

TEA DIALOGUE

A BULLETIN FOR CURIOUS MINDS POWERED BY PHDT
WHERE IDEA STEEP AND CONNECTIONS BREW

4th Quarter
Issue # 2026/04

Ministry of Plantation and Community Infrastructure

HEALTH | CULTURE | ENVIRONMENT | LIFESTYLE



LABOUR SHORTAGES AND SOCIAL
DISENGAGEMENT

CARBON CREDITS AND THE FUTURE OF
SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE IN SRI LANKA

THROUGH LEADERSHIP AND MOTIVATION

WHY SRI LANKA MUST EMBRACE
THE OIL PALM SOLUTION

KELANI VALLEY CLUB – TALDUWA

EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES IN IMPROVING
EARLY CHILD DEVELOPMENT (ECD)

PHYSIOTHERAPY IN EVERYDAY LIFE



NO 427/14

Robert Gunawardena Mawatha
Battaramulla Sri Lanka



Sri Lanka PLANTATION SECTOR DIGITALIZATION

Centralizing Social Welfare Data for Better Community Development



 Population & Health Data  Child Development Centers  Education & Housing Info

- Unified Social Welfare Database
- Real-Time Monitoring & Analysis
- Improving Health & Child Development
- Valuing Data-Driven Impact

SMART PHDT

Digital Transformation of Sri Lanka's Plantation Sector

Digital Transformation of Sri Lanka's Plantation Sector

Building a Centralized Social Welfare Data Ecosystem

Introduction

Sri Lanka's plantation sector is not only a pillar of the national economy but also a socio-cultural system supporting nearly one million people living in estate communities.

Managed through institutions such as the Plantation Human Development Trust (PHDT), the sector encompasses a wide network of workers, families, and social welfare services, including healthcare, housing, and early childhood development.

However, despite decades of development initiatives, data fragmentation remains a critical challenge. The transition toward digitalization and centralized databases presents a transformative opportunity to enhance governance, service delivery, and measurable social impact at the National Level.

The Need for Digitalization in Plantation Welfare

The plantation community spans multiple districts and estates, with services delivered through a complex ecosystem of multiple stakeholders, government agencies, Regional Plantation Companies RPCs), and welfare organizations.

Key characteristics of the sector include:

1 million resident plantation population

Over 120,000 direct workers and extended dependents

More than 1,000 Child Development Centres (CDCs)

Approximately 16,000 children are enrolled in early childhood programmes.

Despite this scale of operation, drawbacks are...

Difficulty in monitoring and evaluating the impact assessment.

Data is scattered across institutions, resulting in difficulty or a lack of coordination.

These factors create inefficiencies in targeting welfare, tracking outcomes, and planning investments.

Our Vision is to create A Centralized Plantation Social Welfare Database on a digital platform to act as a "single source of truth" for all plantation community data.

TEA DIALOGUE

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Designed by
Jayanthi Gamage

A Sector in Decline: Labour Shortages and Social Disengagement

From Child Development Centres to Universities: The Journey of Sri Lanka's Plantation Children.

Continued from: Toward a New Chapter: Rethinking the Plantation Future.

The plantation crisis is not about welfare gaps, it's about dignity denied. Communities are no longer asking for handouts; they are demanding recognition. The future must be built on empowerment, not dependency.

- Estate life must evolve into spaces of mobility and choice.
- Youth must be nurtured as leaders, not retained as labour.
- Plantation residents must be seen as citizens, not workers.
- Political platforms must open to estate voices, not silence them. Early childhood care is only the beginning. The real test is whether Sri Lanka can design systems that match aspirations with opportunity. The plantation future will not wait, it must be reimagined now.

For decades, Sri Lanka's plantation sector has been synonymous with hard work, resilience, and community life. Yet, behind the rolling tea fields lies a quieter story, the story of children growing up in estates, often with limited opportunities, but now increasingly breaking barriers to pursue higher education. The rise in university admissions among plantation youth is not just a statistic; it is a turning point in the history of these communities. Their journey, beginning in child development centres and culminating in university lecture halls, reflects both progress and the urgent need for a future realistic management approach.



L.R. PERERA

Child Development Centres

Child Development Centres (CDCs) have long been the cornerstone of early childhood care in plantations. Established with the support of the Plantation Human Development Trust (PHDT) and estate management, these centres provide safe spaces for children while their parents work in the fields.

- Nutrition and Care: CDCs ensure that children receive balanced meals, addressing malnutrition that has historically plagued estate families.
- Early Learning: Structured play, storytelling, and basic literacy activities lay the foundation for formal education.
- Socialization: Children learn to interact, share, and build confidence, skills critical for later schooling.

These centres have helped bridge the gap between home and school, preparing children for primary education. Without them, many estate children would have entered school disadvantaged, perpetuating cycles of underachievement.

Early childhood care in Sri Lanka's plantations to industry transformation:

A Model for the World The plantation sector in Sri Lanka has witnessed a quiet revolution, one that begins in the earliest years of a child's life. Through the Regional Plantation Companies (RPCs), with strong government assistance and funding support from the World Bank, early childhood care has been elevated to a standard that is now recognized as one of the best integrated models in the region. The impact of this achievement extends far beyond education. These young graduates represent the future of the tea industry. Their knowledge, skills, and aspirations can reshape the sector, bringing innovation, professionalism, and global competitiveness. To harness this potential, we must assist these children to focus their talents towards this noble industry, guiding them to take it to the next level.

Short-term strategies will not suffice. The tea industry requires a long-term approach that integrates education, career pathways, and modernized management practices. By creating opportunities for graduates to contribute meaningfully, the industry can evolve into a knowledge-driven sector that attracts talent rather than loses it. At the heart of this success are the RPC Child Development Officers (CDOs). Their dedication, combined with monitoring and training by the Plantation Human Development Trust (PHDT), has created opportunities once unimaginable, it is their personal commitment that ensures success. Without their devotion, many children would not have had the opportunity to progress through the education system and reach higher education. The impact is remarkable: over 100 plantation-sector children now enter universities annually. This milestone, once unimaginable, is a direct result of the integrated approach to early childhood care and the unwavering dedication of CDOs. It is also a testament to the collective effort of all stakeholders RPCs, government agencies, international partners, and the plantation community itself.

It is essential that the community recognizes and values the contributions of these officers. Their performance should be highlighted and celebrated, as they represent the bridge between early childhood care and lifelong opportunity. The Regional Plantation Companies must not stop here. Instead, they should capitalize on this success and promote it globally as a model for the tea industry showcasing how investment in human development can uplift entire communities. The improvements made in the lives of plantation families in Sri Lanka are profound, and they deserve international recognition and this achievement extends far beyond education. These young graduates represent the future of the tea industry. Their knowledge, skills, and aspirations can reshape the sector, bringing innovation, professionalism, and global competitiveness. To harness this potential, we must assist these children to focus their talents towards this noble industry, guiding them to take it to the next level.

Rethinking management practices

Globally, industries are advancing rapidly, yet the tea sector often struggles to demonstrate its wider impact. This is one reason why younger generations sometimes reject it as a career path. To change this perception, management practices must be re-examined and modernized. Transparency, sustainability, and innovation should become the hallmarks of plantation management.

Communities and stakeholders must also understand the value of this environment and the noble heritage of the tea industry. By aligning local empowerment with global sustainability standards, Sri Lanka can showcase its plantations not only as centers of production but as models of social development and human progress.

Changing Sri Lanka's tea industry through young graduates and modern management

The Sri Lankan tea industry stands at a crossroads. For decades, it has relied on traditional labour models that positioned workers' children as successors to estate labour

rather than as partners in progress to transform tea into a modern, globally competitive sector. If industry fails to adapt, these graduates will leave the industry for more attractive opportunities elsewhere. But if leadership embraces long-term strategies, rethinks outdated practices, and positions these young minds as resources and partners, the tea industry can evolve into a knowledge-driven, sustainable enterprise. Why short-term fixes, whether in labour relations, productivity drives, or marketing campaigns, have historically dominated plantation management and failed? Yet such approaches rarely address structural challenges.

Management theorists like **Peter Drucker** emphasized that organizations must focus on long-term vision and human capital development rather than short-term gains. In the tea sector, this means moving beyond labour-centric models to talent-centric models, where workers' children are seen not as labour replacements but as future models, innovators, and entrepreneurs who can redefine the industry. In the tea sector, this means moving away from the traditional labour-centric model where workers are primarily valued for their physical contribution in the fields and embracing a talent-centric approach. Such a shift recognizes that plantation communities are not just a workforce but a reservoir of untapped potential.

Several children from Sri Lanka's plantation families have broken away from the traditional labour identity and risen to prominence in business and politics, symbolizing the shift from labour-centric to talent-centric models. Their success stories illustrate how education, empowerment, and opportunity can transform plantation communities into leadership pipelines.

Emerging entrepreneurs from estate youth

Many second-generation plantation youth are now entering retail, transport, and small-scale tea trading businesses.

For example, estate-born entrepreneurs have established tea boutiques in Colombo and Kandy, catering to niche markets such as organic and fair-trade tea. These ventures demonstrate how plantation children are moving beyond field labour into value-added segments of the tea industry. Several plantation-origin youth who benefited from scholarships and NGO support have gone on to careers in IT, finance, and export businesses. While their names are less publicized, who now run logistics companies, microfinance institutions, and tea export firms.

Implications for the Tea sector

- Breaking inherited cycles: These success stories prove that plantation children can transcend labour identities when given access to education and leadership opportunities.
- Role models for transformation: There are Families inspire younger generations to see themselves as capable of shaping policy and industry.
- Strategic investment: Supporting scholarships, vocational training, and entrepreneurship programs can multiply such success stories, aligning with Drucker's vision of human capital development.

For example, estate-origin youth in the UK have become councillors in London boroughs, showing how plantation heritage can translate into civic leadership overseas. Plantation-origin families who migrated have established retail chains, restaurants, and logistics businesses in Europe and North America. Case studies highlight Sri Lankans from estate backgrounds running tea export companies in Canada and the UK, leveraging their heritage to build niche businesses around Ceylon tea. Children of plantation workers who accessed scholarships have gone abroad for higher education. Many now work as doctors, IT professionals, and academics in countries like Australia and the US. These professionals often send remittances back to Sri Lanka, supporting estate families and funding education for the next generation.

Primary and secondary education: Breaking barriers

Once children transition to formal schooling, challenges intensify. Estate schools often face shortages of teachers, resources, and infrastructure. Yet, progress has been notable:

- **Enrolment Rates:** Over 85% of estate children now complete secondary education, a significant improvement compared to past decades.
- **Scholarship Support:** Initiatives by PHDT, NGOs, and government programmes have provided scholarships, textbooks, and uniforms, reducing financial burdens.
- **Community Engagement:** Parents, once hesitant about education, increasingly recognize its value, encouraging children to stay in school.

Despite these gains, dropout rates remain higher than the national average, particularly among girls, due to economic pressures and cultural expectations. Addressing these gaps requires sustained investment and awareness campaigns.

The leap to higher education

The most remarkable development in recent years has been the rise in university admissions among plantation youth. For families accustomed to generations of estate labour, seeing their children enter universities is transformative.

