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Beyond the Crossroads: New Issues, Persistent Problems. Linking food security, sustainability science and sustainability politics

# **The Double Losers: Consequences of Food Consumption Patterns of the Indigenous Community in the Dry Zone of Sri Lanka**

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**From Sri Lanka**

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# Theoretical approach

## Subaltern Studies – Can subaltern Speak ?

‘Subaltern group - ‘inferior’ communities in the society.’

Antonio Gramsci 1930

*‘Subalternity is where social lines of mobility, being elsewhere, do not the formation of a recognizable basis of action.’*

(Gayatri Spivak 2005; 476)

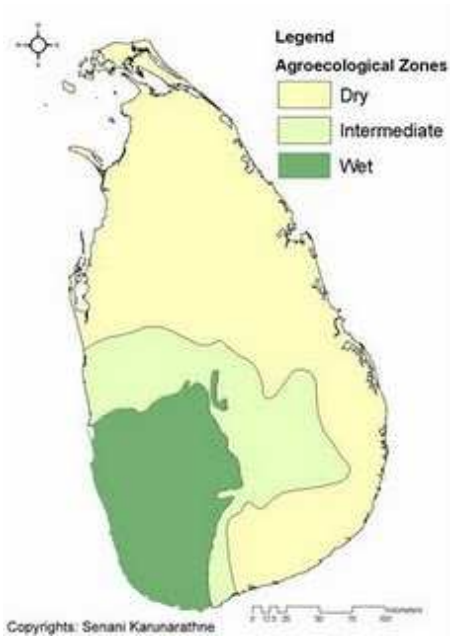
- Subaltern groups voices were originated by hegemonic language of the dominant group
- Dominant discourse decides the subaltern groups existence or passively acceptances.
- Dominant Discourse attempt to equalize the subaltern behavior into main cultural line.

## Hegamonic discourse – Chalten Mouffe und Ernesto Laclau

Political power, administartive  
tools, regulation, cultural  
superiority  
consumption patterns,  
agricultural methods, livelihood.

# Methodological approach

- Ethnographic studies
- Statistical analysis, econometrics analysis – metrological reports, census report and economic data
- Oral history and secondary sources

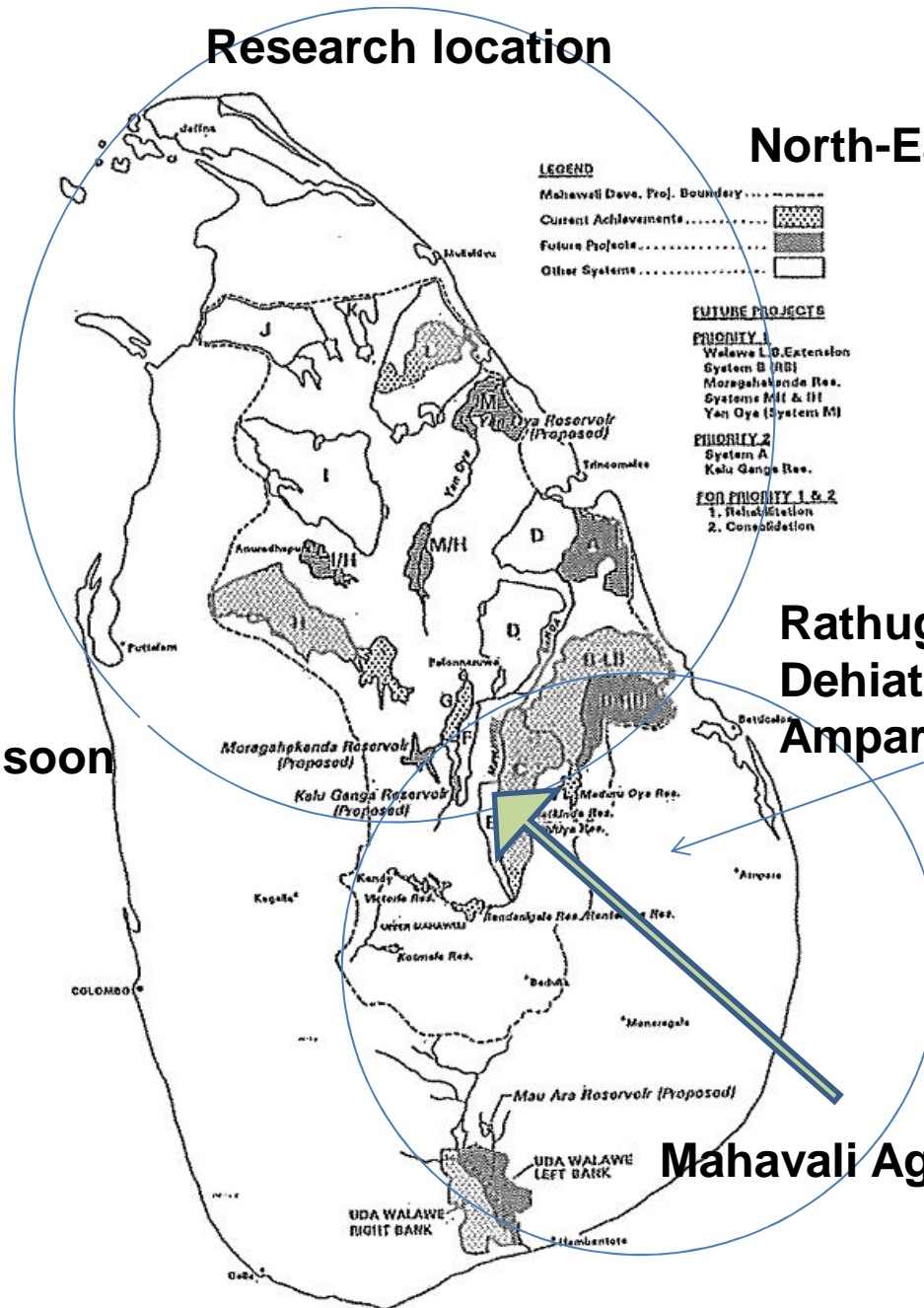
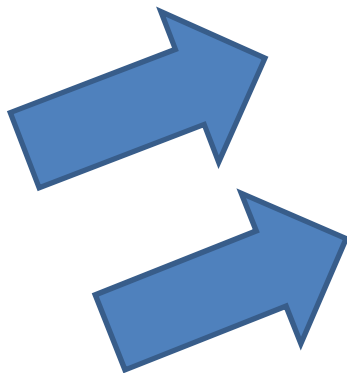


