

## **An analysis of land ownership rights in document registration: A pragmatic Sri Lankan Perspective**

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Land is a valuable asset of the people in Sri Lanka. If there is a clear tenancy with no title disputes, its commercial and financial marketability is increased. The ownership of land has long been considered a property right, enacted through land registration in this country. The system of land registration system in Sri Lanka consists of two components, the Registration of Documents and the Registration of Title. The Registration of Documents programme was implemented as a primary ownership registration procedure based on the Ordinance related to the Registration of Deeds and Documents No.23 in 1927. After 1927 a law was imposed to register deeds, to protect the land ownership rights of uninformed buyers and to regularize documents pertaining to land. In the context of this registration procedure, registering by manually writing in volumes and folios in the land registry is a problematic and challenging task to the general public. The objectives of this study are, therefore, to critically evaluate and investigate the impact and practical difficulties of ensuring the rights of land ownership originated by acquaintance with the law of registration of documents in the existing system and finally to provide recommendations. Though registration of documents may create the impression that it is a fair and equitable method of ensuring rights of ownership of the lands, it is problematic. This research is basically a qualitative one but for the purpose of assessing the impacts and to ensure the rights of ownership by implementing a registration of documents, a mixed approach was used, which included case studies. The study reveals the reality of acquiring a clear tenancy and the rights of ownership. Therefore the study concludes that the land registration system should enforce pragmatic procedural strategies rather than maintain its confidence in overly formal and inefficient rules and regulations.

**Key words:** Registration of Documents, Ownership, land rights.