

# **Youth in Development: Sri Lanka**

**M.K. Nadeeka Damayanthi  
G.G. de L.W. Samarasinhe  
M.A.C.S. Bandara  
H.M.S.J.M. Hitihamu  
Subashini Perera**

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**Hector Kobbekaduwa Agrarian Research and Training Institute  
114, Wijerama Mawatha  
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Sri Lanka**

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## **FOREWORD**

Every year, the Hector Kobbekaduwa Agrarian Research and Training Institute (HARTI) had been submitting a country report for the Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and Pacific (CIRDAP), Rural Development Report. The CIRDAP prepares a single report for the region using information of the country reports, but entire text of the country report has not been published anywhere. Therefore, for the first time the HARTI attempted to publish the country report as a research publication and this is the result of that effort.

This report covered vast areas including government policies and programmes towards youth development, youth in education, employment, peace and social harmony, science and technology, agriculture and fisheries etc. In Sri Lanka, around 27 percent of the total populations are youths belonging to age 15-29 years. Compared with her counterparts, Sri Lankan youths had benefited much in many sectors such as education and health. Furthermore, the successive governments have formulated number of policies and implemented programmes towards youth development. In addition to the public sector, NGOs and private sector had been involved in youth development providing scholarships, facilities for research and training in modern technology and increasing employment opportunities for youth.

This report reveals that even with many achievements in most of the sectors, Sri Lankan youth are still facing some problems. These includes mismatch between education and job market, sectorial disparities in the achievement of education, deterioration of traditional counseling system and social tie up and non-availability of counseling system and high rate of suicide.

I congratulate the research team for successfully undertaking this study and hope the findings and recommendations would be very useful to conduct an effective regional programme towards youth development.

**E.M. Abhayaratne**  
**Director**

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**M.K. Nadeeka Damayanthi**

**G.G. de L.W. Samarasinhe**

**M.A.C.S. Bandara**

**H.M.S.J.M. Hitihamu**

**Subashini Perera**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMERY

This study was conducted in 2012, with the aim of providing country information and analysis for Rural Development Report - 2012 of the Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and Pacific (CIRDAP), Bangladesh. The study is mainly based on secondary data, but research team also used primary data collected through key informant discussions and focus group discussions when required.

The objectives of the study were to conduct a situation analysis on youth in development, to explore further strategies to be adopted in youth development regionally and to examine the way forward for youth in development. Non availability of processed, published data on youth was one of the major limitations of the study. The adopted definition "youth" in this study was both "male and female" who belong to 15-29 years.

The proportion of youth population was 27.1 percent (5,576,000) of total population in 2010 and it shows declining trend of youth population when compared with 2000 data (29.7 percent). Of the total youth 28.7 percent were employed in 2010 and it consisted of 53.6 percent of males and 24.3 percent of females. However, percentage of employed youth also shows a declining trend compared with 2000 data.

The successive governments had made many efforts towards improvement of the youth by providing positive policy directions such as increasing the age of marriage, preventing child abuse improving the quality and strengthening of vocational trainings and skill developments, improving the facilities and quality of higher education institutions and signing bi-lateral agreements for foreign employment. However, there are many issues and challenges on youth development as well as to get youths' fullest support for the development process.

The issues related to youth are, less youth participation at decision making level of politics and labour market, small but considerable number of child labour, less trust on political and governing systems, sectorial disparities in resources distribution and marginalized group far from national figures of educational achievement and low computer literacy rate. Furthermore, weakness in the use of two languages and difficulties to build up mutual trust among different ethnic groups, high suicide rates among youth lack of saving habits, difficulties in access to credit average age of entering the job market being high are other issues related to youth development.

The research team suggested strengthening carrier guidance, conducting of awareness programmes to change the mind set of youth on job market, implementing most related but not yet implemented recommendations of the Presidential Commission on youth in 1989, implementing of bi-lingual policy in a more practical way, and develop proper coordinating and monitoring mechanism to improve youth development in CIRDAP member countries.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
CSR	Co operate Social Responsibility
CYP	Commonwealth Youth Programme
DTET	Department of Technical Education and Training
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HNB	Hatton National Bank
ICT	Information Communication Technology
ILO	International Labour Organization
IYF	International Youth Foundation
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
KOICA	Korea International Cooperation Agency
LFS	Labour Force Survey
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NAM	Non –aligned Movement
NGO	Non Governmental Organizations
NVQ	National Vocational Qualifications
NVQF	National Vocational Qualifications Framework
NYS	National Youth Survey
NYSC	National Youth Services Council
OUSL	Open University of Sri Lanka
RYC	Regional Youth Caucus
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund
USA	United States of America
VET	Vocational Educational Training Plan
WUSC	World University Service of Canada
YESL	Youth Enterprise and Sustainable Livelihood Programme

# CHAPTER ONE

## Introduction

By M.K. Nadeeka Damayanthi

### 1.1 Background and Overview

The definition of 'youth' is not universal and it varies from society to society and country to country. Psychologists define youth as 'the period between puberty and adulthood' while legislators define it based on age. In economic sense, "youth is a period in the life of the individual in which she/he develops her/his occupational capacities". Considering social level, youth can be defined as a period of investment (Sessional Paper III, 1967). The United Nations has defined youth as 'persons those within the age group of 15 to 24 years' while the Sri Lanka National Youth Service Council (NYSC) has defined youth as 'persons those within age group of 13-29 (Ibargüen, 2004). Apart from the age limit, countries like Sri Lanka use some socio-cultural aspects such as marriage and engagement in employment to define youth. The National Youth Survey (NYS) in Sri Lanka conducted by 2000, adopted definition of youth as 15-29 years old unmarried persons. This study, adopts definition of youth as 15-29 years old married and unmarried persons including both male and female.

In Sri Lanka nearly 28 percent of the total population belongs to 15-29 years age group. Furthermore, over 75 percent of the youth lived in the rural sector during the period 1960- 2000 (Ibargüen, 2004). Youth population in the category of no schooling has declined remarkably and they had achieved satisfactory level of educational achievements over the years after independence. Literacy rate of the youth (15-24 years) was 95.8 percent in 2006/07. Further, ratios of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary were 99 percent, 105.7 percent and 187 percent respectively in 2006/07 (Department of Census and Statistics, 2009).

However, youth unemployment ratio was much higher when compared with national unemployment ratio. As shown in Table 1.1, during the period of 1990–2011 country's youth unemployment accounted for 72.7 percent to 84.4 percent of the total unemployment. There are several factors associated with the high rate of youth unemployment in Sri Lanka. This includes better education and skills mismatch, queuing for an opportunity to find a "good job" in the public sector (Ibargüen, 2004, Ministry of Labour Relations and Foreign Employment, 2006, Heltberg and Vodopivec, 2008).

**Table 1.1: Youth Unemployment (Age Group of 15-29 Years)**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Youth Unemployment (15-29 yrs)</b>	<b>Total Number of Persons Unemployed</b>	<b>Total Unemployment Rate (% of Total Labour Force)</b>
1990	79.9	953,794	15.9
1991	78.2	861,680	14.7
1992	80.5	845,957	14.6
1993	77.8	830,910	13.8
1994	79.2	797,591	13.1
1995	79.4	749,021	12.3
1996	81.4	704,604	11.3
1997	83.0	658,297	10.5
1998	80.3	611,285	9.2
1999	81.6	590,846	8.9
2000	82.3	517,168	7.6
2001	84.4	537,246	7.9
2002	83.5	625,967	8.8
2003*	82.9	640,961	8.4
2004**	81.4	667,324	8.3
2005***	80.7	623,341	7.7
2006	78.3	493,440	6.5
2007	76.6	447,021	6.0
2008*	75.1	433,397	5.4
2009*	72.7	471,254	5.8
2010	74.0	215,578	7.7
2011 (2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter)	83.2	357,471	4.0

Up to 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2002, both Northern and Eastern provinces are excluded

\*including Eastern Province but excluding Northern Province

\*\* Excluding Mulathivu and Kilinochchi districts

\*\*\* All the districts are included

Source: Damayanthi and Rambodagedara, 2013

However, as some researchers argue majority of unemployed youths in Sri Lanka are voluntary rather than lack of employment opportunities. Karunagoda (2004) has pointed out that level of education has a strong influence on voluntary unemployment in Sri Lanka.

In the year 2011, 16.3 percent of youth in 15-19 years age category had actively participated in labour force while it was 12.6 percent in urban and 16.8 percent in rural areas. Of the age category of 20-24 years, 54.5 percent had actively participated in labour force and this rate was 66.1 percent among 25-29 years of age group. Of those, economically inactive in the above age categories were unemployed mainly due to engagement in studies (Department of Census and Statistics, 2012).

Some achievements of the welfare model in Sri Lanka are paradoxically creating problems for youth. The relatively high levels of education among youth may have created gaps between aspirations and available economic and social opportunities which could be a cause of youth unrest and relative deprivation. Further, late marriage is also a problem among youth in Sri Lanka.

A number of government, private sector and non-governmental organizations have been involved in providing skills development training island-wide. The government has expanded the vocational and technical education system with the establishment of the Human Resource Development Council, the Tertiary and Vocational Education and the National Technical Teacher Training Collage. Affiliated agencies of the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Skills Development provide a large number of vocational and training development programmes in different sectors for varying durations island-wide. Further, they assist youth to find out job opportunities through 'job fairs'. However, due to lack of career guidance path to select suitable vocational or skills development training for youth, considerable proportions of trainees drop out of the courses before the end of the course ( Ministry of Youth Affairs and Skills Development, 2012).

As revealed by the literature contribution in the agriculture sector is low due to a number of reasons. Some argue that landlessness, lack of managerial and technical skills, negative perception towards farming (Jayatissa, Seneviratne and Sankar, 2005), perception towards white collar jobs (Hettige and Mayer, 2002), lack of social recognition, lack of social security systems, problems of availability and accessibility of extension system, irrigation and marketing facilities (Damayanthi and Rambodagedara, 2013) have contributed less for youth participation in farming sector. However, as revealed by recent research findings, youth involvement in agriculture has been increasing in cash crop cultivation sector. In accordingly, around 28 percent of the youth in 15-29 age group were full time farmers while around 19 percent and 24 percent of the youth involved in agriculture on part time basis and as family labourers (Damayanthi and Rambodagedara, 2013). This is a positive impact of governments' policy. In the

meantime, youth population gets attracted to the manufacturing and service sectors. After 1977, government policies including liberalization and industrial policies and structural adjustment measures, contributed to generate thousands of jobs in the private sector.

Though there are many important achievements in social development, Sri Lankan youth perceive society as unjust and unequal, and they are frustrated due to failure of most of the government agencies to address existing inequalities in the distribution of resources as well as in gains created by economic development (Ministry of Youth Affairs, 2007). They recognized that a highly politicized society has caused political patronage and influential networks for employment opportunities rather than creating a system of merit (*Ibid*, 2007, Iburgüen *etal*, 2005). In addition, youth have been experiencing discrimination and inequalities in the labour market due to different factors such as geography and sector, gender, class and status, ethnicity and physical and mental disabilities (Ministry of Youth Affairs, 2007). Foreign employment brings in considerable proportion of income earning for the youth but higher percentage of migrated youth depart for the unskilled or semi skilled jobs. For example, 39 percent of the total number of migrant workers in 2004 was between 20-29 years of age group and most of them were in the low skilled category (*Ibid*, 2007).

There are number of issues and problems relating to youth and youth development in Sri Lanka. Most of them are related to socio-cultural, economic and political issues. Suicide rate is also high among the youth population. The ratio varied from 32.5 percent of total number of suicides in 2000 to 27.7 percent in 2011 and most were in rural agricultural areas (Department of Registrar General, 2011, [www.police.gov.lk](http://www.police.gov.lk)). Common reasons for the suicide are frustration caused through love affairs, failure at examinations and economic problems such as poverty, indebtedness, employment problems and family disputes ([www.police.gov.lk](http://www.police.gov.lk)).

Sri Lanka lost thousands of youths due to two insurrections in 1971 and 1987/88 and thirty years war. The majority of the youth who participated in these insurgencies represented poor families from rural areas. First insurgency was a form of protest against the elite groups who exercised political and social power after the independence. They were driven by a sense of social injustice and lack of opportunities especially in the area of employment. The second uprising was mainly due to government attempts at power devolution and Indo-Sri Lanka peace accord but factors like social injustice and lack of accessibility of employment opportunities also contributed to the insurgency. As a result of the two youth insurgencies and ethnic conflict, Sri Lanka lost many opportunities including thousands of human capital as well as physical capital which country could have utilized for development process. In addition considerable number of youth became disable or widowed resulting in a burden to the country's economy as well as society.

## **1.2 Objectives**

The main objective of the study is to provide information for a regional action plan with the identification of country specific needs for youth in development. The specific objectives are,

- (i) To identify and analyze the current national status of youth and the strategies regarding youth in development
- (ii) To identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities of youth and threats for youth
- (iii) To identify way forward for youth development
- (iv) To explore the strategies to be adopted for youth development at the regional level

## **1.3 Methodology**

This study used both primary and secondary data. Secondary data was mostly collected from Department of Census and Statistics, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Skills Development and its' affiliated institutions. In addition, secondary information was gathered through research reports, journals, newspaper articles and report of the Presidential Task Force on Youth Affairs etc. Primary data was collected through key informant discussions with officers such as Additional Secretary (Youth Development), The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Skills Development, Directors of National Youth Service Council etc. Sixty five youths from different areas of the country with different educational levels and employment status were contacted for the data collection for SWOT analysis. To collect primary data Researchers used to focus group discussion method.

## **1.4 Limitation**

This study was mainly based on secondary data due to time limit and earlier scheduled work of the researchers. Therefore, researchers could not get real experiences from two of the most vulnerable groups viz, youth from the conflict affected areas and estate sectors. Further, non-availability of published/processed data on youth was one of the limitations of the study. Report is also limited due to absence of some data for the given time period by the TOR.

## **1.5 Organization of the Report**

First chapter provides background information of the study including overview of the youth in Sri Lanka, objectives of the study, methodology and limitations. Second chapter discusses policies and strategies implemented by the government towards youths and

their development. The third chapter presents data and information related to status of youth including education, employment and migration. The fourth chapter presents SWOT analysis and a discussion on youth in development. The fifth chapter discusses way forward including problems regarding youth, climate change and youth involvement in sustainable development. The chapter six discusses efforts in regional collaboration, strategies to be adopted for regional collaborations and presents ideas on the formulation of regional action plan among CIRDAP member countries. The chapter seven makes policy recommendations.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **Strategies for Youth Development**

**By G.G. de L.W. Samarasinhe**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

“Mahinda Chinthana Vision for the Future” is the development policy framework of the Government of Sri Lanka up to 2016. This document has outlined Sri Lanka’s new development strategy for a higher economic and quality growth in each sector. According to the vision document, the country will slowly move towards a knowledge based economy which will create more job opportunities for educated youth. In order to achieve that status and cater to the workforce requirement, the government has recognized the value of developing science and technology, strengthening education, training and skills process and developing high quality human resources. To ensure that the Sri Lankan youth acquire necessary skills and knowledge, many strategies have been formulated by the government such as expansion, reprioritizing and updating existing programmes and introducing new programmes.

#### **2.2 Definition of Youth**

Definition of youth in Sri Lanka is different from the global definition by youth of the United Nations General Assembly. According to the National Youth Services Council of Sri Lanka, youth is defined as people from 13 to 29 years of age.

#### **2.3 Roles and Responsibilities of Ministries Dealing with Youth**

Among the number of Ministries that has linkages to youth related programmes, the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Skills Development with 17 affiliated institutes (Annex 1) holds the overall responsibility of formulating policies and strategies and implementing projects regarding youth development. Vision of the ministry is to create globally employable empowered youth by “Making available of effective policy environment and institutional framework enabling the youth to acquire necessary skills, knowledge and attitudes to become productive citizens”. Main functions of the Ministry of youth Affairs and Skills Development are focused on four thrust areas viz, youth development, entrepreneurship development, skills development and vocational training development.

Regarding youth development the Ministry is conducting programmes to empower and organize them, developing sports, aesthetic skills, leadership and personality. Further the Ministry is making an effort to create an environment for proper recognition for Sri

Lankan youth at international level. To develop the entrepreneurship among youth, many programmes are being conducted to provide entrepreneurial skills while creating job opportunities and introducing of new business opportunities for them. In addition, the Ministry is involved in building up international relations for skills development.

In order to develop vocational training, the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Skills Development is engaged in conducting programmes to popularize vocational training programmes of vocational training institutes, providing carrier guidance facilities, developing infrastructure facilities and developing new training courses while improving the quality of the existing courses.

Other than the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Skills Development, the Ministries of Education, Labour and Labour Relations, Sports, Culture and the Arts, Child Development and Women's Affairs are few other organizations that provide especial attention to the youth through their projects and programmes.

The Ministry of Labour and Labour Relations is aiming to achieve the status of "A satisfied productive Sri Lankan labour force" by focusing on industrial peace and harmony, labour standards and enforcement. Other main areas of interest include protection of working women, elimination of child labour, social protection, occupational safety and health and research and development. The Ministry of Social Services' mission is to get the partnership of under privileged persons to the national development process by providing a suitable environment and opportunities through policy initiatives in social welfare and social development. By conducting and coordinating counseling services, programmes related to empowerment of women and people with disabilities, protection of their rights, the Ministry of Social Services is playing a vital role in youth development. The Ministry of Child Development and Women's Affairs are also directed towards activities to entire development, protection and participation of women in the development process. The many goals of the Ministry of Sports are aimed to use sports to enrich the quality of life, physical well-being and health of all Sri Lankans by providing knowledge, access and the opportunity for everyone to participate in sport and enjoy its benefits.

The Ministry of Education's mission is to develop competent citizens keeping with the global trends using innovative and modern approaches to education. It is expected that, this will eventually result in efficient, equal and high quality performances among the workforce ensuring stakeholder satisfaction.

## **2.4 Policy on Youth Development**

### **2.4.1 National Youth Policy of Sri Lanka**

The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Skills Development initiated formulation of a National Youth Policy for Sri Lanka in the latter part of 2012. Consultative workshops have been conducted island wide to obtain public opinion regarding the policy and the process is expected to be completed by mid 2013. Technical and specialty assistance for policy formulation has been given by the Open University of Sri Lanka while the National Youth Services Council has agreed to provide its fullest support throughout the process.

Main objective of the youth policy is to assess the current status and needs of youth population and to prepare a framework that will create a developing and securing an environment for sufficient resources for empowerment. Through the strategies and programmes of the National Youth Policy, it is expected to identify and provide policy directions to address youth problems related to different sectors such as health, environment, security and livelihood.

### **2.4.2 Government Policy for Marriage**

Legally accepted minimum age for marriage is 18 years for both males and females in Sri Lanka. The Government of Sri Lanka in 1988 increased the legal age at marriage for women from 14 years to 18 years. This amendment is considered a really significant achievement towards women's health and reproductive health rights. This also facilitates the offense of statutory rape effective for sexual intercourse with a female under the age of 18 years with or without her consent.

### **2.4.3 Government Policy for Motherhood**

In 1998, the government amended the legislation, again with significantly improving the position of women in society by providing facilities to women engaged in productive employment outside households. It entitled working women with 84 days paid leave in the event of child birth and 1 hour breast-feeding breaks until the baby is 6 months old and ready to accept alternative food.

### **2.4.4 Government Policy for Education**

Government implements a free education policy along with providing text books and set of school uniforms free of charge for all school children. School children are also benefited by the subsidized bus fares for government road and railway transport as well as in private sector transport. In addition government is extending its support for students from families with low income and less privileged backgrounds.

