

A Study on the Effect of Urban and Rural Divide on Youth Development Index (YDI) in Sri Lanka

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Youth development has become critical for young people worldwide, in order to realize their capabilities to pursue decent employment, education opportunities, health and wellbeing, as well as civic and political empowerment. As a result, Commonwealth YDI was built as a tool to measure relative youth development across countries. This study investigates on the effect of urban-rural division on a young person in determining their YDI level, as those have divergent facilities levels that clearly differentiate each sector. Hence, the study attempts to identify the difference in between the level of Youth Development in both identified sectors of Colombo district, within the age bracket of youth in between 18-34 years. A representative sample of 299 urban (Kolonnawa DS Division) and 86 rural (Homagama DS Division) youth were chosen using stratified sampling with proportionate allocation. Primary data collection method of survey questionnaires was used to gather data. Secondary data were obtained from Census of Population and Housing (2012), National Youth Survey III (2013) and UN Statistics on Sri Lanka (1990-2014). The sample data was tested for reliability and validity by using Cronbach's Alpha (above 0.7) and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (P-value=0.00, KMO=0.927). With 95% confidence it can be stated that there is no population mean difference in YDI (T=-1.11/P-value= 0.268) between urban (Avg. YDI=0.803) and rural (Avg. YDI=0.818) sectors. According to the results, the sector difference has not affected the YDI level of youth. Yet examining further, Colombo district has wide opportunities available for youth more than any other district, thus, this similarity presented in urban and rural YDI may not be seen in other districts. Thereby, the study provides strategic suggestions for Sri Lanka to improve on its youth development island-wide, by presenting recommendations for government and policy makers, civil society and youth, and finally for further researches.

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