

3. School Attendance

Persons whose age group 5- 20 years are considered in this section. Most of this population is students. In this analysis, school attendance is regarded as current attendance at any government, private, international or any other recognized school which provides regular education for children. The school attendance of 5-20 year age group is nearly 81 percent. This is expected as the large number of students (between age group 15-20) terminates their formal school education after G.C.E (O.L) and G.C.E. (A.L.) examinations (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1: Percentage distribution of population (aged 5-20 years) by school attendance and by sector - 2006

Sector	School attendance			
	Total (%)	Currently attending school (%)	Never attended school (%)	Attended school in the past (%)
Sri Lanka	100	80.6	4.2	15.2
Urban	100	79.7	3.9	16.5
Rural	100	81.0	4.1	14.9
Estate	100	78.4	6.3	15.3

According to the government policy children in the age group 5.14 years are considered as the population, which are compulsorily being attended school. Out of 2.91 million children in the age group 5-14 years, 2.86 million children (i.e 98.4 percent) attend school as shown in Table 3.2. The corresponding figure for estate sector is 93.7, which shows the poor school attendance among sectors

Table 3.2: Percentage distribution of population (aged 5-14 years) by school attendance and by sector – 2006

Sector	School attendance			
	Total (%)	Currently attending school (%)	Never attended school (%)	Attended school in the past (%)
Sri Lanka	100	98.4	0.7	0.9
Urban	100	98.1	0.6	1.3
Rural	100	98.8	0.4	0.8
Estate	100	93.7	4.4	1.8

It is to be noted that some of the children who have completed age 5 by the survey date are not eligible to get a chance to enter schools as they were not 5 years old in the month of January in the survey year. Therefore the children whose birthdays fall in between February 2002 to September 2002 were not included in the above eligible group.