19.09.'91**

The primary problem is that of lands. It is due to the problem of lands that a forest gets destroyed. People need to eat and drink. We should not destroy even an inch of forest because Sri Lanka does not have adequate forests. Too much of forests are destroyed in Sri Lanka. So, we should protect the forests without felling a single tree. As I said people should have land for their day to day needs. They should be provided with land. One thing is clear. What do we find now on lands cultivated by us during the time of the whites ?

Such lands have no economic value now. Due to setting on fire, teak and rubber trees have died. If such lands are distributed among the ( landless ) people and facilities provided, nobody would invade our forests. People from large plantations have no right to come to the forests. Forests belong to the government and that is why they stealthily gain access to the forests despite obstacles. It is not possible to enter the plantations easily, but it is possible to enter the forests. If this is stopped and lands are allowed to be used, people will not come to the forests.

**A citizen - Public Hearing - Pansiyagama, Madahapola, Kurunegala - 20.09.'91**

For the last fifteen years forests are felled (logged) around here. Of the thick forests that existed before, not a single remains today. The highest mountains in this area is Kadampotha and this mountain has also been cleared. There was a little water flowing in the streams. After the forests were cleared, even this little flow has stopped and the streams have become sedimented. No there is no water sufficient (adequate) for farming.

**Ven. Pandith Gangarama Thero - Matale - 20.07.'91**

Forest resources are destroyed on a large scale for personal gains. By no means can ordinary people fell trees ( do logging ). The damage is not caused by ordinary people, but by powerful individuals. What is wrong if a dry tree is cut down from the forest ? Any day no harm will be done to the forest by such action.

**Ven. Samitha Thero - Poorvarama Temple, Pilagoda - 03.08.'91**

The relationship that existed between nature and the people has completely disappeared today. The forest is being protected by employing watchers.

**Ven. Goluwamulle Kolitha Thero, Puttalam - 21.05.'91**

Trees are being felled by the rich, the higher-up in the government and by those who govern the country. Even a little while ago, a lorry loaded with logs passed the town. Lorries heavily loaded with logs pass regularly. Sometimes when such lorries were taken into custody, the officers were transferred on the ground that they worked against the MPs and the Ministers.

**Weerakoon Banda, Hunnasgiriya - 23.05.'91**

The primary problem in this area is the scarcity of water. The streams (fountains) that existed on hill tops those days have dried up now. They have dried up because of the felling of trees. Felling of trees was being done for firewood (fuelwood), for tobacco farms or for factories.

**Representative of Farmers Association Pansiyagama Central College - 20.09.'91**

That (forest) is all what the people have now. The feeling that forests should be grown has now waned to a large extent. Farmers have been accused for cutting down the forest. Everybody is asking why the forests were felled. When it becomes impossible to get a good income from what is cultivated after clearing jungles, it was abandoned. Chenas were started at Pallekele. Thousands of acres have been destroyed. Now the government is prohibiting chena (swidden) cultivation. Because of such prohibition the government should consider what the farmers would do next and should give them redress. The government has not looked into it.

**A citizen - Karagahawewa, Anuradhapura - 23.09.'91**

Although forest plantations exist, they are unsuccessful because of logging for business.

**A worker - Sinharaja Forest - 27.09.'91**

Logging of Sinharaja commenced in 1972. That was done by the Canadian Government. About 5000 acres were subjected to logging. Trees on either side of the road to Sinharaja comprise the secondary forest.

**A citizen - Kargahawewa, Anuradhapura - 23.09.'91**

Clearing of forests took place after Mahaweli lands were allotted. People were earlier used to chena (swidden) cultivation. Even before the Mahaweli project came into being, forests were cleared.

After Mahaweli lands were allotted, those forests got destroyed even more.

**A citizen - Shanthipura, Nuwara Eliya - 06.07.'91**

People cut down trees for firewood (fuelwood). However much they are asked not to cut down trees, it cannot be stopped until the firewood problem is solved.

**A citizen meeting at Sarvodaya Centre, Matara - 11.09.'91**

Madu Ganga is an important place in Balapitiya. Around every small island in Madu Ganga there are Kadol trees. Bakers cut down these Kadol trees and turn them as a good source of firewood that produces heat. Now soil erosion has taken place in this area.

**Nandasena Pinidiyaarachchi - Balangoda - 29.09.91**

About 2800 acres of thick forest were cleared for the Samanalawewa Project. We have still not found an alternative to these thousands of acres of forests which existed for several generations and which helped us to maintain the balance in environment.

When large scale forests vanish, the surrounding smaller forests have to pay the penalty. We have to fulfil all our requirements of timber and firewood from the smaller forests. The disappearance of large forests is a threat to the smaller forests.

There is a jungle of 100 acres by the name of Dampitiya Mukalana in the vicinity of Balangoda. Mahogany trees planted about 30 years ago are being cut down for firewood. There is nobody to check the sawing of timber inside the jungle.

**A Resident of Gurubewila, Balangoda - 29.09.'91**

In the past there were several protected forests in this area. Known as Kandekumbura, Boyawalana, Bolthumbe, Wandehimukalana and so on, none of them is to be seen today. They have turned out to be no man's lands. There is no room even to fetch a piece of firewood.

**A Resident of Gurubewila, Balangoda - 29.09.'91**

In the past there was plenty of water which was available for bathing, for paddy fields and for other useful purposes. But due to the indiscriminate clearing of plots of land set apart by the government as forest reserves, obtaining water has become difficult.

**Chief Priest - Nawalapitiya, Balantota - 23.05.'91**

Clearing of forests in Ratnapura district is being done with political patronage. Even the officials help a great deal in this connection.

**A citizen - Arts Society Hall, Kandy - 20.07.'91**

Degradation of the environment is taking place. Certain officials submit false reports to the government. They try to show that a substantial income is derived from tea plantations. But an income commensurate with the expenses is not derived.

Senkadagala and Kandy are cool places because of the hills in the central region like Hunnasgiriya, Udu-Dumbara and Knuckles range. This situation is being changed now. At present there is a six-months long drought in areas like Udu-Dumbara. During the drought hill tops are set on fire. A large scale destruction of the environment has been thereby caused.

**A citizen - Meeting at Sarvodaya Centre, Matara - 11.08.'91**

In Galle district there is a large area designated as 'protected' by the government. Because such protected lands are brought under commercial crops to a large extent, streams and waterways in the vicinity face the threat of drying up. No action is taken either by the government or any other relevant agency against such clearing of land.

**A youth - Meeting at Sarvodaya Centre, Matara - 11.08.'91**

Forests should be grown with the protection of the people as well as voluntary societies. Otherwise it would be futile. The existing forests in this area are destroyed by influential people. The influential people in the area transport logs to the city.

**Ven. Maditiyawela Wijithasena Thero, Ratnapura - 91-05-24**

For the most part, the politicians are responsible for the rape of the forest in the Ratnapura District. felling is done with the protection of the politicians. The officers have a tendency for this.

**A citizen - Ampegama - 91-08-09**

The Beraliya forest in the south has been destroyed because of the intervention of the Government Officers. In case a poor villager cuts a piece of wood for an ekel broom or for a rafter to a house, there are officers to take him to the police and get him fined. But no one came to punish those big illegal businessmen who deal in timber on a large scale. We have a so-called development in the country.

**A citizen - Sarvodaya- Matara- 91-08-11**

In the Madu river there are mangroves around every islet. These are being cut by the bakery owners, on a large scale. Soil erosion has taken place in these beautiful islets which I saw as a child. Those are wonderful sort of plants. When they grow at a place, roots come down through branches and the floating litter is retained by these roots and the plant breaks off on to the land. What happens is gradually the earth extends little by little, protecting the islands from being washed up. So the cutting down of mangroves should be stopped forthwith.

**A citizen - Kahatagasdigiya - Anuradhapura - 91-09-24**

The villagers do not destroy the forests. They cut down a tree to put up a house, or for fuel wood. It doesn't lead to deforestation. It does not affect the environment. The people do not cut down the trees that are necessary to the village. Some parties came from Colombo or from other cities and destroy the forest. That is where a remedy should be effected.

**A citizen - Kahatagasdigiya - Anuradhapura - 91-09-24**

In the recent past, it was announced that electricity supply will be provided here. Thereafter they marked trees with the English letter 'E' and cut down all these trees. They take the permission of the Timber Corporation to remove the trees. In the meantime the trees disappear. In the morning even the stump is burned. None can say what happened to the trees.

**A citizen - Kahatagasdigiya - Anuradhapura - 91-09-24**

In land preparation for Chena cultivation, the large trees are not cut. Only small trees and thorn bushes are removed. The Chena requires the large trees. It is said that large trees are destroyed for Chena cultivation, no tall trees could have been left at the rate the Chenas are done here. Farmers did not cut trees, it was the businessmen who did that. We have no doubt about it.

The timber pirates in our country have links with the influentials at different levels. So we cannot expel these pirates from the village just because we, the small people protested. Villagers are aware of it. If a villager cuts a stick it is an offence. If he cuts a tree or two to put up his house, it is an offence. But taking lorry loads of timber is not an offence. The devices these pirates use for this massive scale illicit fellings are endless.

**A citizen - Bandarawela St Joseph's College- 91-07-28**

Environment is being polluted on a large scale in the Uva Province. Today the forest resources have dwindled to 10% or 15%, because the influential people in our country have cut down the trees. If a villager who grows a tree, cuts down one tree, the powerful people who don't grow even a single tree, cuts down 100 trees. This felling of trees is instrumental for the environmental pollution.

**A citizen - Bandarawela St Joseph's College - 91-07-29**

The influentials are responsible for the destruction of the natural environment and this destruction has spread widely. It was a practice that came down from the time of ancient kings to have a forest for each village in the Uva Province. In the past on the eve of starting work in the paddies, we went into the forest to get timber for our ploughs. We went into the forest to get various things needed in farming. Today we go to the town to buy these things. We buy the handle to the mamoty. We buy the mortar from the town and these are available for sale.

**Wijesundera, Muthiyangama Temple, Badulla- 91-05-30**

Ques. To what extent has deforestation taken place in the Badulla area ?

- Answ.: It is less now. It lessened in the past because of J V Pers. If not a large number of traders cut and removed trees.
- Ques.: What is the extent of destruction now?
- Answ.: Large scale de-forestation was as a result of the Mahaveli Project. A large area of forests were cleared in the Uva Province.
- Ques.: Where?
- Answ.: In Mahiyangana and Girandurukotte areas and so on. I think it's about 45,000 acres. The project runs from Girandurukotte to Polonnaruwa. That did the most destruction. Next is the shifting cultivation in the Wellawaya area. The other is tobacco farming. Earlier for about 20 years tobacco was grown in the Diyaluma electorate in the Badulla District. It cleared mountains and forests. In the Dunhinda area a considerable extent of forests were cleared. This was in the water-fall area which should be carefully protected. Recently I saw there that a large number of trees had been cut down. In the area there are valuable sandalwood trees. A pound of such wood fetches a considerable sum of money. The trees grow naturally in the forest there. If the people are educated, deforestation can be minimized. They don't realise things.

