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Chapter Twenty-Six

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✓ **LAND-BASED SOURCES OF
MARINE POLLUTION IN SRI LANKA**

H.H. COSTA

Department of Zoology
University of Kelaniya
Kelaniya, Sri Lanka

INTRODUCTION

Sri Lanka is an island of about 64,000 km² situated between 5°55' and 9°51' north and 79°41' and 81°54' east. The island has a coast line of 1700 km, more than a kilometer to every 40 km² of land of which nearly 9/10 consists of sandy beaches. No part of the island is more than 120 km from the sea. In the country's coastal areas are located the major urban centers as well as the multiplicity of human activities vital to the life of the nation.

The coastline is dotted with a large number of lagoons, more so in the eastern and western coast and in the northern extremity than in the southern coast.

A conspicuous feature of the marine environment is the continental shelf which extends for a distance varying from 8-40 km with an average depth of 65 m. It is narrow around the southern part of the island but widens out in the north and merges with the platform that surrounds India. On the outer edge is a comparatively steep shelf falling to 1800 m or more and taking around 20 km to reach the general level of the Indian Ocean. The shelf is sometimes broken by deep submarine valleys where deep waters occur within a few kilometers off the coast near Trincomalee, Kumana, Matara and Panadura (Figure 1).

The economic activities are mainly related to coastal resources and among others include fisheries, mining, tourism, etc.

As in most other developing countries, concern for the environmental problems is a relatively recent phenomenon. Data relevant to marine environment for instance

