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**SMALL FARMER ORGANIZATION
PROJECT
IN SRI LANKA**



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SMALL FARMER ORGANIZATION PROJECT IN

SRI LANKA

(A REPORT BASED ON THE TRAINING COURSES HELD
FROM MAY 1984 TO APRIL 1985 AND ACTIVITIES
UNDERTAKEN UNDER THE SMALL FARMER ORGANIZATION
PROJECT)

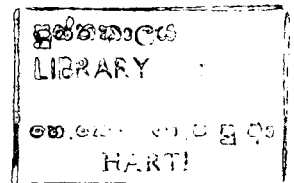
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- 1986 -

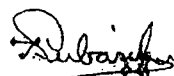


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FOREWORD

In July, 1980 the Agrarian Research & Training Institute initiated the Small Farmer Organization Project at Galgamuwa Agrarian Services Committee area in the Kurunegala district. This project was supported by the Food and Agricultural Organization, both financially and with technical advice, and it was implemented in collaboration with the Department of Agrarian Services. Because of the success observed during the project period the programme was continued and extended to four other Agrarian Services Committee areas in the Galgamuwa electorate even after the termination of the FAO support.

With further support from FAO, another project on the same line was implemented from May 1984 to April 1985. Under this project the entirety of the Kurunegala district and one ASC area from each of the other districts were covered. The details of this coverage and its performance, experiences and the problems encountered are enumerated in this report. This report was originally prepared in Sinhala by Mr. R. Kumarasiri Pathirana, Research & Training Officer. This is the English translation of his report. My thanks are due to Mr. Kumarasiri and the others who helped in the translation and the printing of this report which I hope will be a useful addition to the number of publications now available on the mobilisation of peoples' support in the development effort of the Government.



T.B. Subasinghe
Director.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report is based on the training course and other related activities conducted, from May 1984 to April 1985, under the Small Farmer Organization Project in Sri Lanka.

I am indebted to Mr. T.B. Subasinghe, Director, ARTI and Dr. Jayantha Perera, Head of Division, ARTI for perusing the report patiently and making a critical evaluation and valuable suggestions for improvement.

I am also grateful to Mr. C.S. Ranasinghe of the Sri Lanka Foundation Institute for enormous pains he has taken to edit this report.

A special word of thanks is due to Mr. E.R. Epakande, Statistical Assistant, ARTI who helped me, in various ways, in the process of preparing this document.

Finally, I wish to extend my gratitude to the typists of the ARTI for typing out the manuscript neatly, and to the staff of the Printing Division of the ARTI for producing this report attractively in printed form.

Ranjith Kumarasiri Pathirana.

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List of Abbreviations

ADA	-	Agricultural Development Authority
ARTI	-	Agrarian Research and Training Institute
DAS	-	Department of Agrarian Services
FAO	-	Food and Agricultural Organization
KVS	-	Krushikarna Vyapthi Seveka (Village Level Extension Officer)
SFO	-	Small Farmer Organization
SFOP	-	Small Farmer Organization Project

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INTRODUCTION

The Agrarian Research and Training Institute (ARTI) initiated a pilot project for small farmer organization in the Agrarian Services Committee area of Galgamuwa in July 1980. Patronage at consultancy level was received from the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) to launch this project. Mr. Nud Huck from Bangladesh was appointed as the consultant of the project by the FAO. On the advice of Mr. Huck, this small farmer organization project was introduced to 44 farmer representatives chosen by the ARTI from the Galgamuwa Agrarian Services Committee area. They were called for a one day course held at the Galgamuwa Agrarian Services Centre and were briefed on the importance of the organization of farmers at village level or at *uaya* (tract) level.

The farmer representatives thus trained set up farmer organizations at *uaya* level in their village areas. Holding of the posts of the Secretary and the Treasurer of the small farmer organization by the farmer representatives of the respective area was a salient feature of this project. The special reason that influenced such an appointment was the relationship the farmer ~~representatives~~ maintained with the Agrarian Services Committee. This pilot project was implemented successfully from 1980 to 1983 and many were the benefits that the farmers could reap as a result. Obtaining agricultural credit, water management and restoring of irrigation systems through joint co-operation, improvement of agricultural yield, and introduction of the system of group savings to the farmers are some such benefits.

The second phase of this project was launched on the basis of results and experiences gathered and the problems encountered by the 44 farmer organizations over a period of nearly 3 years since the inception of the pilot project. Accordingly, the second phase was the setting up of small farmer organizations throughout the Galgamuwa electorate. The ARTI summoned the farmers and the officers serving the agrarian sector in the selected areas for a three day training programme in June 1983.

The selected regions were the four Agrarian Services Committee areas of Rajangana, Mahananneriya, Ehetuwewa and Moragollagama in the Galgamuwa electorate.

Among those who followed this training course were the selected farmer representatives engaged in agriculture in the above mentioned Agrarian Services Committee areas as well as the Cultivation Officers, the Divisional Officers of the Department of Agrarian Services, the Instructors of the Department of Agriculture, the Agricultural Extension Officers and the Development Officers of the Bank of Ceylon and the People's Bank. The farmers as well as the field officers received their training under the same roof and played the vital role of setting up farmer organizations in their respective Agrarian Services Committee areas. Thus by 1983, 123 small farmer organizations had been formed in the areas coming under the four Agrarian Services Committee.

The third stage of the project commenced in May 1984. The fundamental aim of the third stage was the extension of this project to cover the whole of Kurunegala district. The FAO assisted this project at consultancy level and also provided financial aid required for training. In May 1984 the FAO sent Mr. J.P. Joshie, a Nepalese Consultant to Sri Lanka in connection with this project. Under the guidance of this consultant, the training group of the ARTI and the Department of Agrarian Services has already completed a major part of the work connected with the extension of this project to the whole of Kurunegala district and subsequently to rest of the districts in Sri Lanka.

The main objective of this report is to investigate the results and the experiences gathered and the problems encountered during the third stage of the small farmer organization project. I intend to discuss these aspects under four main chapters. Discussed in the first chapter is, on what methodology the Kurunegala district was chosen for this project. The importance and the aims of this project and the significance of small farmer organizations in the sphere of rural

development are elucidated in the second chapter. The third chapter deals with the efforts made to extend this project throughout the Kurunegala district and also the details of training courses conducted for that purpose. The last chapter is devoted to discuss the results of the project, the experiences gathered and the problems encountered. A deliberation on certain suggestions made as to the future prospects of the project are also appended to it.

CHAPTER ONE

When a research or a training project of any dimension is launched, it would be useful to focus attention on the physical as well as sociological factors that affect the project in order to make it a success. Firstly, it is hoped to discuss the special factors that influenced the initiation of the small farmer organization project primarily in the Kurunegala district.

Physically Kurunegala district situated to the North-West of the central hills of Sri Lanka covers an area, with many hills as well as flat terrain. This district receives rain from all major sources of rainfall to Sri Lanka, and also from rains caused by South-West monsoons, North-East monsoons, and rains caused by air depressions. One could therefore, find in the Kurunegala district an extremely dry climatic condition as well as certain factors of wet climatic conditions, characteristic of a wet zone.

