

Executive Summary

Entrepreneurship is the willingness to take risks, develop, organize and manage a business venture in a competitive global marketplace that is constantly evolving. Dr. Ranaweera is an entrepreneur who started his business as a small entrepreneur in 1993 by resigning from the post of Director held at the Tea Research Institute (TRI). At present, his business is synonymous with high quality organic Tea and Spices and he is on his journey, on becoming the best environmental friendly organic food producer in South Asia through sustainable Fairtrade approach to his supplying partners.

Dr. Ranaweera possesses a Master in Philosophy in Food Science and a PHD in Bio Statistic, awarded by the University of Peradeniya. He gained his experience and practical knowledge in different areas, through his work experiences at the Industrial Development Board (IDB) and TRI. With his knowledge and experience he gathered, he initiated his own business, with four, who were his, family members and his friends as initial crew.

Dr. Ranaweera has a passion for innovation and strongly believes in his capabilities. He continued to build his innovative capabilities in product development to leverage the latest technology to produce Tea and Spices. He innovated a special type of machine and a unique processing method for green tea manufacturing and obtained the patent. This was one of his major revolution which helped him to be the first Sri Lankan Company to produce Organic Green tea using machines that were developed in house.

Dr Ranaweera gathered the farmers who are scattered in regions and created societies. Mobilizing the small farmers in to societies and retaining them in the system was a challenging task, yet he was able to form the Small Organic Farmers Association (SOFA) as well as Marginalized Organic Producers' Association (MOPA). In 1998 he registered the small farmer organization in Sri Lanka, under the Fairtrade Labelling Organization (FLO). This enabled farmer society to receive Fairtrade premium directly from the European consumers for their products exported via Bio Foods (Pvt) Ltd.

All the effort that he put in was rewarded, as he was appreciated and accepted as the Fairest Fair trader, at the Fair – Trader 2014, which was held in Germany, organised by the World Fairtrade Organisation. The award recognised all special efforts and innovation by outstanding individuals, in the global Fairtrade system, especially towards small farmers.