**A citizen - Badulla - 91-05-30**

The traders come to the lands of the villagers and ask for one or two trees. They cut down the trees and remove them. When a lorry load of timber was passing we telephoned the Forest Officer. He asked us to inform the Police. There is no meaning in our telling the Police. He should have done it. He was in a hotel close to the police. He was asking us to make an entry at the Police Station. Later we got the information that the man used to cut and remove trees paying a bribe every month to the officers.

**Dharmasena- Monaragala- 91-05-30**

During the past few years, trees were felled. The Timber Corporation was handed over the responsibility of removing wood and fuelwood from the catchment areas of tanks. People who come from Colombo did that. The Timber Corporation exploited all the trees and creepers here. The other is Pelwatte Sugar Company. They burnt the forest, the way they wanted and what is left today is only cane sticks. This caused a loss of equilibrium in nature. Wellawaya today does not get the rain it got five years ago. Pelwatte Sugar Company is responsible for it.

**Dharmapriya Samansiri- Passara- Badulla- 91-09-09**

(From a letter)

Although small in extent, the Namumukula forest spread over 5500-6700 feet above sea level has not been declared as a forest reserve and valuable plants are being destroyed.

**Mr Kanakarathna- Hakgala- Nuwara Eliya- 91-07-26**

If the officers concerned and the villagers are educated and an orderly arrangement is made the Hakgala Forest Reserve can be protected. If Hakgala reserve is destroyed it does not end there. The reserve goes even up to the top of the mountain. Around the Palanas it is the date which is surrounded by nine villages. The destruction of the Hakgala reserve will affect these villages. All these villagers have to be educated.

**Jayasekera Tennakoon- Allewela- Paththiyagedera- Bandarawela - 28.01.91**

The pressing problem in the area is the racketeering in illicit felling on a large scale by the friends of politically influentials, because of the Uma Oya project activities.

**II. Wild Life**

**Bandirala - Bambaragahawatte, Matale - 19.07.'91**

We have no way of living. When a sanctuary is opened and boundaries are demarcated, we cannot enter it even to fetch ( cut ) a stick. There is no place to graze a pair of cattle. These are for all of us. Men who live by chena ( swidden ) cultivation, grow paddy and Kurakkan by clearing the jungle. Because of sanctuaries this too is precluded.

**A citizen - Art Society Hall, Kandy - 21.07.91**

These days there were forests in Poionnaruwa, Minneriya, Habarana and Thoppigala areas. Because of the sound of LTTE firing, elephants have come to this area. Now elephants live in small jungles. Besides, a lot of trees are being felled in Habarana area. Therefore, elephants who lived in forests have come to villages.

**A worker from the Department of Wild Life Conservation- Polonnaruwa - 91-05-08**

There are difficulties more than the duties. These are the obstacles we come across in the execution of our duties. In their sentry rounds our officers have come across lot of impediments. In these areas people tend to do a lot of illegal activities. There are no security zones in our forests around. People are settled up to the borders of the forest reservations. Even in a newly set up national forest reserve we don't have such a protective zone. Even on the border of national forest reserve, Mahaveli settlements have come up. Because of this we have come across a lot of problems. The wild animals damage these settlements and harm the people. Because of such events people are not well disposed towards us. They clash with us. People always help the other side. Without public assistance illegal activities cannot be stopped.

There are protective zones to avoid damages from wild animals. Problem is, people always come into our forests for their needs. The other is, organized racketeers illegally enter the forests for timber business and hunting. In such instances we have to take them into custody. When we do our duty right, big clashes emerge and political intervention follows. The officers are subject to various hardships. If we do not have any protection we no longer can attend to our duties. How can we do this?

**Chief Priest - Muthiyangana Temple. Badulla - 91-05-30**

The forest cover is destroyed to-day, just like the elephants have been destroyed. We talk about wild life. They too should co-exist with the environment. Because of the Pelwatt Sugar Company, hundreds of elephants were killed. People made agitations against it. Unfortunate things about which we cannot even talk, happened in the Siyambalanduwa area. We fear to talk about them. The villagers, for the most part hesitate to talk directly

**A citizen - Laggala- Pallegama- Matale- 91-05-22**

Citizen: Damages by wild animals post a serious problem

Ques : From elephants?

Answ : Yes; from elephants. That's the problem. Otherwise these lands are enough for farming

Ques : From where do the wild animals come?

Answ : From Wasgamuwa. It is close to us.

Ques : Is this problem a recent one? Has it been happening for a long time?

Answ : No. From a generation. Then we had guns. Non availability of guns has worsened the problem.

Ques : Recently there was a change in the invasion of elephants. They were chased to one place?

Answ : That increased the problem.

Ques : Why?

Answ : The elephants did not go. They stopped half way. They are now invading the villages

Ques : That means they did not do it systematically?

Answ : No; elephants have increased now. This is highlighted in today's paper too. This is a serious issue here.

Ques : Haven't you thought of any way to settle this?

Answ : We have informed the higher officials

Ques : Don't the villagers have any suggestions? You all can suggest a way to keep the elephants in the forests.

Answ : They should live but not in these villages.

Ques : You don't mind them in the interior of the forests?

Answ : If elephants are there, nothing good will come.

- Ques.: Even in the far off jungles?
- Answ.: Then they come to the Chenas one by one.
- Ques.: Then what should be done to them?
- Answ.: They should be chased away. Should be trapped. It doesn't matter if people are provided with guns
- Ques.: What happens then?
- Answ.: The elephants can be frightened away.
- Ques.: Not to kill?
- Answ.: No. It is not good to kill. Elephants are a national asset.

#### **Jayasingha Banda- Matale- 91-05-22**

- Ques.: What sort of thing should be done to chase the elephants, protect the cultivations and keep the elephants in the forests?
- Answ.: Provide the people with guns
- Ques.: You may shoot once, but they come back again?
- Answ.: They don't come back. There's another question. If there are guns, we can get to-gather in groups and chase the elephants away. We can do it more successfully than the government. If we have a gun we are not afraid. There are killer elephants here
- Ques.: What about the guns you had?
- Answ.: We handed over to the government. We have no guns at all. We can shoot in the air without killing them. Once such shooting is done at one place, the elephant does not come until the harvest is collected. This is the best solution now. We did not kill people with our guns. They were for the protection of farms.

#### **A citizen - Elahera- 91-05-22**

The serious problem in the area is that so far the elephants have destroyed about 300 houses. These elephants are a wonderful species!

- Ques.: From where do they come?
- Answ.: From the Elahera project. About 4 months ago they put down the wall of that house. They broke the wall exactly at the place where paddy was stored, pulled out the sacks and ate the paddy. About three days ago they crossed the river put down the walls and ate rice.
- Ques.: Why do elephants come like that? Did they come earlier too?
- Answ.: Earlier they didn't come like this.
- Ques.: Is the Wasgamuwa reserve close by?
- Answ.: There were some people to chase away elephants to Wasgamuwa. What they did was they chased the elephants to come here. All the elephants are now in the village.

Ques : Didn't you inform the department of Forest Conservation?

Answ : We have written to all those concerned. But haven't got any reply at all.

### **III. Introduced Species**

#### **A citizen - Kandegedara, Matale - 20.07.'91**

After the planting of pinus, streams that existed hither to have dried up. There is not even a drop of water in them after pinus came to be planted. Earlier we used to get water everywhere. Now everything has dried up.

#### **Erolis - St. Joseph's College, Bandarawela - 28.07.'91**

Those days the tank was full of water for cultivation. So the harvests were good. Now there is no water because of pinus cultivation which was started about 7 or 8 years ago. Nothing

grows where there is pinus. Not even a shoot of grass where pinus leaves fall.

#### **A citizen - Mathatilla, Bandarawela - 27.07.'91**

Destruction is caused by pinus. With one match stick lighted the entire mountain gets destroyed instantly. Not even one plant of grass exists in a pinus plantation. The little water that was available has also dried up.

#### **A teacher - St. Josephs College, Bandarawela - 28.07.'91**

Please do away with pinus cultivation. If pinus cultivation is of no benefit to us, if there is nothing in it for animals to feed on, if birds do not nest in pinus trees, then we get nothing from the pinus tree. There are many trees in this country much better than pinus and turpentine.

#### **A Labourer - Diganatenna, Mirahawatte - 28.07.91**

I am working as a supervisor on a pinus plantation. Mr. Dudley Senanayake too was against pinus cultivation. Through experience I have observed that pinus cultivation is not suitable for Sri Lanka as it greatly causes the drying up of natural streams (fountains). All fountains around here have dried up. When a pinus leaf drops not even a weed grows in that place. Thereafter when it is set on fire, gravel and sand come up and as a result weeds do not grow.

#### **A Farmer - Pansiyagama, Madahapola, Kurunegala - 20.09.'91**

Traditional farming cannot be done now at any cost. If the surrounding hills are grown with trees it would be OK. The forest Department grows trees. They have been destroyed due to setting on fire by the people of this area. There will be no problem if cashew and tamarine are grown instead of ipil ipil and akesia.

**A citizen - Mathatilla - Bandarawela - 91-07-26**

Pinus cultivation won't help as forest farming. The government should take an interest to plant trees that grow here locally. The plants that are exported and put down here will not benefit our earth. The multi-national companies will organize nurseries and say plant these in place of ours. These are the things that happen today. Whatever the destruction that is caused to the country, something is shown on the TV screen and the government gets those things grown. What do they grow? Pines, eucalyptus. Those things grow easily. It is easy to put down and easy to grow. There is no point in our talking whether they are suitable for the environment or not. The decisions are taken by more important people than we.

**A citizen - at Bandarawela St Joseph's College - 91-07-28**

- Ques: Let's go back to about 30 years. How was the farming then ?
- Answ: In those days, the tank had enough water for cultivation. So the farming thrived well. Water posed no problem at all.
- Ques: Why there isn't sufficient water now?
- Answ: That's because people who work in the estate have put up a pines cultivation. The bund of the tank is broken and it doesn't get filled with water. People have put vegetable pots in the tank.
- Ques: Since when this pines growing began ?
- Answ: From about seven to eight years.
- Ques: Were you also involved in the growing of pines ?
- Answ: No! No!
- Ques: Who did ? Who grew ?
- Answ: It was done by the government.
- Ques: Can't we grow our own trees at places where there are pines ?
- Answ: Nothing can be grown. At places where pines leaves drop not even a blade of grass can be grown. The place gets dried up like a cemented floor.
- Ques: Let's say, that we do not grow pines hereafter. Can we grow our local species in those places?
- Answ: No. Difficult to grow. It's a painstaking job.
- Ques: Now they don't grow ?
- Answ: No. The soil has become completely infertile.

**Dharmaratna, Bandarawela St Joseph's College- 91-07-29**

We have no water, because of pines. Soil is washed off. Those lands are infertile. Under the pines even a 'mulkiri' tree doesn't grow. Now we cannot grow the way the government said. It is impossible to get the juice of the pines tree and sell a kilo of such juice at lakhs of rupees as the TV showed it recently. If there were jack trees at least we can get a fruit to eat. At least an animal will live.

**A farmer- Bandarawela - 91-05-30**

Ques.: When did the growing of pines and turpentine begin?

Answ.: Pines growing began after 1975.

