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Factors affecting farmer participation in a State initiated "Farmer Woodlot Programme" in two villages of Badulla district of Sri Lanka are discussed in this paper. The programme covers about 4000 hectares in five districts and was undertaken between 1981-85. Each farmer was allocated 0.5-1 hectare of land on a leasehold basis for planting fuelwood, timber and fruit trees. This paper is based on data collected through intensive field work in the two villages concerned, in 1984.

The results suggest that, among the participating farmers, there was a high degree of awareness of the anticipated project objectives and benefits. A keen competition for obtaining lands was noted. Despite this, it was apparent that the keenness for securing land was mostly due to the farmers' desire to cultivate short-season cash crops rather than resorting to agro-forestry. It was also seen that farmers were strongly motivated by higher incomes associated with the cash crop cultivation. The heavy demand for land resulted in many social and political problems in the study area with adverse effects on project performance.

The findings suggest that the project design was based primarily on technical considerations of establishing agro-forestry in the area. In this process, the social and economic factors that determine the project success appear to have been overlooked.