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**FACTORS AFFECTING ADOLESCENT PREGNANCY IN THE  
SRI LANKAN TEA ESTATE SECTOR WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE  
TO THE NUWARA ELIYA DISTRICT**

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In Sri Lanka the issue of adolescent pregnancy, particularly among unmarried adolescents, has become a growing public health concern. There are about 3.7 million adolescents in Sri Lanka, which amounts to almost 19% of the population and this is the largest group in the population. Preliminary analysis of DHS data 2006/7 shows that there were 28 live births per 1000 adolescent women in Sri Lanka. In the Sri Lankan tea estate sector this number had risen to 38 live births per 1000 adolescent women.

The consequences of adolescent pregnancy, and in particular the pregnancies among adolescents in the age group below 15 years, have its impact on the health conditions of young women. The physical immaturity of an adolescent will increase the risk for preterm birth (WHO, 2004), prolonged labour (WHO, 2004) and eclampsia which put the lives of both the mother and the child in danger. Socio- economically a pregnancy may cause adverse implications for both the young woman herself and her family, as it may ruin her future prospects by curbing her opportunities for further education and employment.

The objective of this study is to examine the factors that contribute to adolescent pregnancy in the Sri Lankan Tea Estate sector in the Nuwara Eliya District. According to this study, the norms and values around sexuality, low levels of knowledge on sexual reproductive health among adolescents, high drop-out rates from schools, low usage of condoms among the sexually active adolescents, their sexual behaviour and attitudes along with poor reproductive health services can be identified as some of the contributing factors.

Sri Lanka still needs to develop good strategies to address the needs of adolescents in sexual and reproductive health. Therefore, several recommendations are suggested to reduce adolescent pregnancy in the Sri Lankan tea estate sector.