Ques.: What is your idea about the effect of pines on water springs when they are grown on hill tops?

Answ.: The pines and turpentine growing destroyed our springs. Our climate has been affected. We lost our water too.

**A labourer- Bandarawela - 91.05.29**

I work in a pines estate. Mr Dudley Senanayake was also against growing pines. Many learned people said that this pines was not good for Sri Lanka. I too feel that these trees are responsible for the drying up of the natural springs. All the springs around have dried up and the climatic conditions have got distorted. Pines leaf fall does not allow even a weed to come up. Once they catch fire the sands and metals come up. Nothing grows under the pine trees.

**Kanakaratna- Hakgala- Nuwara Eliya; 91-07-26**

Patanas cannot be considered as infertile land. They are necessary for the environment. The government grows pines and eucalyptus. This destroys even the available fertility. People think that pines have contributed to soil erosion. This really happens because of soil erosion.

**Rosalin Nona- Bandarawela - 29.07.91**

I have lived in Bandarawela for 29 years. Today the city is quite different from that of yester year. Pines growing has changed the environment. Pines were grown to save water, but I feel we have lost water. Today even this cultivation is being destroyed. We have a canal near our house. There too the water level is dropping.

**R A Dharmasena - Nawadandegama- Bandarawela - 29.07.91**

In this area, drying up of springs because of pines growing has become a serious problem. The cultivation of pines has not only deprived us of the little water we had, but also has destroyed the cattle breeding activities in the area. This happened because we lost grazing fields. We do paddy and vegetables. We don't have the water we require for these.

In lands coming under pines, plants of our own should be put down. The species should be selected to match our environment. Lands that can be developed should be distributed among the landless.

#### **IV. Biodiversity**

##### **A citizen - A meeting at Sarvodaya Centre, Matara - 11.09.'91**

When we were young there was Kekatiya growing in the river. Olu (water lillies) are not be seen now. Due to this, we have lost two good medicinal food items. They might grow again if salinity stops.

##### **Martin Wijesinghe - Sinharaja Forest - 91-09-27**

Sinharaja is the most valuable tropical rain forest in the world. The reasons are the trees that grow tall and the 76% of uniqueness to Sri Lanka. Medicinally, almost all the plants are herbs that can be used in our Ayurvedic System of Medicine. Similarly, there are fish, birds and beasts unique to Sri Lanka. This is an ever green forest which has received North-Eastern and South-Western monsoon rains for over four or five centuries. It also gets inter-monsoon rains.

##### **A citizen - Pilagoda, Galle - 91-09-03**

There are plants endowed by nature. When the beasts eat fruit and excrete, seeds fall and germinate. Even today, there are plants growing and large trees which have come up in this natural method.

##### **A citizen - Ampegama, Galle - 91-08-09**

The 'Rumassala' range of mountains close to the city of Galle is a thing of exotic natural beauty in South. More the tourism is developing day by day, more is the degradation of this range of mountains. The environment has been destroyed to put up tourist hotels. As history has recorded it, Rumassala is considered as the herbarium of King Ravana. All the plants and beasts in the Himalayan region in India are available in this Rumassala forest. The environmentalists have also found rare species of wild life.

#### **V. Reforestation**

##### **A youth - Pansiyagama, Kurunegala - 20.09.'91**

The government would have generally spent five to six hundred thousand rupees. But I think only half of that amount would have been for growing forests. The remaining half may have been plaid out.

##### **A Rural Youth - Madahapola, Kurunegala - 20.09'91.**

If land is allocated, settlements and natural forests will grow together. Thereafter jak, coconut and breadfruit trees will form a canopy like a natural forest. Subsequently burning will not take place. As a result hundreds of trees will grow in each plot of land which will create a natural environment. The village Madahapola is a hill now where trees have grown well. Earlier they were hills like these.

**A villager - Madahapola, Kurunegala - 20.09.'91**

Cashew cultivation is not so successful. We pursue an idea when official puts it across. We are told that the Chief Minister or somebody else is coming. Some plants are distributed. One to two hundred people get together. A count is taken for drought relief and they work for two or three days. They (officials) keep quiet after disbursing a month's relief. Later when drought sets in, the cashew plantation is set on fire. There is no cashew. The only thing that takes place is a ceremony.

**A villager - Madahapola, Kurunegala - 20.09.'91**

Pallekelle is a flat area where cultivation can be done fairly well. Yet thousands of acres of teak have been grown there. In these hilly areas there is nothing, but earth digging has been done on hills whereas teak has been cultivated on flat land. If one look at the history of those flat lands, there are many hamlets and small tanks overrun by the teak plantations. Teak has been cultivated by submerging many small tanks. If one were to take a walk into the teak plantations, bunds of such tanks can be seen even today.

**A Villager- Pansiyagama- Madahapola- Kurunegala- 91-09-20**

Madahapola Galpaya forest is protected by the people in the area. 150 acres have been planted with forests. The Government has spent about Rs. 5 or 6 lakhs to grow this forest but only a half of it may have gone to grow the forest. The other half would have gone for underhand dealings. On this hill, today there isn't a single tree. One reason is the mal-practices of Forest Officers. Now the people are aware. If the people change this attitude, the influential in the area will cut down those trees when they grow up.

**A Buddhist Priest- Pilagoda- Purvarama Temple- 91-08-23**

According to our understanding, if there is a forest in every village, that will be of much use to the village when there is no forest people face such problems as scarcity of water. If the Government takes an interest and grows a forest, the ordinary people can buy the timber from such forests on permit. A forest is of use to a village and even to the government. Even the government cannot cut trees free of charge. Security arrangements have to be imposed. A forest promotes sanitation in the village. It is good for the fields, for the water springs. There is no forest nearby. People have to go to Imaduwa and Sinharaja to fetch water. Even to cut a stick they have to go to these areas. If there is a forest people can make payments to the Government and purchase their needs of timber and wood. There are such good uses of a forest. A forest of about 35 acres would suffice to this area. It is useful to us and to the neighboring areas.

**Ven. Samitha Thero · 91-08-03**

Rather than bringing down plants from outside and plant them here, it is better to allow the plants already available here on some lands acquired by the Government with people's participation. These should be maintained by the village society of the Devotees under the leadership of the priests, and with the assistance of the Government. Several people should be deployed to protect that. There are trees and creepers unique to this area. These plants spontaneously grow. As an outside help, we can introduce trees which grow in these areas and which are not alien to these areas. They too have to be protected. This is a good opportunity to the villagers. This is a small village surrounded by a spreading jungle. It is easy to get the people in the neighbourhood together. Things have to be explained to the people, with examples. Then the people can maintain this forest. Because of the link the man has with the forest, I firmly believe that this idea can be passed forward.

**Chandrasekera- Bandarawela · 29.05.91**

Ques How should the trees be grown?

Answ Trees should be grown continuously. There are species like "Kumbuk" which should be grown. It should be a tree that can be put to use in all aspects. Earlier "Mara" trees were grown along the roads, but they were not of much use. Medicinal herbs can be of use to all. The trees like "Kumbuk" and "Karanda" are very useful to the environment. These have almost been wiped out now.

Ques How long such a conservation arrangement will take?

Answ About 05 years.

Ques They should be grown with a mix?

Answ Afterwards bamboo can be grown. A bamboo bush takes about one and a half years for a full growth.

**A farmer · Bambaragama- Bandarawela · 91-07-24**

It is because of the natural forests that the catchment areas are protected here. Felling of trees is daily increasing. We are facing the threat of all the forests in catchment areas being cut down. We urge the environmental officers to look into this problem. We planted trees on "the Tree Planting Day" and that's the end of it. We think about it on the next planting day. Within one year we see the end of the tree, and we plant another again, and fix a board. It is better to protect the few remaining trees.

**A farmer -Rikillagaskada- Hanguranketa- 91-05-14**

In the Wilpattu village in Udakanda, forest farming has been done by the department of Forest Conservation. In short, pines and acacia growing is just like keeping a dead body upright. Water gets dried up. Even on the lands alienated to us from the Wilpattu area, in times of our great grandfathers, the officers of the Department of Forest Conservation have forcibly done forest farming. At the time of commencement of that farming farmers were farming those lands. We have about 26 poor families. The officers who instructed them told them that the forest farming would not affect their cultivation and they would do forest farming as directed by the government. After about 10 or 15 years these officers have secretly filed cases against these farmers. Some farmers have been charged for removing earth. Some for doing cultivation in the forest farm. In this way cases have been filed unreasonably- Everybody did farming. They have planted some trees to absorb the trickle of water which stretched miles away. They have polluted the environment. They have planted a tree called turpentine. With trickles of water the roots of these trees came up. Nothing grows here.

**A farmer-Rikillagaskada- Ginigathena-91-05-14**

The youth club had informed us to start a community forest project. So we started one around Hanguranketha Maha Vidyalaya. This we did on our own. It takes three years to protect the catchment area, after first planting the jack plants. We put down jak plants on lands alienated to us by the commissioner, under community relief. Now that they have grown to a certain extent, the lands are to be distributed to friends of politicians under political pressure. This is the place which provides drinking water to thousands of school children. Earlier there had been a pipe line from the rock. That water completely fulfills the needs of the students in hostels. It is a question for us as to why the lands are to be re-distributed under such circumstances.

## 5. Mineral Resources

### I. Gem Mining

#### **Mr Weeraratne- Ratnapura-91-05-23**

About 75% of the people at Ratnapura are engaged in the gem business. They do this to the extent each can do. The majority learn the gem industry and get into that business. Those who have not learnt the trade, soon or sometime before he gives it up. The others continue it. I prefer gems to be cut, polished and kept in Sri Lanka. If not they may be polished and sold to the foreigners. This takes the gems, uncut, to their country. That is a loss for us.

#### **Ven. Maditiawala Vijithasena Thero - 91-05-24**

By giving priority to the economic problem, we have endangered the pollution to a certain extent. There is no regular plan within the Ratnapura City. It is there in a haphazard manner, without guidance from the proper authorities. Gem mining has debased the environment on a big scale. Financially, the gem industry has improved. On the other side there is an economic decline. Tracts of paddy fields in the Ratnapura area has gone fallow. They cannot be farmed anymore. As we know about 04 decades ago, the Ratnapura district was self sufficient to a certain extent. The situation today has changed completely. About 400-500 acres of paddy lands cannot be farmed.

People have preferred gemming to cultivation and this has resulted in a great disaster in this area. In the past there was a tank called "Ehelapola Wewa", very close to the city. This tank fed the tracts of paddy fields in this Ratnapura area. Batugedara tract, Weralupe tract, and the Katamune tract etc. have been now given up. In those lands gem pits are sunk. These pits left unclosed, have created a plague of mosquitoes. In every house, occupants need mosquito nets. This situation did not exist about 3 to 4 decades ago.

#### **Gem Businessman- Ratnapura-91-05-24**

The gem resource in our country is completely owned by private parties. Gem business has today become a monopoly. If this situation continues, very soon we will be deprived of this resource. Whether this resource does not belong to the people in this country, is a major question. The government is the only authority that can maintain this business. Why the government does not want to do so is another question.

