

**REVITALIZATION OF REED INDUSTRY
TWO CASE STUDIES IN KALAPUGAMA VILLAGE-KALUTARA
AND HABAKKALA AND KAIKAWALA VILLAGES IN BENTOTA**

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Data were gathered to cover four aspects, such as resource utilization, environmental friendliness, economic and social aspects. Objectives of this study were to identify the present situation; problem associated with the industry; potential of expanding the industry; to identify the assistance and encouragement required to expand the industry; ultimately preparation of a manual to revitalize the reed industry. Sample size was 30 from each village. Data were collected using primary and secondary data sources. Reed species, which were found, was Galhe (*Cyperus corymbosus*), Wetakeya (*Pandanus furcatus*), Pothukola (*Cyperus platyphyllus*), Hambu (*Typha angustifolia*) and Thunhiriya (*Scirpus grossus*). Wetakeya and Galhe are cultivated; other species can be obtained from the fallow paddy fields. After the collection of raw materials reed are subjected for pressing. Unlike Pothukola and Thunhiriya, Galhe and Wetakeya can be used to produce diversified products like handbags, beach mats, shoes, carpets etc. This is a women headed industry, which has environmental benefits like reducing environmental pollution, enhancement of biodiversity and conservation of genes. Annual income exceeds Rs.12000.00 for Galhe, Rs. 15000.00 for Wetakeye, Rs.5000.00 for Pothukola and Rs.5000.00 for Hambu. Improvements of tools, machines can maximize the resource utilization. Establishment of systematic marketing strategy, production of utility products, improving quality of the products and use of natural dyes can boost the gross returns. Technological improvements and diversification of labour as in the garment factories can stimulate younger generation to be involved in the reed industry.