



AMPARA DISTRICT

IDENTIFYING AND STUDYING LABOR MARKET TRENDS AT DISTRICT AND DIVISIONAL LEVEL

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AMPARA

1. INTRODUCTION

Introduction to the District:

Administratively, Ampara District is divided into 20 Divisional Secretariats representing 503 Grama Niladhari Divisions. Out of the 20 Divisional Secretariats two are Municipal Councils, one is an Urban Council and the remaining 17 are Divisional Councils (Pradesha Sabhai or Pradeshiya Sabha). What is not so well known are the wild-life sanctuaries where it is possible to see over 100 elephants in one place, exotic bird-life and rare fauna. Ampara has an ancient irrigation system that continues to feed large paddy fields, making it one of the largest producers of rice in the country. There are also the ruins of the Diagamdulla Kingdom, where visitors can see the remains of Palaces, Monasteries and Stupas. Other hidden gems in the district include hot springs and lakes in and around Mahaoya.

Ampara covers an area of 4,222 square kilometers, making it the largest geographical district of the Eastern Province. The district has one of the largest population levels in the province, with the numbers increasing from 644,000 in 2010, to 776,222 in 2019, representing a growth of nearly 11%. Specific data on human resource development reveal that literacy rates are improving, with nearly 90% of males and 88% of females being classified as literate. Despite achieving a good foundation, only 15% of the current population in Ampara have grade 5 leaving school certificate and a smaller 1% have a degree level qualification. Available data from the district office show that out of those in employment nearly 60% are classified as unskilled labors. Care must be taken when using this data since the sampling framework is not known, but the bottom line is that the district has a poor skill base that must be improved.

Table: 1:1 - Population by 20 DS Divisions within District - 2019:

DS Divisions (20)	Population				
	Total	Male	Female	Male Ratio	Female Ratio
District Summary	776,222	384,405	391,817	49.52	50.48

Source: Department of Census and Statistics – Ampara District

SOCIAL STRUCTURE: major portion of the population is engaged in Agriculture while the fishing occupies the second place in the social structure. Other occupations are Industrial activities, Business and Employment in government, corporation and private establishment.

ECONOMY: historically Ampara District is a significant land mark in contributing to the national economy of the country. Agriculture is the main livelihood of the district population and more than 95% of the people are engaging in Agriculture sector. The contribution of National GDP of Ampara district is about 3.2% which is expected to grow up to 6.0% per annum in future.

AGRICULTURE: there about 95,606 Hectares of paddy land available in the Ampara District where both Maha and Yala seasons, the farmers are doing paddy cultivation in addition to the inter seasonal cultivation called late Maha from February to May in some area with the help of minor tanks. Senanayaka Samudraya is the largest and very special among other reservoirs in Sri Lanka in various manners. This can store 770000-acre feet capacity of water. 27658 Hectares of Highland and Home Garden including Coconut have been cultivated wide spread throughout the district.

LIVE STOCK: livestock is an important livelihood activity in the district. Neat cattle, Buffaloes, Goats and Chickens are major source of the activities. Neat cattle 127,501, Buffaloes 49,625, Goats 49,542 and Chickens 631,036 are in the district. The Milk production for the year 2019 was 179,299 litters.

FISHING: a coastal belt of the Ampara district has many resources and has potential for marine fishing and deep-sea fishing. The interior part of the district contains large number of major, medium and small-scale tanks where the potentiality is high for the inland fishing. There are 19,300 Ha of reservoirs, 292 Ha of mangroves, 127 Ha of salt marshes and 7,235 Ha of Lagoons for inland fisheries production in Ampara District.

INDUSTRIES: the industrial sector is also developed considerably in Ampara district and also except Gal-Oya Sugar factory, few Garment factories are operating in a large scale. Weaving, Rice Milling, Pottery, Carpentry, Coir and Brick Manufacturing are paying many roles for the income and contributing to district Economy.

TOURISM: Ampara is most popular place for tourism since early centuries. There are many places in the Ampara to the foreign and local tourism. There are Ampara ruins, Pottuvil Lagoon, Kumana

National park, Arugambay, Maduru oya National park and Lahugala Santury. Arugam Bay is known as one of the best three surfing spots in the world. Surfing is best in arugam bay during the season of April to October each year.

EDUCATION: there about 162,950 pupils are studying in 440 schools in ampara District. There are 16 National Schools and 424 Provincial schools available in ampara district including 43 1AB schools, 66 1C schools, 157 Type II Schools and 175 Type III Schools. One University and One college of Education available for higher Level Education. One Open University, 2 SLIATE, 3 Technical Colleges, 11 Vocational Training Centers are available as tertiary Education in Ampara District.

2. PROBLEMS OR ISSUES

Due to lack of industries, industrial zones and manufacturing companies in this district, mainly the people are depending on self-employment and agriculture with using the available resources.

The size of the population in Ampara is close to 800,000 people and represents the pool of labor that can be drawn upon, covering youth who need skills to obtain their first job, the unemployed who need to be re-skilled and those in work who will need up-skilling.