## Research location

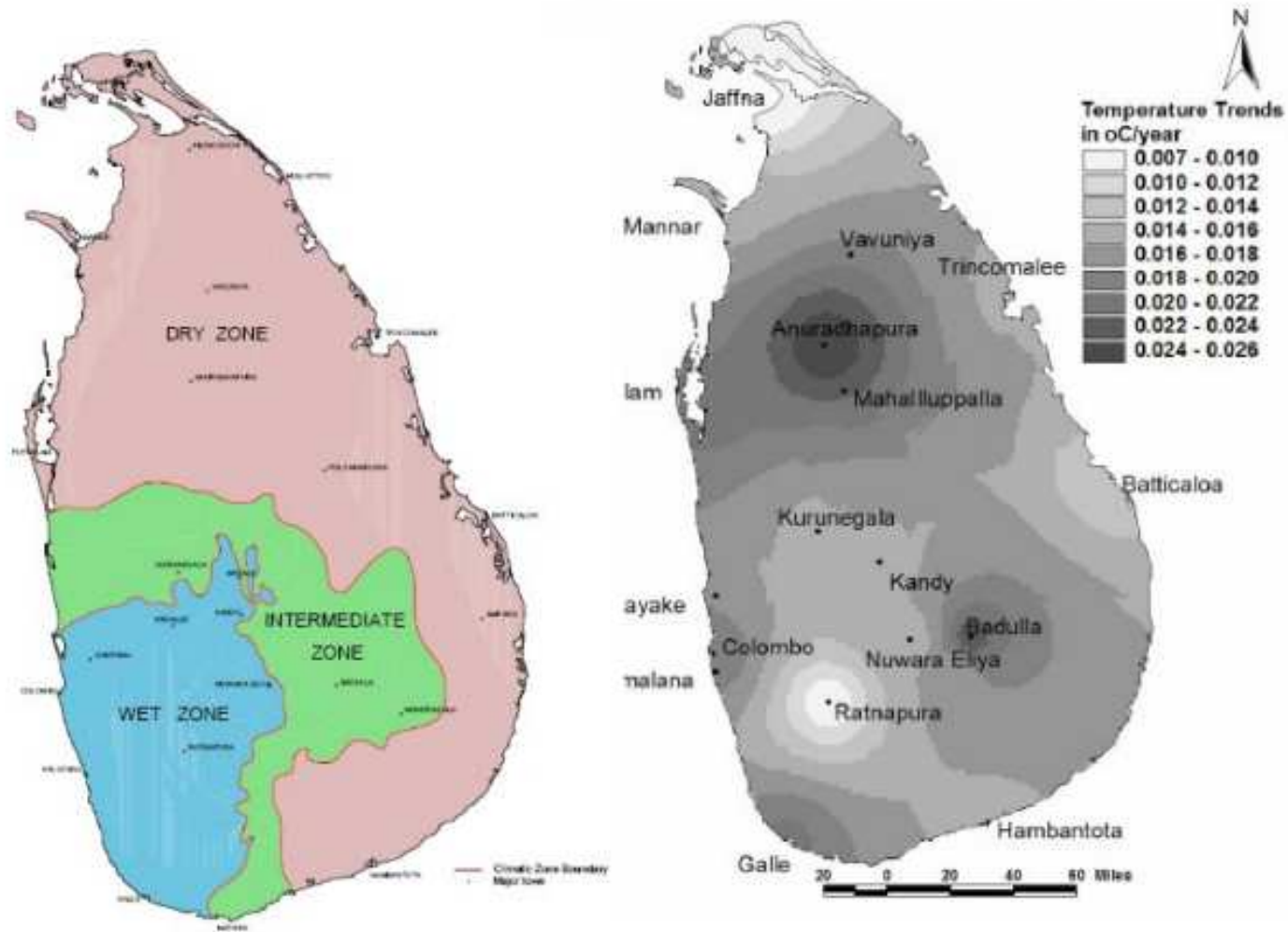
## North-Eastern Monsoon



## South-Western Monsoon



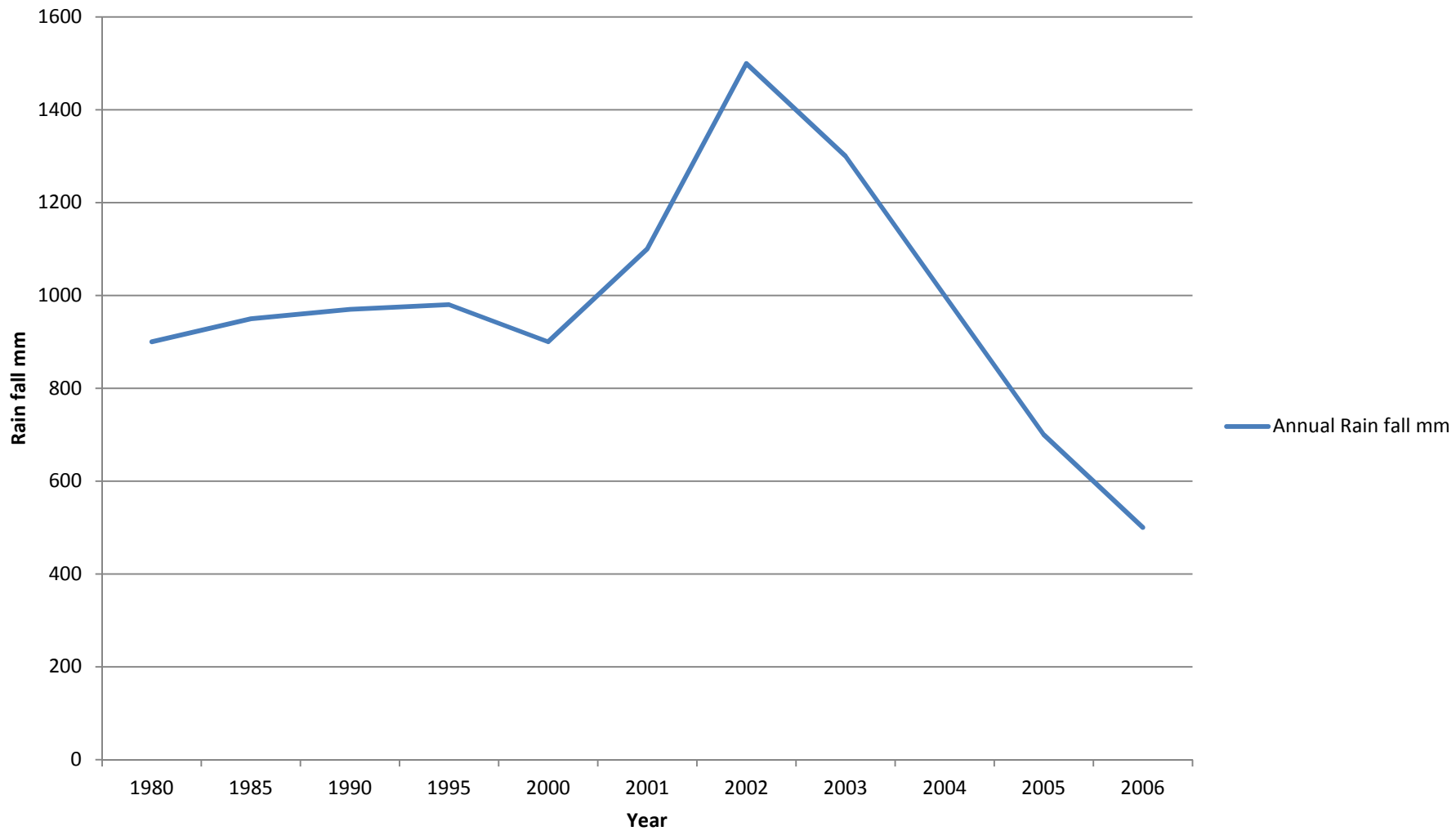
Source: Perera G.D. and Sennema, 2002, Towards sustainable development in Mahaweli settlements through farmer participation



Observed warming trends in mean annual temperature

Sources: Nishadi Eriyagama and Vladimir Smakhtin, 2010 IWMI from Zubair, L et al., 2005

## Annual rain fall in the dry zone Sri Lanka



Source: Metrological Department , Sri Lanka

# Climate Situation in Dry Zone

## Average Temperature

- Dry zone - 28 °C

## Average Rainfall

- Dry zone - < 1,750 mm

0.016°C increase per year between 1961 to 90 over entire country, 2°C increase per year in central highland. ( Chandrapala L 1996)

# Vadda community – Indigenous people

## Historiography and Demography



- Prehistoric settlements in Sri Lanka
- Ancient settlement was *Rathnapura* District Sabaragamuwa
- Hunnasgiriya hills and lowlands spreading through Mahiyanganaya, Rathugala, Nilagala, Toppigala, Panama, Dambana
- Total Population 2,500-3,000 in Badulla, Ampara and Baticalo Districts
- New relocated area of Vadda community in *Rathugala in Ampara District - Population 350 – 45 households*
- *Community based on Varige, Raha* (clan organisation - totemistic nature)





## Food consumption patterns of Vadda community

- Hunting and fishing
- Gathering wild plants and honey
- Chena cultivation –  
Shifting cultivation, rotation of crops  
varieties of vegetables, cereals, some varieties  
of paddy
- Daily consumption and barter exchange  
between community



### Government restriction on Chena cultivation

- Deforestation process
- Negative effect on paddy cultivation in  
*Mahawali* areas



## ***Mahaweli* development scheme after 1977**

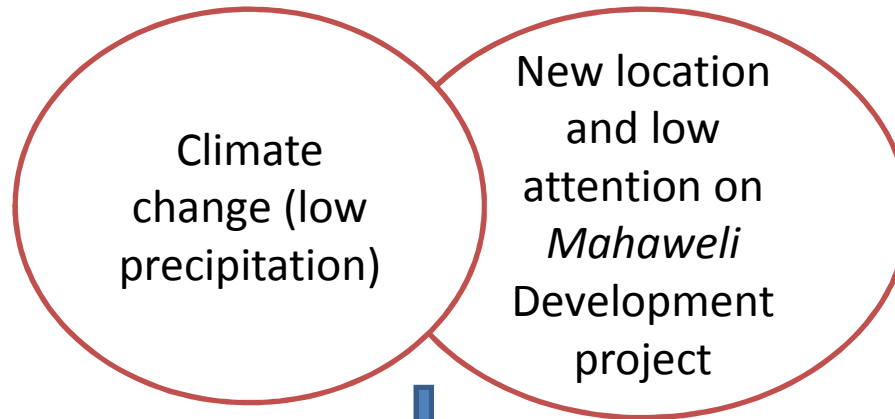
Accelerated Agricultural Development Project



New settlement for migrated farmers



Dislocation of Vadda community to new settlement



Vulnerability of life style /effect on food consumption pattern



## **Arguments and positions of the research**

- Paradox - interests clash between governmental goals of accelerated agricultural development in the dry zone and interests of the indigenous peoples
- Lack of attention - the government policies to the indigenous people's traditional agricultural system and food consumption
- Water scarcity - dry zone areas in the Northeast and the East agricultural areas
- Relocation- the new settlements of indigenous people are located in the East part of the dry zone.
- Lack of space for awareness of environment conservation and climate issues
- Lack of integration of Vadda community into the modern agriculture models

# Conclusion

- Vadda community as a subaltern community has been under represented in dominant agricultural process.
- Integration to main dominant society, Vadda community has lost thier native lands, culture, right to food and traditional agricultural patterns.



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# Sources

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# Research paper for conference documentation

**'Green Consumption'** beyond mainstream  
economy: A discourse analysis

## Main stream economic argument

**green** consumption as the rational choice of  
individuality based on utility and self-  
preferences

**green** consumption is configured by discourses  
Green ideology , hegemony, nodal point, green  
market strategies



# Youth

**Continuation**

**Practicing**

**Coordination**

**Advancing**

**Theory into practice**

