

PRIVATIZATION OF AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICE IN UP COUNTRY
VEGETABLE CULTIVATION IN NUWARA ELIYA DISTRICT IN SRI LANKA

By

SUDU HAKURUGE PUSHPA MALKANTHI
✓

Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

in the

POSTGRADUATE INSTITUTE OF AGRICULTURE

of the

UNIVERSITY OF PERADENIYA

PERADENIYA

C. 630.715

M14



557028

AGRICULTURE LIBRARY
UNIVERSITY OF PERADENIYA

MAY 2004



557028 ✓

ABSTRACT

Agricultural extension is a system of service and education, design to meet the needs of farmers. Extension service has a quite long history and evolution, extends over few centuries. However, modern extension systems have been practiced since the early years of nineteenth century. Governments have traditionally taken the dominant role in providing of agricultural extension service because of its importance to the development of the agricultural sector. However, escalating fiscal defects in many developing countries and in several cases, problem of poor governing of public programmes over the last decade have increasingly redirected attention towards how to make agricultural extension more cost effective and responsive to specific farmer needs. Many countries are now in the process of modifying the existing public extension approaches, so as to meet current challengers such as globalization and liberalization. This has increased attention towards the potential for the privatization of agricultural extension service (PAES) in Sri Lanka. too.

This study was conducted to examine the problems, constraints, opportunities and feasibility of PAES for the vegetable farmers in Nuwara Eliya district in Sri Lanka, as it is the area where, intensive commercial level up-country vegetable cultivation is carried out. A cross sectional survey was conducted to collect necessary primary data. There were four groups of respondents namely vegetable farmers, Agricultural Instructors (AIs), Higher Officers of the Department of Agriculture (HODoA) and Higher Officers of agriculture related private companies (HOAPC). A sample of 240 farmers was selected by using cluster-sampling technique. Twenty-one attitudinal statements were examined

with the attitudes of the farmers towards PAES. Twenty agricultural instructors of the area, twenty higher officers of the Department of Agriculture and twenty higher officers of four agriculture related private companies namely Hayles, CIC, Baur and Finlay were interviewed to find out their attitudes towards PAES. Further, sixteen hypothesis related to the socio-economic conditions of the farmers and the attitudes towards PAES were tested viz: age, size of the family, educational level, type of farming, farming experience, type of labor used, land size, cropping pattern, profit from vegetable farming, total monthly income, access to modern technology, access to market information, decision making ability, management ability, nature of the government extension service and the nature of the other extension services. Main sources of secondary data were the publications of the Agrarian Research & Training Institute and the Central Bank reports.

Result revealed that, more than fifty percent of the up-country vegetable farmers have positive attitudes towards PAES. Large-scale and medium-scale farmers as well as a few number of small-scale farmers are willing to buy extension service, when it is essential. Out of sixteen socio-economic factors, four of them such as type of labour, monthly profit, monthly total income and management abilities are positively related to the attitudes of the farmers. According to the variance analysis, monthly income is the main factor that affects the attitudes of the farmers towards the PAES. The study shows that there is a possibility of privatizing the extension service under certain conditions. Fare prices, easy access, effective and efficient service, accountability of the service, trust between the two parties etc, are the important features for privatization of extension service for the up-country vegetable cultivation in Nuwara Eliya district of Sri Lanka.