

WEATHER FORECASTING ABILITY OF ELDERLY PEOPLE IN RAJANGANAYA DS DIVISION IN THE DRY ZONE OF SRI LANKA

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Abstract: Climate change poses a significant global challenge, impacting ecosystems and communities worldwide. This study investigated the valuable traditional knowledge held by elderly individuals (over 70 years of age) in the Rajanganaya DS division in the dry zone of Sri Lanka and their effectiveness in forecasting weather change. This study aims to identify the knowledge of local traditional people towards weather change. To achieve this, we conducted in-depth interviews with 20 traditional elders in the Rajanganaya DS division dry zone of Sri Lanka. The qualitative analysis method was used to analyze the collected data. The findings of this study revealed that elderly people in the Rajanganaya DS division possess a remarkable ability to forecast weather change. The elders' knowledge, deeply rooted in their observations of natural phenomena over several decades, provides valuable insights into weather patterns, monsoons, and seasonal variations. Their understanding of indigenous weather indicators, such as animal behaviour, plant flowering patterns, and celestial events, has proven to be highly accurate in predicting impending climatic shifts 75% of the selected people could predict the weather. Elderly people in the Rajanganaya DS division possess an invaluable repository of knowledge that can enhance our understanding of local climate dynamics. These findings advocate for incorporating traditional wisdom in climate policies and developing community-based climate resilience strategies. This study highlights the importance of preserving and incorporating indigenous knowledge into weather change mitigation and adaptation efforts. Traditional communities can play a vital role in enhancing the accuracy and effectiveness of weather forecasting. This research provides a foundation for further exploration of the synergies between traditional wisdom and modern science in the quest for weather resilience.

Keywords: Indigenous; Traditional knowledge; Weather change; Weather forecasting