

# TRADITIONAL HOMGARDENS AND RURAL LIVELIHOOD IN BATTICALOA

Krishnal S<sup>1</sup> and Weerahewa<sup>2</sup>

This paper details the results of a study carried out on an overview of homegardens in Batticaloa district. The significance of homegardens to rural livelihoods is well appreciated all over the world. Although homegardens are common in Sri Lanka, the system is not well documented and economic value of the homegardens is not well assessed in Batticaloa region. So the main objective of this study was to assess the contribution of homegardens to rural livelihoods. Specific objectives were to assess the species composition in the homegardens and to estimate the contribution of homegardens to household income. Primary data were collected using structured pretested questionnaire in 206 households in three selected divisional secretariat divisions viz Eravurpattu, Manmunai South & Eruvilpattu and Korelapattu D. S. divisions. Secondary data were obtained from statistical reports. Data collected were subjected to descriptive analysis and frequencies. It was found that average household size was 4.41 and average monthly income of household was

Rs. 17, 723.30. Schooling of head of household was negatively correlated with income from homegardens ( $p < 0.01$ ). Employment status of the household head also increased the income from homegarden significantly ( $p < 0.01$ ). Homegardens vary in species composition and tree density. There were sixteen different woody species found in the surveyed area. The most common tree species recorded during this survey include coconut, cashew, mango, banana etc. and annuals like brinjal, okra, bushitao, chillie, onion, bitter gourd, snake gourd etc. It was noted that 10.18% of the household income was contributed by homegarden trees and 35.26% by annuals. Homegardening was hampered by various factors such as water scarcity, lack of space, lack of credit etc. If these obstacles could be overcome, properly managed homegardens will improve rural livelihoods and quality of life of farmers in Batticaloa.

**Key words:** Homegarden, Livelihoods

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<sup>1</sup> Department of Agricultural Economics, Faculty of Agriculture, Eastern University.  
E-mail: [skrish\\_16@yahoo.com](mailto:skrish_16@yahoo.com)

<sup>2</sup> Department of Agric. Economics and Business Administration, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya.