**Impact of Sudden Banning of Chemical Fertilizers and Other Agrochemicals on Smallholders’ Tea Production in Ratnapura District**

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The government banned chemical fertilisers and other agrochemicals at once in April 2021, in order to save Sri Lanka’s agricultural sector, especially farmers and consumers from various health problems and environmental issues. Therefore, it is high time to assess the impact of banning chemical fertilizers and other agrochemicals on smallholders’ tea production in the country, smallholders’ awareness about agrochemicals and their attitudes on moving towards organic farming, as they are essential for many aspects of the economy. Ratnapura district was selected as the research area, in which tea cultivation has been conducted in many Divisional Secretarial (DS) divisions. 120 tea smallholders were randomly chosen as the sample from three DS divisions (Balangoda, Opanayaka, Imbulpe) representing the whole district that supplies green leaves to the ABC tea factory in Balangoda. Data were collected using a field survey from September to November 2022. Descriptive statistics and paired t-tests were used to analyze the data. T-test was used to analyze the cost of production of tea and tea production before and after the fertilizer policy. According to the results, most of the tea smallholders have a significant level of education. Also, the majority have tea lands between ½-1 Acre. The majority of them have a good understanding of the positive and negative aspects of agrochemicals. Results indicate that there is a significant increase in the cost spent for chemical fertilizers and agrochemicals and the cost of production and there is a significant decrease in tea production after the fertilizer policy. However, when farmers’ attitudes are taken into account, they wish to move away from inorganic farming gradually, if they have suitable alternatives. But at the moment, they are facing various problems due to the unavailability of effective alternatives for agrochemicals. Therefore, finding better alternatives for chemical fertilizers and other agrochemicals is a felt need.

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