

Risk associated with paddy farming in Gampaha District, Sri Lanka

I.G.N.I. Wijerathna¹ and K.P.P. Kopyawattage¹

Abstract

Agriculture plays a significant role in the economy and livelihood of Sri Lankan people in terms of food security, export earnings, employment and income generation. As uncertainties such as weather, market, prices, government policies and yield are inherent in agriculture, their timely identification and management are necessary. This study was focused on identification of risks associated with paddy farming in Gampaha District which contributes to about 14% of the rice production in the wetzone of Sri Lanka. There is a gap between the actual paddy production (2.8 t/ha) and potential paddy production (6-7 t/ha) in the area. Since the agricultural risk and land productivity are inversely related, identifying risk associated with paddy farming is important. Thus, a field survey was carried out using a pre-tested structured questionnaire with a randomly selected 90 paddy farmers from among 900 registered paddy farmers in Gampaha District. Accordingly, cultivation extent in ten Grama Niladari (GN) divisions was categorized such as high, medium and low by using multistage random sampling method. Results were analyzed by using frequency analysis. The results showed that paddy farmers in the area are vulnerable to numerous risk factors. Production risk was ranked as the most critical risk (39.12%) which included irrigation (26.30%), access to water (23.67%) and subsidies (22.50%) as sub components associated with paddy farming. Marketing risk, institutional risk, financial risk and human risk were ranked 19.09%, 15.68%, 13.33%, 12.76% by respondents respectively. According to the findings of this study, it is recommended that paddy farmers in the area adapt risk mitigating strategies such as adjusting cultivation according to rainy seasons, use of flood tolerant and high yielding seed varieties and crop diversification. Moreover, actions need to be taken to minimize flooding condition in the area though proper land management strategies.

Keywords: *Agricultural risk, Paddy farming, Risk mitigation*

¹ *Department of Agricultural Systems, Faculty of Agriculture, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka. Corresponding author's email: kumudupdn@gmail.com*