

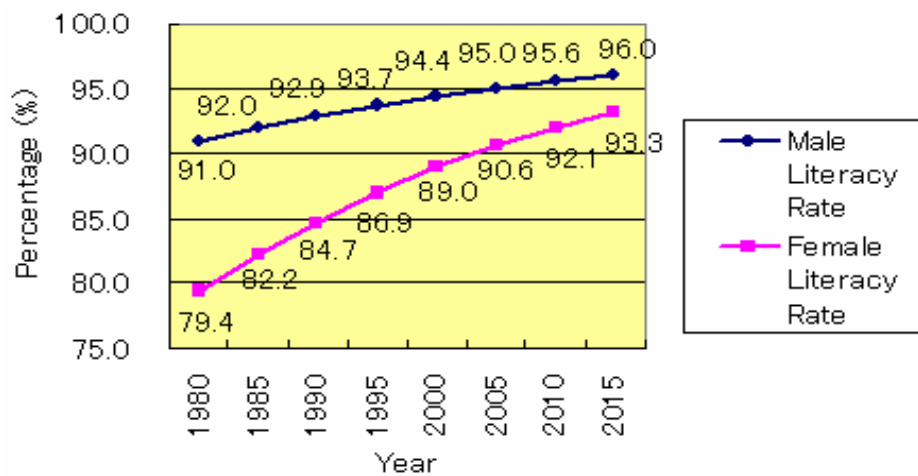
### CHAPTER 3

#### EDUCATION, ECONOMIC AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

##### A. Education

Although a developing country, Sri Lanka has achieved remarkable success in education. In 2001, the census of population showed that literacy rate was 91 percent, with female literacy rising by about 33 percent in the past 20 years from 67 percent in 1963 to 89 percent in 2001.<sup>53</sup> Forecasts report that literacy rates will rise even further by 2015.

**Figure 8. Literacy Rate by Sex, 1980-2015 (Projected)**



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2002

Differences between urban and rural literacy rates tend to be decreasing through the years. (Table 16)

**Table 16. Literacy Rate by Urban-Rural Sector and Sex, 1963-2001**

Sector & Sex		1963	1981	1990/91*	2001**
All Island	Average	77.0	87.2	86.6	90.7
	Male	85.6	91.1	90.1	92.2
	Female	67.3	83.2	83.1	89.2
Urban	Average	87.6	93.3	92.3	-
	Male	91.8	95.3	94.0	-
	Female	82.4	79.9	84.3	-
Rural	Average	74.5	84.5	87.1	-
	Male	84.2	89.0	89.9	-
	Female	64.1	79.9	84.3	-
Estate	Average	-	-	66.1	-
	Male	-	-	79.0	-
	Female	-	-	52.8	-

Note: In 1963 and 1981 Estate sector has been included under rural sector.

\* Northern and Eastern Provinces were excluded.

\*\* Provisional estimate from Census of Population 2001. Only *Ampara* district is included from the Northern & Eastern Provinces.

Sources: Census of Population 1963, 1981, 2001

Household Income and Expenditure Survey 1990/1991

The country is projected to reach the targets of the United Nation's Millennium Development Goals in education. Enrollment ratio in primary school was 96.4 percent in 2002 and is projected to reach 100 percent by 2015. Literacy rate among youth (15-24 year olds) was 95.6 percent in 2002 with forecasts achieving universal literacy in this age group by 2015. (Table 17)

**Table 17. Progress and Projections in Achieving MDG Education Targets, 1990-2015**

Indicator	1990 %	2002 %	2015 %	MDG Target status
Net enrollment ratio in primary school	91.7	96.4	100	On track
Proportion of pupils in grade 1 who reach Grade 5	92.7	97.6	100	On track
Literacy rate of 15-24 year olds	92.7	95.6	100	On track

Source: UN Millennium Development Goals Country Report, 2005

The reason for this success is the education system. The law makes education compulsory for 5 to 14 year olds. As a result, 85 percent of children below 16 years attend school.<sup>54</sup> As a welfare state, the public sector provides free education until the tertiary level, spending 2.8 percent of GDP annually (14 billion rupees).<sup>55</sup> Apart from this, the government also provides subsidized transportation and lunches in some areas. The country has 10,475 schools catering to approximately four million students. Of these, 9,790 (93.5 %) are public schools while 78 are private, the remaining 607 being *privernas* or temple schools. On average, there is one school for every six kilometers of land area. (Table 18)<sup>56</sup>

