

Replanting Tea Lands of Smallholding Sector in Sri Lanka: A Case Study in Galle District

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Replanting and also rehabilitation of tea determine both the productivity and sustainability of the tea industry. To achieve the accepted norm of increasing annual replanting rate up to 2%, replantation should be performed in existing old tea lands. However, considering the farmers' perspective, most of them are reluctant to replace their old tea lands with new tea plantations. Therefore, this research study was carried out with the main intention of analysing the factors behind the lesser interest of farmers in replanting old tea lands in Galle district. The cluster sampling method was used and all tea smallholders in Galle district were divided into small clusters according to the GN divisions. Hiniduma west GN division was selected as the proposed cluster where the highest number of small holders presented and the sample size was 30. According to the results, the highest productivity in the sample was 2666kg/ha/yr. It was revealed that the main reasons why farmers pay less interest in replanting were the absence of any other income source during the replanting period(36%), gap of a long period for new harvesting (21%), high labour cost and labour scarcity (21%), limitations in subsidy procedure and difficulties in obtaining subsidies (5%), and difficulties in finding quality planting materials (5%). Therefore, this study recommends to introduce some extra income sources such as self-employments, livestock and home gardening to ensure a source of income for tea smallholders during replanting period. Moreover, present study recommends regulating the existing procedure of giving subsidies and implementing projects to supply and disseminate quality planting materials among tea smallholders.

Keywords: replanting, small holding tea sector, Galle district