

**ASSESSMENT OF CULTIVATION PRACTICES AND
POSTHARVEST HANDLING OF PINEAPPLE AMONG
SMALLHOLDER FARMERS IN DOMPE DS DIVISION,
GAMPAHA DISTRICT**



BY

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EU/IS/2019/BST/74



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2026

ABSTRACT

Pineapple (*Ananas comosus*) is one of the most economically important fruit crops in Sri Lanka, with Gampaha district being a major production area. The low adoption of improved cultivation methods and poor postharvest handling practices continue to limit fruit quality and profitability. This study was conducted to assess current cultivation practices, postharvest handling methods and the constraints faced by smallholder farmers in the Dompe DS Division of Gampaha district. A descriptive research was employed and primary data were collected from 100 randomly selected farmers using a structured questionnaire. Data were analyzed using SPSS through descriptive statistics.

Results revealed that the majority of farmers depend on rain-fed cultivation (76%), chemical fertilizers (64%) and manual labour for all major farming activities, with limited use of improved techniques and no Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) certification. Although most farmers practiced sorting (47%) and grading (52%), postharvest losses were mainly attributed to poor transportation (77%) and inadequate storage facilities (99% without storage). Lack of technical knowledge (100%), poor market prices (51%) and high cost of fertilizer (38%) were identified as key constraints hindering improved production. The value chain analysis showed strong dependence on wholesale markets (71%) with minimal value addition at the farm level, resulting in low bargaining power and reduced income.

The study concludes that strengthening extension services, improving access to affordable inputs, promoting GAP adoption and introducing better transport and storage solutions are crucial to reducing losses and enhancing the livelihood sustainability of smallholder pineapple farmers in the Dompe DS Division.

Keywords: Cultivation practices; Pineapple; postharvest handling; Smallholder farmers; Value chain

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