There are also many areas with intermediate climatic conditions, where we find characteristics of both, a dry zone as well as a wet zone climate. As a result of these varied climatic conditions, many conspicuous characteristics can be identified in the economic activities of the people in this district. For example, in Nikawaratiya and Galgamuwa areas paddy cultivation is done mainly by water supplied under major irrigation systems. But in an area like Polgahawela, located closer to the Kegalle district, paddy cultivation has been extended basically by means of rainfed water. In the transitory zone between these two areas, agricultural activities depend on water supplied under minor irrigation systems.

The presence of minor tanks and anicuts is a special feature in this district, and most of the minor tanks in the country are found in the Kurunegala district. Thus, as a result of cultivation work being done with the help of major irrigation schemes, minor irrigation schemes and rain fed water, there are many striking differences in the pattern of agricultural extension throughout the district. While places like Nikaweratiya and Galgamuwa are noted for the cultivation of

cereals such as green gram and cowpea, places like Dodangaslanda are famous for the cultivation of wet zone crops such as cocoa and tea. Moreover, the whole of Kurunegala district comes within the coconut cultivation triangle of Sri Lanka.

I wish to mention here that a climatic and a physical environment such as this is very conducive to the small farmer organization project. While a definition of the term 'small farmer' is given in some other place in this report, a small farmer is described here for convenience in a simple way by stating that he is a person enjoying a land area of less than three acres in extent. On that basis over 80% of the population in the Kurunegala district could be termed as small farmers.

The nature of agricultural problems inherent throughout the Kurunegala district influenced the selection of this particular district for the project. In this district, we can observe complex agricultural problems, which are common to other districts of Sri Lanka. Difficulties encountered in the utilization of agricultural credit by the farmer, inability to payback outstanding debts, unemployment, irrigation problems, crop failures, poor yields, lack of legal title to land etc., are some of the major problems prevalent throughout this district. As such, it is important that the small farmer organization project aimed at rural development be implemented primarily in the Kurunegala district. When the project is eventually extended to other districts of Sri Lanka, experiences gathered from the Kurunegala district would prove very useful.

There is a total of 52 Agrarian Services Centres in the Kurunegala district. The work connected with forming farmer organizations in 05 Agrarian Services Areas has been completed during the first and the second stage of the project. Extending the project to 47 Agrarian Service Centres of the district, besides the 05 Agrarian Service Centres in the Galgamuwa electorate, commenced in May 1984. Two *yayas* were selected at first from each of the Agrarian Services Committee Areas. The viability of the small farmer organization was one of the

considerations for selecting a *yaya* or two. Thus, two farmer organizations were formed in a selected *yaya* or two with a view to avoiding any disruption of information regarding the entire Agrarian Services Committee Area in the event of a failure of a farmer organization of a particular *yaya* thus selected.

A socio-economic survey of the members of a farmer organizations formed in a *yaya* was conducted by the farmer representative of that *yaya*. In that survey, factors that determine the income of an individual such as the extent of land held by him, his main economic activity, his additional sources of income and his educational attainments were considered important. In addition, the Cultivation Officer completed a questionnaire to collect general information regarding their *yaya*. By this method, information on the total acreage of the *yaya*, sources of income, advanced programme on agriculture and water management etc. was gathered.

FORMATION OF FARMER ORGANIZATIONS IN OTHER DISTRICTS

Agrarian Services Committees were selected through Assistant Commissioners of Agrarian Services in the respective districts. The Assistant Commissioners in charge of the relevant district recommended the Agrarian Services Committee areas suitable for forming farmer organizations in his district. A *yaya* or two from each of the Agrarian Services Committee Area in a district had to be selected for this purpose. In making his selection the Assistant Commissioner of Agrarian Services was keen to choose an area where there were problems related to agriculture.

As in the case of the Kurunegala district, a householder survey and an area survey in the two selected *yayas* had been conducted by the farmer representative and the cultivation officer respectively. As a result of this survey, it was possible to gain a knowledge of the farmers who were eligible to be members of the farmer organization, and also of the problems they had to encounter collectively as a group.

ELIMINATION OF TAMIL DISTRICTS

Inability to launch this project in districts where Tamil small farmers in Sri Lanka live could be mentioned as a shortcoming of the project. No training of farmer representatives or officials of the agricultural sector of the 05 districts where Tamils live namely, Jaffna, Mannar, Mullaitivu, Kilinochchi and Batticaloa was undertaken. The unsettled atmosphere prevailed in these districts could be cited as the main reason for this exclusion. Although Agbopura Agrarian Services Committee Area in the Trincomalee district was selected for this project and the farmer representatives and the relevant officers were trained for this purpose, it was not possible to conduct follow up course and understand the farmers' problems due to the unsettled conditions prevailed in that area.

CHAPTER TWO

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PROJECT AND ITS OBJECTIVES

Who is a small farmer?

It is obvious that various theoretical problems do surface when attempting to define the term 'small farmer'. It is observed that various people adopt different types of criteria when defining the term 'small farmer'.

I presume that defining the term 'farmer' is more important for the convenience of the study, before attempting to define the term 'small farmer'. A renowned anthropologist, Raymond Firth defined the term 'farmer' as the "man engaged in minor businesses while being engaged in agriculture for his subsistence." *Firth was of the opinion that the farmer clearly engages himself in vocation connected with agriculture.

A 'small farmer' could be described as a person possessing a land area of less than 03 acres in extent and who has selected vocations related to agriculture for his livelihood and who indulges himself in activities connected with land for a long time.

This is only a definition adopted for the convenience and purposes of our study. It has to be admitted that this definition too is not complete.

The definition of 'small farmer' may differ depending on the degree of fertility of land in the respective areas. The income of a small farmer enjoying one acre of land in an area like Dodangaslanda may be higher than that of a farmer enjoying 03 acres in Galgamuwa in the same district. Therefore, the extent as well as the degree of fertility of land are important factors in defining the term 'small farmer'.

*Firth R.- Malaysian Fisherman:
Their peasant Economy, Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Though there are certain deficiencies, theoretically as well as practically, in the above definition of the term 'small farmer', the importance of having definition for the convenience of the project is clear.

SMALL FARMER IN SRI LANKA

Eighty per cent of the population of Sri Lanka live in rural areas of the country. According to many socio-economic surveys conducted in Sri Lanka, out of the 80% who live in the rural areas, about 62% are small farmers. This group of people who enjoys a plot of land less than 03 acres in extent and engages in agriculture or any other vocation related to agriculture, and has lived for a long time within the rural environment as a social and a cultural entity, is considered a **distinct** group in the development programmes of Sri Lanka.

Majority of the small farmers in Sri Lanka are poor. Low income, low production factors, unemployment, illiteracy, lack of opportunity to utilize resources found in the area, poor relationship with outside world are among some of the factors responsible for the poverty of the small farmers.

'DEVELOPMENT' AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Various economic, social and political scientists give different definitions to the term 'Development'. The term 'Development' means an increase in the per capita income. According to others it means a certain broad expansion within the consumption pattern of individuals. There are others who argue that it means a certain increase in the economic benefits the individuals derive from their professions. Accordingly, varied are the definitions given to the term 'Development'.

However, since every such definition is restricted to the respective subject area, it has been difficult to find a broad and an universally accepted definition to this term.

