Research Studies on Tertiary Education Sector

Relevance of Foreign Degrees, offered locally and their contribution to the Socio-Economic Development of Sri Lanka

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Sri Lanka

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A study on the

Relevance of Foreign Degrees, offered locally

and

their contribution to the Socio-Economic Development of Sri Lanka

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Executive summary

Annually, about 250,000 students sit for the G.C.E. (AL) examination in Sri Lanka of which, about 150,000 students qualify for university education. Of this, only about 14,000 are able to enter the local universities (excluding the Open University of Sri Lanka).

Currently, about 40,000 undergraduates from 15 local universities are said to be unemployed, attributed to mismatch between demand and supply.

There are at least 19 educational institutions in Sri Lanka offering foreign first degrees, locally, of which, only one namely: IFCA Education Center is registered with the Board of Investment of Sri Lanka (BOI).

Degree courses in Information technology (IT), Business Management, and Accounting, Finance, & Banking are more on offer than any other disciplines, reflecting the current trend in higher education.

There are also at least 21 organizations representing universities in 12 countries operating in Sri Lanka. In addition, there are 2 organizations claiming to represent universities the world over.

Universities in Australia, United Kingdom, and New Zealand are better represented by these organizations than those in other countries, again reflecting the current trend in overseas higher education.

It is reported that whilst the affluent students opt for higher education in western countries, the middle-class and the upper- middle class students prefer to study in Russia (mostly Medicine), and India (Medicine and Business Management) on account of budgetary constraints.

Whilst degrees from western universities are highly desired and much recognized, similar degrees from Russian and Indian universities are not favorably considered in the Sri Lankan job market.

Of the several Alumni associations, only the Russian Alumni association is active, with a membership of about 3,000 of which, 50% are currently reported to be overseas.

The institutional survey of 12 colleges revealed that to-date, a total of 44,787 students had obtained their foreign first degrees in Sri Lanka and a further 3,568 are currently reading for the degree.

The choice of degree is said to be heavily influenced by labor market trends.

60% of the employers interviewed were of the opinion that the quality of such graduates was above those of the local degree holders.

All those graduates interviewed stated that they were employed currently, in senior executive positions.

Some of the major socio-economic benefits highlighted in the study are:
- Increase in stock of much needed IT specialists.
- Increase in productivity.
- Increase of competent manpower, by providing an opportunity to those who cannot enter local universities, on account of limited seats.

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1.0 Introduction

The National Education Commission (NEC) was established under the National Education Commission act No. 19. of 1991 to make recommendations to His Excellency the President, on educational policy in all its aspects, with a view to, ensuring continuity in educational policy and enabling the education system to respond to changing needs in society, review and analyze such policies and plans in operation and where necessary, and to recommend to His Excellency the President, changes in such policy plan/s. Comprehensive national education policy includes the following matters:

Aims and goals of education; the structure of the educational system - pre-school, primary, secondary tertiary, higher, informal, non-formal, adult, special, professional and religious; the establishment, location and distribution of educational institutions, including methods and criteria for admission of students and recruitment of teachers; the content of education, including medium of instruction, diversification of curricula, text books and learning materials, the place of religious knowledge, observance and practice, assessment and evaluation, the examination system, certificates, diplomas and academic awards and recognition of qualification; recruitment, placement, disciplinary control and professional growth of education service personnel, including teachers, Para-education personnel, supervisors and administrators; resources for education, including the mobilization of community participation; and ancillary services for education including mid-day meals, health and dental services, physical education and sports (www.nec.gov.lk).

It was in this context that the NEC called for quotations from various organizations by way of a press advertisement, for the conduct of several research studies and in response to this, the Marketing & Research Services (MRS), a professional market research company tendered its proposal and was selected to conduct the research study on the "Relevance of foreign Degrees offered in Sri Lanka and their contribution to the socio economic development in Sri Lanka".

2.0. Objectives of the study

2.1.   To identify organizations offering foreign degrees, in Sri Lanka.

2.2.   To ascertain foreign degree courses currently offered by such organizations.

2.3.   To discover perceptions of students of foreign degree programmes, and employers of such students.

2.4.   To assess contribution of such degree programmes to the socio economic development in Sri Lanka.

3.0.   Methodology

The research methodology relating to the research study is as follows: -

3.1   Identification of the spread of foreign degree facilitating institutions
The Marketing & Research Services believed that the identification of the spread and the geographic dispersion of the private educational institutions in Sri Lanka offering foreign degree/s was a key activity to be performed before designing the research method.

For this purpose, the research team undertook a prior analysis to landmark the areas for census.

3.2   Secondary sources
Since it is not mandatory for organizations offering foreign degree programmes in Sri Lanka to register with any authority, except in the case of Board Of Investment of Sri Lanka (BOI), where only one educational institute has so far registered in order to obtain the BOI status, and one more with the University Grants Commission (UGC), "population" records do not exist. Similarly, Sri Lankans holding foreign degrees also have no compulsion to register, except perhaps with respective Alumni associations, which is totally voluntary, or with the Sri Lanka Medical Council, if such students qualified in medicine, overseas, which is mandatory. Hence, the 'population" was constructed by secondary sources such as:
- University Grants Commission
- Board of Investment of Sri Lanka
- Press
- Internet
- Books on Higher Education in Sri Lank, and
- EDEX publication

3.3.   Primary data
The breakdown of respondents is as follows:

Sample breakdown	Nos	Percentage
Undergraduates	50	33.3
Graduates	50	33.3
Colleges	25	16.7
Employers	25	16.7
Total	150	100

Since there are only 19 colleges offering foreign first degrees in Sri Lanka, a census of the colleges was undertaken to collect data and in the case of other categories, quota sampling was adopted as per the TOR. Whilst heads of colleges and undergraduates were interviewed face-to-face, graduates and employers were interviewed via telephone.

3.4.   Research instrument
Semi-structured questionnaires in English were employed, consisting of qualitative and quantitative questions as well as open, and close-ended questions.   The draft questionnaires were submitted to the client and approval obtained, prior to the commencement of fieldwork.

3.5   Data accuracy
Pilot testing of the questionnaires were done among 5% of the sample. In addition, only trained field enumerators were assigned with fieldwork, supervised by a senior field coordinator.

3.6.   Data cleaning, entry and tabulation
Raw data was checked against logic errors and thereafter analyzed against degrees offered, duration of study, market demand, reason for selection, quality of education, socio-economic benefits accruing to the country, etc.

4.0. Literature review

4.1. History of education system in Sri Lanka
Since the arrival of Prince Vijaya and his followers about the year 543 BC, the Brahmins enjoyed a prominent status in Sri Lankan educational system as the descendents of the royal family received their education under the Brahmins, in their homes- Gurukula or Gurugedera.

After the introduction of Buddhism to Sri Lanka, the monastic institutions were mainly responsible for education. Privenas or monastic colleges primarily intended for the education of clergy students were established and patronized by the kings.

The first such intuition which helped the continuation of the study for many centuries was set up at the Mahavihara in Anuradhapura. As a result, the monks soon became knowledgeable and the village temples soon became the center of learning.

King Vattagammini (103 BC) extended his patronage to another monastic college, the Abhayagirivihara at Anuradhapura, which broke away from the earlier establishment and in the course of time became its rival.

During the reign of King Mahesan, the Jettavanarama monastery was found, where the curriculum was not confined only to religion, but also other languages, history of many countries, Vedic and Post-Vedic literature, medicine, astronomy, poetry, and architecture, among others. Whilst the temples became the center of primary education, the pirivenas became the center of secondary education and the mahavihara, the center of tertiary education and research.

During the Polonaruwa period (1073-1215 AD), more pirivenas were set up and the curriculum included Sinhala, other languages, art etc. Non-formal education provided an education of a high standard with regard to subjects like weaving, metal work, gold and silver work, clay pottery, tailoring, architecture, town planning, construction of irrigation systems, art and painting, and literature. This trend continued during the Dambadeniya period too.

4.2. The Portuguese period (1505- 1658 AD)
In 1505, the Portuguese invaded Sri Lanka and ruled the maritime province of Sri Lanka for 153 years, during which, they introduced an education system in these areas and started many schools in Kotte and Jaffna. Under the Portuguese, males were given both primary and secondary education, while females were given only primary education.

4.3. The Dutch period (1658- 1796 AD)
In 1658, the Dutch conquered the areas which were under the Portuguese and continued to rule for 138 years, until the British ousted them in 1796. They too continued the education and in the process, converted the people to Christianity.

