

## **A study about agro forestry practices in wet zonal home gardens in Akuressa Divisional Secretariat in Sri Lanka**

W.M. Gangani Chandralatha

*Department of Geography, University of Ruhuna, Matara, Sri Lanka*

Agroforestry is an intentional practice that integrated agriculture with forestry to manage the environment, enhancing income diversification, energy security and environmental protection and to solve deforestation related issues. Forest cover that was rich earlier in Sri Lanka has been reduced up to 29% and sustainable solutions are needed to manage and conserve vegetation in the country. According to agro ecology in country, 29 agro economic practices can be seen in Sri Lanka. Wet zone in Sri Lanka is specific for a good vegetation cover, especially home gardens. This study was conducted to identify agro forestry practices in wet zone that done by community in their home gardens. Specific objectives were to appraise the traditional involvement of community to grow flora species in their lands, to identify major flora species found in wet zonal home gardens, and to find out potentials and constraints in extending intentional agro forestry into open lands in the area. Akuressa divisional secretariat division in Matara district was selected as the representative area for the wet zone. Literature survey, questionnaires, interviews, and direct observations were used to collect primary data. With the result and discussion, it could be identified that, highlands and paddy lands ownership of community, land size, distance to lands from their houses, home gardens and its cultivations are directly affect the agro forestry practices. The study concluded that, there were five main agro forestry practices as, crops with wind belts and shelter belts, strip planting, intercropping under coconut, tea and coffee under shade trees and slopping agriculture land technology. Home garden is the main part of those practices. Though there are those practices, the community hasn't knowledge the agro forestry or its importance and they use their traditional knowledge and experiences. Therefore the main suggestion of this study is, wet zonal community should be encouraged to improve their various kinds of agro forestry practices further. Traditional knowledge and forestry techniques of that community should be expanded to other areas those where the vegetation cover is under threat.

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\*Corresponding Author: *gangani365@gmail.com*