

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION AND ADOPTION OF INNOVATIONS  
BY ENCROACHERS AND SETTLERS

BY

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THESIS

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ABSTRACT

This study was carried out in ~~Yala~~ 1980 in tract 12 of the Uda Walawe Multipurpose Reservoir Scheme. This scheme was inaugurated in early 1960's mainly to provide irrigation water for agriculture to an area of the southern part of Sri Lanka. This study investigates comparative performance of settlers and encroachers in this settlement scheme.

The sample studied included both settlers and encroachers. Sampling units were obtained from records maintained by government and semi-government agencies such as the Land Commissioner's Department, the Government Agent's office and the River Valleys Development Board. Purposive samples were obtained for encroachers and settlers and for each category samples were selected on a random basis. The data were collected in the field through personal interviews using a questionnaire.

The selection of the study area was based on the dependability of a supply of irrigation water and the age of the scheme. This was done to minimise the effect of extraneous factors that influence agricultural production and adoption of innovations and also to achieve reasonable accuracy in the study.

The problem of encroachment of crown land and the contribution made by the encroacher as a farmer to the national income in settlement schemes need investigations, therefore investigations were done to find out their socio economic background and whether, this has any effect on their

adoption of innovations and agriculture production. Specifically investigations were done by comparing agriculture production and differential rates of adoption of innovations by encroachers and settlers. To arrive at a detail picture, economic behaviour of encroachers in comparison to settlers like their level of education, district of origin, land holding size, level of available capital, family size and infrastructural facilities available were also investigated.

The study revealed, the per acre agriculture production levels were not dissimilar for the two groups indicating that adoption levels may not be related to agriculture production. The size of irrigable land holding had a positive correlation to the yield of encroachers. The availability of capital for agricultural production was also correlated positively to higher yields. The social background had very little association with agricultural production and adoption of innovations for the categories of farmers studied.

It is apparant from the study that the settler who obtained government assistance to establish himself as a farmer did not out performed the encroacher in obtaining higher yields or in adoption of innovations in the tenth year of the settlement scheme. These findings therefore should lead to reconsideration and reevaluation of the role of the encroacher indepth in multipurpose settlement schemes.