

Stakeholders' Perception on Oil Palm Cultivation: A Case Study in Kegalle District, Sri Lanka

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Abstract

This study was carried out to determine the stakeholders' attitudes towards crop diversification from rubber into oil palm in Kegalle district. The present study was conducted during June (2018) to January (2019) at Panana division in Madeniya Estate, Warakapola by using simple random sampling technique with 35 participants. Pre tested structured questionnaire and water table depth was measured during eight months period using two wells located in oil palm and rubber plantations. According to the data analysis 3% of labours in 20-30 age categories were observed and it was cleared that future of rubber industry has to face severe labour scarcity. On the other hand, participants were not satisfied with the present wages. However, 60% of them satisfied about their job practiced for a long period. The results clearly showed that 100% of participants were aware of oil palm cultivation in the area by rumors which have created an emphatic public opinion against oil palm. Sociological disfavours such as loss of jobs, no added benefits from oil palm, spreading of skin diseases among dogs, increase of snake population and environmental problems including groundwater depletion and biodiversity degradation. Among the participants, 97% were believed that there is an environmental impact on oil palm cultivation. Among the participants, 37% were experienced difficulties faced due to oil palm cultivation in the area. Job satisfaction level of labourers had a significant relationship with education ($p < 0.05$). The fluctuation of ground water table in oil palm and rubber plantations were depended on climatic factors. Water table depth decreased during the dry season (September and January) and increased during the wet season (October to December) in both plantations. Based on findings and future prospects of oil palm industry, awareness programs should be arranged with the support of all stakeholders.

Keywords: Crop diversification, Kegalle district, Oil palm, Rubber, Sociological problems

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