

Environmental Audit report on Water Pollution of the Kelani River



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National Audit Office

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Executive Summary

The Kelani river, the second largest river and the fourth largest water basing in Sri Lanka, being providing drinking water to approximately 80 per cent of the population lives in the western province is the foremost water source. Nearly 10,511 factories are situated near this river valley and it was observed that the tendency of being polluted river water is increased due to factories and domestic related activities. Moreover, in the examination of activities of the two Export processing zones located near the Kelani River observed that the waste water emitted from the operation of those zones disposed of to the interior water sources and environment in a manner non – compliance with standard parameters and specific treatments. As the disposal methodology of hazardous and innocuous waste is not properly managed and the disposal methodologies of sludge generates after being purified waste water is not environment friendly applied the impact of there is finally added to the water sources. Even though the ascertainment of economic benefits related to Kelani River are improved, it was observed that the contribution of all parties for the protection of environmental splendour and the environmental value of the river is minimal. In the examination of the identification of water pollution criteria observed that many places with main bridges transcended, the standard parameters of the Central Environmental Authority. The cost needs to be incurred on water reservoirs for the supply of drinking water to general public is risen. It was also observed that provisions made in the National Environment Act on fines and penalties imposed on parties do not follow the methods determined by the Central Environmental Authority in the disposal of waste water in to the interior water sources are insufficient.

Industries mostly affected the water pollution of Kelani River, and the Environmental protection License obtained by the seethawaka export processing zone situated in the kelani valley and operates as a main industrial estate has not been renewed since 08 years. The common waste water purification centers available to 37 industries in these zone have been put up without sufficient capacity. Being inactivated the plant exists for the destruction of micro – organisms in the waste water purification center is also Environmentally effected. Moreover, as observed in audit, there was no proper methodology for removing sludge generates from the factories of

Seethawaka and Biyagama export processing zones and sludge is mixed up with rain water and absolved waste in to the soil, resulting a risk of being polluted water sources.

In the observation visits made in respect of Kelani River revealed main causations to pollute river water that evaded river banks as a result of encroachments in the two banks of the river, adding solid waste, sewage and waste water disposed of by hotels built in the river boundary and encroached houses in to the river water, disposal of waste water from the vehicles service stations and factories without being purified.

In considering economical, social and esthetical benefits obtain by us from the Kelani River which is subject to pollute daily, causing hasty actions of the man, it is foremost important of the active contribution of the government entities, comprising Central Environmental Authority, Department of Irrigation, Local Authorities ,Urban Development Authority ,Water Supply and Drainage Board which take the main responsibility of protecting Environmental, economical and social values of the Kelani River. Thus, all existing laws, rules and regulations need to be revised in a manner establishing the functions perform by relevant parties in respect of protecting environmental balance and make the requirement of other procedures there to in active form.