

D-42: A survey of existing indigenous knowledge in agriculture and forestry practices in Kandy and Anuradhapura Districts of Sri Lanka

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A survey was undertaken at Kandy and Anuradhapura districts, which represents two ecological zones, to investigate the existing indigenous knowledge practices in the fields of agriculture and forestry. One Assistant Government Agent Division (AGA) each was selected from the Districts; 3 Grama Niladhari (GN) Divisions were selected from each AGA Division. The selection of the Districts was based on the information gained by literature and talking to relevant personnel as to the prevalence of age-old practices in the areas. Ten families were selected from each GN Division randomly and data gathered by way of a questionnaire and informal interviews with farmers and direct observations.

According to the results obtained, traditional knowledge is still being used for agriculture and forestry practices at varying levels in the villages assessed. With regard to agriculture it is being used for a variety of practices such as field preparation and planting, soil conservation, weeding, fertilization, pest control, harvesting, transport of harvest and storage of harvest. A significant variation ($p < 0.05$) was observed in the usage of traditional knowledge between the Kandy and Anuradhapura Districts where the usage was very much higher in Kandy District for all the practices recorded. In Kandy District traditional knowledge was mostly used for field preparation and planting (84%), soil conservation (84%), harvesting (93%). The least was used for fertilizer use (5%) and pest control (13%). The highest traditional knowledge usage was for storage of harvest (33%) while lowest was for fertilizer use (2%) and pest control (3%). The villagers in both districts were using modern practices as well as a combination of traditional and modern practices.

With regard to forestry practices, the proportion of farmers who adopted traditional methods varied for timber production, collection and processing of non-wood forest produce, home gardening, chena cultivation and conservation of forest. As in agriculture, more traditional practices were seen in the Kandy District rather than Anuradhapura District. Among all practices, more traditional

knowledge was applied to managing home gardens (85% in Kandy and 72% in Anuradhapura)