

Statistical Data from the 2006 Survey on Asset Building by Samurdhi Beneficiaries[†] (I)

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The *Samurdhi* is a national programme for poverty alleviation, designed and operated by the government of Sri Lanka. It was started in 1994. The word, *Samurdhi*, is Sinhalese, meaning ‘prosperity’. Eradicating poverty and gaining well-being of the people, and eventually reaching prosperity of the nation, the name of programme, *Samurdhi*, indicates. This is a good contrast with the case of the Self-Employment Women’s Association (SEWA), India (see Ekuni (2009)), which is also working for poverty alleviation as a non-governmental organisation comprising many trade unions in a vast country demographically as well as economically. The land of Sri Lanka is small and the GDP per capita (US\$4,243 (adjusted with PPP (purchasing power parity) as of 2007) is not high, but its social development index, particularly in the field of education of people is considered to be relatively high. It should be an interesting study to compare Samurdhi with SEWA in terms of their activities and effectiveness in the fights against poverty

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and for development.

The authors' friend, Dr. Sunil Jayantha Nawaratne, a former director of the Samurdhi Authority, (the current secretary of the Ministry of Higher Education in Sri Lanka), had willingly consented to have the research studies with us. Based on Ekuni's preliminary study of 2003, one of the authors applied for a research fund to realize the survey on the asset building by Samurdhi beneficiaries to examine the impact of their interventions, and when things went successful, the authors asked Dr. Nawaratne to conduct a pilot survey under his direction in the field. After the pilot study, we carried out the main survey, with Samurdhi beneficiaries interviewed by the students of the Sri Lanka Institute of Information Technology. This main survey was done during December 2006. Since then, it took much time unexpectedly to correct errors in data and for some other personal reasons.

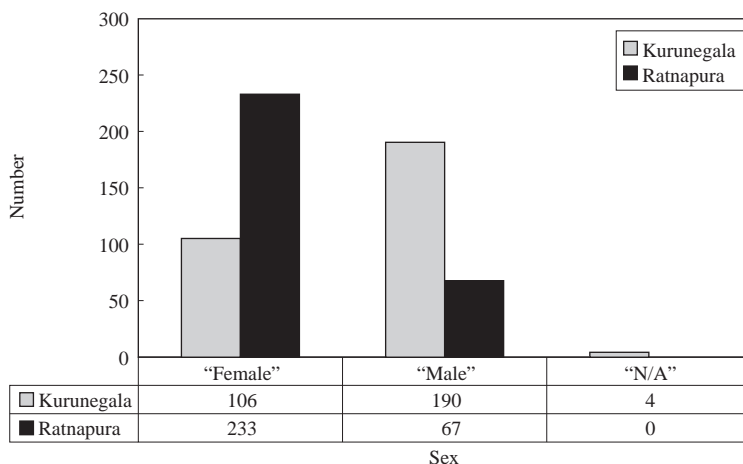
Now finishing the correction of errors in original data, we are ready to make a series of reports concerning the basic statistical analyses as we did for SEWA. Two districts, Kurunegala and Ratnapura, were surveyed: the former is in the north western province, Wayamba of Sri Lanka, and the latter is in the province, Sabaragamuwa, to the south-east of Colombo. Kurunegala is a commercial town and outstanding in its cultivated extent of coconuts, while Ratnapura is renowned in gem mining and plantation of rubber and tea. (See Wikipedia [1] and [2].) The sample size of each district is 300. In the first series of analyses, we make reports only of basic statistics with more sophisticated ones performed later on.

In the following tables, "NA" stands for 'not applicable'. In most case, numbers stand for those of interviewees or the figures in Sri Lankan Rupee.