University Admissions: Data from 2025 shows a steady increase in estate students qualifying for national universities, particularly in fields such as medicine, engineering, and social sciences. These students serve as role models, inspiring younger children to dream beyond estate boundaries. Higher education offers pathways out of poverty, diversifying livelihoods beyond plantation labour. It is cultural. It signals a shift in identity, where estate children are no longer confined to the margins but are becoming active contributors to national development.

Towards this journey management theories that can guide transformation to the modern young plantation managers:

1. **Human Capital Theory :** This theory views education and training as investments that increase productivity and innovation. By supporting plantation children through early childhood care, scholarships, and university pathways, RPCs are already building human capital. The next step is to integrate these graduates into the industry, ensuring their skills are not lost to other sectors.
2. **Transformational Leadership :** Leaders must inspire and motivate young managers to see tea as a noble industry with global relevance. Transformational leadership emphasizes vision, empowerment, and innovation qualities that can attract graduates to stay and contribute.
3. **Resource-Based View (RBV) :** RBV argues that sustainable competitive advantage comes from unique resources. In Sri Lanka's case, the educated youth from plantation communities represent a rare and valuable resource. If nurtured, they can differentiate the industry globally.
4. **Change Management (Kotter's 8-Step Model) :** To shift from outdated worker models to modern partnership models, management must follow structured change processes.
 - I. Create urgency (highlight risks of losing talent).
 - II. Build coalitions (RPCs, government, universities).
 - III. Develop vision (tea as a knowledge-driven industry).
 - IV. Communicate widely.
 - V. Empower action (graduate internships, leadership training).
 - VI. Generate short-term wins (pilot projects led by youth).
 - VII. Consolidate gains.
 - VIII. Anchor new approaches in culture.

Global examples of industry transformation

- **Coffee industry in Colombia**

Colombia invested heavily in education and branding, turning coffee farmers' children into agronomists, marketers, and sustainability experts. Today, Colombian coffee is globally recognized not just for quality but for its social development model.

- **Wine industry in France and Italy**

Generational succession was redefined: children of vineyard workers became oenologists, marketers, and global ambassadors. By professionalizing the industry, they elevated wine from agriculture to a cultural and economic powerhouse.

- **Technology sector in India**

India's IT boom was driven by educated youth who were once seen as "resources" but became global leaders. The industry thrived because management invested in long-term training, partnerships with universities, and global branding. These examples show that industries evolve when they invest in youth, modernize management practices, and reposition themselves globally.

Tactics for Sri Lanka's Tea industry : Rethinking Sri Lanka's Tea industry: Lessons from India's IT boom

India's IT revolution was not accidental it was the result of deliberate investment in youth, education, and global positioning. Sri Lanka's tea industry can follow a similar trajectory if it embraces innovation and human development as its core drivers. These are suggestions for reflection and adoption, not rigid tactics, but they can guide the sector toward modernization and sustainability.

Towards a Tea sector compact

The transformation of Sri Lanka's tea industry cannot rest solely on the shoulders of producers. For too long, the burden of modernization, education, and community upliftment has been placed on estates, while brokers,

sellers, and even government institutions have benefited from the industry's output without sharing equal responsibility for its renewal. This imbalance is unsustainable and unfair.

A Tea Sector Compact is urgently needed a formal partnership where government, producers, brokers, and sellers work together to drive long-term change.

- Government must provide enabling policies, infrastructure, and scholarships to break the cycle of inherited labour.
- Brokers and sellers must reinvest in community development and value addition, ensuring that the industry's reputation is matched by its social impact.
- Producers must continue their role in community engagement, but with the assurance that they are not carrying the transformation alone.

Such a compact would embody Peter Drucker's vision: organizations thrive when they invest in human capital and long-term vision. In the tea sector, this means seeing plantation children not as future labourers but as future leaders managers, innovators, and entrepreneurs who can carry Sri Lanka's tea legacy into the global future. Global Branding Initiatives is to see position Sri Lankan tea as not only a product but a story of human development. Highlight how plantation children are now university graduates contributing to industry modernization. Management Culture Shift to move away from hierarchical, labour-centric models. Adopt participatory management where workers and graduates are treated as partners.

This aligns with McGregor's Theory Y, which assumes people are self-motivated and capable of responsibility when empowered. Long-Term Sustainability Strategy is that an integrate environmental, social, and governance (ESG) principles into plantation management. Graduates trained in sustainability can lead this transformation, ensuring tea remains relevant in global markets.

A Personal note from the writer

These reflections are offered in good faith, drawn from decades of experience in plantation management, public administration, and community development. Having worked closely with all stakeholders in the plantation sector, I share these ideas openly and sincerely.

They are personal opinions, not directives, and carry no malicious intent toward any individual or institution. The purpose is solely to encourage fresh thinking, inspire collaboration, and strengthen Sri Lanka's tea industry for the benefit of the country and its people.

Readers are kindly requested to take these suggestions in the spirit in which they are offered: for the betterment of the industry and the prosperity of the global brand of Ceylon Tea.



El Teb Estate: A timeless icon of Sri Lanka's Tea legacy

Planters Association of Ceylon

Nestled in the hills of Sri Lanka's picturesque Uva Province, El Teb Estate is a living testament to the rich history, relentless innovation and deep-rooted community values that define the island's tea industry. With a heritage spanning over a century, El Teb Estate embodies the spirit of resilience and excellence, producing some of the finest teas sought after by tea connoisseurs all over the world.

El Teb Estate's story begins in 1896 with Captain Hamilton Gordon of the Gordon Highlanders, a soldier turned planter who traded his military glory for the lush plantations of Uva. His first encounter with the island came as aide-de-camp to Governor Sir Arthur Gordon (later Lord Stanmore), where he was deeply enchanted by Sri Lanka's natural beauty. Through George Steuart & Co., he was introduced to Mr. J.J. Robinson, who guided him to Heathstock, a humble cardamom estate nestled along the Madulsima road four miles from Passara. Captivated by its potential, Captain Gordon, fondly known as "El Teb Gordon", acquired the property and renamed it "El Teb" as homage to his military past at the Battle of El Teb in Sudan (1884), where he had served with distinction.

Evolution of a Landmark Estate

Over the years, his vision transformed El Teb into a thriving estate, consolidating nearby lands like Deyanawatte and Galbokke, while keeping Heathstock as the nucleus.

Some of these acquisitions came about in colourful ways legend has it that Gordon bought Deyanawatte from a traveler at the Badulla Club for £50 without the seller even knowing where the estate was located.

Other significant additions included Devenick, an abandoned coffee estate, and portions of St. Mary's and Kitulkellie. His knack for recognizing opportunity led to the estate's rapid expansion, including ventures into tea, coffee, and rubber cultivation. Gordon's innovative spirit, from introducing labour friendly practices such as serving hot tea during morning muster, to experimenting with crop diversification, reinforced his reputation as a pioneering planter.

Throughout the 20th century there were many changes in ownership and management that brought modern agricultural techniques to El Teb. In 1907, El Teb was sold to the Consolidated Estates Company, with George Steuart & Co. acting as agents. Over the years, several superintendents oversaw the estate's operations, including Captain Gordon, Mr. P. Phillips, and later Mr. A.M. Clarke, who modernized the estate through expansions into tea and rubber. The lineage of superintendents at El Teb Estate (1896 - Present) spans from its founding leader, Captain H. Gordon (1896–1907), to the current superintendent, C.A. Jayaratne (2024–Present).

After Sri Lanka's 1975 land reforms, portions of the estate were nationalized and placed under the management of the Janatha Estates Development Board (JEDB). In 1992, following the government's privatization efforts, management shifted to Madulsima Plantations Ltd. under the Stassen Group, marking the beginning of a new era for the estate.



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Tea Craftsmanship: A Tradition of Excellence

Every cup of El Teb tea is crafted with care and passion, grown 945 meters above sea level. Over the years, El Teb Estate has achieved several remarkable milestones, achieving a record production of 786,357 kilograms made tea in 1998 and a record yield per Hectare of 2087 in 1996 which established its prominence as a leading tea producer in the Uva region; with smallholder contributions playing a vital role and reaching an unprecedented financial milestone in 2022 with an overall profit of Rs. 110.76 Million. El Teb follows the Rotorvane method for tea manufacture, ensuring the consistent production of high-quality teas with vibrant flavors and brisk undertones characteristic of Uva teas.



The process begins with hand-plucking, where only young, tender leaves are selected, followed by withering to adequately reduce moisture content for rolling and fermentation, enhancing the tea's aroma and flavor profile. The final stages involve drying and grading, which ensure a long shelf life and optimal market readiness. Renowned for their golden liquor and floral notes, El Teb's teas are highly sought after, maintaining a consistent presence in international markets. This dedication to quality has earned El Teb top prices in the Uva medium tea category. Reaffirming its reputation for exceptional quality. In a world that is increasingly focused on sustainability, El Teb has emerged as a leader in eco-friendly practices. The estate's operations are powered by a Pelton hydro-power plant, harnessing renewable energy from local waterways. Investments in energy-efficient machinery, CCTV surveillance and modern machinery to ensure consistent quality while minimizing environmental impact. From manual weeding to soil conservation techniques, the estate ensures practices that safeguard the environment while enhancing tea yields. Over the past four decades, Madulsima Plantations has spearheaded the development of 285 hectares of forest, fostering biodiversity while investing over Rs. 44 million in forestry. Beyond tea, the company has diversified its portfolio to include cardamom, cloves, pepper, and rubber, with an investment exceeding Rs. 32 million.

These secondary crops not only enhance financial resilience but also highlight Madulsima Plantations' innovative approach to agriculture. Additionally, the company has invested Rs. 131.4 million in development initiatives, including vehicles, land improvement, water and sanitation projects, equipment, plant and machinery, and buildings. These strategic investments enhance the long-term sustainability of El Teb Estate.

Empowering Communities

El Teb Estate is committed to supporting its community, providing stable employment for over 700 individuals while housing a vibrant community of 4,078 residents, including 1,430 children. The estate places a strong emphasis on worker welfare, prioritizing healthcare, education, infrastructure development, and financial security. A fully equipped dispensary, operated in collaboration with the Plantation Human Development Trust (PHDT) and the Ministry of Health, provides regular medical check-ups to ensure the well-being of the workforce. Education is supported through Child Development Centers and initiatives for local schools, nurturing the next generation. Investments in housing, water supply, and sanitation facilities improve living conditions, while the Estate Workers Housing Cooperative Society encourages savings and financial stability, fostering a secure and supportive community environment.



El Teb's dedication to excellence is further validated by its certifications. The estate follows Rainforest Alliance standards, limiting the use of pesticides and undertakes manual weeding for sustainability. Pruning schedules, low and high shade planting, and soil conservation methods help maintain plant health and protect the land from erosion. The estate's ISO 22000 accreditations stand as testaments to its high standards in environmental conservation, food safety, and quality management. These certifications position El Teb as a trusted name in international markets, where its teas are celebrated for their distinctive character and exceptional quality. El Teb Estate's location in the heart of Uva provides it with unparalleled advantages. The region's unique weather patterns from the misty rains of September to December to the dry winds of June to August impart a complex flavor profile to its tea. This combination of fertile soil and ideal climatic conditions ensures that El Teb remains at the forefront of Sri Lanka's tea industry.