**Table 18. Number of Schools by Grade Level, 2002**

Province	Primary	Primary and Secondary			Secondary only		Grand total
	Grade 1-5	Grade 1-8	Grade 1-11	Grade 1-13	Grade 8-11	Grade 8-13	
Western	260	46	675	325	14	73	1393
Central	506	90	531	303	2	51	1483
Southern	219	47	555	256	8	66	1151
Northern	333	89	278	134	5	29	368
Eastern	330	80	321	196	1	9	937
North Western	227	63	636	297	0	27	1250
North Central	214	59	347	152	0	11	783
Uva	195	73	373	183	1	4	829
Sabaragamuwa	306	96	502	192	0	39	1135
Sri Lanka	2500	643	4218	2038	31	309	9829

Source: UN Millennium Development Goals Country Report, 2005

In the early 1960s, private schools were banned in the country. As a result, most students, especially those in the primary level, attended public schools. At present, only a handful of private institutions are allowed to operate, most of which offer tertiary education where limitations are significantly less.<sup>57</sup>

Due to the country's wide network of schools, average school size (number of students in each school) is low, with most schools having less than 500 students. As a result, average teacher-student ratio is also low with approximately 21 students per teacher for the entire country. (Table 19)

**Table 19. Government Schools, Student Enrolment and Teachers, By Province, 2002**

Province	Number of Schools	Number of Students	Number of Teachers	Average School Size	Student Teacher Ratio
Western	1,393	873,434	38,187	627	23
Central	1,483	539,262	27,447	364	20
Southern	1,151	544,109	26,984	473	20
North-Eastern	1,802	628,195	27,361	349	23
North-Western	1,250	481,510	24,839	385	19
North-Central	783	269,380	13,010	344	21
Uva	829	299,897	14,464	362	21
Sabaragamuwa	1,135	391,288	19,520	345	20
Sri Lanka	9,826	4,027,075	191,812	410	21

Source: World Bank estimates, based on Ministry of Education, School Census, 2002.

Educational attainment in the country is relatively high, with nearly half of the school age population finishing secondary school, another 30 percent acquiring at least a primary education, and only 7.4 percent remaining unschooled in 2003. (Table 20)

**Table 20. Percentage Distribution of School Age Population by Educational Level (%) (1953-2003)**

	1953	1963	1973	1978 /79	1981 /82	1986 /87 (b)	1996 /97 (b)	2003 /04 (b)
No Schooling	41.8	26.8	22.9	14.9	15.1	11.8	8.6	7.4
Primary	46.8	45.5	43.2	43.8	43.8	41.1	35.2	29.1
Secondary	9.8	22.7	27.3	29.8	29.2	32.1	35.5	42.2
Tertiary	1.8	5.0	6.6	11.5	12.8	15.0	20.7	21.3

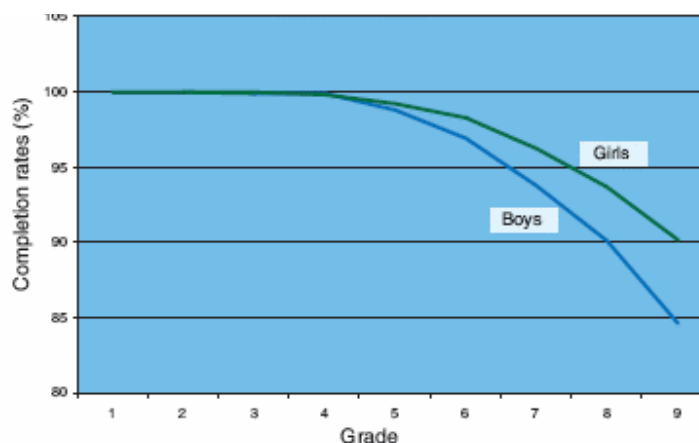
(b) Excluding North and East provinces

Source: UN Millennium Development Goals Country Report, 2005

The country's primary and secondary completion rates are relatively high with 97.6 percent and 83 percent of those entering primary and secondary schools, respectively, successfully completing their respective grade levels.<sup>58</sup>