1. Basic Personal Characteristics of Sample Interviewees

1.1. Sex

Figure 1-1 Sex Distribution

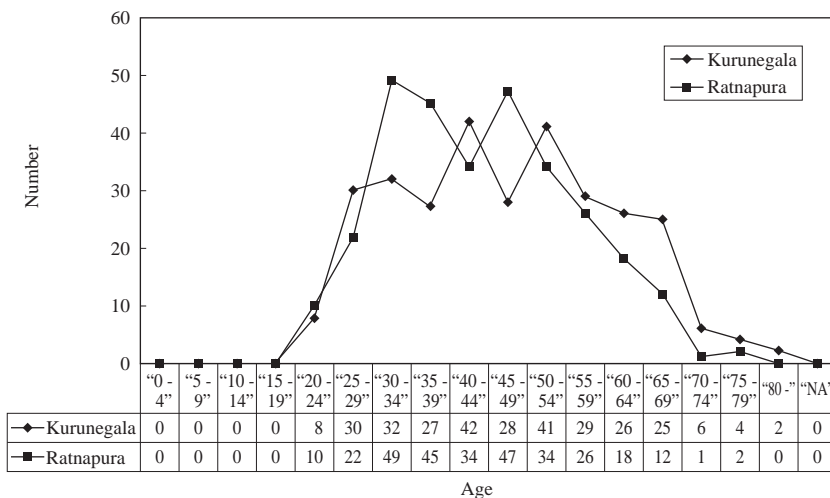


The distributions of sex in the interviewees are shown as Figure 1-1. Different from the case of SEWA, the sex of the beneficiaries of Samurdhi programme is not limited to female: men are also eligible. The relief benefit of Samurdhi is supplied to the households whose income is lower than 1,000 in Sri Lankan Rupee, and not to individuals. On the behalf of the whole family, each interviewee answered the survey questions. In Kurunegala, about the two thirds of interviewees are male, contrasting with 22% in Ratnapura. The survey was conducted for the period from August 19 to 21 in the year of 2006, and they are from Saturday to Monday. This fact may have an influence on the distribution together with the industrial structure of the two areas.

1.2. Age

The Age distributions are given in Figure 1-2. The averages are more or less the same: 46.6 years of age in Kurunegala and 43.5 in Ratnapura. The distribution in Kurunegala is slightly more widely dispersed than in Ratnapura. In the former, the youngest is aged 20 and the eldest 80 among the interviewees.

Figure 1-2 Age Distribution

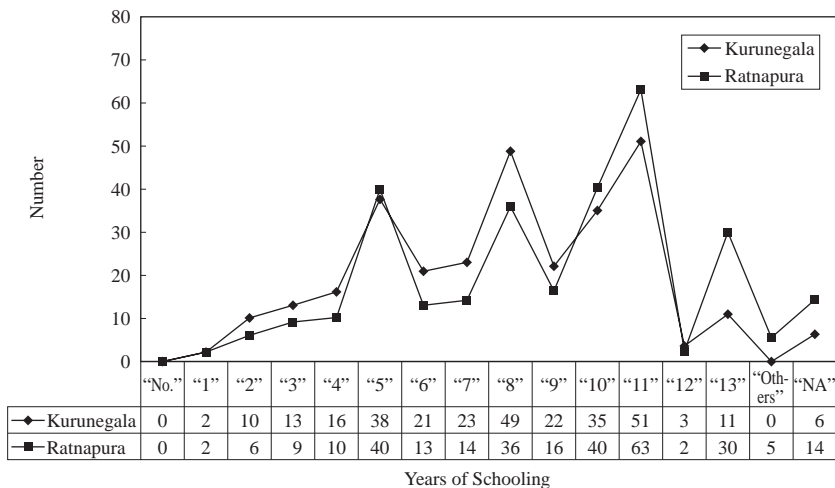


1.3. Education

The education structure in Sri Lanka follows the 5-3-3-2 pattern: the primary school for 5 years (age 6-10); the secondary school for 3 years (age 11-13); the high-school for 3 years (age 14-16); and the pre-university course for 2 years (age 17-18). The compulsory schooling is up to the completion of the secondary school. The distributions of schooling among the surveyed interviewees are represented in Figure 1-3. In both districts, the lines on the figure show similar

