

USE OF ICT FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE CINNAMON INDUSTRY IN SRI LANKA

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Cinnamon is an export agricultural product with a Sri Lankan identity. It has been used as one of the world's most popular medicines and has been a favorite spice for more than three thousand years. The present research was conducted to identify why Sri Lankan cinnamon is not gaining maximum value in the world market. The aim of this research was to develop an ICT based solution model for the cinnamon industry in Sri Lanka for sustainable development. This will directly increase the foreign revenue to Sri Lanka.

In order to understand the literature behind the study, a literature survey was conducted and a field survey was carried out. Six categories of study areas including cinnamon farmers, peelers, intermediate collectors, exporters, certification authorities and buyers were involved in the field survey.

According to the survey results the use of e-commerce and ICT among Sri Lankan cinnamon farmers, peelers and intermediate collectors is low. However, exporters, buyers and certification authorities use ICT satisfactorily. There were several factors which affect the levels of e-commerce and ICT usage in the cinnamon industry. ICT literacy level, ability to access the internet, knowledge of the English language, communication skills, ability to search the web and the ability to handle ICT tools were identified as factors which influence e-commerce and ICT use among the stakeholders of the cinnamon industry in Sri Lanka. It showed that the use of ICT at ground level is very low. The knowledge of English is poor among the ground level people. Therefore, it is a barrier in adapting oneself to the use of ICT.

Interrelation among the above six categories *via* ICT and the use of e-systems and technologies will be given a competitive advantage for the Sri Lankan cinnamon industry. It will help them to achieve sustainable development when Sri Lanka becomes the hub of Asia. According to the model, the integration and other activities will be subjective through supervision of a government monitoring authority. To overcome the barriers the holistic integrated model has been proposed by linking the six categories *via* ICT. This could serve as a guideline for Sri Lankan policymakers when Sri Lanka becomes the hub in Asia.