

Socio-Economic Influence on Growth Performance of Smallholder Rubber Cultivation in Uva Province

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Rubber cultivation in Sri Lanka has been extended to Uva Province (Intermediate Zone) to meet the demand for natural rubber. This study was conducted to find the growth performance of smallholdings in Uva Province and associated socio-economic factors. Using a stratified sampling technique, a hundred farmers were selected from four and six Rubber Development Officers' divisions in Badulla and Moneragala districts, respectively. A questionnaire-based survey including information on the family profile, income, expenditure, rubber land & its management, the government supports, yield & products, and marketing facilities was carried out. Also, stem girth, bark consumption rate, the quality of harvesting, and land management were evaluated by randomly selecting twenty rubber trees in each smallholding. Descriptive statistics and multiple regression analyses were performed. According to the results of age distribution, the majority of smallholders (45%) are in the 51-60 age group. Also, more than 50% have only primary and O/L education. According to the results, 93% farmer's cultivation area is less than 2 acres and most have cultivated RRIC 121 rubber clone. The majority (85%) had participated in training/extension programs conducted by the Rubber Research Institute of Sri Lanka and Rubber Development Department. When considering fertilizer usage, 52% of farmers use fertilizers; of them, 68% apply fertilizer yearly. Results of regression analysis revealed that rubber stem girth positively correlated with management practices, fertilizer usage, farming experience, and age of plants.

Keywords: Growth performance, Rubber smallholder, Socio-economic status

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