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**Role of Education in Ensuring Inclusive Growth in Postgraduate Education: A Study on Enrolment of Female Students for MBA Studies at the Postgraduate Institute of Management, Sri Lanka**

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**ABSTRACT**

Investing in human capital, especially in higher education, contributes to inclusive growth. Inclusive growth presupposes inclusive education, where quality education is accessible to all, irrespective of gender. Thus, the role of education in ensuring inclusive growth cannot be emphasized more. Higher education plays an important role in providing skilled human resources and thereby in ensuring social development. This is because higher education develops the skills, abilities, and attitudes of men and women and thereby contributes to social development. Women in Sri Lanka have played a significant role in the socio-economic development of the country for a long time. The proportion of women in the national workforce has been increasing and is about to reach 50% of the total workforce. However, this trend has not been reflected in higher education, where there are relatively less women in higher education in Sri Lanka. This research paper focuses on the role played by higher education of women in inclusive growth. The study is based upon secondary as well as primary data. The paper focuses primarily on the issues of equity, the barriers to women's participation in postgraduate studies and women's access to educational opportunities. The main objective of the research is to ensure the equitable access of higher educational opportunities to women. The study was conducted across postgraduate institutions in Sri Lanka by examining the gender-wise enrolment in higher education, and by conducting an in-depth case study of one Postgraduate Institute in Sri Lanka which had the highest MBA enrolment over the last decade. The study reveals that women are actually strongly motivated to empower themselves and become self-reliant and independent through higher education. This is illustrated by women's high rate of conversion from graduates to post graduates in the recent past. Women now seek career enhancement and personal development in entering postgraduate education, which they feel is vital for job success. The study further establishes work-life balance as an important factor preventing women from seeking higher education in Sri Lanka.

*Key Words: Inclusive Growth, Women's Participation, Executive Education, Career Growth, Work-life Balance*