

Survey of Employment

January–December 1981

(Conducted by the Employment and Manpower Planning Division—Ministry of Plan Implementation)

This survey in respect of the year 1981 shows that the upward trend of job opportunities advertised, observable from 1978 onwards, had continued in the year under review. The data gathered from the advertisements in respect of employment opportunities advertised in the Lake House Group of Papers is set out in Table 1.

Table 1

Employment Opportunities Advertised in 1981 Compared with Previous Years

1977	9,154
1978	16,469
1979	34,955
1980	47,584
1981	52,662

The data shown in the table do not include foreign employment opportunities and employment opportunities advertised by the State Sector. If such vacancies are also taken into account the number of employment opportunities advertised would considerably be higher than the numbers given in this table. They have been excluded for the reason that the study is mainly concerned with ascertaining the magnitude of employment generation with the progress of the organized private sector following the introduction of the package of incentives in 1978.

An analysis of the advertisements indicated that most of the employment opportunities advertised were in the urban sector and particularly in the trade and commerce sub-sector of the economy. The analysis also showed that the categories of occupations advertised were those that could be described as falling within the modern sector except in the case of unskilled grades where the bulk of the opportunities advertised belonged to categories of stores labour and helping hands in the hotel and catering services which cater to large numbers of people who migrate daily to the principal cities from outside, for employment.

As a single group, the managerial grade has the biggest number of employment opportunities within it as far the advertisements show. The 'demand' accor-

EMPLOYMENT

in the Private Sector

ding to advertisements monitored during the period January/December 1981, in respect of different types of managerial positions is indicated in table 2. It is observed that 1,317 employment opportunities of this category have been advertised in 1981.

Table 2

Number of Employment Opportunities in respect of Managers Advertised from January December 1981

Post	1981
Managers (not classified)	534
Sales Managers	58
Marketing Managers	36
Import Managers	17
Company Managers	86
Project Managers	40
Factory Managers	109
Production Managers	61
Shift Managers	21
Industrial Managers	101
Airline Managers	18
Hotel Managers	141
Personnel Managers	21
Farm Managers	31
Transport Managers	02
Finance Managers	30
Printing Managers	11
Total	1,317

Engineers

The next group in respect of which a large number of advertisements have appeared is engineers. See Table 3.

It was observed that a good percentage of advertisers were prepared to accept non professionally qualified engineers without making a distinction in the salary offered. This could be recognised as an indication of the level of demand for qualified engineers and this is supported by other studies in regard to the supply/demand situation of engineers undertaken by the Employment and Manpower Planning Division.

The increased employment of engineers of different specialisms would result in the creation of new technicians and skilled level employment in particular specialisms. In the recent past, the incidence of migration of technicians and skilled level personnel to the Middle East has increased. The situation arising from the loss due to migration, and the increased internal demand during the period subsequent to 1978 have enabled persons with lesser experience in the particular

trades to better their employment incomes. The wage rise pertaining to these skilled occupational categories thus brought about has to some extent had a chain effect in the clerical and allied grades which earlier enjoyed better scales of salary than those in skilled occupations.

Table 3

Number of Employment Opportunities in Respect of Engineers Advertised from January - December 1981

Post	1981
Engineers (not classified)	179
Mechanical Engineers	95
Civil Engineers	226
Electrical Engineers	86
Total	586

Accountants

The occupational category of accountants too had registered a high demand situation according to the employment opportunities advertised. See Table 4.

The advertisements indicated that partly qualified accountants too were acceptable. This is indicative of the demand in respect of fully qualified accountants. This job category is one in respect of which a high incidence of migration out of the country for employment exists, the more important destinations of migration being Nigeria, Zambia and the West Asian Region. The dearth of professionally qualified accountants has been somewhat offset by the induction of senior personnel in organizations with part professional qualifications into the positions usually filled by professionally qualified Accountants. The fact that the British Examinations such as the ICMA and IAA were being held in Sri Lanka also has helped to ease the situation of deficit of this critical category of manpower.

Table 4

Number of Employment Opportunities Advertised in Respect of Accounts Between January - December 1981

Post	1981
Accountants	325
Cost Accountants	325
Management Accountants	43
Total	452

Middle Level Manpower Category

It was observed that in respect of the middle level category most of the employment opportunities advertised during the period January-December 1981 belonged to the clerical and allied grades. This demand was observed primarily in the urban trade and commerce sector.

The pattern of requirements in clerical grades is indicative of the fact that school leavers who aspire for these jobs should have basic skills required at this level at the time of leaving school in preference to only a general academic background. This trend, is perhaps a signal to those responsible for designing curricula for secondary education in the school system, to ensure that relevant course material is introduced to the general school curriculum.

The monitoring of these advertisements during the year 1981 also showed that considerable numbers of technical and allied job opportunities falling within the middle level manpower category was advertised.

The pattern discernible from the increased employment opportunities for technical categories in the private sector indicate two phenomena viz:

- (i) The adoption of higher technology in general and
- (ii) Acceleration of activities in the construction sector in particular

The salaries of these categories of employees, over the last few years, have registered an upward trend due to both the increased demand internally and the outflows for employment outside the country. The Employment and Manpower Planning Division of the Plan Implementation Ministry has already drawn attention to the need for expanding the training facilities required to train adequate numbers in these skills in order to meet the increased internal demand as well as to be benefitted from external demand.

Employment Opportunities for Craftsmen and Persons with Similar Skills

In the past employers did not usually resort to the medium of advertisements in the newspapers to procure these categories of employees. Skilled level employees by and large acquired their skills on the job and semi-skilled persons who functioned as assistants and helpers to skilled craftsmen moved up gradually to skilled level employment over a period of time. The recent demand for these

categories both internally and in West Asia has contributed to change the profile of the craft level occupations in the last few years. Besides, the increased demand, the circumstances leading to the change of profile of craft level occupations is a welcome social change. This is particularly shown when large numbers of educated persons who have been exposed to 10-12 years of general education have to be attracted to these jobs because all of them cannot be provided with white collar and allied type of employment which have been considered superior and more prestigious.

The increased economic activity which arose as a result of incentives offered by the Government has contributed to better incomes for persons in craft level skilled occupations. The advances made in the field of education during the previous three decades and the new incentives together have given an impetus and a new image to craft level occupations. This is borne out by the number of employment opportunities in these grades advertised during the period under review and also from the high remuneration offered to some job categories in the skilled group. It is also observed that the level of technology required for skilled jobs had considerably increased as compared with the position a decade earlier. Today, the higher levels of technology adopted in industry, construction, etc., demand higher general educational levels which will help the skilled workers to read diagrams, plans or charts relevant to their work. It is observed that today technical and vocational training is popular among all social strata in this country and it is not confined to children from low income families as in the past, perhaps due to the above reasons.

The task of classification of the craft level jobs which were advertised during the relevant period, in order to undertake a closer analysis of the trends in this level of employment, is under way. It is hoped that these aspects could be discussed in greater detail in a future report.

Table 5
Number of Employment Opportunities
in respect of Technical and Allied
Grades advertised from January-December
1981

Category	
Foremen	306
Technician	233
Draughtsmen	119
Surveyor	74
Quality Controller	61

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