

Sustainability of Selected Rural Agricultural Systems in the Mid-Country of Sri Lanka - A Case Study

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Poverty and agriculture remain as significant features within the rural community of Sri Lanka. Majority of the rural population engaged with agriculture in the mid-country wet zone and two main cropping systems could be identified viz. Kandyan homegarden (KHG) and tea smallholder (TS) cultivations. The previous studies have indicated that deficiencies in marketing, extension and declining agricultural production have caused to diminish economic sustainability, leading to a setback in rural livelihoods. Hence, this study was conducted to evaluate the status of family units, their contribution to the agriculture based livelihoods, agricultural productivity and its contribution to income generation by using a pre-tested questionnaire. Nadithalawa, a typical rural village located in Yatinuwara Division was chosen and nearly a 60% of households (129 families) were randomly selected. Results revealed that 58.4% of the adults in the respondent households engaged in agriculture on part-time basis. Majority (76%) of the families were engaged in KHGs, while 35.6%, 6.9 % and 7.75% were involved with TS, others and livestock respectively. The highest income was recorded by TS than KHG farmers. A lower productivity of KHG was recorded when compared to potential productivity. Thirty eight percent of the households belong to the lowest income category (up to Rs. 50,000/ year) which is accounted from total agriculture income. A significant change in agriculture sector policies will be needed to ensure economic sustainability of households by utilizing the resources in a sustainable manner.

Key words: Kandyan homegarden, Rural economy, Sustainability, Tea small-holdings, Workforce