



**Economic impacts of using combine harvesters in paddy cultivation in Hambantota district**

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Combine harvesters put great economic burden to the labors engaged in paddy cultivation recently even it helps to enhance the paddy productivity. Therefore, this study was an attempt to find out the economic impact of using combine harvesters in Hambantota district. Thirty labors and 60 farmers including, 30 farmers using harvesters and 30 not using harvesters were selected for the survey. The simple random sampling technique was employed. The findings revealed that 19 laborers/ac are replaced by using of large type combine harvesters, out of machine type and mini harvesters. Labourers in the study area (Bandagiriya, Malpetthawa, Hungama and Dehigahalanda) were very poor in socio economic status. Due to low education level and poverty they can neither go for a job nor have other income generation activity. Therefore, the usage of combine harvesters has a tremendous impact on the local labor force. The average production cost of using combine harvesters is about Rs.7000 and that is for manual harvesting is Rs. 11000.00. Therefore, 92% of farmers tend to hire combine harvesters from long distances such as Ampara. Most of the combine harvester operators are foreign operators (60%). Even though farmers are obtaining maximum benefits from combine harvesters, only 40% was satisfied about combine harvesters. Unsuitability to operate in flooded lands and inefficiency of operating through dropped paddy panicles due to rain were the main disadvantages of combine harvesters. The results of the t test shows that there is a significant difference between the production cost/ac for manual and combine harvesting. It is beneficial to use combine harvesters in case of farmers as they can minimize their production cost significantly while it creates a burden to the agricultural labors.

**Keywords:** combine harvester, paddy productivity, economic impact