

MULTIDIMENSIONAL POVERTY AMONG THE ESTATE POPULATION OF BADULLA DISTRICT IN SRI LANKA

P.M.M. Fernando*, **P.H.T. Kumara****, **R.A.P.I.S. Dharmadasa*** and **W.G.R.L. Samaraweera***

Abstract: *The official poverty estimates of the Department of Census and Statistics of Sri Lanka convey that 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 poverty alleviation. Therefore, this study aims 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. Data from a sample of 200 households in the estate sector of Badulla district was collected and analysed using Multidimensional Poverty Index developed 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. As the 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 decrease nutritional, sanitary, housing and household utility deprivations to reduce multidimensional poverty among the estate population in the Badulla district.*

Keywords: Alkire Foster method; Estate sector; Multiple deprivations; Multidimensional poverty; Sustainable development goals

Introduction

Department of Census and Statistics (DCS) states that, poverty status of Sri Lanka is based on an official poverty line defined by the cost-of-basic-needs method. Poverty status is determined by comparing the monthly real per capita expenditure to the official poverty line where an individual is considered poor if the per capita expenditure per month is below the official poverty line. Poverty Head Count Index (HCI) is commonly used to measure poverty incidence in Sri Lanka (DCS, 2006) which however does not reveal the extent of deprivation distinctly suffered by different communities making policymakers unable to intervene and implement appropriate solutions directly to have a positive impact. The monetary approach seems to be too narrow to be considered as a proxy to reflect the reality of the poverty, as

*Department of Export Agriculture, Uva Wellassa University, Badulla, Sri Lanka.

** Corresponding author, Department of Public Administration, Uva Wellassa University, Badulla, Sri Lanka. Email: thusitha@uwu.ac.lk

Acknowledgements: *This research was funded by the Grant No: UWU/RG/2018/040 of Uva Wellassa University of Sri Lanka and the authors gratefully acknowledge the funding and other services provided by the University. Authors appreciate the constructive comments received from the two anonymous referees of the journal.*