# Impact of Staff Training Programs on the Effective Service Delivery in Public Sector: A Case Study in Sri Lanka

August 2022

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**Submitting a master's thesis of**

**Public Administration**

**March 2022**

**Graduate School of Public Administration**

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**Public Administration Major**

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**June 2022**

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# DEDICATION

This study is in honor of my loved ones, who have supported me throughout my Master of Public Administration programme and provided me with many sources of motivation, inspiration and support.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

When it comes to something as significant as the final thesis project, no one ever works alone. This was only made possible due to the efforts of a large number of diverse people, each of whom contributed in their own unique way. We would like to express our deepest gratitude to the following individuals, all of whom provided unwavering assistance throughout the process of constructing this thesis.

To begin, I believe that I owe a great deal of gratitude to my advisor, Professor Chong Min Na, for his consistent support and commitment in assuring that I remained on track during the entirety of my research. His dedication to the research process made a significant contribution to the quality of my work and provided the drive I needed to keep going.

Secondly, I appreciate the interviewees who gave their time to address my questions. I'd like to convey my gratitude to my family and friends, foe being there for me and helped keep me calm and collected as I worked through this process. I'll always cherish the memory of how much you loved me.

Furthermore, I'd like to thank my parents for their unwavering financial and emotional support as I pursued my education. Particular thanks must be out to my family for bearing with me throughout the years it has taken to complete this course.

Finally, I want to thank everyone who helped me in any way during the course of                                     this                                     research.

# ABSTRACT

The public sector plays an important part in development of the nation as it fosters a socio-economic and political climate supportive to the growth of the nation. The success or failure of an organization can be link to its staff, which is considered critical to the delivery of services that aim to meet the required standards. This study aimed to evaluate the impact of staff training program on the effective service delivery in the government sector of Sri Lanka. The specific objectives were; To determine the nature of staff training program conducting for government officers in Sri Lanka, evaluate the factors affected to increase or decrease standards staff training program, examine the opinion of employees at each level in the public sector regarding staff training programs and find out possible solution and recommendation for future studies. The study assumed qualitative research design. Research sample was 20 public sector employees and the data in this study was collected using in-depth interviews. The study established that the impact of training programs on the effective service delivery is unsatisfactory. This is due to a variety of problems, such as the fact that the content of the programs is not planned based on the mission of the organization, there is no unique method to achieve the goals of the organization and transform the performance, carelessness in selecting resource persons, lack of equal opportunity to all staff to undertake training, and trainings are rare. Finally the study establishes that these challenges hindering achievement of quality service.

# Table of Contents

# LIST OF FIGURES

# LIST OF TABLES

# Chapter one

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1.    Background of the Study

It is evident that organizations around the world strive for success and always make great efforts to surpass their competitors. In order to be more competitive and sustainable in the business arena, organizations tend to rely on the human resources equipped with skills, knowledge and abilities. Managers are expected to focus on all the basic functions of human resource management because most organizational, social and economic sectors play a vital role in accomplishing the objectives of the organization. In the current fast-paced business world, organizations can be found to be undergoing problems in dealing with human resource acquisition and optimization. (Karim, 2019). Furthermore, it is obvious that in the present globalized, technologically advanced, political and economic context, organizations would be expected to cope up with  mounting challenges. In response to these concerns, organizations basically keep faith in strategic Human Resource Management(HRM) techniques to transform their employees into long-term competitive edge. It is significant to mention that organizations should provide their staff with suitable training to enhance their performance. their employees (Aboyasin & Sultan, 2017). It is because employees can be regarded as the heart of the company. (Elnaga & Imran, 2013). Therefore, encouraging employees to undergo a training program would be vital for creating skilled workers who are both physically and socially capable.

According to the United Nations General Assembly (UN), there has emerged a need for a well skilled, dedicated and motivated staff. The above mentioned fact is reflected in the United Nations Handbook of Competencies which states that in the endeavour to 'build the future', the weapon which paves the way for the organization to be strong and successful would be the quality of both staff

and managers. For an organization to reap the maximum benefits, organizational culture should be achieved through employee training and the environment in such a way that the employees can develop their skills.

"Training can be defined as the process of creating multi-skilled employees by upgrading their knowledge, developing skills, bringing about a change in their attitude and improving abilities so that the employees can perform tasks effectively and efficiently in organizations". (Mathis & Jackson, 2004).

The job skills required to hold a position in an institution will not be adequately covered by the formal education setup. Needless to say that few people might have obtained both educational qualifications and skills to survive well in the workplace. However, most employers expect employees to obtain adequate training for the enrichment of their skills. There must be a positive impact on the success of the organization. If organizations provide their employees with a proper training, managers and superiors who can ensure their own employees' capabilities will be able to delegate authority to their subordinates. However, in the case of inadequate training, it will be impossible for their superiors to delegate authority to the employees. (Ohabunwa , 1999). As revealed by much of the literature, training programmes and development programmes are the key contributing factors to the wellbeing of an organization.

As cited by the Central Bank of Sri Lanka's(CBSL) Annual report, the entire population of Sri Lanka is around 21.92 Million and the entire public sector employment is around 1.528 million at the end of 2020 (Central Bank of Sri Lanka, 2020). It is evident that the public sector organizations represent the majority of the service sectors in Sri Lanka. Staff training of public service organizations in Sri Lanka would aim at improving employee performance in the implementation of current development initiatives. The National Human Resources and Employment Policy for Sri Lanka formulated in 2012 makes attempts at developing human resources that contribute to the socio-economic development of the country. According to the Employment Policy for Sri

Lanka, any effective public service sector requires a human resource development programme which incorporates the best elements of training performance evaluation and motivation (National Human Resources and Employment Policy , 2012). However, Sri Lanka Institute of Development Administration (SLIDA) is the leading training institute designed to deliver training programs for the public sectors in Sri Lanka. One of its major objectives is to "develop through training, knowledge, skills and behavior proven within the public officers eligible for their official duties." (SLIDA act. No. 9 of 1982 3(a) cited by Wickramasinghe, 2015).

It is clear that the policies also highlight the importance of staff training. However, there can arise doubts as to whether there can be a positive impact on the employee performance of public sectors in Sri Lanka. Despite the large investment allocated for the training programmes and activities for government officials, it is obvious that employment performance is far behind the required standard. As noted by researchers, the public service delivery can be weakened by the contributing factors such as inefficiency of the public service, the lack of professionalism of the public servants, conflicts among roles and their immoral practices. In this kind of a backdrop it is timely needed of examine the actual impact of conducting staff training program for an effective service delivery in public sector in Sri Lanka.

## 1.2. Problem Statement

Human Resources can be considered to be a critical component for any organization. Employees should be armed with necessary abilities, skills, and competencies to carry out the vision and the goal of organization. It is vital to develop human resources in both private and public organizations in order to meet the demands for human resources. (Prabawati et al 2018). Organizations with highly trained and innovative personnel will be enabled to reduce the undue expenditure on ineffective investments to increase efficiency and performance. Training process can be considered as the most significant aspect

for human resource management and practically everyone acknowleges the importance of training programmes as a key factor for organizational success. On the other hand, employees with inadequate training tend to show poor performance and get vulnerable to higher level of stress at work. Training gaps might cause in vain efforts and dissatisfaction of the staff. Employees who do not have an understanding of their progress might get frustrated with their job roles and give up on performing their duties.

It is obvious from the research findings that training programs have a favorable effect on staff performance and effective service delivery. (Mozael, 2015 & Samwel, 2018). In Sri Lanka only few studies have been conducted on the above subject. The foundation of a modern developed state is an effective and efficient public sector. It is crucial to provide the general public with the proper and effective services.  On the other hand, it can be said that the public sector in Sri Lanka is one of the largest in the world as a percentage of the population (Wickramasinghe, 2015). The contribution of the public sector is essential for moving the private sector towards the development goals. The Sri Lanka Institute of Development Administration (SLIDA) is the most prominent government body and organizes more than 150 training programmes each year to improve the managerial and non-managerial skills of the professionals in the public sector.

Gaining knowledge of numerous economic and business-related fields such as innovation, research and development and technology is vital for Sri Lanka's economy to grow at a substantial rate. Mammoth economic reforms such as liberalization, improving the investment climate, implementing both sector-specific policies and a slew of other government-proposed measures will become impossible to be implemented, if the qualifications of the public sector officials are far behind the country's development needs. The failure on the part of the public officials to comprehend the current trends, global events and opportunities available in Sri Lanka could result in a reform implementation gap, delaying changes and reducing efficiency. Because Sri Lanka aims at

objectives such as liberalization, signing trade agreements, lowering tariffs and enhancing exports and investment, there should not arise a mismatch between the qualifications and the skills of workers in the public sector.

