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Nature of Learning and Teaching the Agriculture Subject in the Sri Lankan School Curriculum

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Background: Sri Lanka has an agro-based economy, and it is necessary to build a strong foundation through the curriculum to raise awareness among citizens regarding the main source of income.

Objective: This study was conducted to achieve four specific objectives. 1. To examine opportunities for accessibility for students 2. To examine the nature of the teaching process of the subject 3. To explore the challenges faced by teachers in implementing agricultural education. To provide recommendations for enhancing the quality and relevance of agricultural education.

Methods: This study used a qualitative, descriptive-interpretive design to explore teachers' experiences, perceptions, and practices in Agricultural education. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 15 subject expert teachers and through document analysis of research papers, teacher guides, and textbooks to triangulate findings and deepen contextual understanding.

Results: The agriculture subject is taught as an integrated subject in the primary level, as a basket subject in the junior secondary level, and as an elective subject in the senior secondary level, across all streams, excluding Mathematics. In the Biology stream, the probability of selection is 2/4. Other streams are offered as the third subject. Probability is 1/11. Textbooks are available only for grades 10, 11, and each consists of 190 pages. As the content is higher, teachers use only lecture methods and discussion. At the junior secondary and senior secondary levels, only 120 and 400 minutes per week were allocated.

Conclusion: The subject should be updated with modern technology to align with the world of work and students' expectations. Teachers should be equipped with modern technology and training. Agriculture should be a core subject from junior secondary level. Excessive time, resources, and training should be given.

Keywords: Integrated subject, Junior secondary, Subject stream, curriculum, elective subject.