

SRI LANKA'S CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE - 2002

1. INTRODUCTION

The policy makers need more realistic and complete set of statistical information pertaining to the social and economic life of the people where there is no doubt that the required information are to be generated through decennial censuses viz; Census of Population and housing, Census of Agriculture, etc. Due to the prolonged internal conflict in the country, Censuses that were planned to conduct during the last decade were not under-taken and as a result of that it has made a huge vacuum in the field of information system.

Having realized the fact that the Department of Census & Statistics (DCS) has made all arrangements to conduct the Census of Population and Housing during the year 2001.

2. Methodology of the Census of Population & Housing 2001.

The total population of Sri Lanka, according to 1981 Census of Population and Housing, was 14.8 million. The current total population of the country is estimated to be nearly 20 million. The country has nine provinces, and each province is divided into a number of administrative districts. Districts are further divided into Divisional Secretary Divisions (DS), and each DS division is divided into Grama Niladhari (GN) divisions. GN division is the lowest level of administrative unit, and can contain one or more of the three area types, i.e. urban, rural and estate areas. Urban areas consist of urban centers, which are classified as Municipal Councils or Urban Councils (MC/UC') depending on the size of the urban center. Urban centers are also further sub-divided into smaller units known as city wards. Since the ward boundaries are defined independently of the GN division boundaries, the GN division can cut across the ward boundaries, and hence a ward can be in more than one GN division. Rural areas consist of smaller towns and villages. Estate areas consist of large tea and rubber plantation areas managed by estates. The MC/UC's in the urban areas are always contained within AGA division boundaries, but can be cut across by GN division boundaries. In the rural areas, a town/village is always within one GN division. Since estate areas are generally very large, the AGA division can also cut across the estate boundaries. For the purpose of enumeration, these areas are divided into census blocks (CB's), and a block is urban, rural or estate area. The census blocks are defined so that they never cut across the boundaries of the administrative units in the rural areas; the CBs are defined within towns, villages. Even in the case of very small villages, each village will be a census block by itself. In estate areas, the CB's are defined within parts of an estate area belonging to different GN divisions. In the forth-coming census, the average block size in terms of number of housing units would be 40 - 60 in rural, and 60 - 80 in urban areas.

The maps showing the boundaries of the CB's are prepared and the housing units within the census blocks are listed on a form called form F1.

The Census is carried out in four stages;

1. Mapping operation
2. Listing operation
3. Preliminary Census
4. Final Census

- Mapping operation in all areas except few areas in North and Eastern province is completed.
- Based on the maps prepared, listing of all units are being in progress.
- Preliminary Census where information is collected for each person will be conducted ten days prior to final Census during June 2001.
- Final Census date is 28th June 2001.

While conducting of next Population Census, this systematic approach explained above would form a sound basis to conduct the Census of Agriculture, so that the DCS next task is to undertake the Census of Agriculture, which is scheduled to be conduct in the year 2002.

3. Historical Perspective of the Census of Agriculture

Unlike the Census of Population, where there is almost a tradition of decennial censuses since 1871, there has been no regularity of the Census of Agriculture in Sri Lanka.

A Census of Production, virtually agricultural production was taken in 1921 and was followed by partial censuses in 1924 and 1929. At these census particulars of crop areas, livestock numbers and production were recorded at village level.

In more recent times there was Censuses of Agriculture in 1946, 1952, 1962 and 1973. At the Census of 1946 a parcel-wise enumeration was undertaken in all blocks of land throughout the country, on which they're existed at the time or had previously existed, any kind of cultivation. This was the first comprehensive census of agriculture taken in Sri Lanka in recent times.

A deviation from this pattern of parcel wise enumeration was first attempted at the Census of 1952, but difficulties in completely enumerating the villages selected in the sample restricted the use of the census data on smallholdings. The 1962 Census, enumerated all holdings not less than 50 acres on a complete basis and a sample of 10 per cent in the case of holdings less than 50 acres. In 1973 the larger holdings and all estates were completely enumerated for detail information on the various characteristics and operations while a sample of smallholdings were scientifically selected and enumerated.

Census of Agriculture 1982, the latest in the series about 1.8 million holdings both large and small were covered on a complete enumeration basis.

3.1 Census Questionnaire

The items that are to be included in the questionnaires are being discussed.. The questionnaire will be mostly the same as that was used in the 1982 Census of Agriculture with few modifications. (Preliminary draft of Listing Sheet –AC1 and detailed questionnaire for small holding sector –AC2 is annexed).