Source: Prasada, L and Kulatunge, D. (2006). Education Guide, Sri Lanka (2nd ed). Neptune. Colombo.

4.4.   The British period (1796- 1948)
        The 1805 – 1824 period under the British was known as the missionary period, as many Christian missionary institutions were active, setting up schools and providing education throughout the country. During the British rule, the following institutions were set up by the government:
        • 1870- The Medical College of Ceylon
        • 1895- The Law College
        • 1921- The University College

4.5.   Higher education in Sri Lanka
        During the pre-independence era, access to university education was limited. Until the University of Ceylon was established in 1942, a very few from affluent families received higher education in foreign universities. Although the university education expanded rapidly during the last fifty years, nevertheless, only 0.6% of the youth in the 15-30 age group were able to study in Sri Lankan universities, while a few more were studying abroad. There has been a mismatch between the skill requirements of higher education in the country and the supply of graduates.

4.6.   Universities in Sri Lanka
        When Sri Lanka regained independence, there was only one university in the country, namely: the University of Ceylon, established under Act No. 20 of 1942, by absorbing the Ceylon University College and the Ceylon Medical College. The medium of instruction was English and the intake of students was low. The location of new university was to be in Peradeniya. However, the first major move was in 1952 when the faculties of Arts and Oriental studies were shifted to Peradeniya. The Medicine and the Engineering faculties commenced courses in Peradeniya only in the early 1960s. With the introduction of free education in 1945, a need arose to increase the student intake for higher education and to make Sinhala/Tamil the medium of instruction and the first batch of students in the Sinhala/Tamil medium was admitted to the University of Ceylon at Peradeniya, in 1960. The Vidyodaya and the Vidyalankara pirivenas, two well-known Buddhist learning centers, were granted university status in 1959. These two universities, presently known as: University of Sri Jayawardenapura and University of Kelaniya respectively, became full-fledged universities in 1996 and the restriction on admission of female students was removed. The following universities were established during the next 20 years:
        • University of Colombo
        • University of Katubedda
        • University of Jaffna
        • The Open University of Sri Lanka
        • The Ruhuna University (Matara)
        • The Eastern University (Batticaloa)
        • The Sabaragamuwa University and the Rajarata University
        • (Belihuloya and Anuradhapura)
        • The South-Eastern University (Oluwil)
        • The Uva Wellassa University (Badulla)
        • The University of Visual and performing Arts

Source: Prasada, L and Kulatunge, D. (2006). Education Guide, Sri Lanka (2nd ed). Neptune. Colombo.
            Economic progress of independent Sri Lanka, 1998. Central Bank of Sri Lanka. Government Press. Colombo.

In order to coordinate the activities of higher education, The National Council of Higher Education (NCHC) was established in 1966. By University Act No.1 of 1972, the four universities namely: Peradeniya, Colombo, Vidyodaya, Vidyalankara and Ceylon College of Technology, Katubedda were amalgamated to constitute a single university, the University of Sri Lanka. The Jaffna Campus was established in 1974.

Government control over universities was strengthened between 1971 and 1977, influenced by the experiences of the 1971 insurgency.

The system of independent universities was restored in 1978 and the six campuses became separate universities.

4.7.   The University Grants Commission (UGC)
The University Grants Commission (UGC) was established in 1979 to function as the central regulatory body for the overall co-ordination of the universities, functioning within the framework of Universities Act No. 16 of 1978.

Its vision is to "Develop a university system to the highest quality appropriate to the national needs and aspirations, in keeping with global trends", while the mission is "To promote and sustain through resource allocation, a widely accessible university system that is accountable to the public and dedicated to the highest levels of learning, professional training and research, relevance to the needs of the country, by facilitating, in partnership with other stakeholders of higher education, the diversification and the assurance of quality of academic programmes, and the emergence of centers of excellence in teaching and research".

4.8.   Fifty years of progress in higher education
University enrollment, which stood at 1,611 (1948) increased to 33,948 (1996). The percentage of university students in the 15-30 group increased from 0.1% (1950) to 0.6% (1996). The annual supply of graduates increased from 200 (1948) to 5,550 (1995). The number of universities increased from 1 (1948) to 12 (1997). At the end of 2005, Sri Lanka had 15 universities that enrolled 66,386 students, excluding the students of the Open University.

Source: Economic progress of independent Sri Lanka, 1998. Central Bank of Sri Lanka. Government Press. Colombo.

Table # 1. Universities & students statistics- 2004/5

Item	Yr. 2004	Yr. 2005
a. Universities	13	15
b. Students	64,801	66,386
c. Lecturers	3,725	3,875
d. No. of Graduates	10,525	12,067
Breakdown Arts & Oriental sciences	3,366	4,442
Commerce & Management studies	3,091	2,913
Law	166	223
Engineering	984	1,037
Medicine	1,323	1,406
Other	1,595	2,046
e. New admissions for first degrees	13,396	14,520

4.9.   Demand for higher education

Annually, around 250,000 students sit for the G.C.E (A.L) examination, aspiring to enter the university, of which about 150,000 become eligible for university education. However, Sri Lankan universities can only absorb about 14,000 students. For example, in 2004/2005, a total of 108,357 students were eligible for university education, of which, 14,250 were offered admission, as a result, 94,107 students had to either opt for overseas education, which is very costly, or study locally for overseas degrees or professional courses.

The current trend in overseas education may be segmented cost-wise. For example, whilst affluent students preferred universities in Great Britain and Australia, the cost-conscious students preferred universities in India, China, Nepal, and Russia.

4.10.   Degree awarding private institutions

The role of private universities is a hotly debated topic ever since the operations of the private medical college based in Ragama with state consent in the 1980s failed due to widespread opposition from many quarters, including students and the teaching staff of the government medical colleges, and the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP).

The proposed private medical college of the Ceylinco Conglomerate in the 1990s also did not materialize, again on account of widespread protests.

The opposition was due to suspicion that the private medical colleges if permitted to operate, would enroll lesser-qualified students and churn-out medical graduates at a faster pace motivated by profit, thereby creating an oversupply resulting in lower wages and even unemployment to those passing-out from the state medical colleges, whilst putting the patients at risk.

4.11. Sri Lankan Vs. foreign degree awarding universities

The public sector monopoly of university education in Sri Lanka suffers from both an inability to meet the demand for university education in many fields and a failure to supply high quality education in many fields, compatible with global trends. The failure of university education in Sri Lanka were manifested in many indicators: a large number of students entering the labor force at an early age, a significant number choosing vocational training, instead of university education, students seeking admission in foreign universities, foreign institutions making commercial presence in Sri Lanka to attract local students and unemployed graduated numbering 40,000, currently. In addition, the reluctance on the part of the private sector, which is considered to be the engine of growth, to absorb local graduates, citing mismatch between such graduates and the jobs, is also a pointer in that direction.

Considering the inability of the state universities to absorb a reasonable number, if not all who are eligible for university education, due to the inability to expand the public university system, owing to fiscal constraints, it is essential to provide alternative higher education opportunities. International experience show that deregulation of university education has resulted in promising results. However, the deregulation has to be accompanied by a set of comprehensive rules and guidelines, which ensure that private universities maintain the required standards in line with the changing global trends.

4.12. EXEX 2007

EDEX is a National Higher Education and Career Expo organized annually by the Royal College Union, in strategic partnership with the Ceylon National Chamber of Commerce, and endorsed by the Presidential Secretariat, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Vocational and Technical Training, Ministry of Labor Relations and Foreign Employment. A total of 121 organizations had taken part in this year's EXPO held at the Bandaranayake Memorial International Conference Hall (BMICH) in Colombo, of which there were only 13 private degree awarding institutions

4.13. Local registration

As per the Annual Report 2005 of the University Grants Commission, only one private educational institution has been approved by the University Grants Commission (UGC) as degree awarding institution. As for the Board of Investment of Sri Lanka (BOI), there is only one educational institution on its register.

