

EMPLOYABILITY AND EXPECTATIONS OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS: A CROSS FACULTY COMPARISON OF THE ATTRIBUTES OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

In Sri Lanka the incidence of unemployment among educated youth has been found to be significantly high. It has been said that "the more educated a person is, the greater the likelihood of being unemployed". This situation arises due to the high rate of entry to the labour force on the one hand and the relatively sluggish expansion of the economy that restricts its capacity to absorb the increasing numbers of new entrants to the labour force on the other. This results in the employment mismatch, which is an imbalance between the type of work, people are willing and able to do and the type, nature, and scope of job opportunities available in the country.

The objectives of this study are to ascertain the extent to which employability and expectations affect job opportunities of educated youth of this country. This was done by means of evaluating the preferred attributes possessed by students (vis a vis the job situation) and their expectations in terms of employment.

A questionnaire survey was administered among a sample of sixty-eight students from the Faculties of Science, Commerce and Management and Social Sciences of the University of Kelaniya to elicit information on those "preferred attributes" as seen by the private sector employers and the employment expectations of university undergraduates.

The findings corroborated the view that there is a mismatch in terms of the number of opportunities generated by the job market and the number of applicants for those jobs. This enabled the employers to short list applications at the time of pre screening, which discriminated against those undergraduates having predominantly rural backgrounds. The situation was particularly unfavorable for female undergraduates from the Faculties of Social Sciences.

References,

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