Gems are an exhaustible limited resource. If it is lost, we will have no such resource as gems. That is why, in today's developed world, valuable resources are kept as reserves. They collect such resources. They do so fearing that one day that resource would be lost to them. We must think of the future generation. We must work together as members of one family. I cannot understand why they are destroying this resource.

When we consider how gem pits were sunk during the period 1972-1980 we feel that people are more concerned about earning than the environment. Digging pits with machines is not allowed today. These prohibitions have come, after the environment was destroyed. Areas like Elahara have suffered the most. Such lands where pits were sunk cannot be made use of today. It is after the pollution has been completed that we think about environmental pollution. Why did we allow this to happen? Who is responsible? Who were the sharers of this destruction? They know what they did. The main culprit is the prevailing administrative machinery. A government depends on the income of the country. What happens if an annual income of half a million is received in place of 50 million? This is what has happened to the government. Is it not the government itself which is badly hit?

**A Citizen - Matale - 20.07.91**

In Elahera, Kaluganga area, in the Matale district, there are gem deposits worth billions. Mines are cut from morning till night legally or illegally. The gems mined are exported by the businessmen. What is left for us is only the soil that floats in the Kaluganga which feeds the Parakrama Samudraya. (a reservoir)

**P. J. Ratnasekara - Proprietor, Ratna Gem Centre - Ratnepura  
91.05.24**

I count 10 years working experience at the Gem Corporation, and a further experience of five years here at Ratnapura. With my 25 years of experience, I see that if this asset is destroyed in this manner, the future generation will not have the advantage of making use of this resource. About 90% of our gems are already in Bangkok. When one goes there only one can understand who owns our gem resources. Before I went to Bangkok, even I thought that I had a considerable knowledge in gem business. At Bangkok, I felt as if I were an aborigine wearing a loin cloth. Our gem resources are entirely in their hands. They are gradually turning out to be the sole monopoly in the world gem business. If this situation continues for some time, we will lose this resource, and this business. Oh! God! It doesn't matter for us. We will be leaving this world in a few days time. But the big issue, is whether the people in this land cannot lay claim to this resource. Only the Government can maintain this business. It is unimaginable as to why the Government does not need to maintain at least such a thing.

### **Chief Priest - Sri Gnanasiha Thapovana Temple - 91.05.24.**

Gemming has greatly damaged the environment in the absence of guidance from those responsible. On one hand the gem business had become viable financially. On the other hand there is a decline in the economy. I mean, that large tracts of paddy lands in the Ratnapura area have become fallow. These lands cannot be farmed. As we know, about 4 decades ago, Ratnapura was self-sufficient to a certain extent. Now the situation has completely changed. In about 400-500 acre of paddy land cultivation is not done. Recently, some of the farmers wanted to take up this matter with the Government Agent and the Government. So that they could get back their old paddy lands, provided with irrigated water. But those farmers themselves were responsible for this catastrophe. They have given up farming and have taken to gemming which has resulted in this destruction. In this area, there was a tank called Ehelepola in the older times. It was with water from this tank that tracts of fields were cultivated in the Ratnapura area. Batugedara tract, Weralupe tract, and Katamune tract etc. Since the pits have not been closed, Mosquitoes breed largely. Ratnapura today faces this mosquito menace. Today at any home, it is rather difficult to sleep without mosquito nets. This was not so about 3-4 decades ago.

### **A citizen - Ratnapura Town - 24.05.'91**

Environmental pollution today has increased 100%. The way the mines were cut during the period 1972-1990 it is obvious that people need money more than preserving the environment. Today machines are not allowed in digging mines. The prohibition has come only after the environment has been destroyed. Areas like Elahera faces this problem largely. These areas where mines were cut have become useless for anything. After the environment has been polluted, we claim that it has who allowed it? Who were the partners of this disaster? They know what they did. The existing administration is the chief miscreant. Today money has twisted the human mind.

### **Gem Businessman - Ratnapura - 14.05.'91**

Within two years from its inception in 1972, the state Gem Corporation came to be the second highest foreign exchange earner. Today it is at the end of its collapse. When this happens a monopoly on gems would emerge and people will lose this asset altogether.

The government destroyed the Gem Corporation. Not the people. People brought the State Gem Corporation to a sound footing. But that position sank just like a sinking ship. Having done this, today the Government says "let's have another Board".

1972 - 1991, when we see the rate of devaluation of the rupee during this period today we lose about Rs 5000m a day. The Gem resource is not properly controlled. It is strange why the Government is not concerned about this.

It is opined today that no one owns the Gem resource and it should be handed over to the private sector. If that happens the Blue sapphires which fetch about Rs 50,000/= will have the price stabilized at about Rs 37,000/=. A small group will become richer. The profits will go to about 5% of those engaged in the gemming industry. About 95% will fall into a miserable position with no employment. The income that should go to the Government is drained off to foreigners.

**A citizen - Devaladeniyagama, Matale-91-05-29**

- Ques: From what area are you returning after gemming operations?  
Answ: A little far off.
- Ques: Where?  
Answ: About one mile across Ma-oya
- Ques: That means you do gemming in the Ma Oya area?  
Answ: Yes.
- Ques: What is this village?  
Answ: Devaldeniya
- Ques: These villages come under Matale(District)?  
Answ: Yes
- Ques: How do you do gemming? As an occupation?  
Answ: Sometimes as an occupation. We do farming also. When we are free we cut gem pits
- Ques: Whose pits?  
Answ: We ourselves cut them
- Ques: Your own pits?  
Answ: Yes
- Ques: Is it not necessary to take permits for them?  
Answ: It is necessary. Otherwise Police nab us.
- Ques: In the rush you also do it?  
Answ: Yes. If we are caught, we are fined.
- Ques: How much?  
Answ: Rs 500/-
- Ques: Have you got good gems?  
Answ: We get a little.
- Ques: What sort of gems?  
Answ: Small ones to meet our expenses.
- Ques: Haven't you go big gems?  
Answ: No.
- Ques: For how long have you been doing this gemming?  
Answ: Several years.

**A group of people from the area- Devaladeniyagama, Matale - 91-05-22**

- Ques: Whose lands are these?

- Answ.: These are state lands. There are settlers, settled by the government as farmers. These lands have gems. Outsiders come here and do gemming as an occupation.
- Ques.: In their lands? Not in state lands?
- Answ.: Gemming is over in their lands. These lands cannot be cut anymore. Now the forest is cut.
- Ques.: Do they cut down trees also?
- Answ.: There are such instances. The trees are uprooted, not cut. Instances come up where a tree has to be felled.
- Ques.: What do you mean by uprooting?
- Answ.: When the soil is removed under the tree, it invariably falls. We don't intend to fell a tree. We do as a job.
- Ques.: Even big trees are felled?
- Answ.: No difference between big or small.
- Ques.: Is gemming a big source of income to you?
- Answ.: Just enough to manage the day to day expenses.
- Ques.: Do the outsiders buy your gems?
- Answ.: There are big traders in the village.
- Ques.: The unauthorized gem pits are not closed with earth. Are they?
- Answ.: They aren't.
- Ques.: You see in the papers, officers come and explain to you, officers from the Gem Corporation come and tell you that felling of trees and the removal of earth will result in the decrease of water in the canals and streams down. The springs dry up. Do you know that?
- Answ.: We know.
- Ques.: What do you think about that damage?
- Answ.: Nothing can be done about it. If what we own by right in Sri Lanka has been sold by the Sri Lankan government to the foreigners, to the white people, is there anything wrong for us to do this for our living? These forests have been sold to white people.
- Ques.: To white people?
- Answ.: Sold to white people.
- Ques.: For what?
- Answ.: To do gemming.
- Ques.: Whereabout?
- Answ.: Here, down.
- Ques.: Have they completely cleared the land? Can we go there to see?
- Answ.: We can't go there. There are watchers. They have even put machines. There's one block here; another there.
- Ques.: What is the extent they have cleared?

- Ans.: No limit. Thousands of acres have been given. In all about 75,000 acres, to machine-dig gem pits. The cut all the gems.
- Ques.: Is the Kaluganga one river?
- Ans.: Yes. They say that this is the border.
- Ques.: There are layers and layers of earth. Isn't it?
- Ans.: Yes.
- Ques.: Is the earth put back again?
- Ans.: Yes, But things don't remain as in the past.
- Ques.: So white people do all these things? To companies in what countries have the gem lands been leased out?
- Ans.: In the past there was an Australian Company. Now it is a Thai company
- Ques.: Has the government given the lands?
- Ans.: Yes. Labourers are hired to do the work at the rate of Rs. 70/- a day. We tried our best to get this cancelled but in vain. This was highlighted in the press by the villagers. Petitions were sent. Even the Police swoop on, when villagers do it
- Ques.: People down may be the authorised company people?
- Ans.: Yes
- Ques.: Whether authorised or not they are foreigners aren't they?
- Ans.: The government has given the authority and they cut gem pits. Even if we go to the boundaries of those lands we can't dig pits
- Ques.: Is it the area where the villagers did that earlier?
- Ans.: Yes. That was the area. They follow what the people in the past did.
- Ques.: What do you think would happen to those areas in about 6 months or one year's time?
- Ans.: They will be deserts. Now itself it has happened. There is hardly a tree there
- Ques.: What you all have done for that as people in the area; as MPs in the area?
- Ans.: If one tries such things one will be left to himself. If a poor person tries, only he will be in the forefront. Ultimately he will find it difficult to live in the village.

## **II. Graphite Mining**

### **A woman - Kahatagaha mine, Kurunegala - 21.09.'91**

My husband is a labour hand in the mine. He fell ill because of working in the mine and he has been medically condemned by a Medical Board. Two years have lapsed since his illness. We don't get even a half of the monthly pay. This time I got only Rs. 470/=. I have to attend to all needs with this money. Medicines have to be bought for the husband. We must have our food. The children's schooling needs have to be looked after. There is no other source of income.

### **A Worker of the Mines - Kahatagaha Mines - 21.09.'91**

I am a mine worker. Even if we manage to come up having fallen ill inside the mine we are not given a vehicle (to go for treatment). We ourselves have to go home. Somehow or other, and come back to work on the following day. If we keep away for three days, letters are prepared warning us. We did not have this situation earlier. All these laws are for us.

### **A Worker of the Mines - Kahatagaha Mines - 21.09.'91**

We ourselves have represented matters to the Labour Department. I went four times and handed over letters to the Labour Dept. at Kurunegala. We did not get any opportunity for discussion. This was not so in the past. Today the Labour Dept. is like a dying person.

### **A Worker of the Mines - Kahatagaha Mines - 21.09.'91**

The Corporation has not taken any measure to prevent the employees from various afflictions. For over 20 years, the air is polluted inside the mines. About 100 kgs of gelatine are burnt inside per day. The fumes come up when the employees get down. These fumes and dusts get into our lungs when we breathe. Nothing has been done to change this situation and preserve the health of the employees.

### **A Worker of the Mines - Kahatagaha Mines - 21.09.'91**

No protection whatsoever. Recently a worker was burnt to death because of methane gas.

### **A Worker of the Mines - Kahatagaha Mines - 21.09.'91**

The most serious problem that emerges from privatising the mines is, who is going to compensate the workers who have been disabled. We can not expect compensation from those Company owners.

