

Multidimensional Poverty in the Estate Sector of Badulla District in Sri Lanka

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According to the official poverty estimates of the Department of Census and Statistics, poverty in the estate sector of Sri Lanka has gradually reduced in monetary terms over the past years. However, in measuring poverty, monetary approach itself does not contemplate the extent of simultaneous deprivations suffered by individuals under multiple dimensions which are important for reduction of poverty. Therefore, this study aimed at estimating the level of multiple deprivation among the estate poor, identifying the dimensions that people are mostly deprived of and suggesting policies for alleviating poverty which leads to sustainable development of the country. To understand poverty in multidimensional nature, data from a convenience sample of 200 households in the estate sector of Badulla district was collected and analysed using Multidimensional Poverty Index introduced by Alkire and Santos (2010). The study reveals that Multidimensional Poverty Index for the estate sector of Badulla district is 0.12 and 34% of the population were multidimensionally poor along with 37.7% on average intensity of deprivation which are significantly higher than the estimated monetary poverty figures. Poor living standards and insufficient nutrition of estate sector people contributed significantly for multidimensional poverty in the study area. Sanitation which is a necessity of an individual was found contributing 4.8% which revealed their severity in poverty. However, the attendance of school by school aged children was satisfactory compared to the completed years of schooling by the rest of the household members. As plantation community is constricted within the estate areas, they encounter numerous deprivations and income is not always an ideal measure to determine the depth of poverty. Thus, it is required to reduce nutritional, sanitary, housing and household utility deprivations to reduce multidimensional poverty among the estate population in the Badulla district.

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