

Health Rights of Estate Workers Provided by Health Policy of Sri Lanka: A Study Conducted in Madampe Estate

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It has been universally accepted that Health and Human Rights are reinforced and interconnected. If a man is to enjoy Human Rights, he must have a healthy life. Due to this reason, health rights have been given a focal concern in human rights. In contemporary world, all most all governments including Sri Lanka when formulating public policies have given a primary attention to rights of various segments of the society. During the last two decades, successive government of Sri Lanka that was inspired by millennium and sustainable development discourses have contributed to a different extent to promulgate and operationalize health policies to enhance the living condition of estate workers while ensuring their enjoyment of health rights. Despite such a situation, one of the major social criticisms, targeted the state policies was the not ensuring the conducive legal backdrops for these people to enjoy their full right to access to the healthy life in their areas. The aim of this study was to explore these puzzling situation pertaining to the health rights of state workers provided by the health policy in Sri Lanka by paying particular attention to Madampe estate. Hence, the objectives of the study are to examine the legal impediments to protect the health rights of estate labourers, their economic protection. By applying qualitative research methodology, 35 employees from Madampe Estate and 5 health officers were interviewed to collect primary data while referencing letters, reports, documents and e-sources to obtain secondary data. The descriptive method was used to analysis data to come up with explanatory findings for answering the research questions. One of the main findings derived was that health rights of state employees are not adequately secured both by legal provisions as well as operational routines. Some of the notable reasons that were encountered were the lack of sufficient sanitary facilities, lack of modern medical services and hospital facilities, amateur medical officials, lack of health clinics and health education programmes in the areas. For the protection of space for health facilities of estate people, synergic endeavour need to be take by state, private sector and community level actors. Reconsideration of legal provisions and practical actions should be done with comprehensive frame in order to cover up the entire community.

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