



STATUS OF SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE AND NETWORKING IN THE PLANTATION SECTOR: THE STUDY BASED ON PLANTATION YOUTHS DURING THE COVID -19 PANDEMIC

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Abstract

Social Media is dominating all aspects of political, socio-economic life in the world which is not an exception for Sri Lanka. In this backdrop, the purpose of this study is to identify the status of Social Media usage and Networking among the plantation youth during the Covid 19. This study adopts a mixed research approach (Qualitative and Quantitative). This study collected primary data using a mixed-method approach through a questionnaire survey and an in-depth interviews with youth in the plantations and relevant stakeholders and various other secondary sources. Two estates in the Nuwara-Eliya district were selected for this purpose (One Estate - close to the urban center while one is far off from the urban center). Descriptive analysis is used for data analysis. The total sample size is 85 (urban sample 42, and the sample far away from the urban 43) According to this study, only 57 respondents (67.05%) use social media including Facebook. Among social media users, 100% use WhatsApp, 93.3% use Facebook, 64.9% use Imo, 15.8% use Instagram, 12.3% use Viber and 3.5% use Twitter. The percentage of male social media users is high than female youths. The purpose of using FB is mainly, to keep in touch with friends and relations, to upload posts/photos/message and for entertainment. Female youths (53.3%, 66.7%) are using Facebook for education purpose and their ICT knowledge is little bit higher compare with male youths (30.9%, 42.9%). The main reason for not using Social Media is not having a smartphone due to the poverty. Furthermore, the study identified many reasons for not paying much interest in social media for career development and declining trend. This includes high cost for technology devices and poverty of livelihoods, poor ICT infrastructure in plantations, lack of awareness and opportunity for learning, poor English language proficiency and low level of computer literacy rate. Effective policy and institutional measures are vitally important to address these shortcomings and move towards the sustainable social and career development through social media among the plantation youths.

Keywords: Social Media, Plantation, Plantation youths, Career Development, Covid 19.

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