

Participation of Youth in Sri Lankan Labour Force: Do We Meet the Needs of Youth in Development?

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Sri Lanka has been well known as a developing country with successful social policies, however achieving the wellbeing of youth is a major challenge due to mismatching of factors in demand and supply in youth labour market. This study attempts to empirically examine the youth participation and effects of manpower development on Labour force of Sri Lanka. The study adopted a cross sectional research design and a mixed methodological approach while primary and secondary data were used for the study. i.e. micro data from the Sri Lanka Labour Force Survey 2012 to draw the quantitative results and qualitative results from case studies. The unit of analysis was economically active 5768 male and females belonging to 15-29 years of age. Apart from the basic analysis, binary logistic regression model was used to analysis the determinants of unemployment among the youth in Sri Lanka.

The study found that, the majority (53%) of youth are inactive and rate of unemployment of youth (5%) is higher than overall rate of unemployment of the country. A higher percentage of unemployed youth (55%) are in the age category of 20-24 years of age. Another notable finding is that in terms of educational qualifications, unemployment was higher among youth with advanced level and higher education qualifications, than those who had lower or no education. Moreover, only 29% of youth have successfully completed a formal professional/technical training, relevant to an occupation/self-employment and among them the majority (66%) has only a general certificate. As the barriers to training and development are attitude of the achieved higher education is sufficient, didn't relative the importance of such training for a job, financial difficulties to get an appropriate formal training etc. and also majority (38%) of youth are in a queue one year or more for a job. The study found that most of the youth who can supply the

productive manpower is trying to supply their labour to the foreign labour market while unskilled youth are engaged in unproductive economic activities. In conclusion a gender-friendly policy needs to be introduced to address constraints faced by young women to strengthen the full participation and manpower development in the labour market in Sri Lanka.

Key words: *Development, Labour force, Manpower, Sri Lanka Youth.*