Looking ahead through Innovation and Sustainability

As El Teb strides into the future, it remains committed to blending tradition with innovation. Collaborations with the Sri Lanka Tea Board, Tea Research Institute, and global partners enable the estate to modernize operations and expand its reach. El Teb Estate stands as a symbol of Sri Lanka's tea heritage a bridge between the past and the future. From Captain Gordon's pioneering spirit to the estate's modern-day achievements, El Teb is a story of resilience, innovation, and dedication. Its journey from a modest plantation to a modern enterprise exemplifies the resilience and vision that define Sri Lanka's tea industry. As it continues to balance tradition with modernization, El Teb remains committed to setting new benchmarks in quality and sustainability, ensuring a bright future in the global tea market.

Carbon Credits and the Future of Sustainable Agriculture in Sri Lanka

Dr. Sampath Niroshan



Abstract

Climate change is reshaping global agricultural systems and forcing nations to adopt sustainable production models. Carbon credit mechanisms have emerged as an important financial and environmental instrument to reduce greenhouse gas emissions while encouraging climate-smart agricultural practices. This article examines the potential for Sri Lanka's plantation and smallholder agricultural systems to generate carbon credits through agroforestry, soil carbon sequestration, and regenerative farming practices. By aligning agricultural productivity with climate mitigation strategies, Sri Lanka has the opportunity to create new income streams for farmers while contributing to global climate goals. The paper also discusses the environmental benefits of carbon farming and outlines strategic pathways

for developing agricultural carbon markets within the country.

Introduction

Climate change is widely recognized as one of the most significant global challenges of the 21st century. Agriculture contributes to greenhouse gas emissions, yet it also possesses substantial potential to act as a carbon sink through improved land management practices (IPCC, 2023). Increasingly, agricultural systems are being recognized not only as sources of emissions but also as part of the solution to climate change mitigation.

What Are Carbon Credits?

A carbon credit represents the verified reduction or removal of one metric ton of carbon dioxide (CO₂) or equivalent greenhouse gases from the atmosphere (World Bank, 2022).

Carbon credits are generated through climate mitigation activities and can be traded within global carbon markets.

- Tree planting and reforestation projects
- Soil carbon enhancement through organic farming practices.
- Introduction of cover crops and bio-fertilizers
- Restoration of degraded agricultural lands
- Protection of natural forests and ecosystems
- Adoption of climate-smart agricultural techniques

Importance for Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka possesses a unique ecological advantage due to its tropical climate, biodiversity, and long-standing plantation traditions. Agricultural landscapes including coconut plantations, tea estates, spice gardens, and agroforestry systems contribute significantly to natural carbon sequestration (FAO, 2021).

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- Coconut-based intercropping systems
- Shade-grown spice and timber cultivation
- Use of living ground cover and mulching
- Organic soil improvement practices

Carbon Farming as a New Income Source

Carbon farming introduces a new financial model for agricultural communities. Under carbon credit systems, farmers are compensated not only for crop production but also for the carbon captured and stored in soils and biomass. Smallholder participation is typically enabled through aggregation models where multiple farms are grouped into a single carbon project for monitoring and verification (Verra, 2023).

Environmental Benefits

- Improved soil fertility and soil structure
- Greater water retention and drought resilience
- Reduced dependency on chemical fertilizers
- Long-term improvement in crop productivity
- Increased resilience to climate extremes
- Enhanced biodiversity conservation

Role of Bio-Fertilizers and Regenerative Agriculture

Regenerative agriculture emphasizes rebuilding soil organic matter and restoring soil biodiversity. Bio-fertilizers and organic soil amendments stimulate microbial activity and contribute to long-term soil carbon storage. These practices reduce nitrous oxide emissions commonly associated with synthetic fertilizers while improving plant nutrient availability (Lal, 2020).



Strategic Vision for Sri Lanka

- Promotion of organic and bio-based fertilizer adoption
- Expansion of agroforestry systems across plantation landscapes.
- Formation of farmer cooperatives for carbon credit projects.
- Development of strong measurement, reporting and verification (MRV) systems.

Conclusion

Carbon credits are transforming the role of agriculture in the global climate agenda. Farmers are no longer solely producers of food; they are also providers of climate solutions. By capturing atmospheric carbon and improving soil health, Sri Lankan farmers can contribute meaningfully to global emission reduction efforts while strengthening rural livelihoods. Strategic policy support, scientific measurement systems, and international carbon market access will be essential to realizing this opportunity.

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The Illogical Ban: Why Sri Lanka must Embrace the Oil Palm Solution



Lalin I De Silva

Sri Lanka ongoing economic recovery is a tightrope walk, dependent on disciplined fiscal management and, crucially, a pragmatic approach to foreign exchange. Yet, in the heart of our struggling agricultural sector, a self-imposed obstacle remains: the arbitrary 2021 ban on oil palm cultivation. This policy born of popular environmental fear rather than scientific fact is costing the nation hundreds of millions of precious US dollars, draining our reserves simply to import the edible oil we could efficiently produce ourselves. It is time for the government to follow the recommendations of its own expert committees and replace populism with economic sense. The economics are stark, and the urgency is undeniable. Sri Lanka's annual requirement for edible oils and fats hovers between 220,000 and 250,000 metric tonnes. Our domestic production, dominated by the much-loved but comparatively low-yielding coconut, satisfies less than one-third of this demand.

The deficit is bridged entirely through imports, primarily palm oil and its derivatives, leading to an import bill that exceeded US\$300 million in 2023. We are literally haemorrhaging foreign exchange to purchase a commodity that thrives in our wet zone, a climate already hosting our existing plantation infrastructure.



The decision to prohibit new planting and mandate the gradual uprooting of existing plantations which currently span a mere 11,000 to 12,000 hectares is an act of profound fiscal illogic. When successive governments previously sanctioned a target of 20,000 hectares, they were responding to a fundamental reality: oil palm is, globally, the most land efficient oilseed crop. .

The yield disparity is the central, unassailable argument. On average, a hectare of oil palm yields between four to eight metric tonnes of oil annually. Contrast this with the modest 0.8 metric tonnes produced by a hectare of coconut. To meet Sri Lanka's full edible oil requirement using only coconut, we would need to dedicate nearly a million hectares of land—an area far exceeding our available suitable agricultural terrain. The alternative, expanding oil palm to the proposed 20,000 hectares, would allow us to cater to nearly half of the national demand on a tiny fraction of the land base. This land-saving efficiency is the key to unlocking significant cost savings, boosting rural employment, and creating a stable, domestically-sourced edible oil supply.

Critics of oil palm often invoke images of deforestation seen in Southeast Asia. This comparison is disingenuous. The Sri Lankan industry has strictly adhered to replanting on marginal, degraded land primarily worn-out rubber estates in the wet zone. There is a rigid legal prohibition on clearing natural forests for this purpose. Furthermore, scientific studies conducted in Sri Lanka directly refute the popular environmental myths. Research confirms that oil palm plantations are highly efficient carbon sinks, sequestering carbon dioxide at a rate (11–16.3 MT per hectare per year) significantly higher than traditional tea and coconut plantations. Claims regarding water depletion are often simplistic, failing to account for the efficiency of the crop's root system in utilising rainwater compared to the area-based consumption of other plantation crops.

The most recent development—the reported recommendation by the Ministry of Plantation's Expert Committee to lift the ban—offers a ray of hope. It signals a move away from political posturing and towards evidence-based governance.

We cannot afford to remain the world's only nation that bans the cultivation of a strategic commodity while simultaneously being one of its biggest importers. The current ban has not saved the environment; it has merely outsourced our production to Malaysia and Indonesia, increased our national debt, and crippled local investments worth billions of rupees.

The mandate for the government is clear: immediately scrap the ill-conceived 2021 ban, enforce the proven, strict guidelines set by the Coconut Research Institute for planting only on suitable, existing plantation land, and allow the industry to meet the long-approved target of 20,000 hectares. Sri Lanka's economic recovery hinges on pragmatic decisions that bridge the gap between imported necessity and local capability. The oil palm represents a vital opportunity for self-sufficiency that we can no longer afford to ignore.

COUNTERPOINTS BASED ON AGRONOMIC SCIENCE

1. Monoculture (Including Pinus)

Negative outcomes arise from poor management, not monoculture itself. Tea, rubber, coconut, oil palm, and pine can all perform sustainably when:

- Soil carbon is maintained
 - Groundcover is protected
 - Biodiversity strips are retained
- Well-managed monocultures are not inherently harmful.

3. Intercropping in Coconut

Coconut provides multiple especially in early and mid-canopy development

- This does not replace
 - Global edible-oil supply dominated by palm oil
 - S160,000 mT deficit of 15 years
- Each crop serves a different value-chain role.

4. Subsistence Farming

Coconut can be grown on small plots, but national edible-oil security cannot rely on subsistence farmers:

- Reducing imports
- Legume cover crops
- Increasing per-hectare productivity
- High soil carbon

5. 'Environment Not Conducive' in Oil Palm Plantations

Well-managed oil palm on non-peat soils can maintain

- Legume cover crops
- High soil carbon
- Beneficial flora

FAO and CIFOR emphasise quality, not crop type determines biodiversity outcomes.

6. Carbon Footprint Numbers

The claim "palm oil = 5–7; coconut 2.5" is not universally valid.

KELANI VALLEY CLUB TALDUWA

“Usque ad Tertium Diem” SINCE 1884

Nestled amidst the emerald valleys of Talduwa – Avissawella, renowned for its lush rubber plantations, rocky mountain tops, and cool climate, lies the Kelani Valley Club (K.V. Club). Rich in history and tradition, the KV Club was inaugurated in 1884 by the Kelani Valley Planters, primarily European settlers in Ceylon. Over time, the club gradually evolved from a conventional meeting place into the centre of fashionable social life, relaxation, and entertainment, fostering recreation among both the British Raj and the planters alike. Ideally situated in the heart of the Kelani Valley sub-district and surrounded by plantations, the KV Club became a favoured destination for planters from near and far. Many would travel on Horseback or even Walk from their Estates to partake in social gatherings, enjoy Rugby, Tennis, Billiards, Clay Pigeon Shooting, Elephant Racing and even a refreshing River Bath in the Adjacent Seethawaka River, before returning to their estates on Sunday. The club’s motto, **“Usque ad Tertium Diem”** meaning “All the way to the third Day” perfectly reflects the leisurely spirit of those early gatherings.

Originally established as a single-storied, thatched-roof clubhouse in 1884, it remained so until the early 1900s when local planters took over its mantle. The club still retains its authentic Ceylonese-British architectural outlook. Having endured floods in 1947, 1989, the club has stood resilient through time. After the 1947 floods, it was modernized into a two-storied building.

NIROSHANA ILANGARATNE
President Kelani Valley Club
2003-2004



The upper floor consists of the Ladies’ Cloakroom, the Billiards Room, and the Committee Room. The ground floor houses the Ballroom, Badminton Courts, Office, Pantry & Kitchen, Players’ Changing Rooms, Bathrooms, and the Legendary Bar Counter.

