

AGRO-FORESTRY HOME-GARDENS IN KALUTARA DISTRICT: A PARTICIPATORY RURAL APPRAISAL (PRA)

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Promotion of agro-forestry in home-gardens has been greatly emphasized as a national priority, in the new amendments of forest-policy in Sri Lanka. Further, development of homestead gardens is one of the major component of the Participatory Forestry Project of the Forest Department. Evidently, the home gardens contribute a substantial amount of food, timber, fuel-wood, fodder etc., of the country. In most of these home-gardens, the canopy cover is dense with a closure of over 75 percent.

The total extent of land under the home-gardens in Kalutara District has significantly decreased during the last decade. However, the remaining home-gardens are a major source of food, timber, and fuel-wood required for household consumption. Moreover, exportable products of the perennial agricultural crops, and fruits required to cater the increasing demand in the tourism are becoming attractive sources of income from the agro-forestry home-gardens in the district. To improve sustainable agro-forestry home-gardens, an assessment of the present agro-forestry home-gardens in the district is essential.

Home centred spatial arrangement in agro-forestry reflects different interactions among household, garden, and gardening as well as socio-economics and indigenous resource management strategies. Hence, the paper discusses the agro-forestry home-gardens in Kalutara district based on the data and information collected through Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA). The PRA administered the main steps and methods: discussions group maps, aggregate maps, wealth rankings, transect walks, participatory transects, venn diagrams, direct matrix, pair-wise ranking and scoring.