Despite these, some failures and challenges remain. While completion rate is high in the lower grade levels, it decreases as the grade level increases. This is apparent when a comparison is made between the primary and secondary completion rates with a difference of more than 14 percent. In the primary level alone, completion rates start to decrease from the 5<sup>th</sup> grade. (Figure 9)

**Figure 9. Net Compulsory Education Completion Rates, Grades 1-9, 2001**



Source: World Bank, 2005

Drop-out and repetition rates increase as grade level increases. (Table 21) Survey data of 2003 suggest that Sri Lanka had 60,000 drop-outs, with poverty as the predominant reason. Despite subsidized education, many students are prevented from going to school or completing their education due to lack of resources for bus fares, school supplies, food, and clothing. Girls, in particular, are forced to stay home to take care of younger siblings. It is suggested that most of those who drop-out end up in the child labor market.<sup>59</sup>

**Table 21. Repetition and Drop-out Rates (%)  
by Medium of Instruction and School Grade, 2002**

Grade	Repetition Rate		Drop-out Rate	
	Sinhale Medium	Tamil Medium	Sinhale Medium	Tamil Medium
Grade 1	0.17	0.80	-0.02	0.35
Grade 2	0.40	1.54	0.23	0.36
Grade 3	0.35	1.77	0.32	1.74
Grade 4	0.41	2.01	0.77	2.11
Grade 5	1.02	3.09	0.87	4.49
Grade 6	0.84	2.29	1.80	4.77
Grade 7	0.67	2.03	1.85	6.00
Grade 8	0.52	1.87	2.60	8.15
Grade 9	0.29	1.18	2.17	9.61
Grade 10	0.19	1.10	4.27	10.17

Source: <http://www.statistics.gov.lk/education/edustat-2002.pdf>

The situation is worse in the Northeastern part of the island where there is conflict between the LTTE and the government. A 2003 Needs Assessment Report estimates that about 50,000 school aged children in the Northern and Eastern parts of Sri Lanka are currently out of school. Drop-out rates in the rest of country generally stay below 10 percent. The region lacks about 5,000 teachers and principals and the violence between government troops and Tamil rebels damaged 15,000 classrooms in 500 schools.<sup>60</sup>

Recognizing these weaknesses, in 1978, an Act of Parliament created the President's Fund to provide a variety of scholarships and allow selected students to continue their education. The President Scholarship Scheme (PSS) is one program under the Fund where 175 University lecturers, public sector employees, their children and other qualified youth conduct and follow academic and training courses.<sup>61</sup>

In 2000, the Millennium Scheme (MS), a new scholarship program for G/CE A' or senior secondary level students who excel in academic and extracurricular activities was launched. This scholarship targets underprivileged yet talented senior secondary students who otherwise would have dropped out of school due to lack of resources. Another scholarship scheme was created in 2002 which targeted Northeastern students who were victimized by the conflict in their region.<sup>62</sup>

### **The Education System and Adolescent Reproductive Health**

Even before the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in 1994 with emphasis on reproductive health, Sri Lanka was already one of the first few South Asian countries to launch population education program targeting school children.

In 1973, the Department of Education launched a Population Education Programme (PEP) for school children. At the time, the program was considered a pioneering achievement considering the socio-cultural context that frowned upon the public discussion of sexuality and reproductive health.<sup>63</sup>

In 1990, another program was implemented. The Family Life Education (FLE) program incorporated items covering population and family life education at national level public examinations. It involved parents by organizing programs to create awareness on adolescent issues among parents through parent-teacher organizations. A book on reproductive health (RH), "Dawn of Adolescence" was published and distributed to school children although some parents and teachers decried the content of the book, arguing that it was too explicit.<sup>64</sup>

Apart from in-school projects, the government also launched RH programs targeting out of school youth. The National Youth Services Council (NYSC) headed these initiatives primarily focused on RH information programs and leadership training for youth and poor groups. In 1998, a directorate for youth was established at the Ministry of Health (MOH). The directorate was tasked with the promotion of life skills education among Sri Lankan youth and adolescents.<sup>65</sup>