The Legendary Bar Counter

The Bar Counter carries one of the most fascinating stories of the club. In the late 1800s, European planters Leaving or arriving in Ceylon through Colombo Port often patronized the Grand Oriental Hotel Colombo (GOH) and its famous bar. On one occasion, a KV planter was seated there with a non-planter friend who was curious to know how a rubber tree was tapped to extract latex. To demonstrate, the planter took out his foldable tapping knife from his pocket, similar to a pen knife and tapped the curved wooden pillar of the bar counter, which had been imported from London. The hotel management immediately demanded payment for the “damage.” The planter calmly inquired about the full cost of the entire bar counter. Having received the figure, he paid for the whole counter including its unique Ladies’ and Gentlemen’s stools had it dismantled, and transported it by ferry via the Seethawaka River to the Kelani Valley Club.

To this day, the original tapping mark remains visible on the bar counter at KV Club a proud reminder of planter with and character.

K.V. Rugby

The Kelani Valley Club is one of the pioneering Rugby clubs in Sri Lanka. It has played alongside Darawala, Uva, Kandy, Havelocks, and CH, winning numerous tournaments in its heyday.

Many prominent personalities represented the club in their Planting Days before moving to Colombo for professional careers. Notably, Mr. Ken Balendra who later became Chairman of John Keells Holdings captained the KV team in 1969.

Equally remarkable is the loyal Fan Base from the surrounding villages. Men, women, young and old, support the team with a "KV Must Win" attitude. They know the Rugby Rules better than the Referee and are never shy to voice their opinions regardless of whether the opposition is Army, Navy, Police, Air Force, or any other formidable side. Their hearts belong solely to KV. Truly an adorable and unforgettable crowd.

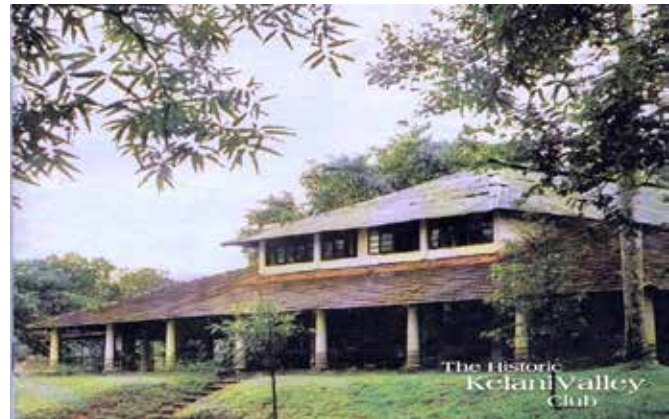
Thai Pongal Dance

The Thai Pongal Dance is the main annual event of the club and remains the only continuous planters' dance organized by a low-country planters' club.

A dedicated committee comprising members and ladies of the club handles the entire affair, from fundraising to execution. **No Out soused professional event managers. Only pure Talent, Commitment, and Creativity.**

Held during the Tamil Thai Pongal holidays, when many estates pause work for celebrations, the event transforms the club premises into a Themed Spectacle. The decorations meticulously designed by the **planters' wives** are nothing short of extraordinary. From interior décor to table arrangements, souvenir covers to ticket designs, every detail reflects imagination and elegance. Two of the country's best live bands perform back-to-back. **No DJs** only full live music. .

The finest caterers provide exquisite cuisine. Premium wines and spirits grace the tables. Entrance gifts, prizes, and delightful surprises add to the Glamour. Many competitions waltz, Bila Mr KV and KV Queen are the major ones. The highlight is the **KV Special Cabaret**, enjoyed by the entire gathering. Each year the committee refreshes the Artiest, bringing new flavour and excitement. The dance continues until 6:00 a.m., concluding with a traditional breakfast of Kiribath, Lunumiris, and a plain tea with a piece of Jaggery. It is, without doubt, a memory cherished for life.



Children's Christmas Party

Another heart-warming tradition of the club is the Children's Christmas Party. This event is organized not only for the children of planters but also for the young children from the surrounding villages. Mouth-watering food, Ice-cream and drinks of course Christmas gift from Santa is given to all the children who are present. Santa Claus is usually selected from among the SDs (Assistant Superintendents). On some occasions, when a suitably sized Santa could not be found, the club had to settle for a rather "compact" version!

Santa dresses at the Talduwa Estate Manager's Bungalow and makes a grand entrance to the club on a beautifully decorated tractor-trailer, escorted by a lively motorcycle parade of SDs. The arrival is an electrifying moment for the children.

The level of Santa's Entertainment, often depends on the "spirit" he has consumed to gather the necessary courage, said to have exceeded the fuel consumed by the Tractor that brought him from Talduwa to the Club! Laughter, joy, and community spirit define the day, making it yet another treasured KV tradition.

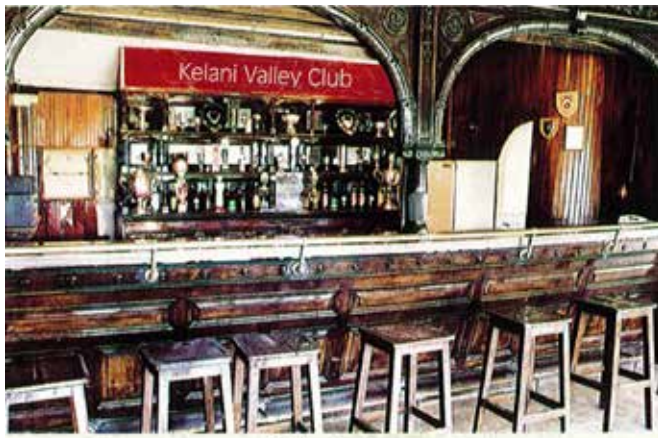
Wesak Alms Giving

Directly opposite the KV Club stands the famous Talduwa Temple, a spiritual landmark of the area and a place of deep religious significance to the community.

Each year, in keeping with tradition, the Kelani Valley Club organizes a Wesak Dānaya (alms giving). During this sacred period, 15 to 20 Buddhist monks, led by the Chief Incumbent Priest of the Temple, are respectfully invited to the Club house.

A Dahawal Dānaya (midday alms) is offered by the members of the club with devotion and humility. The event is conducted with dignity, simplicity, and reverence, reflecting the club's respect for the religious and cultural traditions of the land in which it stands.

Over the years, this annual observance has built a strong and enduring relationship between the Kelani Valley Club and the Talduwa Temple a bond rooted in mutual respect, harmony, and community spirit.



The Legendary Bar

Aron – An Icon

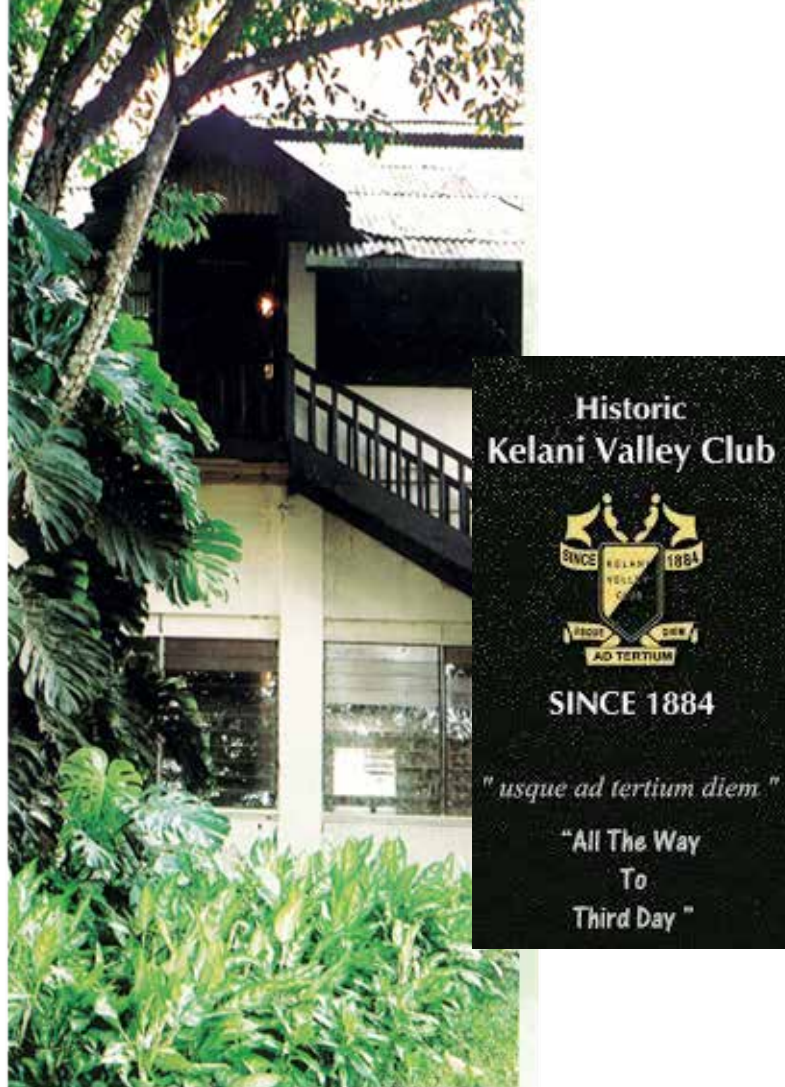


Aron Singho, affectionately known simply as "Aron," was more than a caretaker he was the living soul of the Kelani Valley Club. Hailing from Talduwa and residing directly opposite the club, Aron joined the KV Club during the European era at the tender age of just 13, beginning as a humble club boy. Over time, through dedication, loyalty, and unmatched commitment, he rose to become the custodian of the club for over eight decades. Aron also have played Rugby for KV Club and had been a member of the 1969 Ken Balendra's Champion Team For more than 80 years, Aron served the club as though it were his own. He safeguarded its movable and immovable assets with unwavering vigilance, ensuring everything remained intact through changing times. The club and Aron faced many natural disasters, especially devastating floods that completely cut off access roads yet he stood firm, protecting its belongings with courage and determination.

He was instrumental in preventing land encroachments and illegal gemming activities in the surrounding property, acting swiftly and decisively whenever threats arose. So deeply was he associated with the KV Club that many new generations genuinely believed the club belonged to him.

Though his children rose to the highest ranks in the Security Forces and government institutions, Aron himself refused to leave the club he loved. He remained devoted to it until his very last days. A few years ago, after protecting and serving the Kelani Valley Club for more than eight decades, Aron passed away leaving behind a legacy that is impossible to replace.

Today, the club continues to be looked after by his long-time deputy, T.L., carrying forward the spirit and discipline Aron instilled.



Kelani Valley Club Motor Racing Track

Kelani Valley Club boasts the only motor racing track in the country with Tarmac, Gravel, Grass, and Mud all in one track. It held more races annually in the past, mainly organized together with the leading motor sports clubs and the Sri Lanka Army along with the club.

Also, many MEGA outdoor musical events and 'melas' were organized with the Leading media institutes, together with the club, in order to raise funds for Maintenance, Upgrading, and Preservation of the Clubhouse.

Legacy

Though its famous Horse-Riding & Elephant Racing days have faded and the Track now hosts Talduwa Motor Cross meets, little has changed in spirit over the past 142 years. The Kelani Valley Club remains a living testament to history, camaraderie, sport, culture, resilience, and timeless colonial charm.