Public sector organizations represent the major part of the service sector in Sri Lanka. To produce effective services for the public, organization should possess well trained employees. It is crucial to modify the perspective of the employees since changes in thinking can have an effect on productivity. This is true for both individuals and businesses. In addition, in order to keep up productivity and keep up with the current trend, employee knowledge and skills need to be consistently updated. This is because the current trend has caused a rapidly developing change, which necessitates the constant updating of modern knowledge and skill levels. On the other hand, the vast majority of personnel working in the public sector have a narrow mindset and indicate a desire to carry out their jobs in traditional ways. Gradually, the prevailing situation needs to undergo the due changes under the guidance of the management. No doubt that a continuous training programmes should be provided to the employees at all levels. It is evident that one of the major reasons behind the public sector workers' inefficiency is the decades long poor attitudes. If regarding from the perspective of the management, those armed with skills and knowledge can be trained. However, the good work attitude is subjective and seems to be exceptionally rare in the Sri Lankan public service.

The success of the delivery of essential goods and services for the citizens of a country depends on three factors such as the public service delivery system, the efficiency and effectiveness of their staff. (Mohammad & Joseph , 2017). However, the training needs of the employees in the public sector in Sri Lanka have been highlighted at several occasions. The public service has repeatedly come under the harsh criticism for the inefficiency in the execution and implementation of plans, despite the availability of resources and budget. According to the report of Transparency international in 2014, there is strong criticism and dissatisfaction among the general public about the lack of

response and accountability regarding the provision of public service. In addition, many government services have failed to accomplish optimal levels of efficiency ( Alahakoon & Jehan, 2020). As a result of inefficiency and ineffectiveness, Sri Lanka has expended a considerable amount of resources in vain. The main reasons for the unsatisfactory service delivery can be the lack of knowledge and poor attitudes towards the public service delivery.

The knowledge and skills resulting from the effective staff training play a vital role for the effective distribution of goods and services up to the customer satisfaction. (Mohammad & Joseph , 2017). There have been a number of training programmes conducted to address this prevailing issue. Therefore, public servants will be allowed to attend the training programmes after the recruitment. However, there have arisen doubts as to why the service delivery of the public sector is inefficient despite the systematic training programs implemented by the government. This shows the importance of analyzing whether the staff training program impacts effective service delivery in the public sector of Sri Lanka.

## 1.3.  Research Question

Recognizing the above problem statement, it can be concluded that there is a need to focus on training programmes conducted for the public sector, which paved the way to investigate whether training programs contribute to public sector service delivery in Sri Lanka. Based on the problem statement above, the following questions have been made so that they can be answered in the research.

I.   Do staff training programs have an actual impact on the effective service delivery within a government organizations?

II.   What is the nature of staff training program conducted for public sector officers in Sri Lanka?

III.   What are the factors affected to increase or decrease standards staff training program?

IV.    What is the opinion of employees at each level in the public sector regarding staff training programs?

## 1.4.    Objectives of the Study

### 1.4.1.  Main Objective

 ➢ To examine the Impact of training programs conducted for the public sector professionals on the effective service delivery within government organizations in Sri Lanka.

### 1.4.2.  Specific Objectives

 ➢ To determine the nature of staff training programmes conducted for public sector officers in Sri Lanka.
 ➢ To evaluate the factors affected to increase or decrease standards staff training programmes.
 ➢ To examine the opinion of employees at each level in the public sector regarding staff training programmes?

## 1.5.    Significance of the study

Many studies argue that most training programmes were launched in developing countries. However, many programmes were found to be ineffective and failed to reach out the desired goals (Ahmad and Mohamed, 2014). This is because of the inability to design a training programme encompassing all the areas such as the specific objectives, the theoretical nature of the programme, the lack of response to the needs of the training programmes for employees and the lack of coordination among stakeholders within these organizations (Healy, 2001). Although these programmes are believed to be highly theoretical, there can arise controversies as to whether these theories born in the developed countries can be applicable to developing countries. South Asian states that have failed to provide effective public services for their citizens would reveal the mismatch between such thoeries

and developing countries. Providing employees with training programmes has become a key factor for the betterment of both employees and employers in an organization.

Policy makers would be expected to concentrate on the training programmes appropriate for the employees. It is significant to mention that this study would become the first to discuss the selected scope of professionals in the public sectors in respect of the impact of the training programmes on the effective service delivery. Therefore, the findings of the study will be beneficial for the government of Sri Lanka to identify the significance of the training programmes for professionals in public sectors.

## 1.6. Chapter organization

The first chapter covers a brief overview about the scope of the study and explores the background. The first chapter highlights the problem statement, the research questions, the objectives of the study, the significance of the study and the limitations of the study respectively. The organization of the study is presented at the end of this chapter.

Second chapter presents the literature review and is divided into two parts. First part discusses theoretical literatures mainly focusing on the factors such as the staff training, importance of the staff training, training and public service system, reasons behind the poor performance of training, service delivery and the relationship between the staff training and service delivery. Second part covers a critical review focusing on both international and domestic literatures.

Third chapter reviews the theoretical background of the study and presents the research methodology including research design, data collection and research area and sampling method.

Fourth chapter presents the results of the data collection and analysis.

Fifth chapter which is the final chapter of this study presents the conclusions, summary of the findings, recommendations and suggestions for the future research.

# Chapter Two

# 2. Literature Review

This chapter presents the findings of previous literature published by highly regarded sources and consists of two main parts such as theoretical literature and empirical literature. The main objective of this chapter is to identify the research gap by conducting a systematic literature review and then attempt to fill this gap while gathering new knowledge on the subject.

## 2.1. Theoretical literature

This part of the research will discuss the main concepts related to the topic such as staff training, service delivery, and the importance of training employees in an organization and its impact on service delivery.

### 2.1.1. Human Capital Theory

Theorists like Mincer (1958), Schultz (1960), Becker, (1962), and Ben-Porath (1967) set the groundwork for human capital theory. Gary Becker and Theodore Schultz, two prominent philosophers in the 1960s, highlighted that training and learning were investments that might contribute to a worker's productivity. First, in a fully competitive labor market with no flaws or biases, Becker (1962) investigated the effect of two forms of human capital on pay levels. Incentives for employees to pay for their own training and reap its full advantages arise from the fact that some forms of human capital are portable across industries. Since the second form of human capital is considered to be unique to a given organization and therefore non-portable, it is in everyone's best interest—employers and workers alike—to split the bill for training (Becker, 1962).

Neo-classical models of job markets, educational systems, and economic expansion form the foundation for the human capital theory. It is taken as a given that employees are valuable resources, and an investigation into whether staff with extensive training are far more efficient than the other employees is taken out.

### 2.1.2. Staff Training

Academic writers have long recognized training in HRM as an essential duty, and this has been subject to various definitions of training. Training is the systematic management method whereby an organization delivers development and improves the performance of its new and current staff. According to Tahir and others, training is a capacity-building component of any organization that is committed to improving employee performance and meeting the goals of the organization. Training is an organized set of actions that improve the level of expertise required to complete tasks efficiently (Sultana A., Irum, Ahmed, & Mehmood, 2012). Training serves as an interdisciplinary action to enhance the technical competency of employees and to increase the organization's overall quality in the face of rigid competition (Nda & Fard, 2013).

Considering all these definitions, it appears that training is a method of learning and growth that improve the individual and the organization. It contributes to the well-being and productivity of society as a whole, not just individuals and organizations. Training is supposed to employ qualified personnel who are both knowledgeable and skilled at their jobs, as well as capable of progressing into specialized or executive roles (Elnaga & Imran, 2013). Fast technical advancements and the fast launch of new goods and services result in a constant stream of new training requirements (Sultana et al., 2012). As a result, the process of staff development and training is always in demand.

Training is the process by which a specialist works with trainees to impart specific skills or knowledge to help them perform better throughout their

current job. As a result, staff should be trained to the greatest extent possible to fulfill both their professional and organizational needs. Job-oriented training should train and develop staff to meet professional as well as organizational needs. Its purpose is to help employees perform better in their current job (Muma et al., 2014, citing Asare-Bediako, K). In general, training is an effort made by a company to assist staff in understanding employment skills. These skill sets encompass knowledge, skills, or behaviors essential for efficient employee performance (Noe et al., 2003).

While some human resource professionals view training as a post-hire activity, Asare-Bediako (2002) thinks it should be included in newly hired employee orientation programs. According to him, training should explain what training is and what programs and resources are offered to new employees. This example discusses the training and development of existing internal training programs and how employees can participate (Wulnye et al., 2018). According to him, a career development plan for the employee should be prepared at the time of hire or afterward at the very least. It must include the employee's profile, academic qualifications and training, job experience with dates, previous training and time, key strengths, important limitations, progress projections and timing, and a training and development plan and scheduling.

The need for in-service training for public-sector employees has long been overlooked. Governments just began to recognize the necessity for in-service training for public officials in the late 1960s. This was a period of administrative reform, and new management practices, such as budget systems, planning methods, and organizational tactics, were introduced into the public sector. (OECD, 1997).

In recent years, public employment in emerging countries has risen significantly in response to increased demand for better public services. Training for public servants needs to be more relevant to the demands of the job. This necessitates tighter collaboration between trainers and trainees, as

well as between training and career development, as well as the creation of local training materials and programs. (World Bank, 1983).

