

## **Reduction of paddy cultivation: A case study in Alawwa area in Kurunegala district**

### **Extended Abstract**

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#### **Background**

The beginning of the paddy cultivation in Sri Lanka had proud history and it traces back to more than 5000 years (Dharmasena, 2010). Our culture was adjoined with the paddy cultivation. The royal governance mind saw the Sri Lanka was enrich with the rice farming. Sri Lanka produces just over million tonnes of rice each year. Rice is harvested twice a year. About 1.8 million farm families are engaged in paddy Cultivation Island wide. Anuradhapura, Pollonnaruwa and Ampara are the districts which produce highest rice production in Sri Lanka which contribute 12%, 12%, 11% in respectively. But forth highest district of paddy in Sri Lanka is Kurunegala which contribute 10 % out of total paddy production of Sri Lanka (Department of Census and Statistics of Sri Lanka, 2015). It is noted that there is a long term trend between the rainfall and the deviation from the rice production. Rice is considered as golden grain and it produce staple food in Sri Lanka. But at present, paddy production is decreasing due to various natural and economic factors. Therefore, there are so many challenges to protect this cultivation in Sri Lanka.

#### **Objectives**

The general objective of this study was to study reduction of paddy cultivation in Alawwa area in Kurunegala District. The specific objectives were to identify the reduction of paddy lands and paddy production in Alawwa area, to identify factors which affect to the reduction of paddy cultivation, to suggest potential measures to increase of paddy production.

#### **Methodology**

Both primary and secondary data were used for this study. Questionnaires, group discussions, filed observations methods were used for collecting primary data. Books, website in internet, reports and articles were used to collect secondary data. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were adapted to analyse the data. Data were presented using texts, graphs, charts, maps, tables. There

were 200 farm families in Keppitiwalana GN Division. Questionnaires administered to 35 farmers. Study was conducted in Alawwa, Keppitiwalana GN Divisions.

#### **Results**

The multiple analyses indicate that there is a significant reduction of both paddy production and paddy lands in Alawwa area. Researcher could find out several reasons for reduction of paddy production in this area such as lack of high quality paddy seeds, lack of water for paddy cultivation, lack of suitable lands, changed of the paddy growing season, lack of knowledge of the farmers, lack of good price for paddy in the market, Loss of profit from the paddy crops, increase cost for paddy cultivation etc. Most people refer other crops instead of paddy cultivation In Keppitiwalana GN division. There are 140 acres of paddy fields in Keppitiwalana including four villages but only harvested 97 acres of paddy fields in present while 43 paddy fields have been become fallowed during the period of 2010-2015. Though the highest harvest of paddy has been reported in 2011, after 2011 paddy production has been reducing immensely in this area. Farmers in this area are changing to grow other crops instead of paddy because of various reasons such as continuous drought. On the other hand, they think that growing long term crops such as coconuts, and other commercial crops like pineapple, and other vegetables are profitable than paddy. Therefore, there is a potential threat for reducing paddy cultivation in Alawwa area. There are limited paddy lands in this area but day by day quantity of paddy land is decreasing due to landfilling for various constructions such as building houses, factories due to the increase of human population in this area. Hence, it is necessary to take some policy based actions to minimize the land filling for other purposes in order to sustain paddy cultivation in Alawwa area.

#### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

Since the past era paddy cultivation was main crop in Sri Lanka. Furthermore paddy cultivation is reducing day by day and it may be threaten to economy of Sri Lanka. In Keppitiwalana area most of farmers engaged long term cultivations. Farmers have not enough economically benefits from paddy cultivation. They had high income from the long term cultivations than paddy. They are growing other crops instead of paddy cultivation. Some farmers had been given up paddy cultivation since long period. Agrarian Department and relevant

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parties should motivate farmers to uplift paddy cultivation in order to protect the staple food of Sri Lanka.

**Keywords:** Paddy cultivation, paddy Reduction, Fallow field, Staple food.

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