

AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE IMPACT OF YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT ON POVERTY IN SRI LANKA: SPECIAL REFERENCE TO GALENBINDUNUWEWA AREA

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Youth aged 15 to 24 play a vital role in economic transformation, yet high youth unemployment in Sri Lanka worsens poverty, reduces productivity, and increases social costs. Despite a 4.7% unemployment rate, skill-job mismatches limit employment opportunities. The research problem examines how youth unemployment contributes to poverty in Galenbindunuwewa, identifying socio-economic factors that exacerbate the issue. The objective is to examine the impact of youth unemployment on poverty in Galenbindunuwewa, Sri Lanka. It seeks to identify socio-economic factors such as educational attainment, skill mismatches, and limited local opportunities, and assess their role in exacerbating poverty. This study adopts a mixed-methods approach, collecting primary data from 100 households through structured questionnaires and secondary data from reports. Quantitative data were analyzed using statistics, while qualitative data underwent thematic analysis. The research found that youth unemployment in the region is driven by low educational attainment, skill mismatches, and limited local economic opportunities. These factors lead to high unemployment, reduced income, increased dependency ratios, and worsening poverty, exacerbated by a lack of vocational training aligned with market demands. The study emphasizes that limited local economic opportunities, lack of industries, and reliance on agriculture push youth to migrate, depleting the workforce. The mismatch between youth skills and job market demands perpetuates unemployment, contributing to the ongoing poverty cycle in the region. The study suggests that vocational training, improved educational infrastructure, and local economic development initiatives can reduce youth unemployment. Tailored vocational programs would equip youth with relevant skills, while local development efforts can create jobs, reduce migration, and encourage youth to stay, alleviating poverty. Based on the results, youth unemployment in Galenbindunuwewa drives poverty, worsened by factors such as inadequate education, skill mismatches, and limited local opportunities. Targeted interventions, including vocational training, education reforms, and economic development, are crucial for sustainable development.

Keywords: Economic Development, Poverty, Socio-Economic Factors, Vocational Training, Youth Unemployment

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