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Factors Associated with Non Schooling and Dropouts in Sri Lanka

W. Indralal De Silva

Introduction

In the countries of the world half the children enrolled in school fail to complete the primary level. Early leaving or dropout is defined as leaving school before the completion of a given stage of education or leaving at some intermediate or non terminal point in a cycle of schooling.¹ Non schooling children can be defined as those who have never been to school or never admitted to school. Dropouts problem is more serious than non schooling, and it is more complex. The magnitude of the problem varies from country to country and area to area, and remedial actions taken are not uniform.²

There has been a considerable increase in the level of literacy over the years in Sri Lanka³: 26% in 1901 and 87% in 1981; but there are still a remarkable number of non schoolings and dropouts. This study pays attention only to the rural sector of Sri Lanka because it constitutes about 80% of the national population; the district of Hambantota, which is predominantly agricultural, is selected for the investigation. There are two main objectives associated with the study. First, to examine the current trends and magnitude of dropouts and non schooling, and secondly, to investigate the socio-economic and demographic determinants of dropouts and non schooling in rural Sri Lanka.