Table # 2. BOI & UGC registrations

Educational institute	Degree offered	Registration body
1. ICFA Education Lanka	B.Sc. Information technology	Board of Investment, Sri Lanka
2. National Institute of Social Development	Bachelor of Social Work	University Grants Commission

Source: www.ugc.ac.lk
           Annual Report 2005. Central Bank of Sri Lanka. Government press.
           Economic progress of independent Sri Lanka, 1998. Central Bank of Sri Lanka. Government Press. Colombo.
           EDEX 07RoyalCollege Union, Colombo
           Board of Investment, Sri Lanka.
           www.ugc.ac.lk

4.14. Institutions offering foreign Degrees, in Sri Lanka

Table # 3. Institutions and Degrees offered

Institute/college	Course offered
1. Asia Pacific Institute of Information Technology (A.P.I.I.T)	B.Sc Computing B.Sc Computing with specialization in Multimedia B.Sc Computing with specialization in Internet technology B.Sc Computing with specialization in Software engineering B.Sc E Commerce BA Business Administration B.Sc Business Computing B.Sc Business Information Technology
2. Imperial Institute of Higher Education	B.Sc Computing B.Sc Business management
3. British College of Business studies	B.Sc Information Technology B.Sc International studies B.Sc Accounting & Finance
4. Australian college of Business & Technology (ACBT)	Bachelor's Degree in Business Bachelor's Degree in Computer science & Software engineering
5. IDM Computer Studies (PVT) Ltd	B.Sc. Computing & Information technology
6. Institute of Technological studies (ITS)	Accounting (B.S. Degree) Finance (B.S. Degree) Mechanical engineering (B.S Degree) Electrical engineering (B.S. Degree) Electronic engineering (B.S. Degree)
7. International College of Business & Technology Ltd (ICBT)	B.Sc in Applied accounting B.Sc. Teaching technology BBA
8. Royal Institute	B.Sc in Accounting & Finance B.Sc in Accounting with Law B.Sc Banking & Finance B.Sc Economics & Finance B.Sc Law with accounting
9. Singapore Informatics- City Campus	B.Sc. Business administration B.A. Hospitality management B.A. Tourism & Hospitality management
10. Aims College of Business & Technology (ACBIT)	B.Sc. Information technology BBA. Business administration
11. ICFAI Education Lanka	B.Sc. Information technology
12. Informatics Institute of technology	B.Sc. Computing B.Sc. Internet computing B.Sc. Information systems B.Sc. Information systems with Business management B.Sc. Software engineering

Source: Sunday Observer, January 2006 to March 2007, Lake House. Colombo
Prasada, L and Kulatunge, D. (2006). Education Guide, Sri Lanka (2nd ed). Neptune. Colombo.
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13. Open Arc school of Business & Technology	B.Sc. Information Technology
14. Sri Lanka Institute of Information Technology (SLIIT)	B.Sc. Information technology B.Sc. Business Information technology B.Sc. Computer systems & networking
15. Brandix College of clothing Technology	B.Sc. Textile technology
16. British College of Applied Studies	B.A. Hospitality management
17. American College of Higher Education	B.Sc. HR management
18. American National College	B.Sc. Business administration B.Sc. Engineering B.Sc. Information technology Bachelor's Degree in Pre-Med & Health Sciences Bachelor's Degree in arts & Psychology
19. Australian National College (Monash)	B.Sc. Business administration B.Sc. Engineering

A total of 19 educational institutions in Sri Lanka were identified from press advertisements in the local dailies spanning a period of fifteen months and also from Education Guide (2006), and publications such as: EDEX 07, and Higher Education in Sri Lanka.

Table # 4. Breakdown of Degree courses

Course	Nos	Percentage	Rank
Information technology	28	38	1
E-Commerce	01	1	7
Business administration	10	14	2
International studies	01	1	7
Accounting, Finance, & Banking	09	14	2
Tourism & Hospitality	04	5	4
Human Resource management	01	1	7
Art	03	4	5
Health	02	3	6
Engineering	10	12	3
Textile technology	01	1	7
Logistics	01	1	7
Aerospace	01	1	7
Maritime	01	1	7
Teaching technology	01	1	7
Total	74	100	-

It is obvious from the above, that most private degree awarding institutions in Sri Lanka are concentrating on providing higher education on Information technology (38%), followed by Business administration (14%), and Accounting, Finance, and Banking (14%). This is consistent with the current job market trends in Sri Lanka.

Table #.5. University location and Sri Lankan representatives

Local representative	University location
1. Asian Business College	India
2. Asian Impex International Ltd	New Zealand
3. Aspirations Education	Malaysia Australia United Kingdom Singapore New Zealand United States of America China Canada
4. Australian Education Academy	Australia
5. Centre for Canadian Academic & Professional Services	Canada
6. Edlocate (PVT) Ltd	Australia
7. Espace EduFrance	France
8. Global Environment Youth Education	India
9. ICAM (PVT) Ltd	India China Europe
10. IDP Education Australia	Australia
11. International scholar Foundation Services (PVT) Ltd	United Kingdom Australia Malaysia
12. Jeeva Australian Education Center	Australia
13. Knowledge Management Systems	United Kingdom
14. Racus Lanka	Russia
15. Russian Education Center	Russia
16. Singapore Education Services (PVT) Ltd	Singapore
17. West 1 International (PVT) Ltd	United Kingdom
18. Cultural Center of Russian Embassy	Russia
19. 3W Global Education	New Zealand Australia United Kingdom Singapore Malaysia
20. Overseas Education Bureau	All countries
21. Scholars Information Centre (PVT) Ltd	Malaysia Australia United Kingdom Singapore New Zealand United States of America China Canada
22. West 1 International (PVT) Ltd	United Kingdom
23. Weeraratne & Co	All countries

Source: Sunday Observer, January 2006 to March 2007, Lake House. Colombo
Prasada, L and Kulatunge, D. (2006). Education Guide, Sri Lanka (2nd Ed). Neptune. Colombo.
EDEX 07.Royal College Union, Colombo

Table #.6. Summery of Representatives in Sri Lanka for overseas universities

Location of University	No. of Representatives in Sri Lanka
Australia	08
Canada	03
China	03
Europe	01
France	01
India	03
Malaysia	04
New Zealand	05
Russia	03
Singapore	04
United Kingdom	07
United States of America	02

There at least 21 representatives in Sri Lanka, representing universities in 12 countries.   In addition, there are 2 representatives representing universities, worldwide. Universities in Australia, United Kingdom, and New Zealand are better represented than universities in other countries. Although no formal data exists on Sri Lankans traveling abroad for higher education, it is widely reported that the majority of them are "economic migrants" obtaining visa under the pretext of seeking further education, overseas.

4.15.   Alumni associations

According to an official of the Indian High Commission, Alumni associations founded from time to time by graduates of Indian universities are currently dormant and their whereabouts are unknown.

Of all the Alumni associations, the Russian Alumni association is perhaps the only Alumni association active in Sri Lanka. Founded in 1960, it has a membership of 3,000 (circa), of which over 50% are said to be currently overseas. Of those remaining, 95% is said to be engaged in professions consistent with their degree. The association however, has no statistical data to offer.

Source: Russian Alumni Association, 138, D.P. Wijesinghe Mw, Battaramulla. (Phone: 2863818/ 0714 716703).
           Prasada, L and Kulatunge, D. (2006). Education Guide, Sri Lanka (2nd ed). Neptune. Colombo.
           EDEX 07. Royal college Union, Colombo.
           Indian High Commission in Sri Lanka.
           Maroke, N. The Education. Education times of The Sunday Times, 20.5.07. Wijeya Publication, Colombo.

