

**The Status of Awareness of State Agricultural Extension
Services and their Adoption: A Case Study of Small
Highland Farmers in Uda-Walawa Area**

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ABSTRACT

A large amount of budgetary allocations are made for the development of agriculture in the country. Although, the real value of this expenditure in terms of other budgetary expenses has diminished, it forms a major component of Sri Lanka's annual budget. Agricultural development policies are aimed at increasing the output per unit of land, on the one hand, with the objective of increasing food production to reach higher of food security index, on the other hand their other objectives are to increase agricultural exports in order to earn much needed foreign exchange, alleviation of poverty and making available opportunities for livelihoods so as to increase life's choices for the farmers..

Other than plantations and large scale farmers, these policies seem to have had very little impact on the vast majority of small resource strapped farmers in the rural areas who farm little plots of land at subsistence level. They have not been benefited by the state and decentralized agricultural extension services due to many reasons that have been identified, a few of which common to most, impedes farmer development have resurfaced in this study. There are other factors that have bearing on the adoption of defused innovation thus inhibiting the rate of adoption of new agricultural technology. It may be that the farmers cannot afford the inputs, nor the ecosystems upon which they farm are conducive to such external inputs or it could be that the farmers have their own priorities or beliefs in life that hinder their development.

Most of the farmers lack credit worthiness and hence excluded form obtaining credit through the prevalent banking procedures. They are also subject to exploitation by other intermediaries and the constraints experienced by the poor farmers are numerous and varied depending on their locations and situations. Hence, this study provides a very good account of small farmers from their own perspective.

This study also brings out the lapses and failures of shared responsibilities in implementing agricultural extension polices by the state that result in the underdevelopment of largely resource strapped small farmer communities of Sri Lanka.