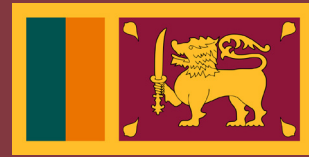


# Rural Development in Sri Lanka



**R**ural development has been a primary objective of national progress in Sri Lanka. After the establishment of the new government, special attention has been given to uplifting the living standards of rural communities. We undoubtedly acknowledge that our nation's heartbeat lies within the lives of people in the rural villages. Accordingly, numerous agricultural projects have been successfully implemented in villages for rural development, focusing strongly on increasing production and productivity in agricultural systems, and we have completed the first steps towards ensuring food security in the country.

Among them, we have taken a successful step forward by allocating necessary provisions for the development of rural infrastructure. Projects have been implemented to renovate and restore to proper condition kilometers of rural roads according to standards and return them to the ownership of rural communities. Through this, connectivity between remote villages and urban centers has significantly improved, access to markets for farmers has become easier, and we have engaged in the noble task of improving the transportation convenience of rural populations.

Sri Lanka has now taken a significant step forward in the agriculture sector. According to statistical data, 26.9% of the employed population is engaged in agriculture-related services. We are successfully moving forward with

projects aimed at increasing the income and production advantage of small-scale farmers by promoting modern agricultural technologies, directing farmers toward the use of high-quality seeds and fertilizers, establishing farmer organizations, and introducing good agricultural practices such as drip irrigation, greenhouse farming, and organic agriculture.

By setting a government-controlled price for one kilogram of paddy to encourage paddy farmers, and by renovating 11 paddy storage facilities for the 2025 Maha season and storing 45,000 metric tons of paddy, we have taken the first step toward making the country self-sufficient in rice—this is a victory we have already achieved.

Tea, coconut, and rubber are among our major export crops.

Serial No	Crop	Export Income (USD Million)	Annual Growth
01.	Tea	1,435.86	9.62%
02.	Coconut	856.39	20.9%
03.	Rubber	1,001.54	7.66%

(Sources: publicfinance.lk, srilankabusiness.com, readsrilanka.com, newswire.lk)

From export crops like tea, coconut, and rubber, Sri Lanka earned a total income of USD 3,293.79 million in 2024. This shows a significant growth compared to the year 2023. This growth can be considered a strong advancement in Sri Lanka's export sector and a major contribution to the economy.

In 2024, Sri Lanka's cinnamon (Ceylon Cinnamon) export sector showed remarkable growth. A trade agreement has been signed to commence cinnamon exports to China from January 2025, which opens a vast market for Sri Lankan cinnamon.

In April 2023, cinnamon export income was USD 53.3 million, and by April 2024, it had increased to USD 56.1 million. The total income for 2024 was approximately USD 250 million (Sources: lankanewsweb.net, readsrilanka.com).

The Sri Lanka Cinnamon Development Department has set a target to double cinnamon export income to USD



500 million in 2024. To achieve this target, plans are already in place to increase the annual capacity by 25,000 metric tons and expand cinnamon cultivation into newly identified areas.

Furthermore, under the Department of Agriculture, six agricultural schools have been established in various parts of Sri Lanka, aiming to enhance agricultural education and direct more youth toward agriculture. By providing training and financial assistance for agricultural entrepreneurship projects for youth, we are engaged in the massive task of reorienting a young generation that had distanced itself from agriculture. Another goal is to broaden the product flow through value-added products made from village-level agricultural production.

Special attention has been paid to identifying rural poverty and directing rural women—beyond their domestic duties—toward contributing to family economic growth and income generation, thereby contributing to national development. Projects have been implemented for this purpose, including training programs, attitude development initiatives, empowerment programs, and microfinance facilities, establishing a strong foundation for rural development.

Finally, the rural development projects currently underway in Sri Lanka stand as testimony to the strong commitment toward sustainable development. The achievements made thus far are rooted in the strength, innovation, and unity of rural communities. Going forward, continued investment, resource provision, and community participation are essential, and it is our responsibility to move forward without leaving any village behind.

Thank you.

**H.E. K.D. LAL KANTHA**

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