

DETERMINANTS OF CULTIVATING TRADITIONAL FOOD CROP VARIETIES BY FARMERS IN MORAGOLLAGAMA AGRARIAN SERVICE DIVISION

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Demand for traditional foods is increasing both in the domestic and international market and prices are extraordinary high which indicates a shortage of production. One of the trust areas of the agricultural policy in Sri Lanka is the promotion of traditional foods to meet growing demand. Similarly, there is an increasing demand among Sri Lankan farmers for cultivation traditional crop varieties. However, progress of cultivation of traditional food crops in the country is slow. Hence, this study was conducted to determine the factors affecting cultivation and varietal selection of traditional crops by farmers in Moragollagama Agrarian Services Division of Kurunegala District. A questionnaire survey was conducted to collect data by interviewing randomly selected 100 farmers. Among them 41 farmers were traditional crop cultivators. Tabular analysis and Binary logistic regression analysis were employed to analyze data. Tabular analysis revealed that availability of seeds, cost of seeds, lack of chemical usage, lack of fertilizer usage, high market demand, cultivable land extent, shelf life of harvested products have significantly affected selection of type of traditional food crop varieties. Further, nutritional value had no significant effect on selection. The binary logistic regression disclosed that education level has negative significant effect on cultivation of traditional food crop varieties, while age of household head, household size, experience on farming and annual income were not affected significantly cultivation of traditional crops. This may be due to the fact that most of the farmers involve in highland cultivation under rain-fed condition and they use to cultivate traditional food crops because such crops have high adoptability to moisture deficit environments. This study concludes that traditional food crops farming can be popularized among rain-fed farmers who are not used to apply fertilizer and agro chemicals and recommends that seed production programme be implemented with them to address the shortage of seeds. Similarly rain-fed farming which has been neglected in the country should be given due attention in the government agricultural development programs including research, extension and marketing.

Keywords: Agricultural policy, Binary logistic regression, Kurunegala district, Rain-fed farmers, Traditional crops