

Present status and future prospects of the rice processing as a cottage industry in Anuradhapura district.

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The Institute of Post Harvest Technology (IPHT) first introduced the rice processing village program in 2005 as an income generating activity and to promote superior quality rice processing at cottage level. After 05 years of inception this study attempted to assess the performance of this program. A random sample of 100 beneficiaries, taken from rice processing villages in 04 selected divisional secretariats was interviewed. The study revealed that the beneficiaries have earned an average additional profit of Rs. 10,100.56 per month by selling rice instead of paddy. The average amount of paddy processed per week was 320kg. The common problems faced by the beneficiaries were shortage of paddy and paddy storage facilities. All respondents were satisfied with this program and the profit earned. Therefore, this program is a highly viable program to be introduced to the rural people in order to reduce poverty.

Further, this study revealed that this program is a viable industry to be introduced to the rural community in gaining additional financial benefits, where this can be introduced to many rural paddy producing areas of the country. State intervention, proper financial support programs and development of storage facilities are necessary to enhance the impact of the program in future. These findings will be used in future planning of development activities conducted by IPHT and be given to relevant stakeholders via training, awareness programs and discussions.