### III. Rock Blasting

#### **A citizen - Kurunegala- 91-09-20**

This quarry should be stopped completely. We don't have a water supply scheme. We do our cultivation under rain-fed conditions or by using spring water. Dynamites have destroyed the aquifers. So we lose the sources of water supply even for drinking purposes. We sometimes throw the post of rice we have cooked because it is full of stone dust.

They promised a paradise for us. They said that they would carpet (the roads) and provide the area with three-phase electricity and telephones to houses. Jobs were promised. But all these promises were not fulfilled.

#### **Metal stone project by a Korean Company Korelegedara, Kurunegala - 20.09.'91**

The Kyn nam of Korea started this company. Dynamites are used. Stones are crushed to be used for road building. This started about three months back. In that three months they put dynamite thrice. More than 95% of our houses were damaged. Tiles were broken.

Ques: What sort of damage ?

Answ: Walls are cracked. Cement flooring is broken. Lavatories are damaged. Wells are broken. There you can see the broken places of the wall.

Ques: How does it break ?

Answ: Stones fall on the walls. These are the stones that fell here. Stones everywhere. What a long distance the stones have been thrown.

Ques: Is a warning given when the stones are burst ?

Answ: Every five minutes a whistle is blown. Three times. But we don't hear it. They told us about a week ago. Then all the people in the village stayed off about a mile away. That's how our lives were saved. On that day everyone in that area left their houses. This is my son's child, one and half months old. His ear lids have burst.

#### **A villager - Kurunegala - 29.09.91**

They told us that the stones would not strike the houses. If we believed them and stayed in our houses, the stones would have struck our houses wounding the inmates. Even some of us would have got killed. We didn't believe them and left our houses. That saved our lives. The walls of the houses in this area are cracked. Roofs are damaged.

#### **A villager - Kurunegala - 20.09.91**

My name Mahathun, from Batapola, Pothuhera. We just manage to survive. Everytime we are in a fix. The stone crusher operates from about six in the morning to till about eight or nine at night.

### **A villager - Kurunegala**

Every one was told about this chief Minister, Government Agent, Divisional Secretary and the Assistant Divisional Secretary. All came from time to time and gave us promises saying that he will stop it. We believed everyone. But so far it has not been stopped. Villagers do not like to leave this area. Villagers are the owners of the village.

### **A villager - Kurunegala**

They dig to a depth of about 20 feet. Our house is about a three quarter mile off this place. Vibration has cracked the walls.

Eighty pits of 20 feet deep are connected with wires and burst all together. The Naulakanda Temple is about one and a half mile off. The vibration has shaken the galvanized sheets of the temple.

School is about two miles off. It is said that stones struck the roof of the school. The children in the school had asked the teacher from where those stones came. After that they knew that a Korean Company was working here. Some students had fainted. Then the children had been asked not to come to school when the dynamites were used. About 700-800 students attend the school.

### **Meeting of villagers near the metal project at Koralegedera, Kurunegala - 20.09.'91**

About 95% of the houses in our village faced problems. Walls are cracked, cement flooring damaged, walls broken, wells damaged and lavatories broken. The dynamites have destroyed the water springs. It is like, that we might not get drinking water. This child is only one and a half months old. His ears have burst. My ears are blocked.

The roofs of the Naulakanda Temple and the school about one and a half mile off had been shaken. Children had fainted.

Some people scare us telling that we will go to jail if we sue the company.

Now we throw the cooked pot of rice to the steam because of dust. My child who is about 2 1/2 years old had run away over a mile because he was afraid of the sound of the burst.

### **W. Janis - A villager from Koralegedera - 20.09.91**

These are our ancestral lands. We have paddy lands and we have cattle. We cannot leave them and go. We will not go even if we get more valuable lands. Our parents and our brothers and sisters dwell on these lands. So we cannot abandon such lands.

Earlier there was a quarry here. Generally the dynamites are put to a depth of about 1 1/2 feet. The sound is virtually not heard by the inmates of houses. There was no problem at all.

After these bigger machines were introduced. We are in trouble. Digging is done to a depth of about 20 feet. They cut a small place and put the dynamite sticks. When the company does four or five such setions, would the earth remain ..... ?

## IV. Mineral Resource Management

### Suriyabandara, Matale - 20.07.91

- Ques.: For how long the lime industry has been going on here?
- Answ.: From 40 years.
- Ques.: You are a person born here. Wasn't it there when you were small?
- Answ.: It was. But for sometime it wasn't done.
- Ques.: How did it first begin?
- Answ.: First lime stones were broken.
- Ques.: Who did that?
- Answ.: One of our people? He gave the limestones to the kiln.
- Ques.: How were they carried?
- Answ.: In those days they were transported in vehicles.
- Ques.: What vehicles?
- Answ.: Lorries.
- Ques.: When did the work start with kilns?
- Answ.: I think about 30 years ago. First two kilns came up in the upper region. Then people started putting up kilns.
- Ques.: Do you have a kiln?
- Answ.: Yes.
- Ques.: What about these lime stones. Does this land belong to the village people?
- Answ.: Villagers have a few. Others belong to Muslims and Tamils.
- Ques.: Where do they live?
- Answ.: There is a place called Galagedara. They live there.
- Ques.: You need a license to take the part under earth. Don't you?
- Answ.: I take a license.
- Ques.: How do you get it?
- Answ.: We have to take it from the Provincial Council.
- Ques.: Now you have a license.
- Answ.: Now I don't break stones. I did for sometimes. I have given it up as I am not well.
- Ques.: What is the system of licensing?
- Answ.: The Provincial Council informs the police who examine the place and issue the licenses.
- Ques.: What are the requirements?

- Answ. Generally, the houses and other things around have to be protected.
- Ques. What do you use to break the stones? Is dynamite generally used?
- Answ. Yes.
- Ques. Is it dynamite?
- Answ. Yes.

**A public health Inspector- Kalawana- 91-05-24**

If we look at where the industries are located, they have become a nuisance. The unemployment problem has been settled to a certain extent; but certain people have fallen into difficulties. Health-wise and environmentally a damage has been caused.

**Sunil Pathirana- Ittekanda- Kalawana- 91-05-24**

(from a letter)

It is revealed that a large limestone spread over a large extent of land of historic value in Walakada, in the Kollna AGA division is to be leased out for a period of about 20 years to a big gem businessman at Embilipitiya. Large rocks, trees and soil around that stone has been dumped into the brook nearby. A large spring on top of that limestone feeds about 85 acres belonging to the poor people who live down the stone. Drinking water too is obtained from this spring. By breaking this rock, springs have got dried up and farmers down have become deeply perturbed.

**A citizen - Sarvodaya- Matara-91-09-11**

The unplanned lime kilns have considerably affected the environment. When a kiln is operated there is a law that it should have a chimney to a height of 20 feet. This rule is not observed by any of the kiln owners in our area. We experience breathing difficulties. It is believed that this is because of the poison released from those kilns. Laws are there but they are not observed.

**A Youth - Galahitiya- Malkawa- 91-05-27**

There are resources for brick-making here. But the problem is marketing. If someone intervenes and provides us avenues of marketing then this self-employment can be developed. Making bricks alone won't help. The bricks have to be marketed. Our problem is that we cannot market our bricks. This is the problem also with the wood industry or with any other self-employment project. In this area we have bamboo and cane and such other resources. There are people with professional skills to put these resources to use. But all these are of no use when marketing facilities are not available. If the Government intervenes and helps the producers to dispose of their products, more people will tend to do these industries- then the economic conditions would also improve.

**A citizen - Meeting at Sarvodaya Centre, Matara- 91-09-11**

Ransegoda east is a very backward village in our area. The clay here can be used for brickmaking to develop it as an industry. There are a large number of unemployed young people both males and females. We have discussions with various organisations but nothing effective came up. Even if such large scale enterprises as the Koggala Free Trade Zone are not existing, we can do self-employment projects utilizing the village resources. We can do brickmaking.

**A citizen - Meeting at Sarvodaya Centre, Matara- 91-09-11**

There are ways and means in a village for a person to live; they can do brickmaking, sewing, livestock farming. Brickmaking involves hardly any expense. We can weave coconut leaves or make 3000 bricks per month. If we make 3000 we can get an income of Rs 2,400/- per month. Bricks can be burnt using chaff. To make 100 bricks, per day it doesn't take even an hour. In this way we have ways to lead an independent life in the village.

**A Youth- Thalawa- Anuradhapura- 91-09-23**

We have resources. We don't say that multi-national companies should be brought down here. What we say is provide assistance to the industries that can utilize our resources either through the government or through any other source. The government also should provide a market for the products.

**Art Theatre Hall - Kandy - 91.07.21**

Ques. Does the problem of using fossil resources with no proper management exist here ?

Answ. Yes, Yes. Elahera, gemming lands have no proper management at all. Similarly our area has some kind of quartz. They can be exported to Japan. We had a look around the village Pannegama and we hope to organize the matters in the future. We went to Kongahawela and recorded a wealth of data. There are people in the Central Province to fight for these. There is a farmer named Bandirala. The Eppawela apatite plant has now found out that phosphate is fast disappearing and it will be a very valuable fossil in the near future. I have seen that our I S S has conducted dialogues about this. We are told that this apatite can not be dissolved here and it should be sent to (foreign) companies. From some magazines brought down from the States we came to know that it can be dissolved in compost. If compost is substituted any phosphate can be dissolved. So these very countries inform us that this should be given to multi-nationals... if not there is no solution. These things should be taken up for discussions. Our campus students had done an experiment in the Dambulla area. They have found out that an area between Dambulla and Matale cannot be cultivated because of excess phosphate. Because of the change of composition in different chemicals, other problems emerge. Universities have found the out. This should be discussed. This can grow up to a

serious problem in the future. We use phosphate in our fields. In time we may not be able to farm these fields.

**A citizen - Meeting at Sarvodaya Centre - Matara - 91.09.11.**

Several successive Governments made some serious attempts before 1977 to revive the local industries. During this decade all these industries collapsed. Local resources land and labour are neglected and an alien open economy has been introduced, under which local resources are not cared for. These multi-national companies were interested only in earning money.

**A citizen - Meeting at Sarvodaya Centre, Matara - 11.09.91**

According to a project survey the coir industry is mainly associated with the south. For further improvement there are various products that can be turned out using coir raw material. There were things we used in the past. When such products turned out with coir as raw material began to fetch lower prices we fell from the frying pan into the fire. Those who were in the limestone industry barely managed to survive. Now there are no limestone. On this environmental problem the limestone industry too cracked. So we have no employment. If now projects can be opened using coir ropes, the Koggala project will be of vital value.

**A villager - Talawa, Anuradhapura - 24.09.'91**

Meeting NGOs - Peace Service

The phosphate project is at a place close to us. The only thing that is left to us from the phosphate factory is tuberculosis. This has no other asset, nor it is a source of revenue to Rajarata. These things should be different. The phosphate project has destroyed the entire environment. The dust is spread everywhere. Medical men have found out that about 25% of the people in this area are victims of heart ailments. Any project should not disturb the environment around it. But it has not happened.

