



## JOB DESCRIPTION AND JOB SPECIFICATION: A STUDY OF SELECTED ORGANIZATIONS IN SRI LANKA

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### ABSTRACT

*Human resource professionals and consultants use job descriptions and job specifications as basic building blocks for many human resource (HR) functions, including recruitment and hiring, performance evaluations, and salary ranges. Some organizations not maintain the job description and job specification. They don't know importance of them. This research explore whether they practice, how to maintain the job descriptions & job specifications, what is the content of the job description and specification in the selected Sri Lankan organization. This study demonstrated that the job specifications and job descriptions look different from one another jobs of selected 18 organizations in Sri Lanka.*

*. The researcher collected response from 18 organizations. The main tool of the study was interview guidelines. The data collected from the Owners or HR Managers of the organization via Interview. The secondary data also collected via review of the job analysis information. The Qualitative analyses were conducted.*

This study reveals that organizations practice job description and specification at different level based on the organization size and type

**Key words:** *Job description, Job specification.*

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Human resource professionals and consultants use job descriptions and job specifications as basic building blocks for many human resource (HR) functions, including recruitment and hiring, performance evaluations, and salary ranges.

A job description can best be thought of as a blue print of the position. It outlines the essential duties and responsibilities that are expected of the employee and the basic purpose of the work the employee is expected to perform. It also defines accountability in an organization, which helps to prevent overlap of duties and assign task responsibility.

Job specification establishes the qualifications required of applicants for the job openings. Job

specification provides a basis for attracting qualified applicants & discouraging unqualified ones. Skills relevant to a job include education or experience, specialized training, personal traits or abilities. The physical demands of a job refer to how much walking, standing, reaching lifting or talking must be done on the job.

Job descriptions and job specifications are used every day in organizations, and while research provides guidelines for what should be included in each of these and how each should be constructed. The purpose of this study was to examine precisely what job descriptions & job specifications in the field contain and to determine whether or not in particular organization. This study demonstrated that the job specifications and job descriptions look different from one another jobs.



## 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Job analysis consists of collecting data and applying it by preparing job descriptions, job specification and job standards. (Bratton and Gold, 2007). Therefore, a job description is a result of a job analysis. Where the job analysis describes the general requirements of a certain job, the job description will explain in detail the different tasks to accomplish during the day. "The process to make a job description is to have a strong reflection on the available sources of expertise." (Richard, 2007). The principle of a job description is to identify the essential function of a work. One of the main objectives of a job description is to be used as a tool during the recruiting process. The job description should be enough descriptive but also very clear to understand. Job description will give the opportunity for the team to work together and faster. It will increase also the good feeling of the employees. The job descriptions can be multipurpose tools that can be used in every aspect of the employment process (Arthur and Diane, 2006).

### Job descriptions

The creation of job descriptions is the most common use for job analyses (Brannick et al., 2007). Usually, job descriptions are created by compiling the most salient information gathered in the job analysis. Job descriptions essentially summarize the findings of the job analysis and highlight the most important elements of the job. Brannick, Levine, and Morgeson (2007) define a job description as a "brief written description of work". According to Brannick et al. (2007) job descriptions are used to provide information regarding what precisely the job entails to people that do not perform the job. The intent is to provide an overview of the job to those who are not familiar with it. Grant (1988) refers to a job description as the "blueprint" of a job. This means what tasks and responsibilities must be performed as part of the job. Researchers and professionals are generally in agreement over what a job description consists of: identifiers, summary, duties and tasks, and often other information (Brannick, et al. 2007). Cascio (1998) breaks down the content of the job description using different terms than Brannick et al. (2007); however, they convey the same information. He states that there are five elements of a job

description, including the job title, job activities and procedures, working conditions and physical environment, the social environment, and conditions of employment. One such purpose is to assist in staffing (Cascio, 1998). Companies use job descriptions to inform potential applicants about what the job involves. This allows applicants to gain an understanding of the job and determine if they are qualified and want to apply for the job. Often job descriptions are included as part of the posting to recruit applicants for a position. According to Brannick et al. (2007) job descriptions are designed for the novice, not a job expert.