However, it may be, if we are to define the equivalent of the term 'development' in Sinhala. (*sanvardhanaya*) in short the prefix 'san' means whatever that is good or 'beneficial'. The term '*vardhanaya*' means 'increase' or augmentation. Therefore, '*sanvardhanaya*' can be taken to mean some exercise to improve whatever that is 'good' or 'beneficial' to society.

Accordingly 'rural development' could be summed up as the integral progress that takes place in the rural areas. A certain Indian Philosopher has compared 'rural development' to a cup of tea. The reason being that it contains many ingredients. It contains processed tea leaves, water, sugar, milk, etc. When those components are taken apart one cannot speak of a cup of tea. Because, each ingredient by itself is not a cup of tea. Blending of these ingredients in proportionate quantities, however, makes a cup of tea. The drinking of a cup of tea also provides some stimulation. We find a similar process in the activity called development. Therefore, development can be described as the careful blend of all activities of the people living in a society, such as their community participation, group activity, economic structure, social and cultural responses, and the selection of their leaders to govern their society or in other words determination by them of the political environment in which they live. By taking each of these activities separately, it cannot be said that there is total development within a society.

Especially in the process of developing a village we see the need of a good blending of all the activities mentioned above. It may be mentioned that a developing third world country, as in the case of Sri Lanka in particular, the process of development is centered round the rural areas. It is a well-known fact, that in a developing agricultural country like Sri Lanka, the development efforts should be made in relation to its population, the main vocation of which is agriculture.

*THE IMPORTANCE OF VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS IN THE SPHERE OF
RURAL DEVELOPMENT*

Before discussing the importance of voluntary organizations in bringing about rural development, it would be useful to form an idea about the rural institutions such as the Rural Development Society, the Multi-purpose Co-operative Society, the Community Centre, the Gramodaya Mandalaya and the Productivity Committee, etc. which at one time functioned successfully.

In all these organizations mentioned above, the leading role was played not by the ordinary villager who lives in the rural society, but by individuals such as middle class landed proprietors, those who wielded political influence and those who were privileged by their education or in the words of the villagers, those who constituted the 'elites' of the rural society. A marked difference can be observed between the pattern of thoughts and aspirations of the villagers who were steeped in abject poverty for a long time and those of the so-called 'elite' class. The main reason for erosion of farmer participation in rural organizations is due to the fact that those organizations catered to diverse needs that were contrary to those of the villagers. Let us, for example, take the Productivity Committees that were in operation under the last government. The important role of decision making in those committees was played not by the farmers, but by those who wielded political power. The government through the Productivity Committees expected to provide an equal service to every farmer and thereby promote agricultural development at the rural level. Those organizations, however, proved to be a failure as those who were politically influential at village level made the decisions, implemented them and favoured their political henchmen.

The importance of public participation is vital in the process of rural development. If any government wishes to make a genuine effort to bring about rural development, then it should focus its attention on rural participation. Any development effort that takes place neglecting the rural participation is certainly doomed to be a failure.

The main reason for the failure of many development programmes meant for the rural sector was that those programmes were implemented without involving villagers in such programmes.

It is pertinent to mention that the new Agrarian Services Act promulgated in 1979 was an effort made to utilize farmer participation in the agricultural sector in some form. It appears that the Agrarian Services Committee and the *kanna* Meeting could play an important rôle in this sphere.

AGRARIAN SERVICES COMMITTEE

According to Agrarian Services Act of 1979, a basic importance is attached to the Agrarian Services Committee in the realm of agriculture. Along with the enactment of the Agrarian Services Act, new '*Vel Vidhanes*' were appointed. They are appointed by the majority vote of the farmers of the area. Leadership, capability in agricultural pursuits and popularity at the village level were the main qualities considered in the appointment of *Vel Vidhanes*. One farmer representative was generally elected from each *yaya* and six of these elected in that manner served as members of the Agrarian Services Committee. For example, let us take the Galgamuwa Agrarian Services Committee Area. There are 61 farmer representatives elected to represent the farmers in the entire Committee Area. Six of these representatives are selected to serve in the committee on the proportional basis.

Just as 06 of the farmer representatives are selected to represent in the Agrarian Services Committee, 08 officials serving in various agricultural sectors, represented themselves in the Committee in their ex-officio capacity. Thus, Agrarian Services Committee comprised 06 farmer representatives and 08 government officials, and meets once a month and makes decisions after discussing the problems related of to the agricultural sector in the Agrarian Services Committee area.

KANNA MEETINGS

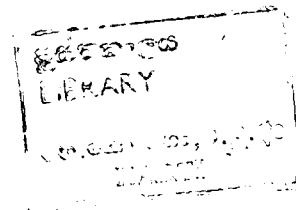
The *Kanna* Meeting could be treated as another organization that makes decisions in the agricultural sector on behalf of the farmers. But farmer participation in these meetings is minimal. The reasons for this can be attributed, in brief, to the following:

1. Some farmers themselves have very often neglected to abide by the decisions taken at *Kanna* Meetings. Therefore, the other farmers tend to lose their faith in *Kanna* Meetings.
2. Since decisions taken at the *Kanna* Meeting are not implemented by the officials at the opportune time, the farmers do not rely on *Kanna* Meetings.
3. At these meetings certain officials try to impose their views ^{on} the farmers and the farmers resent it.
4. Inability to implement the decisions made at *Kanna* Meetings in areas where cultivation is done with water received from minor irrigation schemes or with rain water, although such decisions could be practicable only in areas coming under major irrigation schemes.
5. Since *Kanna* Meetings are confined to matters concerning paddy cultivation farmers growing other crops do not participate at these meetings.

CLARIFICATION OF THE IMPORTANCE AND THE OBJECTIVES OF A SMALL FARMER ORGANIZATION

After reviewing all these matters, the ARTI explored the possibility of finding solutions to the farmers' problems through small farmer organizations.

The objectives of the small farmer organization could be summarized as follows:



1. Identification of the problems of small farmers by organizing them into small groups at *yaya* level.
2. After identification of their problems, investigation of the resources available within the group for solving such problems. The resource may be the man power they possess, or else it may be the physical resources available in the environment they live in. In other words, endeavour to develop the village through self-reliance.
3. Receiving the services and the inputs made available to the farmers by the government as well as by the voluntary organizations on group basis and not on individual basis, and not on individual basis. For instance, certain inputs and services such as fertilizers, agrarian services, subsidies for coconut cultivation, bank loans and facilities for animal husbandry, and for export of minor crops provided by respective government organizations are made available to the small farmer organizations.
4. Guidance of farmers, through their organizations, to plan their products. Here, the farmer groups that identify the problems in the village suggest ways and means of solving them and submit their proposals at the *yaya* level to be taken up eventually at the area level, the district level, the district level and the national level respectively. This facilitates the formation of production plans and fix targets at the area level and the national level.

The next chapter aims at outlining the action programme implemented by the ARTI and the Department of Agrarian Services in collaboration with the FAO. These activities fall into two categories, viz. training courses and follow-up courses.

CHAPTER THREE

1. CONDUCTING OF TRAINING COURSE

Conducting training course with a view to extending the small farmer organization project to cover the whole of Kurunegala district and to the remaining districts of Sri Lanka has been commenced in June 1984. These training classes were held at the regional training centre situated at Mahawa road in Nikaweritiya in collaboration with the Agrarian Research and Training Institute.