**A citizen - thalawa - 24.09.91**

The deposits and all the components required for the phosphate industry are available here. All these resources are drained out. What is left for us are germs and diseases. Thousands are already victims of such diseases. Several other farmers who have nothing to do with this industry have fallen prey to diseases. There are any amount of examples.

## 6. Human Resources

### I. Labour and Self-employment

#### **A Tamil woman - Nawalapitiya- 91-05-22**

We come to the estate for work from Ambagamuwa. We have school going children. We need about Rs. 100/- a day. I am the only bread winner in the family. I get a salary of Rs. 45/-. There are five members in the family. My husband is not working. This salary is not enough.

#### **A woman- Rambula- Kalawana- 91-05-25**

There are people who have no land to work on. They hire their labour. A woman does not get more than Rs 40/- a day. A man gets about Rs 50/-. The poor people do some work for the rich, sell their labour to earn a living. There was a Timber Corporation here. There people earned about Rs. 2000/- a month. It is not more there. There are poor people who do not have even a shelter. They sell bundles of firewood to buy their measure of rice. Some pluck tea leaves at the company estate.

#### **Athula- Kalawana- 91-05-24**

There are youths without employment. Everyone does not get an opportunity to do a government job. The school dropouts have no self employment opportunities. In this area there are no such things as factories. Absence of opportunities for young people to train themselves for a job, is one reason for unemployment. Environment should be created to take out the hidden skills of the youths. To open a self-employment project, there should be ways to provide the youth with the needy capital.

#### **Dahanayaka- Kalawana- 91-05-24**

Over 30 years have lapsed since carpentry school in the Kalawana area commenced. A large number of people are trained there annually. When the trainees pass out, they have no jobs to do. They don't have facilities such as equipment to improve their skills. Here there is lot of timber. If they are helped with a government assistance scheme they can develop themselves.

#### **A Rural Youth- Kalawana- 91-05-25**

We don't have capital. If the basic capital required is available, we can start such things as self-employment projects. Not that resources are lacking with coconut leaves, we can give them to a place like a hospital. To start such things we need capital. We have no place in the market. If we prepare a stock and a source is there to purchase that stock, we can do several such industries here.

**A citizen - Ampegama- Galhenkanda School- 91-09-09**

At least one child from a poor family should be provided with employment. People in our houses are the poor. Sometimes each family has two or three school going children. It is not possible for the children to pursue their studies. Sometimes the parents are deprived of a livelihood. The children have to lag behind. They stop their studies, stay at home and hire their labour. They are forced to look after their families.

**A Mother- Maduwa- Balapitiya-91-06-12**

These days people did not come to buy ropes. Spinning too was not done. On some days we can't make even ten pieces of rope. We can not earn enough to meet our expenses. Even that amount is made with much difficulty. When there is other work we cannot do it. We are in debt. Sometimes we manage with one vegetable. We live amidst various hardships and sorrow. We get loans when what we earn is not enough. In instances of sickness we are helpless. To crush 100 husks and spin that coir, it takes a couple of days. Even from that we get only a half.

**Seneviratna- Rajanganaya- 15.05.91**

Most of the people here hire their labour. That is how they carry on their day to day existence. On the other side there is the colony. They go to the colony for work. They go there in the morning, work till about 5.00 in the evening and come back. Even younger generation follow suit.

**A Women - Rambuka, Kalawana - 25.05.91**

Those who have paddy and coconut lands have no problems there are poor people who don't have even a hut (look there making a signal with her hand). He has to sell that bundle of firewood to get his measure of rice. There are people in similar situation. Some pluck tree in the company land for a living. Some other sell their labour. Day's wage for a woman does not exceed Rs 40/= a day. A man gets about Rs 50/= a day. The poor go to the rich and sell their labour for a living. A Timber Corporation was here. Trees were felled, a road was built and a factory functioned. When it was there a man could get about Rs 2000/= per month. It is no more there now. In one household there are two or three educated children. There a considerable number of youths with ordinary level and advanced level passes. They are without jobs.

**Nandawathie - Buluthota - 25.05.'91**

I do a small trade. I have two school going children. My business does not give me any good income. I have a son who has passed examinations. He made several applications for employment in hospitals, Government Offices, to work as a labourer. All was in vain. In this village there are about 30-40 unemployed youths. They should be given facilities to start some industry. Selling their labour for Rs.50/= or 60/= get them nowhere.

**A female laborer- Bandarawela- 91-05-29**

- Ques.: Mother, how long have you been working in the tea factory?  
Answ.: About 24 years.  
Ques.: What is your name?  
Answ.: S M Leelawathie.  
Ques.: What changes have happened here, after 24 years?  
Answ.: Generally our factory today is more equipped with machinery.  
Ques.: You are in a labour grade. How is the income?  
Answ.: We get our normal salary of Rs.49/- plus a few cents per day.  
Ques.: Is that enough for your living?  
Answ.: We cannot say it is enough.  
Ques.: That means it should be more?  
Answ.: More the better. Cost of living is high. Our economy should be more improved.  
Ques.: How many are in the family?  
Answ.: I had six children. Two have gone away. There are four others. Two go to school and two are at home.  
Ques.: Is the income enough to educate them?  
Answ.: No! Nothing can be done. Just enough for the meals.  
Ques.: Haven't you asked for an increased salary?  
Answ.: I have asked, but haven't received.

**A citizen - Diarhaba Tea Estate- Welimada-91-05-28**

- Ques.: Grandfather, what is your name?  
Answ.: I am Kumaraswamy  
Ques.: What do you do here?  
Answ.: I weigh tea leaves  
Ques.: Is it sold here after that?  
Answ.: No. I weigh it and take it out.  
Ques.: How much tea leaves you have collected?  
Answ.: It depends. 10 or 15. We pluck by Kgs.  
Ques.: What do you do with the leaves?  
Answ.: We take it to the factory.  
Ques.: How much do you get for plucking leaves?  
Answ.: Salary of Rs.49/-  
Ques.: Is that enough?

- Answ.: Not enough
- Ques.: What are your expenses for a day?
- Answ.: About Rs. 100/- including expenses for the children also.
- Ques.: Are the children going to school?
- Answ.: Yes
- Ques.: Is the money enough to spend on children?
- Answ.: whatever we get, we spend on children's needs.
- Ques.: Where is your house?
- Answ.: In the estate.
- Ques.: Do you pay a rent?
- Answ.: No! We don't
- Ques.: How many labourers are there in the estate?
- Answ.: About 1800 About three from each family work
- Ques.: How many line rooms are there?
- Answ.: There are different quarters. One line has about 4 rooms

**A citizen - Ampegama- Galhenkanda Vidyalaya - 91-09-09**

At Free Trade Zones no such salaries are paid. The factors owners get our labour from morn till night. If a responsible organisation is vigilant over this, it is not possible to persecute labour in that way. they have to be alert always, about their needs, their work and the number of hours they should work

**A citizen - Meeting at Sarvodaya Centre, Matara- 91-09-11**

We are aware of the problems at workers' level once a Free Trade Zone is set up. Those in such areas as Galle, Matara, Hambantota, Kurunegala, Dambadeniya, Colombo and Katunayake work in these places amidst difficulties to earn a living. When the Trade Zone gets under way Koggala, those who are in the south and in other areas will get an opportunity to go to a job at a place close to their houses and they will be able to get some relief and earn some money. But we must make sure whether there are rules and regulations governing the employment of those who work whether they have the proper environment to do their jobs with no danger to their health or the permanency of their jobs.

**A youth Thalawa- Anuradhapura- 91-09-23**

The Multi-national companies bring clothes, prepare garments and take them back to their countries. They employ only our labour. Even the foreign exchange earned on investment is taken back. We have to stop this and invest local capital in industries. If such a venture was operated at least for one year, I think we can get better economic results.

### **Sarvodaya Centre, Matara - 11.09.'91**

**Ques :** Having set up free trade zones inviting foreign investors to open up large scale industries, and employment opportunities are found, would you like it ?

**Answ :** When such employments are given, they attempt to maximise their profit. They don't pay us a salary enough to manage our lives. Then we will have to lead miserable lives. Those in the Katunayake area suffer pain and agony. They keep up late at night. Even then they get about Rs. 1500/= . How much do they have to suffer for that? Farming is more independent.

### **Ajith Dissanayake - New Town Hall, Colombo - 14.09.'91**

Under the policy of free investment zones, the workers have not rights to organise themselves, to be concerned about their salary of their labour. Our people have paved the way to procure labour. At cheap rate to the multi national companies. There was a time when our country was free from debts. We are now entrapped in the new foreign colonialism.

### **A citizen - Meeting at Sarvodaya Centre, Matara - 11.09.'91**

The multi-national companies and the capitalists in our country have turned to exploit the labour of our young boys and girls. The rulers of our country are responsible for this. Why did they introduce an open economy? Anything can today be marketed here openly. That is why it has become possible to market our infants to foreign parties. We have to think over whether the country has any morality.

## **II. Corruption and Social Degradation**

### **A citizen - Kurunegala- 91-09-20**

A certain sum is allocated for area development. That money is not properly utilized for human development. Nothing is there where it is wanted. Culverts are not there for the water to drain. They were not put up the way we wanted; but done the way the contractors wanted.

### **A public health inspector- Kalawana - 91.09.24**

Generally a child should get the mother's affection, protection and care until he is about 05 years old. If there is any shortfall, the child will turn out as a person not conducive to the society. Socially, he will be a misfit, and a stubborn undesirable element. That is because of the unhealthy influence one gets at the early stage of life. Now, birth control has been a little misunderstood. It doesn't mean one for one family and two for another family. It means a number of children to suit the family and the family's economic condition. There is no limit as one or two for a family.

**A citizen - Ampegama- Galhenkanda Vidyalaya - 91-09-09**

Within the political machinery today the unqualified gets the jobs and the qualified is left at home. Some time back a large number of teachers were recruited as trainees. I know very well that youths with G C E (O.L.) and (A.L.) applied for those posts. But they did not get the posts.

**A citizen - Meeting at Sarvodaya Centre - Matara- 91-09-11**

The loan schemes of the private sector here have increased indebtedness. People are squeezed by the heavy burden of debts. People get only a small harvest. It is not enough to settle their loans.

**A citizen - Meeting at Sarvodaya Centre - Matara- 91-09-11**

The rich always try to make capital out of the poor. So inspite of poverty, there are people who are not disheartened.

**A woman - Kotapola, Morawaka- 91-05-26**

Woman: I put up in a leased in house. I have no lands and houses. Children's father died. Elder brother disappeared about 3 years ago.

Ques: Disappeared means?

Woman: He was doing a job in Colombo. When he was coming home, one day, during the troubled period he disappeared.

Ques: In 1989 or 88?

Woman: 1989

Ques: What did you do about it?

Woman: We looked for him. Went to fortune tellers, looked for him in places he used to stay.

Ques: Didn't you complain to the Police?

Woman: We informed all the places. We looked for him for 3 months.

Ques: Does any one from other families in this village disappear so?

Woman: A considerable number

Ques: How many people in this village?

