

The Socio-economic impact of *Annona glabra* Invasive Alien Species, IAS Special Reference to the Mudun Ela Catchment

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Invasive alien species (IAS) have negatively impacted native biota and socio – economic environments worldwide. All major invasions are due to the actions of humans such as deliberate introductions or escapes and hitchhiking with global trade of species to other continents. *Annona glabra* plants highly impact the wetland ecosystems and socio – economic activities of the western part of Sri Lanka. The main objective of this study is to identify the socio-economic impact of the *Annona glabra* plant in the Mudun ela catchment area in the Mahara divisional secretariat division. Primary and secondary data were used for this research and also used to calculate density of invasive plants in this area. Shannon Weiner density calculator was used in calculating the density, so that it could be identified whether IAS growth has affected human activities. Primary data were collected through semi – structured questionnaires, observations, and open discussion while reporting with 30 people in 30 randomly selected families, books, articles and institutional reports have been used as secondary sources. Secondary data have confirmed that the *Annona glabra* plant richness and density were at the highest levels in the study area. It could be identified that the people were not aware of the threats of *Annona glabra* plant to the ecosystem as well as socio-economic activities. Paddy and herbal plant fields have been encroached by this plant, so this area has experienced an increase of reptiles and rats. Therefore, people in this area face a lot of problems such as snake bites and rat damaging electric power instruments and other factory equipment. Moreover the growth of this plant harm the diversity of plants. Therefore, awareness programmes to control the growth of this plant are needed.

Keywords: *Annona glabra*, IAS, Mudun ela catchment, Socio – economic impact.