

Assessing the Requirements for Extension and Advisory Services of the Cinnamon Industry in the Southern Province: Stakeholders’ Perspectives

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Abstract

Sri Lanka is the origin of *Cinnamomum zeylanicum* also known as Ceylon cinnamon or ‘True cinnamon’. In Sri Lanka, the effectiveness of extension and advisory services for the cinnamon industry has declined in previous years, particularly after it was recognized as a new department. This research sought to investigate the actual need assessment requirement for extension and advisory services within the cinnamon industry of the Southern Province by identifying the specific extension and advisory service needs of cinnamon farmers in the Southern Province, to explore the perceptions and expectations of cinnamon farmers and extension officers in Southern province, to analyze the roles, challenges, and capabilities of extension officers in the cinnamon industry and to propose recommendations for improving extension and advisory services in the cinnamon industry. Consequently, the survey was carried out in Southern Province, involving 30 cinnamon farmers who were selected by purposive sampling method. Additionally, interview information was also collected from the six extension officers at the Department of Cinnamon Development. The data were collected through phone-based interviews. The Friedman test and descriptive tools were used to analyze the data. It was revealed that only 26.7 % of the farmers had participated in extension services over the two years and the majority expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of extension services provided. Farmers revealed the necessity of a higher level of knowledge regarding animal, pest & disease management (mean rank 2.13). In terms of extension services, it was found that while there has been a rise in the delivery of online services (6.67%), farmers still favored the traditional approach (53.3%) for knowledge transfer, particularly through workshops and group sessions. Thus, this study emphasizes the need for changes and reforms in the existing extension system of the cinnamon industry.

Keywords: *Ceylon cinnamon, Knowledge dissemination, Need assessment*