Challenges before Forest Conservation in Sri Lanka: Comparatively Analysing the Laws against Illegal Timber Logging

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Deforestation is one of the major environmental crises faced by many nations. Even so, most of them have successfully faced this challenge by practicing effective forest conservation policies. Population growth and the high demand for timber market have adversely affected the rate of deforestation in Sri Lanka as well. Before the 1970s, natural forests catered to the country's timber requirement. When the Government declared some natural forests as protected areas, and imposed regulations that banned harvesting timber from unprotected natural forests and imposed restrictions on felling and transporting of timber, it created an artificial scarcity of timber in the country. This led to illegal timber logging and other forest offences. This research aims to review the laws relating to illegal timber logging in Sri Lanka, to analyse the effective implementation of those policies and to compare Sri Lankan policies with those in Australian jurisdiction to identify how they have achieved better conservation of forests. It further aims to recognize the loopholes prevailing within the Sri Lankan legal framework and to provide recommendations as to how to improve the existing legal regime with regard to timber logging in Sri Lanka for a better forest conservation. The research was conducted using black letter approach using relevant primary and secondary sources as a comparative analysis between Sri Lankan and Australian jurisdictions. The study concludes Sri Lankan legal system is inadequate to prevent illegal timber logging and it lacks forest policies to address the issue of deforestation, and thereby, recognizes the importance of adopting from Australian standards in order to control deforestation and to achieve better forest conservation in Sri Lanka.

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