5.0. Institutional survey findings

5.1. Institutions offering Foreign Degrees in Sri Lanka

Table # 7. Institutions and Degrees offered

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2. Imperial Institute of Higher Education	B.Sc Computing B.Sc Business management
3. British College of Business studies	B.Sc Information technology B.Sc International studies B.Sc Accounting & Finance
4. Australian college of Business & Technology (ACBT)	Bachelor's Degree in Business Bachelor's Degree in Computer science & Software engineering
5. IDM Computer Studies (PVT) Ltd	B.Sc. Computing & Information technology
6. Institute of Technological studies (ITS)	Accounting (B.S. Degree) Finance (B.S. Degree) Mechanical engineering (B.S Degree) Electrical engineering (B.S. Degree) Electronic engineering (B.S. Degree)
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        Prasada, L and Kulatunge, D. (2006). Education Guide, Sri Lanka (2nd ed). Neptune. Colombo.
        EDEX 07.RoyalCollege Union, Colombo

5.2. Institutions participating in the survey

Table # 8. Participating institutions

No	Institution	Address	Phone	Fax	Email
1	IDM Computer Studies (PVT) Ltd	25, Visaka Rd, CMB 4	2596366	2596368	idmho@idm.edu
2	Brandix College of Clothing Technology	157, Galle Rd, Ratmalana	2638761	2638269	rohanak@brandix.com
3	Singapore Informatics computer Institute (PVT) Ltd	2nd Fl, Liberty Plaza, CMB 3	2564796-7	246770	info@singaporeinformatics.lk
4	Asia Pacific Institute of Information Technology	388, Union Pl, CMB 2	2675060	2687249	kalani@apiit.lk
5	Institute of Technological Studies	7, Kirimandala Mw, CMB 5	2586887	2501959	itsuniversity@yahoo.com
6	Imperial Instute of Higher Education	25, Milagiriya Av, CMB 4	259772	2597907	ceo@iike.lk
7	Openarc College of international studies (PVT) Ltd	26, Duplication Rd, CMB 4	2506020	2375425	ocis@openarc.lk
8	Sri Lanka Institute of Information Technology	BOC Merchant Tower, 28, St. Michael's Rd, CMB 3	2301904	2301906	info@sliit.lk
9	ICFAI Education Lanka	113, Dutugemunu St, Kohuwela	5513771	5513780	srilanka@inincindia.org
10	Royal Institute of Colombo	189, Havelock Rd, CMB 5	2556329	2556329	royaldgr@sltnet.lk
11	Informatics Institute of Technology	57, Ramakrishna Rd, CMB 6	2360212	2362305	registrar@iit.ac.lk
12	International College of Business & Technology (ICBT)	31, Hotel Rd, Mt. Lavinia	4210021	4203170	mohan@icbtcampus.edu.lk

Of the 19 educational institutions identified, only 12 participated in the survey, as the other 7 refused to provide information, despite numerous attempts, citing various reasons.

5.3. Heads of Institutions, Designations and Year of incorporation of institutions surveyed

Table # 9. Details of foreign Degree offering institutions

No	Institution	Head	Designation	Year established
1	IDM Computer Studies (PVT) Ltd	Dr. B. Ranasinghe	Chairman	1987
2	Brandix College of Clothing Technology	Dr. R.U. Kuruppu	CEO	1996
3	Singapore Informatics computer Institute (PVT) Ltd	R. Ambalam	MD	1994
4	Asia Pacific Institute of Information Technology	Dr. A. Pitigalaarachchci	CEO	1999
5	Institute of Technological Studies	Dr. E.M.S. Edirisinghe	President	1983
6	Imperial Instute of Higher Education	Dr. T.S. Weerakoon	CEO/ Director	1996
7	Openarc College of international studies (PVT) Ltd	Mr. D. Hettiarachchci	Chairman	1995
8	Sri Lanka Institute of Information Technology	Prof. S. Karunaratne	Chairman	2001
9	ICFAI Education Lanka	Mr. S. Jayasekera	Country Manager	2004
10	Royal Institute of Colombo	Mr. G.T. Bandara	Chairman	2005
11	Informatics Institute of Technology	Prof. A. Perera	Dean	1990
12	International College of Business & Technology (ICBT)	Mr. Mohan Pathirana	Director	1999

Of the 12 intuitions participating in the study, two are headed by a Professors, five, by those holding PhDs. The rest of the heads are said to hold Masters' Degrees.

5.4.   No. of students Passed-out to date, and No. of Undergraduates, in institutions surveyed

Table # 10. Details of graduates & undergraduate

No	Institution	Passed-out to-date	Undergraduates
1	IDM Computer Studies (PVT) Ltd	651	189
2	Brandix College of Clothing Technology	40,000	30
3	Singapore Informatics computer Institute (PVT) Ltd	80	118
4	Asia Pacific Institute of Information Technology	254	627
5	Institute of Technological Studies	0	55
6	Imperial Institute of Higher Education	150	58
7	Openarc College of international studies (PVT) Ltd	0	06
8	Sri Lanka Institute of Information Technology	299	87
9	ICFAI Education Lanka	0	76
10	Royal Institute of Colombo	700	800
11	Informatics Institute of Technology	1153	222
12	International College of Business & Technology (ICBT)	1,500	1,300
	Total	44,787	3,568

According to statistics provided by the institutions taking part in the study, a total of 44,787 students had graduated to-date, with a further 3,568 students presently following degree programmes. These figures would be much higher, had the other 7 non-participating institutions declared their statistics.

5.5.   Relevance of Foreign Degree/s

Table #11. Relevance of foreign Degrees

Comments	Nos	Percentage	Rank
Demand-based	5	41.6	1
Emphasis on practical aspects, to meet industry requirements	1	8.3	3
Helps increase quality of graduates in the country	2	16.6	2
Tailored to meet local requirements	1	8.3	3
Very appropriate to corporate sector	1	8.3	3
Degrees are employment-oriented	1	8.3	3
Appropriate to international business situations	1	8.3	3
Total	12	100	-

According to most heads of institutions surveyed (41.6%), foreign degrees offered in Sri Lanka are very relevant to the country as they are demand- based. This statement is consistent with the earlier finings on foreign degrees offered, where Information technology, Management, and, Accounting, Finance and Banking are more popular than the others. Heads of institutions surveyed also expressed the view that the foreign degrees offered enhanced the quality of graduates in the country (16.6%). The above findings were based on "one statement only" policy.

5.6.   Contribution to Socio economic development of Sri Lanka

Table # 12. Contribution to socio economic development

Contribution	Percentage	Rank
Helps produce much needed IT graduates	1	2
Helps those who cannot be absorbed by the national universities on account of limited seats	2	1
Helps increase stock of competent manpower	1	2
Enhances productivity	1	2
Corporate sector, which is the engine of growth, is fuelled by graduates with foreign degree/s, at the top	2	1
More oriented towards practical skills, which are very essential in today's business	1	2
Helps to add to output of National Universities' IT graduates, as it is insufficient	1	2
Helps ease unemployment, as graduates with foreign degrees are readily absorbed by the corporate sector both here and abroad	1	2
Helps save valuable foreign exchange, as only a fraction of the cost is payable, locally	1	2
Contributes to the development of the IT industry, which in turn helps develop other industries, leading to economic growth	1	2
Total	12	-

It was pointed-out that according to the National IT survey (2006), the country requires 5,755 IT graduates, whereas, the present supply is only 2,216 (38.5%). The above statements by heads of institutions offering foreign degrees highlight as many as ten socio-economic benefits accruing to Sri Lanka, on account of foreign degrees being offered locally.

5.7.   Foreign Degrees offered in Sri Lanka, by discipline, and university

Table # 13. Foreign Degrees by discipline

Degree programme	Full time (yrs)	Part time (Yrs)	Degree awarding body
B.Sc (Computing & Information sys.)	-	1	London Metropolitan University, UK
B.Sc (Business computing)	-	1	Wolverhampton University, UK
B.Sc (Information technology)	-	3	Charles Steurt University, Australia
B.Sc (Applied science)	3	-	Royal Melbourne University, Australia
B.Sc (Computing)	3	4	Portsmouth University, UK
B.Sc (Technology management)	3	4	Do
BA (Business administration)	3	4 1/2	Staffordshire University, UK
B. Sc (Computing)	3	4 ½	Do
B.Sc (Software engineering)	3	4 1/2	Do
B. Sc (Business information tech)	3	4 1/2	Do
B.Sc (Internet technology)	3	4 1/2	Do
B.Sc (Computer Science)	4	-	Troy University, USA
B.Sc (Business Administration)	4	-	Do
B.Sc (Management)	3	-	University of Wales, UK
BBIT (Bachelor of Business & IT)	3	-	University of Southern Queens land, Australia
B.Sc (IT)	3	-	Curtin University of Technology, Australia
BBA	-	3	ICFAI University, India
B.Sc (IT)	-	3	ICFAI University, India
B.Sc (Accounting & Finance)	3	3	University of London, UK
B.Sc (Accounting & Law)	3	3	University of London, UK
B.Sc (Banking & Finance)	3	3	University of London, UK
B.Sc (Business)	3	3	University of London, UK
B.Sc (Development Economics)	3	3	University of London, UK
B.Sc (Economics)	3	3	University of London, UK
B.Sc (Economics & Finance)	3	3	University of London, UK
B.Sc (Economics & Management)	3	3	University of London, UK
B.Sc (Information systems & Mgt)	3	3	University of London, UK
B.Sc (Law & Accounting)	3	3	University of London, UK
B.Sc (Law & Management)	3	3	University of London, UK
B.Sc (Management)	3	3	University of London, UK
B.Sc (Mathematics & Economics)	3	3	University of London, UK
B.Sc (Sociology)	3	3	University of London, UK
LLB	3	3	University of London, UK
B.Sc (Software engineering)	4	5	University of Westminister, UK
B.Sc (Information systems & Mgt)	4	5	University of Westminister
B.Sc (Internet)	4	5	University of Westminister
B.Sc (IT)	3	4	Middlesex University, UK
BBA	3	-	Curtin University, Australia

The study identified 38 foreign degree programmes of 14 foreign universities, currently offered locally.