Woman: More than ten or twelve

**Ranjith: Danawala Korale- Galle- 91-05-26**

This area did not get any assistance from the government. When elections are held for Provincial Councils or for any other organization, number of people come here tell some lies and go. That's what happens. Politically this are was not served by any government. We have no health facilities at all. No educational facilities. There is a school but no teachers. All they have are 11 teachers including the volunteers to teach upto year 10. There are about 700 students.

**Seneviratna- Galhitiya- Malkawa- 91-05-27**

This area Galhitiya comes under the Agalawatta electorate. Most of the people do farming here. Some are employed as labourers in estates. About 20% work according to feudal systems. There are others who work under big rubber land owners. They get only a meager salary. Educationally they are backward. There are no facilities for learning, specially transport difficulties. Besides, what the parents earn is not enough for their living.

**A Youth - Galhitiya- 91-05-27**

I went to Pelanda school and now go to Privena (Temple school). In a poor school such as this we cannot go to a school in the city. Economic considerations matter much. Parents in this village cannot send a child to a city school. Even if they go to a school here, about 90% become drop-outs. They have become a big problem. These drop-outs get no assistance so far either from the government or from any other source. They then resort to hire their labour or go to the estates for jobs. There are government estates, where opportunities are available for which no higher education is necessary. This is how we use to live.

**A citizen - Kalutara- 91-05-03**

The administration of the country has been handed over to one class in this country. When we ask a question they get together and suppress the helpless poor. Farmer is the expert to the field. But the rulers cover it.

**A Youth- Galhitiya- Malkawa- 91-05-27**

The big traders dominating the city is against society. No villager can go to the city and pursue his business, because of the influence of the government. If not, we can go to the town and do our business there. We live in this country and we should have the right to go anywhere and do whatever we like. We do not want brokers. We must have the opportunity to sell our products at the town. Present situation does not permit it.

**Citizen - Galhitiya- Malkawa-91-05-27**

The Grama Niladharis buy large trees from our ignorant people at Rs 10/- or Rs. 15/- If not they give them an official permit or do some other little favour, get friendly with the people and get their trees. That is for the benefit of those GNs.

**A Youth- Galhitiya- Malkawa- 91-05-27**

The officers enforce the law when they nab a small poor man. They catch the poor man and then laugh over it. It is the poor who go to courts. Another man stays behind.

**A Farmer- Devahuva, Matale - 91-05-22**

There's nothing to talk about law. If a thief is caught, he is at home in the evening. Law is on the side of money. Justice is for the rich. A reasonable living is of no use. If a person, from a religious viewpoint finds fault he has no place in the society, because the country has gone to worse. It is now very difficult to take it back.

**Ven. Ariyawansa- Rajanganaya- 15.05.91**

Educationally children in these villages are backward. The reasons are economic considerations. There is a house here where the householder was beaten to death by the Tigers in the troubled times. They have come here and settled down here, in the area called Manamalgaswewa. No water is available there; there are tanks but no water. No paddy farming. There are four children in the family. They do not attend school. I get them down and asked them why they don't attend school. The mother said that they couldn't afford it. They could not buy the necessary clothes and other needs. She said that she was sending only one child to school and even that was with much difficulty. That is how they do that.

The government today claims that the country is self-sufficient. When we go into the society we see there are people who are self-sufficient. But it is only about 10%. Most of them had earned unjustly. We pay the labourers about Rs 40/- to Rs 50/- How much he has to spend on day's needs. In addition, children's clothes, needs for sickness, require more than that. The small people live amidst agony.

**A citizen - Kalawewa, Anurathapura- 07.05.91**

I am not talking against the government. All in power MPs and the Ministers say that will look into our needs, they will provide electricity, make roads etc. But finally nothing happens.

**A citizen - Kalawewa- 07.05.91**

One drawback is the absence of facilities for higher education in villages. Not a single child has received a higher education. Even our parents did not think such a time will come with environmental problems. I do not know whether it is because of ignorance or through negligence, these villages are educationally backward. People think about jobs. To say the truth, there are no people in villages with educational qualifications to do such jobs. We do not know whether it is the mistake of the parents or the children. This is the crux of the matter. There are jobs in the police force and in the army. Except for those, still there hasn't been any one who has got a higher job.

**A citizen - Hunnasgiriya, Bambaragala area - 23.05.91**

Recently, the up-country, village Rehabilitation commissioner came here. In that Medamanavakanda there are springs which never go dry. It was promised that a large tank would be built and water would be brought to the village. Engineers came, demarcated the area and did the necessary things. But the Gam Udawa Work continued and not the tank construction work. If that work was completed about 5000 people would have got water. People would not have clamoured for jobs. There are paddy season. About 60 acres of paddy lands are left uncultivated. They are not cultivated in both seasons.

**A citizen - Galahitiya, Malkawa - 27.05.91**

Teachers come to the schools here from far off areas. They serve only a very limited time. Because of the transfer of teachers, the education of the children is completely crippled. No teacher continues in these schools for over five years. When they come here they have to work out transfers because those are difficult areas. This is what has happened to schools. First of all the education in schools should be bettered. It has to be done with Government intervention. These crowd have to be given a better education. Resources are more concentrated in the cities.

**A citizen- Galahitiya, Malkawa -27.05/91**

Galahitiya has no school and the village children are compelled to go to schools at distant places. No transport facilities are available and they have to go on foot. They have to face considerable inconveniences. The bridges and culverts are not maintained well. Some children have to wade across rivers. There is a boat at the ferry but at times the boatman is not available.

**A citizen - Morawaka, Kotapola - 26.05.91**

- Ques As you think what are the shortcomings in this village ?
- Answ Here we don't have health or educational facilities at all. The children have a school but no teachers. There are 11 teachers inclusive of volunteers for classes up to 10th standard. About 700 students are on roll.
- Ques When they complete the 10th standard where do they go next?
- Answ Next they have to go to Meegahatenna. If they want to go to a place like a central college Oh! God! it is about 25 miles. the up and sown trip costs Rs. 40/= each. Sometimes there are no buses. Otherwise they have to go to the Neluwa Maha Vidyalaya (school).

**A Citizen - Mahaweli 'H' Area - 22.05.91**

A different way of living emerge within the Mahaweli life pattern. It did not happen in keeping with our country or our culture. The old customs and manners that prevailed in the old villages are not disservice here. We accept the fact that Mahaweli project is a national asset which cost billions of rupees. If we use it without proper awareness destructions follows. Then it is more a disaster than development. When different sections of the population are settled, according to my view, they should be inculcated with a feeling of our nations, our culture and our religion. They should be equipped with the convictions that we should shun evil. This awareness has not been given. It is difficult to get that. Now they have to resort to legal measures

**A citizen - Pahala Mirahawatta, Bandarawela - 26.05.'91**

I can remember the general elections in 1960s. The people, irrespective of the fact whether they were UNPers or SLFPers gathered at a place where there was a radio to listen to the results. When the UNP won, along with the winner the others fired crackers. There was such communion at that time. What happens

now? The UNPers gather at one place and the SLFPers at another place. They talk about assaulting the opponents. People have fallen down to such lower depths.

**A Farmer - Mahaweli 'H' area - 22.05.91**

Drunkenness is the major culprit. There is a tavern at Galnewa, close to this village. I hear that in a couple of days one will be set up here also. Every two or three mile a new tavern has come up. In one way the government intends to rid the people of their addiction to illicit liquor. In the other, who do away with the illicit liquor brewers. This is a task impossible. Now people take both the illicit and the licit. It is true that the Mahaweli project brought a new way of life. But it has turn more to the bad of the country than good.

**A citizen - Peoples' Consultation, Kollupitiya - 03.12.91**

There are loopholes in the law. It is alleged that I can prosecute only when I am affected by the environment. According to the law in Sri Lanka, offender is most powerful. When Mahaweli water is taken to Trincomalle the farmers in between suffer without a drop of water. Our way is from the wrong to the right. Even for a trivial affair, a penal code is resorted to. Laws affect the major offences less. They should be given punishments that prevailed during the time of ancient kings. Pollution of environment means pollution of the human mind.

**A citizen - Hanguranketa, Rikillagaskada - 14.05.'91**

I am Madurasinghe. This area is Rikillagaskada in the Hanguranketa electorate. Most of the people have been here for the last 20-40 years. Still they do not own the place they sit on. If they don't have a source of income they have to resort to the clearing of the forest. Recently, about five years back a community forest development project got under way. What did it do? They got down poor people from the villages and gave them half an acre each. Having done so what did they do? They distributed terpine plants. Now there are trees, girth of which cannot be even encircled by two arms. How many such trees have been cut down by people for their use? Of what use it is for the person who planted it. Not even a price if fuelwood. Even the person who cut the tree is not allowed to touch a piece. Other people stealthily cut and remove these trees. Those are things that have been done by the farmers for over five years. They took their children to the work place and had them under the shade of trees till they worked. They put these up, not even caring their meals. Sometimes not even a slice of bread. What did they do to the poor man. Who grew the trees? Did they consider at least the expenses the farmer incurred for their slice of bread and the cup of tea? If they are at least given a paper cure of money and take them over to the Government.

But what is the matter?

if the person who grew the trees attempted to cut a tree, he will be put behind bars. Where is justice? Recently, when we wanted to put up a community hall, I asked the landowner whether I could cut down one tree each from their lands. They said that they would not cut those trees down although they had brought them up. They wanted me to speak to the Grama Sevaka. His advice was to cut a tree if the landowners were willing. So what is the legal implication? One has planted the trees, but he cannot cut them down. It is a meritorious deed, if it is possible to regularise the ownership of encroachers who have lived here for 20-40 years. They will plant a jack tree, a breadfruit tree or an arrange plant in their block of land. When they have a feeling that it is their own.

**A farmer - Matale - 20.07.91**

There are several paddy land owners here. First they had a tax system under which they had to pay Rs 10/= or Rs 15/= This increased to Rs.150/=, Rs.200/= and to Rs 300/= Since of late the amount increased ranges Rs.3000/=, Rs 6000/= and even Rs 10,000/= and Rs 15,000/= If the money is not paid they are asked to leave. If not another is allowed to pay the money and acquire the land. Some people have no way to pay. Some refuse to pay. Some people pay, either taking money on credit, or by selling their cattle or the sewing machine.

**A citizen - Meeting at Sarvodaya Centre, Matara - 11.08.91**

The tourist industry has badly hit the local arts and crafts. The local dancing in the South, the 18 sannu dances ( mask ) are very famous. What has happened today is that those who know nothing of local dancing have put up tourist hotels and present dances, songs and musical shows, in the name of local traditional dancing.

**Chief Priest - Balantota - 25.05.91**

The youth here are interested only in gemming. The money earned is not beneficially invested. They waste that on liquor and vices and do not realise any economic gain. Houses of ill-fame are rampant in Ratnapura now, and also gambling dens and clubs.

**A citizen - Katugampola Peoples' Gathering Kurenegala - 20.09.'91**

The first problem we face as parents is the employment problem of our offsprings. Here we now have the third generation. They all sit on the 3 acre land, the father got. Only about 10% go out of the village having obtained employment or having joined the armed forces. Others hang around in the village with no proper way of living.

