**Did the Overnight Ban Smash the Sri Lankan Paddy Farmers?**

**Evidence from Chemical Fertilizer Policy Reform**

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The overnight ban of chemical fertilizer on 27th April 2021, immediately disrupted the fertilizer supply which is procured as a 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 agricultural operations, the nation was widely pushed to organic fertilizers over months. This study aims 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 during the month of July, 2022 in four districts namely Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa, Kaluthara and Kurunegala with 406 paddy farmers whereas qualitative data was gathered through Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). Apart, the Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) existed for other stakeholders such as collectors, millers and traders. The collected data was analysed using porter’s value chain analysis model. 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, illegal market transactions and artificial shortage by hoarding were reasons for to temporary drop of maintaining an efficient rice value chain in the country. The poor knowledge of organic farming techniques and adverse market opportunities happening in the society were threatening to current agricultural operations. They should be mitigated to implement the organic farming conversion as a feasible operation. Moreover, 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 favourable floor prices are much needed to ensure the national rice production process is alive. Then it will strengthen the paddy farmers’ living conditions in order to establish the sustainable rice value chain in Sri Lanka.

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