

A Sociological study of the factors pushing the youth community out of Sri Lankan agriculture (Deniyaya area in Matara district with Lankagama village)

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Abstract

The agricultural sector occupies an important place in the economy. At present the labour force contribution in the agricultural sector is 26%. The problem of the study is what are the push factors that are driving the rural youth community away from agriculture. The main objective of the study was to identify the factors pushing the youth community away from agriculture (chena farming and tea cultivation) and analyse them from a sociological point of view. In-depth interviews and observations were used in the collection of preliminary data for research data collection. Department of Census and Statistics records, Agriculture Officer and Grama Niladhari annual reports were used in the collection of secondary data. Random samples were selected from Lankagama with a sample size of 45 people which includes Grama Niladhari, Agriculture Officers and people at various age levels. Qualitative methodology was used as the main methodology in this study. The livelihood of the villagers could be identified as chena farming and Kithul industry associated with the Sinharaja reserve. But today tea cultivation can be identified as the main livelihood due to the lack of permission to cultivate in the reserve and the impact of the open economy. At present, the interest of the young community in the plantation industry tea cultivation is very low. In this way, the problem of income and marketing can be identified as the main reason for young community to leave agriculture. It appears that a good price could not be obtained for tea cultivation due to the dilapidated condition of the Lankagama road system. Lankagama many lands do not have deeds and therefore it is not possible to obtain a bank loan when obtaining fertilizer machinery for cultivation. As a result, low-income tea buyers are being held hostage to "Dalu potha" (Daily Report Book) loans and high-interest loans, a unique feature of the village. Also, due to lack of infrastructure development, lack of technology and services and for education and employment goals, the young community left agriculture and migrated from village to town. Close proximity to the Sinharaja Reserve can be seen as a growth of the tourism industry in Lankagama village. It is also observed that the youth are leaving agriculture. The inability to identify a clear economic benefit in agriculture and plantation and the backwardness of the youth community in defining agriculture as a non-permanent economic activity is the main factor influencing the youth community to shift from agriculture and tea cultivation to other economic activities.

Keywords: Agriculture, Chena farming, Migration, Tea cultivation, Youth community

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