

Farmers' Perception towards Government Intervention in Paddy Purchasing Process: Case Study in Ambalantota DS Division of Hambantota District, Sri Lanka

V.P.R. Madhushani¹, S.M.S.P. Bandara^{2*}, W.B.K. Bandara³ and G.C. Samaraweera⁴

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

² Paddy Marketing Board, Housing Secretariat, Chiththappalam A. Gardiner Mawatha, Colombo 02, Sri Lanka

³ Sri Lanka Institute of Advanced Technological Education, No. 320, Janawathu Piyasa, T.B. Jayah Mawatha, Colombo 10, Sri Lanka

⁴ Department of Agricultural Economics, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Ruhuna, Mapalana, Kamburupitiya, Sri Lanka

Abstract

This study mainly focused to disclose the farmers' perception towards government intervention in paddy purchasing, exploring the present situation of paddy marketing and assessing benefits and challenges of Paddy Marketing Board (PMB). The primary data were collected by using a pre-tested questionnaire from randomly selected 150 paddy farmers in Ambalantota divisional secretariat (DS). Data were analysed by using parametric and non-parametric statistical methods and descriptive statistics. Key findings revealed that paddy farmers' perception was negative towards government intervention in paddy marketing ($z = -2.67, p < 0.05$). The choice of paddy selling agency was significantly influenced by farmer's experience in paddy farming and availability of transport facilities ($X^2 = 10.808, p < 0.05$ and $X^2 = 93.204, p < 0.05$, respectively). Majority of farmers (85%) have refused to sell their paddy to the paddy marketing board. Farmers have stated negative agreement with current ceiling price of paddy ($z = -9.962, p < 0.05$). Study further revealed that PMB is significantly more beneficial than private agencies due to higher guaranteed price for paddy ($t = 10.57, p < 0.05$), linkage with government ($t = 15.439, p < 0.05$) and restriction of the intervention by third parties ($t = 8.901, p < 0.05$). According to the respondents, main challenges faced by PMB were, (a) high quality maintaining cost ($t = -22.73, p < 0.05$), (b) limited purchasing ($t = -155.45, p < 0.05$), (c) documentary ($t = -22.98, p < 0.05$), (d) purchasing period ($t = -6.985, p < 0.05$), (e) high weight losses after drying ($t = -18.224, p < 0.05$), (f) time consumption ($t = -14.392, p < 0.05$), (g) inconvenience for cleaning and drying paddy ($t = -14.238, p < 0.05$), (h) quick cash accessibility ($t = -3.417, p < 0.05$) and (i) transport facilities ($t = -8.769, p < 0.05$). Key suggestions from farmers in order to improve the government intervention in paddy marketing were providing transport costs (75%), accepting higher moisture level of paddy at purchasing (72%) and increasing purchasing quantity (63%). It is recommended to launch awareness programmes on the importance of quality maintenance in paddy, establish drying beds in purchasing centres to maintain quality and provide moisture meter to farmer organization, establish local purchasing centres at village level to reduce the transport cost and utilize IT facilities to reduce unnecessary documentation and to enhance quick payment method.

Keywords: Farmers' perception, Government intervention, Paddy marketing

*Corresponding Author: samanpb@yahoo.com