

Land ownership and land management: a case study of Karuwalagaswewa, Sri Lanka

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Land ownership and land management as concepts related with modern capitalist economy. There were plenty of land available to spare for any increasing of population, hence the 'land' might be considered as a 'free good'. Eventually, there has been changes such as 'community ownership', 'individual ownership' and 'state ownership' respectively depending on the land. Land ownership pattern in the ancient Sri Lanka was simple and the King was the absolute lord of the soil. The landed property of every description, thus, originated from him. King's rights and power on land have been changed due to deterioration of kingdoms in the country and then, transformed by the Colonialism. Mode of ownership and land usage were also dramatically changed with the introduction of different Ordinances and Acts by the colonists and the different governments. This transformation was resulted to convert the self-sufficient agrarian society in to commercial, dependent and capitalized society. At present, most of the market-led rural sector has been miss-managing their land, resulting in different micro and macro level economic issues in the country.

Major objective of the study is to identify the land ownership pattern and land management issues of the Dry Zone, in Sri Lanka. 'Kudamadawacchiya' village in Karuwalagaswewa Divisional Secretariat of Puttalam District was selected for the case study due to salient features of land ownership pattern and under-utilization of lands in the area. Primary data were collected at household level, which was selected under a random sample.

Findings of the study reveal that 'Land to the tiller does not give much prospect' under the present circumstance. Therefore, it is necessary to change peoples' attitudes from 'dependency' to 'self-reliance' for achieving better prospects. Further, it is a vital requirement to avoid some political interference, which is mostly based on the low of the country, for ensuring self-development through the better and sustainable land management of the peasants.

Key words: Land management, Land ownership, Community, Ownership, Individual ownership, State ownership

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