
Farmers' Perception of Paddy Land Contraction; Special Reference in Kaluthara District

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This study focused on identifying the factors that created an impact on Farmers' Perception (FP) for Paddy Land Contraction (PLC), which is considered as one of the demotivation factors in any agriculture field. The study was carried out with special reference to Kaluthara District, which is located in the wet zone of Sri Lanka (SL). It is the area which has faced contraction the paddy lands. The main objective of this study is to examine the factors which influence farmers' perception of paddy land contraction. As the specific objective, this study explored what is /are (the) most influenced factor and perception indicators to the paddy land contraction of the area. As literature shows. Rice is the main food for more than half of world population and even in Sri Lankan context, rice is considered as the staple food. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to identify the main factors that contribute to the abandonment of paddy lands. An inductive approach was taken to accomplish the objectives with a sample of 200 paddy farmers selected from Kaluthara District. Exploratory Factor Analysis method (EFA) was used as an analytical tool to extract important factors of the Farmers' Perception (FP) for Paddy Land Contraction (PLC). This study found out six factors of the Farmers' Perception (FP) for Paddy Land Contraction (PLC) in Kaluthara District in Sri Lanka, namely *Social Factors (SF)*, *Economic Factors (EF)*, *Ecological & Climate Factors (ECF)*, *Political & Government Influence (PGI)*, *Institutional & Education Influence (IEI)*, *Geographical Factors (GF)*. The Cronbach's Alpha value of the questions was 0.821 and KMO value to estimate the adequacy of the observations was 0.634. The cumulative variance explained by the factors was 96.37%. After applying descriptive statistics analysis, it was discovered that the EF and SF have relatively high potential to influence the contraction process. Some indicators have a considerable contribution to that process according to the ground level data. (Lack of labours, land issues as boggy, land fragmentation, land converting and low-income.)When commencing a future agriculture planning and policy making, it will be important to examine those factors influences.

Keywords: abandonment; agriculture, farmers' perception; paddy land contraction; socio-economic impact