

## ABSTRACT

### ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION IN POST-COLONIAL SOUTHEAST ASIA: A HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF ASEAN COUNTRIES

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Environmental history had become a subject for concern and garnered much attention through the environmental movements of the 1960s and 1970s in United States. Studies on Environment of Asian countries through the historical lens had been few and far between. The Southeast Asian region, being a tropical area with enriched natural resources and being a biodiversity hotspot, had historically been prone to colonial and economic exploitation. The plunder and the subsequent reconstruction came at the cost of the rich environment ornate and adorned with diverse flora and fauna. Such detrimental effects on the economy, society and environment encouraged the regional nations of Southeast Asia to form Association of Southeast Asian Nations or ASEAN, in order to protect their sovereignty, economic well-being and maritime security. This study attempts to understand the different causes of degradation and their impact on the climate of this region. This study makes an effort to analyse the historical context and underlying reasons of deforestation, environmental degradation, and climate change in Southeast Asian countries, with a special emphasis on the countries that are located in ASEAN region. Because of the large decrease in forest coverage and the accompanying increase in carbon emissions that have occurred during the post-colonial era, the purpose of this study is to identify industrialization, urbanization and deforestation as the key causes responsible for these findings. The research uses a combination of methods and utilises secondary sources to garner information. It is based on a temporal study and is both exploratory and explanatory in nature, with a fixed research design. Problem-State-Response (PSR) framework has been used in this research work in a historical context to analyse the major findings of this study in a comprehensive manner. Analysis of PSR for the ASEAN countries offers vital lessons for future policy and management initiatives by providing insights into how historical events and responses have influenced the current environmental situation. Conclusion has been drawn based on the findings after analysing the data using qualitative methods and several recommendations and suggestions have been proposed based on the observations.

*Keywords: Environmental History, Environmental Degradation, ASEAN, Climate Change*

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