

EVALUATION OF THE KEY ELEMENTS THAT INFLUENCE ON ADOPTION OF ORGANIC COCONUT CULTIVATION IN KURUNEGALA DISTRICT, SRI LANKA

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Organic farming is growing quickly, and only a few countries engage in the commercial organic farming. Coconut growing area in Sri Lanka has high potential for converting to the organic farming due to favourable climate, rich biodiversity, and traditional agricultural practices. Kurunegala district is one of the major districts under the coconut growing area of the country. However, the agricultural shift towards sustainable organic coconut cultivation lacks understanding of the factors influencing its adoption in the area. Therefore, the study was conducted to assess the key elements influencing the adoption of organic coconut farming in Kurunegala District. Data were obtained from a randomly selected 100 farmers, with 50 from organic and 50 from non-organic coconut farming groups, using a structured questionnaire. Binary logistic regression was used to examine the relationship between the adoption of organic coconut farming and demographic data. Additionally, the perceived differences in attitudes toward organic coconut farming, social factors (family background, support from subsidies, indigenous practices) and control factors (fertilizer application, market, organic certification procedure) between two populations were evaluated using the Mann-Whitney U test with the significant level of ($p < 0.05$). Results indicated that the negative correlation for willingness to adoption to organic coconut farming with education level (-0.333) and the time spent on farming (-0.017). However, a positive correlation was observed with gender (0.159) and age group (0.065). The non-organic growers were not highly motivated to engage in organic farming due to their perception of low yields, high cost of organic fertilizers, and the complicated process of producing them. The study revealed key factors influencing the adoption of organic coconut farming in Kurunegala District, highlighting significant correlations with demographics like gender and age group. According to the Mann-Whitney U test ($p < 0.05$) social factors, such as influence from peers & community engagement, and control elements like resource availability and market potential, also play crucial roles in adoption decisions.

Keywords: Coconut farming, Kurunegala, Organic agriculture