

F-01 : Occupational aspirations and attitudes of youth in the tea plantations sector

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Plantation agriculture is a vital part of the Sri Lankan economy. Among plantation crops, tea is predominant. The labour in the plantations came originally from the economically deprived groups in South India. The workers live isolated from the rest of society and labour management is marked by a considerable degree of regimentation.

Changes outside the plantations however, affect all. Youth, being a vulnerable category, are affected by these changes, particularly by changes affecting the employment situation. This study, was designed to identify the occupational aspirations and attitudes of youth in the tea plantations.

The information relevant to the study, such as attitudes, aspirations, unemployment, under employment and skills, were obtained through a field survey conducted using an interview schedule in Darrawella and Barcaple Estates. Primary data was also collected by unstructured interviews with welfare officers in the study area as well as from field observations.

Data analysis was done using simple statistical methods. Unemployment and under-employment was high in the surveyed estates. Male unemployment and under-employment was higher than female. Their aspirations and attitudes are centred towards obtaining high incomes. In Darrawella Estate, youth liked to move outside plantations and be self-employed. In Barcaple Estate, youth liked to work in the plantation and be employed by others.

Through a workable recruitment system and development of more enterprises, more youth could be employed. Suitable economic activities should be developed within the estates which are remote, to enable youth to live a meaningful life.