

Socioeconomic Analysis of Employees in Oil Palm Industry in Southern Province Sri Lanka

KGS Priyankara^{1*}, GC Samraweera¹, PVS Harshana¹ and WAAM Bandara¹

¹Department of Agriculture Economics, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Ruhuna, Kamburupitiya, Sri Lanka.

Abstract

The exploration of direct and indirect social and economic impacts of the industry on the workers attached to the oil palm industry has under researched and hence the situation is questionable particular in the Sri Lankan context. Therefore, this study focuses on investigating the present status of oil palm employees in Southern province, Sri Lanka and to provide suggestions to uplift their livelihood. Primarily data were collected from a sample consisted of sixty employees in Elpitiya plantation in Galle district using pre-tested structured questionnaire survey. Results related to the respondents' profile, it discovers that majority (73%) of oil palm growers in the study area are male and 43.3% have been educated only up to grade five. About 83% of them are permanent labors while rest of them are working in a temporary basis. Moreover, the adaptation of younger generation for oil palm industry is very low (8.3%). It is noteworthy that 72% of them engaged in oil palm industry as their main income source. Average income of the employees nearly Rs.19, 000 per month. Furthermore, monthly average expenditure (Rs. 22,000) is more than their average income. Out of the total expenditure, 81.7% spend on food items. Results further disclose that 60% of the oil palm workers are having three to five members in their family and live in line houses with limited space revealing hosing facility as their major problem. More than half (52%) of the employees are having their own vehicle; motor bike or foot cycle and majority (76.6 %) use mobile phones. However, all most all the employees are not satisfied about available health facilities. However, they satisfied about the working hours (6hrs/day). Finally study suggests that land allocation for building comfortable spaced houses (48.3%), assuring benefits (40%), developing infrastructures (3.3%) and safety conditions (8.3%) must be done in order to satisfactorily engage in the industry. Organizations must make a long-term schedule for uplifting as well as maintaining the uniformity of the socio- economic status of oil palm employees' for the betterment of the existing industry.

Keywords: Employees, Long-term, Oil Palm, Socioeconomic status

***Corresponding author:** sandunp73@gmail.com