3.2. Methodology

The Census of Agriculture will cover the entire island other than few Municipalities which are predominantly residential and commercial areas where agricultural activity is insignificant. Firstly, the form (F1) containing the list of census units in each census block which is to be prepared for the opulation Census 2001 will be updated and a list of agricultural operators and agricultural holdings

Within the census block will be identified. Agricultural holdings will be classified into two namely the Estate or large holding and the peasant or small-holding. An Estate or large holding is a holding having at least one parcel of 20 acres in extent or more and under the same unit of management. All other holdings are considered as small-holdings. Thus the basic unit of enumeration in the Census of Agriculture will be the operational holding and not the ownership holding. An operational holding is defined as all land and/or livestock used wholly or partly for agriculture production irrespective of title, size, legal form or location and is operated under one operational status.

In the Census of Agriculture 2002, it is proposed to collect the information as follows.

(A). Small Holding Sector (Complete enumeration basis through personal interviews)

(i). Identify the holdings and classify them in to two groups in the listing sheet (AC-1)

- Holdings producing mainly for home consumption
Limited information will be collected in the listing sheet itself for such holdings
- Holdings producing mainly sale purpose
Detail information will be collected using AC-2 schedule. Here it is proposed to extend the AC-2 schedule to cover up the information that was collected sample basis in 1982, without canvassing sample schedule this time.

(B). Estate Sector (complete enumeration basis through mail questionnaires)

The list of estates will be prepared in advance and it is proposed to canvass through a mailed questionnaire as in the case of Census of agriculture 1982. It is expected about 15,000 holdings in this category during 2002.

5. Problem

The conducting of next Census of Agriculture would be greater challenge to DCS due to the following reasons.

- (1) The next census is undertaken after the laps of 20 years. Therefore, personnel who have practical experiences are very limited as most of the trained personnel in the subject have retired.
- (2) Prolonged internal conflict has created lot of difficulties in collecting the required information by the means of personal interviewing/observations since number of areas is inaccessible to enumerators for fieldwork.

Therefore, alternative data collection techniques are to be designed to cope up with the above situation.

- (3) To strengthen the cartographic and data processing facilities, technical skills and analytical capabilities in order to enable the DCS effectively organize the census and survey programs.

Annex -1

Information requested by FAO:

1. Institutional arrangements

Responsible Institution: DCS

Cooperating Institution(s): Ministry of Agriculture, Department of Agriculture, Department of Agrarian Services.

2. Organigram of Census Organization: - Attached

3. Resources for the field work of the agricultural census: -Attached

Human resources (Numbers of staff by location and grade)

Budget: Recurrent US\$
Supplementary US\$

4. Resources for the data processing of the agricultural census:

Availability: Three clusters of 16 machines – key to disk data
IBM S390 integrated server 3006 model B01 available in the Data processing division.
In addition to that 6 pcs (Pentiums) are available in the agriculture division.

Human resources (Numbers of staff by location and grade)

Equipment Required:

- (1). Optical readers for data capturing directly from questionnaires to the disk (Not Budgeted)
- (2). Photo copy machines to make duplication of Census Block maps and list of housing units prepared in the Census of Population & Housing 2001.

Budget: Recurrent US\$
Supplementary US\$

5. Work Plan (activities and timetable) - Attached

6. Methodology proposed (sample or full enumeration or combination of both)
– explained in the note

Budget requested from Govt. Year 2001 – Rs. 2, 000,000 -US\$ 23,500
Year 2002 – Rs. 21,000,000 -US\$ 247,000
Year 2003 – Rs. 4,,300,000 -US\$ 50,500
(For planning, field work, data processing)

7. Technical assistance required:

Expert 1:

Type: International/National

Main Purpose: Planning , Monitoring and Execution of the Census

Number of missions and duration

Mission 1 (duration: purpose) : Planning Activities - Two Months

Mission 2 (duration: purpose): Monitoring and Execution of fieldwork – Six Months

Mission.....

Expert 2:

Type: International/National

Main Purpose:

Number of missions and duration

Mission 1 (duration: purpose)

Mission 2 (duration: purpose)

Mission.....

Expert

Training:

Overseas Study Tours: For three persons in the Upper/Middle level

Purpose; duration; country(s) : In a Developing country and a Developed country for one week each

In-country Training:

Training 1 –Trainers/District Coordinators

Purpose of Training: For training of Middle level Officers

Duration: One week

Number of trainees: 50

Location: Colombo

Cost: US\$ - 5,000

Training 2

Purpose of Training: Enumerator Trainers

Duration: Three days

Number of trainees: 360

Location: Colombo

Cost: US\$: 20,000

Seminars/workshops

User/Producer Workshop

Duration: One day

Number of Participants: 100

Location: Colombo

Cost: US\$: 1,000

Equipment: (list)

Number; Description; Unit Cost

- 1). Network consisting of 6 Computers (Pcs) with necessary software including GIS software such as Arcview, Arcinfo - US\$ 6,000
- 2). Public Address System (Amplifier, Buffers, Microphones, etc.) US\$ 1,500
- 3). Optical Character Readers for form processing -
- 4). Multi Media Projector , Laptop Computer US\$ 5,000
- 5). Xerox Machines – 1 US\$: 2,500