All credit goes to the Past and Present Presidents, Committees, and Members who did their very best to preserve and upgrade the Club to what it is today. Throughout its 142-year history, the Club has faced many challenges at different times. Yet, with sheer determination and courage, those who held the helm, together with their dedicated teams, overcame every obstacle that came their way. It is now the duty and obligation of the younger generation of planters to uphold these proud traditions, move forward with vision and responsibility, and hand over this prestigious Club stronger and greater to the generations to come.

'A club where memories are not just made but lived.'



Physiotherapy in Everyday Life: Why It Matters for Injuries, Health, and Professional Performance

Hasitha Tharaka

In modern life, physical strain has become almost unavoidable. Long hours at desks, the widespread use of smartphones, sedentary lifestyles, and demanding physical occupations all contribute to a growing number of musculoskeletal problems. From a simple ankle sprain while walking to chronic neck pain caused by poor posture, injuries, and discomfort are now common experiences for many people. In this context, physiotherapy has emerged as a vital healthcare discipline that not only treats injuries but also helps prevent them and promotes long-term physical well-being.

Physiotherapy is often misunderstood as a treatment used only after serious injuries or surgeries. However, its role extends far beyond rehabilitation. Physiotherapists help individuals recover from everyday injuries, manage chronic pain, improve mobility, and maintain an active lifestyle. For professionals whose careers rely on physical performancesuch as athletes, healthcare workers, teachers, and manual labourers physiotherapy can be an essential part of maintaining health and productivity.

What is Physiotherapy?

Physiotherapy is a science-based healthcare profession that focuses on restoring and improving movement and function. It aims to reduce pain, enhance mobility, strengthen muscles, and prevent future injuries.

Physiotherapists are trained to understand how the body moves and how different systems muscles, joints, bones, and nerves work together to support daily activities.

A physiotherapy treatment plan usually begins with a thorough assessment. The physiotherapist evaluates posture, joint movement, muscle strength, flexibility, and functional limitations. By identifying the root cause of pain or discomfort, they design a personalized treatment program that may include exercises, manual therapy, posture correction, and lifestyle advice.

The goal of physiotherapy is not only to relieve symptoms but also to address the underlying causes of injury and improve overall physical function.

Common Everyday Injuries

Daily life exposes people to a wide range of minor injuries and physical stresses. Many of these injuries may appear insignificant at first but can gradually develop into long-term problems if not treated properly. Muscle strains from lifting heavy objects or sudden movements

- Ligament sprains, particularly in the ankle or knee
- Lower back pain caused by poor posture or prolonged sitting
- Neck and shoulder pain due to excessive screen time
- Repetitive strain injuries from repetitive tasks such as typing or manual work

For example, office workers often develop neck stiffness and back pain after sitting for long hours without adequate ergonomic support. Similarly, individuals who suddenly engage in physical activities such as weekend sports or gym workouts may experience muscle soreness or minor injuries due to inadequate warm-up or improper technique. Physiotherapy helps address these problems through targeted treatments that restore movement and strengthen the affected areas.

How Physiotherapy Helps in Recovery

Physiotherapy treatment uses a combination of techniques to promote healing and restore function. These methods are tailored to the individual's specific condition and physical needs.

- **Pain Management**

One of the primary goals of physiotherapy is to reduce pain and inflammation. Techniques such as manual therapy, soft tissue mobilization, and therapeutic exercises help relieve muscle tension and improve circulation. In some cases, physiotherapists may also use modalities such as ultrasound therapy, electrical stimulation, or heat and cold treatments to support pain relief.

- **Improving Mobility and Flexibility**

Injuries often restrict movement in joints and muscles. Physiotherapy exercises are designed to gradually restore flexibility and range of motion. Gentle stretching and mobility exercises allow the body to regain normal movement patterns.

- **Weak Muscles**

Muscle weakness is a common contributor to injuries.

Physiotherapists prescribe strengthening exercises that stabilize joints and support proper movement. Stronger muscles help protect the body from further injury.

- **Correcting Posture and Movement**

Poor posture is one of the leading causes of musculoskeletal pain. Physiotherapists educate patients about correct body mechanics during daily activities such as sitting, standing, lifting, and walking. Postural correction plays a key role in preventing recurring pain.

- **Preventing Recurrence**

An important part of physiotherapy is teaching individuals how to avoid future injuries. This includes advice on exercise routines, workplace ergonomics, stretching habits, and safe physical activity.

The Importance of Early Treatment

Many people tend to ignore mild pain or discomfort, assuming it will disappear on its own. However, untreated minor injuries can gradually develop into chronic conditions that are more difficult to manage. Early physiotherapy intervention can prevent such complications.

For example, a mild lower back strain may initially cause only occasional discomfort. Without proper treatment, it may lead to persistent pain, reduced mobility, and difficulty performing daily tasks. Early physiotherapy can correct the underlying muscle imbalance and prevent the condition from worsening.

Physiotherapy for Working Professionals

In addition to treating injuries, physiotherapy is particularly beneficial for professionals who experience physical stress due to their work.

Office workers frequently suffer from neck pain, shoulder stiffness, and lower back discomfort due to prolonged sitting and poor workstation ergonomics. Physiotherapy provides posture correction strategies, stretching exercises, and ergonomic recommendations to reduce strain.

Healthcare professionals, such as nurses and caregivers, often experience back injuries due to lifting and transferring patients. Physiotherapy helps them learn proper lifting techniques and strengthen their core muscles to reduce injury risk.

Manual labourers and construction workers place repeated stress on their bodies through heavy lifting and repetitive tasks. Regular physiotherapy can help maintain flexibility, improve muscle strength, and prevent work-related injuries.

Athletes and fitness enthusiasts benefit from physiotherapy by improving performance and preventing sports injuries. Physiotherapists guide them through conditioning programs, recovery strategies, and rehabilitation protocols after injuries.

Physiotherapy as a Preventive Healthcare Tool

One of the most important aspects of physiotherapy is prevention. Rather than waiting for injuries to occur, physiotherapy encourages people to adopt healthy movement habits and maintain physical fitness.

Preventive physiotherapy focuses on:

- Improving posture and body mechanics
- Maintaining joint mobility and flexibility
- Strengthening muscles that support the spine and joints
- Promoting regular physical activity
- Reducing the risk of long-term musculoskeletal disorders

By incorporating these strategies into daily life, individuals can maintain better physical health and avoid many common injuries.

A Holistic Approach to Health

Physiotherapy takes a holistic approach to health by considering the physical, functional, and lifestyle factors that influence well-being. Instead of treating only the symptoms, physiotherapists aim to understand the root cause of a problem and provide solutions that promote long-term recovery.

This approach empowers individuals to take an active role in their own health. Through guided exercises, education, and lifestyle adjustments, physiotherapy encourages people to become more aware of their bodies and movement patterns.

Conclusion

Physiotherapy plays an increasingly important role in today's healthcare landscape. From treating everyday injuries to enhancing professional performance and preventing chronic pain, it offers practical solutions that improve quality of life. For the general public, understanding the benefits of physiotherapy can encourage earlier treatment and healthier habits. Rather than viewing physiotherapy as a last resort after injury, it should be recognized as an essential component of maintaining physical health.

In a world where daily activities place constant demands on the body, physiotherapy provides the knowledge, guidance, and care needed to stay active, recover from injuries, and lead a healthier life.

PHYSIOTHERAPY IN EVERYDAY LIFE:

Why It Matters for Injuries, Health,
and Professional Performance



1. REHABILITATING INJURIES

Physiotherapy helps the body heal after injury, surgery, or pain by restoring movement and strength.

HOW IT HELPS:



Reduces pain and swelling



Restores strength and flexibility



Prevents re-injury with proper movement patterns



EXAMPLE:

Recovering from an ankle sprain with guided exercises to return to walking and sports safely.



2. IMPROVING HEALTH & WELL-BEING

Physiotherapy isn't just for injuries – it supports long-term physical and mental well-being for everyone.

KEY BENEFITS:



Improves posture and mobility



Enhances breathing and cardiovascular health



Reduces stress and improves quality of life



EXAMPLE:

Physiotherapy for back pain relief through stretching, strengthening, and posture education.



3. BOOSTING PROFESSIONAL & ATHLETIC PERFORMANCE

Physiotherapy optimizes movement, prevents injuries, and enhances performance in work and sports.

HOW IT SUPPORTS:



Increases strength, speed and endurance



Improves technique and movement efficiency



Prepares the body to prevent injuries during high demands



EXAMPLE:

A physiotherapist helps an athlete improve running form and recover faster between training sessions.

WHY PHYSIOTHERAPY MATTERS EVERY DAY



Supports Daily Activities

Helps you move better at home, work, and in leisure.



Prevents Future Problems

Addresses muscle imbalances and movement issues early.



Promotes Independence & Confidence

Keeps you active, strong, and in control of your body.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Physiotherapy is for everyone – not just patients. It plays a vital role in injury recovery, lifelong health, and achieving top performance.

*“Moving well is living well.
Physiotherapy helps make that possible every day.”*

LEADING CHANGE IN PLANTATIONS: THE ROLE OF MODERN MANAGEMENT IN A TRADITIONAL INDUSTRY



Diluk Priyantha

The plantation sector has long stood as a cornerstone of Sri Lanka's economy, deeply rooted in history, culture, and global trade. From the misty highlands where tea is carefully plucked to the bustling export markets around the world, the industry carries a legacy that spans over a century. Yet today, this traditional sector finds itself at a critical crossroads where change is no longer optional, but essential.

The Need for Transformation

Global market dynamics, climate change, labour challenges, and rising operational costs are reshaping the plantation landscape. Consumers are increasingly demanding sustainably produced, ethically sourced, and high-quality products. At the same time, competition from other tea producing nations is intensifying.

In this evolving environment, relying solely on traditional practices is no longer sufficient. The sector must embrace transformation, and at the heart of this shift lies modern management.

Redefining Plantation Management

Modern plantation management goes beyond routine supervision and production targets.

It is about strategic thinking, innovation, and people-centered leadership. Today's plantation managers are expected to act not just as administrators, but as change leaders who can navigate complexity and drive progress.

Key aspects of modern management include:

- **Data - Driven Decision Making**

The use of digital tools and systems enables managers to monitor productivity, track field activities, and make informed decisions in real time. This improves efficiency and reduces resource wastage.

- **Technology Integration**

From smart irrigation systems to mobile-based data collection, technology is revolutionizing how estates are managed. Digital platforms are also enhancing transparency and accountability across operations.

- **Sustainability as a Core Strategy**

Environmental sustainability is no longer a choice; it is a necessity. Modern management emphasizes soil conservation, water management, biodiversity protection, and eco-friendly cultivation practices.



Empowering the Workforce

The true strength of the plantation sector lies in its people. A modern management approach recognizes this and prioritizes worker welfare, skill development, and community upliftment. Investments in education, healthcare, housing, and digital literacy are transforming plantation communities. Initiatives that empower women and youth are particularly crucial in building a resilient and future-ready workforce.

By fostering a sense of ownership and dignity among workers, management can significantly enhance productivity and long-term sustainability.

