

**PRESENT STATUS OF AGRICULTURE EXTENSION AND ADVISORY SERVICES PROVISION FOR FOOD CROPS IN ANURADHAPURA DISTRICT, SRI LANKA**

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The role of extension and advisory services is imperative for agricultural development. Recently, the performance of the extension sector in Sri Lanka, especially the state sector at key agricultural locations has been questionable. Thus, this study aimed to explore the status of agricultural extension service for the food crop sector at the *Anuradhapura* District. Multistage sampling technique was employed to draw a sample of 120 farmers representing major food crop categories. Descriptive analytical techniques, factor analysis, constraint analysis and Poisson regression were used for data analysis. Accordingly, compared to state sector (92%) private institutes offer extension services for selected farmers (47%), whilst the participatory approach is exercised by NGOs (16%). Though, majority of the teaching methods and information types offered by the state sector perceived to be ineffective, method demonstrations (77%), farm and office visits (68%) as teaching methods and varietal selection (59%), pest and disease management (62%) as information types were perceived to be comparatively effective. Farmer expectations on extension improvements were extracted from Factor analysis in to supplementary services (66% variation), qualities of extension agent (17%) and value of extension information (8%). According to constraint analysis, insufficient market-driven extension (19%) and lesser extension contacts at the field level (17%) and shortage of field staff (20%) and inadequate support services (17%) were the major constraints faced by farmers and extension agents respectively. The Poisson regression analysis revealed that the farmer's age, being an executive committee member of farmer organization and distance to extension office significantly affect the number of effective extension contacts. Compared to old-aged farmers (>55 years), younger farmers had more extension contacts ( $Exp \beta = 2.5$ ), whilst extension contacts of executive committee members were increased by 40% ( $Exp \beta = 1.4$ ). Altogether, the study recommends strengthening supportive services to minimize the ineffectiveness in the extension system.

**Keywords:** Effectiveness, Extension, Factor analysis, Poisson regression