In 1998, age limit of compulsory education was fixed between 5 to 14 years. However, according to the present government's "*Mahainda Chinthana*" development policy document, this age limit has been extended to 16 years or up to General Certificate of Examinations Ordinary Level (G.C.E. O/L). The primary motive of this reform was to protect a large number of children who were not attending school and who were subject to various forms of abuse such as being employed as child labourers.

Bilingual education is promoted by the education policy. Therefore, other than English it is expected to learn both Sinhala and Tamil languages during primary education.

Government is adopting a free education policy for state universities though there is still limited to about 2 percent (CENWOR, 2002). Student selection criteria are based on merit basis as well as district quota system which provides equal opportunities to students in all parts of the country. Scholarships are being awarded to students who excel in advanced level examination and for those from financially difficult families to assist in their expenses through the Mahapola fund.

To expand the opportunity of higher education, the University Act was amended allowing few more institutions to award their own degrees. One such prominent institution is the Sri Lanka Institute of Information Technology (SLIIT). From 2011, to improve the employability of undergraduates the government made it mandatory for all students selected for undergraduate courses in state universities to undergo leadership training.

The Ministry of Higher Education in collaboration with the University Grants Commission (UGC) has a continuous dialogue with academia, trade unions and other key stakeholders to uplift the higher education system to global standards. The Higher Education for the Twenty First Century (HETC) Project is working towards achieving the task of increasing the quality of higher education system. To facilitate access to higher education, the National Online Distance Education System (NODES) project is also in the process of expansion. With the objective of assuring excellence in higher education through quality assurance the Ministry of Higher Education is taking measures to strengthen its institutional framework by establishing Quality Assurance and Accreditation Council (QAAC) under the University Grants Commission. Initiatives have been taken to improve effective communication skills and literacy in Information Technology. One of the key initiatives of this nature is Information Communication Technology (ICT) specialization for BA degrees which will have higher demand in the job market.

#### **2.4.5 Government Policy for Employment**

Currently the legal age for employment is 18 years. In order to broaden the employment opportunities for youth and enabling them to compete better in job markets, the Ministry of Youth Affairs is integrated with the skills development – a single entity making it the 3rd largest segment in the annual budget. Sri Lanka encourages youth to be innovative and creative. The 2010 United Nations General Assembly outcome document on the MDGs has also endorsed a similar call for effecting such improvements.

#### **2.5 Specific Strategies for Enhancing Youth Development**

Direct link has been identified between youth related issues and the country's peace and security. With this understanding it is vital to assure the access of youth to education, health and productive employment. The Government policies with a link to country's youth such as education, health and employment have been formulated giving prime importance to the above factors. The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Skills Development along with all other institutes that comes under its purview has developed strategies for four thrust areas that has identified to implement their work plan. Economic development strategy is basically focused on provision of vocational training, assistance for self employment development, providing entrepreneurship training, vocational guidance and agricultural training.

In order to create a productive workforce that require knowledge and skills, need of a comprehensive education program which go together with the process of transformation has recognized as a vital requirement. As a prerequisite, intake and output capacities of all primary, secondary and tertiary education institutions, including technical and vocational schools were supposed to be strengthened. As a way of improving the productivity of youth in development by developing knowledge and skills, introduction of modern class rooms, teaching methods and provision of resources such as infrastructure of information technology, computer laboratories, revised text books and e-libraries was to be implemented immediately.

#### **2.6 Achievement of Strategies of Different Ministries**

Job Banks and vocational guidance centers have been established to guide the youth. The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Skills Development is amalgamating the Government, private and Non Government Organizations in this regard. There are 133 registered vocational training institutes operating in the country and for vocational training and skills development sector by September 2012, about 75,000 trainees had been recruited for vocational education and training due to promotional programmes conducted through the National Career Guidance Center. In addition, five advisory service centers

are in operation with the objective of providing consultation services to youth with problems.

The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Skills Development has organized many training programmes, workshops and competitions to sharpen the skills of Sri Lankan youth while providing a forum to show them to the public. Skills and innovation competitions, “*Shramabhimani*” youth camps and educational exhibitions attract large number of participants. One day entrepreneurship training programmes for upcoming young entrepreneurs, provision of vocational training for disabled youth and 2 days leadership training programmes for school prefects are few more such efforts of the Ministry.

To improve the trainee’s English language competency, a programme has been initiated to improve the language knowledge of the English Instructors with the assistance of the British Council, Colombo. Attempts of getting the service of volunteers from various universities in Britain for the English training program was also a success.

Members of the academic staff who are attached to training institutes that comes under the Ministry have been trained in collaboration with Nanyang Polytechnic International Institute, Singapore. Further, training programme on Pedagogical Training for instructors of the institutions under this Ministry with the assistance of Institute of Technical Education (ITE) in Singapore had commenced.

Action has been taken to sign the following Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with other Ministries under the inter Ministerial programme to develop youth skills. Under this programme, the Ministry of Rehabilitation and Prison Reforms provides vocational training for prisoners. According to the MoU signed with the Ministry of Power and Energy, students who successfully completed the courses stipulated by respective technical colleges or colleges of technology will get the opportunity of following three years on the job industrial training. A MoU was signed with the Ministry of Education to prepare a systematic programme which facilitates awarding National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) to students who follow Information Communication Technology (ICT) as a subject in school curriculum. An agreement was made between the Ministry of Foreign Employment Promotion and Welfare to initiate a separate programme to offer vocational qualifications for persons who seek foreign employment.

Members of the Youth Club Federation participated at the youth exchange programme between Sri Lanka and United Kingdom. Sri Lankan youth were able to take part in Japan- Sri Lanka friendship programmes such as Fuji-Maru Ship Programme.

Drama contests are been conducted in Sinhala and Tamil medium at provincial level. National Youth Awards Authority has introduced and implemented a youth awards programme for the youth in youth circles. This programme was conducted among the

Tamil community in the estate sector and in rural areas under the patronage of the Ministry of Economic Development.

To develop sports skills of differently abled youth of the country, sports equipment were supplied for those groups and “*Sihinaya*” (Dream) sports festivals is been conducted to give them an opportunity to participate in competitive sports. To improve their talents of singing, dancing and acting “Dream be on the reality” programme is been conducted.

## **2.7 Best Examples of Activities for Youth Development**

A Youth Parliament of Sri Lanka was conceived and implemented to mark the International Year of Youth and it consists of 335 members between the age group of 15-26 years representing all ethnic communities in the country. By now, the Sri Lanka Youth Parliament has completed seven sessions.

Twenty five per cent of the young parliamentarians are from the predominantly Tamil areas in the North of the country. The drive for setting up the Youth Parliament was to create leaders or representatives nurtured in the finest democratic ideals and practices. It also provides an important opportunity in post-conflict Sri Lanka to foster ideals of peace, solidarity, and harmony among the country’s younger generation. These aspiring leaders in the Youth Parliament could one day meaningfully contribute to strengthening and revitalizing the country’s democratic institutions, democratic governance and further promote ideals of peace, tolerance and justice.

Policy makers are keen on creating a more secure and better environment for development for youth population of the country in the post-conflict Sri Lanka. The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Skills Development and institutions under its supervision such as the National Youth Services Council of Sri Lanka have established youth capacity building programmes throughout the country to disseminate entrepreneurial, social and life skills, non-violent conflict resolution, and vocational training to increase their overall capacity for gainful employment in order to enhance their quality of living. The network of Youth Centers under the National Youth Services Council has extended its activities to 12,000 villages out of the 14,000 total villages across the country. Vocational training centers have been re-established in the Northern and the Eastern parts of the country to provide opportunities to those youth who missed years of schooling during the conflict. Further, to ensure the completion of secondary education for former young adults and child combatants, special programmes called “Catch-up School Programmes” have been conducted.

## **2.8 Roles and Responsibilities of NGOs, Local and International Development Partners Dealing with Youth**

There are 247 registered local and international Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) operating in Sri Lanka. They play an important role in many disciplines such as environmental protection, social welfare, especially of women and children, empowerment of low income category people, and uplifting community health standards. NGOs are key actors in the national reproductive health and gender programmes also and their service has been recognized by the government. They provide valuable support to government programmes mainly in the areas of family planning, adolescent health, and STI/HIV prevention. Their programmes are directed towards educating, training, and counseling of adolescents on above subjects. Further they provide counseling facilities, reproductive health information and conduct various youth projects.

In collaboration with the United Nations Family Planning Association (UNFPA) several NGOs have implemented projects targeting the vulnerable sectors of the society such as the Free Trade Zone workers, the plantation and rural community, youth, adolescents, and army personnel. The project was to distribute condom vending machines island-wide to encourage the use of condoms as a temporary solution to prevent sexually transmitted diseases and also to reduce the chances of unwanted pregnancies.

An NGO in collaboration with the Global Network of Religions for Children (GNRC) South Asia Secretariat has hosted a special youth consultation day to mark the International Day of Peace on the theme of Youth for Peace. The youth participants of diverse backgrounds were able to prepare critical peace statements through a participatory learning process. The critical peace statements they prepared expressing their aspirations for sustainable peace in Sri Lanka by grappling with various issues in Sri Lankan society.

With support and endorsement from several United Nations agencies operating in the country a group of youth led and youth focused organizations which are engaged in environmental issues perform many activities. These included management and conservation of environment, climate change, sustainable development and advocacy for environmental issues. These organizations are working to inspire, engage and support young people to take collective action towards achieving a sustainable development and greener Sri Lanka especially among youth category ([srilankayouth.lk/regeional.php](http://srilankayouth.lk/regeional.php)). UNICEF with the assistance of local NGOs has conducted a programme covering nearly 100 schools with the aim of promoting life skills to prevent risk behavior among students (Perera, 2007)

## 2.9 Private Sector Contribution in Youth Development

Private sector firms have taken considerable effort to empower Sri Lankan youth initiating many activities such as knowledge and skills development programmes, providing on the job training facilities and loans and etc. Few examples are summarized as follows:

The Hatton National Bank (HNB) one of the premier banks in Sri Lanka has introduced *Yauwanabhimana* programme to empower the Sri Lankan youth by fostering personal and professional development and creating employability. Number of other renowned companies such as the Hayleys, Dialog Axiata PLC, Chemical Industries Colombo Ltd. (CIC), Diesel & Motor Engineering PLC (DIMO), Holcim Lanka Ltd as well as the British Council, the University of Colombo and the World University Service of Canada (WUSC) Sri Lanka are partners of the *Yauwanabhimana* programme. *Yauwanabhimana* programme offers numerous opportunities, including internships, knowledge sharing and exposure to private sector operations to increase the employability of young people of the country. *Yauwanabhimana* programme has organized youth development workshops covering all parts of the country to improve their knowledge in English language. This programme has also given training and exposure to a variety of industries, including mechanical engineering, telecommunication, construction and agriculture to improve skill and develop the ability of youth to be successful in a professional environment. In addition, the HNB offers a series of financial services including savings accounts and educational, vehicle, personal, housing and entrepreneurial loans, to empower young people with financial opportunity.

Dialog Axiata PLC and Varam Sri Lanka have joined hands in a youth self-employment initiative. The Varam Welfare Centers have been providing job skills training for young people. Its paper recycling project which is part of a greeting card manufacturing programme was funded by the Dialog Axiata PLC Change Trust.

Dialog awards local and foreign scholarships annually to assist young people to pursue their higher education. Local scholarships are awarded to students who excel at the Ordinary Level and Advanced Level examinations. Selection of students for the scholarships is done by the Ministry of Education of Sri Lanka and is based on the best results in each of the 25 administrative districts. In addition to the above scholarships, approximately four differently abled students get scholarships each year. Dialog has also awarded fully sponsored scholarships to Sri Lankan scholars, to pursue a BSc Engineering Degree, at Multimedia University (MMU) Malaysia, acclaimed as one of the most technologically advanced universities in the World.

To uplift and facilitate research, development and higher learning in Sri Lanka, the Dialog invested for the first ever research lab for telecommunication technologies research which was established at the Moratuwa University. It will benefit University graduates with interest in the Electrical and Telecommunication Engineering fields.

Applied research projects and product development initiatives, that are beneficial to the industry and are academically challenging are undertaken by the laboratory, while facilitating technology transfer among similar research bodies. Further, Dialog facilitates interaction between scholars and the company's employees which facilitates mentoring, internships and soft skills development to train these scholars for job market requirements.

The Sampath Bank, one of the leading banks in Sri Lanka has joined hands with the University of Sri Jayewardenepura to promote youth empowerment in the country. The bank has adopted various mechanisms to enhance employee engagement. For that purpose, the bank has implemented its Cooperate Social Responsibility (CSR) projects in rural and semi urban sectors and focuses on small and medium scale projects to facilitate more beneficiaries. This is being done through developing partnerships, strategic agreements and industry collaboration with respective bodies.

Talented undergraduates of the Sri Jayewardenepura University and qualified foreign interns from Bosnia, Bulgaria, China, Czech Republic, Germany, Pakistan, Russia and Ukraine had served as resource persons for the programme. Leadership Training programmes conducted by this project has covered topics such as Corporate World, Social Dancing, Documentary Writing, Presentation and Public Speaking, Social Etiquette etc.

However, these programmes do not sufficiently reach rural areas of the country yet. Therefore, youth empowerment programmes via CSR projects of private sector that will ensure good knowledge to increase the employability is vital for development of rural youth of Sri Lanka.

## **2.10 Conclusion**

The Government has taken so many initiatives to utilize the contribution of Sri Lankan youth for the countries' development process by developing their knowledge and skills to their fullest potential by expanding and updating education and training facilities, skills development opportunities, aesthetic skills as well as overall well-being through various programmes and Ministries. Role of NGOs (local as well as international) should be acknowledged for their services in this regard. Though, the overall performances of youth development programmes demonstrate success, to reach the desired status of "globally employable youth" still there are many limitations in the existing education system as well as in training programmes in terms of their quality and access. Poor selection of target groups for various programmes has been identified as one of the major weaknesses. However with current government's initiatives to strengthen carrier guidance and counseling programmes it is expected to address this issue. In addition, information that will gather from these consultations will produce more productive youth development programmes in the future.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **Status of Youth**

**By M.A.C.S. Bandara**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

In this Chapter, an attempt is made to provide a profile of Sri Lankan youth, outlining only some selected aspects such as demographic, socio economic and economic profiles. In addition, the chapter presents data related to migration and discuss reasons for migration.

#### **3.2 Youth Population**

The standard United Nations definition of youth is people ages 15 through 24. The International Labour Organization (ILO) follows the UN definition. Both organizations, however, recognize that the operational definition of youth varies widely from country to country depending on cultural, institutional, and political factors (Higgins, 1997).

In Sri Lanka, the National Youth Survey defines youth as those in between ages 15-29 years. As in most industrial countries, the lower age limit corresponds to the constitutional minimum school-leaving age. The upper limit of 29 years reflects several factors. One has to do with the average age of a university student. Sri Lankan students are usually 19 years when they complete their secondary school education. The results of the General Certificate of Education Advance-level or A/L, examination are usually released in the following year and university entrance is exclusively depends on these results. This long lag time combined with a history of youth unrest, student strikes, and political instability in the country, which have led to temporary closures of the universities, mean that a student's actual entry to university is often delayed for at least one or two years.

Moreover, students are allowed to retake the A/L exams twice if they are interested in improving their aggregate score to be eligible for university entrance. As a result, by the time university students graduate and enter the job market they are usually between the ages of 24 and 27 years. However, situation has been changed now due to stable political conditions. Now a student who passed G.C.E. A/L can enter into the university within less than 6 months after reaching the results. As a result they graduate between ages 22 and 24 years and can enter in to the job market earlier than before.

### 3.2.1 Proportion of Youth in Total Population

The first Population Census in Sri Lanka conducted in the year 1871 showed a population of 2.4 million. The previous census in 2001 showed a population of 14.8 million. Currently population is around 20.277 million (Department of Census and Statistics, 2011). Table 3.1 shows the proportionate of youth to the total population by sex. According to the information, in the year 2005 and 2010, youth proportion had decreased compared to early days. Nearly 2.6 percent proportionate reduction of youth could be seen during year 2000 to 2010.

**Table 3.1: Youth Proportionate to the Total Population**

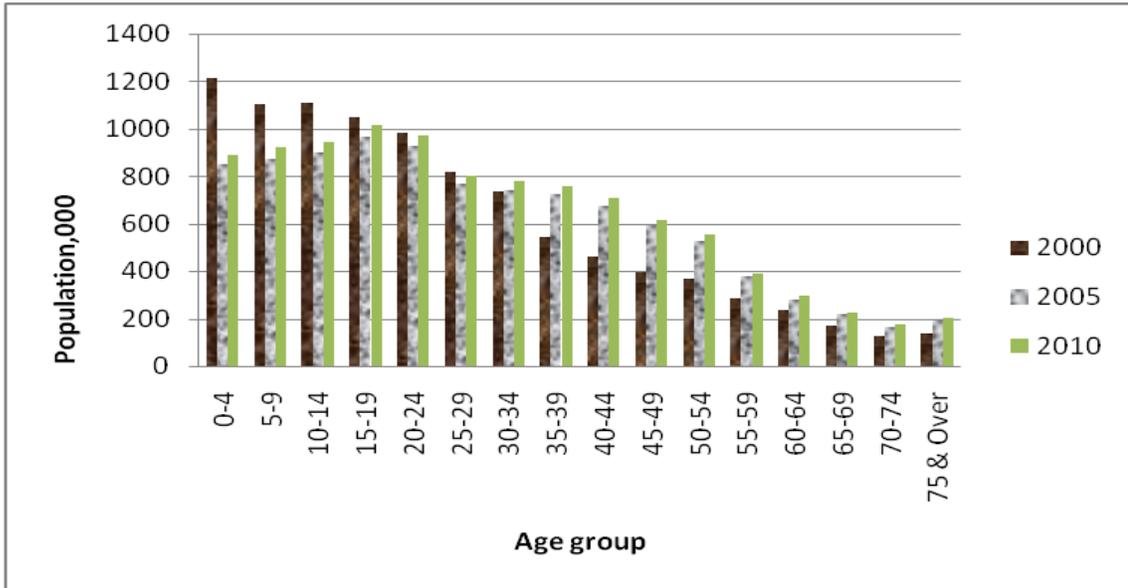
Age group	Percentage of Total Population					
	2000		2005		2010	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
15-19	5.5	5.3	4.9	4.8	4.9	4.8
20-24	5.2	5.1	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7
25-29	4.3	4.3	3.9	4.0	3.9	4.0
Total	14.9	14.7	13.6	13.5	13.5	13.5

Source: Department of Census and Statistics, 2012

### 3.2.2 Age Distribution

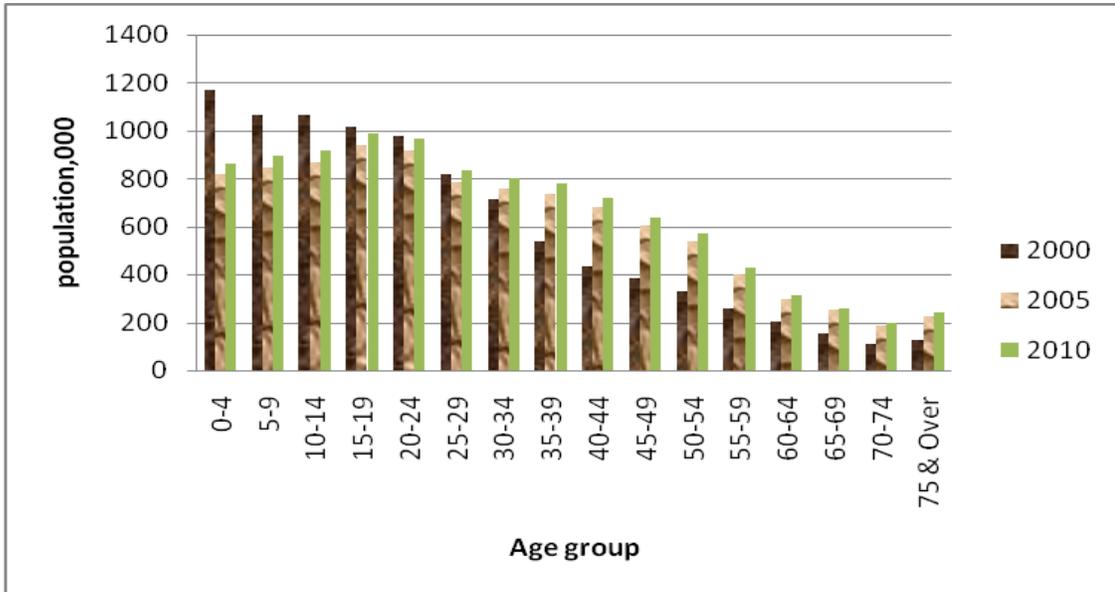
Figure 3.1a & 3.1b illustrate the population by age and sex. According to the Figure 3.1a & 3.1b, during the early days (year 2000) male population was comparatively high. However, during the year 2005 it showed minor decreasing trend up to age 30 to 34 but then again male population started to rise. One prominent feature of the Figure 3.1a & 3.1b is the gradual decrease in the population below 15 especially after year 2000. This is mainly attributable to declining fertility levels in the recent past. In the year 2005 and 2010 the highest population was in 15-19 age groups for both sexes. But it was reported for 0-4 age group in 1981 and the rest until 2000.

