

Agricultural Extension in Sri Lanka: Status and challenges in a society in transition

Jayatilaka, Wijaya University of Peradeniya

Jayasinghe, Nandana CIC Rural Humanity Foundation

Wijesekera, R.S. Department of Agriculture

SRI LANKA

Introduction

SRI LANKA in Context

Population (2012)	20.27Million
GDP US\$ (2012)	59.49 Billion
Per Capita GDP at Market Price (US\$) 2012	2836
% Employment rate in Agriculture 2012	33
% of GDP of Agriculture 2012	11.2
Unemployment rate (% of Labor Force) 2012	4.2
Main Crops	Rice , Tea Rubber , Coconut , Cinnamon
Live stock	Neat cattle , Buffaloes , Goats , Sheep , Pigs, Poultry
Fisheries (Marine / Inland and Aquaculture sector) 2012	486170 Mt

Total Land Area	6,561,000 ha
Agriculture Land Area	1,640,250 ha
1. Paddy	685,625 ha
2. Subsidiary Crops	131,220 ha
3. Coconut	413,343 ha
4. Rubber	150,903 ha
5. Tea	18 0428 ha
6. Other Export Crops	62330 ha
7. Sugar Cane	9842 ha
8. Tobacco	6561 ha
9. Forest & Wood Land	1,778,031 ha
10. Homestead	780,759 ha
11. Scrubland	505,197 ha
12. Sparsely used Cropland	1,285,956 ha
13. Other (Including Inland water)	570,807 ha

Agricultural situation - A snapshot

- Global Food Security Index (GFSI) 2012 - Sri Lanka 62nd of 105 countries.
- The National policy focus (i) food security (ii) improve fertilizer use thru subsidy expected to improve food and nutrition security.
- Achieved goal of self sufficiency in rice - food secure in staple food.
- Availability & affordability of protein source and other major food items challenge.
- Poverty, climate change, decreasing arable land and increasing population pressure - key challenges.

Overview of Agricultural Extension

- 1912 Establishment of the Department of Agriculture (DOA) – Ag. Extension
- 1938 - 6 divisions in the DOA
- District extension structure headed by Agriculture Officers and Agriculture Instructors + field level extension workers having direct contact with farmer
- 1957 Department of Food Production disbanded and its staff absorbed to DOA. 'Krishikama Viyapthi Sevaka' (KVS) responsible for local extension work.
- 1963 unit under DD established to coordinate extension works in Rice, subsidiary Food crops & Horticulture

Overview of Agricultural Extension

- 1979 - Training & Visit (T & V) system introduced
- 1988 - Decision to abolish the carder of Village level extension worker (KVS) and entrusted them with other responsibility under Divisional Secretariat (Serious Brake down)
- 1989 Provincial Council 13 amendment administrative system
- National Agriculture Extension Committee (NAEC), standing committee- Sri Lanka Council for Agriculture Research Policy (CARP) established
- 1999 Second Agriculture Extension project “Integrated Agriculture Extension Service (IAES) introduced

Key challenges

- Policy relevance
- Budgetary allocation – Research for development / extension
- Diversity of agricultural production & processing systems
- Governance & administration – public / private / NGO / CBO
- Role of the state & leadership
- Coordination – governance system,
- Visioning and common goals
- Professionalizing extension – HR capacity
- Accountability
- Knowledge and information dissemination
- Being evidence based – R&D
- Youth disengaged from farming

Addressing challenges: Ongoing efforts

- PPP pursued
- International & local NGOs engaged in agric. Extension work
- Increased number of agriculture graduates and diploma holders – Efficacy?
- Post war – resettlement and development work

Addressing challenges: Possibilities

- Institutional system – review / strengthen
- Historical antecedents in agric. Extension
- Man power training system – Agricultural & Farm schools, Universities
- 1.8 mil farm families
- High literacy rate
- Access to schools
- ICT network and users
- Strengthen PP

Looking beyond for solutions

“Sub-regional networking”

- R & D – knowledge sharing
- Education, training & certification
- Lobbying
- Coaching for executive levels
- Working in “political minefields”
- Professionalizing work
- Sharing lessons learnt / success stories
- Platforms for idea exchange
- Optimizing use of ICT
- Efficacy of governance & accountability
- Learning opportunities for youth

Some challenges

- Language and ICT divide
- Differentials at ground situations – higher levels of conceptual work
- Economic & political stability
- Governance
- Intergovernmental cordiality
- Interactions among professional, academics, practitioners

THANK YOU