Most countries worldwide have had some form of training system in place since the 1960s. The basic design of the systems varies by country due to a variety of circumstances. An OECD report in 2017 explained that the public service training program, for example, tends to be centralized in a unitarian state (OECD, 1997). Another aspect impacting the training program is the public service members. A career system necessitates a different type of training than a post system. Basic training, and also adaptation training, are critical components of a career system. The freshly hired staff enters the service with no prior experience in the field. The basic training provides general preparation for public service work. The recruitment strategy is another major component that impacts the public service training system. (OECD, 1997). Most governments require a specific educational background when recruiting new governmental servants. (OECD, 1997).

According to the OECD report, there are numerous primary components that determine a public service training system, in contrast to the criteria described above. These include: objectives, legal framework, funding, Training institutions and their statutes; trainers' statutes and pedagogical skills; training content; needs assessment; and so on.

In the public service sector, newly hired personnel should be provided with learning opportunities based on strong theoretical (Milanowski, 2004). Appropriate time must be devoted to putting these theoretical notions into practice. Pre-service training programs serve an important role in preparing highly trained public servants. The value of a well-prepared public officers cannot be overstated. Better prepared public officers, according to Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2005), are more capable and are rated as more effective by their directors, supervisors, and coworkers. Less well-prepared

public officers, on the other hand, have more work challenges and are deemed less successful by evaluators and colleagues (Guarino et al, 2006).

### 2.1.3. Training Methods

When considering training methods, it's crucial to think about and define the fundamental principles of learning. Learning is a method of gaining information, knowledge, abilities, and morals in order to adjust to a variety of situations; it is at the heart of all training and development programs. Cascio (1995) views that training programs must contain various learning concepts that have been established, tried, and evaluated through time to encourage efficient and effective learning.

Nassazi, (2013) work is much deeper than the expalnation of Casio and he has noted that there are two vastly different methods that companies can choose from to train their employees and develop skills. The first is on-the-job training, which is provided to employees while they perform their regular work in the same workplace, and the second is off-the-job training, which involves removing staff members from one's regular work place so that all of their attention is focused on the training. Job rotations and transfers, coaching and/or mentoring are just a few examples of on-the-job training. Conferences, role acting, and a variety of other activities are examples of off-the-job training.

According to Armstrong (2009), workplace training can be more effective if it is taught or coached by more experienced individuals or coaches. Different organizations are tempted to adopt different training methods for a number of reasons; based on their goals and available resources, needs and target group to be trained.

It is important to note that many experts such as, Cascio, Beardwell & Holden, and Cole, differ slightly on the choice of words and emphasis, but so far agree on the different methods.

### 2.1.4. Importance and benefits of training employees

Since many tasks require specific skills and expertise, having specialized knowledge of employees' skills and occupations makes it easier for employees to complete the task. (Tanveer et al., 2011). Employees who do not have these skills have a poor understanding of their roles and obligations (Elnaga & Imran 2013). In addition, training emphasizes the importance of bridging the gap between present performance and the desired standard, and training aims to close the gaps between staff, job practices, and basic features of their workplaces (Najeeb, 2013).

The importance of training for the development of many organizations has been recognized for a long time. The main objective of staff training is to develop the knowledge, attitudes, and skills of the employees towards job-related activities. It is among the most significant motivations that can have short-term and long-term advantages for staff and organizations. There are numerous advantages to training, and these advantages are described by Cole (2001) as follows.

I.    It increases employees' morale and confidence.
II.   It eliminates risk and reduces the cost of production because trained employees are capable of using materials and equipment better and more economically.
III.  It supports adapting to new situations and managing changes.
IV.   It helps to enhance the quality and responsibility of staff.

Nassazi (2013) explains that "most of the benefits derived from training are easily attained when training is planned." This indicates that the organization, the trainers, and the people being trained are all ready for the training a long time before it starts.

This has been deeply described by the work of Kenny and Reis (1995), and they said that any action that is meant to help people learn what they need to

know to do their jobs better is a good action. Kenney and Reid say that the below-mentioned steps make up planned training:

Planned training, according to Kenney and Reid (1995), is any action that is meant to help people learn what they need to know to do their jobs better. Kenney and Reid say that the below-mentioned steps make up planned training:

I.    Determine and define training requirements.

II.    Define the learning requirements in terms of what skills and knowledge have to be learnt and what attitudes need to be changed.

III.    Define the objectives of the training.

IV.    Plan training programs to meet the needs and objectives by using the right combination of training techniques and locations.

V.    Decide who provides the training.

VI.    Evaluate training.

VII.    Amend and extend training as necessary (Obisi, 2011).
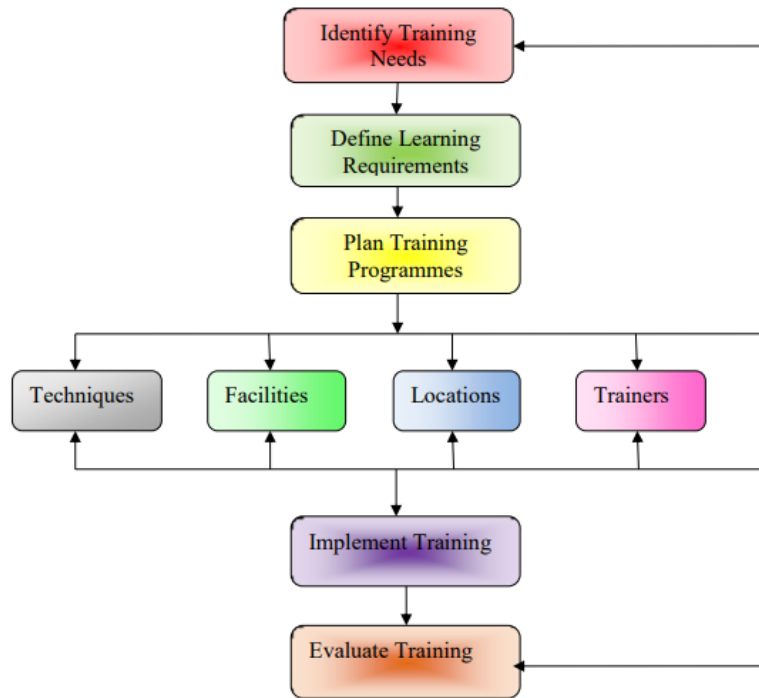
*Figure 2. 1*: The Process of Planned Training

*Source:* Armstrong Michael (1995

### 2.1.5. Challenges to training

Previous research has largely found evidence of a beneficial association between human resource management strategies and organizational performance. (Purcell et al., 2003). The organization's most significant functions are training and development, which will help with human resources procedures. It is primarily advantageous to have a positive impact on the employee's work quality as well as on the growth of the employee's knowledge, abilities, and ability to perform better on the job.

Employee training is critical for both enhancing performance and delivering high-quality service. As a result, it puts organizations in a better position to remain competitive. According to certain studies, employee performance has an impact on the company's overall performance. Effective training programs can change an employee's competencies (Elnaga & Imran, 2013 citing Wright and Geroy). As a result, in order to do their current tasks, employees must

improve not just their overall performance but also their knowledge, abilities, and attitudes in order to perform their future roles as well as contribute to increasing organizational performance (Ikemefuna, 2012). This implies that there is a considerable difference between organizations that train their staff and those that do not.

As Harrison (2000) points out, learning is critical, and when it is done through appropriate training, it has an impact on an employee's initial performance, which is regarded as a critical aspect in reaching organizational goals. Myrna (2009) argues that staff training is an important strategy for managing employees and reducing attrition because it stimulates people to be productive and achieve their professional and personal goals, improves job satisfaction as well as employee satisfaction, and leads to greater productivity. It is clear that implementing training programs as a means of addressing performance difficulties, such as bridging the gap between actual and predicted performance, is, on the other hand, an effective way to improve service delivery. Bridging the performance gap here involves developing relevant training interventions to improve employees' specific skills and their job performance.

Swart et al. (2005) further expand this concept by saying that training allows organizations to understand when their employees are underperforming and, to meet the needs of the organization, their knowledge, skills, and attitudes need to be adapted. Various factors influence the poor performance of employees, such as lack of motivation to use their skills, lack of confidence in their abilities, or lack of work-family balance. All of the above factors should be considered by the organization when choosing the most effective training intervention to address all of these issues and demonstrate the desired performance.

"This employee's superior performance occurs only because of a good quality training program that leads to employee motivation and their needs fulfilment" (Swart et al., 2005).

Considering the ideas and findings of all these authors, it is clear that staff training is a fundamental part of corporate management as it enhances staff efficiency. A well-trained staff makes the best use of corporate resources so that they can be entrusted with the responsibility of the organization with the complete confidence of ensuring organizational success and providing quality service.

### 2.1.6. Service delivery

Employees are assets to the organization, and without them, the organization would not be able to meet its goals. It is important for employees to know what the most important things are for them to do their job effectively. Every employee should be aware of the performance expectations and goals of the organization. (Shantha, 2019). Employees participate in the planning process to achieve the organization's goals and objectives, including determining what must be done and how it should be done.