**Figure 3.1a: Total Male Populations by Age in 2000, 2005 and 2010**



Source: Department of Census and Statistics, 2012

**Figure 3.1b: Total Female Populations by Age in 2000, 2005 and 2010**



Source: Department of Census and Statistics, 2012

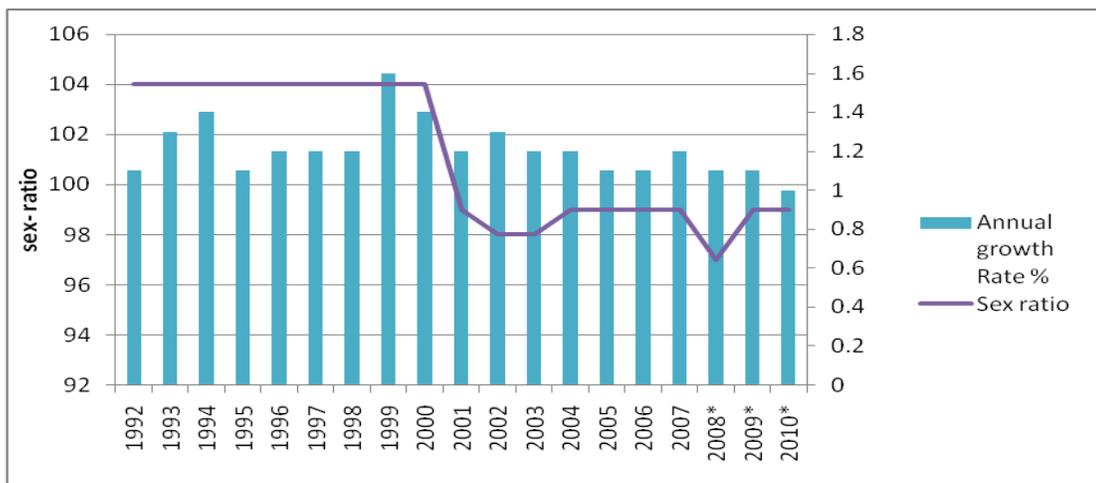
### 3.2.3 Growth Rate

In this section the growth rate of total population is discussed. Growth rate does not show much spatial variation. According to the previous census of the year 2001, most of the wet zone districts had very low growth rates of less than 1 percent. A very clear exception was the Gampaha district which had a high growth rate (1.9 percent). This could be due to domestic migration, particularly to Free Trade Zone. Colombo district too had a growth rate, which was more than the average value. On the other hand, districts in the dry zone area had growth rates exceeding 1 percent. The highest growth rates were recorded for the dry zone districts of Vavuniya (2.2 percent), Mullaitivu (2.2 percent) and Ampara (2.1 percent). However, censuses 2001 data shows an annual overall growth rate of 1.2 percent. During the period 1981 to 2010 it had decreasing and very closer to 1 (Fig 3.2). However, decreasing growth rate could be observed in the past decade. This was mainly due to the conflict situation especially in the Northern and Eastern provinces of the country. According to the 2012 census (preliminary data) population growth had been further reduced to 0.7.

### 3.2.4 Sex-Ratio

Sex ratio, which is defined as the number of males per 100 females was 99 in the year 2010. Comparison with 1981 census Figures reveals that the overall sex ratio had decreased by 4.8 units from 104.0 in 1981 to 99.2 in 2001 and further to 99 in 2010. According to the Table 3.2, out of the total population 5,667,000 (29.67 percent), 5,312,000 (27.04 percent) and 5,576,000 (27.10 percent) were the youth in the population years 2000, 2005 and 2010 respectively. During early days, males had consistency outnumbered the females at all censuses from 1871 to 2001.

**Figure 3.2: Sex Ratio and Annual Population Growth Rate (1992-2010)**



Source: Department of Census and Statistics, 2012

Population density is measured as the number of persons per square kilometer of land. While the land area remains constant, the population density increases with the growth of the population. Today, Sri Lanka is one of the densely populated countries of the world. According to the 2001 Census, Sri Lanka population density stood at 300 persons per square kilometer. Wide variation in population density exists across the districts. Colombo is overwhelmingly the most densely populated district with 3,330 persons per square kilometer, which is nearly 11 times higher than the national figure.

**Table 3.2: Estimated Mid-Year Total Population ('000) by Age Group**

Age group	Year		
	2000	2005	2010
0-4	2,387	1,671	1,755
5-9	2,165	1,721	1,817
10-14	2,173	1,771	1,859
15-19	2,063	1,911	2,003
20-24	1,964	1,846	1,942
25-29	1,640	1,555	1,631
30-34	1,449	1,497	1,580
35-39	1,079	1,460	1,538
40-44	898	1,359	1,425
45-49	784	1,195	1,250
50-54	693	1,064	1,126
55-59	543	780	817
60-64	438	576	609
65-69	324	469	485
70-74	234	352	372
75 & Over	268	417	444
<b>Total</b>	<b>19,102</b>	<b>19,644</b>	<b>20,653</b>

Source: Department of Census and Statistics, 2012

### 3.2.5 Rural-Urban Youth Distribution

In the 2001 census, urban sector comprised of all Municipal and Urban Council areas. Estate sector is defined as plantations of 20 acres or more in extent upon which there are 10 or more resident labourers. Rest of the areas is treated as the rural sector. Although the definition of estate sector is similar to that used in the 1981 census, the definition of urban sector is not comparable between the two censuses. This had happened as a consequence of abolishing Town Councils which were treated as urban in the 2001 census and absorbing the administration of such areas into *Pradesheeya*

*Sabhas* which were considered as rural since 1987. Therefore, the urban population figures and percentages seem to be underestimating the true picture of urban sector and should be interpreted cautiously. Anyhow, majority of the youth population had stagnated in rural areas. However, due to changes of Town Councils from time to time, it is difficult to give any reasonable arguments to the changes.

**Table 3.3: Percentage of Youth Distribution by Sector**

Year	Rural		Urban	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
2000	44.1	42.7	6.6	6.6
2005	42.9	45.0	6.3	5.7
2010	41.5	46.1	5.6	6.8

Source: Department of Census and Statistics, 2012

### 3.3 Educational Attainment

In this section the total population frequencies other than youth population are discussed. Ability to read and write at least one language was regarded as literate. The literacy rate by sex is shown in Table 3.4. The literacy rate of the population of year 2001 aged 10 years and over was 91.8 percent. Findings revealed (Table 3.4) that literacy rate is comparatively higher in male population.

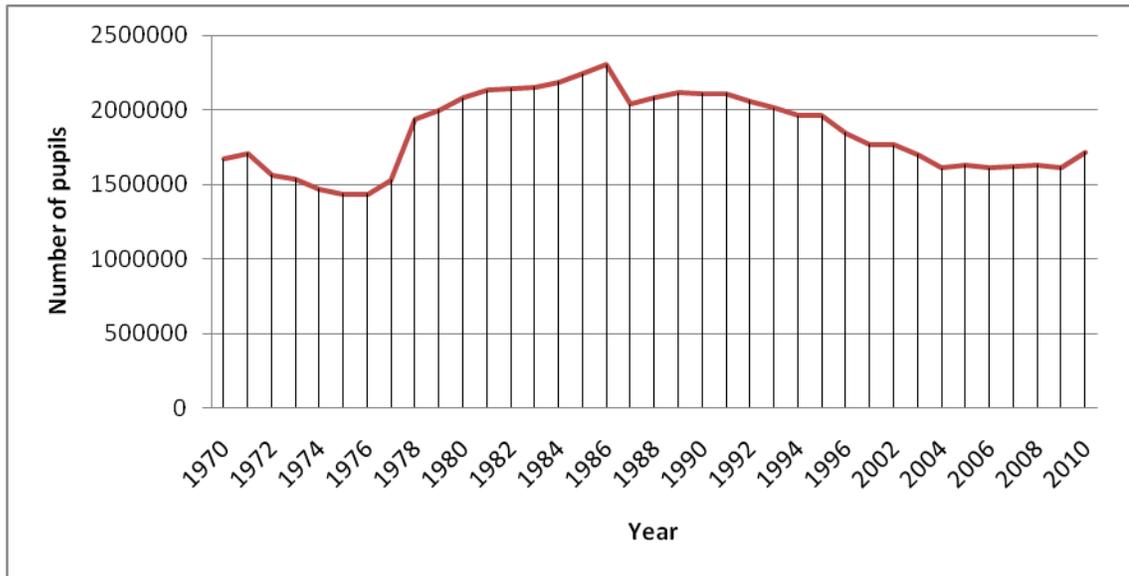
**Table 3.4: Literacy Rate by Sex, (2001)**

Sex	Literacy rate
Male	92.8
Female	90.6

Source: Department of Census and Statistics, 2012

The number of primary education pupils in Sri Lanka was 1,720,806 as at 2010 (Figure 3.3). As the graph below shows, over the past 40 years this indicator had reached a maximum value of 2,304,499 in 1986 and a minimum amount of 1,436,300 in 1975.

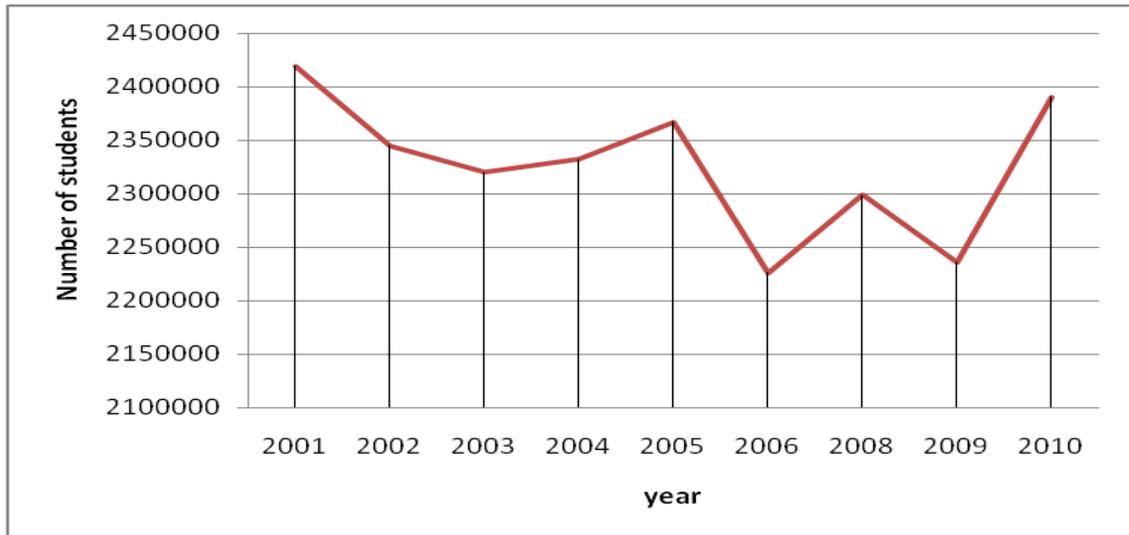
**Figure 3.3: Primary Education of Pupils (1970 – 2010)**



Source: Department of Census and Statistics, 2012

The value for Secondary education, general pupils in Sri Lanka was 2,390,895 in 2010. As the graph below shows (Figure 3.4), over the past 9 years this indicator had reached a maximum value of 2,419,496 in 2001 and a minimum value of 2,225,785 in 2006.

**Figure 3.4: Secondary Education of Pupils (1970 – 2010)**



Source: Department of Census and Statistics, 2012

According to the Table 3.5, during the early years, higher numbers of male students entered into the primary and secondary education rather than females. But, during the

later years, even though male students entered primary education in more numbers than females, it was reduced at the tertiary education levels. More female youth who had entered into the primary to secondary had ended up with tertiary. But, of the male youth who had entered into the primary and secondary levels less percentage had gone to the tertiary level. Other important fact is that in the year 2010, less number of students had entered into the primary education and that was 153,819.

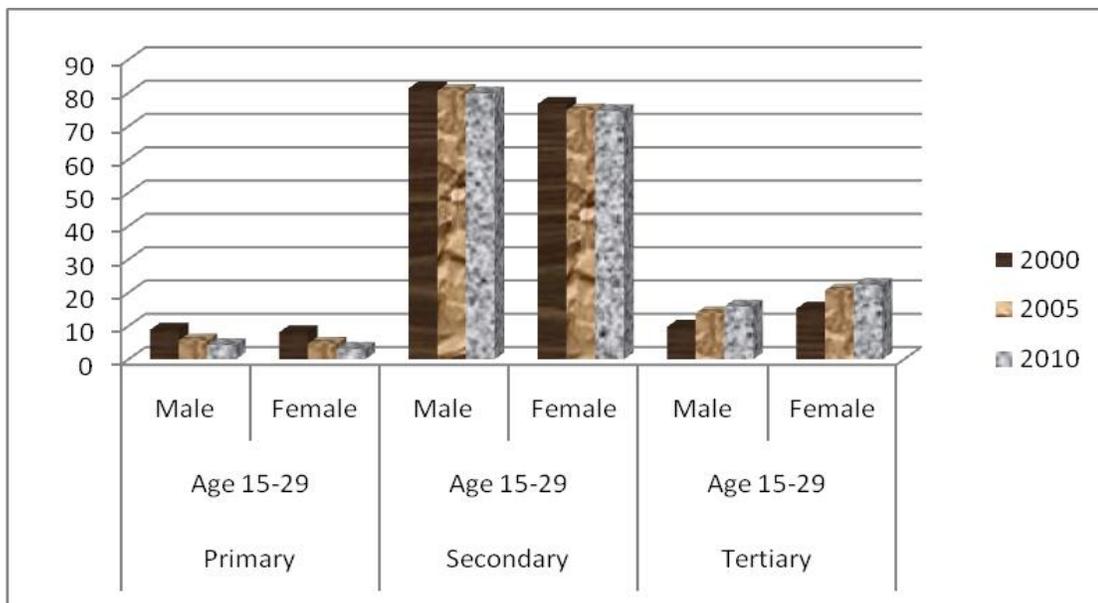
**Table 3.5: Educational Attainment of Youth**

Year	Primary		Secondary		Tertiary	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
2000	197,193	175,835	1,810,065	1,659,027	216,796	328,718
2005	123,094	104,932	1,771,354	1,689,753	304,360	466,475
2010	84,351	69,468	1,578,246	1,654,536	313,130	496,072

Source: Department of Census and Statistics, 2012

Figure 3.5 shows the percentage of educational level of youth during years 2000, 2005 and 2010. It shows that higher percentage of female youth were more educated than males under the category of tertiary level. Also, significant decrease of primary education on 2010 can be shown in both sexes.

**Figure 3.5: Education Attainment Percentage to Total Youth Population**



Source: Department of Census and Statistics, 2012

### 3.4 Employment

The main source of data for this part is the Labour Force Survey (LFS) data published by the Sri Lankan Department of Census and Statistics (DCS). Because of the ethnic conflict, the LFS surveys did not cover Northern and Eastern provinces from 1990 to 2002 or for 2006. The survey covered some parts of Northern and Eastern provinces in 2003 and 2004, but only in 2005 did the survey cover all the administrative districts. To keep data comparable across different years, most of the analysis are conducted for the country excluding these two provinces. Where appropriate, information for these two provinces are provided using 2005 data.

Table 3.6 reveals that, about 7.7 million persons were employed during the year 2010 and that was 6.3 million in the year 2000. Table 3.5 depicts the trends in employment by main industry group from year 2000, 2005 and 2010. It shows a gradual increase of employment in industry and service sector while depicting a decreasing trend in agriculture sector from 2000 to 2005. However, again agriculture sector emergence can be shown from 2005 to 2010. It can be noticed that there is a transition of employment within economic sectors in recent annual Figures.

