

F-22 Nuwara Eliya social forestry programme and the clientele: perceptions and functional disparities

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Nuwara Eliya social forestry programme emerged under the Integrated Rural Development Project, as a land use upgrading programme for village agriculture. Empirical evidence has revealed that the programme is not economically viable. Therefore, the paper attempts to discuss the programme and clientele in terms of the main functions such as philosophy and assumptions; goals and directions; policy/programme formulation; management structure and practices using the information and data collected through reconnaissance, exploratory study and in-depth field survey.

The programme is lacking a proper orientation towards social forestry and its objectives do not reflect the needs of the farmers other than erosion control. The programme has centralised control and operation and does not emphasise income generating aspects of social forestry recognising the local land use practices. Ineffective mechanism for co-ordination, shortage of well-trained staff, inadequate staff incentives, ineffective administrative procedures, inflexible budgetary system, and lack of appropriate criteria and mechanism for monitoring and evaluation could be identified as main limitations in management structures and practices of the social forestry programme.

The farmers do their farming with usual customs, values, beliefs, and practices. Although they have different goals and needs, they are lacking information regarding alternate technologies and methods of social forestry and project formulation capabilities. Evidently, traditional farmer groups and institutions are existing for co-operative action, even though poor management structures and practices in social forestry could be observed due to lack of suitable organisational structures and procedures and absence of a mechanism for local monitoring and evaluation.