

A Study of the Language Practices of the Government Service: With Reference to the Examination for Official Languages Proficiency in Sri Lanka

Author: P. S. Manthirathna

Temporary Lecturer - National School of Business Management

Abstract

As per the Public Administration Circular 1/ 2014 declared by Ministry of Public Administration and Management, all the government sector employees in Sri Lanka should have the official languages proficiency. Accordingly, the Tamil speaking employees and the Sinhala speaking employees should pass the Sinhala Proficiency Test/ the Tamil Proficiency Test respectively. The aims and the objectives of the Official Languages Proficiency Examination mainly address effective communication and translation in order to do official work successfully, catering the needs of the country. The final examination respectively offers 70% and 30% marks for the written paper and for the oral test. The government sector employees who possess this qualification are paid a special allowance too. However, despite the employees get through this examination it is problematic whether its aims are actually accomplished and cater the actual language needs of the country. Thus, this ongoing research investigates whether the practical component of the course is actually practiced within the workplaces. This study also intends to research whether the government sector employees of all the categories have the opportunity to sit for the Official Languages Proficiency Examination, and the total number of the candidates who passed the examination for the past five years.

Keywords: official languages proficiency examination, language needs, practical utilization