

ANALYSIS OF FACTORS INFLUENCING COCONUT GROWERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE STATUS OF EXISTING COCONUT INDUSTRY - A STUDY IN COCONUT TRIANGLE SRI LANKA

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Abstract

Coconut is a major plantation product in Sri Lanka. Every district grows coconut, and the coconut triangle spanning the districts of *Kurunegala*, *Puttalam*, and *Gampaha* accounting for about 55% of the total area planted to the crop. Most of the farmers in this area, pluck the coconut, gather it, and sell it. But the Manufacturers and the exporters earn more profit from the coconut industry. The study was conducted to determine the factors influencing coconut growers' attitudes towards the status of the current coconut industry within the coconut triangle where *Kurunegala*, *Puttalam*, and *Gampaha* districts were covered based on the extent of cultivation. Data were collected from the respondents using a structured pre-tested questionnaire. The stratified random sampling method was used to select 100 coconut growers for primary data collection. In addition, secondary data were used from various sources. Data were analysed by using SPSS software with descriptive statistics and chi-squared test. Five-point Likert scaling was used to determine the coconut growers' attitudes towards the status of the existing coconut industry. The findings revealed that 90% were male. Among them, 52% had a secondary level of education. Around 86% of them had their own coconut land in the coconut triangle, and the average extent of coconut land was 39 acres. Almost 70% of the growers produced between 15,000 and 100,000 coconut nuts annually. The results further revealed that 53% of the farmers have high-level attitudes towards the status of the coconut industry. The coconut growers' attitudes towards the current status of the coconut industry are significantly associated with their gender ($p < 0.05$) and the type of land ownership ($p < 0.05$). The coconut growers should be given more awareness regarding opportunities available in the coconut industry. The relevant authorities should consider the above factors when designing extension programs for coconut growers and should assist them in developing the farms to the next level.

Keywords: Attitude, Coconut growers, Coconut triangle, Extent of land, Plantation

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