**Table 3.6: Employed Population by Industry Group**

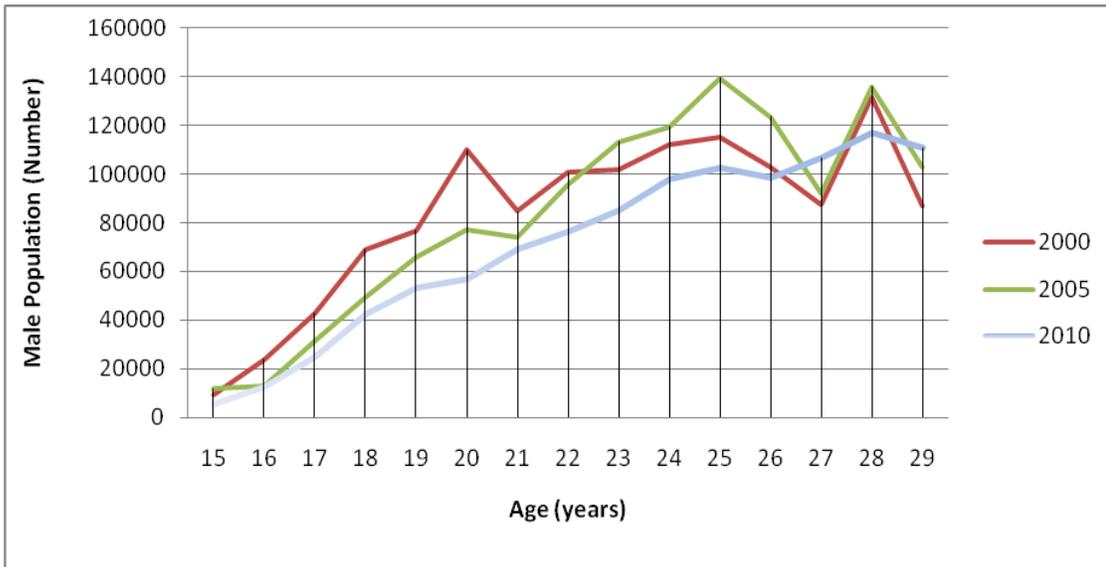
Year	Total Employed Number	Major Industry Group (% to the Total)			Total Percentage
		Agriculture	Industries	Services	
1992	4,924,130	42.2	20.1	37.7	100.0
2000	6,310,247	36.0	23.6	40.3	100.0
2005	6,788,119	30.3	26.3	43.3	100.0
2010	7,706,593	32.7	24.2	43.1	100.0

Source: Department of Census and Statistics, 2012

#### 3.4.1 Mean Age during Engagement in Employment

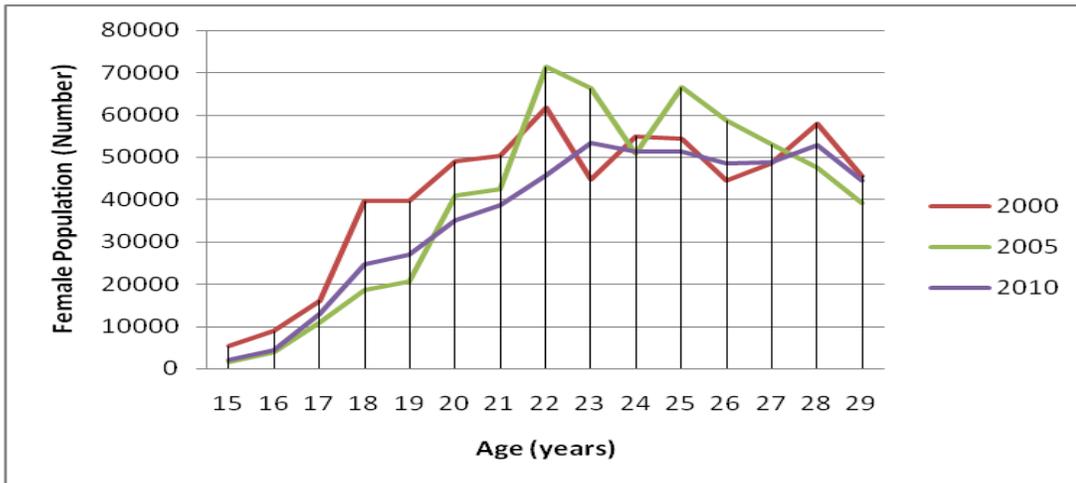
According to the Figure 3.6, the mean age during engagement of male's employment was around 25 years and that was 22 years in females. Because, most of the persons who go through the formal education and ended up at the university or following some professional courses had come to the job market mostly between the 22 years to 25 years of age. But, recently the lower limit of the age of engagement in work has gone down to 20 years.

**Figure 3.6 a: Male Youth Engaged in Employment (2000, 2005 and 2010)**



Source: Department of Census and Statistics, 2012

**Figure 3.6 b: Female Youth Engaged in Employment (2000, 2005, 2010)**



Source: Department of Census and Statistics, 2012

### 3.4.2 Total Number of Youth in Employment

Table 3.7 reveals that, the total number of youth in employment has been reduced during the period of 2000 to 2010. Both male and females employed had been reduced with the years. More than 50 percent of the male youth engaged in employment, however, female youth employment was comparatively lower.

**Table 3.7: Total Youth Engaged in Employment**

Year	Male		Female		Total	
	Number	% of Male Youth	Number	% of Female Youth	Number	% of Total Youth
2000	1,252,913	56.32	621,275	28.7	1,874,188	33.07
2005	1,244,425	56.60	590,769	26.13	1,835,194	34.55
2010	1,060,063	53.65	540,612	24.35	1,600,675	28.71

Source: Department of Census and Statistics, 2012

### 3.4.3 Total Waged Employee/Worker

Table 3.8 shows the total waged employed youth males during the year 2000, 2005, and 2010. Shown in above Table 3.7 the total number of waged employee youth was fluctuating over the period of 2000 to 2010.

**Table 3.8: Total Waged Employed Youth Population**

Year	Male		Female		Total	
	Number	% to the Total Male Youth	Number	% to the Total Female Youth	Number	% of Total Youth
2000	795,314	35.75	444,051	20.52	1,239,365	21.87
2005	876,545	39.86	440,544	19.48	1,317,089	24.80
2010	704,222	35.64	394,574	17.77	1,098,796	19.70

Source: Department of Census and Statistics, 2012

### 3.4.4 Non-waged Employee/Worker

Table 3.9 explains the non-wage employment population of youth in 2000, 2005 and 2010. One can hardly find any trend in waged and un-waged youth in the Table 3.10. However, there was slight increase of female waged employed in years of 2005 and 2010 compared to the year 2000. Female waged employment percentage was comparatively high with same male category.

**Table 3.9: Total Non-Waged Employed Youth Population**

Year	Male		Female		Total	
	Number	% to the Total Male Youth	Number	% to the Total Female Youth	Number	(%)
2000	457,599	20.57	177,224	8.19	634,823	11.20
2005	367,880	16.73	150,225	6.64	518,105	9.75
2010	355,841	18.01	146,038	6.58	501,879	9.00

Source: Department of Census and Statistics, 2012

**Table 3.10: Percentage of Waged and Non-Waged Youth Employees by Gender**

Year	Waged Employed (%)		Non-Waged Employed (%)	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
2000	63.5	71.5	36.5	28.5
2005	70.4	74.6	29.6	25.4
2010	66.4	73.0	33.6	27.0

Source: Department of Census and Statistics, 2012

### 3.4.5 Youth in Unemployment

According to the Table 3.11 total number of unemployed youth in year 2000 was 424907. It was 9.68 percent of the total youth population in the year 2000. Anyhow, national level of unemployment rate of the year 2000 was 7.6. The number of unemployed persons was estimated at about 401,146 during the year 2010. Out of this total, 46 percent were males and 54 percent were females. However, total unemployment rates had changed over time. It was 13.8 percent in 1993 and 8.9 percent in 1999 and had reduced to 4.9 percent in 2010.

**Table 3.11: Unemployed Youth Population**

Year	Male		Female		Total	
	Number	% to the Total Male Youth	Number	% to the Total Female Youth	Number	%
2000	222,094	9.98	202,813	9.37	424,907	77.5
2005	205,286	9.34	213,175	9.43	418,461	7.9
2010	130,765	6.62	146,156	6.58	276,921	5.1

Source: Department of Census and Statistics, 2012

### 3.5 Youth Migration

This section attempts to identify key characteristics of Sri Lankan youth migrants, the trends and patterns associated with migration from the country, and the impact of migration on individuals. Further it is extended to identify the reasons for migrations and government initiatives regarding international migrations. Despite the significant numbers of youth migration, no specific analysis has yet been done on the youth component of the migrant labour force in Sri Lanka. The percentage of departures in the age of 19 years and below category was extremely small. However, there is no any proper mechanism or procedures to collect statistics related to the youth migration in Sri Lanka. Anyhow, an attempt is made here to elaborate the national situation of migration and issues (Table 3.12), trends and patterns in the country situation.

**Table 3.12: Migration for Foreign Employment (2005 and 2010)**

Category	2005	2010
Total Migration for Employment (Number.)	231,290	267,507
Number of Males	93,896	148,001
Percentage of Total Migration	40.6	55.0
Number of Females	137,394	119,506
Percentage of Total Migration	59.4	45
Migrant Employment by Skills (%)		
Professional	0.6	1.1
Middle Level	3.5	2.6
Clerical & Related	3.6	3.0
Skilled Labour	20.2	28.5
Unskilled Labour	18.1	22.6
Housemaids	54.3	42.1
Estimated Stock of Foreign Employment	1,221,763	1,932,245 (a)
Foreign Employment as a % of Total Labour Force	16.7	23.8 (a)
Foreign Employment as a % of Total Number Employed	17.2	25.1 (a)

(a) Provisional

Source: Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment  
Department of Immigration and Emigration

In Sri Lanka, rural-to-urban migration has been marginal until recently because of the pro-rural policies of successive governments (Hettige and Mayer, 2002). The majority of Sri Lankans who migrate overseas do so for short periods of time to ease economic burdens but almost always with a hope of return (Kottegoda, 2004). So while migration

is a key feature of Sri Lanka's labor market, at the individual level migration is mostly a temporary phenomenon.

### **3.5.1 Domestic Migration**

The majority of the workers who migrate internally from rural areas to urban centers are employed in the informal sector in low-status, casual jobs mainly in the construction industry and in the free-trade zones (Hettige and Mayer, 2002). The informal sector is characterized by low job security, low wages, poor working environment, little internal structure with arbitrary rules, and few benefits. Workers in the free trade zones are predominantly females.

### **3.5.2 International Migration**

There are several types of international migration: seasonal, project-tied, contract, temporary, and highly skilled or professional (ILO, 2005). The contract labour migrants to the Middle East since the early 1980s differ from the economic migrants of the preceding decades. Before economic liberalization in the late 1970s, overseas migration was undertaken by highly skilled professionals whose migration tended to be long-term or permanent (Kottegoda, 2004).

New political policies in the early 1970s forced English-speaking middle-class businessmen as well as middle-class professionals to migrate to Australia, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Canada (Waxler-Morrison, 2004). Today, overseas migration from Sri Lanka is dominated by low skilled workers on fixed-term contracts, usually of two to five years in length, mainly to oil-rich Middle East countries (SLBFE, 2007). From a macro-economic perspective, the main beneficiary of migration is seen as the sending countries' economy, which gains valuable foreign exchange for its balance of payments. Migrant workers' contributions have been estimated to be as much as one-third of Sri Lanka's national savings (Rodrigo and Jayatissa, 1989). Table 3.13 explains foreign employment by skill, age and gender in year 2010.

**Table 3.13: Number of Departures for Foreign Employment by Skill Level, Age Group and Gender 2010**

Gender	Age Group (years)								Age not reported	Total
	Below 20	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	Above 49		
Number of Departures for Professional, Middle and Clerical Level Jobs										
Male	161	1,651	3,707	3,383	2,446	1,752	1,261	1,539	0	15,900
Female	25	243	437	365	282	248	169	195	0	1,964
Total	186	1,894	4,144	3,748	2,728	2,000	1,430	1,734	0	17,864
Departures for Skilled Level Jobs										
Male	1,480	9,798	13,974	12,827	9,443	7,413	5,750	4,434	1	65,120
Female	320	1,620	1,729	1,301	742	418	181	106	0	6,417
Total	1,800	11,418	15,703	14,128	10,185	7,831	5,931	4,540	1	71,537
Departures for Semi Skilled Level Jobs										
Male	75	847	1,296	900	579	330	195	148	0	4,370
Female	31	194	141	78	43	27	32	16	0	562
Total	106	1,041	1,437	978	622	357	227	164	0	4,932
Departures for Unskilled Level Jobs										
Male	1,211	10,777	14,077	10,514	6,537	4,218	2,595	1,530	1	51,460
Female	214	958	1,450	1,585	1,406	1,562	1,190	597	0	89,62
Total	1,425	11,735	15,527	12,099	7,943	5,780	3,785	2,127	1	60,422
Departures for Housemaid Jobs (Female only)										
Total	2,927	23,073	33,054	27,624	19,005	13,713	9,801	7,651	3	136,850
Departures for all Occupations										
Male	2,927	23,073	33,054	27,624	19,005	13,713	9,801	7,651	3	136,850
Female	3,053	15,398	21,859	23,093	20,905	22,579	16,319	7,450	2	130,657
Total	5,980	38,471	54,913	50,717	39,910	36,292	26,120	15,101	5	267,507

Source: Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment

Foreign employment is the second largest earning source of foreign exchange in Sri Lanka. Private remittances for 2006 amounted to LKR 241,816 million Rupees, of which 57.1 percent were from migrant workers in the Middle East. In fact, 95 percent of employees working abroad are in the Middle East. Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Qatar, and Lebanon are the major labour-receiving countries, capturing 83 percent of Sri Lanka's export labour market. The number of departures for employment abroad had steadily increased until 2006, when there was a 12 percent decrease. Fifty-two percent of the departures in 2006 were women, 89.3 percent of whom worked as housemaids. It is estimated that about 1.5 million Sri Lankans are currently overseas for employment (Table 3.14).

**Table 3.14: Estimated Stocks of Sri Lankan Overseas Contract Workers by Manpower Levels (2006)**

Category	Number			Percentage of Total
	Male	Female	Total	
Professional	10,750	2,536	13,286	0.9
Middle-level	33,250	9,500	42,750	3.0
Clerical & related	57,600	11,200	68,800	4.8
Skilled	222,750	101,225	323,975	22.3
Unskilled	210,640	76,810	287,450	19.9
Housemaid	0.	711,446	711,446	49.1
Total	534,990	912,717	1,447,707	100.0

Source: SLBFE, 2007

Approximately half of those are housemaids. The skilled and unskilled categories combined account for another 600,000, or 42.3 percent, of the estimated stock of overseas contract workers. Professional, middle-level, and clerical workers account for only 8.7 percent of the total jobs filled. Engineers, medical professionals, accountants, administrative staff, and teachers make up the majority of professional-level staff, and the middle-level workers are dominated by clerical and technically qualified subordinate staff. Construction workers, cooks, drivers, and mechanics form the majority of the skilled workers (SLBFE 2007). In 2005 a total of 231,290 workers left for overseas employment, of whom 85,251, or 36.9 percent, were between the ages of 20 to 29 years.

As Table 3.14 shows, women constitute more than half of the total numbers in each age group. In 2005, almost 42,000 Sri Lankans left to do unskilled work overseas. Of this number, more than half of the jobs were filled by migrants in the 20–29 years age groups. While the overall percentage of migration in the professional and middle-level categories was low, the percentage of young people seeking employment in these categories was even lower. Lack of qualifications and experience may be one of the more obvious reasons. It would be important, however, to investigate this phenomenon before migration is actively promoted among youth.

**Table 3.15: Departure for Foreign Employment by Age Group and Sex (2005)**

Age Groups	Total Departures	Percentage of Total (%)	No. of Male	Percentage of Age Group (%)	No. of Female	Percentage of Age Group (%)
19 and below	1,311	0.6	416	31.7	895	68.3
20–29	85,251	36.9	38,843	45.6	46,408	54.4
30–39	74,548	32.2	22,638	30.4	51,910	69.6
40–49	49,843	21.6	14,516	29.1	35,327	70.9
50 and above	8,511	3.7	3,943	46.3	4,568	53.7
Not identified	11,826	5.1	7,757	65.6	4,069	34.4
Total	231,290	100	88,113	38.1	143,177	61.9

The number of female migrants in the other job categories is significantly lower. Moreover, females who migrate to do housework make up nearly 32 percent of the total departures in this age group. Women account for 25 percent of the skilled workers in this age group leaving for overseas employment, but only 5 percent of female migrants in this age group fall into this category.

### 3.5.3 Reasons for Migration

Several studies indicate that marital status is intimately tied to the motivation to migrate, especially for women who seek temporary overseas employment mainly for family survival and a way out of poverty. It is usually married women who migrate with the hope of improving their family's economic situation (Kottegoda, 2004; Gamburd, 2005). While some migrants achieve a certain level of socio-economic security through savings, many others find themselves in a cycle of remigration where they return home only to migrate within a couple of years (Kottegoda, 2004).

In Sri Lanka it is the population considered to be economically inactive that seeks jobs overseas, usually for a limited period of time. As many as two fifths of migrants are from poor households, which helps explain the decision to migrate (Central Bank 2003). The sparse research on youth mobility and migration makes it difficult to understand in depth the motivations for migration and whether overseas employment has met and can meet the aspirations of youth.

However, some existing studies suggest that young people are willing to migrate mainly for economic gain for themselves and their families. The National Youth Survey conducted in 2000 reported that almost half of those surveyed wanted to migrate because they felt the situation in the country was getting worse (Hettige, 2002). While many women find it necessary to migrate to ensure better marriage prospects or a better standard of living, some also migrate to escape discrimination, domestic violence,

and problematic relationships (Kottegoda, 2003). Higher salaries and greater distances mean that domestic work abroad carries less social stigma (Gamburd, 2005).

#### **3.5.4 Government Initiatives for International Migration**

The Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment was established in 1985 within the Ministry of Labor. Its main objectives are the promotion, development, and standardization of migrant labor rules, as well as providing protection for employees and their families. While the SLBFE has played an important role in implementing policies that protect migrant workers, especially housemaids, it has done little to explore and diversify overseas employment opportunities. Neither the ministry nor the bureau have formally studied the international labor market with the intention of determining what categories of available jobs could be filled by Sri Lanka's export labor force.

The government and some nongovernmental organizations have set up self-employment and entrepreneurship programmes for returning migrants. The Bank of Ceylon, for example, has two credit programmes for self employment projects. Such programmes are not complemented by a skills development programme, nor do they have a monitoring arm to at least record the challenges faced by loan recipients. Since migrants may not have entrepreneurial skills, a loan scheme without an accompanying programme to develop those skills may not be useful to a large segment of the migrant returnee population.

Further, the SLBFE has a compulsory registration scheme that includes an insurance scheme that covers contingencies like medical or other emergencies that may compel a worker to return home; 70 percent of all migrants register before departure. Workers who migrate without registering are not eligible for protection under the Act (Dias and Jayasundere, 2004). The amount of insurance paid to migrant workers in 2004 was LKR 52,562,832. The SLBFE also provides self-employment loans, scholarship schemes for migrant workers' children, and distribution of school equipment (SLBFE, 2005). Other interventions include the establishment of safe houses in certain Middle Eastern countries and loan schemes by state banks to prevent exploitation by money lenders. However, the government does not regulate or monitor the fees levied by employment agencies on migrant hopefuls, who spend close to LKR 100,000 to obtain a job.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### SWOT Analysis

By H.M.S.J.M. Hitihamu

#### 4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, strengths, weaknesses of youth, opportunities and threats for youth will be discussed in detail. SWOT is an acronym for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. By definition strengths (S) and weaknesses (W) are considered to be internal factors over which there are some measures of control. Also by definition, opportunities (O) and threats (T) are considered to be external factors over which essentially there are no controls (<http://www.investopedia.com>). The information needed for SWOT analysis was gathered from a comprehensive literature review, focus group discussions and key performance interviews. Interviews were held with 30 graduates and 35 A/L qualified employees of the Hector Kobbekaduwa Agrarian Research and Training institute.

#### 4.2 Strengths (S)

1. Sri Lanka has a separate Ministry for youth, the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Skills Development.
2. Free Education system from year one to university level provides many other benefits such as free text books and uniforms.
3. Higher literacy rate (2010 male and female literacy rate 92.6 percent and 90 percent respectively)
4. Sixteen universities controlled by the University Grant Commission.
5. Availability of vocational training centers
6. Utilizing children below 18 years as child labour is prohibited
7. Laws to reduce smoking
8. Prohibition of selling narcotic drugs such as heroin and cocaine
9. Selling alcohol to individuals below 18 years is prohibited
10. Rehabilitation programmes for vulnerable youth
11. Increase of the marriageable age up to 18 years.
12. Establishing youth clubs
13. Free immunization programmes to every new born child for a healthy youth.
14. Nutritional level enhancement programmes among kids eg. *"Thripasa"* distributing programme
15. Free health service.
16. Better international relationships.

17. Chance to vote after 18 years for selecting members to the parliament and other representative bodies.
18. Quota system for youth in all elections nomination list.