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), both local and international, launched initiatives towards educating the youth with regards to reproductive health. These were led by the Family Planning Association of Sri Lanka (FPASL). It was the lead organization in the joint United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)/ European Community (EC) project targeting the RH information, counseling and services needs of Sri Lankan youth.<sup>66</sup>

## B. Economic and Employment Opportunities

In 2002, employment rate in Sri Lanka was 90.2 percent. Unemployment rate was 9.8 percent, a rise from the previous year's 8.2 percent. (Table 22)<sup>67</sup> Labor force participation rate was about 50 percent of the population aged ten years and above. While Sri Lanka's total labor force is mostly made up of males (4.6 million of the country's seven million labor force are males), male unemployment (7.28%) is half that of the female unemployment rate (14.82%).<sup>68</sup> This represents a skewed employment pattern giving rise to gender inequality in terms of labor force participation.

**Table 22. Number and Percentage of Employed and Unemployed Population Aged 10 Years and Above, 2002**

	2002 -2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter (in 000)			Percentage %		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Population 10 years and above	6,953.50	7,210.83	14,164.33	49.09	50.91	100.00
Total labour force	4,671.13	2,346.13	7,017.26	67.18	32.54	99.72
Employed	4,331.27	1,998.38	6,329.65	92.72	85.18	90.20
Unemployed	339.86	347.75	687.61	7.28	14.82	9.80
Not in the labour force	2,282.37	4,864.70	7,147.07	32.82	67.46	50.46

Source: Employment Policy Unit, Sri Lanka, 2004

Most of those employed were in the private sector. Twenty-eight percent were self-employed while 13.2 percent worked in the public sector. Ten percent were unpaid family workers, mostly females who do domestic work for their own families. (Table 23)<sup>69</sup>

**Table 23. Category of Employment in Sri Lanka (%), 1990-2002**

Period	Public Sector employees	Private sector Employees	Employers	Self Employed	Unpaid Family Workers	Total
1990	21.5	33.7	1.8	29.2	13.8	100
1994	16.4	44.3	2.3	27.2	9.8	100
1995	15.6	44.3	2.5	28.3	9.4	100
1996	15.0	45.8	2.3	26.8	10.0	100
1997	15.1	44.3	2.3	28.8	9.4	100
1998	14.5	41.2	1.9	28.9	13.6	100
1999	14.4	43.1	2.0	28.3	12.2	100
2000a	13.4	42.9	2.4	28.4	13.0	100
2001b	13.9	44.8	2.3	28.5	10.5	100
2002b	13.2	45.1	2.9	28.0	10.8	100

a. average of four quarters

b. average of three quarters

Source: Employment Policy Unit, Sri Lanka, 2004

The gender bias in unemployment rates may be partially explained by the concentration of employment in the private sector. While gender equality is espoused in principle, it has yet to be put into practice. As a result, most women work in low-paying jobs as unskilled laborers usually in subsistence agriculture, plantations, textiles and garment industry, teaching and nursing, clerical services and domestic work. Low wages in these sectors lead to many women migrating as domestic workers.<sup>70</sup>

Agriculture employs majority of the population, with more females engaged in agriculture-related work than males. Females also dominate the education sector as there are more women teachers than males. Manufacturing employs the second highest number of workers, about 17 percent of the labor force, followed by wholesale and retail trade. (Table 24)

**Table 24. Percentage Distribution of Employed Population by Sex and Industry, 1st Quarter 2004**

Industry Group	Total	Male	Female
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	32.1	29.4	38.1
Manufacturing	16.9	13.3	25.0
Wholesale and Retail Trade, Repair of Personal and Household Goods	13.7	16.1	8.4
Financial Intermediation and Real Estate, Renting and Business Activities	2.3	2.8	1.4
Public Administration and Defense, Compulsory Social Security	7.8	7.7	7.9
Education	4.0	2.3	7.9
Other	23.1	28.5	11.4

Source: Department of Census and Statistics, 2004

Unemployment is higher in rural than urban areas, displaying a greater disparity between males and females. Unemployment is highest among adolescents (15-19 years old) at 31.7 percent and the youth (20-24 years old) at 23.2 percent. (Table 25)

