

Evaluation of Effectiveness of Training Programmes for Technicians in Land Preparation of Rubber Farming: A Case Study in Kegalle District

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Scarcity of skilled technicians in Land Preparation of Rubber Farming (TLPRF) was identified as one of the major reasons which affect the sustainability of the rubber sector in Sri Lanka. Hence, establishment of training programmes for TLPRF called “*Erambumata Athwelak*” (EA) in rubber growing areas is the extension strategy introduced by the Rubber Research Institute of Sri Lanka (RRISL) to overcome this issue with the intention of introducing technically skilled personnel to perform according to the recommendations of the RRISL. Systematic training through the EA was initiated in 2012 with the aim of enhancing the knowledge and skills of Land Preparation of Rubber Farming (LPRF). Subsequently, a case study was conducted to evaluate the EA for further improvement in the efficiency and effectiveness of EA. Sixty trainees and non-trainees were evaluated using a questionnaire on practical aspects. The level of skills LPRF of TLPRF was measured by practical test. The increase in skill due to EA was statistically significant. The respective mean scores for trained and non-trained groups for skills 74 and 38 ($t=-12.85$, $P<0.001$) signifying that training has increased skills by 74%. The experience in harvesting was negatively correlated with skill level ($r=-0.528$, $P<0.001$). Participation in other rubber related training programmes was positively related with skill ($r=0.341$, $P<0.01$). The variables, such as age, gender and education level and job satisfaction did not have significant relationships with skill level of LPRF. It is evident that systematic training enhances skill on LPRF, eventually improves the productivity of rubber holdings. Hence, this practice is worth continuing for the future for the improved performance of the rubber sector.

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