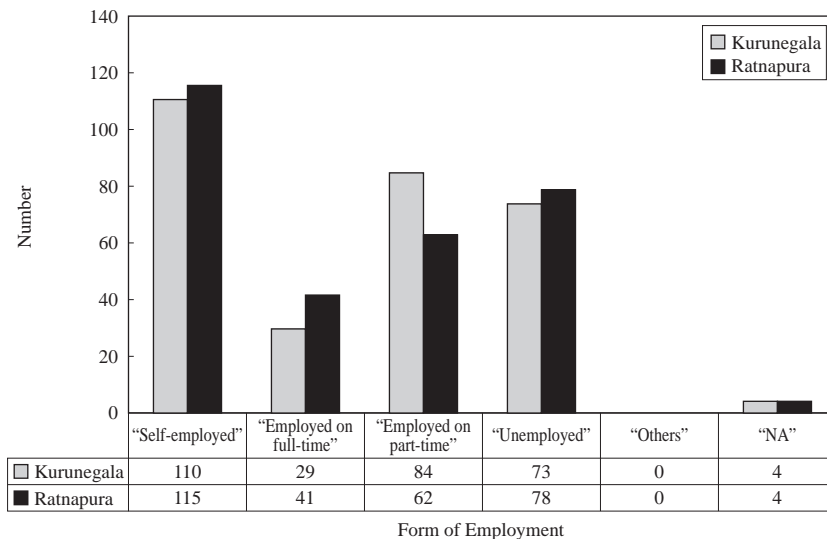
shapes with three peaks, which are naturally the points of 5, 8, and 11 years. However, the number of interviewees, who had been educated for 8 years, in Kurunegala is a little more than in Ratnapura, and, who had for 11 years, vice versa. A remarkable difference between the two districts is that the number of interviewees who had education for 13 years is much larger in Ratnapura than in Kurunegala. The average years of education in Kurunegala is 7.76 and in Ratnapura 8.38. There is no one who did not have any education : nevertheless, 13.7% in Kurunegala and 5.7% in Ratnapura had not finished the compulsory education.

Figure 1-3 Years of Education



1.4. Form of Employment

Figure 1-4 Form of Employment

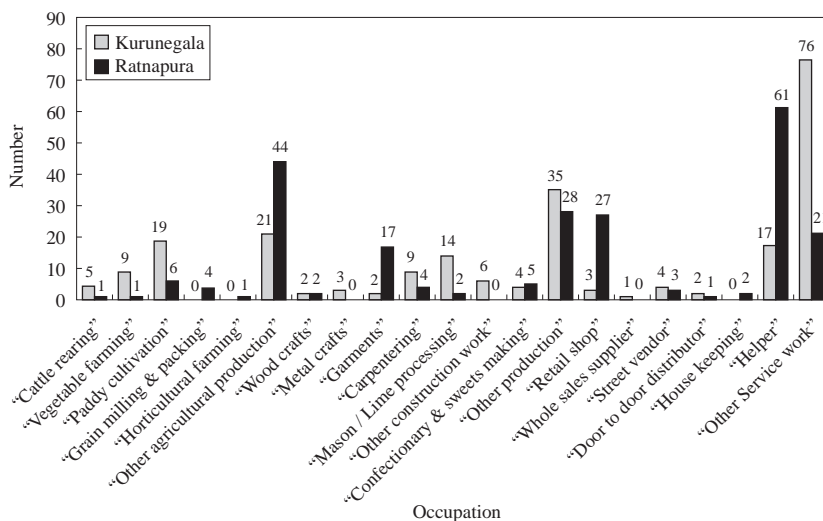


The Figure. 1-4 shows the distribution by form of employment. In both districts, many interviewees are self-employed: 37% (110 interviewees) in Kurunegala and 38% (115 interviewees) in Ratnapura. Likewise, the ratio of employed interviewees (“employed on full-time” and “employed on part-time”) is almost the same as that of self-employed with 37.6% and 34.4%, although the ratio of interviewees employed on full-time basis is less than that of those on part-time. A problem lies in the rates of unemployment. The unemployed interviewees are 24.3% in Kurunegala, and 26% in Ratnapura, which is one forth of the samples, irrespective of whether the interviewee is female or male.

1.5. Type of Job

As the Figure 1-5 below shows, the distribution by type of job is concentrated mainly in the job category of “other service work” among the interviewees in Kurunegala, and in “helper” and “house keeping” in Ratnapura. (For easier communication in the interviews, these two job types “helper” and “house keeping” are provided among the alternatives, while they are understood to be the same.) In Kurunegala, “other service work” occupies 25% of the samples, and in Ratnapura, “helper” and “house keeping” does 21%.