**Table 25. Unemployment Rate by Age Group, Sex and Residence, First Quarter, 2004**

Age & Sector	Age Group (yrs)					
	Total	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-39	40-
Both Sexes						
Total	8.1	31.7	23.2	11.3	3.8	1.5
Male	6.2	27.7	20.1	7.1	1.9	1.3
Female	12.2	37.5	28.9	21.3	7.2	2.0
Urban						
Total	6.9	20.4	20.4	10.9	2.0	1.6
Male	4.5	16.5	12.3	7.7	1.6	1.7
Female	12.6	26.3	33.1	21.7	5.5	1.5
Rural						
Total	8.3	33.1	23.5	11.3	3.9	1.5
Male	6.4	29.1	21.1	7.0	1.9	1.2
Female	12.2	37.5	28.9	21.3	7.2	2.2

Source: Department of Census and Statistics. 2004 (First Quarter)

**Table 26. Unemployment Rate by Age Group and Residence, 2004**

Sector	Age Group					
	All Ages	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-39	40+
Total	9.0	34.2	26.1	11.9	4.4	1.3
Urban	12.2	51.7	26.2	16.1	6.6	1.1
Rural	8.5	30.5	26.1	11.0	4.0	1.3

Source: Department of Census and Statistics. 2004. Quarterly Report of the Sri Lanka Labour Force Survey.

**Table 27. Unemployment Rate by Age Group and Sex, 2004**

Sector	Age Group					
	All ages	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-39	40+
Total	9.0	34.2	26.1	11.9	4.4	1.3
Male	6.6	31.5	20.2	7.6	2.9	1.2
Female	13.9	38.4	35.3	21.6	7.3	1.4

Source: Department of Census and Statistics. 2004. Quarterly Report of the Sri Lanka Labour Force Survey.

In 2004, the overall unemployment rate (for the second quarter) was 9 percent with 34.2 percent for adolescent population aged 15-19 years. Data confirmed the much higher rates of unemployment among adolescents in urban (51.7%) than in rural areas (30.5%)(Table 26). Moreover, the unemployment rate among adolescents was high for females (38.4%) than for males (31.5%) (Table 27).<sup>71</sup>

**Table 28. Percentage Distribution of Unemployed Population by Reasons for not Actively Seeking Work, By Sex and Residence, 2004**

Sex and Sector	Reasons for not Actively Seeking Work			
	Total	Discouraged on not being able to get a job	Believed no suitable work is available	Other Reasons
Total	100.0	60.3	10.1	29.6
Male	100.0	47.9	5.6	46.5
Female	100.0	68.2	12.9	18.8
Total	100.0	60.3	10.1	29.6
Urban	100.0	32.2	..	67.8
Rural	100.0	69.6	13.4	17.0

Note - .. Negligible

Source: Department of Census and Statistics. 2004. Quarterly Report of the Sri Lanka Labour Force Survey.

There were 48 percent males and 68 percent females who have not been seeking work because they were discouraged by not being able to get a job, with much higher percentage in rural (69.6%) than urban sector (32.2%). Thirteen percent among females reported that they were not actively seeking work because they believed that no suitable work is available, with much higher rate in rural areas (13.4%). (Table 28)<sup>72</sup>

Consistent with the overall trend in the population, female unemployment rate in this age group is almost twice that of males. Trends show, though, that while remaining high, unemployment rates among the older ages groups had decreased in the third quarter of 2006.(Table 29)<sup>73</sup>

**Table 29. Unemployment Rate by Age Group and Sex- Third Quarter of 2006**

Age Group (Years)	2006		
	Male	Female	Total
15-19	17.4	25.8	20.7
20-24	16.9	28.2	21.5
25-29	7.1	20.8	11.9
30 +	1.3	2.9	1.8

Source: Source: Department of Census and Statistics. 2006

High youth unemployment presents a problem since they constitute a large proportion of the population. For instance, the 2000 Sri Lanka National Youth Survey (SLNYS) reported that due to unemployment, a high proportion of youth still depend on their parents for assistance.<sup>74</sup> This, in turn, leads to greater delays in marriage, poverty, child labor, trafficking and prostitution, and the possibility of youth unrest and strikes, an event that occurred in the early 1970s and late 1980s.