- The numbers in employment are close to 200,000, out of which 30% work in the formal sector and a much larger 70% can be found in the informal sector.
- There is a considerable gender imbalance in this district. The available data suggests that 76% of those employed are male and 24% female. Another study found that women are more likely to be found in informal sector than male counterparts.
- Age is an important issue that must be taken on board, with over 36% of labour force aged between the ages of 25 to 39, compared to a much smaller 4% of youth, between the ages of 15 to 19 years of age. This highlights the population group where emphasis should be given.
- The actual number working in the tourist and hospitality sector appears to be very small, highlighting that not much attention has been given by the government or stakeholders to developing this sector. As outlined earlier, most of the existing jobs are unskilled or low skilled

The barriers to employing women are significant and responses to a recent enterprise survey found that employers in Ampara are much

less likely to employ a woman than those in other districts. The same survey showed that enterprises in Ampara were reluctant to hire more women due to perceived cultural reasons and family commitments. Similar trends were observed for the area of disability where employers in Ampara are reluctant to employ disabled workers due to the fact that employers think that they don't have the relevant skills or that they have no experience of employing such workers.

According to the study, following problems are identified basically in this district:

1. Lack of Industries and manufacturing companies
2. Unskilled Labor Force
3. Lack of Resources
4. Language & cultural barriers
5. Lack of awareness on demand of current labor market
6. Poor communication and coordination between the dependents and unemployed.
7. Lack of standard and world class training institutes
8. Child labors and early marriages.
9. High number of dependencies.
10. Interest on foreign employments.

3. PROBLEM AND SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

3.1. LABOR FORCE

Due to lack of industries and manufacturing companies in this district, the demand for the labor is deprived and many people engaged to do the self-employments as their main sustenance and seeking to work at private sectors.

According to the reports and data submitted by the Ministry of Planning and Policy making of District Secretariat, Ampara, in large amount of labor demands are available in various private sectors like insurance companies, garments, available private factories, private business centers and other private institution with minimum wages and facilities. But un-employed are not ready and interested to work at private institutions rather than government sectors because of job security and social prestige.

Nearly, 20,124 people are in this district doing private jobs and 198,827 are with own-entrepreneurship than the government jobs (table 5.1.1.). Around 22,072 of people in the district including women and men leaving to abroad in 2014 whereas the demand is relatively higher than local. Even though, the demands are still available for those skilled labors in the private sectors.

The following table shows the figure of the labor force of Ampara District. All the figure show based on 2019 records.

Table: 5:1:1 – Employed and Unemployed in Ampara District - 2019:

S. No	Employment Categories	No of Employed
01	No. of Government Employees	41,087
02	No. of Semi Government Employees	10,807
03	No. of Self Employees	34,506
04	No. of Private Sector Employees	21,412
05	No. of Foreign Employees	22,042
06	No. of Person Employed in Agriculture	50,819
07	No. of Persons Employed in Fisheries	12,192
08	Housemaids	36,176
09	Other Employed	88,472
10	No. of Unemployed	158,239
Total		475,752

Source: Ministry of Planning and Policy Making – District Secretariat, Ampara

3.2. UNEMPLOYMENT AND HIGH AMOUNT OF DEPENDENCY

According to the data, in 2019 around 158,239 people have found as un-employed in the district with 6.1% and 218,476 dependents are registered. Recent study shows that numbers of un-employed and dependents were unskilled and had poor qualifications, therefore, they are unable to get any opportunities for any employment facilities.

Those, poor qualified and unfitted dependents and un-employed will be identified and encourage them through career guidance to develop their skills and technical and vocational qualification in the required field and will be directed them for finding the job.

Table: 5.2.1: Un-Employed in 2019

S. No	Educational Level	No. of Personal
01	Graduates	3,469
02	G.C.E. A/L	39,558
03	Under G.C.E. O/L	54,977
04	Technical College Certificates	4,401
05	Dependents	218,476
Total		320,881

Source: Ministry of Planning and Policy Making – District Secretariat, Ampara

3.3. UNSKILLED LABOR FORCE

Based on the data, higher number of unskilled labors are identified in the district than the skilled labors.

Table: 5.3.1: Un-Employed in 2019

Gender	Skilled Labors	Un-skilled Labors
Male	66,456	80,929
Female	33,148	43,751
Total	99,604	124,680

Source: Ministry of Planning and Policy Making – District Secretariat, Ampara

As studied, several of causes that were made unskilled labors have been identified in this district as shown in the chart below.

4. DEMAND FOR LABOR

4.1. SELF EMPLOYMENTS

Self-employment is the most demanded earning process in the district where maximum resources like water and land are available for agriculture, farming, fishing, gardening and poultry. In large amount of people in this district engaged to do this business according to their knowledge, intelligence, interests and skills. Entrepreneurs

According to the data of Ministry of Planning and Policy Making of Ampara district, totally 34,506 of self-employed in 2019 were identified in the district and doing several self-employments. Notably, the agriculture is the major entrepreneurship in the district and 17.8% of land is using for agriculture in both maha and yala seasons. And, fishing, business and other small employments are also important occupations done by the people of Ampara district.

