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## SPICE GARDENS: LOCALLY INNOVATED FORESTRY INVESTMENTS AND THEIR ENTREPRENEURIAL OPPORTUNITIES

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The entrepreneurial aspects associated with the Spice Gardens (SGs) are situation specific and emerged out of the traditional Kandyan Forest Gardens or Kandyan Homegardens. The cultural, environmental and economic concerns of the rural inhabitants, as reflected in these systems, have been accomplished through their own forestry innovations, and the mosaics of forest gardens are important areas in the cultural landscape of rural Sri Lanka. Although a complete evaluation of these systems is difficult to make due to their spatial variations, as a system of tourist attraction, the spice gardens located in main tourist corridors, in Kandy, Matale, Kegalle and Kurunegala districts in particular, should earn recognition as area of development options. This paper examines the traditional forestry practices and local investments on spice gardens, and discusses their predominant characteristics such as composition, structure, spatial arrangements, and management from the perspectives of entrepreneurial development. Primary data were collected from 45 spice gardens through a field investigation based on a household survey and field observations. Nearly 45% of the sampled gardens have been established as 'Spice Gardens' in 1970s, and become popular with the expansion of tourist industry. In the process of promoting spice gardens, attention has been paid to aesthetic beauty where regeneration has been controlled and selective nurturing has been introduced. Although a complete transition from traditional homegardens systems to a new venture of spice gardens has not taken place, it has promoted a new model out of an old practice of home garden agroforestry. Inner-tracts, demonstrations, processing, and sales centres have been added to facilitate the tourists and cater for their needs.

In the process of development a well established mid and low canopy structure consisting of pepper, clove, cardamom, nutmeg, cinnamon mixed with medicinal plants in scattered tree gardens are maintained. The management efforts are to maintain cultural, environmental and economic integrity and therefore, its interest on the marketability of the system and the non-timber products are noteworthy. The income derived from spice gardens is determined by various external factors, including location, accessibility, external linkages, popularity etc., but the newly emerged entrepreneurial opportunities are captured by these systems as places for ecotourism. The possible detrimental effects of over manipulation to the sustainability of the systems are also discussed.