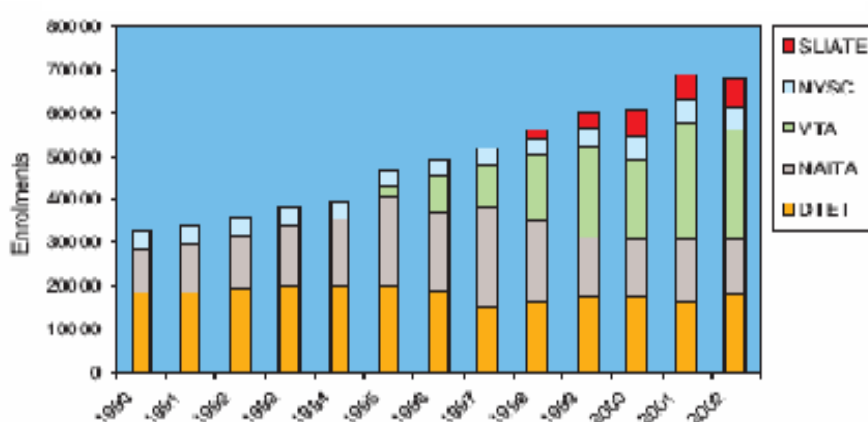
Youth unemployment and poverty stem from a mismatch between labor supply and demand. Sri Lanka's multicultural atmosphere led to an ethno-linguistic segregated school system where public schools offer and teach subjects in one language (usually either Tamil or Sinhalese). Although some schools offer language courses, majority of Sri Lanka's youth finish their education and master only in one language. This results to difficult adjustments when forced to find jobs in areas where another language is used.<sup>75</sup>

The private sector has a bias for English-speaking candidates. Since English is mostly taught in private schools and attended by more affluent youth, this creates a vicious cycle where talented but monolingual graduates from public schools lose jobs to their wealthier cohorts.<sup>76</sup>

Apart from this, a national survey showed that the country's educational system has a tendency toward white collar aspirations among its graduates regardless of opportunities. As a result, Sri Lankan youth prefer to work in the state or public sector doing white collar jobs.<sup>77</sup>

The need for vocational training seems urgent. In 2001, there were 920 training institutes registered with the Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission (TVEC). Of these, 556 (60.4%) were from the public sector, 252 (27.4%) were private while 112 (12.2%) were run by NGOs. Under the public sector, there are five main organizations: the Department of Technical Education and Training (DTET), the National Apprenticeships and Industrial Training Authority (NAITA), the Sri Lanka Institute of Advanced Technical Education (SLIATE), the Vocational Training Authority of Sri Lanka (VTA) and the National Youth Services Council (NYSC). Each of these provides a variety of vocational courses and apprenticeships. (Figure 10)<sup>78</sup>

**Fig. 10. TEVT Enrolments, 1990-2002**



Source: World Bank, 2005

Since the 1990s, student enrollment in vocational courses has grown. From 32,612 students in 1990, the number of enrollees grew to 67,612, representing an annual growth of 8.9 percent with majority of the enrollees coming from the Western Province, Sri Lanka's most developed region, and the least number of enrollees coming from the Northern part of the island. (Table 30)<sup>79</sup>

**Table 30. TEVT Enrolment by Province, 1990-2002**

Province	1990	1995	2000	2001	2002
Western	29.23	30.54	30.07	29.86	28.60
Southern	16.03	15.82	16.38	8.77	16.71
Sabaragamuwa	17.44	11.15	11.65	16.62	11.63
North-Western	11.64	10.53	9.66	2.32	9.93
Central	11.52	12.06	9.35	8.95	9.31
Eastern	9.79	8.91	8.92	9.94	9.16
Uva	5.60	6.17	6.87	4.41	7.46
North Central	3.96	4.35	4.53	7.55	4.49
Northern	0.30	0.48	2.56	11.58	2.71
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: World Bank, 2005

More than half of enrollees in vocational institutes (52%) came from rural families living below the poverty line, with 45 percent of male trainees and 65 percent of female trainees coming from such backgrounds.<sup>80</sup>

