

## **Crop Diversification for Sustainable Agriculture: A Case Study from the Mahaweli Development Programme of Sri Lanka**

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### Abstract

Agriculture is still a predominant economic sector in Sri Lanka. In the past, there was a simple self-sufficient economic agricultural system which had been gradually transferring into a commercial economy. But, the agricultural production has to be increased to meet the food requirement of the rapidly growing population since 1950s. Mahaweli development programme was the initial strategy to solve the emerging socio- economic problem in Sri Lanka. .

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the land availability per person in Sri Lanka was 2.0 hectares and at present it has declined to 0.3 hectares. Increase of population was the main factor for reducing the man land ratio. Therefore, as an alternative strategy , ‘The Green revolution’ technology was introduced to increased agricultural production in a vertical way in the country.

‘The Green revolution’ package increases mono-cultural agricultural production. However, the liberal economic policies of the Governments during the 1990’s and early 2000 had created a market challenge for the domestic agriculture. The impact of the policy has emerged a low market price for paddy. Therefore, some farmers have been practicing crop diversification.

The Mahaweli Development Authority has introduced the strategy for their agro-economic zones, in particular the system ‘H’ area in the dry zone. Attempts of this paper is to examine the experiences of farmers who were practicing crop diversification with the multi cropping system successfully to overcome the economic, social and environmental constraints in Mahaweli development area in Sri Lanka.