### Job specifications

When recruiting and screening applicants, employers utilize job analyses to determine what knowledge, skills and abilities an applicant needs to perform the job (Brannick et al., 2007). These needs are referred to as job specifications or "a written description of job requirements" (Brannick et al., 2007). Job specifications can include job requirements such as written communication skills or prior experience in a certain field. Job specifications allow companies to determine the educational, professional and certification requirements for a person performing a job. Prien and Hughes (2004) demonstrated that minimum qualifications, such as education requirements, can be established by utilizing a quantitative job analysis designed to measure the educational achievement needed to perform a task. Further, Prien and Hughes' study, knowledge required was linked with levels of education.

## 3.0 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Job description and specification are importance to the organizations for implementing other human resource management activities. This study looks whether the selected organization has job description and specification and what are the contents of job descriptions & job specifications? Are they similar in the selected organization?

## 4.0 OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The following objectives were defined in this study. They were:

- To explore the Job description and specification in selected organization



- To examine precisely what are the element or content of job descriptions & job specifications and
- To determine whether or not in particular organization. This study demonstrated that the job specifications and job descriptions look different from one another jobs.

### 5.0 METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted in selected 18 organizations in Sri Lanka. The interview method was adopted to collect the primary data. Secondary data also collected via review their job description and specification Interview guideline was developed to collect the data from the owner/ HR manager of the particular organization. Researcher selected five jobs and its description and specification from 18 organizations. These five jobs and its title differ from organization to organization. These selected organizations are categorized into banking and finance, government organization, garment factory, and other organization. Qualitative analyses were conducted to analyze the collected data. The table 1.1 shows the details of the organizations.

**Table 1.1 Details of the sample organization**

Name of the organization and its products/services	Name of the organization and its products/services
1. Nippon Paint Lanka (PVT) LTD – Paint Business	10. Mihila Apparel Factory - Garment Factory
2. NNE Distributors – Deliver the fast moving consumer goods.	11. Embilipitiya Base Hospital – Service organization
3. Puttalam Salt Ltd – sell to salt.	12. Daya Apparel – Garment Factory.
4. LOLC – Finance Company	13. Damro showroom in Hambantota – Furniture Manufacturing & sales
5. Yattogoda Agriculture center – Farming Organization.	14. Huruluwewa Hospital – Service organization
6. Mega Company (Pvt.) Ltd – Construction	15. People’s Bank Murunkan Branch – Banking sector

company	
7. Star Garments Ltd – Garment Factory.	16. Nature secretes company – Beautician company.
8. Interfashion Garment – Garment factory.	17. Bank of Ceylon Badulla branch – Banking sector
9. NSB Hettipola branch – Banking Sector	18. DS office - Jaffna

### 6.0 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Researcher selected five job holders from 18 organizations. These five job holders differ from organization to organization. These 18 organizations categorized banking and finance, government organization, garment factory, and other organization.

#### Banking and Finance Organizations

##### a) Lanka Orix Leasing Company

In LOLC Mullitivu Branch discussed with branch manager five of the jobs in this data collection. Job titles are Cashier, Assistant Branch Accountant, Office Clerk, Credit Officer and Administration Assistant. Cashier, Assistant Branch Accountant and Credit officer has to report to the Accountant. Office Clerk and Administration Assistant report to the Branch Manager. Job location is in Mullitivu Branch. The head office clearly defined the Job description and Specification for each job. The Job description and specification are practiced at the branch level. Job descriptions consist of Job title, Location, Report to, Duties and Responsibilities for each job. Job specification consists of qualifications, experience and skills for each job.

*“Branch manager told that they use job description and specification for several purposes. It is very useful human resource management tool to manage human resources effectively and efficiently in his branch”.*

##### b) People’s Bank Murunkan Branch

People’s bank Murunkan branch has not maintained the job description and job specification. It is developed by the Human Resource division of Head office. The branch level they get things from employees via using the job description. In the data collection, the researcher could collect five different types of jobs. They are Branch Manager, Audit Manager, Loan officer, Analyst Bankruptcy, and



Business Banking officer. *During the interview branch manager told that "most of the officer level staff are graduates"*. The analysis of selected job could observe that main duties of the jobs maintain customer relationship and deal with money.

**c) Bank of Ceylon Badulla Branch**

Bank of Ceylon also has maintained the job description and job specification at the branch level. Branch manager practice some of the elements of the job description in day to day work such as responsibilities and accountabilities of job holders, reporting line, working hours and rate of pay.

In data collection five types of jobs were discussed with the branch manager. They are Branch Manager, Office in Charge (Pawning), Office in Charge (Loans), Marketing Manager, and Assistant Accountant.

