

## Study of traditional non timber forest utilization patterns in Dediya gala rainforest in Sri Lanka

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**Keywords - Forest, utilization, peripheral, community, Dediya gala**

Dediya gala is a tropical rain forest, located in southern Sri Lanka, between  $6^{\circ}.8-6^{\circ}.12^{(N)}$  and  $80^{\circ}.23-80^{\circ}.28^{(E)}$ . It is rich in biodiversity. Many families live with the help of this rain forest. They have exploited some forest materials since long period of time, specially food materials, spices, some kind of drugs (medicinal herbs) and raw materials for handicrafts. Main food / edible plants are Beraliya (*Shorea dyeri*), Hal (*Vateria copallifera*), Bedi del (*Artocarpus nobilis*), Mora (*Nephelium*), Atamba (*Mangifera zeylanica*) and number of edible mushrooms. Main spices are cinnamon, wild pepper, wild ginger. This rain forest is very rich in medicinal herbs such as Venivel, wild ginger, Arattha, Vanna raja, Iru raja, etc and mainly used medicinal herb is Venivel (*Coscinium fenestratum*). Kithul (*Caryota urens*) tapping is the main livelihood in periphery and inside (deni cultivation) communities of the rain forest. On the other hand they use cane, bamboo (*Ochlandra* spp), plants and wines for making handicrafts. Bamboo leaves (*Ochlandra stridula*) and Beru (*Agrostistachys hookeri*) leaves are used as roof sheltering materials. The best known product, dorana oil, is obtained from the dorana tree (*Dipterocarpus glandulosus*). This oil mixed with other organic substances has been used to paint murals in ancient temples in Sri Lanka.

Even though the above mentioned activities are sustainable and not so harmful to the forest. illegal logging and clearing for tea cultivation are now widespread. Extraction of forest materials took place since ancient time and present situation is quite different from ancient practices. Most of people bound with tea cultivation but not interested with collecting forest materials.

For this research, a questionnaire survey was carried out to collect data in addition to targeted group interviews and participatory observations. The results unraveled that people are not interested with collecting forest materials but with tea plantation. Felling trees for timber started in this forest in 1970s.. Therefore most of the areas cleared by now and remain as secondary forest or pinus forest. At present, people should travel long distance to extract forest materials. It is the major discourage in collecting forest materials. Some medicinal herbs are also over exploited. Such way of exploitation is very harmful to the forest. Specially people cut branches to get Bedi del and some kind of Berries/mora (*Nephelium*), madan (*Syzygium cumini*).