

Gender analysis of engineering graduates passed out from Sri Lankan universities

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During the period of 2000 to 2004, a series of graduate follow-up surveys were conducted for engineering graduates passed out from the Universities of Moratuwa and Peradeniya in the years 1998 to 2002. The paper describes the major findings of the surveys conducted in the years 2000, 2002, 2003 and 2004 respectively. The Data was collected by sending a structured questionnaire to the graduates and the university intake data was collected from the University Grant Commission (UGC) from 1999 to 2004.

The female engineering undergraduate portion of Sri Lankan universities is 16.5% and males dominate the field by having 83.5% of total engineering undergraduate population. From year 2000 to 2004, the growth rate of male engineering undergraduate population was 4.3% while the same for female engineering undergraduate population was 2.0%. Even though there is no considerable encouragement for females to do an engineering degree, there is a slight growth of female engineering undergraduate population in Sri Lankan universities. But there were some districts (i.e. Mullaitivu), which had no single female student selected for engineering courses in the last five consecutive intakes. Though females are a minority of the engineering undergraduate population, their achievement in the final exam is higher than the majority male engineering undergraduate population. 10.9% of females had

obtained first classes while only 5.9% of males had obtained first classes at the final exam. 64.5% of female engineering students completed their degree with a class and the same for males was 54%.

Findings of the survey further highlighted that the highest employment rate was recorded for female engineering graduates which was 83.9% compared to males (81.6%). The highest un-employment rate of 12.3% also was recorded for the female engineering graduates. Most of the male engineering graduates earn more than female engineering graduates. 28.9% of male engineering graduates earn greater than Rs. 20,000 per month and it was only 11.3% of women engineering graduates who earn a similar amount.