Numerous surveys including the Hawthorne experiments designed to gauge employee productivity have found that workers who report high levels of job satisfaction are more productive and loyal to their employers than their dissatisfied counterparts. Aside from that, data suggests that individuals are more inclined to sell if they are dissatisfied with their jobs and thus demotivated to exhibit positive results to their coworkers. By delivering superior training and development programs, an organization can achieve a larger and more satisfied employee base as well as a motivated and high-performing staff. This could help the company meet its goals more rapidly. As we can see (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2013), employees are more content when they get the gratification they want and when they reach a competent level. Better

training and development programs are all that is required to achieve these goals.

"Service delivery is a system or arrangement of periodic performance of supplying public needs" (Davis, 2014).

The provision of services to the people is a deliberate decision made by appointed or elected officials to provide goods and services to the people. The performance of an organization or government is assessed according to the nature and level of service provided to its customers. The main aim of every nation is to raise service standards in order to provide a better standard of living for its people. Here, well-trained public sector officials play an important role in effectively providing the crucial public services that are key in sustaining the state and its economy.

### 2.1.7. Strategies and factors affecting effective service delivery

Employee training is critical for both enhancing performance and delivering high-quality service. As a result, it puts organizations in a better position to remain competitive. According to certain studies, employee performance has an impact on the employee's overall performance. Effective training programs can change an employee's competencies (Elnaga & Imran, 2013 citing Wright and Geroy). As a result, in order to do their current tasks, employees must improve not just their overall performance but also their knowledge, abilities, and attitudes in order to perform their future roles as well as contribute to increasing organizational performance (Ikemefuna, 2012). This implies that there is a considerable difference between organizations that train their staff and those that do not.

Swart et al. (2005) further expand this concept by saying that training allows organizations to understand when their employees are underperforming and, to meet the needs of the organization, their knowledge, skills, and attitudes need to be adapted. Various factors influence the poor performance of employees,

such as lack of motivation to use their skills, lack of confidence in their abilities, or lack of work-family balance. All of the above factors should be considered by the organization when choosing the most effective training intervention to address all of these issues and demonstrate the desired performance.

In the study of Bahlis & Tourville (2005), they outlined six strategies to increase the effectiveness of training programs. Mohanty at el (2019), focused on the eight most important factors to consider when evaluating training success. According to Huang (2001), much research on the efficacy of training has focused on determining the factors that contribute to its success.

| | RESEARCHERS | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Bahlis & Tourville (2005) | Mohanty at el (2019) | Huang (2001) |
| **STRATEGIES AND FACTORS** | • Align Training with Mission Goals<br>• Improve Employee's Performance<br>• Reduce Time to Competency<br>• Consider Internal Versus External Options<br>• Choose the Correct Combination of Delivery Options<br>• Duplicate Effective Training Programs and Identify Issues | • Training Need Analysis<br>• Setting Training Objective<br>• Programme Design<br>• Faculty/Resource Person/Facilitator<br>• Audio-Visual Aids<br>• Methodology<br>• Non-academic &Academic Environments<br>• Learning outcome | • Objective<br>• Content<br>• Organizational factors<br>• Expenditures<br>• Duration of training<br>• Coverage of employees<br>• Profitability<br>• Growth<br>• Delivery methods |

*Table 2. 1:* Strategies and factors influencing training effectiveness.

*Source*: Bahlis & Tourville (2005), Mohanty at el (2019) and Huang (2001)

However, in Sri Lanka, conducting training programs for government officers has become a common characteristic. On the other hand, although there are many training programs for government officers, inefficiency and lack of transparency in service delivery have become significant. In this kind of study, the researcher use following strategies to evaluate the effectiveness of staff

training programmes in the public sector of Sri Lanka for effective service delivery.
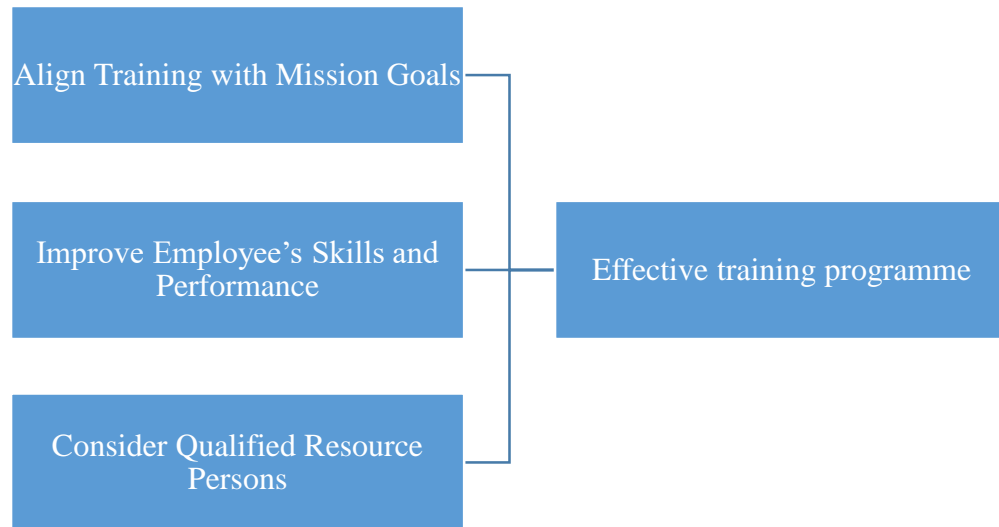


*Figure 2. 2*: Factors of an effective training program

*Source*: modified based on Milhem et al, 2014

## 2.2. Empirical Review

Many researchers in the past and present have contributed to examine the impact of staff training programs on employee performance, organizational performance and service delivery in various studies. Many of them have found mixed results and their conclusions are different. It is important to review the research done by various economists and social scientists to understand this diversity. Therefore, this part of the study reviews some of these researches to present an empirical framework for the study

### 2.2.1. Experiences of International Researchers

There are several studies done by international authors about training programs and service delivery. This part of the study discusses this under different categories. There are some authors who has conducted their research analyzing previous studies. The study done by Jehanzeb & Bashir and Thang, Quang, & Buyens are greater examples for that. Jehanzeb & Bashir, 2013 have done a conceptual study on employee training programs and its benefits on employees and the organization. This study examines the structure and elements of the employee training and development program, and then presents the positive effects of the study on employees and organizations. This is a careful assessment of the literature on the basics of the employee development program and the benefits to its organizations and employees. Existing analyzes in the literature and the proposed model of thee study suggested that these benefits basically divide into two parts as employee and Organizational. And it also discussed how to increase the benefits of training. These features include training planning, distribution, and focus on training transfers. Finally they concluded that if organ izations are able to help all employees meet their needs, employees and organizations will reap long-term benefits. However, this research did not focus on identifying specific issues such as features that could smoothly transfer employee development benefits to different levels and how training and development directly affect the individual and organizational level.

Thang, Quang, & Buyens, 2010 explored the connecting between training programs and organizational performance by analyzing theories and past empirical investigations on the relationship between training and overall performance. The objective of this work is to build an understanding of the impact of training on long-term performance. This study used both selective and descriptive methods and previous studies were categorized into two categories: those that used data from a large sample of various companies and case studies. thorough investigation into the effects of training on company

performance was undertaken by a researcher. The authors attempt to define key theoretical methodologies and presents a framework for analyzing training and company performance issues. Further they emphasized theories related to training such as Human capital theory and theories that link training and organizational performance such as organizational theory, behavioral theories and some other HRM theories. According to their findings, Staff knowledge and attitude can influence the link between training, employees and organisations.

There are some authors who carried out empirical quantitative studies examined the relationship between training and perfomance. Algharibeh, Almsafir, & Alias in their article in 2014, analyzed the relationship between relationship between training and employee performance. The purpose of this research paper is to examine whether thereis a relationship between the training program and employee performance in Jordanian state universities. The study used quantitative approach and it is incorporated with three independent variables such as job training, quality training and training strategy. The results and findings shows that all three varibles are positively related to employee performance and found that quality training has the highest correlation. But they did not specify whether it increases employee capabilities, ability to deal with customers or productivity etc. furthermore, the sample size is small which is 63 in total and it can be expanded to include wide range of respondents.

Some authors identified the impact and the effectiveness of trainig programs on employee performance. Asfaw, Argaw, & Bayissa (2015) carried out a cross sectional quantitative research on the impact of training and development on the effectiveness and the performance of the employees in district five administration office, Ethiopia. The main purpose of this research was to see how training and development affected the performance and productivity of employees. They applied social identity theory and argued that Organizational social identities are powerful performance determinants especially social

identity is an important input or driver for organizational learning and performance. The key finding of this research is that training and development have a significant impact on staff performance and effectiveness.

