

**IMPACT OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF TEA  
SMALLHOLDERS ON THE PRODUCTION OF TEA LANDS  
IN PASSARA TEA INSPECTOR (TI) RANGE**

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## ABSTRACT

The main plantation crop grown in Sri Lanka is Tea. Tea industry in Sri Lanka can be categorized in 2 sectors based on the land extent cultivated as plantation sector and smallholdings sector. Lands less than 10 acres in extent are treated as “tea small holdings” according the Tea Control Act. Contribution of small holders to the Sri Lankan tea sector is higher than the plantation sector. Hence safeguarding the small holders is very much important to our country. Knowing the socio-economic status helps to find the strategies for improving smallholder’s living conditions. Socio-economic status is the social standing or class of an individual or group and it is often measured as a combination of education, income and occupation.

This study was undertaken to assess the impact of socio-economic status of tea small holders in the Passara (Tea Inspector) TI range on the production of their tea lands and also to identify the constraints faced by them in socio-economic upliftment. Total sample size of this study was 150 smallholders who are registered in five smallholding development societies out of 15 societies in Passara TI range. Data were collected randomly by using a structured questionnaire through a face to face interview. Descriptive statistics and regression techniques were used to analyze the data. Simple linear regression results revealed that gender (male), education level and farming experience of the smallholder farm size and monthly fertilizer cost were positively affected on the production. While marital status of the smallholder negatively affected. Major constraints faced by the smallholders are poor infra-structure facilities, high cost for children’s education, high cost of field operations, and pest and disease attack to tea cultivation. Proper extension services and field training programmes are suggested to improve their knowledge and experience on proper field practices. Increasing of fertilizer allowance and supplying of credit facilities are also needed. Infrastructure facilities should be developed in the Passara area. Various social organizations and societies should come forward to improve the socio-economic status of the tea growers.

*Keywords:* Socio-economic status, Tea Smallholding sector, Constraints of tea small holders