

ASSESSING SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE CHRONIC KIDNEY DISEASE ON PADDY FARMING COMMUNITY IN ANURADHAPURA DISTRICT

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The links between agriculture offers an incentive for these two sectors to work together to orient agriculture systems to benefit health and health systems to benefit agriculture. This study examines empirically the socio-economic impact of end stage Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) on paddy farming community in Anuradhapura district. A series of "face-to-face" interviews supported by a structured questionnaire were carried out with 200 randomly selected farmers from Medawachchiya and Padaviya DS divisions to represent the affected (n=100) and non-affected (n=100) farmers for the disease in Anuradhapura district. Since the sample consists of both affected and non-affected farmers, the attempts were taken to compare the affected farmers with non-affected farmers in terms of their income from paddy farming. It is hypothesized that preponderance cases of CKD among farmers in this area is likely to have negative impact on the socio-economic conditions of affected farmers. Both qualitative and quantitative data analysis techniques, including descriptive, cost and returns, valuation of additional burden of hired labour, and the regression analysis were performed.

The results revealed that, majority of affected farmers were male, married, relatively less educated compared to non-affected households and the majority between the age group of 41- 60, are also exposed to risk factors such as drinking unfiltered, non-boiled water, and cooking in metal vessels. Presently, non-affected farmers cultivate 93% of their available average paddy extents whereas it is 62 % among the affected farmers. About 18% of affected paddy farmers gave up paddy farming due to the disease. Further, a considerable reduction of chena cultivation (47% to 4%) and home gardening

(61% to 39%) was observed. The value of additional burden of hired labour is 3734.40 Rs/ha/farmer and the net income of affected farmers is less than those who were not affected. Coefficients of the hired labour input and cost of fertilizer variables of the affected sample are statistically significant, while it is not significant in the non- affected sample. Moreover, the difference of net income (excluding imputed cost) from paddy is significantly different between the two samples (7719.01 Rs/ha), where the affected sample is receiving a lower income (20,217.99 Rs/ha). The outcome of analysis demonstrates that profound CKD cases among farmers in aforementioned area have negative impact on the income from paddy and other socio-economic aspects. This implies that policy makers must take preventive implications like community based awareness programs on CKD risk factors and screening for basic renal investigations in more prone areas. As an implication of improving family status and income, well organized counseling programs may be in place and home gardening may be promoted among affected families.

Key words: Chronic Kidney Disease, Socio-economic impact, Paddy farming