The number of officers who received the training and the number of training courses held are given below.

1. Number of training classes in respect of Kurunegala district - 12
2. Number of training classes in respect of other districts - 05

THE NATURE OF TRAINING COURSE

A training course was of 3 days duration. All participants were provided ^{with} food and lodging as well as travelling expenses. It is pertinent ^{to} indicate in brief the subject matter discussed in a training course of 2 days duration.

THE TRAINING COURSE - 1st DAY

I. The History and the Objectives of
the Small Farmer Organization

Ranjith Kumarasiri Pathirana

Special factors/influenced/setting up of this small farmer organization as a pilot project in the Galgamuwa Agrarian Services Committee area were discussed at the outset. Then, the main objectives of the project were clarified. In the course of this clarification the importance of farmer organization with special reference to small farmer organization and the benefits that could be derived through such an organized group of persons were also discussed.

II Rural Organizations and the Importance of
a Small Farmer Organization

Wimal Attudawage

(Department of Agrarian Services)

The main objective of this lecture was to explain the history of the rural voluntary organizations of Sri Lanka. After a short introduction of the voluntary organizations found in rural areas of Sri Lanka and of the organizations that have been started by the state, the reasons for the failure of many such organizations and for the success of certain other organizations were taken up for discussion. While special attention was focussed on organizations such as Rural Development Societies, Community Centres, and Gramodaya Mandalayas, the Death Donation Societies operating very successfully in several villages of Sri Lanka too were discussed. The final part of the lecture was a critical analysis of the similarities and differences existing between rural voluntary organizations and small farmer organizations and of the relative importance of the small farmer organizations.

The Trainees :

	Dept. of Agrarian Services	Agriculture Dept.	Bank of Ceylon	People's Bank	Agricultural Development Authority
Divisional Officers	68				
Cultivation Officers	72				
Farmer Representatives	134				
Technical Assistants	26				
Assistant Commissioners	1				
Agricultural Instructors					
KVS		46			
Development Assistant		59			
Managers (Agricultural Development) Authority)			22	27	13
Total	303	105	22	27	13

No. of Trainees from Kurunegala District - 331

No. of Trainees from other districts - 138

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V Methods of Conducting a Local Survey and
the Problems that arise in the Process

Mahinda Henegedara

(ARTI)

Methods and the scientific strategy that could be applied in conducting a local survey were discussed in this lecture. Various problems that one may confront in conducting a survey in a familiar as well as an unfamiliar area and the methods of conducting a local survey by minimising such problems with a view to obtaining correct information were taken up for discussion.

VI Discussion on the Outcome of the
Galgamuwa Farmer Organizations

Haripriya Karunaratne

(ARTI)

The benefits accrued to the farmers of Galgamuwa area as a result of the small farmer organization project, which was introduced as a pilot venture by the ARTI, were discussed. The advantages of obtaining credit, rehabilitation of irrigation systems and increasing production, through group activity and group savings, etc. were discussed.

The Importance of Galgamuwa Small Farmer
Organizations

(Based on the experiences gained by government officers)

D.N. Hettiarachchi

(Divisional Officer, DAS)

The discussion was based on the experiences of the Divisional Officer of the Agrarian Services who was greatly involved with the small farmer organization project, which was launched as a pilot project. The wrong impression he had of these organizations at first and the manner in which he has subsequently helped such organizations in the discharge of his duties were discussed. This lecture brought to light the fact that the farmers in this area were conscious of their rights and that they are now trained as ^{to} how to clamour for their rights if a necessity arises.

Importance of Galgamuwa Farmer Organizations
(Experiences of two farmers involved with the pilot project)

The salient feature of this lecture was the recounting, by the farmers, of their experiences about the Galgamuwa Small Farmer Organization Project. The main theme here was a confession of the difficulties undergone by the farmers before the setting up of this pilot project and the hard life they had to lead, particularly due to difficulties in obtaining agricultural credit. The importance of organizing themselves into groups with a view to overcoming such difficulties and improving their living standard had been proved ^{their} by own experiences that were related here.

a *SECOND DAY OF THE PROGRAMME*

The second day of the programme was set apart for the field visit. The aim of the field visit was to study to what extent the theoretical and the practical knowledge they acquired on the first day could be established from what they observed in the field. While the trainee group visited two farmer organizations in the Galgamuwa pilot project each trainee individually recorded the following information after holding discussions with the farmers.

The Informations Recorded are as Follows:

1. Facts as regards the nature of the economic activity of the group and their main occupation, cultivation pattern and the quantity of their production .
2. Is the group's relationship with various government agencies cordial?. The relationship the group maintains with the Divisional Office of Agrarian Service Department, Agriculture Department, Coconut Cultivation Board, Agricultural Insurance Board and the two main lending Banks were examined with a view to ascertaining, how cordial such relationships are.,

3. Information regarding the nature of co-relationship the groups maintain with other farmer organizations and voluntary organizations in the area.
4. Does the group have any future plans?. Here the investigation was directed to find out what sort of future plans have been formulated by the farmers as a group to improve agricultural, social and community activities in the area.

Each trainee who participated in the training course met the members of the farmers organization and collected the required informations. The information so gathered was submitted to the forum in two groups at the Nikaweratiya Training Centre.

While one group submitted its report to the forum, the role of the second group was to review and evaluate it. The second group submitted the information it had collected after the first group had submitted its findings. Thereupon the first group in their turn reviewed and evaluated the information submitted by the second group.

The information gathered from the field visit, and the theoretical knowledge about farmer organizations were compared by the trainees on the same day. The preliminary discussion was directed to find out the problems encountered by the Galgamuwa farmer organization. There after the trainees were provided ^{with} the opportunity of learning, by way of an exercise, the importance of understanding such problems practically and the manner the solutions to such problems be found at the farmer organization level, the area level, the district level and also at the national level.

Drama on Farmer Organization

Directed by

D.J.D.R. Gunatilaka

(Officer-in-Charge)

The second day of the training programme was concluded with a drama on farmer organizations staged by the trainees. Here, the officers attached to the organization as well as the real farmers were selected by drawing lots and in most cases the actual officials had to act as farmers and actual farmers had to act as officials. The most important training the officials as well as the farmers received by way of this drama was to learn by role-playing the manifold problems both parties encountered when setting up a farmer organization and to orientate them on how to overcome such obstacles.

THIRD DAY OF THE TRAINING PROGRAMME

The third day of the Training Programme was exclusively set apart for discussing technical matters. The lectures on different subjects were delivered by officials conversant with the relevant subject areas and problems relevant to respective subject areas were discussed thereafter.

I. Extension of Coconut Cultivation in Homegardens

E.H.S. Godawita

(Coconut Development Board)

A great deal of scientific facts about the coconut tree was made clear to the trainees by this lecture. It was also discussed the scientific way of cultivating coconut palm to obtain a maximum yield. Moreover, extension of coconut cultivation subsidy scheme to the Kurunegala district, in particular and to other districts, in general, and the facilities for availing of such subsidies to groups such as farmer organizations too were discussed.

