

Determinants of Employability of Female Graduates in Public Sector Jobs in Sri Lanka with Special Reference to the Graduate Employment Scheme of 2012

E.M.S.M.Ekanayake¹

Background

Investment in education appears to be related to people's success in making many decisions concerning their working life. Higher education, in particular, promotes more efficient decision making processes related to labour market through the acquisition of information that has a positive impact on occupational choices. As a consequence, the labour market situation of higher education graduates is better, in general, than that of non-graduates through various aspects. Therefore, higher education has to play a vital role in the economy by supporting the country's economic objectives as well as in diffusing and applying new knowledge and developing a qualified indigenous labour force. Labour force participation is one of the key labour market measurements in an economy and it gives an indication of how many people of working age actively engaging in labour market. The majority of the population of Sri Lanka consists of women but their participation in the labour force has been comparatively lower than men. However, there is some gap between men and women participation in labour force and existing statistics reveals that female labour force participation is quite low. In 2012, the male labour force participation was around 66.8 percent while its equivalent female labour force participation stood at 29.9 percent. The participation of women in labour force is still considered low although it has substantially increased over the years.

Research Problem

The overall unemployment rate is at a negligible level at the moment in the country, even though it is somewhat high among the educated population. The most important fact is that youth unemployment is much higher than unemployment among other age groups in Sri Lanka. Employability of graduates has been a controversial issue in the Sri Lankan labour market for a considerable period of time. When it comes to gender, female unemployment rate has always been higher than the male unemployment rate. Female graduate employability interest to public sector becomes a big issue in Sri Lanka since majority of graduates are being females. The country spends huge amount of money to produce graduates and they are expecting safe job from the government. This is evident that, specially, when opening the registering graduate unemployment scheme, majority of graduates are tent to registering in order to have public sector jobs.

¹ Faculty of Graduates Studies, University of Colombo, Colombo 03

Objectives

The main objective is to understand the female graduate employability interest. The specific research objectives are formulated as follows.

1. To identify possible determinants affecting female graduate employability in public sector jobs
2. To examine the skill composition of the female graduates who entered into the public sector through the 2012 graduate employment scheme
3. To assess the level of job satisfaction among the newly recruited female graduates in public sector in 2012

Research Methodology

A sample of 332 female graduate employees was selected on a stratified and simple random sampling basis from population of female graduates who have attached to the Government Ministries (25%), Departments (15%), District Secretariats (10%) and Divisional Secretariats (50%). The percentage weighted by considering the total number of female graduate employees in different workplace. The survey data gathered through a structured questionnaire to identify the employability determinants of female graduates' employees and their job satisfaction in public sector jobs. It is used as the main instrument for analyzing the impact of the identified factors affecting employability of female graduates. The data on variables, collected and measured by the use of questionnaire has been codified, quantified, analyzed and evaluated using the Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS).

Key Findings

The key findings of the study mentioned that majority of graduates are from university of Kelaniya and Sri Jawardenapura and from the fields of Arts. Further, the study reveals that many of Arts stream female graduates have been remaining in long term unemployment. Majority of graduate employees are from 25-30 age groups and many of them do not have professional or post graduate qualifications apart from their degree.

Many of the female graduates have higher expectation to join with public sector and many of them shifted from private sector to public sector. The findings show that B.A. graduates tend to waiting for a proper job without joining any job even in the private sector. It also confirms that possibility is high for B.Sc. and B.Com. graduates to find a job. Female Graduates determinants highlighted the reasons to select this job in multiple responses. One fourth of the study population had selected this job due to job security of the government sector and willingness to work in government sector. While some of them

are willing to serve the country and general public (16%), 13% are interested in the pension rights. Although many people have suffered a lot due to graduate unemployment problem, only 10% have mentioned that they selected this job because of the suffering. Other reasons are to make use of the provided opportunity for female graduates, difficulty of finding a job, freedom of the job and convenience to travel from residence.

Job satisfaction of female graduate employees is in average level but their satisfaction has come down with compared to at the beginning level of their job.

Conclusions

The findings of the study reveal that the education system of the university needs to be adjusted with the potential labour market demand. As a solution to the graduate unemployment issue, graduates propose to integrate couple of courses which are able to enhance IT and English knowledge of the graduates and Promoting internship opportunities to opening employment opportunities for them in the private sector as well. It also emphasized that the graduate unemployment issue become more serious because of generating large number of external graduates without considering the demand of the graduates to the country. As a solution to this, the quality of external degrees need to be improved and after the Advanced Level examination the youth should be directed and encouraged to follow technical or professional trainings than moving them to the external degrees and the awareness of existing labour market need to be improved. However, it is concluded that the demand driven proper recruitment methods need to be implement in order to increase productivity of graduate employees and to increase their job satisfaction.

References

- Bimrose, J. (2009). *Graduate Transitions into and through the labour market*. Graduate Market Trends.
- Central Bank of Sri Lanka. (2013). *Annual Report*. Colombo.
- Department of Census and Statistics. (2012). *Annual Report of Sri Lanka Labour Force Survey*. Colombo.
- Dissanayake, E. (2010). *Determinants of unemployment among Sri Lankan University Graduates*. Colombo: Department of Manpower and Employment.
- Gunathilake, R. & Vodopivec, M. (2010). *Labour Market Institutions and Labour Market Segmentation in Sri Lanka: The challenge of Youth Employment in Sri Lanka*. Washington: The World Bank.
- Hettige, S. (2004). *School-to-work Transition of Youth in Sri Lanka*. Employment Policy Unit, University of Colombo.