Figure 1-5 Type of Job

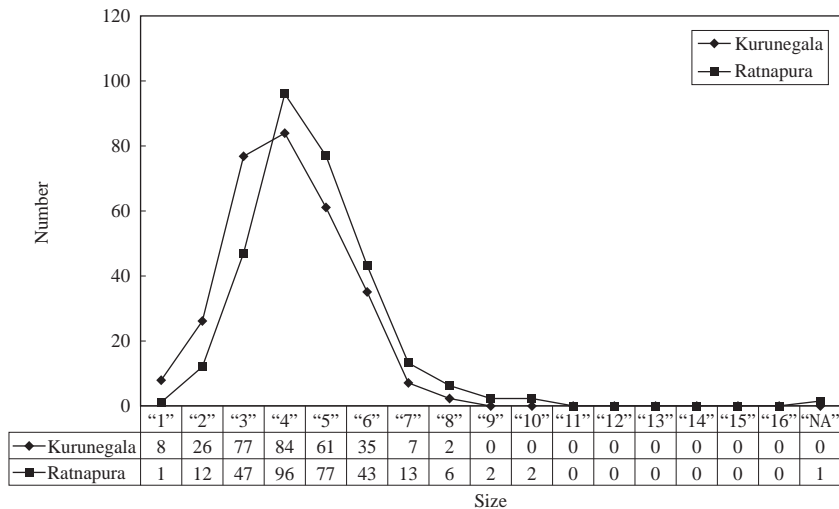


In the survey, the category in the questionnaire, “other service work”, is the service work other than the listed service works in the figure : “retail shop”, “whole sales supplier” and so on. Hereby, we can presume that the job types vary widely among the interviewees. Actually, so many “other” jobs are specified

in the answer sheets : 37 types of job in Kurunegala and 25 in Ratnapura by the interviewees. Among those jobs, the maximum number of people are in the type “daily worker” of the both categories, production and services, counting 67, which means 22% of the total sample in Kurunegala, followed by “betel cultivation” of 16 people (5%). On the other hand, in Ratnapura, “tea cultivation” of 36 (12%) has the largest share in those “other” jobs, and secondly “gem mining” of 17 (6%). With the almost same rates as “tea cultivation” or “gem mining”, the figure shows that the “paddy cultivation”, “helper” and “mason / lime processing” (or “house keeping”) in Kurunegala have the modest number of interviewees, while “retail shop” and “garment” in Ratnapura are somewhat conspicuous. The number of interviewees answering “NA” is nearly matched with that of those who answer “unemployed” in the previous question, 1.4. Form of Employment.

1.6. Family Size

Figure 1-6 Family Size

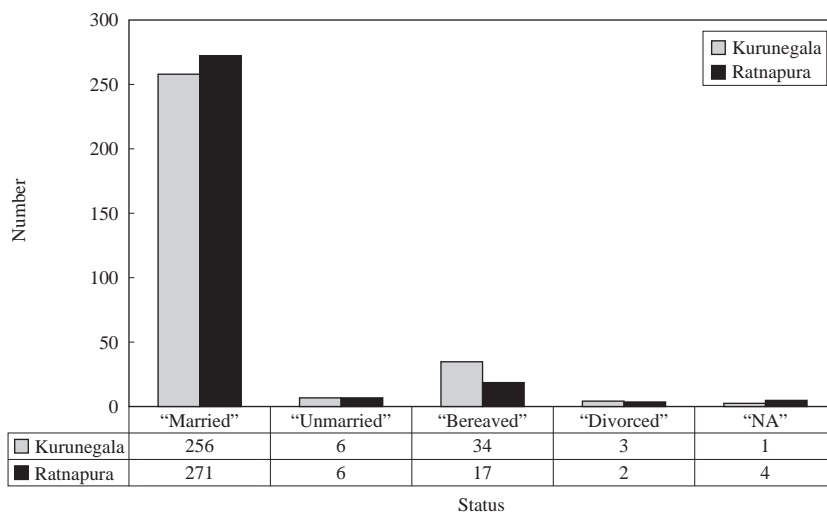


The result is shown in Figure 1-6. The distributions of family size of the interviewees in both districts are more or less the same. The average of the family size in Kurunegala is 4.0, and in Ratnapura 4.6 : the latter is slightly larger than the former, including the largest size 10.

