

**ADAPTABILITY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF SUSTAINABLE  
CERTIFICATION SCHEMES IN LOW COUNTRY TEA SECTOR, SRI  
LANKA: A CASE STUDY IN DENIYAYA**

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Tea sector contributes immensely to the economy and Gross Domestic Production of Sri Lanka. Though, Ceylon tea has remarked its position among tea exporters, sustainability of Ceylon tea industry is threatened due to various environmental, economic and social factors. In order to mitigate these problems, sustainable certification schemes were introduced. The study was carried out to assess the adaptability and effectiveness of these certification schemes since no study was done in Sri Lanka previously. Primary data were collected from 400 random sample of tea smallholders in three divisional secretarial divisions using pre-tested and structured questionnaire. Non adapters of the scheme were 75% of the respondents while the rest were practicing organic and rainforest alliance certification schemes. Factors affecting adaptability were identified by fitting binary logistic regression model. Difference of yield and income of adapters and non adapters were compared by pooled t-test. Logistic regression results revealed that, adaptability to sustainable certification increase with tea income (OR:1.10), level of education (OR:17.34), gender (OR:1.83) and number of family labours (OR:1.64) while, adaptability decrease with age (OR:0.93) and yield (OR:0.99). Results of pooled t-test indicated that monthly yield (382 kg) and income (LKR 42,453 ) of adapters significantly higher ( $p < 0.05$ ) than non adapters (yield = 347 kg and income = LKR 31,989 ). In conclusion, sustainable certification schemes ensure higher yield and income of tea farmers. Higher fixed price levels for certified green leaf would encourage tea small holders to adapt and continue sustainable certification schemes. Recommendation of simple, convenient and non labour intensive practices will ensure the adaption of sustainable certification schemes. Nevertheless, well planed awareness programs are essential to enhance the farmer participation.

**Keywords:** Binary logistic regression, Rainforest alliance, Sustainable certification schemes, Tea smallholders