

A MODEL TO CALCULATE WOMEN'S CARE ECONOMIC VALUE IN HOUSEHOLDS: A CASE STUDY IN KANDYAN HOME GARDENS, SRI LANKA

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Women's primary role as care givers in the domestic sphere is not valued yet economically. Women's involvement in home gardening for household consumption is one of the care role dimensions that attempted to value in this study. The sample consists of 120 female *Kandyan* home gardeners, were selected from *Medadumbara* Divisional Secretariat Division in *Kandy* district using multistage sampling. A pre-tested questionnaire was administered for data collection and MS-Excel Software (2010) was used for data analysis. The concept of opportunity cost was applied to calculate the forgone income for the respondents from home gardening due to her involvement in other care economic activities at home. The real labour market values were used to calculate it. The study considered six most common activities pertaining to home gardening and its relationship to consumption along with six other domestic activities performed by a typical woman in the area. The labour-days spent for all activities by a woman and prevailing daily labour wages in the study area were accounted in calculations. The selected most common domestic activities included caring for child/elderly/sick, meal preparation, washing/laundry, housekeeping, fuel-wood collection, and home-decoration. A weightage factor was adjusted to each considered home gardening activity considering the relatedness (as a percentage) of personal labour contribution to consumption. The total of the mean cost of labor of selected home gardening activities for consumption (LKR 4,488) and mean cost of labour of selected domestic activities (LKR 42,057) per month were interpreted as the care economic value in the sample and it is LKR 46,545. The total monthly income level of approximately 74% of the respondents in the sample is in the range of LKR 25,000 –50,000. Based on the results, the study concludes that the women's care role has a significant economic value. Therefore, valuation of women's care role and developing reliable methods and tools for such valuation are very important. These measures will eliminate the belief of women's domestic work has no value.

Keywords: Economic value, *Kandyan* Home gardening, Women's care role