

# A STUDY OF UNEMPLOYMENT AMONG WOMEN ARTS GRADUATES (1972-1977)

**Wimala de Silva**

*(Sri Lanka Federation of University Women.)*

**Swarna Jayaweera**

*(Department of Education, University of Colombo.)*

**Lakshmi Perera**

*(Project for Unemployed Women Arts Graduates.)*

**Thana Shanmugam**

*(Agrarian Research and Training Institute, Colombo.)*

and

**Chitra Wickramasuriya**

*(Department of English, University of Colombo.)*

As a result of funding provided by the Overseas Education Fund U. S. A., the Sri Lanka Federation of University Women (SLFUW) was able to undertake a project to enhance the employability of unemployed women arts graduates. The project falls into 2 phases phase I (March 1979-May 1980) was the collection of data on which phase II action programme is to be based. This paper outlines phase I of the project.

The collection of data fell into 4 broad areas.

- (1) The Socio economic and employment status of the arts graduates who had passed from the Colombo, Peradaniya, Vidyodaya and Vidyalankara Universities from 1972-1977.
- (2) The views of employers regarding the employment of women arts graduates.
- (3) A survey of the usage of English in employment in the Public and Private Sectors.
- (4) A workshop of policy makers, planners, trainers and members of the SLFUW to identify:

(a) areas where there is job potential

(b) areas where retraining or special training is required by the target group.

The data revealed that it was vital to give the arts graduate a good knowledge of English, develop personality qualities required by the employers and train them in special skills in a job situation areas where there is job potential. It was also necessary to change the attitude of employers as regards the potential of arts graduates. A number of policy matters were also identified as requiring study and change.