

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Introduction

In Sri Lanka, 33 percent from the 20 million of population are directly engaged with the agriculture (Labor Force Survey, 2011). Agriculture in Sri Lanka mainly depends on rice production for local consumption and also exports some quantity of rice every year. Its main goal is to achieve an equitable and sustainable agricultural development through development and dissemination of improved agricultural technology. The agriculture sector is the cornerstone of Sri Lanka's economy with more than 70 percent of the population living in rural areas depending on agriculture for their livelihoods (National Agriculture Policy Sri Lanka, 2010). Currently this sector contributes to about 12 percent of the GDP (National Accounts of Sri Lanka, 2011).



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Sri Lanka has 5 million youth population amounting to 26 percent of the total population (Ministry of Youth Affairs and Skills Development Sri Lanka, 2013). The Poverty and Youth Survey (PYS) defines youth as a period between 15 and 29 years of age. This is same as the range used in Sri Lanka National Youth Services Council. In addition to age, civil status impacts on the way people conceptualize youth. According to the National Youth Survey (NYS), it defines youth to be unmarried men and women, between the ages of 15 and 29, which implies that youth keeps until they are married and it ends when the person forms a new family unit (Ibargüen, 2005).

In the past, there was a great relationship between agriculture and the adults who engaged themselves in the agricultural sector in Sri Lanka. The adults transferred their agricultural knowledge to young people from generation to generation. Young people also absorbed that knowledge without any reluctance. However, now, such

circumstances have been subjected to change according to the various aspects of issues related to youth as described throughout this chapter.

## 1.2 Background of Research

When word 'Youth' comes into mind, it is obvious that terms like 'Unemployment', 'Education', 'Poverty', 'Politics', etc. stand around it. In Sri Lanka, there is limited access to data, information and statistics regarding youth population. Also, youth surveys are not conducted very often in Sri Lanka, as it is difficult to find a youth survey even once every 10 years. Therefore, very limited amount of sources is available to give a view of youth.

In Sri Lanka the youth constituency has attracted a fair amount of interest and discussion. Nonetheless, data and information reflecting in a direct manner the viewpoints and opinions of young people is limited. An important step in overcoming this gap was the 1999-2000 NYS, which focused on obtaining the opinions of Sri Lankan youth on issues ranging from politics, education, employment, values, culture, health, etc. (Ibargüen, 2005).



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Within the context of rapidly changing economic and social conditions, many avenues are available as choices for occupation for youth. Therefore, attracting youth to future agricultural development programmes is a challenge to the government. Even though, there is ample literature available addressing this issue in the world, this situation is poorly investigated in Sri Lanka (Chandrasiri and Karunagoda, 2011).

The prominent thinker Sharma tells that, the demography of Indian agriculture is changing fast. There are clear signs of people fast moving out of agriculture, especially in the form of rural youth practicing farming part-time and ageing of the farmer population in several pockets of the country. It is well-known that as economies mature the percentage of people involved in agriculture undergoes a

significant decline. This is true for all countries; the only difference lies in the rate at which the decline happens (Sharma, 2007).

Sri Lanka is an interesting case of a developing country with extensive youth unemployment. From the time the relevant statistical information has been available, the rate of unemployment among the youth in Sri Lanka is known to have remained several years that of the average rate of unemployment in the country. A large proportion of the youth in unemployment has also been relatively highly educated (Hettige and Mayer, 2002).

### **1.3 Problem of the Study**

There is a trend to withdrawing youth from agriculture day by day. Even though, still agriculture is the main occupation in Sri Lanka, the number of youth moving out of agriculture is rapidly increasing. Ibargüen (2005) has mentioned that lack of job opportunities, alcohol consumption, lack of educational opportunities, deteriorating moral values, drugs, poverty, smoking, violence and lack of mobility are the most serious problems faced by youth.



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Young people in Sri Lanka, account for a large percentage of the rural population, and are often unemployed or underemployed, despite the need for a labour force in agriculture. Furthermore, rural youth do not perceive agriculture as a remunerative or prestigious profession, and until they find meaningful economic opportunities and attractive environments in rural areas, they will continue to migrate to cities. Consequently, youth faces considerably higher unemployment rates than adults. And Sri Lanka, as in other countries the unemployment/underemployment rate of young people with more education is high. Their rate among educated youth was much higher than the corresponding rate of those with little or no education (Ibargüen, 2005). Therefore, it is difficult to encourage young people to engage in agriculture as their intention is to attain a higher education level.

The present study is carried out to find factors affecting youth participation and satisfaction on agriculture as an occupation or agriculture related activities in Sri Lanka using data of the survey, which was conducted by Hector Kobbekaduwa Agrarian Research and Training Institute (HARTI) in 2012. Factors are basically identified on the information related to demographic characteristics of the youth, the availability of sufficient facilities to engage in agricultural activities, participation in agriculture and satisfaction of engaging in agriculture.

#### **1.4 Objectives of the Research**

In view of the above, this dissertation aims to use statistical techniques to find the factors affecting youth participation in agriculture and satisfaction on agriculture by doing it as an occupation/activity. Thus, the specific objectives of the research are:

- To identify the set of variables affecting youth participation in agriculture as an occupation/activity.
- To identify the set of variables influencing youth satisfaction by engaging in agriculture as an occupation/activity.



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## 1.5 Organization of the Dissertation

Later on introduction, background, objectives and problem of the research in Chapter 1, Chapter 2 aims to present the review of the literature founded by the historical data and information. It comprises of eight sections and defines youth in global and Sri Lankan perspective, agricultural sector in both world and Sri Lanka, socio-economic characteristics and agricultural factors that influence the participation of youth in agriculture through the studies conducted prior to this study and other previous studies which have been done around this topic.

The details of the secondary data and the statistical methodologies used for the research are presented under the Chapter 3. It contains how secondary data are obtained and statistical techniques are used for the analysis, which are chi-square tests and logistic regression.

The Chapter 4 focuses on providing a description of the variables used and selecting the variables significantly influence youth participation in agriculture. Chapter 5 provides the data analysis using Logistic regression, which finds the logistic model for youth participation in agriculture. Chapter 6 develops the logistic regression model for selected variables with respect to the satisfaction gained by doing agriculture only if youth engage in agriculture as an occupation/activity. Finally, Chapter 7 gives the conclusions of the study after carefully studying and analyzing the data.