#### **4.3 Weaknesses (W)**

1. University entrance has remained a 'bottle neck' limiting access to higher education
2. Most young people find it difficult to obtain suitable jobs because of prevailing class room education system up to graduation level.
3. Political interferences in all sectors e.g.; education (selecting schools), finding job, promotions, government subsidy programmes and etc.
4. Urban rural disparities in distributing the human and physical resources in all sectors.
5. Available vocational training centre programmes do not always cater to the current job market in the world and Sri Lanka.
6. No proper programmes to attract youth to the agriculture sector with modern farming techniques.
7. Provide cheap labour to the Middle East countries due to lack of proper skills development programmes.
8. Lack of proper English Knowledge leaves out most of the youth from the expanding private sector and it act as a barrier in climbing the ladder at the work place.
9. Majority of the youth expect white colour jobs.
10. Lack of counseling programmes in every sector including youth's education, job selection, other social and cultural religious matters.
11. Disparities among rich and poor youth. Rich youth has immense opportunities to attend several sectors such as education, finding better schools, learning English, social relations and aesthetic activities.
12. Unplanned urbanization: most youth come from Colombo metropolitan area for several activities such as finding jobs and education purposes, but there is no proper plan to have comfortable accommodation facilities in the city.
13. Problems in ethnic integration, Thirty years of continuous war in the country has created unfavorable environment among ethnic groups.
14. Certain level of class and caste differences in marriages.
15. Lack of programmes to educate youth on social issues.
16. High rate of suicide among youth
17. Northern and eastern province youth have been war affected. For example due to war, majority of youth did not get a better education; therefore it takes more time to become normal in those provinces.
18. Even though laws remain to protect youth from alcohol and drugs, some youth are addicted to these and prevailing situation create loopholes.

#### **4.4 Opportunities (O)**

1. Being biodiversity hot spot tourist attractions which create job opportunities.
2. Better and unpolluted environment to spend life peacefully.
3. Opportunities to send skilled labour to foreign countries at higher wage rates.
4. Increase of chances to get advance technological degrees and diploma programmes from international universities.
5. Due to cheap labour in the country foreign investors invest in the country and create job opportunities for rural female youth e.g.: textile and garment industry.
6. Reality shows in mass media to identify the best individuals in the aesthetic sector.

#### **4.5 Threats (T)**

1. Environment changers and natural disasters in the South Asian region. For example due to the last tsunami the country lost huge human and physical capital.
2. Violence and conflict have left large numbers of youth critically disadvantaged in terms of human capital development.
3. Sri Lanka is one of the fastest ageing population in the world. Its' share of youth is decreasing, the adult share is rising, and it has been estimated that Sri Lanka's labour force may begin to shrink around 2030, if the labour force participation rates of 2006 remain unchanged (Vodopivic and Arunathilaka, 2006 cited by Carder and Remnant, 2007).
4. Brain drain: Considerable amount of Sri Lankan professionals leave the country due to low sales of salaries in the local job market, especially in the government sector.
5. Sexually transmitted diseases like Aids. As at the end of 2012, 1597 patients were reported and 275 of them died.
6. Youth unrest. For example the dominant political role of Tamil youth in the North and East created 30 years of ethnic conflict and destroyed human capital and other assets. Furthermore, 1971 and 1988/89 insurrections in the south did the same.

#### **4.6 Discussion**

The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Skills development is the predominant ministry of Sri Lanka which bear the responsibilities for the youth development. It performs functions with the vision of "skilled youth generation" and mission of "to build up a Sri Lankan youth community who can actively participate in national development through the

development of personality and skills". The objectives of the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Skills Development are to improve quality and relevance of the vocational Technical Training sector for creating a globally employable workforce, to enhance opportunities for youth for a sustainable livelihood by creating entrepreneurial culture among youth, to promote equal access for training, employment and development opportunities for socially and economically disadvantaged groups (Vulnerable groups), to ensure availability of upward mobility path to secure higher qualifications in the field of vocational and technical education and formulate and implementations of national Youth Policy that would provide guidance for youth development (Ministry of Youth Affairs and Skill Development, 2012).

Free education from grade one to university level is one of the advantages for being Sri Lankans. This free education policy permits all Sri Lankans to enjoy, public education. The prevailing education policy provides several incentives to students such as free text books, free uniforms. Great majority of the university students too are covered by the government scholarships that reduce the direct cost of education. As a policy, it is compulsory to educate pupils until G.C.E. O/L exam.

In Sri Lanka, the university education was strictly controlled by the government until recently. All the degree-granting universities and most degree-granting institutes are still government owned or funded. However autonomous in theory, only a very few institutes are truly autonomous. Sri Lanka's Higher Education Ministry last year launched a special programme to upgrade six local universities, allocating some US\$ 6 million for improving teaching, research and infrastructure up to 'international' levels within the next few years to become among the top 1,000 universities in the world, as part of Sri Lanka's aim to become a knowledge hub for Asia ([www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org)).

Therefore, literacy rate in the country is higher compared to the other South Asian countries. The total literacy rate in the year 2010 was 91.6 percent. The Female and male ratio was 90 percent and 92.6 percent respectively. Even though the country has a free education policy it is necessary to reform the education systems. On entering the job market young university graduates face difficulties in the working environment, because the skills mismatch between what they have learned and kinds of jobs available. There is a lack of emphasis in education and training institutions on employable skills such as problem solving learning and communication. Other than that, the available jobs are unattractive to young persons although there it is a mismatch with the people aspirations. Therefore, the quality improvement, development of attributes desired by the employers in university graduates and the provision of a more relevant and practical education are essential to focus on strengthening the post secondary education and tertiary education sectors by expanding opportunities for relevant courses of study and by improving quality of the technical education.

The country has pursued better relations with all major powers and seeks to strengthen its diplomatic, economic and military ties with India, Bangladesh, Russia, United States, China, Pakistan, Japan, Malaysia, South Korea and European Union. Sri Lanka has also forged close ties with the member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), African Union and the Arab League.

Sri Lanka participates in multilateral diplomacy, particularly at the United Nations, where it seeks to promote sovereignty, independence and development in the developing world. Sri Lanka was a founding member of the Non-aligned Movement (NAM). It is also a member of the Commonwealth of Nations, South Asian Development Bank and the Colombo Plan. Sri Lanka continues its active participation in the NAM. Sri Lanka uses these opportunities for entire development of the country.

Majority of youth in Sri Lanka have achieved technical skills or necessary academic qualifications for a job but they lack the soft skills to convert knowledge in to practice. In the past, many Sri Lankan youth grew in a war and conflict environment therefore to change the attitude of youth it needs to train them with conflict management and work place ethics to continue good jobs.

Even though Sri Lanka established several government and private sector vocational training centres<sup>1</sup> the awareness about these courses are lacking. These courses also need to be modernized according to the requirements of the local and global job market.

Even though laws are available to protect children from different abuses, still there is no mechanism to identify the causes of abuses. Only the investigations of these cases begin with the reporting in the media. The punishments for these abuses are not very strict. Therefore it is essential to initiate programmes to identify vulnerable children at *Grama Niladhari* level and proper mechanism to protect.

Drug selling and addiction to drug is highly restricted in the Sri Lankan context but illegally some groups of drug sellers import and sell them secretly. Therefore, it is required to further strengthen the rules and regulations to stop drug usage in the country because it destroy the human, physical and financial capital of country.

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<sup>1</sup> Vocational Training Authority provides skill training to rural youth through a network of six National Vocation Training Institutes, 21 District Vocational Training Centers and 238 Rural Vocational Training Centers.

Rehabilitation programmes specially in the North and East for youth vulnerable to initiation are needed. Mental satisfaction and social recognition of these groups should be attended for their better survival in society.

Marriage age which was increased up to 18 years gives advantages to the youth that provides certain level of education and physical fitness for everybody. Specially when married a woman in a developing country, needs to attend production, reproduction and maintain social relationships. Furthermore, this age limit provides certain level of decision making ability.

Free health programmes provide immense benefits to everybody in the country. There is some free immunization programmes for every new born child and nutrition level enhancement programmes are implemented all over the country (*Threeposha* distributing programme) among kids to maintain proper weight gain. This will be a huge advantage for the development of a country.

#### **4.7 Conclusion**

Education policies in Sri Lanka facilitate every individual to receive free education but this system is very competitive and does not help to find good jobs for everybody. Therefore it is essential to reform the prevailing education system to job oriented programme with the international standards. There is a need to implement programmes to minimize youth unrest regarding job issues, social status, rich and poor differences. Furthermore, rules and regulations need to be revised and strengthened to protect and utilize youth effectively to the development of the country.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### A Way Forward

By M.K. Nadeeka Damayanthi

#### 5.1. Introduction

This chapter focuses on way forward for the youth in development in Sri Lanka. The chapter discusses the role played by youth in sustainable development, the problems faced by them in the development process including education and labour market, science and technology, agriculture and fisheries, social and religious activities, violence and crime, peace and harmony and governance and politics etc. Further, the chapter analyses emerging constraints due to climate change and other natural calamities such as loss of lives, income earning opportunities, shelter and infrastructure and the way to involve youth with the adoption and mitigation of strategies.

#### 5.2 Youth as Key Players in Sustainable Development

In this section, a way forward for youth involvement in sustainable development is discussed with special reference to economics, ecology, culture and politics. Government of Sri Lanka has projected following economic and human development targets by 2016 (Table 5.1).

**Table 5.1: Development Targets by 2016**

Item	Unit	2010 Estimate	2016 Projection
GDP	US\$ billion	49.1	98.0
Per capita income	US\$	2,375	4,470
Inflation-GDP deflator	%	7.0	4.0
Exports	US\$ billion	8.0	18.0
Earnings from tourism	US\$ billion	0.5	2.5
International trade turnover	US\$ billion	21.3	44.1
International service net income	US\$ billion	0.6	2.6
Remittance	US\$ billion	2.0	7.0
Computer literacy rate	%	20.3	75.0
Poverty	%	7.6	4.2
Access to electricity	%	88.0	100.0
Access to telecommunication	%	85.0	100.0
Unemployment	%	5.3	3.2
Infant mortality	Per 1000	10.9	4.2
Maternal mortality	Per 1000	0.39	0.2

Source: Ministry of Finance and Planning, 2010

To achieve the above targets youth have a vital role to play in different economic, social, cultural and environmental sectors. Unemployment rate has been reduced over the years but of the total unemployment in Sri Lanka, youth have been 70 percent to 80 percent during the period 1990/2011 (Damayanthi and Rambodagedara, 2013). By providing income opportunities and social recognitions for each type of job, this could be significantly reduced. One of the major foreign earnings in Sri Lanka is private remittances and it was reported as 47 percent of the total export earnings in 2009. Further, of the total number of departures for foreign employments in 2009, 36.7 percent were youths. However, Sri Lanka is not able to supply the required proportion of foreign employment demands (Table 5.2). On the other hand, a greater number of the total departures is related to unskilled and semi skilled labour. Therefore, by improving skills, providing necessary information and expanding bi-lateral agreement with developed countries, government can provide a wide range of opportunities to youth to contribute to the economy and development.

**Table 5.2: Demand and Supply of Foreign Employment (2008-2009)**

Employment	2008		2009	
	Demand	Supply	Demand	Supply
Professional level	6935	639 (9.2%)	4798	403 (8.4%)
Middle level	11466	1333 (11.6%)	7043	849 (12%)
Clerical and related level	25361	2502 (9.9%)	16237	2331 (14.3%)
Skilled level	34349	37537 (10.9%)	265453	37241 (14%)
Semi skilled level	15787	3103 (19.6%)	12501	3662 (29.3%)
Unskilled level	154223	32723 (21.3%)	120034	24715 (20.5%)
House maids	457489	83139 (18.2%)	356157	87519 (24.6%)
Grand total	104610	160973(15.9%)	782223	156720 (20%)

Source: www.statistic.gov.lk

Regarding the agriculture sector, the data shows that there is a mismatch between labour force participation (32 percent of the labour force in agriculture) and GDP contribution (around 11%). On the other hand, youth participation in agriculture as a full-time occupation has been decreasing in various crops including paddy. However, there are many opportunities for youth engaged in the agriculture sector not as just farmers but also as entrepreneurs. Since local as well as world markets are largely opened for organic products which have a high demand as well as a high value, youth can earn high incomes from farming while protecting environment. Further, instead of producing raw material they can earn better income from food processing. By, using post harvest loss reducing practices, they also can contribute to protect resources, improve nutrition level and food supply. Fisheries and aquatic resources are another field which youth can obtain a good income with the modern technologies and skills.

Though, 33 percent of the national milk requirement is met through local production at present, there is a greater possibility to develop this sector through youth participation because those who are engaged in dairy farming earn more income than traditional agricultural farmers. And also, there is a trend towards youth engagement in the livestock sector, specially dairy and poultry using modern technologies.

Tourism is one of major components which government attempts to promote and earn more income. Since the majority of the youths are from rural agricultural areas there is a possibility to develop eco tourism and agro tourism. These types of tourism will help to achieve sustainable development targets protecting environment and culture rather than conventional tourism. Since the elder generation is not much attracted to these fields, youth can play prominent roles in these fields.

Though the majority of the youth are engaged in social work at different levels of civil society organizations, only 8 percent of the youth were involved as officers or committee members while 11 percent of the youth had held responsibility for finance (National Youth Service Council, 2009). Therefore, giving opportunity to hold responsibilities in social works, the nation can get high level of youth contribution for development. Regarding youth participation in politics, participation in voting is high but at the decision making level youth participation is negligible. Providing opportunities through political parties, election system and trade unions can increase youth participation in decision making levels in politics.

According to available data, corruption rate and perception about corruption is high in Sri Lanka and they directly affect economy and development. According to Global Corruption Perception Index -2012, Sri Lanka was placed 79<sup>th</sup> out of 179 countries and scored 40 points. Among the South Asian counterparts, Sri Lanka is second to Bhutan while in the Asia Pacific region Sri Lanka ranked in 11<sup>th</sup> position ([www.transparency.org](http://www.transparency.org)). However, since the country has scored below 50, it shows that Sri Lanka is unable to minimize the level of corruption in the public sector. Therefore, youth have to play important roles against corruption which directly affect development and economy.

### **5.3 Problems of Youth**

#### **5.3.1 Education, Vocational Training and Labour Market**

Educated Sri Lankan youth is one of major resources of the country which can be used for achieving the development targets. They gain high level of achievements in the education sector but still some problems can be identified such as sectorial disparities in resources distribution, differentiation of school enrollments and level of achievements. For example, though net enrollment ratio in primary education was 97.5 percent in 2006 for the island, it was 94.6 percent for estate sector. Literacy rate of 15-24 years old Sri

Lankan was 95.8 percent in 2006 but it varied from 83.9 percent in the estate sector to 96.6 percent in the rural sector. For the estate sector male, it was reported as 80.6 percent ([www.census.gov.lk](http://www.census.gov.lk)). These Figures illustrate that though Sri Lankan youth achieve much in education, marginalized groups such as the estate sector males already are far behind the government expectation. Therefore, such groups cannot access better employment with high level of salary and other benefits.

According to the National Survey on Needs of Youth (2008/09), 75 percent of male candidates who sat for the University entrance examination (G.C.E. A/L) could not get at least minimum passes (normal pass of three subjects). Likewise, of those who sat for the GCE A/L examination only 28.9 percent passed. Since they are not eligible for higher education, the only way to absorb them into the development process is vocational and skills development trainings. However, only 47 percent of the youth are expected to be involved in vocational training. Negative attitudes on present vocational trainings mostly contribute for the situation (National Youth Service Council, 2008/09). Of those followed vocational trainings, the majority had followed short term courses; e.g.: 30.3 percent of the vocational training followers were enrolled in 3-6 months courses. In addition, according to their view, training was not useful to find employment or livelihood opportunity for the majority of the trainees.

Foreign earnings largely contribute for the country's economy as well as development. In 2009, the total sum of private remittances and export earnings were LKR 1, 403,109 million and of them 49.6 percent or LKR 382,801 million was private remittance ([www.statistics.gov.lk](http://www.statistics.gov.lk)). Earning from foreign employments has increased during the period of 1990-2009. For example, in 1990 private remittances were 20.2 percent of total export earnings while it has increased to 47.03 percent in 2009. However, most of the departures went for unskilled or semi skilled jobs. Of those departures in 2009, 46.0 percent, 20.3 percent and 2.4 percent were house maids, unskilled labourers and semi skilled labourers respectively. Of the total departures for employment in 2009, 24.8 percent were skilled labourers while 1.1 percent and 2.6 percent were for professional and middle level employment respectively ([www.Census.gov.lk](http://www.Census.gov.lk)). On the other hand, the country cannot cater to the foreign demands in all categories of employment. For example country could supply only 20.03 percent (156,720 persons) of the total demand (782,223) in 2009. Another problem in foreign employment is great majority of the job seekers depart to middle-east countries as house-maids or unskilled labourers. Therefore, government should pay attention to supply skilled labour for foreign demand which has possibility for high level of earnings when compare to unskilled or semi-skilled labour. Further, government must regulate and implement enough rules and regulations and systematic way to protect labour rights.

### **5.3.2 Agriculture and Fisheries**

For essential food commodities, which could be produced in country, Sri Lanka spends large amount of money annually. Agriculture sector including fisheries, livestock and forestry is one of major area which has potential for development and absorb the young generation as professional cultivators or entrepreneurs into agro based industries and businesses. Though 70.4 percent of the youths are involved in agriculture in different ways (full- time farmers, part-time farmers and non wage family labourers) only 27.8 percent of the youth are involved in full- time farming. This ratio has increased 85-90 percent in cash crop cultivating areas. Of those contributing for farming 24 percent are involved as non wage family labourers. In contrast, 7.3 percent of the youths are involved in agro based industries and businesses (Damayanthi and Rambodagedara, 2013). Number of reasons contributing to the reduction of youth participation in full-time farming or agro based industries are: marketing problems including lack of accessibility and availability of market facilities; uncertainty of price; tax removal for imports at the harvesting seasons; increasing of cost of production and less profitability and lack of social recognition; and lack of resources such as land, irrigation water and problems on trainings and extension services. Since there is a trend towards high level of youth participation in smallholder agriculture in commercial crop cultivation and livestock, government can encourage youth for farming with the introduction of high technology, facilities like land and water for group farming and agro based industries, market facilities, entrepreneurial skills development and giving some incentives for full time farmers to enhance their social recognition. Though, there is potential to create income opportunities and employments, developing home based industries and medium scale industries related to agriculture, relevant parties such as NGOs, Government and society do not pay much attention to these yet.

### **5.3.3 Science and Technology**

The Ministry of Science and Technology and its affiliated institutions have been taking steps to assist and give recognitions to young innovators to develop and popularize their products by organizing competitions, award ceremonies and fairs on new products. The Ministry has their own network island-wide to help new producers and small scale industrial community in many ways such as introducing new technologies, organizing training facilities to selected producers and giving know-how about financial and other facilities. However, it seems that these attempts are not much popular among the rural youth due to lack of information. Therefore, governments need to take action to deliver all information to grass-root levels through village level officers such as *Grama Niladhari*, *Samurdhi Officer* and Agriculture Research and Production Assistant. Further, government needs to give clear instructions to those officers to identify, encourage and bring forward people with interest and possibilities to adopt technologies.

Successive governments have taken many steps towards popularizing e-government and e-governance systems. De-regulation of telecommunication system was a most important attempt for spreading the e-facilities. As a result, telephone density has been increasing over the years. For example, telephone density of fixed lines was reported as 17.3 per 100 persons while telephone density including mobile phones was reported as 105.1 per 100 persons in 2011. However, internet and email density was low as 4.4 per 1,000 persons in 2011 (Central Bank of Sri Lanka, 2011). Although there had been many attempts to introduce e-facilities to Sri Lankan youth<sup>2</sup>, computer awareness<sup>3</sup> and computer literacy<sup>4</sup> rate has not reached a satisfactory level. For example, though computer awareness rate was high as 43.8 percent, computer literacy rate was reported as 20.3 percent in 2009. Further, there are higher variation in computer awareness as well as literacy among residential sectors and provinces. The highest computer awareness (60 percent) and literacy rate (31.1 percent) was reported from urban areas while lowest (15.8 percent and 8.4 percent respectively) was reported from the estate sector (Department of Census and Statistics, 2009). Among persons of 5-69 years age, 15-19 years youth had highest computer literacy rate (47.6 percent) while 20-24 years and 25-29 years youth had 40.6 percent and 27.7 percent of computer literacy rate in 2009. Further, people literate in the English language have higher computer literacy (56.3 percent) than Sinhala (24.3 percent) and Tamil (20.8 percent) literate people.

