

Butchering Practices of *Veddah*; the Indigenous People of Sri Lanka

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The *Veddah* are an ethnic group of people living in Sri Lanka whose population is limited to around 5000 people according to cense carried out in 2011. They live in several villagers adjacent to their original homeland forests. Seligman brothers have reported in 1911 that *Veddah* have used the arrow head for butchering. In this study state of art of butchering of the modern day *Veddah* was studied. The study was done in Rathugala in Batticaloa District where a *Veddah* community lives in Rathugala village adjacent to their original homeland; Nilgala forest. A monthly field visits were done to Rathugala village during 2010 and 2011. Totally 10 field visits were made and 45 days and nights were spent in the forest with *Veddah* ascertaining the practices related to the hunting. The interviews were done while in the forest, figures and illustrations of the muscular anatomy and skeletal anatomy of common animals were shown initially to familiarise and to acclimatise *Veddah* for a long run of study. Observations were made on how a monkey was butchered to produces 13 major meat portions and 8 byproducts. Each major meat portions and byproducts have terminologies in their language. Obtaining primal cuts are exactly similar to the modern method of butchering. The *Veddah* are still skillful butchers. One specific tool with a sharpen edge and a point is sufficient for successful butchering. During prehistoric period people have used similar methods in butchering. The findings are useful in re-creating prehistoric life style of people. Purpose driven ethnographic studies help gather information, deepen the understanding about the indigenous groups like *Veddah*, increase the weight of the cultural identity and help understand the lifestyle of prehistoric man.

Keywords:Rathugala, prehistoric man, primal meat cuts, butchering by products

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