

## **F-21 : SOCIO-ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF KITUL TAPPING AND USE IN THE KANDY DISTRICT**

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Kitul (*Caryota urens*) is a multipurpose palm with tremendous economic potential and a long history of use by rural folk. With limited commercial use and cultivation almost in the wild, it is necessary to understand the socio-economic aspects of its production to examine the possibilities of optimizing its use as a domesticated multi-purpose tree crop. A study was undertaken in the Narampanawa Divisional Secretariat area to identify the different patterns of Kitul tapping, the socio-economic aspects of this practice and the potentials and limitations of the use of this tree crop in the rural areas. A household survey was undertaken of rural families in the Narampanawa area. Five groups of people were identified based on the relationship they have with the tapping industry. There was a high variation in the tapping techniques adopted. The land tenure relationships had an influence on the extent to which the trees were used for commercial purposes. The legal prohibition of brewing alcoholic beverages was a major problem in the area, market constraints, improper technology to produce high quality products, were other

constraints. Several recommendations are made related to these constraints if the industry is to be developed to help the rural communities.