

CHALLENGES IN THE TRADITIONAL CINNAMON CULTIVATION: THE CASE OF BERAGAMA CINNAMON VILLAGE IN MATARA, SRI LANKA

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This study identifies the challenges of traditional cinnamon cultivation in Sri Lanka by paying special attention to the Beragama cinnamon village. Though Sri Lanka produces the world's greatest quality cinnamon (*Cinnamomum zeylanicum* blume), this traditional caste-based labor-intensive cinnamon producing process is endangered in the face of the modernization process of agriculture. In 2017, Sri Lanka exported 16,967 MT and earned 33,342 Million Rupees from cinnamon. Though it has a well-developed value and marketing chain, the earnings of the cinnamon farmers and the laborers who process the cinnamon from the farms to the local market is very low while, second and third value-adding processes and trading companies earn more. On the other hand, skilled laborers are moving away from the cinnamon process for easy jobs expecting a better salary and dignity. Consequently, the young generation is highly dissatisfied with cinnamon cultivation and there are no new machines or technology to process the cinnamon from the ground to the market. Hence, systematic modernization transformations are much needed. This case study adopted a mixed-method using both primary and secondary data. The study village 'Beragama' is located in Beragama West GND in Mulatiyana DSD of the Matara District in Sri Lanka. Thirty cinnamon producing families have been interviewed. Several focus-group discussions and key-informant discussions have been conducted to collect qualitative data. Data identification was done using sources from institutions, books, magazines, newspapers, brochures and the Internet. Information on cinnamon cultivation was collected from the Department of Export Agriculture, Thihagoda Cinnamon Research Center, Mulatiyana Divisional Secretariat. According to the analysis, the challenges in cinnamon cultivation were identified under three determinants. Those are the cultivation challenges, production challenges, and market challenges. Lack of skilled manpower, non-availability of other cinnamon products, aging cultivation, fragmentation of land, lack of proper land ownership, lack of proper price for cinnamon and lack of access to new technology were identified challenges under the above categories. Adding new technology to traditional cinnamon cultivation can improve the quality of cinnamon products, thereby increasing the demand for Sri Lankan cinnamon in the world market.

Keywords: Traditional cinnamon cultivation, Production challenges, Market challenges