

**F 216**

**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 reported to be significantly high. It was reported that " the more a person has been educated, the

greater the likelihood that he or she may be unemployed" This situation arises out of high rate of entry to the labour force on the one hand and the relatively sluggish expansion of the economy on the other. An outcome of this situation has been the unemployment mismatch, which deals with an imbalance between the type of work, people are willing and able to do and the available job opportunities.

The objective of this study is to ascertain the extent to which employability and expectations affect job opportunities of educated youth. This was done by means of evaluating the preferred attributes students possess (vis a vis a 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" which enabled the employers to short list such applicants at the time of selection. This discriminated against those undergraduates having predominantly rural backgrounds. The situation was particularly unfavorable for female undergraduates and those students in the Faculty of Social Sciences.