(Farooq & Khan , 2011) examined impact of training and feedback on enhancing performance of the employees in educational institutions of pakistan. The study discusses and emphasizes the importance of good training and feedback in raising the quality of work processes, which eventually leads to improved employee performance. After analyzing the literature, they concluded that each organization need more efficient and improved training methodologies that are more appropriate to the constant changes in technology. Employee performance can be improved by implementing formal methods like training and feedback, and improving staff' self-efficacy at workplace also can help them to perform better. Data was collected through questionnaires where the sample size is 150. Findings review that employees at all levels should be treated similar/y when it comes to training and responding to their input. Each activity requires the collaboration of upper management's employees. As a result, training and feedback assist employees in refining their techniques of executing their tasks, which has a direct impact on their performance. This study attempted  to examine the role of training and feedback in enhancing performance, but it only addresses a few components of training and feedback.

(Halawi & Haydar, 2018) investigated the effects of training on the performance of employees focusing on two lebanies Organizations. The primary goal of this research is to determine the benefits and challenges of effective training programmes. Data was collected from the managers and low-level employees. Researchers foundout that managers from both organization design different training programmes to improve short-term skills. Employee satisfaction, life - long learning, high-quality production, and social interactions were discovered to be critical determinants and showed that training is a key element in determining effective and long-term commitment. Furthermore, Organizational hierarchies and bureaucracy posed significant

challenges to training. They said that rigid workplace policies prevent management from making essential reforms. Overall, this research examined both benefits and challenges and gave reccommendations based on that and also collected data from both the managers and low-level employees to reduce bias.

(Aboyasin & Sultan, 2017) conducted a research on the role of human resources training in improving employee performance in the five star hotel in Jordan. A questionnaire was used to collect data from 191 staff working in Five Star Hotels. This research used a causal model to investigate the impact of training characteristics on employee performance. Independent variable is training dimension and it determined by training needs assessment, training design and training duration) and dependent variable is employee performance (productivity, service quality and job satisfaction). Based on these variables researchers developed four hypothesis and at the end of the analysis showed that employee dimensions are significally impact on employee performance. They also looked at the effects of two mediating variables such as age and gender, but findings showed that they have no effect on the link between training aspects and job performance.

Several studies have been conducted to see how training effectiveness has improved service delivery. Mpofu & Hlatywayo in 2015 carried out a research based on training and development as a tool for improving basic delivery of a selected municipality in South Africa. Researchers identified that municipal staff have been criticized for their poor work performance and behavior. Some of them are engaging in corruption and others are lack of necessary qualifications to carry out their responsibilities. Employee training has become a critical component of enhancing employee performance in organizations, resulting in increasing organizational development and success. With data obtained from 150 employees, the study looked into the impact of training and development of employees on service delivery in a particular municipality. According to their findings, quality training through high standard programs,

and well qualified facilitators is crucial to improve perfomance of the employees which leads to increase better client services. They concurs their findings with Social learning theory and also they emphasised the need of providing incentives to motivate employees which did not point out by other authors.

( Dennis, 2018) explored the influence of employee in-service trainng on service delivery in kisii country government in Kenya. Specific objectives included evaluating the impact of on-the-job training on service delivery and determining the impact of off-the-job training on service delivery. The research employed both the New Public Management (NPM) and Cognitive Learning Theories and research was conducted using a descriptive research design. The target population consisted of all 241 administrative employees of the departments and data was gathered utilizing questionnaires and an interview guide with department leaders. The study found that the level of delivery of services in the county was unsatisfactory. This was due to a number of problems, such as the fact that not all staff had the same chance to get training and the trainings that were given were not fair, the county didn't have an internal training policy and instead used the national government's public service training policy, which didn't meet its needs, and stakeholders weren't involved in the trainings. It is clear that organizations should design training programs to stimulate their employees improve their skills and capabilities in order to boosts organizational productivity.

Looking at all of these research done by various authors it is clear that staff training programs have directly resulted in improving knowledge, attitudes and skills of the employees which links to numerous benificial impacts on service delivery. This review shows authors used theories like social identity theory, social learning theory, human capital theory, cognitive theory and new public managemant. While these studies reveals that training programs can have favorable and large impact on employee and organizational performance in some industries like hotels, educational institutions and business organizations

there are only few studies which covered government organizations. Some studies have a poor rate of response to questionnaires or a lack of accurate data for estimation, which is a problem in some cases(eg: Algharibeh et al).

### 2.2.2. Experience of national researchers

Kuruppu, Kavirathne, & Karunarathna, (2021) have carried out a research aiming to explore how training affects the performance of operational level personnel in the chosen apparel company. They deeply discuss in their literature review about dimensions of training such as training content and operational factors as well as dimensions of employee performance such as efficiency, effectiveness and speed. Based on this they developed four hypothesis to test at the end of this study. This research was undertaken by examining the pertinent theories related to the topic of interest using quantitative methodology. Mostly primary data were utilized and questionnaires were used to collect data. Based on 60 responses they concluded that there is a positive relationship between training and employee performance and the provision of training assists organizations in improving the performance of their personnel, not just in the garment industry but also in other industries. They also identified the importance of training needs and other operational elements, such as trainer support and training time, have also been found to be unsatisfactory for some employees.

Darshani & Thennakoon, 2018 conducted their research in the title of " " with the goal of determining whether training and development have a substantial impact on an employee's overall job performance. Also, this study investigated the impact of training needs, training design, training applicability, development opportunities and the long-term perception of the organization. Using quantitative approach study was administered to 100 employees from the head quarters of Reigional development Bank(RDB). It was found that among these variables training need has highest impact and job applicability has the lowest impact on job performance of the RDB employees. Overall, this

research is useful for various experts in the banking industry, particularly public banks. This study provides data for HRM practitioners to examine how they might boost employee training and development with the use of prior research but this study is limited to reigional basis.

(Shantha, 2019) also conducted a similar research as Darshani & Thennakoon , 2018 but they special reference to Bank of Ceylon, J-Ela. They also cover four dimensions of training such as training content, trainers, training evaluation and learning culture and found out training content and trainers has positive relationship with employee performance. All three above mentioned researchers concluded that when organizations provide training to its employees, the emphasis should be on the employee's job function.

(Wickramasinghe, 2015) conducted a research aiming to determine the factors that influence how effective SLIDA's staff training programs are. This is a analysis of data taken from the evaluation sheets given to participants at the end of every managerial and non-managerial training programs in 2013. primary data of evaluation records for 141 courses were used for this study. Doing a multiple regression analysis he foundout  only a few elements influence the success of training programs and many of them do not have expected impact on the effectiveness of these training programs. He emphasized that to carry out an effective manageria programs administration must give attention to the course objectives, course design and its appropriateness and carryout detailed constructive analysis. For the non-managerial officers stress the significance of a resource person's expertise in a certain field. Overall, he suggested both should pay attention to the designing stage.

Review of the domestic studies shows that all of these authors used quantitative methodology and they all shows the importance of training dimensions such as training needs, training design, trainers, training content, training evaluation etc. and also shows which dimensions are more effective

and which are not. Furthermore, most of these studies carried out in banks and apparel companies.

### 2.2.3. Summary

A common factor of reviewing both international and domestic studies is that most of the authors found that effective training programs influence the performance of the employees and organization, but there is a very limited number of researchers who explored the causes of the failure of training programs and challenges to conducting training programs. Also, a few studies focused on public sector employees and public sector organizations. Furthermore, none of the abovementioned research was carried out regarding the impact of staff training programs on the remanence of the organization under the organization theory. Therefore, there is a research gap in qualitatively exploring the impact of staff training programs on effective service delivery in government organizations based on scientific management theory.

# Chapter Three

# 3. Research Methodology

This chapter describes the methodology, and techniques used in the study. This chapter also included a description of the study area, an overview of the sampling procedure, data sources and instruments, data collection procedures, and method of data analysis. Each one of the sub-headings listed above is explained in detail below.

## 3.1.  Research Design

This study will use a qualitative approach in order to address research objectives and answer research questions. Qualitative research aids in the understanding of concepts and is adaptable in that it aids in determining the missing piece of what is unknown or only partially known. Furthermore, qualitative research seems to be more relevant in the context of discovery, which allows access to previously unknown information (Ghauri & Grnhaug, 2005). In this research, the case study method is utilized as a research strategy. The case study methodology refers to the process of conducting an in-depth study or research of a particular event by utilizing different data sources within the context of its actual-life application.

## 3.2.  Population, Sample and Sample selection

The public service employees in Sri Lanka are categorized according to the service and level. Categorization based on services is comprised of two main branches: open services and departmental/closed services. According to Public Administration Circular 2017, categorization based on the level is comprised of four levels as mentioned below.
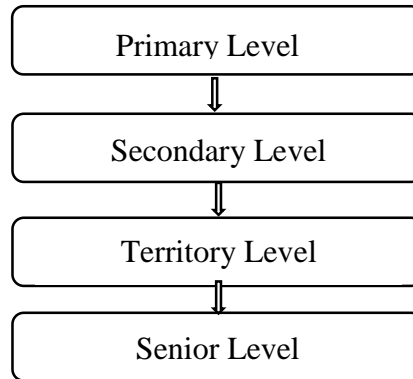
*Figure 3 1 :* Public service employee categorization in Sri Lanka

**Source**: Public Administration Circular, 2017

To examine the impact of training programs conducted for public sector professionals on the effective service delivery within government organizations in Sri Lanka. The study used a non-random purposive sampling method to select the sample. In selecting the sample for this study, five officers from each level were selected, and a total of twenty were selected, which will cover all the levels mentioned above. All four levels, not limited to one institution or one level, were chosen to reduce bias and compare ideas at each level.

