

Why Younger Generation Reluctant to Continue with Farming? A Case Study in Huruluwewa Modern Colonization Scheme

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Modern agricultural colonization schemes were introduced to the Dry Zone of Sri Lanka to achieve the country's food self-sufficiency. However, less interest in young farmers to continue with farming has become a major issue in these schemes. Therefore, this study attempted to identify the reasons for the young generation in the colonization schemes in Sri Lanka to be less interested in continuing with farming, by testing the *Huruluwewa* Colonization Scheme in the North Central Province as a case. Primary data were collected through the field survey which covered 155 farm households by employing a random sampling method. Descriptive and inferential analytical methods were used to analyze the collected data. The economic factor analysis indicated that yield and price risk of farming are the critical factors that affect farming income. The specific concern of the farmers in the scheme is drought and thereby the water management issues. Less profitability of farming systems in the scheme was another economic reason for the lack of interest of young in farming. This was mainly due to the absence of innovativeness in farming or less ability of the farmers to think out of the box as most farmers traditionally grow rice the same as the first generation did at the establishment of the scheme. Analyzing the social factors indicated less social recognition of farming is the main reason for the younger generation's decision to quit farming. The root causes here were the economic and social stagnation or less or slow transformation of these communities for many decades. This has created multiplier effects on the second and third generation of the scheme in terms of societal, for instance, out-migration (both temporary and permanent), social issues in terms of marrying, crimes, and drug addictions. The selected progressive farmer cases revealed that they are innovative farmers who think beyond the traditional farming system in the scheme, with entrepreneurial freedom for farming.

Keywords: Colonization Scheme, Farming, Huruluwewa, Less interest, Socio-economic factors