

PUBLIC RELATIONS (PR) IN FOREST MANAGEMENT: CONCEPTS AND STRATEGIES FOR SRI LANKA

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Public relations have gained much recognition in the last three decades assuming an increasingly important role as a forest management function in most of the developed countries. However, Public Relations (PR) continues to be a less important, less understood function in forestry sector in many developing countries. The PR is considered as a serious tool for damage control and crisis management measures, which is better done under PR than under other disciplines.

The various remedial measures adopted to meet basic needs of the increasing population have resulted with rapid degradation and depletion of forest resources in Sri Lanka. However, the Forest Authority have to take a fair share of the blame for the unsuccessful or failed forestry development activities for not adequately shouldering the responsibility of creating a required environment and facilitative conditions. The public is inadequately informed the economic problems and functions of forestry, and would like more information. Modern PR gives professional status to professional practice in forestry sector. The paper defines the public and the public relations and, accordingly, the environment required for PR is identified. The management objectives, functions and basic elements required for PR functions, and evaluating results of public relations are discussed. Further, promotion of forester as PR officer and the matters needed for analysis are suggested.