Leadership in Times of Change

Change is often met with resistance, especially in industries with deep-rooted traditions. This is where leadership plays a critical role.

Effective plantation leaders must:

- Communicate a clear vision for the future
- Encourage innovation while respecting tradition
- Build trust among workers and stakeholders
- Be adaptable and open to continuous learning

Leadership today is less about authority and more about influence, collaboration, and inspiration.

Balancing Tradition with Innovation

While modernization is essential, it is equally important to preserve the unique heritage and identity of the plantation sector. The goal is not to replace tradition, but to enhance it through innovation.

By combining time-tested practices with modern techniques, the industry can maintain its authenticity while improving efficiency and competitiveness.



The Way Forward

The future of Sri Lanka's plantation sector depends on its ability to evolve. Modern management is the bridge that connects tradition with transformation. It enables the sector to respond to global challenges, meet market expectations, and create lasting value for all stakeholders.

As the industry moves forward, one thing is clear:

Leading change is no longer a choice; it is a responsibility.

EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES IN IMPROVING EARLY CHILD DEVELOPMENT (ECD)



Dr. Sarath Amunugama

(A pilot project conducted in Hatton and Kegalle Region)

Introduction

ECD focuses on the holistic development of the child with emphasis on skill nurturing broadly involving motor (gross and fine motor), language, social/emotional, and cognitive development (UNICEF 2023). This period from conception to eight years of age specially first 1000 days is an important transformative phase where children progress from dependent to independent state in accomplishing basic needs.

Hence, ECD forms the foundation for better education and attaining one's full potential which positively impacts an individual's social and economic standing in adulthood. ECD requires a stimulating environment under attentive and well-informed caregivers. Furthermore, adequate nutrition plays a pivotal role in achieving optimal growth and development with attention to both macro and micronutrients. Hence, application of preventive and promotive strategies during early childhood is prioritised and recognised in the Sustainable Development Goals. These efforts prepare the child to enter school seamlessly and secure lasting impact on wider national interests including health, education, economic, and social standards.

Plantation Community

The plantation community of Sri Lanka represents an underserved community with high rates of childhood malnutrition which underscores the current efforts to improve the national indices of child health and development in Sri Lanka. The demographic and health survey (DHS) conducted in 2016 highlights the stark contrast in rates of stunting, wasting and underweight children less than 5 years of age in this community which is well above the national, rural and urban figures.

Project focus

The goal of this project was to build capacities of grassroot level Estate Health Workers in the plantation sector to improve child health using holistic approach through community empowerment employing health promotion principles. According to the WHO, health promotion is the process of enabling people to increase control over and to improve their health. In other words, it is the process by which we empower people to take ownership of the determinants of health, thereby improving health.

The intervention focused on enabling, mediating, and advocating for health through multi-sector collaboration, participatory processes, and supportive environments. The project targeted three key action areas: creating supportive environments, strengthening community action, and developing personal skills. The facilitator plays a threefold role throughout the health promotion process: 1) to stimulate the community and society; 2) to address areas where the community lacks knowledge and skills; and 3) to guide the community in evaluating, reviewing, and progressing as a group. Next step in the process is to create a simple plan with guidance from the health promoter or health promotion facilitator to measure outcomes. They create sensitive indicators to measure our progress towards the outcomes and impacts we envisioned from the very beginning..

The subsequent step is to evaluate the outputs and outcomes based on the established indicators and assess how to respond to successes and failures. One of the primary mechanisms of change involved capacity-building initiatives targeting caregivers, including Child Development Officers (CDOs), Plantation Family Welfare Officers (PFWOs), local leaders, community members, and health workers. Training sessions focused on skill development to address the priorities identified by the community, such as improving caregiving practices, fostering responsive parenting, and ensuring adequate child nutrition. Caregivers were equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to combat protein-energy malnutrition and micronutrient deficiencies while supporting cognitive, socialemotional, and motor development in children.

At the community level, the project sought to create sustainable processes that empowered community members to continue health promotion efforts beyond the intervention's duration. Women, in particular, were positioned as agents of change, with their empowerment leading to ripple effects such as improved financial management, reduced reliance on harmful coping mechanisms, e.g., alcohol and tobacco, and strengthened social cohesion within family units and among community members.

These outcomes aligned health promotion frameworks, which highlighted the importance of promoting health literacy, empowerment, capacity-building, healthy environments, and societal transformation.

Community mapping



Analysis of problems by the community groups



Outputs and outcomes

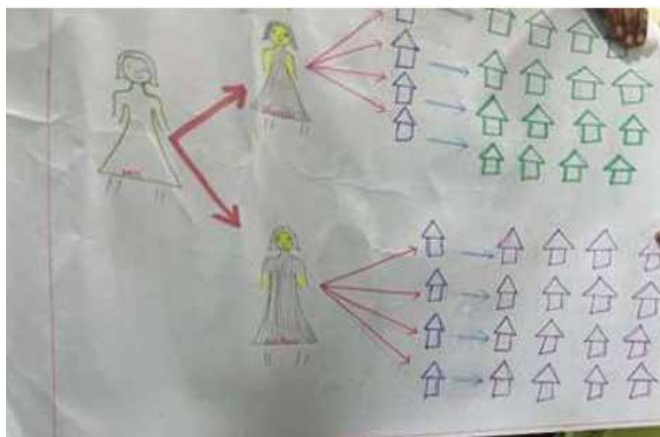
Outputs and outcomes based on the process as well as the end result. Some of the activities integrated with the system and conducted along with their routine work.

Communities were encouraged to do community mapping in order to understand the ECD issues and their determinants.

They were encouraged to analyse problems and prioritise them and identify solutions which can be done easily.

Resource team observed their enthusiasm. Participation, willingness to work together and sharing experiences.

Propagating Health Promotive settings

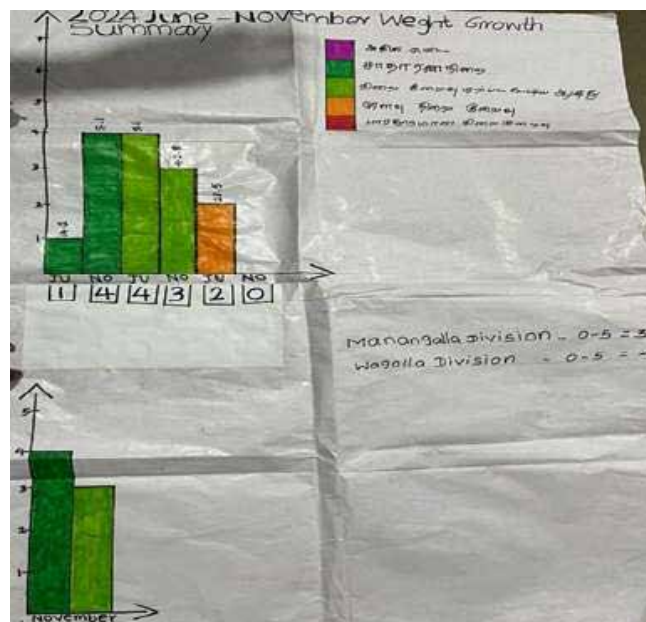


Outcomes

All together 55 CDOs and PFWOs were developed as resource team. They will be expected to continue the programme after the project is over. Additionally, capacities of 38 high achieving mothers also developed. They are from the community and are able to expand the programme in their own estate or nearby estates.

Community based outcome are difficult to measure and interpret since many determinants were interacting each other. Some of the outcomes were given below.

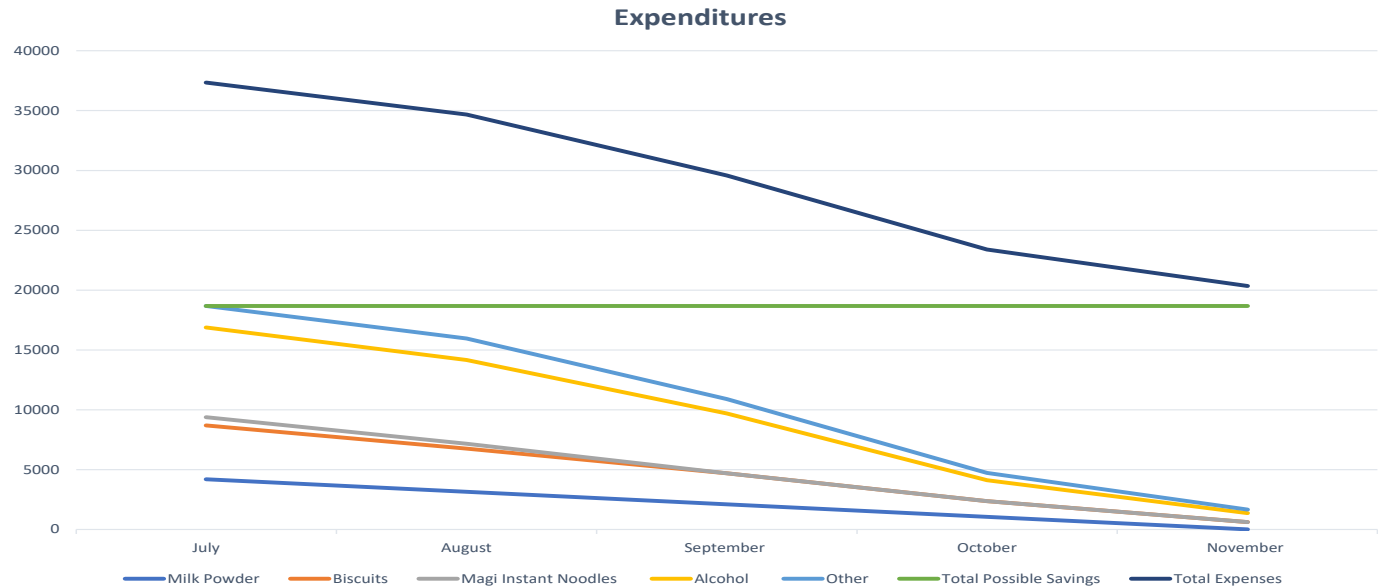
Community monitoring of weight gain of children



Household expenditure is a crucial matter influencing many outcomes including nutrition, resource for care etc. Hence reduction of unnecessary expenditure and their negative influences such as unhappiness of families also played a major part in the community empowerment process.

Summary of the capacities of trainees built during the project period

		Phase I CDO and PFWO	Phase II CDO and PFWO	Phase I HACM	Phase II HACM
A+	85 -100	11	00	02	
A	75-84	12	08	13	06
B+	65-74	04	00	06	
B	50-64	05	15	05	06
C+	35-49	01	00	02	00
C	25-34	06	07	01	04
D	0-24	00	00	00	01
E	Not Respond	00	00	00	01



WEED MANAGEMENT



Dyan Seneviratne

A 'weed' is defined as "a plant which is unwanted". Also a plant which grows in a crop field and significantly disturbs and suppresses the crop growth is also considered a weed.

Accordingly weeding is a vital controlled method practiced in many crops – tea is no exception! The removal of weeds is useful because these unwanted plants compete with the primary crop, tea, for space, water and nutrients. Weeding also helps to loosen the soil. Water can infiltrate more rapidly and roots of the tea therefore develop better when not 'crowded' by weeds.

