

TECHNOLOGY AND INDIGENOUS BOTANICAL WEALTH OF SRI LANKA

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Technology is a word created by the so-called modern developed societies and linked to their own phraseology and terminology. Nevertheless, the term technology did not appear to embrace the past or the present means of production used by the communities of the third world traditional societies. But the people of traditional societies own a wealth of technological knowledge used by them and passed down from one generation to another as a part of their culture. And they both developed and used that wealth of technological knowledge through centuries of experiences from various fields such as production of food, provisions of shelter, health, and medical treatment etc.

This paper attempts to initiate a discussion on highly specialized technological knowledge associated cultural aspects of botany in the indigenous knowledge system in Sri Lanka. As human beings traditional people logically used their cognitive abilities to transform nature into culture. Then they produced useful substances and commodities from natural resources existing in their eco-system. Further, this paper tries to analyze how traditional society used that wealth of cultural knowledge to fulfill their day to day technological needs. They classified, evaluated, and discriminated between multiple uses of plants in terms of their Central Value System to satisfy different purposes or needs. To safeguard dwellings from lightnings they planted specific trees on four sides of their houses. For the protection of cultivated lands from attack by wild animals they used specific plant species. These methods are environmentally viable and it comprised of a part of the ecosystem.

This study provides some information about traditional society and its knowledge about the environment. This provides important ideas or guidelines to develop future scientific research activities. Furthermore it helps formulate development strategies in meaningfully utilizing available resources, as well as cultural and social values, and to ensure that they are widely and fully utilized. Local indigenous knowledge can be used to ensure both progress and sustainability in agrarian societies.