4.2. PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR EMPLOYMENT

In accordance with the recent study in the district shows that the large number of job seekers in the district are preferring to get the opportunities to work in the public sectors rather than private sector employments as there is lack of private sector employments availabilities, limited number of industries and lack of job security etc.

Therefore, high amount of private sector employees is leaving from the services due to lack of salary, lack of services, unfitted for the job or dismissal (unable to get the accurate number of employees). As a result, a small number of vacancies became vacant in private sectors also for the skilled personal. These private sector vacancies can be presumed according to available private industries and manufacturer in future in the district.

4.3. FOREIGN EMPLOYMENTS:

According to the data of Sri Lanka Foreign Employment Bureau, 22,042 personals had been left for employments to abroad till 2019 from Ampara district and approximately 20, 000 personnel (including men and women) are leaving for employments yearly. Due to the requirements for skilled and semi-skilled labors in the global market, the rate for foreign employments will be increased over next five years.

Several vacancies are still available in abroad and not filled due to mismatches of requirements and unfitness.

According to the proposed mechanism, the foreign employments vacancies will be increased and matched through Job Center per year.

4.4. JOBS IN BOI VENTURES

The BOI has been proposed to open many jobs and training centers in eastern province according to the resources and requirements available. So far, few numbers of investments companies and manufacturers are available in the district due to lack of interest of investors and lack of resources in the district of Ampara. BOI has to be focused on investing export developments, fishing, agriculture, tourism and self-employments in the district and open more jobs for the people.

4.5. TOURISM

Like most districts in the East, Ampara is dominated by the service sector, as well as agricultural and fishing. The services sector is predominated by the wholesale and trade sub-sectors, and currently tourism only plays a marginal role in the districts development and has a limited impact on employment. Existing tourism occurs around Arugam Bay and development has taken place without any planning or coordination. As a consequence, there are: limited backward or forward linkages with parts of the district, a narrow range of tourism products on offer, a tourism market dominated by seasonality and a focus upon visitors whose purchasing power is limited.

5. ACTIVITIES AND SUGGESTIONS

As found several problems and issues in the district to establish the job opportunities in the country through government of Sri Lanka and in private sectors, the following listed activities have to be done as much as earlier in the district to develop skilled labor force to meet the requirements.

- Conducting different awareness and career guidance programs to students, teachers, job seekers, unemployed, parents and dependencies with explaining the current Labor Market Information (LMI), demand, requirements and expectation for labor force in the global market.
- Sufficient career guidance units in schools have to be established and appoint a career guidance officer. Career Guidance Unit helps students to develop their skills and abilities of self-assessment information seeking and decision making required for coping with the needs of complex of world of work and to develop lifelong learning ambitions. Success in career guidance depends on providing up to date information on training and employment opportunities and having a good knowledge of available opportunities in the local and international training market.
 - o To advise and provide information to students in finding employment and completion after their education.
 - o To develop and introduce attitudes of the outside world to students by organizing and conducting of training sessions and work-shops.
 - o Personality and merit development work-shops for all students for successful implementation.
 - o On proficiency development a computer center and resource center have been established.
 - o To assist students in directing them for fruitful business or industry.
 - o To actively participate in building a mutual understanding between the students and the outside world.
- Publishing monthly magazines and current LMI reports in both languages with the importance of skill development. It helps to make understand the value of skill development through LMI information.

- To be established information centers at all divisional secretariats within the district to provide the information on upcoming programs, awareness programs, employment statistics, Labor Market Information, demanded courses and training programs, employment opportunities and other all necessary data.
- Establish notice and bulletin boards in public places to display information on current requirements and opportunities.
- Conduct monthly forums in district and divisional secretariat among multi sectors and stakeholders to build a close relationship and in order to better ensure innovation success. These kinds of meetings will help to know the requirements and expectation of the stakeholders.
- Conducting job fairs, career fairs and mini job fairs in district and divisional level to support to the job seekers who are interested to find a suitable job in private sectors. Employers and job seekers can meet in one place and discuss each other regarding their requirements and expectation.
- Organize self-employment promotion programs in divisional levels. Identify the interested people on self-employment and encourage them to develop their employment through supporting loans, subsidies, training programs, marketing information and information of demand for products. As studied, different types of self-employment sectors have been identified in the district and due to insufficient knowledge, training and guidance on the employments, most of them are dropped and loss interest.
- Organize business investor forum in the district and open vacancies for those labors who are interested to work in private sectors. The BOI can provide employments and training to the people through encouraging the investors to invest in the district in private sectors and develop some industrial zones as there is no industrial zones within the district.

6. CONCLUSION

When above activities and suggestions will be done in the district through the support of the government and private sectors, the unskilled labor force and unemployment rate will be reduced.