

Nearly 130,000 students entering Grade 1 drop out when they reach A/Ls

- Senior Prof. Athukorala

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Senior Professor Wasantha Athukorala of the Economics and Statistics Department at the Peradeniya University stated that around 130,000 students who enter the Grade 1 of the Government schools drop out when they reach Advanced Level.

He noted that this finding emerged from the annual data analysis published by the Census and Statistics Department. According to these data, 330,448 students were enrolled in Government schools in 2008, but only around 294,220 of them appeared for the Ordinary Level examination in 2018. This indicates that 36,228 students discontinued their

school education before reaching the Ordinary Level. Professor Athukorala also highlighted that of the students who entered Government schools in 2008, only about 202,923 students remained to take the Advanced Level examination in 2021. This means that around 127,525 students had dropped out between Grade 1 and the Advanced Level.

He also detailed that among the students enrolled in Government schools in 2008, there were 167,221 boys and 163,227 girls. Of these, 23,304 boys dropped out before the Ordinary Level, representing a dropout rate of 14 percent, while nearly 12,923 girls dropped out, marking a rate of 8 percent.

The professor emphasised that 46 percent of the boys and 30 percent of the girls who entered Grade 1 in 2008 had left school before completing their education. In 2021, 89,817 boys and 100,203 girls appeared for the Advanced Level examination, highlighting a higher dropout rate among boys compared to girls.

Although girls show a greater inclination toward higher education, the labour force participation rate of women in the country remains at 30 percent, according to Professor Athukorala. He pointed out that the low participation of educated women in the labour force negatively impacts the country's economy.