1.7. Marital Status

The distribution of the marital status among interviewees is given as the Figure 1-7. The “married” dominates in both districts. The married in Kurunegala are less by 5% than those in Ratnapura. On the other hand, in Ratnapura, the ratio of “bereaved” status is less by 5% than in Kurunegala.

Figure 1-7 Marital Status



1.8. Monthly Income of Interviewees

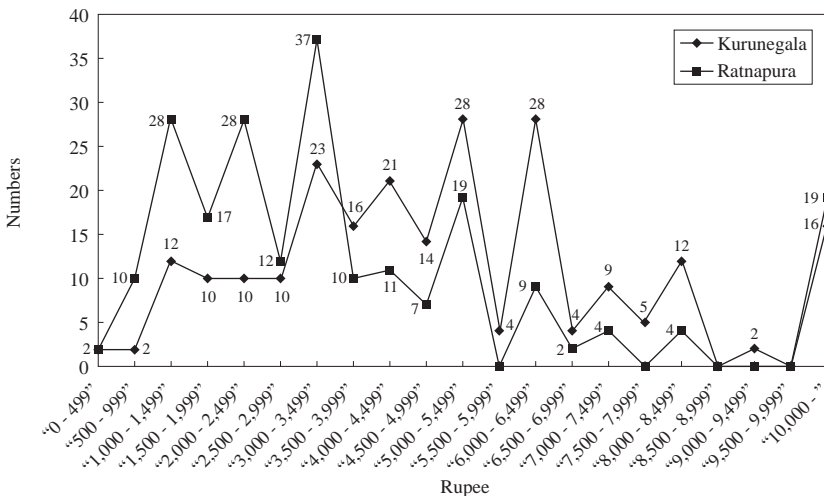
In Figure 1-8, the distributions of monthly income of interviewees of two groups are depicted. The average monthly income and the standard deviations (SD) of each group are :

Kurunegala : 4,872 Rupees (SD=2,844),

Ratnapura : 4,006 Rupees (SD=4,007).

The average of the income in the group of Kurunegala is higher by about 20% than in Ratnapura. This result may come out of the differences in the sex distributions in section 1-1. The 60% of the interviewees in Kurunegala is male while only 22% in Ratnapura. The standard deviation is much larger in Ratnapura than in Kurunegala, and the SD is almost the same value as the average in Ratnapura, which means that the monthly income of the interviewees is indeed widely spread out.

Figure 1-8 Monthly Income of Interviewees



(In Sri Lanka, the gross domestic product (GDP) per capita of 2006 is 147,776 in Sri Lankan Rupee (Sri Lanka Central Bank (2010)) and 1,422 in U.S. Dollar (World Bank (2010)).)

1.9. Total Monthly Income of Households

The Figure 1-9 shows the distribution of total household income per month. The average and the standard deviation of each group are as follows :

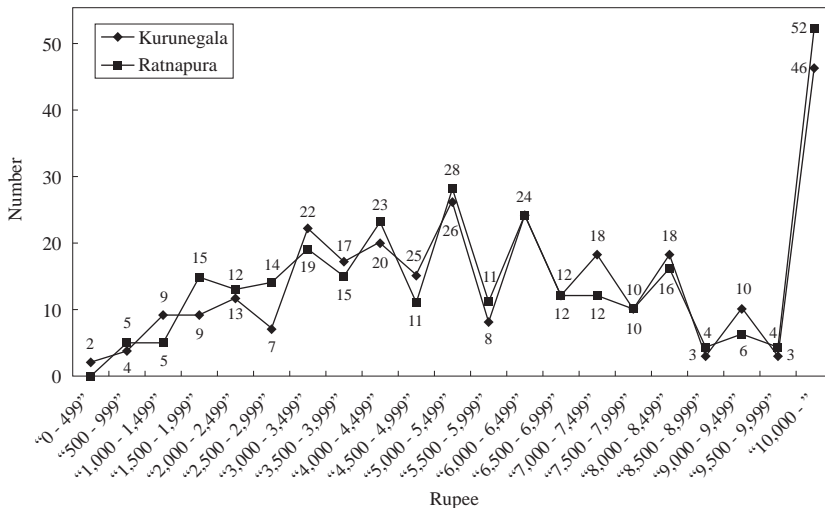
Kurunegala : 6,531 Rupees (SD=5,997),

Ratnapura : 6,710 Rupees (SD=5,268).