Regarding information technology, youths have been facing problems such as lack of ownership and accessibility of computers and internet facilities, regional/sectorial disparities of facilities and lack of English language skills to use computers. Therefore, government as well as private sector organizations involved in software engineering needs to take action to develop software and application instructions in Sinhala and Tamil languages. In addition, government needs to revise available laws and enact new laws and regulations relating to e-crimes and abuses.

#### **5.3.4 Savings and Investments**

Savings and investments are another important field in the development process. However, saving habits are not much satisfactory among youth in Sri Lanka. For example, around 1/3 of the youth even do not have accounts in any bank. However, of

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<sup>2</sup> Establishment of school computer labs, recruitment of IT teachers for schools, tax free computer facilities for university students and low interest rate loan facilities for university students to purchase computers and monthly 5GB free broadband package for public servants etc.

<sup>3</sup> If a person has heard at least of one of computers applications (from playing games to complicated aeronautic applications), then he/she is considered as a person in computer awareness (Department of Census and Statistics of Sri Lanka, 2009).

<sup>4</sup> A person is considered as a computer literate if he/she could use computer on his/her own (Department of Census and Statistics of Sri Lanka, 2009)

the total youth, 12 percent had borrowed loans from various sources. As data given by the National Survey on Needs of Youth in Sri Lanka (2008/09), 71 percent of the youth do not have any stable or moveable properties while 54 percent of them depend on external income sources. Therefore, government needs to pay attention on improving saving habits among youth.

### **5.3.5 Governance and Politics**

Sri Lanka government has introduced a policy to encourage the youth participation in politics. Accordingly, all parties which contest local government institutions must include 40 percent of youth candidates (age between 18-35 years) in their nomination list. If, any party or independent group fails to fulfill this requirement, their nomination list is subject to cancellation. Since this policy is not applicable to provincial and national level elections, it is difficult for youth to get a chance to even contest these elections. On the other hand, though all parties and independent groups may include 40 percent of the young candidates, most of them are unable to get selected as members of local government entities due to proportional electoral system. Therefore, considerable proportion of youth does not participate in decision making process even at local government level.

To increase youth representation in politics, the Presidential Commission on Youth (1990) has recommended some steps such as separate electoral register for youth (18-30 years) for provincial council elections, obligatory 40 percent of the youth (below 30 years) nomination for the provincial councils elections and at least 40 percent of the membership of the local government bodies to be below 30 years. Since most of them are not implemented, youth representation in decision making process is less in Sri Lanka.

Voting participation among youth is high as 81 percent but trust on legislative institutions such as parliament, provincial councils and local government entities are less. According to the National Youth Service Council (2009) only 29.1 percent, 25.8 percent, 25 percent and 31 percent have trusted in the parliament, provincial councils, town councils and Pradeshiya sabhas while 54.4 percent of the youth do not have any trust at all on their parliamentarians and provincial councilors. Further, only 6 percent of the youth believed that government bodies pay enough attention on youths' problems while 26 percent believed that they do not pay enough attention. Sixty two percent believed that government paid minimum attention on youths' problems. As illustrated by the above data and information, Sri Lankan society has been highly politicized and it has been so over the decades.

One of the main reasons behind the two youth insurgencies in 1971 and 1988/89 and ethnic conflict was politics and governance issues in Sri Lanka. As Ratnapala (1982) has

described, salient feature of the first insurgency was lack of opportunities for youth to participate in the process of political decision making. The majority of the youth who participated in the first insurgency came from rural, poor and middle income families. They were driven by a sense of social injustice and lack of opportunities for youth, specially for employment (Ratnapala, 1982). The argument was further proved by the report of the Presidential Commission on Youth (1990) saying that, winners takes all and “ this attitude served and continues to serve to polarize civil society at all levels, giving rise to the belief that members of the ruling party and their supporters have the exclusive right to all the rewards and benefits that society has to offer.....although they (youth) may share different political ideologies, they are substantially united in the belief that the system does not give them the opportunity to represent and act upon their views ”. Compared with the past situations, attitudes and perceptions of youths towards political system of the country cannot be neglected and the government and other stakeholders such as political parties and trade unions need to pay much attention to such issues.

### **5.3.6 Caste System and Its Impacts**

In Sri Lanka, three slightly different caste systems exist among Sinhalese, Indian Tamils (Estate workers) and Sri Lankan Tamils. These caste systems have led to caste discrimination in different ways affecting human dignity, access to education, water, livelihood and income, work and employment, social welfare and political participation (Silva *etal*, 2009). According to Silva *etal* (2009), 20 percent-30 percent of the Sri Lankan population is affected by caste discriminations in different ways. These caste systems and their impacts are another (hidden) problem in Sri Lankan society in economic, social and political process. As mentioned in the report of the Presidential Commission on Youth (1990), caste has played a vital role in past youth unrests. Further, they expressed their views on caste and its impact on youth as follows,

“We are convinced that certain castes still suffer from a great deal of social and politics oppression and tend to remain in pocket or enclaves. Rebellion comes easy to the youth who are often victims of this discrimination” (Sessional Paper, No.1, 1990)

Though many of the underprivileged Sinhala caste groups uplift their status and living conditions using government welfare policy such as free education and health, land distribution policy, market mechanisms and political patronage system all such groups and members of the specific caste groups still suffer from poverty, landlessness, lack of physical capital, low recognition, unemployment and poor living conditions (Silva *etal*, 2009, Damayanthi, 2005). Regarding Sri Lankan Tamils’ caste systems, some scholars noted that caste system went to be silent and mute due to Eelam struggle in the North-East areas, but some new forms of caste discrimination had emerged in the Jaffna

society (Silva *et al*, 2009). As a result of hidden factor of caste, proper absorption of youth of underprivileged groups is difficult in the development process.

### 5.3.7 Widows and Child Labour

Child labour has declined over the years due to government policies and programmes. However, 12.9 percent (557,599 children) are engaged in work such as agriculture and related activities, street vending and services, construction, mining, transportation and its' related work and domestic work. Majority of them are from rural areas and work as non wage family labourers. According to the Department of Census and Statistics [2011 (a)] most of the rural working children<sup>5</sup> are engaged in work whilst attending school. In contrast, working child in urban areas generally leave school, when they are engaged in work. Of the working child, only 2.5 percent (107,259 children) provide child labour<sup>6</sup>. Of the total child labourers, 78.7 percent (84,430 children) and 17.6 percent (18,869 children) are from rural and urban areas respectively while the rest were from the estate sector. Of the total child labourers, 1.5 percent (63,916 children) provides hazardous child labour.

Of them 30.8 percent live without the care of father or mother. Great majority (79.5 percent) of the hazardous child labourers are from rural areas while 15.4 percent and 5 percent are from urban and estate sectors respectively (Department of Census and Statistics, 2011a). School attending among working children was 80.4 percent. Of the total child labourers approximately 20 percent never attended schools while the rest had previously attended. The main reasons for not attending the school was weakness for learning (35.1 percent), financial difficulties (19.6 percent) and disability/illness (10.8 percent).

Though proportion of child labour is small, the number is considerable. They are getting a low payment and work in poor working conditions. For example, the average monthly income for child workers (both cash and materials) was LKR 3,820. Of the child

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<sup>5</sup> According to Department of Census and Statistics of Sri Lanka (2009) a working child defines as a child who involves in any form of economic activity for a payment, profit or family-gain.

<sup>6</sup> Department of Census and Statistics of Sri Lanka (2009) define child labour as follows,

For 5-11 years age group: all children engaged in some form of economic activity excluding

(1) those who work less than 5hrs per week as contributing family workers in non agriculture sector in non hazardous activity

(2) those who work less than 15 hours per week as contributing family workers in agriculture sector in non hazardous activities

For 12-14 years age group: all children engaged in some form of economic activity excluding

(1) those who engage in less than 15hours per week in non agricultural sector in non-hazardous activity

(2) those who engage in less than 25 hours per week as family workers in agriculture sector in non-hazardous activities

For 15-17 years age group: all children engaged in some form of economic activity excluding those who work less than 44 hours per week in non-hazardous activity

labourers, 37.8 percent earned less than LKR 2,000 per month and 34 percent of the child labourers received their payments on daily basis (Department of Census and Statistics, 2011). Further, since they do not have enough education or vocational training it is difficult for them to get rid of the current status. Therefore, government needs to pay much attention to them.

Another vulnerable group is young widows in terms of poverty, income generating activities and social attitudes. Lack of accurate data, trainings and continuous monitoring are the some of difficulties to empower them ([www.nhrep.gov.lk](http://www.nhrep.gov.lk))

### **5.3.8 Differently Abled Youth**

Though exact figures on differently abled people are not available in Sri Lanka, according to the pilot project of the Department of Census and Statistics (2001), 7 percent of the country's population consisted of disabled people. Of the total differently abled people, 18.6 percent (50,993 persons) are youth aged between 15-29 years. Of them around one third [35.04 percent (17,870 persons)] are mentally disabled youths. Figures on differently abled youth may have increased during the period 2001-2009 due to civil war. Since most of the differently abled youths are poor they have problems regarding access to suitable education system, income generating activities and wage employment.

As a policy, government has accepted and enacted regulation to accept the right persons with disabilities to work. Further, government introduced the 3 percent quota system for the disabled persons in the public sector in 1988 while it has been extended to private and semi government sectors in 2004 ([www.nhrep.gov.lk](http://www.nhrep.gov.lk)). Though, there is a possibility to use physically disabled youth's skills and abilities for the development process in many ways it could not be used properly due to negative social attitude on differently abled youths, lack of required entry requirements, non availability of friendly working environments and transport difficulties. On the other hand, they do not have widely spread facilities and opportunities for education, vocational training and job opportunities. Therefore, it is needed to develop positive social attitudes and more opportunities for differently able youths for education, vocational trainings and income generating activities.

### **5.3.9 Peace and Social Harmony**

After thirty years of war, to achieve the development targets of the nation it is very essential to build mutual trust and integration among different ethnic groups. Government has taken many steps to build mutual trust among different ethnic groups adopting bi-lingual policy, rehabilitation of former terrorist members and creating livelihood opportunities. Though the Government has regulated bi-lingual policies due

to implementation problems it cannot achieve success as expected. Ultimate result is difficulties to build mutual trust and absorption for the youth in the development process. Youth population with ability to speak, write and understand the national languages other than mother language is low among the Sinhalese youth when compared with Tamils and Muslims. For example, though 74.8 percent, 73.2 percent, 72.7 percent the Sinhalese youths do not have ability to speak, write and understand the Tamil language. The situation is worse because of considerable proportion of the youths in both races do not have ability to speak in English which is a link language. Only 15 percent of the total youth population can understand English language properly (National Youth Service Council, 2009). However, preferences to follow the language course or attempts to develop language skills are very low among youth. Only one percent of the Sinhalese youth followed a Tamil language courses, while 4.8 percent and 5.7 percent of the Tamil and Muslim youths followed Sinhala language courses.

### **5.3.10 Self Employment and Income Earning**

Self employment is one of income generating methods which can be popularized among youth to absorb them for development process. However, youth are facing some problems related to self employment. First, self employment is not of interest to most of the youth due to lack of security, skills and training, social recognition and long delay for gaining results. According to the National Youth Service Council (2009), only 4.7 percent of youth had obtained the training related to self employment. Second, most of them do not have enough facilities such as finance, market and transportation facilities. Third, though some of the youth had initiated some kind of self employment, some of them failed mainly due to lack of managerial skills.

To mitigate above mentioned problems, government and non-governmental organizations need to conduct training programmes and evaluate them frequently, link up with training programmes, banks and other financial providers, technology and markets. In addition, government and non-governmental organizations which are involved in youth and rural development need to take action to change the thinking pattern of youth and society by using electronic media and school curricular.

### **5.3.11 Suicide**

As shown in Table 5.3, suicide rate is high among young people in Sri Lanka. The ratio varies from 32.5 percent of total suicides in 2000 to 27.7 percent in 2011. Though the rate has decreased compared to 1990s, the situation is worst compared with global data. In addition to suicides, attempts at suicide are high among Sri Lankan youth. The common reasons for suicide are poverty, frustration, failures in love affairs and examinations, employment problems and family disputes ([www.police.gov.lk](http://www.police.gov.lk)). Non-availability of personal consultation, broken family ties and social setup and physical and

mental distance among parents, elders and children are further associated factors with the suicide among youth.

**Table 5.3: Suicide Rate among Youth (2000-2011)**

Year	Total Number of Suicide	Number among 15 - 29 Years Person	Youth Percentage of Total Suicides
2000	5,252	1,711	32.5
2001	4,590	1,390	30.3
2002	4,382	1,292	29.5
2003	4,467	1,274	28.5
2004	4,336	1,198	27.6
2005	4,349	1,222	28.1
2006	4,015	1,201	29.9
2011	3,770	1,046	27.7

Source: Registrar Generals Dept.,2011

#### **5.4 Emerging Constraints Due to Climate Change and Other Natural Calamities**

In Sri Lanka, rise in temperature continues but slowly as 0.01-0.03°C per year while frequencies of extreme weather incidents such as droughts and floods, high intensity rains, tornado type winds, intense lightning strikes, sea level rising have been increasing. Sri Lanka has been facing increasing number of natural hazards during the decades. For example, for 50 years after the independence (1951-2000) the number of major landslides was 98 resulting 255 deaths. But over the recent 10 years (2001-2010) the number of major landslides was 603 resulting 164 deaths (Chandrapala, 2012). Climate change and natural calamities affect country's food security, nutrition and health, lives and livelihoods of people as well as economic development including food production, forestry, tourism, traditional medicine, manufacturing industries as well as external trade. Furthermore, climate change negatively affect natural resources and biodiversity including land degradation, quality and quantity of inland fresh water, degradation of vegetation in watershed, inland wetlands, coastal systems and growth rates, reproduction of species and plants ([www.climatechange.lk](http://www.climatechange.lk)).

High intensity rainfall causes floods, landslides, accelerated soil erosion, less ground water recharge, siltation of reservoirs, reduced capacity of downstream tanks, less water for irrigated lands and production and productivity of the agricultural crops. Increasing temperature causes drying out of tanks and reservoirs, reduced crop production, increased losses, pest, disease, weed pandemics and rise in cost of production. For example if, temperature increased at 35°C at anthesis for one hour it will cause high spike sterility of rice. If, diurnal range increases more than 8°C, productivity of potato will go down from 20/t/ha to 12/t/ha (Punyawardena, 2012). A

study finding on impact of climate change on agriculture sector shows that if temperature increased by 2° Celsius, country will lose 27 percent of the net income from paddy, tea, rubber and coconut while if, temperature increased by 3.5°C, country will lose 46 percent of the net income from above mentioned crops (Seo, Mendelsohn and Munasinghe, 2005). Above situation directly affect food stocks, nutrition levels, farm family, and expenditure of the consumers as well as country's GDP.

Increase of global warming directly causes increase of sea level and make sea coast vulnerable in many ways. Destruction of coastal road network and other infrastructure facilities, salination of river water and ground water, salt water intrusion to cultivated lands, encroachment of arable lands by coastal communities, decrease of per capita availability of land, decrease of living conditions of coastal communities are some of the results emerging due to rising sea level. Sri Lanka has experienced severe droughts during the last decade and it has directly affected agricultural and livestock food production, livelihood and income of people, import expenditure of the country as well GDP.

Due to natural disasters, country has lost huge sums of income and investment. For example, tourism sector lost LKR 1,200 crore while around 480,000 persons lost their direct and indirect income form tourism sector. Further, due to the tsunami in 2004 9,000 ha. of paddy lands and 23,449 ha of other agricultural lands were damaged and 10 out of 12 fisheries loses were damaged in various extents and estimated cost of these harbours was LKR 11,810,000. In addition, due to other damages such as boats, fishing crafts and cooling centers the government has lost around LKR 3,800,000.

In addition to the above mentioned issues and constraints, most of the natural disasters negatively affect human beings. For example due to 2004 tsunami, Sri Lanka lost 30,893 (officially recorded figure) lives. Further, the number of deaths by natural disasters in 2010 were 56 while the number of affected people were 1,251,563 [Department of Census and Statistics, 2011 (b)]. After each and every natural disaster government has to spend a large amount of money for welfare activities such as relief funds and compensation. These loses are burden to the country's economy as well as development.

## **5.5 Way to Involve Youth in Adaptation and Mitigation Strategy**

As mentioned in section 5.3, there are a number of problems and issues relating to youth in development in Sri Lanka as her South Asian counterparts. Some of those have been highlighted in previous commission reports and research reports such as the Presidential Commission on Youth in 1989, Lesson Learnt Commission in 2012 and National Youth Need Survey in 2008/09. These commissions specially highlighted social injustices, political discrimination, politicization of public sector including judicial and made plethora of recommendation as remedies. Though, some of them have been

implemented however, some of the important recommendations were not implemented. Therefore, relevant authorities and agencies need to take action to implement at least most important recommendations.

To increase youth participation in agricultural sector, government and other stakeholders need to provide sufficient extension services, market facilities, infrastructure, finance and land while introducing new technologies and eco friendly agricultural practices. Further, government can get involved in enhancing social recognition for farming as a job and ultimate result will be increased number and extent of young generation in the farming sector. For example, special marks (at least 5 marks) system for children from farm families for the school entrance should be encouraged.

To select suitable occupation after school leaving, career guidance needs to be implemented from the primary school level. Further, to prevent or minimize crime and violence it is needed to establish counseling centers locally and tighten social relationship such as family, kinship and religions.

Though foreign employment is one of the major foreign income sources, Sri Lanka is far behind in supplying for demand. Therefore, by providing necessary facilities to study for vocational degrees or diplomas for the school leavers, government can get involve for the need based labour supply. Further, government needs to take action to protect them in foreign countries.

As shown by recent researches, society is experiencing discriminations in many ways in terms of caste, ethnicity, politics and religion as well. Further, the national youth survey (2009) has pointed out dissatisfaction of youth in the political system. Therefore, government needs to take action to provide development benefits and supports throughout country without any differentiation but based on merit. To increase political participation it is better to make 40 percent quota system for youth representatives in political institutions including political parties, local government institutions, provincial councils and the parliament. Further, same quota system for committee in trade unions and welfare organizations would help to increase youth participation in decision making level in each institution.

## **5.6 Conclusion**

Sri Lankan youth achieve a fairly good in education. But, they suffer from number of issues and problem related to them. Therefore, to get their fullest contribution for the country, government and other stakeholders have to do much for youth. Country has enough human and natural resources needed for development. Youth are searching for continuous, enough and sustainable income opportunities. Therefore, all the stakeholders need to guide them correctly and giving opportunities without concerning any other matters except merits and skills.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **Regional Collaboration for Youth Development**

**By Subashini Perera**

#### **6.1 Introduction**

This chapter consists information related to multilateral and bi lateral negotiations for development of youth in Sri Lanka. Strategies on regional collaboration towards youth in development also are discussed to formulate a regional action plan.

#### **6.2 Efforts of Regional Collaboration in the Developed World**

The programmes, projects, workshops and agreements to create opportunities for youth participation at global level are discussed in this section. Except in a few cases, generally the events listed here have taken place during the year 2010 and 2011.

