

Quality of life better in estates

- Census and Statistics report

The Department of Census and Statistics has reported a significant reduction in poverty and improvement in the quality of life indicators in the estate sector, said the Planters' Association of Ceylon [PA].

The PA said that the latest data from the Department of Census and Statistics shows a marked improvement in estate sector living conditions.

"Although the urban sector shows no significant reduction in poverty since 2006/07 to 2009, the estate sector has reported an unprecedented two third reduction of poverty," states the Department of Census and Statistics' in its preliminary Household Income and Expenditure Survey report 2009/2010.

"This is very good news coming from the Department of Census and Statistics, which is the national body for data collection.

This shows the improvements that have taken place within the estate sector over the last decade.

We are very encouraged by these results and we will continue to work towards improving the quality of life in estates," said Chairman PA, Lalith Obeyesekere.

The poverty head count ratio, which is the count of persons below the poverty line as a percentage of the total population in the domain, indicated a sharp



reduction in the estate sector in 2009/2010.

At the time of privatisation, of plantation management the poverty head count ratio in the estate sector was 38.4 percent [1995/6].

This moved to 30 percent by 2002 and by 2006/7 the poverty head count in the estate sector was reported as 32 percent.

However, the 2009/2010 census data shows that the poverty head count ratio in the estate sector had reduced to 9.2 percent.

Income levels in the estate sector also show improvements.

While the average monthly household income was Rs 4,059 in 1995/96, the average household income had increased to Rs. 25,649 by 2009/2010 an increase of Rs 21,590 or 531 percent over a period of 14 years.

The average income of an income receiver in the estate sector was Rs.1,923 per month in 1995/96. This had increased to Rs. 12,408 by 2009/2010.

"This shows that wage increases in the estate sector have been substantial and have transferred to individuals and households.

Under the current wage structure, an employee has the potential to earn even more than Rs 12,408.

We are hoping for more productivity linked wage increases to ensure a win-win situation for the industry and the employees," said Obeyesekere.

Quality of life indicators,

such as the food ratio, have also improved.

The food ratio is one of the principal indicators used to measure human living standards. It shows the proportion of expenditure on food and drink, against total expenditure.

In 1995/96 the estate sector had the highest average monthly household food ratio of 69.1 percent, indicating that essential food and drink alone, accounted for over two thirds of total expenditure. However, by 2009 the estate sector food

ratio had reduced to 49.5 percent, indicating that estate populations have increased their spending on non food items. [non food ratio 50.5 percent].

Life indicators

The PA noted that other quality of life indicators such as the availability of essential facilities have also shown clear improvements in the estate sector.

Electricity was available to 62.3 percent of the estate sector in 2006/07. Availability of electricity increased to 84.0 percent of the estate sector by 2009.

Over half the estate sector [53.8 percent] did not have access to safe drinking water in 2006/07. By 2009 nearly two thirds of the estate population [65.1 percent] had access to safe drinking water. Housing facilities have also improved.

"Housing conditions have become better, due to various programs to improve existing housing and to build new housing for estate families.

At present estate families are given seven perches of land and access to credit, to build their houses," said Obeyesekere.

Health and sanitation have improved across the estate sector with free medical service and better water supply.

In 2006/07 according to census data, 11.8 percent

of the estate sector had no toilet facilities, while 20.5 percent shared toilet facilities with another household.

By 2009 the proportion of estate households with no toilet facilities had reduced sharply to 1.8 percent, while sharing toilet facilities with another household had reduced to 8.6 percent.

Availability of toilet facilities exclusively for the household increased from 67.7 percent in 2006/07, to 77.5 percent in 2009.

Meanwhile, data from the Plantation Human Development Trust [PHDT] shows continued improvements in health indicators in Regional Plantation Company [RPC] estates.

Birth of children in RPC estates have increased from 60.8 percent in 1985 to 92 percent in 1996 to 98 percent in 2010.

The PHDT says 97 percent of expectant mothers registered for antenatal care before 22 weeks of pregnancy in 2010 and immunisation of estate children is now almost 100 percent in RPC estates.

Infant and maternal mortality rates have reduced, while family planning and other related health services have greatly improved in RPC estates.

Early child care and development facilities have increased and by 2010 there were 1,544 child development cen-

tres in RPC estates with trained Child Development Officers.

According to the Department of Census and Statistics, school attendance, in the 5-20 year age group, in the estate sector, was 74.5 percent in 2006/07.

This figure [5-19 year age group] increased to 83.3 percent by 2009.

Although the share of the estate population with no schooling was 15.8 percent in 2006/07 this had shrunk, to 8.8 percent, by 2009/10.

The share of estate population that had passed G.C.E.(O/L) increased from 3.4 percent in 2006/07 to 5.7 percent by 2009/10 and the share of G.C.E. (A/L) qualified and above, increased from 1.7 percent in 2006/07 to 4.2 percent by 2009/10.

These findings by the Department of Census and Statistics lay to rest the many unfounded allegations from various quarters that estate communities are deprived of basic facilities and essential services and are living in unhygienic conditions said the PA.

Despite the improvements hitherto effected, a considerable volume of work remains to be done and the PA says it will continue to encourage RPCs in their endeavour to improve living and working conditions within their estates.





Census of Population & Housing 2011

Listing of building units for the Census of Population and Housing has now commenced.



Do not remove the Census label
until the end of Census period



Listing of buildings and fixing a census label is being done now by
the Grama Niladhari.
Please extend your co-operation for this operation.



Department of Census and Statistics

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