5.8.   Popularity of foreign Degree programmes

Table # 14. Popularity

Degree programme	Somewhat popular (0-33)	Popular (34-66)	Very popular (67-100)
B.Sc (Computing & Information systems)			X
B.Sc (Business computing)		X	
B.Sc (Information technology)		X	
B.Sc (Applied science)			
B.Sc (Computing)			X
B.Sc (Technology management)		X	
BA (Business administration)			X
B. Sc (Computing)			X
B.Sc (Software engineering)		X	
B. Sc (Business information technology)		X	
B.Sc (Internet technology)	X		
B.Sc (Computer Science)			X
B.Sc (Business administration)			X
B.Sc (Management)			X
BBIT (Bachelor of Business & IT)			X
B.Sc (IT)		X	
BBA			X
B.Sc (IT)		X	
B.Sc (Accounting & Finance)		X	
B.Sc (Accounting & Law)		X	
B.Sc (Banking & Finance)			X
B.Sc (Business)			X
B.Sc (Development Economics)		X	
B.Sc (Economics)		X	
B.Sc (Economics & Finance)		X	
B.Sc (Economics & Management)		X	
B.Sc (Information systems & Management)			X
B.Sc (Law & Accounting)		X	
B.Sc (Law & Management)		X	
B.Sc (Management)			X
B.Sc (Mathematics & Economics)		X	
B.Sc (Sociology)	X		
LLB		X	
B.Sc (Software engineering)		X	
B.Sc (Information systems & Management)		X	
B.Sc (Internet Technology))		X	
BBA			X
B.Sc (IT)			X

The above findings are consistent with the previous findings on foreign degrees offered. It is also evident from the above, that foreign degrees in Information Technology, Management, Accounting, Finance & Banking are very popular, obviously in view of the current job market trends.

5.9.   Reason/s for popularity of Foreign Degrees

Table # 15. Reason/s for popularity

Reason	Nos	Percentage	Rank
Low cost	2	16.6	1
Foreign panel	1	8.3	2
Market demand	2	16.6	1
Job offers	2	16.6	2
Above-market wages	2	16.6	2
Industry requirement focused coaching	1	8.3	1
Image of foreign university	2	16.6	2
Total	12	100	-

The heads of organizations participating in the study revealed that a) low cost, b) job offers, c) above-market wages, and 4) image of the universities contributed to the popularity of foreign degrees and universities, opted for by students. It is pertinent to mention here that foreign degrees followed locally, cost less than 30% (circa), of the conventional cost.

6.0   Employer survey

A total of 25 employers (of employees holding foreign degrees obtained in Sri Lanka) were included in the study and their views obtained on a number of important issues, which are discussed below:

6.1.   Recruitment of foreign Degree holders

Table # 16. Recruitment

Recruited foreign degree holders (degrees obtained locally)	Yes	No	Total
Response- Nos	10	15	25
Response- Percentage	40	60	100

Of the 25 employers surveyed, 10 (40%) stated that they had, at some point in time, employed graduates who had obtained their foreign degree in Sri Lanka.

6.2.   Level of recruitment

Table # 17. Level of recruitment

Clerical & Allied workers	Technical- Non-Executive	Management Trainees	Junior Executives	Middle Managers	Senior Managers	Total
0	0	4 (40 %)	6 (60 %)	0	0	10 (100%)

Respondents stated that they had recruited candidates with foreign degree obtained locally, as Junior Executives (60%) and Management Trainees (40%), within a short span of candidates obtaining their degree. None of such degree holders had been hired in non- executive category, or in middle or senior management.

6.3.   Choice of Discipline/s

Table #. 18. Choice of discipline

Information technology	Business management	Engineering	Law	Other	Total
7 (70 %)	3 (30 %)	0	0	0	10 (100%)

Majority of such degree holders had been absorbed into the IT Dept (Information Technology) - 70%, while the others had been absorbed into Management- 30%.

6.4. Perception of quality of degrees

Table #. 19. Perception

Below local graduates	On par with local graduates	Above local graduates	Total
1 (10 %)	3 (30 %)	6 (60 %)	10 (100%)

60% of respondents stated that they were satisfied with the quality of such graduates, while 30% stated that they considered them on par with local graduates, and 10% stated that they were below the level of local graduates.

6.5. Ratings of essential attributes

Table #. 20. Rating

Variable	V. Poor (0-20)	Poor (21-40)	Fair (41-60)	Good (61-80)	Excellent (81-100)
Knowledge of English	0	0	0	2 (20 %)	8 (80 %)
Knowledge of the subject	0	0	1 (10 %)	4 (40 %)	5 (50 %)
Attitude	0	0	1 (10 %)	3 (30 %)	6 (60 %)
Initiative	0	0	2 (20 %)	2 (20 %)	6 (60 %)
Demeanor	0	0	1 (10 %)	4 (40 %)	5 (50 %)
Finesse	0	0	2 (20 %)	3 (30 %)	5 (50 %)
Interpersonal relations	0	0	0 (0 %)	3 (30 %)	7 (70 %)

Graduates holding foreign degrees obtained in Sri Lanka had scored well in all seven factor ratings such as: English, subject area, attitude, initiative, demeanor, finesse, and interpersonal relations. Of the seven, such graduates had scored high marks for English (80%) and inter-personal relations (70%).

7.0. Graduate survey

A total of 50 graduates of foreign universities who had followed a course of study in Sri Lanka were interviewed and their responses are given hereunder:

7.1. Present employment category

Table #. 21. Present employment

	Clerical & allied	Junior Executive	Functional manager	Senior Executive	Total
Response- Nos	0	0	0	50	50
Response-%	0	0	0	100	100
Rank				1	

All the respondents interviewed stated that they were senior executives and this is an indication of the quality of the foreign degree obtained and the image it has in the local job market.

7.2. Reason for choosing a foreign degree programme, in Sri Lanka

Table #. 22. Reason for selection

	Low cost	Prestige	Quality of education	Necessity to stay in Sri Lanka	Other
Response-Nos	18	14	20	16	0
Response-%	26	21	29	24	0
Rank	2	4	1	3	-

Note: Multiple answers, total exceeds 50 nos.

Quality of education has been ranked No. 1, whilst low cost has been ranked No. 2. The third important observation is the necessity to remain in Sri Lanka due to family commitments, employment, etc.

7.3.   Choice of discipline

Table # 23. Choice of discipline

	Information technology	Business management	Engineering	Law	Other	Total
Response-Nos	32	18	0	0	0	50
Response-%	64	36	0	0		100
Rank	1	2	-	-	-	-

Information Technology has been the favorite discipline (64%), followed by Management (36%). This finding is consistent with the previous findings on the topic and reflects the current labor market trend.

7.4.   Quality of education, in general

Table #. 24. Quality of education

	Very poor (0-20)	Poor (21-40)	Fair (41-60)	Good (61-80)	Excellent (81-100)	Total
Response- Nos	0	0	0	16	34	50
Response-%	0	0	0	32	68	100
Rank				2	1	

The responses are spread between good (32%) and excellent (68%), indicating that the course quality of course work has been very good.

7.5.   Perception of Degree

Table # 25. Perception

	Very low (0-20)	Low (21-40)	Fair (41-60)	High (61-80)	Very high (81-100)	Total
Response-Nos	0	0	0	28	22	50
Response- %	0	0		56	44	100
Rank				1	2	

The respondents perceived their degree very highly (44%) and highly (56%). This finding is consistent with the previous finding on quality of education, in general.

7.6. Usefulness of degree to current employment

Table # 26. Usefulness

	Not useful low (0-20)	Somewhat useful (21-40)	Cannot say (41-60)	Useful (61-80)	Very useful (81-100)	Total
Response-Nos	0	0	0	14	36	50
Response- %	0	0		28	72	100
Rank				2	1	

The respondents also claimed that the foreign degree obtained locally has been very useful in their current employment (72%) and useful (28%).