##### **6.2.1 Multinational Negotiations**

###### **6.2.1.1 Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP)**

CYP works to engage and empower young people (age 15-29 years) to enhance their contribution to development through partnerships with young people, governments and other key stakeholders. The CYP Asia Centre is responsible for developing and running programmes and activities in the Asia region. This was set up in 1975 and is based in Chandigarh, India. Eight countries in the Asia region work in partnership with young people, youth ministries, the non-governmental sector and other stakeholders.

##### **Collaborative Programmes**

###### **i. Professionalizing Youth Work Sector**

Under this programme, the four day workshop for Consultation on Professionalizing the Youth Work Sector was held from 22<sup>nd</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> November 2011 in Colombo, Sri Lanka by CYP in collaboration with the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Skills Development in Sri Lanka.

##### **Output of the workshop**

During the consultation, stakeholders recognized the critical role of youth work in enhancing young people's participation in the nation building process and in steering youth energy towards positive outcomes for themselves and their communities. They

identified the urgent need to professionalize the sector and agreed to establish a professional association for youth workers. Stakeholders also set up a Youth Work Action Group in order to take forward the initiatives in collaboration with the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Skills Development, the Open University of Sri Lanka (which runs the CYP's Diploma in Youth Development), and the Commonwealth Youth Programme.

## **ii. Sri Lankan Participation on Young Entrepreneurs' Network**

A two-day envisioning workshop was held in New Delhi, India, from November 15<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup>, 2011 in collaboration with the Commonwealth-Asia Alliance of Young Entrepreneurs (CAAYE), and the Indian non-governmental organization; Young Indians of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII). The purpose of the workshop was to develop mechanisms to foster youth enterprise development to mitigate unemployment among young people in the Commonwealth.

### **Output of the workshop**

Representatives agreed on a charter, governance structure and rules of business and identified the importance of long term engagement for the Alliance as a catalyst of economic growth, job creation, innovation and social change in the Commonwealth Asia region. This will be implemented through engagement of all stakeholders championing the cause of young entrepreneurs at the local, national, regional and international level.

## **iii. Youth Enterprise and Sustainable Livelihood Programme (YESL)**

YESL programmes are directed to empower young people and provide opportunities to achieve sustainable livelihoods. Under this programme, YESL, in collaboration with the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India, organized a two-day Regional Consultation on Financial Inclusion of Youth in New Delhi from February 8<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> 2011. The purpose of the workshop was to advocate a consensus on a youth focus in national financial inclusion policies.

### **Output of the workshop**

The workshop made recommendations towards use friendly financial services and structures for minimizing credit risk. Further, to greater information provision and simplified legal and regulatory frameworks and provision of incentives to banks to encourage lending to young entrepreneurs were recommended by the workshop.

#### **iv. Commonwealth Diploma in Youth Development**

This programme is offered by the Open University of Sri Lanka (OUSL) in collaboration with the Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP). This Diploma intends to empower young people to maximize their human potential and help in the transformation of youth as partners of development. The Diploma is run by the OUSL as a fully-owned programme in English, as well as the two local languages of Sinhala and Tamil.

The key objectives of the programme are;

- Enabling youth workers to gain professional credentials to practice this vocation nationally and internationally
- Equipping practitioners with generic and core competencies, knowledge, values and skills needed for this field
- Enabling youth workers to facilitate the national development process with enlightened youth policy development, implementation and evaluation.

#### **v. Regional Youth Caucus**

The Regional Youth Caucus (RYC) is a dynamic network of youth from Commonwealth Asia who represent young people in their countries in national, regional and international Commonwealth and other forums. RYCs facilitate meaningful engagement of young people at various levels of planning and decision-making within governments, the CYP and other bodies.

#### **vi. MoU between the Sri Lanka Federation of Youth Clubs and UK-based Youth Organization**

The Sri Lanka Federation of Youth Clubs and a UK-based youth organization have signed a Memorandum of Understanding for a youth exchange programme between UK and Sri Lanka.

#### **vii. Youth Exchange Programme**

The programme is meant to raise awareness on commonwealth values and to enhance relations among young people in the two countries acting on youth rights and encourage reflection on 2013's Commonwealth Youth Forum to be held in Sri Lanka. It was decided that eight young persons from each country will participate in this programme.

### **6.2.1.2 International Youth Foundation (IYF)**

The International Youth Foundation (IYF) founded in 1990 currently operates in 78 countries and territories. The IYF builds and maintains a worldwide community of businesses, governments, and civil society organizations committed to empowering youth to be healthy, productive, and engaged citizens. The IYF programmes are focused on young people and helps to obtain a quality education, gain employability skills, make healthy choices, and improve their communities.

#### **Programmes/ Projects Focused on to Sri Lanka**

##### **i. Planning for Life**

The Planning for Life project aims to integrate reproductive health and family planning into youth development programmes to improve the health of young women and men. The programme was launched in 2007 with support from (USAID) and World of Learning. The Planning for Life model strengthens the capacity of IYF's global partner network and IYF staff to integrate reproductive health and family planning as critical elements within youth development programmes.

##### **ii. Tsunami Reconstruction Initiative**

The Tsunami Reconstruction Initiative promoted long-term recovery efforts by helping youth in affected areas to access training, jobs, apprenticeships, micro credit, and livelihood support services.

### **6.2.1.3 Beyond Borders**

Beyond Borders is a voluntary, youth-led, youth-run initiative active in Sri Lanka, India, Bangladesh and (formerly) in Pakistan and the UK.

Beyond Borders provides a space for young people to actively express themselves and take action on development issues affecting them. Currently the group is working on issues related to peace, governance, citizenship and sustainable development.

#### **Beyond Borders Sri Lanka**

In Sri Lanka, Beyond Borders core group was established in August 2005, and have been engaged in action projects related to peace and governance issues. These activities are implementing citizenship, sexual health education and sustainable development issues through organizing workshops, seminars, open forums, and the use of forum theatre.

They have conducted projects on citizenship education for children in underprivileged communities, a training of trainers programme for young school leaders on sexual health education and HIV/AIDS. In April 2006, they hosted an international youth festival attended by about 1000 young people in Sri Lanka and partner countries.

#### **6.2.1.4 International Labour Organization (ILO)**

##### **i. National Conference on Youth Employment**

The National Conference on Youth Employment in Sri Lanka took place on 26<sup>th</sup> April 2012 in Colombo. This was jointly organized by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Skills Development, Government of Sri Lanka and the ILO country office, Sri Lanka.

During the conference ILO formulated a roadmap to ensure enhanced youth employment in Sri Lanka. As a result of the conference, the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Skills Development is agreeing to organize a National Consultation on Youth Entrepreneurship.

##### **ii. Vocational Educational Training Plan (VET)**

Under the program on development of vocational educational and training (VET) Plan for Provinces, the Eastern Province VET Plan was developed and disseminated. It was funded by the International Labour Organization Country Office.

#### **6.2.1.5 World Bank**

Three training programmes for officers were arranged in Malaysia to gain experience on Vocational Training Institutions in Malaysia with the assistance of the World Bank in order to develop the institutions under the purview of the Ministry. With the aim of exchanging the knowledge and technology and obtaining direct contribution for the development of human resources through international relationship, three courses of studies at Technical College, Vavuniya are being developed.

#### **6.2.1.6 Asian Development Bank**

##### **i. Support for Technical, Education and Training**

Asian Development Bank (ADB) has been giving support to the Department of Technical Education and Training in order to assist the government's strategy to close the gap between supply and demand for technicians and technologists by expanding the capacity for technical and technological education. ADB is expected to provide a loan of SDR 13,605,000 (\$ 20 Million) equivalent from its special resources to upgrade six

Technical Colleges into Colleges of Technology in six provinces to conduct National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) level 5, 6 programmes. These Colleges of Technology will train the industry technicians and appropriate candidates from the secondary education to acquire National Vocational Qualification and other acceptable qualifications recognized by the global industry at provincial level.

ADB provide services and facilities to Colleges of Technologies in following areas;

- Procurement
- Financing goods, related services and civil works
- Consulting
- A team of consultants will provide services in a range of specialization, with estimated international inputs. These services will be provided by a consulting firm and will be selected according to the ADB guidelines.

The Technical Colleges at Rathnapura, Badulla, Kurunegala, Anuradhapura, Kandy and Maradana will be upgraded. The aim of the programme is reducing unemployment by developing an effective and efficient skilled technical workforce.

### **Technical Education Development Project (TEDP)**

The goal of this project was to establish a unified Technical & Vocational Education and Training (TVET) system that is accessible, market driven and linked with tertiary education for lateral and vertical mobility for unemployment and poverty reduction. Total cost of the project was LKR 2,667 and millions of them LKR 1,998 million was granted by foreign Aid.

The objectives of this project were to improve access to alternative forms of tertiary education and vertical mobility of TVET system and to strengthen the Ministry of Youth Affairs and relevant institutions under its purview. Further it was aiming to upgrade the capacity of selected public sector TVET institutions to expand the needs of industry for technicians.

Main activities included strengthening the Colleges of Technology in technician education, strengthening the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Institutions which are coming under its purview, establishing a University of Vocational Technology.

#### **6.2.1.7 World Health Organization**

An awareness programme was held to make the young leaders aware on prevention of non-communicable diseases. This was done by in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and World Health Organization.

#### **6.2.1.8 United Nations (UN)**

Two young girls participated in UN Youth Delegate programme in the United States of America (USA). These two are the first UN youth delegates participated from the Asia Region. Further, Sri Lanka represented at the UN High Level Meeting on youth and the International Coordination Meeting of Youth Organizations (ICMYO) in New York City, USA and proposed to host a UN World Youth Conference in 2014 in Sri Lanka.

#### **6.2.1.9 United Nations International Children's' Emergency Fund (UNICEF)**

With the assistance of UNICEF the Multi Tech Vocational Training Center at Mullativu district was renovated. In addition, a new training centre at Mannar district was established with the assistance of UNICEF.

#### **6.2.1.10 ILO, ADB and World University Service: Canada**

The Regional Conference on Human Resource Development was conducted through Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) as a development strategy in Asia. This conference was organized by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Skills Development together with the ILO, ADB and World University Services Canada.

The conference objectives were to showcase the establishment and implementation of National Vocational Qualifications Framework (NVQF) and to share the experiences of Sri Lanka with countries in South Asia and South East Asian region. Further, objectives were to analyze the key implementation issues of NVQ system and the benefits of NVQF to Sri Lankan industry. Furthermore, the Conference aimed and to take examples of advancements in qualification systems and best practices in TVET in high income and middle income countries for further improvement.

### **6.2.2 Bi-lateral Negotiation**

**Korea** - With the assistance of the Korean Government the facilities of the Technical College at Jaffna were improved. Aid was granted by the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA). Duration of the project was three years (2004 – 2007). Total cost of the project was LKR 296.1 million.

Under the assistance of EX-IM Bank in Korea, the Technical College at Gampaha was developed and facilities of the Vocational Training Center at Orugodawatta were improved. Further, under the aid of the Korean government, the Technical College in Gampaha was modernized with an investment expense of US 15.5 Million US Dollars and starting eight new Diplomas for eight fields. With the contribution of volunteer officers from Korea (KOICA) facilities to networking the computer laboratories in the

Technical Colleges in Kegalle, Ratmalana, Embilipitiya and Hasalaka and the College of Technology in Ampara were provided.

Ten motor mechanical workshops also have been conducted under KOICA. Further, the Korean government has supported technical, education and training sectors with the aim of improving the quality of the technical education in Sri Lanka. Total amount of LKR. 233 million has been allocated by this Agency to complete upgrading the existing infrastructure facilities in Jaffna and Kurunegala Technical Colleges. In addition, in order to strengthen the information and communication technology unit at Kurunegala, Technical collage provided multimedia facility, a van and a hoist to the automobile engineering workshop. Furthermore, it provided new buildings to Jaffna Technical College including a library, canteen, hostels and quarters. With the aim of human resource development KOICA assisted to conduct workshops on refrigeration and air conditioning, mechatronics, information technology, jewellery design and manufacture, gem cutting and manufacture and aluminum fabricator. Also it provided study tours to the senior administrative officers at the Department of Technical Education and Training (DTET) and Technical College in Jaffna to upgrade their Managerial capabilities. Furthermore, it provided Voluntary Officers to Technical Colleges to help instructors with practical work and to introduce new technology methods to the students and up grading of Colleges.

**Canada-** With the financial contribution of the World University Service of Canada (WUSC) arrangements were made to establish three Rural Vocational Training Centers in war affected areas in Mullaitivu and Killinochchi districts. At present, a Rural Vocational Training Center has been established in Killinochchi District.

**German-** Under the assistance of the German government a fully-fledged training centre in Killinochchi district was established, and facilitated proposed projects at Kilinochchi district. Two training programmes have been conducted there.

The German Technical Cooperation also assists for the development of the areas of construction, technical service and maintenance and communication and transport. After the tsunami in December 2004, the German Development cooperation supported to reconstruct and rehabilitate the Technical Collages in the tsunami affected areas.

**Japan** - Implementation of 24<sup>th</sup> "Global Youth Ships" programme under the Japan Sri Lanka Youth Exchange programme. For this programme the (Japan ship of friendship) National Youth Services Council has recognized as the official Sri Lankan partner in the ship. The ship arrived in Sri Lanka in February, 2012.

The Japan - Sri Lanka College of Technology (JSCOT) was established through a technical cooperation by the Department of Technical Education and Training (DTET) and the

Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). This Agency has been developing diploma level training courses in the area of information technology and metal work (welding) and mechatronics and implements them to train technicians to meet the increasing demands in the labour market. The training facilities consist of workshops, laboratories and classrooms installed with equipment and machinery in order to impart relevant knowledge and skills. Those who have successfully completed this course acquire a certificate of completion at the institutional training at Japan-Sri Lanka Collage of Technology and are eligible to follow the in plant training approximately six months in relevant industries conducted by the National Apprentice and Industrial Training Authority (NAITA) to obtain Higher Diploma (NVQ level 6) in the concerned trade.

JICA has further provided human resource facilities to Technical Collages including recruiting counterpart officers for Technical Colleges to conduct courses on mechatronics, information and communication technology. In addition to that provided short term Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers to Technical Colleges if required to help instructors in practical work for students, to configure network systems and to provide computer maintenance.

**United Kingdom-** - Eight members of the Youth Club Federation participated in the youth exchange programme between Sri Lanka and the United Kingdom. Further, the National Institute of Business Management commenced degree courses in Management jointly with the Plymouth University in the United Kingdom. The National Institute of Fisheries and Nautical Engineering has signed an MoU with University of Durham, United Kingdom to develop the sector need.

**United States of America** - A group of American volunteers conducted a five-day training programme at the Technical College, Matara to improve English knowledge of the lecturers, instructors and students. The second stage of this programme is due to be held at Anuradhapura and Ampara Technical Colleges.

**Australia-** the National Institute of Business Management created opportunity to conduct degree courses in Management together with the Victoria University in Australia.

**Sweden-** National Institute of Fisheries and Nautical Engineering held discussions with the President of World Maritime University, Malmo, Sweden in May, 2012 to initiate academic cooperation.

**Singapore** – A staff development programme in the Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sector in Sri Lanka was conducted with the collaboration of Nanyang Politechnic International and Temasek Foundation of Singapore. It was concluded with an outcome of 725 trained academics in the foremost technical trade fields such as electronics, mechatronics and precision engineering. The purpose of the programme

was to empower the instructors in public technical training institutes, to enhance the capabilities to train the youth of the country by delivering quality training in diploma and certificate levels under the NVQF by enabling to gain productive employment.

The programme commenced in the month of August, 2011 and ended in February, 2012. The duration of trainings ranged from 1 to 6 weeks with field visits to the leading industries in Singapore. Each group of training consisted of 15 to 20 participants from the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Skills Development and identified training centers of seven (07) organizations under the purview of this Ministry.

Accordingly, 145 staff of the TEVT sector had received overseas training opportunities up to now. Foreign exposure and latest knowledge gained through this programme is expected to improve young Sri Lankan instructors' enthusiasm to make significant changes in all aspects, including preparing lessons, delivering course contents and motivating the students, in addition to the changes in their management styles.

In fact, the specialists training was an intensive training with the scope of obtaining advanced knowledge and skills in the fields of electronics and mechatronics which are fast growing sectors in line with the rapid change of technology. Know-how of technology, problem-solving skills, talents and curriculum development, teaching factory concept, experiential learning knowledge and quality management, and manpower development are some of the key areas where the trainings were provided in order to equip the technical teachers to upgrade and refresh their knowledge in the respective fields of industries which are emerging in the new trend of economic development of the country.

This programme has not only benefited the TVET sector of Sri Lanka in the sense of knowledge sharing and transformation of modern technology. But also has helped both countries to strengthen the long lasting bilateral relationship and technical corporation in the Asian region of the south sphere of the world.

**Ireland-** In collaboration with the Dublin University of Ireland, the National Institute of Business Management started MSc in Information Technology and Management. Further, a memorandum of understanding with the Dublin University to offer BSc Degree in Computer Science was signed.

### **6.3 Efforts of Regional Collaboration in CIRDAP Member Countries**

**India-** Under the assistance of the Indian Government facilities of two vocational training centers in Batticaloa District were developed and facilities were upgraded in three training Centers. These training centers are district vocational training centre at

Batticaloa, vocational training centre at Dachchimadam and the district vocational training Centre at Nuwara Eliya.

**Philippines** - Training Program on training need analysis was conducted to identify the training needs of the Academic and Non-Academic staff of the Department of Technical Education & Training with the sponsorship of Colombo Plan Staff College, Philippines.

**Malaysia** - Modernization of three courses of Vavuniya Technical Collage (welding technicians, ICT technician, industrial electrical technician) provision of equipment and referring relevant officers for the foreign training with the support of a joint venture sponsored by Rotary Club, Federation of Malaysian Sri Lankan Organization (FOMSO) and DTET.

**Pakistan** - National Youth Services Council is conducting two International Youth Exchange programmes with Pakistan.

#### **6.4 Impacts of Collaboration**

Study of overseas training for development of Technical, Vocational and Educational Centers by the Department of Technical Education and Training (2011) has found that South Korea was the most provider of foreign training for TEVC sector in Sri Lanka during the last six years. Foreign training opportunities were given to males who were more than 45 years old. This study also found that after having trained they have improved their technical knowledge and new methodologies could be introduced to students in TEVC sector.

According to the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Skills Development foreign exchange programmes have had favorable impacts on the Sri Lankan youths. Through exchanging cultural and societal behavior, youths and their soft skills have been improved. Youth in sports sector has benefited favorably due to strong collaboration through regional cooperation. Under the foreign funded projects infrastructure development, especially in the Northern and Eastern provinces could be observed in recent years.

In the youth sector, large amount of funds has been allocated from the government and foreign sources in order to develop youth and make them effective. However, still it is questionable whether the projects, programmes and workshops conducted by foreign agencies with collaboration of local government bodies have contributed to a useful output. The main reason behind that is impacts of most of the programmes are intangible. The weak follow ups, poor monitoring mechanism and reviewing progress and recording are not successfully conducted.

## **6.5 Strategies to be Adopted for Regional Collaboration**

According to the Ministry of Finance and Planning in Sri Lanka, youths are categorized into four groups based on their requirements (Department of National Planning, Ministry of Finance and Planning, n. d.).

1. The youth group of school leavers who have not obtained any professional qualification and skills.
2. The youth group of school leavers who have obtained considerable professional qualifications and skills.
3. The youth group of school leavers who are already involved in self employment for livelihood but have low income.
4. The youth group of school leavers who have already completed their higher education in universities and technical colleges etc.

