**Did the overnight ban smash the Sri Lankan paddy farmers?**

**How to tackle the issue successfully; evidence from chemical fertilizer policy reforms**

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The overnight ban immediately disrupted the fertilizer supply which is procured as major raw material in paddy cultivation in Sri Lanka. As such, farmers had been pushed to the status of confusion and been insecure to overcome the loss of production. As the substitution for continued agriculture operations, the nation was widely pushed to organic fertilizers over months. The farmers were in a position to manage Yala 2021, but not at the 2021/22 Maha season due to the severe shortage of fertilizer. This study aimes to analyze the rice value chain focusing on major challenges faced by paddy farmers during 2021/22 Maha season due to the chemical fertilizer ban.The survey was conducted in four districts namely Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa, Kaluthara and Kurunegala with 406 paddy farmers whereas FGDs and KIIs have existed for other value chain stakeholders. The lack of adequate raw materials for organic fertilizers, quality issues and no proper organic subsidy program were key constraints identified in the study. Moreover, the reduction of harvest, low profit, market price fluctuations, government unsystematized price control, black market conditions and artificial shortage by hoarding were reasoned for to temporary drop of maintaining efficient rice value chain in the country. The worst knowledge of organic farming techniques and adverse market opportunities happening in the society were threatening to current agricultural operations and should be mitigated them to implement the organic farming conversion as feasible. However, the supply of quality fertilizers, implementing advanced farming methods, developing farmer base and value-added product flow regards to organic would be wide future opportunities to meet. Therefore, sufficient fertilizers to secure harvest and favorable floor prices are much needed to ensure the national rice production process alive, and will strengthen the paddy farmers’ living conditions in order to establish the sustainable rice value chain in Sri Lanka.

**Keywords:** fertilizer ban, fertilizer policy framework, harvest reduction, supply shortage, value chain analysis

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