

Study on Socio-Economic characteristics of Income diversified Tea Smallholders in Badulla District

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This study focused on investigating socio-economic characteristics of Income diversified tea smallholders in Badulla district. In this study income was categorized into four categories namely, income from only tea cultivation, income from tea and other agricultural activities, income from tea and non-agricultural activities and income from tea, other agricultural activities and non-agricultural activities. Income generating only from tea is 15%, income generating from tea and other agricultural activities is 53.33% and it is the highest percentage. Income generating from tea and non-agricultural activities is 15.33% and income generating from tea, other agricultural activities and non-agricultural activities is 16.33%. In this sample, the highest portion is male household heads (92.32%) and the rest (7.59%) is female household heads. Highest proportion of small holders who have generated their income by tea and other agricultural activities belongs to 45 — 60 age group. Majority of the tea small holders have completed their secondary education (Grade 6 to 11) and most of the smallholders who have diversified their income belongs to this group. Majority of the households are having 3 to 5 members in their families. As well as highest diversification rate can be seen in the families who are having 3 to 5 members. Highest percentage of diversification can be seen in small holders who are having 0.5 to 1 acres. Small holders who are having more than 20 year experience have highest percentage of income generating from tea, other agriculture and non-agriculture. According to findings highest number (205) of tea small holders are not engaging with non-agricultural activities. Small holders who have the ownership of their lands has more diversification rate comparing the small holders who have not owned a land. Income generating only from tea cultivation is in higher level in households which has migrant members.

The obtained results have important policy implications which imply that programs targeted to engage people in other income generating activities would augment their income sources. As measures from the part of the government reducing the rate of interest for private enterprising in the rural sector, development of rural infrastructure and improving information facilities at the rural areas are suggested.

Keywords: Income diversification, Tea small holders, Socio-Economic characteristics