Technology Issues in the Sri Lankan Tea Industry with an Emphasis on Regional Plantation Companies.
A Case Study based on Agalawatta Plantations and Maskelliya Plantations.

A Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement of the Master of Business Administration in Management of Technology Programme of the University of Moratuwa

Sri Lanka

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December 2004
Approval

I certify that this Dissertation does not incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a Degree or Diploma in any University; and to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by any other person except where due reference is made in the text.

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Abstract

In this research work, an attempt was made to identify the technology integration issues in the tea industry of Sri Lankan with an emphasis on the plantation management companies, who manage several estates dispersed over a large geographical area. The data collection was mainly based on interviews conducted through a wide category of people involved in differed areas related to the tea industry, such as tea research, tea administration, ministry of plantations, suppliers to the industry, etc. The data collection was focused on Agalawatta Plantations Limited (APL) and Maskeliya Plantations Limited (MPL), the latter being a lead performer in the industry, in comparison with an average performing company APL. The data collection was further strengthened through informal interviews conducted with other plantation management company personnel involved with the tea industry.

The research scope extended from the field related activities to the production of tea and did not focus on the market development aspects of the tea industry. The process was modeled to a simplified value chain, which identified three primary activities along with the support activities. This modeling enabled the simplification of the processes involved and the present technology status of the industry was analyzed based on this model. Technology components related to each industry process was identified along with the technological gaps in relation to the best practices and technologies available. Through the collected data, the research work has attempted to identify the technology integration issues, which are the underlying reasons for the technological gaps seen amongst industry players.

Based on identified reasons behind technology issues, several strategies in overcoming these issues are being suggested. A model framework has been suggested for the viewing of technology in the integration of the same in to the tea industry based on the initial definition of technology, which was used in the research design.
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