II. *Irrigation and Water Management - How could this be undertaken as a Group?*

R.M.D.P. Madawala

(Irrigation Technical Assistant)

This lecture brought to light many facts pertaining to both scientific and practical aspects. The assistance that could be had through this small farmer organization in case of a group activity, such as water management, was also discussed.

III *Utilization of Agricultural Credit - How could this be done on a Group Basis?*

D.G. Senerath

(Regional Manager, Bank of Ceylon)

This lecture was a general introduction on credit made available by the state to the farmers for agricultural pursuits. Several facts related to major as well as minor irrigation systems and water management were discussed in this lecture which touched upon both scientific and practical aspects. In a group operation like water management, what sort of assistance could be sought from small farmer organization was also deliberated in this lecture. Thereafter the types of credit made available to the farmers by the Bank of Ceylon and the policies governing provision of such credit were clarified. The facilities that could be utilized by farmers for obtaining credit as members of farmer organizations formed at the village level and also the provisions available for persuading the farmers through the farmer groups to repay the loans too were discussed.

IV Agricultural Insurance Board

A.M. Navaratne
Agricultural Insurance Board

The Importance of Agricultural Insurance Scheme was discussed in this lecture. The wrong impressions the farmers had regarding agricultural insurance were critically discussed. It was also elucidated how agricultural insurance scheme facilitates obtaining bank loans and the policies followed by the Agricultural Insurance Board, particularly as regards the payment of compensation in case of a crop failure. Thereafter the possibility of submitting claims in the event of a crop failure as a group like the farmer organization, and the facilities for receiving compensation through the organization were also explained.

V Developing Animal Husbandry Through Group Activity

Mapa Gunaratne
Department of Animal Husbandry and Health

The main theme of this lecture was the importance of animal husbandry in an agricultural country like Sri Lanka and policy matters pertaining to the support and assistance rendered by the government for animal husbandry were discussed in this lecture. The type of assistance that could be made available by the Department of Animal Husbandry and the Department of the Health, if village level groups, such as the small farmer organizations, start animal husbandry projects was also set forth.

VI *Discussion of Problems Related to Marketing of Agricultural Produce and the Method of Finding Solutions to Such Problems Through Farmer Organizations*

R.P. Rupasena

ART I

The main theme of this lecture was discussion of problems encountered by the farmers of Sri Lanka in marketing their produce. The flow of farmers' produce to the consumers was explained in this lecture. The exploitation of the farmer as well as the consumer by different individuals in the process of marketing was explained. It was pointed out that farmers as well as consumers would be benefitted by eliminating the middlemen, if farmers in a country like Sri Lanka could organise themselves as a group. It was also discussed that the living standards of the farmers who constitute 62% of the total population of Sri Lanka, could also be raised by means of farmer organizations.

VII *How the Farmer Organizations Formulate their Production Plan*

Ranjith Kumarasiri Pathirana

ART I

The significance of a plan was explained at the outset of this lecture which was devoted to discuss the importance of having an agricultural plan. The action programme submitted by the Department of Agrarian Service at the *kanna* Meeting was taken up for discussion with special reference to the formulation of a production plan by the farmer organization, which should be relevant to the agrarian sector. It was stated that the production plan prepared in respect of each *kanna* by the farmers in consultation with the officers concerned should include the following data:

1. What is the total area of land cultivated within the *yaya*?
2. How much water is required for cultivating the area of land?
What is the method of water management utilized by you for that purpose?
3. What is the variety of seed paddy selected for cultivating this area of land?
4. When do you expect to cultivate these lands?
5. What is the variety of manure that should be applied to cultivate these lands?
6. How could the required knowledge of agriculture and agricultural inputs be acquired?. What methods should be followed to acquire that knowledge?.
7. What is the cultivation pattern to be utilized for cultivating these fields?.
8. What sort of effort should be made to safeguard these fields from wild animals as well as from crop failures?.
9. How should the yield be properly harvested in order to augment the yield?.
10. How should the group effort be utilized when marketing the agricultural produce?.

VII Significance of Group Savings Under Farmer Organizations

Wimal Atthudawage

(Department of Agrarian Services)

The importance of depositing as group savings, a certain portion of the income derived from agricultural pursuits, undertaken jointly under farmer organization project, was discussed. It was stated that savings could ever be in kind such as the farmers' produce and such savings could be made use of for purchases could be made use of for purchasing agricultural implements etc., necessary for the farmer organization.

End of the Training Course

An evaluation of the topics discussed during the 3 days was done at the conclusion of this training course. A theoretical, conceptual and practical evaluation of the facts learnt of the farmer organization

has been done and the course of action to be followed by the officers serving the agrarian sector in the formation of farmer organizations in their respective areas was discussed.

After the discussion of certain problems prevalent in the respective areas, a yaya suitable for the formation of farmer organizations was selected. A basic idea as to how an area and a chief householder survey could be conducted in the selected area was received by the trainees. Thereupon the trainees parted with the hope of forming farmer organizations in their respective areas.

Follow-up Courses

The follow-up courses related to the farmer organization project were held on the appointed dates in the villages where farmer organizations have been formed.

Basically the follow-up courses were conducted as follows:

1. A general discussion with the farmers. Discussions with the farmers were projected to understand the problems they face in their yayas. The main objective of this discussion was to form a basic idea of the problems encountered by the farmers in carrying out their agricultural activities.
2. Introduction of the farmer organization project to the farmers who have assembled at yaya level. Topics such as the history of the farmer organization project, activities, undertaken at present and the objectives of the project were discussed. The benefits that could be accrued from the project were also discussed.
3. At the third stage of these follow-up training courses the dialogue was centred on the information gathered by way of discussion with the farmers and the practical aspects pertaining to the formation of farmer organizations with a view to finding solutions to the farmers' problems in their respective areas,

4. Discussion with the farmers regarding the manner as to how the production plans should be prepared by an organized group of farmers in consultation with the government officials serving in the agrarian sector.

These follow-up courses featured prominently in the farmer organization project and the experiences that could be gathered were immense. Imparting knowledge about the farmer organization project by meeting its members directly was very effective and it helped a great deal in the formation of farmer organizations.

Thus, these follow-up training courses were conducted in respect of the 52 Agrarian Services Centres in the Kurunegala district. In addition, similar follow-up courses were conducted for farmer organizations in the other districts of Sri Lanka. The areas, the district and the organizations in respect of which these courses were conducted and the number of farmer organizations are given at the end of this report.

Quarterly Training Workshop

The leaders of farmer organizations, the farmer representatives and the cultivation officers were invited for this workshop held at the Regional Training Centre at Nikaweratiya. Accordingly the leader of the farmer organization, the farmer representative and the cultivation officer from each farmer organization area were summoned for this workshop. A total of 4 quarterly training sessions were conducted in respect of ^{the} Kurunegala district.

Items Discussed at the Quarterly Workshop

1. Submitting of Progress Review Reports

This quarterly workshop was held as a two day training session. On the first day, the leaders of the farmer organizations formed throughout the Kurunegala district submitted progress review reports in respect of their organizations. Accordingly a minimum of 13

leaders of the farmer organizations attended each training session and each of them submitted a report of progress made by this own organization during the past 3 months. Thereafter, the farmer representative and the Cultivation Officer of the respective farmer organization set forth the problems and the constraints that affect their farmer organization.