## 3.3. Data collection

Both primary and secondary data were collected during this study. Collecting primary data involves getting information from the respondents themselves in a direct and unfiltered manner. Secondary data was gained through reviewing existing documents related to staff training and service delivery.

Data was collected through in-depth interviews, and the researcher and the participants engaged in a series of guided discussions in order to accomplish the study. There were interviews with selected officials to find out more about the nature of the staff training and the impact of it on their service. The interview guide is comprised of six sections, and interview questions were

made to address each research question while respecting the ethical norms of conducting a field survey.

## 3.4. Data analysis

Data analysis is a critical component of research. In qualitative research, data is often documented in the form of words such as descriptions, opinions, and feelings rather than figures. Transcription of interviews, checking and editing data into related meaningful units, data display, and conclusion drawing are all part of the analysis. The method entails organizing data in order to develop explanations and new results. The data acquired from interviews was categorized and summarized into categories before being analyzed and interpreted in accordance with the study's objectives.

## 3.5. Ethical Consideration

Prior to beginning the in-depth interview, the researcher provided participants with information about what their involvement in the research entailed, the conditions of the study, and its significance. Researchers kept responder anonymity a top priority. When the researcher is aware of the identities of the people who participated in the study, they maintain participant confidentiality by not disclosing this information. In order to accomplish this, researcher did not inquire about the respondents' identities by requesting their names in order to respect their privacy and maintain their anonymity.

## 3.6. Limitation of the Study

The time duration of this study is limited to three months, from March to May. This study only focused on three factors affecting effective training programs. Therefore, the study recommends other studies to focus on other factors, especially training dimensions.

# Chapter Four

# 4. Analysis

The main objective of this research is to examine the Impact of training programmes conducted for the professionals in the public sector on the effective service delivery within government organizations in Sri Lanka. The study has been based on a series of semi-structured interviews with a range of participants: primary, secondary, territory and senior level public sector officials in Sri Lanka. This chapter covers the responses from the above-mentioned participants regarding the interview questions. The researcher conducts the study through the questions in a systematic way. This chapter presented the collected data through the interview throughout the study. The data which was collected through the in-depth interviews will be categorized and presented in accordance with research questions and objectives.

## 4.1. The impact of staff training programmes on the effective service delivery within government organizations.

The main objective of this study is to examine whether the staff training programmes have an actual impact on the effective delivery of services in government institutions. Many previous studies have revealed that programmes have a positive effect on employee performance. The study interviewed 20 individuals holding various positions at various levels of the public service in Sri Lanka. It is obvious that positive feedback on the effectiveness of the training programmes could not be expected.  One critical comment on this is,

"Training programs may have some effect, but these programs need to be organized in some way. It has to be planned through new methods. This is still done in a typical way. Therefore, I do not think that these programs increased

the productivity of the public service. If it increased, the public service in our country is not so inefficient. For example, any training program should have an outcome, but I don't see any outcome of these programs. If there is such an outcome, the public service which existed ten years ago should have achieved a great victory after ten years (Male, 40s)".

Another participant, who expressed a similar view, criticized the public servant, saying that the majority of public servants from top to bottom were nourished by the public service and were not simply trained to understand the populist nature of the public service or to provide the service properly. He added;

"When organizing these training programs, people who are planning are trying to do it at low-cost and steal something and participants care about the claim or increment they are receiving for the participation. Otherwise I do not think that the mentality that I have to work to provide an effective service related to my job from tomorrow has been incorporated into any of these training programs. They should start from changing public sector officials' attitudes. Also there is no post training evaluation. Therefore, I don't think these training programs are helpful at all (Male, 40s)".

Another contended that the adequacy of training programs provided would have an impact on productivity of public service or employee performance. He said;

"The government spends a lot of money on this. When we were hired as Development Officers, for example, a separate budget was allocated to train us. However, this changes when governments change. For example, the previous government implemented a program called "Grama Shakthi". We received separate training at the time. However, this project is no longer being implemented. Officers assigned to this project have been assigned to other duties. In that case, the training we received is pointless (Male' 30s)".

He is of the opinion that there might be tasks depending on the employees' knowledge. Employees need to be trained more. However, in such a situation the adequate training can become a controversial problem.

Commenting on a statement somewhat similar to the above statement, one respondent stated that it cannot be said that there is no effect. However, the number of recruits to the public service is high. Therefore, it has become impossible to provide the employees with adequate training programmes. Her experience illustrates that the training we receive is ineffective because we do not stay in one position for at least a year and change governments when governments change.

A similar idea arose and the respondents expressed,

"Employees are recruited from competitive examinations for higher posts in the public sector, while lower posts are recruited from political lists. Then training programs should be planned to develop the attitudes of these employees but one question is whether these training programs develop attitudes. There is no point in giving small trainings that are organized without any purpose without developing the attitudes of these employees (Male, 40s)".

Another took a different view, saying,

"I think training is a must for employees. But it cannot be said that there is a positive impact on the training of public servants in Sri Lanka as they do not get equal opportunities or do not get what they deserve. What happens here is that the person who must have received the training gets discouraged and the trainee does not take advantage of it. This does not benefit the organization or the performance of the employees (Female, 30s)".

In general, it appears that the staff training programmes have no positive impact on the service delivery in government organizations in Sri Lanka and such training programmes do not seem to be adequate. Several reasons for this

factor have emerged from these in-depth interviews can be summarized as follows.

I.     The training programme was not found to be quantitative.
II.     There are no equal opportunities.
III.     Inability to work in one position for a long time.
IV.     There is no evaluation and monitoring after training.
V.     No attitude development.

## 4.2. Nature of staff training programmes conducted for government officers in Sri Lanka.

The first question was about the participation of the respondents in any training programme after joining the organization. Regarding the first question, the respondents who belong to all four levels, primary, secondary, territory and senior, answered positive. ( Nassazi, 2013) mentioned two different training methods such as on the job and off the job training. Even when the employee is engaged in regular duties, on-the- job training programme which contributes to upgrading employees' skills can be conducted in the course of their regular duties. Off-the-job training refers to an educational method through which employees learn more about their duties and the latest advancements in their field at a location away from their workplace. According to the researcher's observation, these respondents have been trained both on the job and off the job.

It is evident that some services provide pre-service training programmes and some organizations offer post-hire training programmes. For instance, residential pre-service training programme has been made mandatory for services such as the Sri Lanka Administrative Service and the Sri Lanka Education Administrative Service. What stands out in this context is the fact that not all public servants are entitled to the mandatory pre-service training programme. The key elements covered by the training programme might differ

from position to position and organization to organization. Compulsory training will be provided to every officer in the public sector. The officers will be entitled to participate in various programmes. The number of training programmes that the officers have to undergo varies according to their work experience and employment. The specific method by which the officers get selected for training programmes upon the first appointment will depend on their positions. However, if regarding from a broad perspective, participants selected for this study have undergone at least five training programmes since the recruitment.

## 4.3. Factors affected to increase or decrease the standards of staff training programmes.

The researcher wanted to identify the factors that affect the quality of the staff training. Accordingly, in this section the researcher will discuss the correlation of the factors identified in the literature review with the training programmes which were provided to the public sector employees in Sri Lanka.

**The Analysis on the impact of the training programme on the mission goals of the organization.**

Organizational goals can be viewed as a crucial component for organizations. In general, it is evident that the organizational goals have to be aligned with the workload. Different opinions were raised in this regard. However, the major opinion on the above factor was the fact that the content of the training programmes was irrelevant. On the contrary, it is clear that some are of the view that the content is relevant. Participants belonging to the senior level, were of the opinion that there existed a positive approach. As stated by one respondent,

"The content of the training is directed towards the achievement of the goal of the entity. Most of the training is relevant for the functioning of the operations of the entity (female, 30s)"

Another respondent maintained a different opinion,

"They were given a year of compulsory training before being recruited and did not know which sector they would be hired for when they received that training. Since that training was given to everyone in general, it is difficult to say one hundred percent that the content was designed to be relevant to the mission goals of the organization or the job to be undertaken in the future, rather than general objectives. But some of the training programs offered after recruitment are job-oriented (Female, 30s)".

Another respondent was of the opinion that the impact of the practical sessions was more effective than that of the theory. The practical training sessions recommended after recruitment were more job-oriented than the residential training sessions recommended before recruitment. For instance, in the process of designing a project, it is evident that the above mentioned respondent had been made aware of the way of carrying out his task from the point of selection of beneficiaries to the end.