8.0. Undergraduate survey

A total of 50 undergraduates of foreign universities who are currently reading in Sri Lanka were interviewed and their responses are given hereunder:

Foreign Degree programme, by country

Table # 27. Foreign Degrees by country

Country / Response	United Kingdom	United States of America	Australia	Others (India)	Total
Response-Nos	25	8	15	2	50
Response- %	50	16	30	4	100

According to the findings of the survey, 50%, 30%, 16%, and 4% of undergraduates are currently following British, Australian, American, and Indian Degree programmes, in Sri Lanka. This finding is also consistent with the previous findings on the subject.

8.2. Students' Source of information

Table # 28. Source of information

Press	Radio	TV	Handbills	Hoarding	Exhibition	Friends	Others
38	0	4	2	2	8	34	0
43	0	5	2	2	9	39	0

Note: Multiple answers, total exceeds 50 nos.

Majority of respondents stated that their source of information was press (43%) and friends (39%). A negligible number of undergraduates had also been exposed to hoardings exhibitions, and handbills.

8.3. Field of study

Table #. 29. Field of study

Information technology	Management	Engineering	Law	Other	Total
32 (64%)	18 (36%)	00	0	0	50 (100%)

Information technology appears to be the No. 1. choice (64%), followed by Management studies (36%). This finding is consistent with previous findings.

8.4. Reason for choosing the field of study

Table # 30. Reasons

Personal ambition	Market demand	Other	Total
36 (72%)	14 (28%)	0	50 (100%)

Personal ambition (72%) has been rated as the most predominant factor influencing choice of programme of study, whilst market demand comes second. (28%). It appears that the decision to follow a particular course of study is more emotional than rational.

8.5. Registration of institution/ College

Table # 31. Local registration

Board of Investment	Registrar of Companies	University Grants Commission	Other	Don't know
18 (31%)	4 (7%)	26 (45%)	0	10 (17%)

Note: Multiple answers, total exceeds 50 nos.

The above findings are inconsistent with the previous findings on the subject, probably due to ignorance on the part of students, who may have simply assumed that the college offering tuition for the degree is registered with one or more of the above. However, it is very likely that all educational institutions offering degrees are registered with the Registrar of Companies.

8.6. Year of enrollment for the course

Table # 32. Year of enrollment

Year of enrollment	2003	2004	2005	2006	Total
No. enrolled	10	2	20	18	50
Percentage	20	4	40	36	100

There has been an increase in enrollment over the years, except in year 2004, where the rate of enrollment has dipped sharply, for unknown reason/s.

8.7. Year of graduation

Table # 33. Graduation

Year of graduation	2003	2004	2005	2006	Total
Nos	10	2	20	18	50
Percentage	20	4	40	36	100

The findings coincide with the previous findings on enrollment.

8.8.   Reason for choosing the institution/ college

Table # 34. Reasons

Low cost	Reputation	Less demanding	High pass rate	Other
30 (35%)	42 (48%)	2 (2%)	12 (14%)	0

Note: Multiple answers, total exceeds 50 nos.

According to the findings, reputation of the university ranks first (48%), followed by low cost of education (35%), in comparison to the cost of studying overseas. Another influencing factor was "high pass rate" (14%).

8.9.   Subject knowledge of Lecturers' in general

Table # 35. Lecturers' knowledge

Very poor (0-20)	Poor (21-40)	Fair (41-60)	Good (61-80)	Excellent (81-100)	Total
0	0	6 (12%)	32 (64%)	12 (24%)	50 (100%)

Majority of students had rated lecturers' subject knowledge as good (64%) and excellent (24%). This may be due to some of the colleges getting down the foreign lecture panel, from time to time.

8.10.   Curriculum

Table # 36. Degree curriculum

Very poor (0-20)	Poor (21-40)	Fair (41-60)	Good (61-80)	Excellent (81-100)	Total
0	0	12 (24%)	32 (64%)	6 (12%)	50 (100%)

The curriculum followed by local colleges offering foreign degree programmes has been rated as good (64%) and excellent (12%).

8.11.   Teaching skills of Lecturers
Table #. 37. Teaching skills

Very poor (0-20)	Poor (21-40)	Fair (41-60)	Good (61-80)	Excellent (81-100)	Total
0	2 (4%)	14 (28%)	26 (52%)	8 (16%)	50 (100%)

Most observations are between Fair and good, 28% and 52%, respectively. In addition, 16% of the undergraduates have graded teaching skills of Lecturers as excellent.

8.12. Course work

Table # 28. Course work

Very poor (0-20)	Poor (21-40)	Fair (41-60)	Good (61-80)	Excellent (81-100)	Total
0	2 (4%)	14 (28%)	26 (52%)	8 (16%)	50 (100%)

According to the findings, 52% had stated that the course work was good, while a further 16% had stated as excellent.

8.13. Rating of value of Degree

Table #. 29. Value of Degree

Very low (0-20)	Low (21-40)	Fair (41-60)	High (61-80)	Very high (81-100)	Total
0	0	8 (16%)	10 (20%)	32 (64%)	50 (100%)

This finding coincides with the previous finding on perception of the degree.

8.14.   Contribution of foreign Degree to the socio-economic development to Sri Lanka

Table #. 30. Contribution

Observation	Frequency/Nos	percentage	Rank
Due to international job opportunities, hard currency may be earned overseas and remitted to Sri Lanka	6	12	2
Enhancement of productivity of Sri Lankan enterprises, with foreign know-how	8	16	1
Technology transfer to Sri Lanka	4	8	3
Reduction of unemployment in Sri Lanka, on account of demand for foreign degree holders, internationally	2	4	5
Better quality of life, on account of higher wages	4	8	3
Level playing field, where international competition is concerned, since foreign degree holders will be able to match foreign competition	3	6	4
No response	23	46	-
Total	50	100	-

8.15.   Perception of the Degree programme

Table # 31. Perception

Very low (0-20)	Low (21-40)	Fair (41-60)	High (61-80)	Very high (81-100)	Total
0	0	8 (16%)	10 (20%)	32 (64%)	50 (100%)

Undergraduates perceived their degree programme very highly (64%), and highly (20%). This may be on account of the reputation the foreign universities enjoy, locally.

8.16.   Capacity in which contribution to socio-economic development to Sri Lanka could be made

Table # 32. Capacity & contribution

IT specialist	Engineer	Entrepreneur	Lecturer	Consultant	No response	Total
14 (28%)	6 (12%)	8 (16%)	10 (20%)	6 (12%)	6 (12%)	50 (100%)

The respondents were expected to view the above question on contribution to the socio-economic development to Sri Lanka, from an angle of employment and had stated that they could contribute to the socio-economic development through their chosen profession. In addition, some respondents had stated that they would become entrepreneurs, thereby setting-up business ventures, which would eventually lead to greater domestic production and consumption, resulting in greater Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and standard of living.

8.17.   Relevance of foreign degrees to Sri Lanka's economic development

Table #. 33. Relevance

Yes	No
50 (100%)	0

Respondents unanimously answered in the affirmative to the above question, thus stressing the relevance of foreign degrees to Sri Lanka's economic development.

Table #. 34. Foreign Degrees and unemployment

8.18.   Role of foreign degrees in solving problems of higher education

Response	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Eases pressure on local universities	4	8	2
Not dependent on state funds	5	10	1
Does not add to unemployed graduates	3	6	3
No comments	38	76	-
Total	50	100	-

Of those who qualify for state university admission, only a fraction is absorbed, in view of limited seats. Hence, it is believed that foreign degree courses offered in Sri Lanka is a boon to such students. Another important factor is that students studying for foreign degrees are not dependent on the state for funds, as they are able to meet the cost of such education. The third important factor that was highlighted was that foreign degree holders are employable on account of ready demand in the private sector, both here and overseas and as such, do not join the unemployed graduates and be a burden on the economy.

8.19.   Justification of remittance of foreign exchange

Responses have been very few, ranging from 1). Compared to cost of living and studying overseas, only about 30% is remitted in foreign exchange, for foreign degree programmes in Sri Lana, 2). Foreign university qualified graduates earn much more that what they had remitted, by way of enhanced wages, part of which is usually remitted back to Sri Lanka.