II *What is the Nature of Assistance Rendered by the Respective Institutions to Ensure the Success of a Farmer Organization*

Wimal Atthudawage

(Department of Agrarian Services)

The Department of Agrarian Services functions especially as the department that co-ordinates the small farmer organization project and it was discussed how the assistance of other government officials involved with agricultural activities could be obtained for farmer organizations.

III *How should the Leaders of a Farmer Organization Maintain the Financial Records, Attendance Registers and the Minutes of the Discussions of Their Organization*

D.J.D.D.R. Gunatilake

Officer - in - Charge (ARTI)

IV *How should the Farmer Organization Formulate Their Production Plan on a Scientific Basis*

Vindhya Wadigamangawa

(Department of Agriculture)

At the training course held earlier, matters pertaining to the formulation of production plan of a farmer organization by its membership was discussed. This lecture brought to light more facts on the same theme, on a more scientific basis. For instance, it was explained how a farmer organization should formulate its production plan taking into consideration the quantity of seed paddy, fertilizers, water, etc. required for 1 acre.

Second Day of the Quarterly Workshop

1. *Field Visit*

The participants of this workshop were taken round in two batches to watch two newly formed farmer organizations in the Kurunegala District. The participants met the members of the two farmer organizations and obtained information from them personally regarding their organizations.

Out of the information thus gathered most important were the details regarding the manner their respective organizations were formed, their economic activity, their concept of forming themselves into an organization, and their future plans as a group.

2. *Presentation of the Field Visit Report and Understanding the Problems Confronted by the Farmer Organizations*

What was considered important here was the knowledge acquired by comparing experiences they have already gained through their own organizations with those new experiences acquired by visiting farmer organizations and holding discussions with farmers about their organizations. By this exercise it was attempted to understand the problems their organizations have to confront at the field level, particularly, after 3 months of their formation. Thereafter, they explored the possibility of finding solutions to these problems at the organization level, the area level, the district level and finally at the national level.

3. *Discussion on the Future Role of Small Farmer Organizations*

This was the last item taken up for discussion on the second day of the quarterly workshop. The strategy that could be developed to overcome the shortcoming of farmer organizations and the problems confronting them by means of knowledge gained during two full days was discussed. As the final episode of the programme, each farmer organization disclosed to the forum the role their respective organization intends to play in the future.

4. *Conducting a Training Session for Assistant Government Agents and Agricultural Development Managers in the Kurunegala District*

A one day training session was held at the district office of the Department of Agriculture at Kurunegala for 12 Assistant Government Agents and 5 Agricultural Development Managers serving in the Kurunegala District. The objective of the workshop was to explain the history and the importance of the small farmer organization project, its objectives and present functions.

Another objective of this one day training session was to draw greater attention of the Assistant Government Agents of the Kurunegala district to the role they have to play in connection with the small farmer organization project which at present is extended throughout the district. This workshop, chaired by the Government Agent of the Kurunegala District, provided an opportunity to impart a good knowledge of the farmer organizations to the Assistant Government Agents and the Managers of the Agricultural Development Authority.

5. *Workshop for Government Agents of Sri Lanka*

A one day training workshop was held at the Bandaranayake Memorial International Conference Hall for Government Agents serving in various districts of Sri Lanka. The main objectives of this workshop was to discuss matters analytically as to the role of Government Agents in connection with the small farmer organizations that have already been formed in their respective districts.

6. *Workshop for Assistant Commissioners attached to the Department of Agrarian Services, who are in charge of Districts*

The Department of Agrarian Services plays an important role as the Department that co-ordinates the small farmer organization project. The Assistant Commissioners of Agrarian Services have to play an important role to achieve this aim. A one day training course was held at the ARTI, Colombo, to discuss this matter in detail.

To sum up the topics discussed at the workshop, first the workshop at first the historical background of this project was discussed. Thereafter matters related to its present activities were explained. The objectives of the project, problems pertaining to formation of organizations etc. were also clarified.

The next important objective was the elucidation of basic concepts as regards the small farmer organizations. Thereafter, the nature of the assistance that could be obtained for the farmer organization project was discussed.

The lectures were followed by a useful panel discussion, where matters pertaining to practical problems the Assistant Commissioners had to encounter when setting up farmer organizations were discussed logically and comprehensively.

CHAPTER FOUR

A REVIEW OF ACTIVITIES*A Critical Analysis of Results, Experiences and Problems*

The results and experiences gathered, and the problems encountered by the pilot project of small farmer organizations at Galgamuwa were of great use in extending this project throughout the Kurunegala district and as well as to other districts of Sri Lanka. It is now nearly 9 months since this project has been extended throughout the Kurunegala district. It would not be an easy task to analyse in depth the results and the experiences gathered by this project during this short period. It is, however, clear that those results and experiences would open up new vistas in continuing this project further.

The group-consciousness created by this project among the farmers can be considered an important achievement. During the course of training and also during the follow-up training courses many villagers expressed the view that the village has disintegrated due to various reasons. Their desire to remedy that situation and to be united within the village giving first preference to group consciousness as individuals living in the same village, and as a farmer group working in one and the same *yaya* and as a group following a single system of water management, could be considered as important results of this project. To generate this group consciousness in a village, there should be a problem among the villagers, which should be common to most of them. In the alternative there should be some common objective to be achieved by all those who live in that village. It is important to mention at this stage that this objective is gradually being emerged through the small farmer organization project.

Yet another achievement of this project is that the farmers got themselves involved in agricultural pursuits as a result of their motivation by this group-consciousness. It is a matter for great delight that many farmer organizations set up within the Kurunegala District have launched various projects in their respective *yaya* areas.

giving priority to group production plan and selection of a single variety of seed paddy for the whole *yaya*. Further, the acceptance of the knowledge of agriculture made available to them by the Agricultural Department, and the implementation of water management policies on a group basis by the farmers could also be cited as instances of achieving the objectives of the small farmer organization project.

Rural indebtedness is an index of poverty in many villages in Sri Lanka. Indebtedness of farmers, in particular, to state banks such as the Bank of Ceylon and the People's Bank and also to the Co-operative Rural Banks is a common feature. In many instances the farmers delay repaying the loans they have obtained from government institutions. During the training courses as well as the follow-up training courses we had the opportunity to represent matters to them and to dissuade them from this practice. Many farmers who attended the training course settled their outstanding loans and were able to obtain fresh loans from Banks on the guarantee of the farmer organization. This can be indicated as a noticeable result. There were instances where farmers attached to most of the farmer organizations in the Kurunégala district having obtained loans, on the basis of joint guarantees from the Banks to purchase tractors and sprayers they required.

Commencement of projects outside the realm of agriculture by the farmers organizations is yet another beneficial outcome of this endeavour. Animal husbandry, breeding of fresh water fish, cultivation of coconut on subsidy scheme, and home gardening are some of the projects that have been thus initiated.

A farmer organization in Galpamuwa area has started a fresh water fish breeding project in a small village tank and nominating persons to look after that project from among members of that farmer organization is a good example. Weerambagedara farmer organization has set up a project on health activities to cultivate good health habits among small children. Kathalawa farmer organization has initiated a programme to impart agricultural education for adults.

Thus, we find that various projects, some of which are related to agriculture while others are not and also certain projects aimed at community development, are launched in association with farmer organizations.

