



A study of modern trends in traditional food security methods of rural areas with reference to the north–west slope in *Sinharaja* forest

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The world heritage Sinharaja forest in Sri Lanka is situated in the South- West region of the island between northern latitude 6° 21' and 6° 27' and southern longitude 80° 21' and 80° 34'. This study focuses on analyzing the traditional methods of food security practiced in rural areas, with the special focus on the North – West slope of Sinharaja, which spreads over 11187 hectares. The research problem is 'how the communities residing at peripheral areas of tropical rain forests have used indigenous knowledge concerning food security over a long period?' Six villages at the periphery of North-West slope of Sinharaja namely *Kudawa*, *Pitakele*, *Kongahakanda*, *Petiyakanda*, *Ketalapattala* and *Kosgulana* were selected for the study. At the end of 2009, about 975 people were living in these six villages.

Methods used for data collection were open interview and direct observation. This study has recognized the traditional food security methods in the study area, types of food preserved, the way the old methods are used for modern needs, and factors that have persuade villagers to secure food. This study implies that with the change in land consumption styles, foods that are preserved earlier by people such as cassava, jack, cucumber, kurakkan, thampala, el vee, amu etc., have been neglected. With the use of scrub jungles for tea cultivation, treacle varieties such as kitul treacle are faced with extinction. As rural community build modern houses instead of traditional houses, background of food preserving is gradually declining. The villagers of the study area have used various methods to secure food and these methods are influenced by various human and material factors.

Keywords: Sinharaja forest, traditional knowledge, food security, puerperal community