8.20.   Recommending a foreign degree programme

Table # 35. Recommendation

All 100% had unanimously answered in the affirmative, and the justifications are given, hereunder:

Response	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Sound investment	4	8	4
Demand for foreign degree holders, globally	6	12	2
Much recognized, internationally	5	10	3
Low cost option, as opposed to living and studying overseas	8	16	1
No comments	27	54	
Total	50	100	

The responses vary form a) sound investment to b) Demand, c) recognition, and d) low cost.

9.0 Foreign degrees and Socio economic developments to Sri Lanka

Social development directly concerns the wellbeing of people and improvement in their quality of life. On the other hand, economic development refers to the total volume of production of goods and services in a country. The connection between the two is that it is the rate of economic growth that determines the rate at which the real standard of living of a people increases. When an average worker produces more (by way of better education) in an hour- i.e., when there is an increase in labor productivity- then, the total output of the economy grows. This follows from the following basic relationship:

Total output = Labor hours X Labor productivity

In other words, total output depends on:
a)   The total number of hours worked, and
b)   Labor productivity, brought about by higher education

In 2005, labor productivity, estimated on the basis of annual value addition per employee, was Rs. 138,300.00 per person, which is the highest for the period 2001-2005 (Annual Report 2005, Central Bank, Sri Lanka)

According to Edward F. Dension (who has been associated with the U.S. Dept. of Commerce, the Brookings Washington, a policy-oriented think-tank in Washington D.C, and the Committee for Economic Development), "the educational attainment of the workforce contributed significantly to the economic growth of the U.S economy and also the world economy. Although better educated workforce possessed the ability to produce more, it also requires the willingness to work and the above observation is based on the premise that such a labor force is also willing to work".

John Maynard Keynes, father of modern macroeconomics, argued that economic development must be viewed from the supply-side economics and emphasized that supply factors- such as the quality and quantity of labor and willingness to work- are the principal contributors to economic development, which results in enhanced social benefits for the citizens.

Economists refer to the Production possibility curve (PPC) to explain the phenomenon of the "outward PPC, which is made possible through technology (and education), despite the factors of production being fully expended, thus making greater output possible.

One of the socio-economic benefits arising out of the private sector participation in higher education is that there is no social cost either to the government or society, only to individual students, which can be amply justified. Further, there are several other socio-economic benefits to the society as well as to the state arising from higher education, provided to more students, despite the restriction of seats at the local universities.

Taubman and Walest provide evidence of another reason why private and social rates of return differ. According to them, employers pay graduates (in this case, graduates with foreign degrees, more), not only because education has made them more productive, but also because it has given them the "credential". In other words, education acts as a screening device that tells employers

which individuals have the capacity and diligence to learn. Although this credential provides university graduates with a private return (a higher income) there is also a corresponding benefit to the society and the state. In this context, income from employment may be divided into three components as shown below:

