

**ROLE OF PALM DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES ON
TODDY TAPPERS' LIVELIHOODS IN THE VALIKAMAM COMMUNITY,
JAFFNA**

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Cooperatives play a key role in socio-economic development in many developing countries. The palm development cooperative societies in the north and east of Sri Lanka have been severely affected by over three decades of ethnic conflict, which has disrupted the livelihoods and cooperative functions in the region. This study aims to examine the role of the palm development cooperative societies in enhancing the livelihoods of toddy tappers affected by the ethnic conflict in the *Valikamam* community. The results of this study will be useful in contributing to the socio-economic upliftment of toddy tappers offering valuable insights to development practitioners and policymakers to plan livelihood rebuilding strategies in the conflict-affected areas. The data were gathered from 150 toddy tappers through a semi-structured questionnaire. They were analyzed using descriptive statistics and regression analysis. The findings revealed that most tappers were aged 31–50 years and had completed secondary education (43%). Monthly income ranged between 30,000 LKR and 75,000 LKR. Results further revealed a strong positive relationship between tappers' monthly income to their age, the average number of trees tapped per day, the average daily toddy collection (750 mL bottles), financial benefits provided by the cooperative societies, training, and advisory services, while wastage had a negative relationship. These results highlight the crucial role of palm development cooperative societies in improving toddy tappers' livelihoods by enhancing their income through targeted interventions.

Keywords: Monthly income, Palm development cooperative societies, Tappers