

Appraisal of paddy production and the problems faced by paddy marketing in the Mannar district

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Paddy marketing is the most important sector within the food marketing system in Sri-Lanka. The Mannar District is situated in the Northwestern part of Sri-Lanka. Agriculture and fisheries are the main economic activities in this district. As regards to agriculture, paddy cultivation plays an important role. Annual paddy production in the district is 53,236 mt/year. However, there are some problems faced by paddy farmers particularly in marketing their product. There are no facilities for marketing large quantities of paddy at reasonable prices. The relevant information for this study was gathered based on primary and secondary data from twelve Agrarian Service Centre divisions, namely Mannar, Uyilankulam, Nanattan, Murunkan, P.P.Potkerny, Chilavathurai, Manthai, Alkaddively, Vidataltheevu, Illupaikadavai, Palampiddy and Iranaiilluppaikulam. These data were analyzed by using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) and EXCEL. The socio economic affairs of the Mannar district paddy farmers are quite satisfactory, when compared with those of fishery families. Farm size is ranged from 1 to 30 ha with an average of 8 ha and about 70% of paddy farmers own the land they cultivate. Bg and LD varieties are more popular and the average paddy yield is 1670 kg/ac in the study area. Almost 79% of the production is sold in the open market. Almost 88% farmers sell their paddy immediately after harvest. Balance kept their paddy anticipating of a good price. About 80% of paddy production is marketed to private traders, 12% and 8% are sold to farmers organizations and coop societies respectively. The farmers face some difficulties such as low farm gate price of paddy and middlemen intervention, when they market their paddy. The reasons for such issues are the lack of storage facilities, transport facilities and the labour shortage which lead to increasing the cost of production. There is communication gap in obtaining the Colombo market price. The purchasing system of these paddy farmers was not efficient as 78% of the farmers haven't any proper purchasing system. However, Seed Paddy Producer's Association of the Mannar district (SPAM) has helped in marketing of paddy in Manthai West divisional Secretariat area. Farmer's organizations and Cooperative societies also provide support in marketing paddy, by directly purchasing paddy from the farmers.