On the contrary, this was strongly opposed by both the secondary and territory level participants. Most of them were of the opinion that the content of these training programmes had not been designed to achieve the goals of the organization. As stressed by the majority, the content of these training programs should be improved. A principal said,

"Although I had participated in these programs, I feel like there were no results. Especially the content is boring and sometimes it is out of our interest. Also, they did not provide us job-related information and job-related information is largely found by ourselves. Rather we get information from our seniors or peer community. I would say this is so frustrating and nothing was gained from these training programs (Male, 50s)".

Seven out of 20 respondents had expressed their views that the content of the training programme they have undergone so far is relevant to their job role and mission goals of their organization. The rest had opposed their view.

**Analysis on the impact of the methods used for training programmes on transforming performance to achieve the goals of the organization.**

However, our second question regarding the impact of the methods which were applied for carrying out the training sessions on transforming your performance to achieve the goals of your organization was discussed. Considering ' the tra ining methods' in a broad sense," we are referring to a strategy or an approach for guiding the employees to gain the knowledge and skills required for better performance. Respondent had maintained both negative and positive answers for this question. One respondent pointed out that;

"My skills were really enhanced by the training programs. Because we have to work specifically with the general public, practical knowledge is more important to us than what the book theoretically provides. So the practical training given using field trips gave me something to gain and a good understanding. I think this is one of the best method that they have used to give us clear understanding about our job role and scope (Male, 40s)".

Another participant who is a senior lecturer had expressed positive thoughts about both content and methods used in training programs. She mentioned that;

"I personally learned a lot from these programs. They taught various techniques and were able to learn how to present an interesting lecture using those techniques and how to teach students in a relevant way. They gave us a wheelchair to ride and it was really hard to ride. Using such practical examples they showed us how to empathize with a student. When I was delivering lectures I used most of the techniques they have taught us. Also at the

beginning they gave us clear structure of the university and its vision and mission goals (Female, 30s)"

A Grade I officer of the Sri Lanka Accountants' Service, participated in this interview and had a negative opinion in this regard. She stated that,

"Various methods used during the training session. But the state-of-the-art methodologies are not paid much attention. Thus, if there are more sophisticated methods, there will be more quality service (Female, 30s)".

A first grade teacher attached to the Sri Lanka Teachers' Service had revealed a different opinion. As stressed by him, these training programmes did not contribute to the development of their skills.

"In my 15 years of service I have been involved in at least 15 training workshops. But none of these training programs had a unique teaching method. There are various organizations that provide financial assistance to our country. They have their own way of spending money on education. They are the ones who decide the method of teaching. Teacher training at the moment is about teaching teachers those methods. I think the methods they provide are not suitable for a country like Sri Lanka. Because of this I have no qualms about these training programs (Male, 40s)".

Meanwhile, those who hold a moderate opinion were evident. The idea maintained by them was that the methods used for some training programmes were very successful, while some methods had failed to reach the required standards. Thus, it has been stated that only a 50% skill development can be obtained.

**Analysis on the impact of resource persons participating in the session.**

Resource person is an expert armed with skills and knowledge who contributes information to participants. The primary responsibility that the resource persons should fulfill is to maintain the technical specifications at a good

degree. In a more tangible sense, they will lend a hand to strengthen the process of training by facilitating sessions, contributing to group activities, and evaluating work assignments. To be considered a resource person, an individual must possess the uncommon combination of strong training ability and very greater professional knowledge in a variety of facets related to a specific field. Resources persons should be able to quickly understand the issues that the participants are dealing with as well as their requirements. They should help the participants find solutions to their issues. Therefore, the role of the resource person is extremely important for the success of a training programme.

During the interviewing process, the above fact emerged as one of the most important topics. All of the participants expressed their thoughts about this topic. One of the respondents was of the opinion that;

 "The resource persons are mostly selected at the discretion of the heads of the institutions. These resource persons may have knowledge, but there are also instances where principals are trained by calling teacher advisors (Male, 30s)".

Commenting on this, another respondents said,

"I have participated in local and foreign training programs and I've observed a significant disparity between local and international training programs. Knowledgeable and talented resource persons were employed in overseas training programs. This does not mean that there are no talented and knowledgeable people in Sri Lanka. But when it comes to selecting resource persons, choosing the loyalists of top officials is a big issue (Male, 30s)".

Another one came up with a slightly different idea. He mentioned that;

"Sometimes it is not possible to hire a qualified individual with the budget allocated for the resource person because some experienced and qualified individuals charge high rates. We participate in some training to bridge the

knowledge gap. But this knowledge gap is not being filled 100 percent by resource persons (Male, 30s)".

And another respondent claimed that;

"While the course content is occasionally interesting, the way the resource person delivers the lecture is extremely boring. Therefore, the chances of listening to lectures attentively are very low and also willingness to participate more in these trainings also very low. Personally my opinion is participating in these program is just waste of time (Male, 40s)"

The vast majority of respondents were of the same opinion that greater consideration ought to be given to the selection of resource contributors for training programmes. None of the participants stated that they gained nothing from the resource persons. But several negative comments had emerged. It is a matter of fact that there have been shortcomings in the process of selecting resource persons, especially external training consultants. Many respondents mentioned that they are willing to undergo a training programme under an external training consultant because they think that they can be exposed to the new things related to their fields.

**Equal opportunities for training programmes**

In organizing training programmes, it is critical that the organization provides equal opportunities for all. The researcher also sought the participants' opinions on this. The majority of people believe that everyone is given equal opportunities. However, some participants maintain different views, claiming that they provide the same opportunities for local training but not for foreign training programmes. As said by one respondent,

"For local training, yes. But for foreign training, no. as there are more benefits other than training in foreign countries, limited officers at the same level get the opportunity and do not give the chance to the most suitable officers based on the training requirements (Male, 30s)".

Commenting on this, another said that;

"Although there are similar opportunities for compulsory training, there are not as many opportunities for overseas training. There is no selection criterion for this overseas training and I have seen in my tenure that it often provides opportunities for those who are loyal to the top management (Female, 30s)".

Another participant stated that not everyone can grab the same opportunities. According to him, local administrative officers do not have the same opportunities for training sessions other than pre-service training. Commenting on the above, he said that there would be no similar opportunities for overseas training. He further said,

"Local government is the heart of the public service. We work more closely with people. From the day a person is born to the day he dies, a lot of things are done by the Regional Secretariat. But compared to the opportunities available to officials in Colombo, our opportunities are minimal. I am the best example of one. When I took over here, I did not receive even ⅓ of the training I received while working for the Election Commission. There are no equal opportunities (Male, 40s)".

## 4.4. Opinion of the public sector employees regarding the staff training programmes.

Under this context the first question was the reason for which you attend the staff training programmes. It is vital to discuss whether there can be a motivation behind attending the staff training programmes? The response from the most senior and territory level employees was;

    I.    To gain extensive knowledge to perform well

    II.    To assist in career development.

    III.    To acquire new knowledge.

In addition, the response which had emerged from the most of the primary and secondary level employees was the fact that they had no intention of participating in the programme. They further stated that they are attending these programmes just because they have been made mandatory to attend. Commenting on this, one of the participants said,

"Sometimes if I refuse to attend a training program, I have to give reasons for refusing to top officials. It's better that I go there and sleep than providing reasons for not to attend (Male, 40s)".

Also another respondent mentioned;

"Honestly there is no motivation to participate because training programs are not effective (Female, 30s)".

Similar answers emerged from senior level employees. One said;

"To be honest we're going because it's mandatory. We have no confirmation without a guarantee. We cannot get ranks without confirmation. I am currently in second grade. I need confirmation to go to first grade. This is the one of the biggest motivations is to participate in these programs. This is everyone's motivation but no one wants to say this (Male, 40s)".

Another respondent expressed a similar view to the above;

"We participate in compulsory training because it promotes us to a higher grade than we are currently in. Whether or not to participate in non-compulsory training programs depends on its content. We will take part in these training programs, if we really can learn something new that we do not know by participating in those programs (Female, 30s)".

The next question is whether you need more training to improve your performance? Anyone working in any sector not only in the public sector must keep their knowledge up to date. It is critical to provide regular training in

order to improve performance. Everyone agreed that they needed additional training.

 The reasons for the above fact -:

I.     Ability to learn new things,
II.    Ability to improve existing knowledge
III.   Leading to the development of attitudes
IV.    Leading the way in personal and career advancement
V.     Provides a chance to interact with peers leisurely and to share our experiences
VI.    Make new connections.

The researcher also sought to get feedback from the participants on their own methods to improve the training programmes.

The ideas of the participants in this study are very significant because they have gained experience by participating in such programmes. One idea which came up in the meantime was,

"When an organization provides training, it is imperative to consider the training period. We are sometimes given a day or two of training. This makes no sense. For example, a two-day clerical training will provide training on file updates. The trainee will not receive at least a quarter of the content. When you go to eat and drink, time is up. This training is of no use to the institution and the trainee (Female, 40s)"

Another respondent stated that;

"These training programs need to be restructured. This should be organized in a very formal way, from selecting resource persons. One of the reasons why our training programs fail is because these programs are conducted without any organization. Seeing these shortcomings, the mentality of the participants also breaks down (Male, 50s)".

