

## ABSTRACT

Concerning the prevailing branches of environmental protection laws in Sri Lanka, it hardly offers legal rights to the people for a healthy environment. The enforcement of environmental law mostly depends on the attitude of the judiciary, the commitment of the environmental law implementation agencies and the capacity of civil society groups. The Sri Lanka Police is responsible for enforcing criminal law focusing on crime prevention, for enhancing the public Safety, maintaining order and keeping the peace throughout the country. Moreover it is empowered to enforce the laws on Environmental Protection as provided in Penal Code, Criminal Procedure Code and the Police Ordinance. The legislature, while enacting special laws in environment protection, grant powers for enforcement of those laws to the state agencies. The National Environment Act (NEA), being the umbrella law of environmental protection in Sri Lanka and while the Sri Lanka Police being the main state instrument of enforcement of law within the state, the legislature has not or omitted to grant powers to enforce the provisions in the NEA through the police. In excess, the Inspector General of Police (IGP) issued Circulars establishing the Police Environmental Protection Units (EPUs) in 2010, requiring the Sri Lanka Police to take action in many violations of environmental law all over the Country.

In this research it discusses whether the prevailing law ensure the policing mechanism in protection of environment in Sri Lanka, specially concerning on applicability of Police Powers in Environmental Police Units in Sri Lanka. The attention paid on NEA, Agrarian Development Act and Sri Lanka Land Development Corporation Act (SLLDC) in order to identify the issues in applicability of Police Powers in enforcement of environmental law in Sri Lanka. Further the environmental law of Sri Lanka has been compared with the situation of Republic of China, Kingdom of Thailand and the republic of Vietnam.

The approach and methodology used in this research is doctrinal research methodology and comparative analysis mixed research methodology. Legislations and judicial decisions have been studied to examine the prevailing law. Primary sources include the constitution of 1978, other legislations, case laws and circulars issued by the Inspector General of Police (IGP) while secondary sources include review of journal articles, conference reports and online articles. The secondary data was gathered by interviewing the head of Environmental Police Unit, judges and state functionaries whose duty is functioning in environmental law matters.

The research conclude with the connotation that the EPU's to be established by the proper authority as to be accepted by courts and the special legislations enacted in order to protect environment to be amended as empowering the Sri Lanka Police/ EPU's encouraging the applicability of police powers in enforcement of environmental law in Sri Lanka.

Key Words:- *Police, Environmental law, Enforcement, applicability*