Studies such as “Vision 2010” and “Regaining Sri Lanka” found that the country’s vocational training system has several deficiencies. Mismatch between the training offered and the skills required by the economy lead to the possibility of continued unemployment despite having been trained. Estimates show that up to 70 percent of vocational courses equip trainees with low-level skills that have little relevance to employment markets.<sup>81</sup> Management deficiencies, duplication of courses, shortage of trainers, and outdated equipment and subjects also burden the country’s vocational system.<sup>82</sup>

**Table 31. Relevance of Training to the Job by Organization (%), 2001**

	DTEI	NAITA	VTA
<b>Relevance of Training to the Job</b>			
Very relevant	39.8	72.7	65.4
Relevant	30.4	15.8	8.9
Not relevant at all	29.8	11.5	25.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: World Bank, 2005

Continued unemployment and the resulting poverty invariably lead to child labor, trafficking, and prostitution. Child Activity Seminar in 1999 estimated that out of 4,344,770 children aged 5-17 years, 926,038 (21%) were engaged in economic activity. Majority (67%) of working children were involved in some form of economic activity, while attending to housekeeping activities in addition to schooling. Of all male children, 26 percent were engaged in economic activity and corresponding proportion for females was 17 percent. Of all working children, majority (62%) were males.<sup>83</sup> On the other hand, estimates put the number of internally trafficked children, some of whom are used in begging gangs to 5,000.<sup>84</sup>

A relatively high incidence of sex tourism in the country has been reported. Estimates put the number of child prostitutes between 200 and 30,000.<sup>85</sup> Due to the illicit nature of the act, there was not much information collected as to the extent of trafficking and prostitution of adolescents in the country although anecdotal reports are numerous. Table 32 shows the different estimates by various government agencies and NGOs as to the number of children victimized and sexually exploited for commercial purposes (e.g. prostitution).

**Table 32. Estimate of Children in Commercial Sexual Exploitation by Source**

Source	Estimate
Bond 1980	2000
Department of Police 1985	2000
Department of National Planning (1991)	30000
Liyanage	3000
PEACE (1999)	15000
Ratnapala (1999)	1459

Source: International Labour Organization (ILO), 2002

Many NGOs blame the high prevalence of child labor and crimes against children on ineffective and inadequate law enforcement mechanisms rather than on the absence of laws. Government resources, for instance, were usually focused on containing Tamil separatists instead of prosecuting violators of children's rights.<sup>86</sup>

While much is left to be desired as regards to Sri Lanka's legislation in protecting children and children's rights, the basic legal infrastructure already exists. The law bans employment of children below 18 years old in hazardous jobs, especially as child combatants or prostitutes. Violators will be liable to one year of imprisonment upon conviction.<sup>87</sup>

The law already bans the employment of children below 14 years of age in compliance with the International Labour Organization (ILO) Minimum Age Convention concerning minimum age for admission to employment. In 1991, Sri Lanka ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child while in 1995, the Penal Code was amended, resulting in the criminalization of cruelty to children with offenders liable to imprisonment of not less than two years and not more than ten, attendant with a fine.<sup>88</sup>

In 1998, Sri Lanka added three new offenses related to child trafficking to its penal code. These include the use of children for begging, for sexual intercourse, and for trafficking restricted articles. Violation and conviction will result in a minimum jail term of five years.<sup>89</sup> In 2006, additional amendments criminalized the "kidnapping, abduction, procurement, sexual exploitation of children, trafficking, debt bondage, serfdom, forced or compulsory labor, slavery, compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict, offenses related to adoption, and soliciting a child".<sup>90</sup> In 1999, the National Child Protection Authority (NCPA) was established while a desk was created in the nation's law enforcement arm to specifically handle crimes against the youth (i.e. the Bureau for the Protection of Children and Women [BPCW]). Despite these laws and organizations, some gaps still exist as child abuse in the home and school are still prevalent. Further, while a Children's Charter exists, it is not legally binding. Children in abuse and neglect proceedings need not be represented, nor does the law require the courts to consider the wishes of the child when deciding cases<sup>91</sup>.

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