

Challenges of Improving the Statistical Literacy and Skills in Sri Lanka: Small Country Experiences.

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Abstract

Sri Lanka is a small developing economy with an excellent track record of collecting, tabulation, analyzing, and dissemination of various type of socioeconomic, political, environmental, health and other statistics. The wealth of these statistics are used for variety of planning and policy making activities by the public institutions and other national and international organizations. A number of key government institutions are responsible for data collection and dissemination in Sri Lanka. Department of Census and Statistics has the mandate for all national level statistics while the Central Bank of Sri Lanka is responsible for the handling some economic and social statistics of the country. Agrarian Research and Training Institute is responsible for collecting, and disseminations of agricultural price data, particularly food prices and market information for the purpose of measuring food security and providing price signals for whole agricultural marketing stakeholders, including small farmers and policy makers. There are dark spots of the bright picture of the data collection and dissemination in the country. Lack of general statistical literacy and unavailability of skilled individuals to collect, analyze and dissemination of data is key drawbacks of the country. Similarly, there is no proper legal obligation to collect and updating of vital data in some areas. The general public are not interested of many important statistics relevant their life, neither they have received basic knowledge to understand those vital statistics. A limited number of training programs are conducted to improve the skills of individuals involved with data collection and dissemination though it is not sufficient to meet the modern data requirement of the country. Some programs are not providing basic knowledge on statistics literacy, so that the general public is not in a position to make use of vital statistics in their day today life. The dividends of invested capital on statistics collection and dissemination are not receiving the country as a result of those events.

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