

**DECLINE IN THE RURAL INDUSTRY : A CASE STUDY IN THE ELECTORATE OF WALAPANE  
IN SRI LANKA**

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Development and upgrading of rural industries is generally accepted as a development strategy in the rural development programmes in many developing countries. Attempts to develop rural industries in Sri Lanka in order to develop non agricultural activities and to create more and more employment opportunities in the rural sector was made in the past and is still accepted by policy

makers as an important sector to be developed in many developing countries. But there are already signs of the rural industries disappearing from the rural economy of Sri Lanka due to various reasons. The lack of understanding of the problems that rural industries are facing is a major reason for this situation.

A case study to identify the present situation and prospects for the development of rural industries was carried out in late 1979 and early 1980, in the electorate of Walapane in the Nuwara Eliya District. Most of the rural industries in the electorate was at the level of subsistence and was almost in the process of disappearing.

The industries that were identified are brick making, lime production quarring, light engineering mainly black smiths, traditional pottery making, handicrafts and handlooms. At present there are only one or two of these industries that are functioning and that too are at an unsatisfactory level.

Revival of these industries is a difficult task. Attempts are being made even recently to develop rural industries, reorganise handloom centres, etc. But the results are not encouraging. Shortage of rawmaterials, difficulty of marketing the products, problems of getting skilled labour, lack of entrepreneurship, lack of capital etc. are some of the major problems identified. This paper is an attempt to identify the rural industries which were in production and the present situation in the electorate of Walapane in the district of Nuwara Eliya.