

Impact of Socio-economic Status of Tea Smallholders on the Production of Tea Lands in Passara Tea Inspector (TI) Range

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Contribution of smallholders to the Sri Lankan tea sector is higher than the plantation sector. Knowing the socio-economic status helps find the strategies for improving smallholder's living conditions and their production. This study was undertaken to assess the impact of socio-economic status of tea small holders in the Passara tea inspector range on the production of their tea lands and also to identify the constraints faced by them in socio-economic upliftment. Data were collected from randomly selected 150 smallholders who are registered in five smallholding development societies out of 15 societies in Passara area 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, education level, farming experience of the smallholder, monthly fertilizer cost and farm size positively affect the production while marital status of the smallholder negatively affect the production. Major constraints faced by the smallholders are poor infrastructure facilities, high cost for children's education, high cost of field operations, and pest and disease attack on tea cultivation. Proper extension services and field training programmes are suggested to offer them to gain their knowledge and experience on proper field practices. Continuously providing sufficient amount 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 small scale tea growers.

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