

**SOCIO-ECONOMIC INFLUNCE ON GROWTH
PERFORMANCE OF SMALLHOLDER RUBBER
CULTIVATION IN UVA PROVINCE**

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By

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ABSTRACT

The rubber is an important plantation crop in Sri Lanka because it contributes significantly to the GDP of the country and earns a significant foreign exchange. Climatic and physiographic conditions in the wet and intermediate zones of Sri Lanka are suitable for rubber cultivation. Rubber cultivation in Sri Lanka has traditionally been confined to the Wet Zone where the rubber lands declined rapidly with urbanization. Therefore, cultivation has been extended to Uva Province too in the Intermediate Zone to meet the demand for natural rubber. This study was conducted in order to find growth performance of smallholder rubber cultivation in Uva Province and associated socio-economic factors. For this study 100 rubber smallholders were selected using stratified sampling technique from four RDO (Rubber Development Officer) divisions from Badulla and six from Monaregala Districts. Questionnaire based survey including information on family profile, income, expenditure, rubber land & its management, government supports, yield & products and marketing facilities. In addition, stem girth, bark consumption rate, the quality of harvesting and land management were evaluated by randomly selecting 20 rubber trees in each smallholding. Descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis were done. According to the results of age distribution, majority of the rubber smallholders (45%) are in 51-60 age group. Also more than 50% of the rubber smallholders have only primary and O/L educational level. Cultivation area is less than 2 acres of 93% of rubber smallholders and most rubber smallholders have cultivated RRIC 121 rubber clone. Majority (85%) had participated for training/extension programs conducted by the Rubber Research Institute of Sri Lanka and Rubber Development Department. When consider fertilizer usage, 52% of rubber smallholders use fertilizers whilst 68% of them are applying fertilizer once a year. Also they spend 5,000-10,000 rupees for fertilizer annually. Results of regression analysis revealed that rubber stem girth positively correlated with management practices, fertilizer usage, farming experience and age of plants.

Key Words: Growth performance, Rubber smallholder, Socio-economic status