47

Adding another new idea, one respondent stated;

"Identification of the training requirement is essential. Most government offices provide training as there are funds allocated for training and development by the budget to utilize for each entity within the financial year. So they conduct training without meaningful intention. Selection of the most appropriate officers for the training is another matter. Interactive session is needed. Sharing experiences and knowledge of participants is more practical (Female, 40s)".

Here are some commonalities that arise when considering the views of all in general;

I. Training programmes should be organized to create awareness about the structure of the institution.
II. There should be evaluation and monitoring after training.
III. Specialists should be used as resource persons.
IV. Not only theoretical training but also practical training should be provided.
V. New concepts and techniques must be used.

Focusing on this question, the researcher posed another couple of questions to explore whether their skills were developed through the training programmes. It can be interpersonal skills, communication skills, organizational skills and job-related skills etc. The first question was as to whether the trainers trained you to acquire new knowledge and improve your understanding of the work process? The majority of participants had the impression that their levels of expertise and knowledge did not advance as rapidly as they had hoped. A respondent thought that;

"Those programs taught us the basics but didn't talk much about how things work. In fact, the knowledge that we gained while working here encompasses

more than just the information that we picked up from taking part in training programs (Male, 40s)".

Commenting on the same, another respondent said that;

"These training sessions do not provide complete knowledge. So how do we develop our skills? The objective of the two-day workshops that are provided to us is not even clear. The only advantage is the opportunity to share our experiences (Male, 50s)".

 Another respondent gave a different opinion. He stated that;

"There are some sessions that are really important but the majority of training programs are organized without any purpose. The second issue is that although the employees of not only our company but also the majority of the government institutions have received training, there are times when one post does not get to last for at least six months. If this is the case, the information that was gained was for nothing (Female, 40s)".

The next question raised under this context was whether it easily helped you to adopt a new technology? It is critical to use new technology to update the skills of employees in an organization and to accelerate productivity. Therefore, it is essential to raise awareness of the process in training programmes. There can be evident various opinions on this as well. One opinion was that no training programmes related to technology have been provided to employees so far. One respondent said;

"For example we have been dealing with the Corona plague for two years now but have not been given any training.  There are members of our staff who are incapable of using a computer or a smartphone. Therefore, I believe that training in new technology is essential (Female, 50s)".

Another respondent mentioned that;

"The opportunities offered by the institution are really limited. If we have something to learn, there are times when we have to spend money and get the relevant training (Female, 20s)".

Adding another idea, the participant said;

"In fact, training programs related to technology is minimal in Sri Lanka. Assume, for example, that we are given computer training. However, training is useless if the individual does not have access to a computer. We had three months of training at Gateway College as an e-citizen and a certificate was issued. But when we come to the institution after finishing it, there is no way for us to take advantage of that knowledge because one has to wait until one gets up to use the computer. These facilities are less in Sri Lanka. Sri Lankan government agencies lack facilities and are not yet accustomed to the new technology available (Female, 40s)".

The researcher found that majority of respondents have negative opinions in this regard. Many of them emphasized that these staff training programmes do not completely fill their knowledge gap and other skill developments such as conflict management skills, interpersonal skills, attitudinal change and computer literacy.

Considering all these findings, it appears that the staff training programmes conducted for public sector officials in Sri Lanka are not satisfactory in terms of updating employee skills and service delivery. The following diagram will show a summary of findings.
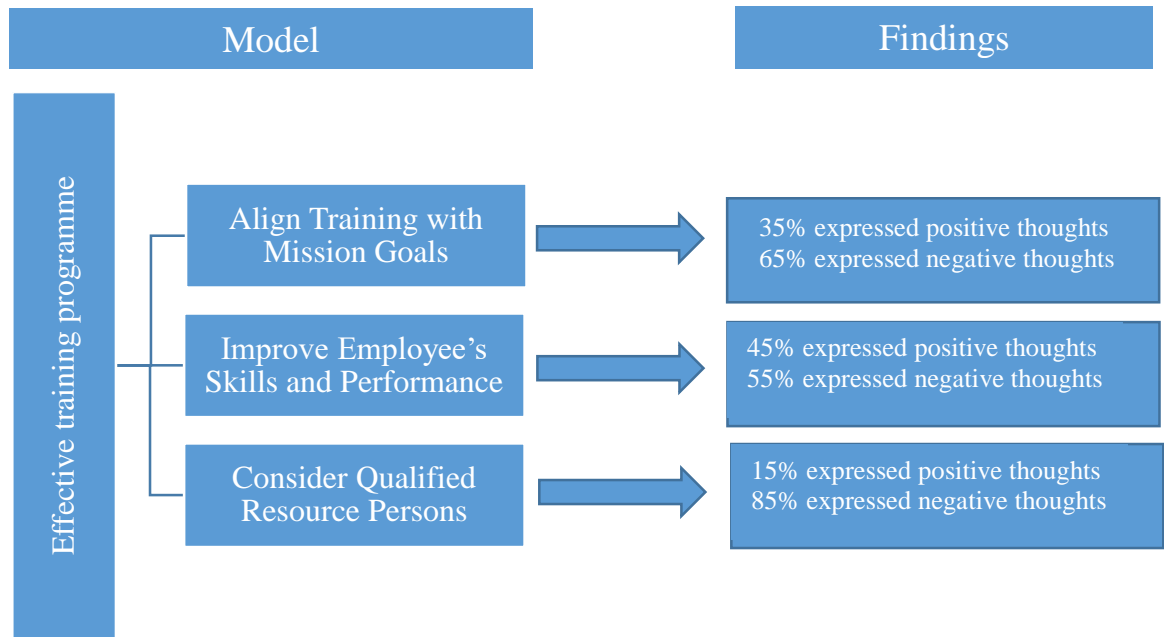
*Figure 4. 1* : Summary of findings

# Chapter Five

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendation

### 5.1. Summary

The main objective of this study is to assess the Impact of the training programmes which were conducted for the public sector professionals on the effective service delivery within government organizations in Sri Lanka. The specific objectives of the study would cover the key factors such as examining the nature of the staff training programmes conducting for government officers in Sri Lanka, examining the effectiveness in updating employee skills, examining the opinion of employees at each level in the public sector regarding the staff training programmes. This study employed qualitative approach. The data were collected through the in-depth training with the participation of 20 respondents consisting all four levels (primary, secondary, territory and senior) public sector employees.

Previous literatures disclosed that the staff training programmes had positively impacted on the performance of employees in terms of their jobs. The findings of the current study have proved that employees' knowledge has been updated up to some extent through the training programmes but in general these programmes have no positive impact on the service delivery in government organizations in Sri Lanka. However, the factors which emerged from the overall interviews proved that the training programmes had not been provided in a properly planned manner, hence these training programmes should be planned in a systematic manner. Training programmes make the employees aware of the way of performing their tasks. However, most of the utilized resources do not provide the new knowledge, as expected by the employees. It is futile to introduce new methods and technologies because some public servants in Sri Lanka prefer to the traditional methods than the modern ones.

The majority of public organizations in Sri Lanka had not formulated internal training policies and strategies. With the changes undergone by the governments, the governments amend their policies and strategies and recruit new employees.

There is an overabundance of employees in the public sector. Many of them are unskilled and poorly trained. Several shortcomings had prevailed in the training programmes provided to the public sector officials in Sri Lanka. It is clear that the content of the programmes had not been planned based on the mission of the organization. There is no unique way to achieve the goals of the organization and to transform the performance due to the several factors such as carelessness in selecting resource persons and the lack of equal opportunities for all. This situation shows that training programmes have not been conducted up to a proper standard. There had existed issues such as inability to achieve goals after training, lack of evaluation, inadequate training and inadequate training period as well the lack of attitudinal changes among the public sector officials. It can be concluded that the above mentioned shortcomings can hinder the ability of employees to deliver quality services. Therefore, a training needs assessment, a post-training impact assessment, and attitude training ought to be carried out for each and every worker in order to produce an exceptional labor force. This can be accomplished by concentrating on the workers' areas of inadequacy and fostering their growth through the completion of pertinent courses that correspond to the requirements that have been established for training.

## 5.2. Recommendations

In the light of the findings and conclusion of the study the following recommendations were made;

I. Staff training programmes should align with the mission goals of the Ministry.

II. Staff training programmes should be empowered by a parliament act.

III. Participation in the staff training programmes should be made compulsory for every government officer.

IV. The government should take steps to encourage government officers to participate at least three times of their whole carrier life[1].

V. Staff training programmes should be organized according to opinion or request of the government officers.

VI. Feedback should be collected. The necessary actions should be taken to strengthen the programme according to the feedback.

VII. Facilitate considerable rate of government officers to enable them to participate in the staff training programmes in order to take the foreign exposure without discrimination.

VIII. Changing the attitude of the government officers should be concerned.

The study focused on impact of staff training programs on the effective service delivery in the government sector officials in Sri Lanka. This study recommend further studies in other counties. Similarly, the study recommends another study on other factors affecting service delivery.

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[1] This strategy is followed by the Indian Government

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