Chart #.1 Earning capacity

Wages

```
                                                    ┌────┐ - - - - - Wage of a graduate with foreign
                                                    │████│           Degree earned abroad
                                        ┌────┐      │████│
                                        │████│      │████│
                                        │████│ - - -│████│ - - - - - Wage of a graduate with foreign
                            ┌────┐      │████│      │████│           Degree, earned locally
                            │████│ - - -│████│- - - │████│ - - - - - Wage of a local graduate
                            │████│      │████│      │████│
                            │████│      │████│      │████│
────────────────────────────┴────┴──────┴────┴──────┴────┴─────────
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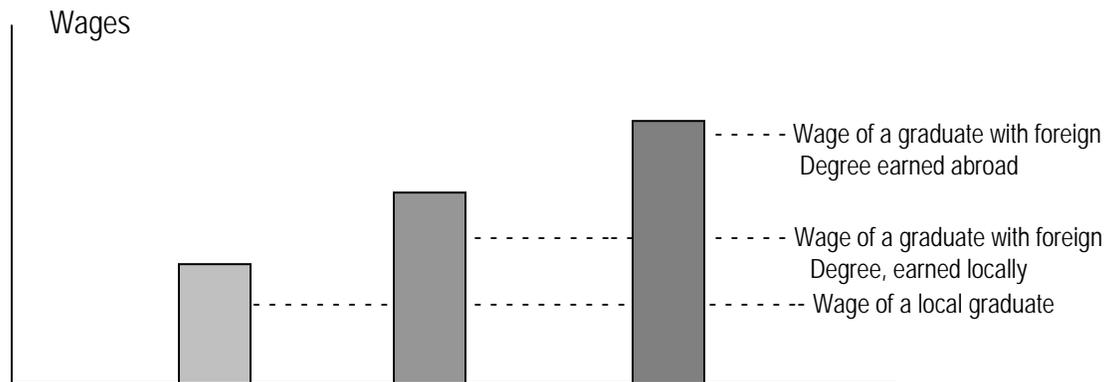
It is argued that whilst a Sri Lankan with a foreign degree obtained locally, is able to earn an additional return on human capital, which is more than the earnings of his/her counterpart who has obtained his/her degree at a local university, those with foreign degrees earned abroad are able to earn even more, due to "credential" explained earlier. Thus, whilst the local graduate earns no rent, graduate with a foreign degree obtained locally earns rent, and those with foreign degree earned abroad earn greater rent. In this context, "rent" may de defined as the return on a factor of production in excess of its opportunity cost.

Heads of educational institutions offering foreign first degrees locally have identified the following socio-economic benefits accruing to the country:

- Helps produce much-needed IT graduates to spur the economy.
- Helps those who cannot be absorbed by the national universities on account of limited seats.
- Helps increase stock of competent manpower.
- Enhances productivity.
- Corporate sector, which is the engine of growth, is prefers graduates with foreign degree/s, at the top.
- More oriented towards practical skills, which are very essential in today's business success.
- Helps to add to output of national universities' graduates, as it is insufficient to meet the demand.
- Helps ease unemployment, as graduates with foreign degrees are readily absorbed by the corporate sector both here and abroad.
- Helps save valuable foreign exchange, as only a fraction of the cost is payable, if studied locally.
- Contributes to the development of the IT industry, which in turn helps develop other industries, leading to economic growth.

Undergraduates interviewed have this to say about socio-economic benefits accruing from foreign degrees, offered in Sri Lanka:

- Technology transfer

- Reduction of unemployment rate
- Better quality of life
- Better earning capacity, especially overseas, and remittance of hard currency
- Not dependent on state for tertiary education
- Less pressure on local universities, and
- Do not add to numbers of unemployed graduates, which has a social cost

10.0   Recommendations

10.1   Regulating the private higher education

In view of the several benefits accruing to the country and its populace from foreign degrees offered locally, the authorities, while encouraging institutions offering such education to operate, should also introduce stringent regulations pertaining to a). curricula, b). quality of lecturers, c). course work, d). conduct of examinations, and e). awarding of degrees among others, to ensure quality and consistency.

10.2.   IT education

According to the National IT survey (2006), the country requires 5,755 IT graduates, whereas, the present supply is only 2,216 (38.5%). Hence, more IT Degree awarding institutions of quality must be encouraged to operate in Sri Lanka.

10.3   Introduction of Internet to the educational system

The Internet is bound to become an inseparable part of all education systems in the new millennium. In fact, in some systems, like the American education system, the Internet has become an indispensable part without which the educational system cannot function any more. There seems to be an assumption that the progress at all levels: individual, national, and international, can be hindered if there is no adequate use of the latest technology. Nationally and globally, progress is being judged against the level of the use of the electronic media. Hence, foreign degree awarding institutions should be encouraged to complement their degree education with wide application of the Internet.

10.4.   There is no necessity to regulate the type of foreign courses offered by locally, as the market mechanism would automatically regulate them on the basis of demand and supply.

11.0. Conclusion

The National Education Commission (NEC) called for quotations from various organizations by way of a press advertisement, for the conduct of several research studies and in response to this, the Marketing & Research Services (MRS), a professional market research company tendered its proposal and was selected to conduct the research study on the "Relevance of foreign Degrees offered in Sri Lanka and their contribution to the socio economic development to Sri Lanka". The objectives of the study were:

- To identify organizations offering foreign degrees, in Sri Lanka.
- To ascertain foreign degree courses currently offered by such organizations.
- To discover perceptions of students of foreign degree programmes, and employers of such students.
- To assess contribution of such degree programmes to the socio economic development in Sri Lanka.

The study commenced with the literature review and followed by one census (of the colleges offering foreign degrees in Sri Lanka) and three surveys targeting a) employers, b) graduates, and c) undergraduates of foreign degree programmes.

Through the above, the study conclusively established the relevance of foreign degrees offered in Sri Lanka and their contribution to the socio economic development to Sri Lanka.

Although a timeframe of six months was originally proposed, the NEC subsequently requested the study be completed in five months, and accordingly, MRS has completed same in just five months.

It is hoped that the findings of the study would be of use to NEC in its effort to make recommendations to His Excellency the President, on educational policy in all its aspects, with a view to ensuring continuity in educational policy and enabling the education system to respond to changing needs in society, review and analyze such policies and plans in operation and where necessary, and to recommend to His Excellency the President, changes in such policy plan/s.

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http://www.nec.gov.lk

Survey on
Relevance of foreign degrees and their Contribution to the socio- economic development of Sri Lanka
conducted for, and on behalf of the National Education Commission (NEC) of Sri Lanka

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Important: The survey is <u>about foreign first degrees offered in Sri Lanka</u> and excludes Masters and PhDs'. It also excludes degrees obtained overseas.

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1.   Name of institution offering foreign degree/s, in Sri Lanka
        …………………………………………………………………………………………

2.   Postal address
        ………………………………………………………………………………………

3.   Hotline…………Phone………….Fax……………   Email……………………...

4.   Name of Head of institution & Designation
        Name……………………………………………Designation………………...

5.   Year of incorporation ……………………………………………………………

6.   No. of students <u>graduated to-date</u> from your institution.......................……..

7.   No. of students <u>currently reading</u> for foreign degree/s……………………..

8.   In your opinion, <u>how relevant are the foreign degrees offered by you</u>, to Sri Lanka? (Please explain)

        …………………………………………………………………………………………

        …………………………………………………………………………………………

        …………………………………………………………………………………………

        …………………………………………………………………………………………

9.   In your opinion, <u>what are the contributions of foreign degrees offered by you</u>, to the socio- economic development of Sri Lanka?

        …………………………………………………………………………………………

        …………………………………………………………………………………………

        …………………………………………………………………………………………

10.   Details of foreign degrees offered and their affiliations

Degree (Mention title)	If Full time (duration in yrs)	If Part time (duration in yrs)	Affiliated to (Name of foreign University & country)

(Use additional paper, if necessary)

11.   Popularity of degrees (Please tick your choice against each degree program)

Degree (Mention title)	Unpopular (0-33)	Somewhat popular (34-66)	Very popular (67-100)

(Use additional paper, if necessary)

12.   Any other comments.

Marketing & Research Services
94/14, Kirulapone Avenue
Colombo 5
Hotline: 0777 268 738

Thank you.

Survey on

Relevance of Foreign Degrees offered in Sri Lanka
&
Their contribution to the socio-economic development, in Sri Lanka

(Foreign Degree refers to First Degree only)

TO BE ADMINISTERED AMONG GRADUATES AND UNDERGRADUATES OF
FOREIGN DEGREE/S AWARDING INSTITUTIONS, IN SRI LANKA.

*The above survey is being conducted for, and on behalf of the **National Education Commission (NEC) of Sri Lanka, of No. 223C, Nawala Road, Narahenpita** ({Phone: 2807945/2805147- Contact Person: Mr. A. Hettiarachchi/ Snr. Programme Officer), by **Marketing & Research Services** (MRS). Please therefore, extend your fullest cooperation to the interviewer, by providing the necessary information.*

Thank you.

Marketing & Research Services
94/14, Kirulaponne Avenue
Colombo 5
Ph: 2514457/ 2553510
Email: consultcci@sltnet.lk
Fax: 2514457

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1. Name :………………………………………………………………………………..

2. Address:……………………………………………………………………………

3. Phone: …………………………………4. Email:………………………………

5 Name of your Degree awarding institution in Sri Lanka...................................………….

6. Name of foreign University, awarding your Degree

    (Name)……………………………………………..(Country)……………………

7. Academic status (Pl. tick one answer)

Undergraduate	Graduate	Other

8. If answer to Q. 7 is "Other", please specify………………………………………….

9. Year of Enrollment:………10. Year of Graduation………11. Full/ Part time…….

10.   How did you get to know the <u>local institution</u> (Pl. tick one or more answer)

News papers	Radio	TV	Hand bills	Hoarding	Exhibition	Friends	Other

11.   If answer to Q. 10. is "Other", please specify……………………………………………

12.   What is the <u>field of study</u>, chosen by you? …………………………………………...
      (E.g.: Medicine/Engineering/ Law/ Management etc)

13.   Why did you <u>choose</u> this particular field of study, mentioned under Q. 12.

      ………………………………………………………………………………………….

      …………………………………………………………………………………………..

14.   Is your <u>college/institution registered</u> with any one of the following? (Pl. tick one or more answers)

Board of Investment	Registrar of Companies	University Grants Commission	Other	Don't know

15.   If answer to Q. 14. is "Other", please specify…………………………………………

16.   Why did you choose this particular college/institution? (Pl. Tick one or more answers)

Low cost	Reputation	Less demanding	High pass rate	Other

17.   If answer to Q. 16. is "Other", please specify…………………………………………

18.   How would you rate the <u>Lecturers' subject knowledge</u>, in general (Pl. tick one answer)

Very poor (0-20)	Poor (21-40)	Fair (41-60)	Good (61-80)	Excellent (81-100)

19.   How would you rate the curriculum? (Pl. tick one answer)

Very poor (0-20)	Poor (21-40)	Fair (41-60)	Good (61-80)	Excellent (81-100)

20. How would you rate the <u>teaching skills</u> of Lecturers, in general?(Pl. tick one answer)

Very poor (0-20)	Poor (21-40)	Fair (41-60)	Good (61-80)	Excellent (81-100)

21 How would you rate the <u>English language skill of Lecturers</u>, in general?(Pl. tick one answer)

Very poor (0-20)	Poor (21-40)	Fair (41-60)	Good (61-80)	Excellent (81-100)

22 How would you rate the <u>course work</u>, in general?(Pl. tick one answer)

Very poor (0-20)	Poor (21-40)	Fair (41-60)	Good (61-80)	Excellent (81-100)

23. How do you <u>perceive </u>the Degree course?

Very low (0-20)	Low (21-40)	Fair (41-60)	High (61-80)	Very high (81-100)

24. How do you rate the <u>value of your Degree</u>, in Sri Lanka?

Very low (0-20)	Low (21-40)	Fair (41-60)	High (61-80)	Very high (81-100)

25. In your opinion, how does your Degree <u>contribute to the socio-economic development,</u> in Sri Lanka?

…………………………………………………………………………………….

……………………………………………………………………………………..

Thank you.

Survey on

Relevance of Foreign Degrees offered in Sri Lanka
&
Their contribution to the socio-economic development, in Sri Lanka

(Foreign Degree refers to First Degree only)

TO BE ADMINISTERED AMONG EMPLOYERS OF FOREIGN DEGREE HOLDERS (OBTANIED IN SRI LANKA).

The above survey is being conducted for, and on behalf of the National Education Commission (NEC) of Sri Lanka, of No. 223C, Nawala Road, Narahenpita ({Phone: 2807945/2805147- Contact Person: Mr. A. Hettiarachchi/ Snr. Programme Officer), by Marketing & Research Services (MRS). Please therefore, extend your fullest cooperation to the interviewer, by providing the necessary information.

Thank you.

Marketing & Research Services
94/14, Kirulaponne Avenue
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Q.1.   Did you at any time in the past, recruit foreign degree holders (who had obtained their degree locally) to your organization?

(Please tick one)

Recruited foreign degree holders (degrees obtained locally)	Yes	No

If answer to Q.1. is "NO" discontinue interview. If "YES" continue.

Q.2.   At what level did you recruit?
(Pl. tick one or more)

Clerical & Allied workers	Technical- Non-Executive	Management Trainees	Junior Executives	Middle Managers	Senior Managers

1

Q.3.   What discipline/s did you prefer?

Information technology	Business management	Engineering	Law	Other

Q.4.   How do you perceive the quality of foreign degrees obtained locally?

Below local graduates	On par with local graduates	Above local graduates

Q.5.   How would you rate the following attributes of such graduates?

Variable	V.Poor (0-20)	Poor (21-40)	Fair (41-60)	Good (61-80)	Excellent (81-100)
Knowledge of English					
Knowledge of the subject					
Attitude					
Initiative					
Demeanor					
Finesse					
Interpersonal relations					