It is noteworthy to mention here of some group savings projects initiated by many farmer organizations. It was possible to study by means of this project two factors that retard saving habits of the rural population. One such factor is the low income and the other is the lack of knowledge of the importance of savings. In many instances, the villagers squander the money they obtain by selling harvest of the season to purchase unnecessary items. They pay less attention to the advantages they could accrue in the future by saving a part of their hard earned money. The training team of the project made efforts to cultivate two forms of saving habits among the farmers. Firstly, the bank official who visits farmer organization every month persuades the members to deposit money in their private accounts. Secondly, all the farmers collectively make common deposits in the name of their organization. Many instances where farmers have reaped benefits by means of this could be cited from farmer organization at Nagollagama, ^{which} collects one bushel of paddy from each member in every *Kanna* and the money realised by sale of paddy thus collected is credited to the general savings fund of the farmer organization.

Small farmer organization project could be singled out as a project that receives more and more support of the officers for rural agricultural development. Yet another advantage farmers accrue through this project is the receipt of the patronage of the officers, who are trained to set up farmer organizations, as well as of other government officials involved with the Agrarian sector. I intend discussing two major benefits that farmers have received by this healthy state of affairs. Firstly, the chances are less where government officers refusing to accede to a request made by the farmers as a group. Accordingly they very often agree to accede to the request, respecting the collective effort of the group. Secondly,

when farmers have organized themselves into a group, it facilitates the creation of a suitable atmosphere for the officer to serve them better. Let us, for instance, take a K.V.S. who imparts agricultural knowledge to farmers. He is responsible for rendering his services to at least one thousand farmers in his area of authority. But he finds it difficult to meet each of those one thousand farmers individually and serve them. However, if these farmers organize themselves into small groups with a view to receiving agricultural knowledge he would find it easy to perform his duty.

The farmers, who have organized themselves into a group in their village or in their *yaya* and share their responsibilities collectively in respect of their areas of activity, tend to systematise their work and also generate group consciousness. This means that the division of the membership of a farmer organization into smaller groups for the purpose of sharing the total work to be completed by the organization, for e.g., members of a farmer organization with 25 or 30 members can form 5 or 6 smaller sub groups each consisting of 5 members to undertake different activities like water management, banking and promotion of savings, securing services and facilities, and community development.

EXPERIENCES GATHERED

A retrospection at the experiences gained by this project may throw some light on the future prospects of the project. A very useful experience we gathered there was that correct leadership was greatly responsible for the smooth functioning of a farmer organization. The integrity of the leader, and his personality in directing a group can be cited as factors that clearly determine the efficient functioning of the group. But, if the leader of that group stands at a level above the economic level of other members of the group, the chances for emergence of qualities of a good leader from him would be remote. The leader should particularly motivate the members towards one specific objective and guide them to achieve that aim, rather than trying to control them. The farmer organizations at *Kithalawa* and *Weerambuqedara* could be cited as two small farmer organizations functioning very successfully as a result of such a good leadership.

Emergence of farmer organizations out of a good membership enhances the chances for success of that organization. The results that derive through the organization of a group of persons living at identical economic, educational and social level are always beneficial, as all the members of such an organization foster similar aims, objectives and hopes. An area survey as well as a chief householder survey was conducted in order to form an organization with such a membership. An accurate idea could be formed through such an organization as to the economic, social and cultural pattern of the farmers. It would be important, in this case, to extend membership to the small farmers, in particular. Otherwise the leadership of the organization may be snatched by the landed proprietors or those with political influence or perhaps by those who are privileged by their education.

A systematic programme that could be implemented uninterruptedly too would contribute greatly towards the success of the organization. Although many organizations held their meetings once a month they did not have a programme to carry forward. This would result in the dropping out of members from the organization. The farmer organizations should meet at least once a month. At these meetings they should discuss the activities to be undertaken during that particular month. It is important to make necessary decisions and devise ways and means to implement them. At the meeting of the organization to be held in the following month they should take follow-up action to find out how much of the decisions made in the previous month have been implemented and make an assessment of their performance. It would be of great importance to find out the advantages they may have had by fulfilling the aims not so far achieved. When such an atmosphere prevails the members develop confidence in their organization.

If there are one or more problems common to all members of the group it would greatly contribute to the success of the group. For instance, the problem that is common to all members may be the problem of water. Under such circumstances each of them must feel it as his own problem. Thereafter they should find ways and means to solve it and suggest a suitable solution that could be achieved through joint effort. The important problem faced by all farmers of the *Kuda Galgamuwa* farmer organization is lack of legal right of possession of the land they cultivate. As a result of this legal hitch they are unable to obtain agricultural credit from Banks, insure their crops, or to obtain any services made available to farmers by the government. The members of this farmer organization who have realized these difficulties made it their own individual problem, and strove jointly to obtain legal status for the land they cultivate. It is important to secure for this project more and more assistance of the government officials attached to the agricultural sector. Although the Department of Agrarian Services functions merely as the co-ordinating body of this project, most government Departments incline to consider it as an organization devised by the Department of Agrarian Services. It is, however, a misconception. Small farmer organizations have been devised by farmers themselves. Therefore, it certainly deserves the blessings of all government officials alike.

PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED

Certain factors that hinder the activities of a small farmer organization project operating in rural areas could be found within the village as well as outside the village. The fact that most villages in Sri Lanka are politically divided is a problem that affects this project. A group of people affiliated to an opposition party may refuse to seek membership in an organization like this. They may even attempt to level charges against its activities. In addition, various social differences prevalent among the individuals of the village too contributes to the disintegration of the village. These may be cited as factors that affect adversely the small farmer organization project.

Yet another factor that affects the progress of a project of this nature is the lackadaisical attitude most of the rural folk in Sri Lanka show towards voluntary organizations. The government as well as voluntary organizations in Sri Lanka have introduced a large number of voluntary institutions to the village. Their failures have instilled an element of pessimism into ^{the} minds of the villagers about the success of the farmer organizations too. The leadership of voluntary organizations that have functioned in Sri Lanka earlier, was monopolised by the rich and the politically powerful persons, who descended from the so called 'elite' families of the village. The aims of these people and those of the rural small farmers are very often contradictory to each other. Consequently, when rural participation withdraws from such organizations these organizations came to a standstill within a short-period. These uncongenial experiences seem to have become a stumbling block in attracting rural participation to small farmer organizations.

Sometimes the dubious conduct and the lack of integrity on the part of the farmer representatives or the co-ordinating officer, who functions as the leader of the organizations affects the farmer organizations adversely. There is a vast difference between the position of farmer representative promulgated under the Agrarian Service Act and the position of non-existent *vel vidane* of the past. Old *vel vidane* system was based on hereditary succession. The position of *vel vidane* was bestowed on a person considering personal matters like his social status, the family importance, the assets and the wealth he possessed. Although the farmer representative is a leader elected by the popular vote, he finds it difficult to perform his duties as the co-ordinating officer of a project like this. He may not have the ability to safeguard the interests of small farmers by overcoming the influence of the villagers who hold away by virtue of their wealth, education and political influence.