This section mainly will focus on developing strategies under these youth categories in order to enable them to contribute to national economic development.

### **6.5.1 Youth Villages**

#### **SOS Children Villages in Sri Lanka**

This is one of the world's largest non-governmental organizations caring for orphaned and abandoned children. Sri Lanka has already established five SOS Children Villages to facilitate children and young people in the country to give them a better future within peaceful and favorable environment. Under this programme, they are providing four SOS youth facilities including education, vocational training, health services and emergency relief programmes.

However, up to now government led well established youth village programme has not been experienced in Sri Lanka. At present, home based youth services are needed to support youth from disadvantages, differently abled youth societies. There is also a need temporary accommodation for children and youths, who are affected by natural disasters and to prevent child labour and child marriages in rural areas. Young girls who are vulnerable for sexual harassments exploitation especially within broken families and in families mothers where have migrated to overseas jobs also need to be helped. In this aspect, a comprehensive long-term strategic plan should be developed to establish family-based in-home service youth supporting system.

#### **Strategies:**

1. Build international relationships and partnerships to implement youth villages by sharing existing best practices and strategies across the region.

2. Prepare in country data base on the above mentioned youth groups.
3. Prepare in country network to coordinate all stakeholders involved in youth related matters.

### **6.5.2 Fully integrated continuum of Services**

Most vulnerable young people should have access to the services, opportunities and supports to make them productive citizens. Rural young women, who do not have access to education, vocational training and employment opportunities and social interaction, youths in post conflict areas, estate sector youths, young widows and physically and mentally differently abled youths are required to be given priority. By providing appropriate services they are needed to be engaged in development activities in the country. In Sri Lanka, a National Youth Service Council has been established for providing proper services for youth to make them actively participate in the development of the country. However there is no strong regional collaboration in this regard. It is high time to establish a regional youth services system to cooperate internationally in order to identify different social, economic, cultural and political needs of the region and share experiences for a better service.

#### **Strategies:**

1. Establishing regional youth service system
2. Identifying most vulnerable groups and high priority issues and their demands for services within the region.
3. Promoting collaborative relationships among youth serving systems at the State level and community level and enhance the joint initiatives to accomplish shared results.
4. Developing joint strategies and sharing resources across the system to serving the most vulnerable young populace in the region.
5. Implementing high quality research based services through the system.
6. Establishing well organized monitoring system.

### **6.5.3 Training and Capacity Building to Boost up Skills, Jobs and Career Development**

Sri Lanka is one of the countries which have achieved quality level of education compared with other developing countries. However, still Sri Lanka needs to go forward for high quality achievement in education sector in line with social and economic developments in the country. Education system of Sri Lanka has failed to provide an output to match the demand in the job market. Other problems are lack of positive attitudes for development and innovation along with a drop in ethical values (Ministry of Human Resource Development, Education and Cultural Affairs, n. d.).

## **Issues Arising in the Education Sector**

**Disparities among Schools:** There are still many disparities related to administration and management among schools. Accordingly, there is a problem of maintaining uniformity of the distribution of infrastructure facilities and human resources among schools of different categories. Therefore, certain schools are facing difficulties in competing with other schools in preparing their students for highly competitive examinations (National Education Commission, 2009).

**Language skills:** In the direction of catering to the job market in the private sector and overseas, proficiency in foreign languages is essential. English is the entryway and access to modern knowledge, which can be accessed through information technology. Therefore it is important to further strengthen English language teaching in schools. At the same time teaching other languages such as French, German, Chinese and Japanese in schools should be encouraged.

**Inadequate Support for Study in Foreign Universities:** At present, opportunities available for academic staff to obtain higher qualifications in foreign universities are inadequate. This is more acute in the field of languages, social sciences and humanities. Exposure to the structure of the foreign education systems and their culture could play a vital role in developing human resources (National Education Commission, 2009).

**Low Skill Labour Migration:** The total labour force in Sri Lanka is approximately 7.5 million and it is estimated that approximately 1.5 million Sri Lankans' work overseas at any given time. The majority of these foreign employments are in low skills jobs and thus remuneration is very low (National Education Commission, 2009). Availability of workers with higher levels of skills will necessarily results in a higher earning potential in foreign markets.

**Career Counseling:** The general education system in Sri Lanka does not provide sufficient counseling and career guidance. With the situation of unemployment status in Sri Lanka, it is very vital to guide youths for selecting their trust areas to study which is directly catering the existing job market and to direct them to find appropriate jobs and to reduce their stress endure both in home environment, school and in the community. There is a negative perception of university students due to frequent violence in universities, ragging, lack of social skills, inability to solve problems skillfully, lack of presentation skills and speech, lack of writing skills and poor English knowledge skills. These drawbacks make it more difficult for students to adjust to the work culture in the engine of growth (Ministry of Human Resource Development, Education and Cultural Affairs, n. d.)Hence, counseling regarding career options based on individual aptitudes and performance is vital. Thus, it is very important to employ well experienced expertise for counseling.

**Strategies:**

1. To eliminate the disparities among schools, foreign assistance is needed from the governments of the CIRDAP region to provide infrastructure facilities, human resource development and information technology.
2. Improving knowledge, skills and abilities of professional staff and volunteers who are directly involving teaching languages through foreign training and sharing expertise and resources.
3. Negotiations among countries in the region to develop curricula for courses which are related to the demand of overseas job markets and for enrollment of students in local institutes as well as international institutes.
4. Reinforcement of linkages with foreign universities to improve opportunities for academics and administrators. Students should be given opportunities to obtain foreign exposure and experience all the way through establishing partnership and affiliations with international higher education institutions avenues should be open. To facilitate academic and non academic staff and students to visit overseas universities for short period.
5. Generate up-to-date well maintained databases on vocational and technical trainings and job opportunities available locally and internationally which any country within the region could easily access to find appropriate courses and opportunities for employment.
6. Develop a mechanism for dissemination of knowledge and information of international skills labour market within the region.
7. School teachers should be given special foreign training in career guidance and counseling with support of specialized foreign expertise and well experienced counselors should be recruited for school career.
8. Exchange foreign volunteers and expertise for career guidance to promote good practices and sharing knowledge and providing assistance.
9. Negotiate with international agencies to generate foreign funds to establish career guidance units in technical and vocational training sector and improve the existing career guidance units within the University network.
10. Manage e-job fairs to provide information on employment opportunities specially for skill labour.

**6.5.4 Psychological Counseling**

Most of the youth need solving their problems through correct psychological counseling. The problems faced by this group often are related to love affairs and marriages, studies and examinations, friends and peers, as well as family matters (Ministry of Human Resource Development, Education and Cultural Affairs, n. d.). This replicated the increasing domestic violence, the rising of divorce cases, criminal offenses, drug abuse and high suicide rates etc. among youth group in recent past in Sri Lanka.

The North and East civil war during the past two decades has led to the dreadful psychological stress in people. The young people in the conflict affected areas experience severe psychological and social problems that can dwarf the problems of lost education, employment opportunities (Gunathilaka and Mayer and vodopivec, 2010). Psychological counseling for vulnerable persons like youths affected by conflicts, differently abled youths (mental and physical), disadvantaged youths (Schools drop outs, child labour and child marriage in remote areas) should be directed towards psychological counseling. In Sri Lanka, there is a scarcity of qualified counselors to attend to these people in need of counseling services.

**Strategies:**

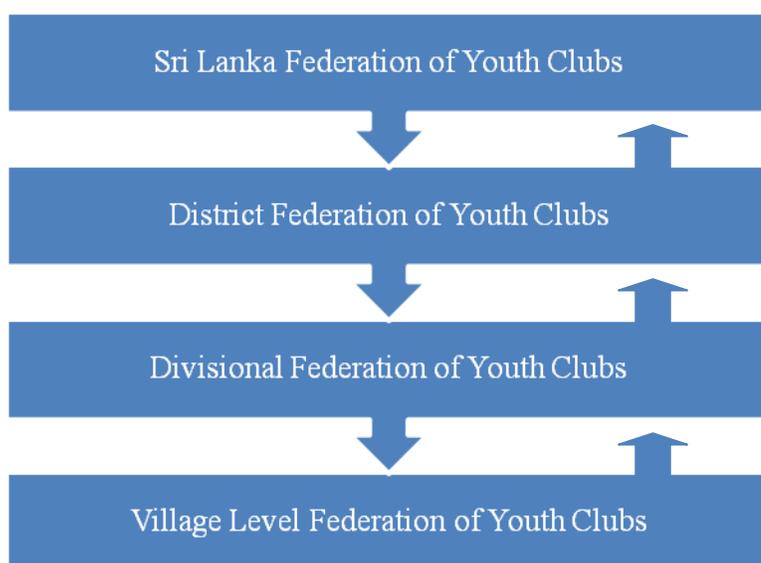
1. Negotiation to establish psycho – social counseling service system.
2. Exchange professional psychological counselors among the region.
3. Assistance to implementation counseling centers at village level.
4. Provide foreign training facilities for professional counselors to upgrade their skills.
5. Facilitating international expertise assistance to develop a broad-based of knowledge and skills in the area of counseling especially through out the schools and university system and public and private psychological counseling institutes.

**6.5.5 Participation at Grass Roots Levels**

The National Youth Service Council, the largest centre for youth in Asia located in Colombo is focusing more on creating the environment to make youth as productive citizens and leaders at the grass root level. Their activities are decentralized at the provincial level and the branch offices are established in nine Provinces of the Island. Each Provincial office is headed by an Assistant Director under whom the district youth services officers co-ordinate the activities at the district level. The youth services offices and assistant youth services officers undertake the implementation of the projects and organization of various programmes at the grassroots level under the guidance of their superior officers.

Most of the activities of the National Youth Services Council are implemented through the youth clubs network which has 10,000 youth clubs in all parts of the country at the village level. The objectives of this youth club network are to provide opportunities for the fruitful utilization of leisure time by the youth, provide vocational training opportunities, extend assistance to various rural development programmes, cause cultural efflorescence within youth, leadership development and obtain youth participation in national development.

**Figure 6.1: Organizational Structure of the Youth Club Network**



Source: Personal Communication with National Youth Service Council Officers

The Divisional Federations of youth clubs have been formed by bringing together the youth clubs at Divisional Secretarial Level. District federations of youth clubs have been formed with representatives from those divisional federations. The Sri Lanka federation of youth clubs is composed of representatives from divisional federations of youth clubs and representatives from the district federation of youth clubs. This organizational structure generates youth representatives to actively participate in formulating the public policy on youth.

However, the poor performances at the grass root level officers weaken the active participation of rural younger. Poor monitoring, lack of sufficient technical skills, personal attitudes and lack of motivation of the grass root level representatives have led to deteriorate the relationship between policy makers and beneficiaries. In other words there are poor top to bottom linkages.

**Strategies:**

1. Exchanging skills and knowledge to enhance the top bottom relationship.
2. Strengthening the existing network among institutes which directly deal with grassroots example, Youth Employment Network, Youth Corps, National Youth Service Council, Student bodies, NGO's and village level youth organizations.
3. Training facilities and awareness programme to develop a proper mechanism to monitoring grassroots level officers.
4. Identifying international best practices and adopt them for local conditions to formulate successful policy implementation and dissemination.
5. Providing technical support to relevant ministries and institutions in the government and provincial councils to address the youth at grassroots level.

6. Providing financial assistance from foreign sources to develop infrastructure facilities of village level community base institute especially in North and East.

#### **6.6 Formulation of a Regional Action Plan among CIRDAP Member Countries**

1. Organizing a regional conference to share experiences about what international stakeholders are doing towards mitigating socio economic disparities and poverty among youth within the States.
  - Charting Youth issues throughout the region
  - Exchange current and proposed projects and activities in bilateral negotiation.
2. Establishing proper network and system covering governments, youth led organizations, donor agencies, civil society organizations, multilateral organizations which are addressing youth development.

This will improve information dissemination within CIRDAP member countries through knowledge management initiatives and tools. Also it would help to review the impact of youth programmes carried out in the region and create forum for members to address their responses. This network also will serve a platform for updating youth related work and to initiate dialogue on prospects for collaboration.

3. Establish the CIRDAP Committee to improve coordination and follow-up of the youth development programmes.
4. Organize periodical e- job fairs within the region.

#### **6.7 Conclusion**

The literature reveals that international collaboration on youth sector has increased significantly in recent years. However, efforts for coordinating and follow-up are very diminutive. There are large numbers of multilateral and bi lateral negotiations focusing on youth development in Sri Lanka. Projects and programmes on infrastructure development and for human resource developments were the key strategies toward youth development that have been implemented through regional negotiation. However, there is no proper network among international and national agencies who are involved in youth sector development. Thus, programmes tend to overlap each. Follow up and feed back assessments are not sufficient.

Representatives of the regional cooperation should congregate and share the information about the ongoing and planned youth development programmes which are been executed with multilateral and bilateral negotiations among the region to identify the gap and prevent duplication of their works. Therefore, it is needed to develop a proper coordination and monitoring mechanism to improve youth development in the region. It is important to build up a partnership among CIRDAP member countries to implement national youth priorities while respecting and harnessing the benefits of the strength of individual States and hence to develop a unique approaches and mandates.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

### **Recommendations**

**By M.K. Nadeeka Damayanthi**

#### **7.1 Introduction**

This chapter provides policy recommendations in some specific areas related to youth in development. The areas covered by the chapter are policy formulation and implementation, peace and harmony, decision making and politics, employment, vulnerable groups, agriculture and fisheries and counseling.

#### **7.2 Policy Recommendations**

##### **7.2.1 Policy Formulation and Implementation**

The most important activity towards the youth in development is formulation and implementation of a national youth policy reflecting particular needs, aspirations and culture of different ethnic and socio-cultural groups. Collecting ideas from all stakeholders including youth, governmental and non-governmental activists involved in youth and development and leaders of civil society organizations is necessary for this task. This policy needs to specially address needs of marginalized and disadvantageous groups such as youth in conflict affected areas, differently abled youths, aborigine youth and young widows. Further, such policy must become guiding principle of provincial and grass-root level youth policies also.

A large number of governmental and non-governmental organizations are involved in youth development as well as rural development activities. However, it seems to be that activities and programmes are conducted without inter connection. Therefore, most of them overlap with each other. This weakness can be removed with the build up of proper network among agencies involved in youth development programmes.

##### **7.2.2 Education**

Several studies have proved that there is a mismatch between present education system and labour market. Therefore, entire education system needs to be reorganized with the direction of labour market. Further, university education system needs to include job oriented programmes such as internship for job trainings (including social science undergraduates), and to introduce more courses focused on employment. The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Skills Development has implemented programmes to offer vocational degrees to train those who are not eligible for university education. This

programme need to be strengthened and information should be disseminated on available job opportunities for vocational degree holders.

### **7.2.3 Employment**

Voluntary employment is high among Sri Lankan youth due to queuing up for “better-jobs” and mismatch between the educational system and the labour market. Therefore, relevant government and private sector institutions, specially institutions related to education system, media and youth should implement awareness programmes to change the mind-set of youth as well as society focusing above issues. For example, government can do campaigns addressing work ethics, perceptions, attitudes and aspirations about manual, technical and entrepreneurial works.

Dissemination of information related to employment opportunities and skills development is another strategy to reduce unemployment among youth and cater to the foreign demand for labour. The networking system on available current employment opportunities in the country and overseas is the best approach to disseminate information. In addition, strengthening career guidance programmes from school level is another strategy to change mind-set of youth and reduce unemployment among youth.

Another viable area to reduce unemployment among youth in Sri Lanka is the foreign job market. However, government should pay attention to cater to the demand providing skills development opportunities and information on vacancies to youth. Further, government needs to sign bi-lateral agreements with appropriate countries to secure labour rights.

### **7.2.4 Self Employment/Entrepreneurship**

There are number of bottlenecks such as policy environment, access to finance, managerial skills and access to business support in self employment. Therefore, compulsory management trainings with the self employment training will be very useful to achieve targets of the youth in self employment. Further, minimum conditions for credits and widely spread information on training facilities and other services will be useful for their success in businesses or enterprises.

### **7.2.5 Agriculture and Fisheries**

Considerable proportion of youth is engaged in agriculture related activities, but a low proportion is engaged in agriculture as full time employment. This is mainly due to less profitability and uncertainty of the market, lack of availability and accessibility of physical and financial resources, extension services and training, information, lack of

social recognition and social security system. To increase youth participation in agriculture including farming as well as agri-business, government can enact rules and regulations to give some incentives such as special marks system for school entry of farm families' children and quota system for youth in farm families for government employments. Further, government needs to strengthen youth farmer organizations giving trainings, field visits, financial and physical resources. There is a need to provide all necessary information to grass-root level and support to stand up as an entrepreneur instead of just crop cultivator.

#### **7.2.6 Vulnerable Groups**

All stakeholders need to pay enough attention to improve training facilities and skills development to absorb the differently abled youths, young widows and youth in conflict affected areas. To enhance their capacities, government and non-governmental organizations should take steps towards strengthening and improving available training centers with modern technologies and curriculum development by considering current needs of the labour market. Further, stakeholders should take necessary action to absorb them in to labour market sufficiently. For example, government needs to take action to recruit differently abled youth for employment vacancies in accordance with available quota system for them.

#### **7.2.7 Decision Making and Politics**

Previous research findings have proved that trust on political institutions (central government, provincial councils, local government institutions and political parties), on elected representatives and on some of government institutions (bureaucracy and police) is very low among youth. Further, many research findings as well as commissions have mentioned that politicization of society causes youth unrest and many other social problems in Sri Lankan society. The Government should pay serious attention to the situation and need to take action towards increasing trust on government institutions. Therefore, implementation of merit based system and at least enough governance practices in all sectors of the government will be the best remedy for the problem.

There are important recommendations given by the Presidential Commission on Youth in 1989 to increase youth participation in decision making, in politics as well as to remedy for social injustices and inequality. Since most of the recommendations are valid the present context also, government and other stakeholders such as trade unions and political parties should take necessary action to implement those to enhance youth participation in politics, decision making, social and economic activities. The Government can enact laws and rule for minimum quota system for youth in nomination of each and every election, representation in political institutions as well as

decision making level in political parties, civil society organization except elderly societies.

### **7.2.8 Peace and Social Harmony**

Many parties including the government attempt to build up sustainable peace and harmony in the country with the increasing mutual understanding and trust among different ethnic groups. However, major barrier is the language problem. The Bi-lingual policy need to be implemented in a more practical way by increasing way to learn a second language and culture of each other ethnic groups.

### **7.2.9 Counseling**

Since traditional social setup for social protection and counseling has been diminishing over the years it is time to introduce and establish an alternative counseling system for youth. The requirement is proved by suicide rates among youth. The alternative counseling systems should be established at grass root levels with the help of civil society organizations and religious leaders.

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## **Annex 1: Institutes under the Purview of Ministry of Youth Affairs and Skills Development**

1. Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission (TVEC)
2. Department of Technical Education and Training (DTET)
3. Vocational Training Authority (VTA)
4. University of Vocational Technology (UNIVOTEC)
5. National Apprenticeship and Industrial Training Authority (NAITA)
6. National Institute of Business Management (NIBM)
7. Skills Development Fund Ltd. (SDFL)
8. Ceylon German Technical Training Institute
9. National Youth Services Council
10. National Human Resources Development Council (NHRDC)
11. National Youth Award Authority (NYAA)
12. National Youth Corps
13. Youth Services Company Ltd
14. International Centre for Training of Rural Leaders (ICTRL)
15. Sri Lanka Institute of Printers (SLIOP)
16. National Institute of Fisheries and Nautical Engineering (Ocean University)
17. National Youth Services Cooperative Societies Union Ltd. (NYSCO)