

DETERMINANTS OF YOUTH LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION IN AGRICULTURAL SECTOR: EVIDENCE FROM BUTTALA DS DIVISION IN SRI LANKA

Erangajith, R.M.D.¹, and Thayaparan, A.^{2*}

^{1,2}*Department of Business Economics, Faculty of Business Studies, University of Vavuniya, Vavuniya, Sri Lanka*

*[*aruppillaithayaparan@yahoo.com](mailto:aruppillaithayaparan@yahoo.com)*

United Nations defines “Youth” as a period of transition from childhood dependence to adulthood’s independence and awareness of interdependence as members of a community. Youth participation in agriculture is very important to make a sustainable contribution to national development as well as the living standard of the rural community. This study aims to examine factors affecting the youth labor force participation in the agricultural sector in the Buttala DS division, Sri Lanka. A field survey was conducted from February to March 2023 to collect the relevant data from 150 youth farmers selected randomly who belong to the age group between 15 – 29 in the study area. Descriptive statistics and frequency analysis were applied in the study to explore the socio – economic and farming characteristics of the youth labor participation in agriculture sector. Among the total respondents, the involvement of males and females in the agriculture sector is 64.7% and 35.3% respectively. Tobit regression model and its marginal effects were used to identify the factors influencing youth involvement in the agriculture sector, and its results revealed that education level, access to off-farm income, access to credit, a distance of the nearest market, land ownership and land size have significantly influenced the youth labor participation in the agriculture sector in the study. Among these factors, access of off-farm income, land ownership and size of land were significant influenced the youth involvement at 1% level while the level of education, access to credit, and distance to the nearest market influenced the youth involvement at 5% significant level. As revealed by the findings, several recommendations have been made to attract youth to farming, such as providing the chances to earn off – farm income, improving the credit access facilities, and ensuring their land ownership. Thus, these types of strategies motivate the young generation to participate in the agriculture sector in the future actively.

Keywords: Agricultural sector, Socio economic and farming characteristics, Tobit regression model, Youth labour force participation