The farmer representative does not specially enjoy the privileges and command the respect the *vel vidane* used to enjoy in the old system. As a result, the farmer representatives have become rather dejected. Further they are also unhappy as they ^{have} no powers delegated to them legally as in the case of *vel vidanes* of the past. This sad state of

affairs tend him to forget the fact that he is a leader elected by the vote of the farmers in his village. On the other hand, lack of any legal sanction in the position he holds, impedes him to perform the duties expected of him.

The age old concepts, ideas and attitudes that are prevalent among the farmers too affect the small farmer organizations. Constant criticisms of the government and its policies by the farmers and the unhealthy relationships they maintain with the officials too adversely affect the progress of small farmer organization project.

Recommendations

Many farmers suggested that small farmer organizations should be registered at a relevant government institution. The importance of recognizing these farmer organizations as legally valid entities could be emphasized since it enables them to obtain, on group basis, bank loans, compensation under agricultural insurance scheme, etc. However, the Death Donation Society which has a long existence in the villages has a clear cut functions although it is not registered anywhere. Registration itself does not ensure continuity of a particular society. If a small farmer organization functions properly, then it can be registered with the Department of Agrarian Services.

Gramodaya Mandalaya has been formed at village level as a representative body of the voluntary organizations functioning within the village. This government, in particular, has set up *Gramodaya Mandalayas* as organizations aimed at achieving total development of the village. Therefore, many farmer organizations suggested that leaders of small farmer organizations been given the privilege of gaining the membership in the *Gramodaya Mandalaya*. It is beneficial for an active farmer organization to be a member of an organization like the *Gramodaya Mandalaya*. Nevertheless, many groups would then try to form farmer organizations with the sole aim of seeking membership in the *Gramodaya Mandalaya*. In the process they would attach less importance to the basic objectives of the farmer organization. Those who are responsible for the future of farmer organizations should be well aware of this

fact, position and allow only those farmer organizations that are really active, to represent at the *Gramodaya Mandalaya*.

Farmer organizations should be set up in the rest of the yaya areas coming under the jurisdiction of the Agrarian Services Committee. This promotes building up of a framework of co-ordination between the farmer organizations. Otherwise, when only two farmer Organizations are to be found within an Agrarian Service Committee area their voice is less forceful. In marketing agricultural produce particularly, a collective action of several farmer organizations could be more advantageous.

The farmer organizations formed in one Agrarian Services Committee area would do well to form a Bureau of Farmer Organizations at the area level. Let us, for example, assume that five farmer organizations would be formed in each Cultivation Officer's Division. Then, the five representatives representing each cultivation Officer's Division should be appointed to the Bureau of Farmer Organizations. Moreover, at the area level we suggest that all government officials serving the agrarian sector be made members of the Bureau of Farmer Organization.

While the problem related to farmer organizations located in the jurisdiction of the Agrarian Service Committee should be tackled by the above mentioned Bureau of Farmer Organizations, another Bureau of Farmer Organization be set-up at the district level to find solutions to problems that could not be tackled at the local level.

In addition, we wish to suggest the importance of forming a National Bureau Farmer Organizations to find solution to problems for which solutions cannot be found by the Bureau of District Farmer Organizations. However, much the farmers organize themselves and strive hard to win their reasonable demands, they would be frustrated if there is no means of communicating their views to those who implement the policies at the national level. Formation of a National Bureau of Farmer Organizations is justified when the present state of affairs are taking into consideration. This Bureau

should be constituted of officers representing the Department of Agrarian Services, Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Development Authority, Department of Animal Husbandry and the Department of Health as well as other connected officers representing at the national level.

Many are the useful experiences that could be gathered from the small farmer organization project to uplift rural agriculture. It is a foregone conclusion that farmers as individuals are unable to encounter the agricultural problems and the challenges confronting them. Therefore, a well organized body is indispensable to raise the living standards of the farmers. Effective water management, use of fertilizers, utilization of latest agricultural technology as well as communication at field level, cordial relationship among farmers and officials, and among farmers themselves are important issues that affect farmers. This small farmer organization project could be described as a potential medium to establish effective communication among farmers themselves and between the farmers and other related agencies. This project, in its initial stage was introduced to the Agrarian Services Committee area of Galgamuwa in the Galgamuwa electorate. Steps have already been undertaken to extend this project in its second and third stages, to cover the entire Kurunegala District and Sri Lanka respectively.

EXTENSION OF THE SMALL FARMER ORGANIZATION PROJECT IN THE KURUNEGALA DISTRICT (ON THE BASIS OF THE AGRARIAN SERVICES COMMITTEE)

Agrarian Services Centres

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Kobeigane | 26 Kithalawa |
| 2. Nikaweratiya | 27 Horombawa |
| 3. Pahala Mawathagama | 28 Kuda Galgamuwa |
| 4. Kotawehera | 29 Mawathagama |
| 5. Wariyapola | 30 Werawella |
| 6. Maho | 31 Rambodagalla |
| 7. Ambanpola | 32 Boigane |
| 8. Nagollagama | 33 Tharana |
| 9. Panduvasnuwara | 34 Polgahawela |
| 10 Moonamaldeniya | 35 Maharachchimulla |
| 11 Bingiriya | 36 Narammala |
| 12 Avulegama | 37 Melsiripura |
| 13 Potuhera | 38 Ibbagamuwa |
| 14 Kurunegala | 39 Ehetuwewa |
| 15 Weerambagedara | 40 Moragollagama |
| 16 Wellawa | 41 Galgamuwa |
| 17 Rambe | 42 Mahananneriya |
| 18 Dummalasuriya | 43 Rajangana (Left Bank) |
| 19 Udubaddawa | 44 Kumbukgete |
| 20 Hemangalle | 45 Karandagolla |
| 21 Welpalla | 46 Kanogama |
| 22 Yakwilla | 47 Dodangaslanda |
| 23 Kuliypitiya | 48 Madahapola |
| 24 Deegalla | 49 Dambadeniya |
| 25 Wewagama | 50 Allawwa |
| | 51 Hulugalle |

EXTENSION OF THE SMALL FARMER ORGANIZATION PROJECT IN SRI LANKA
(ON THE BASIS OF DISTRICTS)

<u>District</u>	<u>Agrarian Services Centre</u>
1. Anuradhapura	1. Mihintale
2 Matale	2 Kimbissa
3 Galle	3 Pilana
4 Matara	4 Deiyandara
5 Ampara	5 Namalthalawa
6 Kegalle	6 Baminiwatta
7 Kandy	7. Imbuleniya
8 Nuwara Eliya	8 Bulugahapitiya
9 Badulla	9 Yatipalana
10 Ratnapura	10 Ehaliyagoda
11 Puttlam	11 Nawagaththegama
12 Madanpe	12 Munneswaram
13 Trincomalee	13 Agbopura
14 Colombo	14 Wetara
15 Kalutara	15 Dodangoda
16 Hambantota	16 Beliatta
17 Monaragala	17 Badalkumbura
18 Gampaha	18 Mirigama
19 Polonnaruwa	19 Sevagama

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

- Kanna* - Cultivation Season: Generally there are two cultivation seasons a year, namely yala and *Maha*. However, in certain parts of the country there is also an intermediate season called *meda* (*Kanna*)
- Yaya* - A tract or a vast expanse of paddy fields flanked on both sides by land (or surrounded by land).