Weeds negatively impact the yield in tea. According to the TRI, on an average, the overall yield reduction due to weeds in the Up country and Low country is 09% and 5-15% respectively. Furthermore, the presence of weeds interferes with field operations such as plucking, fertilizer application, forking etc. More the reason why weeding must be done!

Classification of Weeds

There are three [03] types of classification for weeds, based on their specific characteristics:

- According to the length of its life cycle [annuals, bi-annuals and perennials]
- According to the morphological nature of the plant [trees, shrubs, broad leaf weeds, grasses and sedges]

- According to the tenderness of the stem of the plant [woody or herbaceous] – TRI.

Let us tackle 'weeding' proactively & scientifically!

If plucking is the costliest and most labour intensive operation on a 'tea-estate' then a 'close second' is the cost of NPK Fertilizer and of course weeding – ground condition maintenance. The writer recalls the challenges he faced in keeping estates weed-free in the early days of his career. Much of the 'Weeding' was done using implements such as 'Scrapers' which did irreparable harm to soil as it would loosen it and expose it to be washed away during the rains. Weeding was considered a 'necessary evil'!

One must realize that 'weeds' like any plant need sunlight, moisture and 'good soils' to thrive. All 3 elements need to be present for weed growth. Moisture and 'good soil' cannot be reduced or eliminated; however sunlight if controlled would significantly lessen weed growth – hence Mulching, establishing cover-crops and 'Thatching' on weed-seed-free surfaces would ensure weed free conditions! Apart from mulching and thatching, bush-to-bush merger of tea bushes would effectively reduce sunlight penetration towards triggering off germination. Weed seed germination is from seed availability which comes to being from flowers of weeds. **So weeds must be 'tackled' before flowering!**

The use of appropriate herbicides on large commercial tracts of tea lands are needed – if used judiciously and timed. Some pre-emergent weedicides need to be sprayed on bare ground before pruning along with the Dolomite Applications. These two operations done once in 4 years in a 4-year PR Cycle field would reduce excess soil acidity plus effectively lessen weed-seed germination on pruning when sunlight starts to stream in that would otherwise trigger large scale germination of weed-seed. At ‘Tipping’ and thereafter at each plucking round for 18 months one only needs to uproot manually the few weeds that spring forth until bushes have merged – after which weeding per se is not an issue if bush to bush merger is/was achieved during 18 month period after pruning.



The trick is to proactively tackle the question of weeding or ‘Ground Condition Maintenance’ – go for it [manually or chemically] before flowering of weeds. This is absolutely essential. One should avoid spraying of herbicides on tall ‘flowering weeds’ that are seen even above the tea bush table – the ‘spray drift’ would effectively scorch much of the side branches besides being a waste of funds as herbicide are ineffective on mature weeds or weeds with a rhizome! Here well maintained/serviced knapsack sprayers - a must!

Some opine that if weeds engulf tea or fields abandoned for months on end, one should get on to ‘mammoty-weeding’ hoping that fields would be clean-weeded by this archaic operation! It won’t! ‘Kotta-Mammoty’ weeding is a wasteful and exorbitant operation and is counter-productive as weeds re-emerge within days; so-called clean weeding exposes soil directly to sun, wind, rain; besides it only ‘prunes’ weeds making it to re-generate within days and worse, mammoties/ large scrapers would only hasten erosion of humus built over for eons! Furthermore when tea bushes and creepers/ weeds/jungle growth have ‘co-existed’ over the years they create a symbiotic relationship, albeit ‘semi-parasitically’!

‘Mammoty-Weeding’ also requires collection of all vegetation around the tea which is highly labour intensive. I have witnessed how unsightly weed heaps end up on top of precious tea bush tables scorching the pluckable areas!
In short this practice is a No, No!

I reiterate that the ‘total removal’ of all aforementioned ‘weeds’ and its resultant ‘clean area’ around the tea trees would not only encourage wind/water erosion, direct UV radiation of top soils it would also stifle the soil/bush symbiosis as bushes should not be viewed in isolation but taken holistically as part of the whole natural environment.

The only practical way to ‘tackle’ a heavily weed infested field is to first manually uproot with roots all creepers and jungle growth within/covering the bushes that hinder harvesting; such uprooted creepers/katu-cheddies must be stacked with their roots being displayed on road sides. Then slash all tall weeds in between the bushes to a height of 4 inches from ground; follow up with efficient knapsack sprayers with cocktail of a pre-emergent herbicide such as Diuron mixed with Glyphosate as a once a pruning cycle operation. Both weeds above ground level and latent weed seed ‘awaiting germination’ would then be dealt with effectively.

It is essential that the dead nutrient rich vegetation [yes, weeds are nutrient rich] should not be removed [exception: Cootch/Illuk, Amale] but left in-situ after herbicide application to enhance the nutrient and carbon content in soil, thus obviating necessity of collecting and transporting ‘tons of weeds’ away from the field!. This writer does not subscribe to outmoded practice of maintaining ‘Monthly Weeding Rounds’! Weeds germinate and/or grow when conditions are conducive, period! Therefore after ensuring latent weed seed awaiting germination are ‘neutralized’ as a pre-pruning operation and the few weeds that spring out post tipping are pulled out manually at each plucking round by deploying ‘Cheddies-Podians or Kelavans’ whose job is to have an eagle eye for flowering weeds, creepers, ‘katu-cheddies’. This boy/man is armed with a sack, an alavango and ‘Eety’ to tackle the odd weed, creeper or jungle growth. All collected weeds are brought to the nearest road side; stacked neatly box shaped at each pluck, road side.

The Superintendent must introduce a **‘Weed-Free Certificate’** to be signed after each plucking round. and that’s every 6 to 8 days! Never ever ‘wait’ for weeds to be overgrown here, there and everywhere! That then becomes a losing battle! We need to tackle let me repeat before weeds flower always: **Flowers mean, seeds. and seeds mean: WEEDS!**

To keep a plantation weed-free [or any vegetation that competes with the tea bush for water, nutrients, sun-light is by definition a weed] is not by using implements but by the 3-pronged strategy of manual / chemical & cultural [thatching / bush-merger]. One important point to remember is if one takes over an estate ‘riddled with weeds’ one cannot have low weeding operational costs during the first 3 months. If for instance estimated cost of weeding is Rs 600/- per ha you cannot do weeding at such costs initially. One may have costs of even Rs 2,000/- per ha to start with. However it would gradually reduce along with the ‘weed population’.



Sadly some RPC Heads insist that Managers ‘show’ such costs ‘within the estimate’ from Day One. Result? One significant section of the plantation would be in heavy weeds and may not even be ‘fully plucked’ – thus materially reducing the YPH!

Ideally a tea field should have optimum stand with NO vacancies (no bare ground to be seen in any field) and under each tea bush only tea leaf litter to cover ground! No weeds can then make headway or emerge anywhere.

As the oft repeated cliché goes: “The price of freedom is eternal vigilance” – the price of effective, pro-active management is eternal vigilance – even against emergence of weeds!

FOSTERING HUMAN-LEOPARD COEXISTENCE: CONSERVATION APPROACHES IN THE HILL COUNTRY

Gihani Hettiarachchi
Wildlife and Nature Protection Society



Sri Lanka is globally renowned for its Ceylon tea, mostly cultivated across the lush landscapes of the central highlands. These montane and sub-montane regions, while shaped by decades of plantation agriculture, also form part of a broader mosaic of habitats that support a surprising diversity of wildlife, including the charismatic Sri Lankan leopard (*Panthera pardus kotiya*). Endemic to the island and serving as the apex predator of country's terrestrial ecosystems, the Sri Lankan leopard (*Panthera pardus kotiya*) in the Hill Country is increasingly navigating plantation-dominated landscapes in close proximity to human communities. Increasing human populations, habitat loss and forest fragmentation, unplanned and intensifying land conversion, and declining prey availability are driving leopards to range beyond protected areas, resulting in more frequent human-leopard encounters and, consequently, heightened negative human-leopard interactions and leopard mortality. Understanding this, the public awareness programs for estate communities, organized by the Rainforest Alliance (RA) and conducted by the Wildlife and Nature Protection Society (WNPS) under its WNPS LOLC Multi-Regional Leopard Research and Conservation Project, aim to empower estate communities with the knowledge and better understanding needed to reduce human-leopard negative interactions and promote coexistence. These programs target key groups within estates, including community leaders, field officers, workers, and residents. Each session features a short drama, informative presentations followed by open discussions conducted in native languages. Core topics include an introduction on leopard and other small wild cats, their ecological and economic importance, major threats as well as practical measures to minimize conflicts and measures of reporting incidents to the Department of Wildlife Conservation (DWC).

At the conclusion of each program, participants receive handouts and certificates, while estates are provided with informational posters for display in public spaces. Since 2022,

WNPS LOLC project had successfully conducted programs collaborating with RA in several Regional Plantation Companies, including Bogawanthalawa, Kotagala, Talawakelle, Horana, Kelani Valley, Agarapatana, Hatton and Balangoda Plantations covering 73 estates reaching over 3000 participants while its individual efforts has reached over 2000 school children in central highlands. These efforts are carried out by the Kotagala regional center in addition to its field and research activities including human-leopard incident monitoring, gathering citizen science data, camera trapping, individual leopard identification and studies on leopard dietary patterns in the human-dominated landscapes.

Snare removal sessions held under these initiatives focus on addressing the widespread use of wire snares, which account for the majority of recorded leopard deaths. Although often set to capture other wildlife, these indiscriminate traps pose a severe threat to leopards. In response, together with the DWC and Forest Department, snare removal programs were conducted doing site inspections to locate and remove snares across estates and surrounding landscapes, alongside targeted community awareness programs that highlight the ecological consequences of snaring and the legal penalties associated with it. These initiatives were implemented across 13 estates under Hatton Plantations, supported by the donation of wire cutters to both estate management and the Nallathanniya DWC office, along with the provision of a leopard rescue cage.

Wire cutters were also donated to the Belihuloya DWC office. In addition, several programs have been conducted in selected localities expanding the reach and impact of these efforts. In situations where communities are affected by leopard-related incidents, assistance has been provided in the forms of dry rations to individuals impacted by leopard attacks and compensation support has been extended to individuals whose property was damaged during leopard rescue operations, helping to maintain community goodwill and reduce negative sentiments toward wildlife conservation efforts.



Leopards are an irreplaceable component of Sri Lanka's unique ecosystems, playing a crucial role in maintaining ecological balance even within plantation landscapes. Through responsible practices, it is possible to foster humanleopard coexistence, thereby reducing risks to both estate communities and wildlife. The plantation sector holds significant potential in advancing this approach, positioning biodiversity, particularly leopard conservation alongside Ceylon tea as a globally recognized model. While primary leopard research and conservation initiative under WNPS is funded by LOLC, further discussions are underway with the tea industry leaders such as Brown Plantations under the LOLC group, the world's largest tea manufacturer to collaborate on novel efforts that reframe leopards as a valuable asset within tea landscapes rather than a threat.

Should We Eat More Bananas?

