

ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS DIFFERENCES BETWEEN FARMERS AND SMALL & MEDIUM ENTREPRENEURS: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO KURUNAGALA DISTRICT

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Entrepreneurs are appeared a centralized role in GDP. Agricultural and Small and Medium scale Entrepreneurs (SME) are the most important stake holders in the developing process of a country. Entrepreneur performance depends on dynamic entrepreneurial skills. This paper is delivered about effective characteristics and differences between farmers and SMEs entrepreneurial skills. Data from 500 SMEs and farmers in Kurunegala district were collected by employing a structured questioner questionnaire five skills have been evaluated regarding Entrepreneurial skills namely, innovation capacity, risk-taking, profit oriented skills, visionary, managerial skills and autonomy. Likert-scale answered questions were used to develop the entrepreneurial skills (ES) index. Then, four questions were used for innovative and two were used to explore managerial skills. Three questions were asked to explore risk taking, profit oriented skills, visionary and self-confidence. According to this study the mean age of farmers is 41 years and SMEs is 32 years. The highest percentage of male participation was in farming and SMEs sectors. According to the level of education, over 50% farmers are in primary and secondary level. 60% SMEs are in territory level. Most farmers have either ten or more than ten years of experience in farming. A high percentage of farmers do not participate in any entrepreneurial activities other than farming. Farmers, who are engaged in entrepreneurial activities, have short or long term entrepreneurial training. In addition, SMEs have obtained professional qualification regarding their field unlike farmers. 2% of farmers and 35% of SMEs maintained business plans for their income generation process. According to ES index, there has aspectual difference in entrepreneurial skills between farmers and SMEs. Of the factors such as age and the level of education, entrepreneurial training is the most influential and affective factor in entrepreneurial skills. Therefore, government and non-government organizations should provide these famers and SMEs with opportunities, to experience more about their fields through informal education. In here, they have to pay attention on innovation, -self-confidence and dissemination of knowledge. Such organizations should also encourage women's participation in farming and SMEs sectors.

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