



**St. Thomas' Collegiate School**  
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### **Paddy Cultivation In Sri Lanka**

Rice is generally eaten by Sri Lankan and it has been the principal food among the natives. For this purpose, from the very early days paddy has been cultivated countrywide. Paddy cultivation was started in Sri Lanka with the arrival of the Aryans, in the fifth century B.C. As there was no other way getting a vegetable diet, the Aryans had to cultivate paddy for their survival.

This was steadily encouraged by the Aryan Kings, namely Mahasena, Dhatusena and Maha Parakramabahu the first. They built tanks and for irrigation. During the reign of Maha Parakramabahu the first, Sri Lanka was self sufficient in paddy and was named the "Granary of the East." This luxury was sadly lost in the thirteenth century due to the invasion by the Chola Kings and the influence of the Europeans. Later in 1931, the British Governors started renewing paddy cultivation.

The climatic conditions are ideal for paddy cultivation in Sri Lanka. Steady rain fall, and annual temperatures around 80° F, humus soil which can preserve water and vast flatlands make paddy cultivation profitable. The paddy cultivable areas can be divided into three zones, namely the dry zone, the wet zone, and the up country. Most of the paddy is cultivated in Kurunagala, Anuradhapura and Batticaloa which are situated in the Dry zone.

Although machines are used in paddy cultivation, traditional methods are popular and adopted by Sri Lankan farmers. To cultivate paddy, first of all the land is tilled and then ploughed. Disc ploughs or else bulls or buffaloes are used for ploughing. While ploughing, fertilizers are used and the land is manure. Causeways and drains are constructed around the ploughed fields so that water is stagnant in the field. Then the germinated seeds are sown. Now farmers are advised to row the grains in nurseries and then plant them in the field. When the mature, golden grains are ready they are harvested. After the harvest, activities such as threshing, husking, shifting and winnowing take place. After sufficient amount of rice is taken for consumption, the rest is filled in sacks and stored away for the next season.

Unfortunately, the following problem hinder paddy-production in Sri Lanka: (a) financial problems, (b) unsuitable weather conditions, (c) non-availability of vast lands for mechanizing, (d) ignorance of farmers about modernized cultivation. Our government has planned several schemes to face such problems. They are (i) modern irrigation projects with foreign aid, (ii) an insurance scheme for farmers, (iii) a paddy marketing board to purchase paddy from farmers at a reasonable price, (iv) paddy research institutes to introduce new varieties of paddy.

Sri Lanka has been one of the major rice importing countries for the last three decades. We, Sri Lankan have to work very hard to regain the status our ancestors had maintained. Our government is working very hard towards achieving self-sufficiency in paddy-production. This is a national target. It's our duty to co-operate with the government and help achieve this target.

**U. Karunaharan**  
**Grade 8B**