

Impact of poverty on early drop out of adolescents from schools in fishing communities in Sri Lanka: with reference to Bopitiya village in Gampaha coastal belt

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The word "adolescence" comes from the Latin *adolescere* meaning "to grow into maturity". As well as being a time of enormous physiological change, adolescence is also marked by changes in behavior and expectations. Traditionally, adolescence has been regarded as a prelude to and preparation for adulthood, a transitional period of life between immaturity and maturity. Owing to socio-economic and other related barriers, a large number of children in Sri Lanka do not continue school education, despite the existence of the Universal Primary Education Program.

The Literacy rate is 92% in Sri Lanka- the highest in South Asia and second highest in Asia. Primary school enrolment rates are also high although there is a small proportion of a children that has been denied the right to education. These children live in extreme poverty; are street children, children living in public institutions (orphanages) and in rural, coastal and plantation areas, children displaced by the ethnic conflict and belonging to marginalized groups in Sri Lanka. There were more children in school than out of school with little gender difference. More than 40 % of the out of school children had dropped out early. More girls than boys had never been to school and more boys than girls were dropouts. More out of school children were in 10-14 age groups. The percentage of out of school children was higher among Tamil children. Almost 10 % had been absent through the two weeks of the survey and 44.5% had been absent for more than 5 of the 10 school days in Sri Lanka.

It has been used both primary and secondary data for this study. Secondary data was collected from secondary sources and primary data was collected from Bopitiya village in Gampaha district. It was used interview schedule and observation method to collect primary data. The problem of this study is the impact of poverty on early drop out of adolescents from schools. The objective of this study is to identify the reasons for early drop out of adolescents from schools, identify the impact of poverty on early drop out of adolescents from schools, identify the social problem create by this early drop out and identify the solutions for overcome or at least mitigate the problem of early drop out from schools in fishing communities in Sri Lanka. There are more than 60% of children stop their education before or after O/L examination in this village and they go to fishing with their parents or find other jobs. According to collected data it can be said that there is big impact of poverty on early drop out of adolescents from schools. So, government policy making bodies and NGOs have to take necessary actions to reduce the poverty in coastal areas and it can be motivated the parents and students to the importance of continuing education.

Key words: Adolescents, Drop out from schools, Poverty, Social problems, Fishing communities

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