Effectiveness of Partnership Extension Models Implemented in Tea Smallholding Sector in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Tea smallholding sector provides the highest contribution to Sri Lankan tea industry. In recent years the productivity of tea smallholding lands has shown a declining trend. One of the most significant lacuna in the tea sector has been the low level of adoption of proven technologies due to limitations of providing an optimum extension service. The Public-Private Partnership (PPP) extension models have been introduced in tea smallholdings densely located areas of Ratnapura, Kalutara and Galle districts during the last decade as an alternative to provide optimum extension service and develop tea smallholding sector. This study was carried out to assess the performance of three such well-established partnership extension models and to identify the factors affecting their success. Three partnership extension models representing a factory-based model (FBM), an input supplier-based model (ISBM) and, a development agency-based model (DABM) were selected. Six key components of a successful partnership i.e. trust and cohesiveness, motivation to participate, resource sharing, support to achieve long-term expectations, sharing technical information and, satisfaction about the model were used to assess the success of PPP. The primary data was collected using pretested questionnaire schedule followed by key informant interviews with randomly selected 90 smallholders (30 from each model) and extension partners. The findings were revealed that productivity of tea smallholder lands in FBM is highest when compared with other two models due to frequent contacts with smallholders and supplement of needful services by the extension partner. The ISBM provide sponsorships for TSHDA extension programs and level of resource sharing with TSHDA officials is significantly higher than other two partnership model (p=0.001). DABM was highly focus on poorer tea smallholders, whilst extension partners of other models more concern to strengthen the relationship with smallholders who having higher land extent. Level of support to achieve long term perspective and the level of satisfaction of tea smallholders about partnership model is significantly higher in the FBM than other models (p=0.001). This study proves that trust and cohesiveness, resource sharing, technical information sharing and motivation to work are the success factors for straightening of the partnership and land productivity of tea smallholding.

Keywords: Extension partners, Partnership components, Partnership extension models, Public-Private, Partnership, Tea smallholders

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