

The Communication Impact of Intermediaries on the Marketing of Polytunnel Farmers with Special Reference to Welimada and Bandarawela Areas

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The Poly tunnel farming is one of the modern agricultural practices carried out by Sri Lankan farmers mainly those who are in Welimada and Bandarawela areas. Majority of the farmers use intermediaries as their main marketing channel of information. The research was conducted with the aim of investigating the impact of intermediaries' communication on marketing practices of Poly tunnel farmers and thereby to identify the accessibility of Poly tunnel farmers to the marketing information. Data were collected from 74 Poly tunnel farmers selected using random sampling technique through interviews and the data collection was based on the aspects of market, marketing mix and market performance. The results of the qualitative analysis show that farmers who are working with an institutional framework such as farmers working under the Export Development Board are getting adequate amount of information. Moreover, it was identified that the amount of information received by the farmers are varied on the basis of the type of intermediary with whom they are dealing, knowledge of farmers and the relationship between the intermediary and the farmer. In addition, it was able to identify that those who are practicing the formal marketing techniques can gain more information. In the light of considering all these it is clear that a collaborative approach of farmers and a formal institutional framework will enhance the accessibility of farmers to marketing information.

Key words: Marketing Intermediaries, Poly tunnel Farmers, Marketing Information