

The Prehistoric Food Patterns of Eastern Sri Lanka Revealed Through the Rajagala Archaeological Excavation

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Rajagala is the largest Buddhist monastery complex found in Sri Lanka which spreads across 1025 acres. It is located in 'Uhana' Divisional Secretariat area, in the District of Ampara of Eastern Province, Sri Lanka. For the first time in the history, prehistoric excavations have now been extended to the eastern part of the country and the first ever site has been '*Rajagala Mahalena*', which is the largest cave on the site. Since there are no early records, it is a query, how the food pattern of the prehistoric humans of Eastern Sri Lanka might have been and the similarity or dissimilarity with other dry zonal prehistoric areas. Hence, the main objective of this research paper is to unveil the prehistoric food pattern of the people of Eastern Sri Lanka revealed by the Rajagala Archaeological Excavation, which was conducted in 2016 and 2018. This excavation made notable discoveries including stone tools, glass beads, animal teeth and bones, shells, human bones, some floral remains, etc. and according to the relative dating, the aforesaid findings have been decided to the Mesolithic period of Sri Lanka. Thus, the Mesolithic floral and faunal residues found at the excavation and the related literary sources have been used as the primary and the secondary data sources respectively for this research. Apart from the animal flesh, the seeds of 'kekuna' has also been consumed as a food of their food culture. Speaking of the present vegetation, the site landscape is covered with a forest which is highly dense of flora and fauna. Thereby, it is assumed that plenty of diversified animal existence in the area might have created an environment not to have a scarcity of food to the contemporary humans.

Keywords: Eastern Sri Lanka; food pattern; mesolithic period; Rajagala