

## **The role of the Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment in solving unemployment issue in peripheral areas of Sri Lanka**

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The Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment (SLBFE) was established in 1985 under the SLBFE Act No. 21 of 1985 with the main objective of reducing unemployment and underemployment in Sri Lanka. According to the records available at the SLBFE, present (2007) outflow of labour is over 200,000 per annum. About 1.5 Million Sri Lankan employees work in abroad, presently and they brought Rs. 136,446 Million in 2003, that was 27.5% of total foreign exchange earnings of Sri Lanka. So that it is the highest net earner of foreign exchange to the country (SLBFE 2006).

This study is mainly based on secondary data and the selected focus group discussions and the personal interviews. The data represents all the districts in the country.

The study reveals that the spatial distribution of these employees in relation to places of origin, of employees in the country and the factors that have created the regional differences. About 65 percent of the professional level foreign employees were originated in the Western Province of the country but unskilled employees represent only about 17.6 percent in 2006.

Weaknesses of the strategies and the policies of the SLBFE and related institutions, Imbalance of spatial distribution of the registered agencies, attitudes of people, Educational disparities and the politicians' interventions are the major causes that create regional disparities of the foreign employees.

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