

EMERGING POPULATION ISSUES AMONG ADOLESCENT AND YOUTH

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Abstract: Adolescents and youth, who are generally defined to comprise those in the age group 10-24 years, constitute 29 percent of the total population in Sri Lanka. In 1995, there were 5.3 million persons in this age group. Due to the decline in fertility during the past three decades, the absolute number of adolescents and youth are expected to decline to 4.6 million by 2015. However, the sheer size of this segment of the population poses many challenges for the provision of employment and productive health care services during the next two decades. Unemployment is a problem mainly affecting the youth. In 1992, in the age group 20-24 years, the unemployment rates for males and females were 27.3 percent and 45.5 percent respectively. On the other hand, about 7 percent of annual births occur among adolescents and about 41 percent of all illegitimate births in 1991 took place among mothers aged 10-24 years. It is also seen that the risk of child mortality associated with births to younger mothers is higher.