**A statement from a three wheeler driver, Bambalapitiya - 14.12.'91**

Law has completely deteriorated today. When cases are being heard people are killed in court premises. This happens because of the loopholes in the law. Police officers are involved murders, looting, rape and get into court cases. If the law makers are such, how can justice be administered in the country.

**A woman - Sedawathupura, Colombo - 05.12.'91**

Floods submerge these. Then we have nowhere to go. The flood reliefs given by the Government are looted by the big people. Even the food stuffs are given to those who are friendly with them.

**A woman - Sedawathupura, Colombo - 05.12.'91**

There management is only by word of mouth. Law is useless. Nothing can be done without political support.

**A youth - Sedawathupura, Colombo - 05.12.'91**

The heavy flood in 1989 inundated our area. Water flowed above our roof. We got nothing. During election times various people come, suggesting kinships which are non-existent.

**A citizen - Rikillagaskada- Hanguranketa- 91-05-14**

We were deprived of our labour rights. There were privileges to be employed by a laborer. We did not get any of those. Even the rooms of that lines have acquired by the Land Reform Authority. Get us at least the ownership of those rooms. As the Government Agent says they do not belong to the Land Reform Authority. We have informed these problems to the MPs and the Ministers. So we have no ownership to the lines. Lands have been given but people can't reside there. The government has given instructions to the villagers that the government will take over the lands where people are not settled. When these fields were demarcated, borders of some fields have overlapped with the borders of the highland. Fields worked by tenant farmers for long periods have been distributed to the others. When we presented matters to the surveyors, they said that it was a plan drawn up in 1961 and in that plan these lands were highlands. They admit that the paddy lands border highlands but they are helpless. But the people want to protect their rights and they have already gone to the Land Reform Authority and made payments for these paddy lands. We await the deeds. But at every place it is said that we won't get the deeds.

**A Buddhist Priest- Meeting at the Hanguranketa Community Hall - 14.05.91**

I wonder whether period from 1990 to 2000 is the last decade to protect our people and our earth. We have fallen into such a tragedy. Over a long period of time we have seen in the papers, these landslides in the up country. Officers from Colombo specially make reports on these slides and they are available there. But so far they have not been implemented. No tangible changes have come up.

**A citizen - Matotilla- Bandarawela- 91-07-27**

Today the open economy has routed the co-operative movement. Implementing educational programmes on the co-op movement is of no use. When a pack of fertilizer is sold by a Tamil Trader at Rs. 100/-, the co-operative of which we are members and has our shares and which is run with people's assistance, sells us the same pack at Rs. 110/-. We get no relief at all. The co-op movement is crippled because everything is managed by the government. Although it is said that this is a people's movement. There is the Minister of Co-operatives; the commissioners. They are the people who run this. If they want to continue this movement with the people, they should know how to sell goods to the people under some concessionary scheme. However, we clamour, it is useless. They run it, the way they want it.

**A Buddhist Priest - Bandarawela- 91-05-28**

Social decadence is visible everywhere. Casino, horse racing and scratch lotteries are ever on the increase. When some people go to the town to buy a few things and he keeps back only the travel fare back. He spends money on scratch lotteries and return empty handed. These are signs of utter social degradation.

**Dhmapriya Samansiri- Passara, Badulla- 91-09-02**

The relationship between man and environment has lessened gradually and special efforts have to be made to protect the environment. Forest reserves belong to the government and it is the duty of the department of forest conservation to protect them. The forests which are planted new do not belong to us. What we should do is to cut down trees as far as possible without being caught. These attitudes have crept into the minds of the people in the area over a long period of time. One reason is government's disinterest in the villages in such things. This should be corrected at least now.

**D M Nandawathie- Allanda- Badulla- 91-05-01**

(From a letter)

In the Allanda village area there are 05 quarries belonging to private traders. People in the village earn for them. The villagers are always the victims of those traders. Development wise our village is backward. Problems in our poor families are how to manager the breakfast, then the lunch and next the dinner.

Government officers come into the village only when elections are held. That is to get the votes. Politicians also come for that. They never come to settle the problems of the villagers. So the Allanda Village is in darkness even today.

**III. Human Development and National Prosperity**

**A Buddhist Priest- Pilagoda- 91-09-23**

The concept of the tank, dagaba, village and the temple is one of historic concepts. In village disputes, it was the temple that had the leadership to bring about a settlement. Attempting to solve this, by giving the pride of place to the temple, means an attempt to restore peace, harmony and communion which the old society had.

**A citizen - Ampegama- Galhenkanda School- 91-09-09**

Katunayaka today is not a trade zone but a love zone. The same thing will happen to Koggala also in the future. In the south still there are girls who honour their respect and modesty. I claim that because of the Koggala love zone, they would face disasters in the future. Those are short term solutions to the unemployment problem. But on the other hand, things like culture and civilization will be removed from us. Therefore the youth population in the country have the right to think about that. We must take steps to protect our culture and civilization.

**A citizen - Sarvodaya- Matara- 91-09-11**

The money labour and time utilized in the implementation of development plans should match with the results. The benefits should trickle down to the common people. If merely a few are benefitted by it, it is not real development.

**A retired Principal- at Kalutara, Pulinathala Temple- 91-05-03**

Environment means our surroundings. It should improve. To achieve that, the economy, health and the morals of the people living therein should be promoted. Country's economy should be developed in terms of the environment in each area.

**Rev Sirisuguna- Kalutara- 91-05-03**

This is a country with a Buddhist discipline. People are closely associated with religion and meditation. They need not be told again as to how they should live in harmony with the environment. Then why we have to face environment problems? It is because of concept of development imported from the west. Clearly there is a conflict. That is between our spiritual 'outlook' and that of the west.

**A person from the area- Sarvodaya, Matara- 91-09-11**

Purchasing centers should be set up to buy the products either for the export market or for the local market. Low-fuel ovens can be introduced as a cottage industry. The NGOs can provide the necessary technology to improve this as a source of income. The necessary technology should be available to introduce an oven which consumes low fuel wood so that we can avoid cutting of trees excessively for fire wood and also deforestation.

**Buddhist Priest - Rajanganaya- 22.05.91**

In the past village priest was the community leader. There was the leadership of the elders. The teacher was a leader. There is no leadership to-day. Leadership has slipped away from the temple. It is neither there in the village.

**Buddhist Priest - Mahaweli 'H' area - 22.05.91**

Our children can be taught our history. In the schools at present only a surface knowledge in the Sinhala language is given. A basic knowledge of Buddhism can be imparted. Today, as a commercial product, the child is prepared for an examination. The temple school does not limit the education only, to an exam. He is given a knowledge in Buddhism and Ethics and is taught to respect his parents. A disciplined crowd is brought up. The priest who receives the temple education always contemplates of serving the society which feeds him. He does not depend only on alms. The Buddhist priest is a very predominant personality in the society. He thinks it his duty to help make the canal, the road, to make family reunions and to help develop saving habits among the people. But the school education commercially oriented. The recipient of such education only thinks of getting an employment and achieving his personal well being. In the temple education both the clergy and the laymen are infused with a feeling of serving the society.

Now every village has 'clubs' to sell liquor. These places set up with Government. Authority are not clubs but just taverns. whether an income from farming is derived or not, a liquor addict cannot get rid of that habit. This is a great disaster; no meeting or a religious event without a clash or a brawl. Elders priests, teachers are not listened to. In the past this was not so. Then, the priest was the village community leader. Elders had a leadership. Teachers were the leaders. The religious leadership has slipped from the village.

**A citizen - Matara - 11.08.91**

A large sum of money is invested to rehabilitate the drug addicts and to treat the victims of social diseases contracted from tourists. I think the tourist industry is of no use.

**A citizen - Matara - 11.08.91**

If both boys and girls refrain from sexual intercourse in keeping with our cultural traditions and if we properly adhere to one precept of the five precepts in Buddhism AIDS can be prevented.

**Ven. Viyaththuduwe Ariyawansa Thero Kala Oya Physician Priest - 22.05.91**

My teacher priest lived up to 106 years. Still the village people have their faith in our medicine. Don't think that western, medical science is better than the Sinhala medicine. Our system of medicine has a cure for every disease. To malaria we say virus-nt fever.

**Ven. Nikahetiya Thero - Kandy Arts Theatre Hall - 21.07.'91**

For mental development, the youths should have an environment where they can develop their experiences. 40 years have lapsed since we gained Independence but still we are entrapped by the colonial education system. When that education has hit us badly we have to see how our environment should be developed. Our basic education system needs reforms.

**Swarnalatha Liyanarachchi - Pre School Matron, Galahitiya, Molkawa - 27.05.'91**

Children grow up in the home environment. When they come here it changes. We teach them, what is Buddhism, what sort of people are parents, how we should conduct ourselves, and how do we recite poetry etc. From their childhood, we train them not to litter the compound, not to pluck leaves from trees unnecessarily and not to get used to destructive impulses. As a child grows, such knowledge too improves. That helps in the interest of environmental development.

**Sister - Shantipura Catholic Church, Nuwaraeliya - 23.07.'91**

It is the obligation of the parents to prevent the children from reading unsuitable newspapers and from viewing T.V. Programmes not suitable for children. Educational programmes are necessary to make the parents and children aware about this.

**Chandra Siriwardena Meeting at the Colombo New Town Hall - 14.09.'91**

Here we should have an increased number of common vehicles. Private vehicles should decrease. What has happened is the reverse. The education system has not been fashioned in a way to suit our country. An intellectual upheaval is necessary.

**A youth - Kalawana - Environment Circle - 24.05.'91**

There are no employment opportunities in the village. Even if the education is in the village, we have to migrate to the cities seeking jobs. They get used to the urban social setting. The value system, the virtues of the village have deteriorated. Commercialism invades the villages and the identity of the village is lost. When we love in a village, values and virtues persist among most of the village youths. Youths always haunt a place where there is a funeral. I don't think that there can be a such a gathering in a city, because the social interaction in the city is now deteriorated. One does not know one's neighbour. But we know everyone in the village. Socially the city life has worsened today.

**A citizen - Ampegama-Galhenkanda School-91-09-09**

Making coconut oil and metal breaking for the roads are the industries that can be pursued in these villages. Assistance is given to these industries by private traders who improve themselves. These projects can help solve the unemployment problem. They have to be planned and the people helped. The educated in this area are the poor. They cannot just open up an industry. They do not have the capital. Those are the reasons for the emergence of the unemployment problem.

**A citizen - Maduwa- Balapitiya- 91-09-12**

If facilities are provided for such things as the handloom industry and if such products have a market we can improve ourselves. If the government assistance is forthcoming, such industries as making doormats and ekel brooms can be developed.

**A Young girl- Galahitiya, Malkawa- 91-05-27**

When a girl is away from a village to do a job, she has to do it amidst difficulties. If a job is available in the village she can do it more easily. Then she can attend to the cooking at home, go to the job and come back safely to her parents at home. Such a girl can do a job as sewing. It is a good self-employment that can improve the economic condition.

**A Youth- Thalawa- Anuradhapura- 91-09-23**

We don't like Free Trade Zones. We don't need such a thing. In these zones people are persecuted. What we want is not Free Trade Zones. What we want is capital, in introduction to the particular industry and a market for the products. In this way industries can be developed