

Youth perception to undertake the management of small scale rubber plantations

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Introduction

Sri Lanka is one of the nine major producers of natural rubber in the world. Kegalle, Kalutara and Rathnapura are the major rubber growing districts in Sri Lanka. These districts recorded the highest significance in terms of cultivated area. Small holders are the persons who are holding below 50 acres in extent. Most of the rubber lands in Sri Lanka are owned by small holders. The extent of land area under small holders is about 79,395 hectares out of total rubber land extent in 2010 (Census of Rubber Lands, 2010). Therefore, smallholder sector is responsible for a major share of Sri Lanka's contribution to world's natural rubber output. However, declining rubber extent is an issue of national concern to Sri Lanka (Wijesuriya *et al.*, 2006). Youth participation in agriculture for its sustained contribution to a nation's development is crucial (Ahaibwe, *et al.*, 2013). Therefore, this research was carried out to determine the perception of youth regarding undertake the management of small scale rubber plantations to maintain the continuity and to identify the constraints of youth to involve with the management of these rubber plantations.

Methodology

The research was conducted in three Rubber Development Officer (RDO) divisions in Kalutara district which are named as Agalawatta, Bulathsinhala and Dodangoda. The population of this study is all the small scale rubber plantation owners and their youth who are in age between 18- 35 years in Kalutara district. One hundred twenty youth and one hundred twenty small scale rubber plantation owners were used as respondents for the study. Forty plantation owners and forty youth were randomly selected from each three RDO divisions for the data collection. Two questionnaires were prepared for the owners of the plantations and youth in their families. Response variable of the study was youth perception of engage with rubber plantation management. The contextual variables were career ambition, other job opportunities, attitude, credit feasibility, recognition, parental consent, income, risk, price fluctuation, labour shortage and busy lifestyle. Characteristics of the plantation such as land extent, vision of doing rubber plantation management, gaining of government subsidy and kind ship of the plantation are covered in the questionnaire of owners. Response variable and the contextual variables were measured in five point likert scale (Strongly disagree, Disagree, Not decided, Agree, Strongly disagree). Data analysis was done using Descriptive statistics and multiple regression techniques by Minitab 14 statistical software package.

Results and Discussion

Around 56 % of youth were already engaged in rubber plantation management and helped to maintain the continuity of their plantations. Other 44 % of youth in the sample were not engaged with rubber plantation management activities.

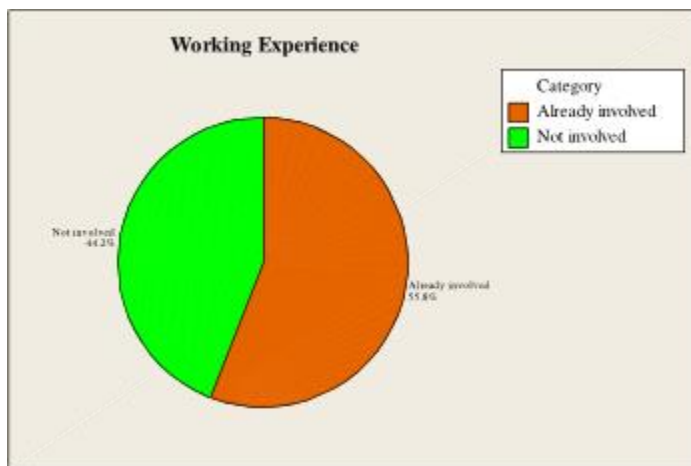


Figure 01: Working experience of youth

Source: - Based on analyzed data

More than 90 % of youth were already involved in management of rubber plantation as a secondary income source. They joined with rubber plantation management as a part time activity while doing another job as the main income source.

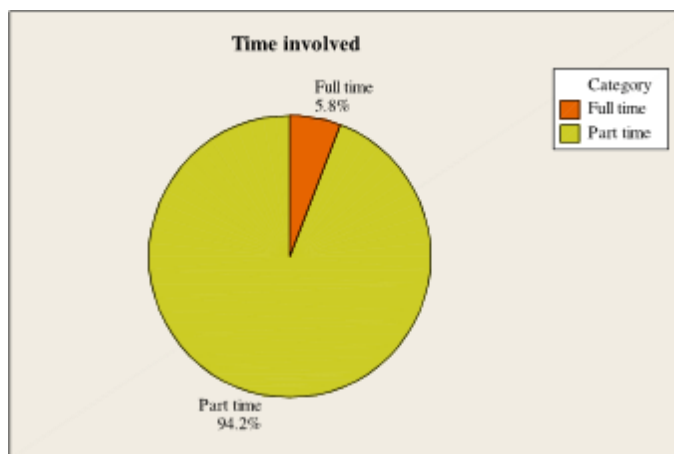


Figure 02: Time involvement of youth in rubber plantation management tegory

Source: - Based on analyzed data

Regression Analysis

Table 01: Summary of regression analysis

Standard Deviation of residuals	R-Sq	R-Sq (adj)
0.569319	74.3%	71.7%

Source: - Based on analyzed data

Regression equation

Perception = 0.73 + 0.334 Career ambition - 0.188 other job opportunities + 0.308 Attitude + 0.529 Credit feasibility + 0.0913 Recognition + 0.032 View of parents + 0.367 Income - 0.074 Risk - 0.524 Price fluctuation - 0.438 Labour shortage - 0.105 Busy life + ϵ
 Source: - Based on analyzed data

Table 02: Analysis of contextual variables

Predictor	Coef	SE Coef	T- Statistics	P-Value
Constant	0.732	1.069	0.69	0.495
Career ambition	0.33436	0.07634	4.38	0.000
Other job opportunities	-0.18785	0.07092	-2.65	0.009
Attitude	0.3081	0.1484	2.08	0.040
Credit feasibility	0.52917	0.05352	9.89	0.000
Recognition	0.09128	0.07852	1.16	0.248
Parental consent	0.0316	0.1143	0.28	0.783
Income	0.3669	0.1015	3.61	0.000
Risk	-0.0743	0.1153	-0.64	0.521
Price fluctuation	-0.5245	0.1378	-3.81	0.000
Labour shortage	-0.4383	0.1193	-3.67	0.000
Busy life	-0.1049	0.1102	-0.95	0.343

Source: - Based on analyzed data

Seven factors were significant at 5 % confident level. These seven factors have P values less than 0.05. Career ambition, other job opportunities, Attitude, credit feasibility, income, price fluctuation and labour shortage were the significantly affected for the perception of youth to engage with rubber plantation management. The factors such as Career ambition, Income, Attitude, Credit feasibility, Parental consent and Recognition are positively affected to the perception of youth while the Other job opportunities, Risk, Busy life, Price fluctuation and labour shortage are negatively affected.

Conclusions

Youth were interested to engage the rubberplantation management as a part time activity. Career ambition, other job opportunities, credit feasibility, low income, price fluctuation and labour shortage were the major constraints of youthto undertake the rubber plantation management. These constraintswere directly affected to perception of youth to engage with rubber plantation management.

Suggestions

Youth should be encouragedto engage with rubber plantation management to maintain their rubber plantations continuously. Youth should be paid further more attention about the management activities of the rubber plantations such as labour and finance management, practices to obtain quality output to enhance the income.Government intervention is important for having stable market price.

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