



**EXPERIENCE SHARING:
OIL PALM SMALLHOLDER
FROM SRI LANKA**

**SAM LIYANAGE - PROPRIETOR
GINGANGA PLANTATION
ON BEHALF OF OIL PALM SMALL
HOLDERS OF SRI LANKA.**

Where we are today - Current status

- **Oil Palm in Sri Lanka started in year 1968 at Nakiyadeniya estate.**
- **After the privatization of the plantations in 1992 many regional plantation companies commenced OP cultivation and expanded the area under cultivation under the government policy decision in 2014**
- **We have seen 6 small holders since then with varied acreage totalling to 247.25 Ha, (611 acres) in a country dominated by agriculture.**
- **Whilst the small holder's amount to 247 Ha, corporates have an extent of 11,495 Ha.**
- **There are many challenges faced by the smallholders to join the industry, for example, lack of technical knowledge, availability of plants, marketplace, governmental influence, last but not least social stigma**

Ginganga Plantation, Udugama, Galle

- **The Ginganga plantation is in Udugama, Galle. It borders the Gin River, Udugama-Galle main road and the national forest reserve.**
- **The plantation consists of approximately 100 acres of which 75 acres is OP (1,716 mature palms and 1,988 immature palms), 15 acres of tea and 10 acres of Cinnamon.**
- **The mature plantation was planted in 1995 (1,716 plants) and the young plantation in 4th quarter of 2018 (1,988 plants). Harvesting of the new area commenced during 2021 April.**
- **We have 4 staff, 24 permanent workers and 14 contractors.**
- **We harvest once in ten days and each harvest last for 2-3 days.**

My experience on Environment, biodiversity, and human development

- **As a planter who manages three different crops (OP, Tea and Cinnamon)**
 - **I feel OP is the most favorable crop towards the environment and biodiversity and tea being the least.**
 - **OP showcases the best topsoil which is rich with plant matter. There are many water streams in the OP area with fish, flora and fauna. The OP area is also home to different bird species, namely peacocks and guinea fowls. Other animals include wild rabbits, mice, deer, porcupines, fox, and jackals.**
 - **We hardly find animals in the tea and cinnamon plantations, except for occasional guinea fowls.**
 - **We struggle to maintain the topsoil and water in tea and cinnamon plantations whilst in the OP plantation, it happens naturally.**



- **Human Development;**
 - **OP workers, namely harvesters and loaders are paid approximately 3-4 times that of the tea pluckers.**
 - **Though the work itself is tough, they work under the shade, with less working hours and superior pay.**





Oil Palm, workers and small holders

- **Out of the crops I have planted, OP is the most lucrative and easiest to manage with the least labour involvement.**
- **Typically, OP would profit about 2-3 times that of tea, 1.2-1.5 times that of cinnamon.**
- **OP provides this yield while having resilience to floods, droughts and other natural disasters, while other crops badly suffer.**
- **OP requires significantly less labour in comparison to other crops, thus being a solution to ever demanding estate labour in Sri Lanka.**
- **This crop should be the most favourable for small holders due to its highly profitability, minimum labour and has minimum environmental impact.**
- **However, we are yet to see this as a small holder crop in Sri Lanka.**



**Can Oil Palm
become a lifeline
to our farmers**

- **I propose that Sri Lanka introduces mechanisms similar to other countries such as Indonesia & Malaysia to manage and support OP small holders.**
- **It could be a one-stop-shop for the smallholders to obtain plants, knowledge, support, connections and opportunities to sell their harvest. Cooperatives will keep a margin for its involvement and the rest will flow to the farmers.**
- **Establish these units in strategic locations and corporates such as in Watawala, Elpitiya and Namunukula supporting these institutions, managed and overlooked by POIA (Palm Oil Industry Association of Sri Lanka)**
- **Greater profits, sustainable development and popularity through this affiliation will make OP as one of the main crops in Sri Lanka. Future I would like to see...**



Thank you!