Comparing these with the monthly income of the interviewees in the preceding section 1.8., there is not so large a difference in the average amounts between the two groups. The amount in Ratnapura is a little higher than that in Kurunegala. The standard deviations of the two groups indicate the monthly household incomes disperse widely. The mode values are equal and over 10,000 rupees unexpectedly.

According to the Department of Census and Statistics, Sri Lanka (2004), the official poverty line in Sri Lanka of the year 2002 is 1,423 rupees, which is the amount of real total food and non-food consumption expenditure per person per month. In our survey research, the averages on the family size of the interviewees are 4.0 in Kurunegala and 4.6 in Ratnapura. When we calculate the poverty lines for an average household using these values, they become 5,692 rupees in Kurunegala and 6,546 rupees in Ratnapura. The number of the households whose income is under the poverty line, here estimated, is 136 (46%) in Kurunegala and 184 (62%) in Ratnapura.

Figure 1-9 Total Monthly Income of Household



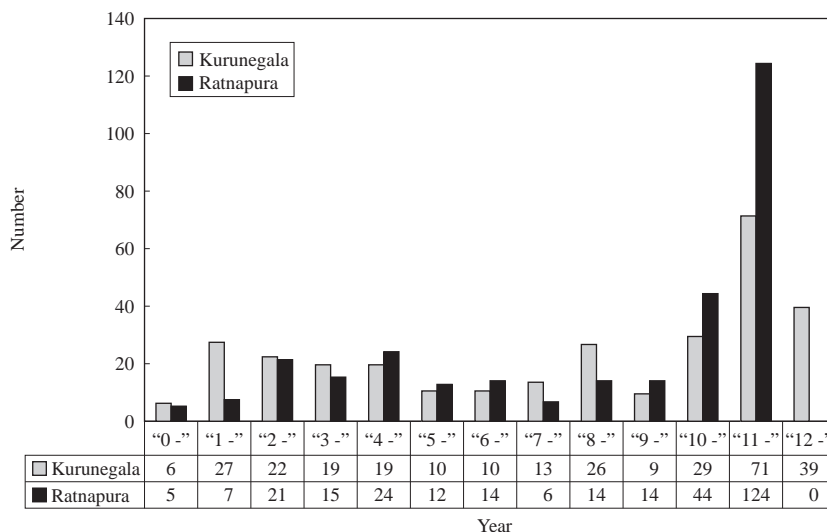
A criterion of eligibility for Samurdhi grant is that the monthly income of the household should be less than 1,000 rupees. The amounts of the grant per month are shown in the Table 1-1 below. At this point, we recognize that the data collected in the survey shows a *problem*, that is, the most of the households of the interviewees, who are recipients of Samurdhi grant, do not satisfy the qualification. The numbers of households that meet the conditions of the Samurdhi grant are only 6 in Kurunegala and 5 in Ratnapura. The rest of households had higher monthly income than the stipulated amount, i.e., 1,000 rupees. The former director of the Samurdhi Authority, Dr. Sunil Jayantha Nawaratne, explained : that is because they were doing odd jobs in the informal sector and there is no way to grasp their *real* income. Practically there are many people who are getting the monthly dole but actually not entitled.

Table 1-1 The Criteria of Samurrdhi Grant Eligibility

The Amount of Samurrdhi Grant (Rupees)	Household Monthly Income (Rupees)	Family Size
1,000	less than 500	4 and over 4
500	less than 1,000	3 and over 3
200	less than 1,000	2
100	less than 1,000	1

1.10. Period of Samurrdhi Beneficiaries

Figure 1-10 Period of Samurrdhi Beneficiaries



The distribution of beneficiary period of Samurrdhi is represented in the Figure 1-10. The mode of the period is from 11 to less than 12 years in both districts. We may say that Ratnapura has, however, a more uneven distribution than Kurunegala. The averages of two districts are 7.5 years in Kurunegala and 8.1

years in Ratnapura, respectively. The follow-up surveys are certainly required to capture how the recipients' incomes grow through the period of their struggle under the coverage of Samurdhi movement.

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