Dr. Harold Gunatillake

Bananas are available in every little wayside tea boutique or street eating outlet in Sri Lanka on the main trunk roads. Bananas are kept hanging in most of these places. The secret is that hanging unripe green skin bananas change as they ripen and become sweeter. There are enzymes in bananas that begin to break down starches into sugars. This means it is already digested into sugar for easy absorption, unlike most other fruits. Hanging seems to accelerate this enzyme activity. You can stop your vehicle and order a bunch and feed your hunger pangs, quite fresh and filling, too. The question is asked how healthy are they, and are they low calorie? They are extremely healthy full of nutrients and most average size banana (6-7 inches-101 grams) have approximately 90 calories. Japanese researchers recently discovered something fascinating about bananas, as they ripen, produces more antioxidants in them.

The black spots on the ripen banana skin produces a substance called Tumour Necrosis Factor (TNF). This substance seems to combat cancer and abnormal cells. So, darker the spots on the skin seem to be more powerful in killing cancer cells. Bananas are full of water, carbs and very little proteins, and as mentioned earlier when they are ripen you are eating sugar. If you suffer type 2 diabetes you may want to eat a ripe banana with nut butter or plain yoghurt. The fats in the nut butter and yoghurt will slow down sugar absorption preventing spikes. Diabetics should restrict eating bananas unless the sugar is well controlled, as each average banana has on an average 25 grams of carbs.

The glycaemic index (GI) of unripe banana is about 30 whilst the ripe ones about 60..

Green unripe bananas have more resistant starch. Resistant starch is less digestible, more like fibre, whilst ripe bananas have less than one percent of resistant starch.

Our grandmothers were right, used to slice unripe bananas and cook into a curry and that would be more suitable for diabetics to enjoy as a treat with so much of resistant starch in them. Bananas are high fibre especially when unripe. They have vitamins like B6, C, B2 and minerals like manganese, potassium, magnesium, folate, copper. Bananas have high potassium and are beneficial for heart health and blood pressure control. Weight watchers: One could eat two bananas and drink some water as a meal which is only 200 cals. Bananas are filling and may delay hunger pangs.

Bananas have powerful antioxidants including dopamine and catechins. Though bananas have high serotonin, it is not able to cross the blood-brain barrier and will not increase serotonin levels in your brain.

Conclusions: Bananas are good for you as health food except that diabetics need to be careful.

Mash it like mashing boiled potatoes and you'll be eating the tastiest ice cream on earth - take my word!

From Plantation to Global

Reimagining
Sri Lanka's
Plantation Economy
Through Value
Addition, Innovation,
and Community
Empowerment



Nilantha Hulugalla

For more than a century, Sri Lanka's plantation sector has shaped the economic, social, and cultural identity of the nation. From the mist-covered tea estates of the central highlands to the coconut-rich coastal belts and spice-growing regions of the island, plantations have sustained livelihoods, contributed significantly to export earnings, and established Sri Lanka's global reputation as a producer of premium agricultural commodities.

Tea, cinnamon, coconut, rubber, and spices from Sri Lanka are widely respected in international markets for their authenticity, natural quality, and unique origin. Yet despite this recognition, the plantation sector has historically operated within a traditional model largely centered on bulk commodity exports. Large quantities of raw or minimally processed agricultural products continue to leave the country each year, only to be refined, branded, packaged, and marketed elsewhere in the global value chain.

As a result, much of the economic value created from Sri Lanka's plantation crops is realized beyond the communities that cultivate them.

Today, the plantation sector stands at a critical turning point. The future of the industry will no longer be defined merely by the quantity of crops harvested, but by how effectively those resources are transformed into high-value products that carry Sri Lanka's identity to global consumers.

The challenge before us is both strategic and transformative: to move from being a supplier of raw materials to becoming a creator of globally recognized plantation-based brands.

Breaking Free from the Commodity Cycle

For decades, plantation industries have been guided by a production-driven mindset in which success was largely measured by export volume. While this model ensured steady participation in global trade, it also exposed producers to the inherent volatility of commodity markets.

This imbalance has gradually constrained the economic potential of plantation regions. Despite producing world-renowned agricultural products, many plantation communities continue to experience limited income growth and restricted opportunities for economic mobility.

At the same time, younger generations increasingly view plantation work as a low-value occupation, leading to concerns about long-term workforce sustainability within the sector.

Yet the paradox remains clear. Sri Lanka possesses some of the most distinctive plantation crops in the world. The purity of Ceylon cinnamon, the richness of Sri Lankan coconut products, and the heritage of Ceylon tea represent natural advantages that cannot easily be replicated elsewhere.

The challenge, therefore, is not the quality of the resource itself. It is how effectively that resource is positioned within the global marketplace.

A Changing Global Consumer Landscape

Fortunately, global consumer behavior is evolving in ways that strongly favor origin-based agricultural economies such as Sri Lanka.

Consumers across Europe, North America, and Asia are increasingly conscious of what they consume and where their products originate. Demand for food products that are organic, ethically produced, environmentally sustainable, and fully traceable is expanding rapidly. In this new global landscape, agricultural products are no longer viewed purely as commodities. They are increasingly connected to lifestyle choices, wellness trends, and environmental responsibility.

Tea, for example, has evolved from a simple beverage into a cultural and lifestyle experience. Coconut-based products have become central ingredients in modern health-conscious diets. Cinnamon and spices are gaining prominence in functional foods, natural medicine, cosmetics, and nutraceutical formulations.

These trends create a powerful opportunity for Sri Lanka to reposition its plantation sector within a new value-driven framework. Rather than remaining a supplier of bulk agricultural inputs, the country can emerge as a producer of premium, origin-based products that deliver both quality and identity to international consumers.

Building Plantation-Origin Brands



At the heart of this transformation lies the development of strong plantation-origin brands. Branding enables agricultural products to move beyond commodity status. When plantation products are presented under credible brands that reflect authenticity, sustainability, and quality assurance, they become differentiated in international markets.

This shift allows producers to capture a greater share of value by extending their role beyond cultivation and into processing, product innovation, packaging, and direct engagement with global consumers.

Premium retail teas, organic coconut oils, coconut-based beverages, natural sweeteners, wellness ingredients, and specialty spice products represent just a few examples of how plantation crops can evolve into branded consumer goods.

Such transformation requires investment in modern processing technologies, internationally recognized food safety systems, research and development capabilities, and sophisticated marketing strategies.

Equally important is the power of storytelling. Plantation products carry rich narratives of heritage, landscape, craftsmanship, and sustainability. When these narratives are communicated effectively, they create trust and emotional connection with consumers around the world. In this way, value creation becomes not only an industrial process but also a cultural expression of Sri Lanka's agricultural heritage.

Uplifting Plantation Communities

The most meaningful outcome of this transformation will be felt within plantation communities themselves. For generations, plantation workers and smallholder farmers have sustained Sri Lanka's agricultural exports through dedication, skill,

By moving into value-added production and branded exports, a larger share of economic value can remain within the country and within the communities that support plantation agriculture.

Higher-value products allow companies to invest more in, training, and community development. At the same time, new industries emerge around plantation based manufacturing. Processing facilities require trained technicians, quality assurance specialists, logistics professionals, packaging designers, and marketing experts. These roles create new employment opportunities for educated youth in plantation regions, encouraging them to remain and build careers within their communities.

Women, who have long played an essential role in plantation agriculture, gain expanded opportunities in entrepreneurship, product development, and small-scale enterprise creation. As economic activity grows, supporting industries such as packaging, logistics, printing, certification services, and digital marketing also develop alongside plantation production. Over time, these developments strengthen rural economies and enable communities to invest more confidently in education, healthcare, housing, and infrastructure. What begins as agricultural transformation gradually becomes social transformation.



Leadership for a New Plantation Economy

Realizing this vision requires bold leadership from both industry and national institutions.

Entrepreneurs within the plantation sector must embrace innovation, invest in product development, and actively pursue international market opportunities. The traditional mindset of exporting bulk commodities must evolve into a forward-looking strategy centered on brand ownership and value creation.

Strategic collaboration between plantation companies, research institutions, government agencies, and global distribution networks will be essential to accelerate this transition.



National institutions can support the transformation through export promotion initiatives, certification frameworks, research funding, and the global positioning of Sri Lankan agricultural brands.

Ultimately, however, the momentum for change must come from within the sector itself from individuals and organizations willing to reimagine what plantation industries can become in the modern global economy.

A Vision for Sustainable Prosperity

Sri Lanka's plantation heritage is one of its most valuable national assets. The landscapes, crops, and traditions that define this sector possess an authenticity that few countries can replicate. If this heritage is combined with modern innovation, strong branding strategies, and visionary leadership, the plantation economy can enter a new era of global relevance. Instead of being known primarily as a supplier of raw agricultural commodities, Sri Lanka can emerge as a global origin of premium plantation-based brands. In such a future, plantations will not only produce crops they will produce innovation, employment, and prosperity.

The transformation from commodity supplier to branded exporter represents far more than a commercial opportunity. It is a national development pathway capable of uplifting communities, strengthening rural economies, and positioning Sri Lanka as a leader in sustainable agricultural exports. The true wealth of plantations lies not only in what grows from the soil, but in the value that visionary leadership can cultivate from it.

When plantation products evolve into globally recognized brands, the benefits extend far beyond export earnings. They empower communities, inspire entrepreneurship, and create a more inclusive and prosperous future for the nation.

PLANTATION ECONOMY THROUGH VALUE ADDITION BRANDING & LABELING

MADE IN
SRI LANKA
PURE • NATURAL • ETHICAL

Building a Strong Global Image for **Sri Lankan** Products



Enhancing the plantation economy through value addition—combined with strong branding and labeling—helps Sri Lankan products build a premium global image and capture higher market value.



1 VALUE ADDITION

Transform raw plantation produce into high-quality, finished products.



TEA

From tea leaves to premium packaged tea



COCONUT

From raw coconut to coconut oil, milk, flour, sugar, cosmetics



RUBBER

From raw latex to durable, high-quality rubber products



SPICES

From whole spices to spice blends and essential oils



2 BRANDING

Branding gives identity, creates trust and positions Sri Lankan products as premium.



Highlights Sri Lanka's heritage, quality & sustainability



Creates emotional connection & loyalty



Differentiates from competitors



Justifies premium pricing

3 LABELING

Labels communicate value instantly and build confidence in global markets.



CERTIFICATIONS

Organic, Fair Trade, Rainforest Alliance, ISO, HACCP



ORIGIN & AUTHENTICITY

100% Pure Ceylon – Proudly from Sri Lanka



QUALITY ASSURANCE

Nutritional information, ingredients, grade & standards



CONSUMER CONFIDENCE

Safe, ethical & sustainable products you can trust



PURE CEYLON
EXCELLENCE IN EVERY LABEL

THE IMPACT



HIGHER EXPORT EARNINGS

More value, more growth



BETTER INCOME FOR PLANTATION WORKERS

Shared prosperity, strong communities



STRONGER GLOBAL RECOGNITION OF SRI LANKAN PRODUCTS

A trusted name in global markets



LESS DEPENDENCY ON RAW COMMODITIES

Move up the value chain for a resilient future



SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Protecting people, planet and prosperity

Our Plantations.
Our Pride.
Our Future. ❤️

*Add Value. Build Brands. Earn Trust.
Grow Sri Lanka.*





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