

Institutional issues of farm support services connected with paddy farming in Sri Lanka

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Rice, as the main staple food crop was given the highest priority by the various governments of Sri Lanka in agricultural policy formulations. In addition to the development of irrigation and agricultural infrastructure, government intervention on providing farm support services was significant during last fifty years. Farm support services include both purchased inputs such as provision of fertilizers, agro-chemicals and seed paddy and non-purchased inputs such as irrigation water, extension system, credit and agricultural output marketing.

The major objective of this paper is to analyze the institutional issues prevailed in providing farm support services in paddy farming sector in Sri Lanka. The study findings are based on the detailed survey conducted in Kurunegala and Kegalle districts during Maha 2000/01 and Yala 2001. The study sites represent the farmers from major irrigation, minor irrigation and rainfed cultivation.

The study results indicate that, the major source of seed paddy in all study areas was from farmers own stock or from neighbouring farmers. The major issue in this practice is that, certified seeds have not replaced these high yielding seeds for many years, which is one of the reasons for the low levels of yield. Private traders were the major supplier of fertilizers and agro-chemicals in major and minor irrigation areas. However, Agrarian Development Centres and co-operatives were major supplier of fertilizers and agro chemicals in poorly developed rainfed areas. Majority of farmers were not satisfied with present extension system due to inefficiency in the present system and lack of enthusiasm and morale among extension officers. The paper also discuss about other farm support services such as irrigation water, credit and agricultural marketing. The paper concludes that, institutional issues pertinent to paddy farming need to be addressed properly in order to increase the efficiency in paddy cultivation.