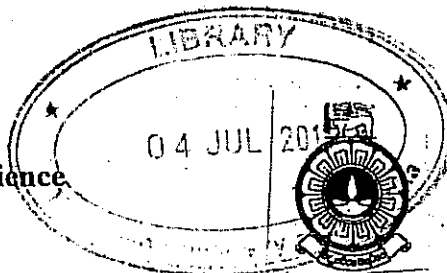


Open University of Sri Lanka
Masters Degree in Environmental Science
Academic year 2010/2011
Final Examination
Course title – Understanding the Environment
Course code – NEP1205



Date – 23rd February 2011

Time – 9.30 am – 12.30 pm

ANSWER ANY FOUR (4) QUESTIONS

1. a) Describe the basic structure and composition of ecosystems.
b) Compare a tropical forest ecosystem and a paddy field ecosystem in terms of stratification of vegetation, species richness, food and feeding relationships, inputs, outputs and ecosystem stability.
 2. Explain the beneficial effects of organic matter on soil properties.
 3. a) Describe in detail the constituents of moist air.
b) Explain how the above constituents maintain a global mean surface temperature of 15^o C and contribute to the formation of rain.
 4. a) Explain giving reasons the vertical distribution of chemical and physical characteristics of fresh water in a deep reservoir of the dry zone.
b) Outline three (3) recent threats to people that depend on reservoirs for their livelihood.
 5. a) List the basic features of nutrient cycles.
b) Explain the natural processes that maintain nitrate ions (NO₃⁻) in soil.
 6. Write an essay on mangrove ecosystems.
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