
**COMMUNITY BASED INNOVATIONS IN REFORESTING SRI LANKAS
LANDSCAPE: THE CONTEXT OF SUSTAINABLE RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT**

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The recent emphasis on community-based innovations is strong and often points to the fact that such systems have been feasible over generations and have resulted in hundreds of spatially varying agroforestry systems. The conversion of land deforested land into a production systems which is rich in diversity both in terms of species composition and structure is difficult, costly and not promising if it is to be done by external agencies. This paper brings out the socio-cultural context within which indigenous systems have evolved, replicated and sustained over generations and across space, with reference to the examples drawn from the central highlands in particular. This paper focuses on the unique system of the 'Kandyan homegarden' that has not only been central to discussion in many forums but has been recognised and merited as a community based system, which has created an 'oasis of biodiversity' in the landscape.

The example drawn from Sri Lanka show two important features of policy implications. The first is related to the process, which intimately evolves from individual households, with their input, and then spread across creating community-based mosaics of forest in the landscape. The community context, as explained in this paper emerges in the geographical space in association with human habitation, social process, indigenous knowledge and practices of resources of management. The second feature is associated with the mechanism; the mechanism of learning and replication which symbolically present the essence of community innovations in reforesting the landscape and managing the resources for sustainable survival.

The strategic implications of the results are many; they urge us to have a new paradigm of forestry in Sri Lanka, where future requirements are to be satisfied through a facilitation process, which will not deteriorate the essence of 'community-based innovations'. A further need here is to eliminate the using of local communities as instruments or vehicles to execute the externally defined programmes, and promote community-based practices.