The responsibilities, accountabilities and rate of pay are differ from person to person, because it is based on their position. All job holders working time 8.00am to 5.00pm, Monday to Friday.

**d) NSB Hettipola Branch**

NSB branch level has not maintained job description and job specification, it is developed and maintain at the head office level. Branch level they practice some of the aspects in the job description such as reporting line, duties and responsibilities. In the above branch researcher reviewed the following jobs Branch Manager, Banking Assistant, Marketing Manager, Officer in Charge (fixed deposit) and Officer in Charge (loan). Branch manager reports to Area General Manager. Others report to Branch Manager.

**Government Organization**

**a) Embilipitiya Base Hospital**

Job titles of the Base hospital are Doctor, Dentist, Psychiatrist, Health Service Manager and Medical transcriptionist. The job description consist of job title, superior (report to), subordinates, location, duties & responsibilities, hours of work and rate of pay. All job holders report to Distinct Medical Officer Their duties & responsibilities are clearly defined in the Job description. Job specifications are also available for each job. All the above job title expects the degree as basic qualification and expect to experience also. The ministry of health developed the job description and specification. Some of the aspects in the job description are practiced at the base hospital level.

**b) Yattogoda Agriculture Center**

Job titles in Yattogoda Agriculture Centre are Agriculture Research and Production Assistant, Agricultural Officer, Export Agriculture Department Officer, Rubber Development Officer and Divineguma Development Officer. The organization clearly differentiates the job description from the job specification. Job description divided as four parts. These are Job identification, Duties and responsibilities, Service condition and Supervisor. Job identification includes job title, division, nature of designation, grade and wages, service department, & reports to. Under the duties and responsibilities mention the job holder's duties & responsibilities. Under the service condition service time period, job exchange policy, designation permanent. Finally who is that supervisor of job holders?

Nature of designation describe as permanent or temporary. Grade and wage mean each job holders grade and their basic salary. Agriculture Research and Production Assistant, & Export Agriculture Department officer they are Grade I officers and their basic salary also Rs. 24,625/= . Only Agricultural Officer Gr – II and his basic salary Rs.17, 650/= . Rubber development officer and Divineguma development officers are Gr III, and their basic salary Rs 15,265/=. Duties and responsibilities based on their job. Job specification includes educational qualification, experience, age, language skills, special qualification and physical fitness. Under the educational qualification Divineguma development officers only have degree holders. Others are required to have G.C.E.O/L and G.C.E. A/L and also trained at the Agriculture Intuitions. All job holders recruiting age limit is 25 – 45. Under the special qualification they expect computer knowledge. Physical fitness also they expect. They develop and practice them.

**c) Huruluwewa Hospital**

This hospital effectively maintains job description and job specification. Under the job description the following are included job title, nature of designation, salary scale, location, reports to, service time, job summary, and job duties and responsibilities. Job titles are Medical officer, Nurse, Midwife, Attendant, and Labour. Here all types of jobs are selected. This hospital located in Regional department of health service. All job holders report to Director of health service. Here service time differ from other organization. 7.00am – 1.00pm, 1.00pm – 7.00pm. 7.00pm – 7.00am. Based on their job titles their



duties and responsibilities also changed. Under job specification includes on educational qualification, language skills, and physical fitness. Medical officer required educational qualification as MBBS degree. Nurse and Midwife required A/L 3 pass, and Attendant wants O/L pass. In addition they expect physical fitness as one of the elements in Job specification. This hospital is also same as above hospital in developing the job description and job specification.

#### **d) Divisional Secretary Office**

Each job has the job description and job specification. The job description consist of division, ministry, job analyst, wage category, report to, and job code. Job specification includes education qualification only. Job titles found in the Divisional Secretary Office are Human Resource Development Assistant, Public Management Assistant, Additional District Register, Counseling officer, and development officer. All job title is available at the Vadamararchy North, Pointpedro but the job holder ministry differs from each persons. Human resource development assistant comes under Ministry of Productivity Promotion, and Public Management Assistant, Additional District Register, and Development Officer comes under the Ministry of Public Administration and Home affairs and counseling officer's comes under the Ministry of child development and women affairs. Job code and wage category differ job to job. Qualification for Management Assistant post is G.C.A/L. Other post listed above request degree holders.

#### **Garment Factory**

##### **a) Mihila Apparel Factory**

Job titles are Assistant Manager, Administration Manager, Accountant, Manager and Production Assistant. They develop and maintain job description and job specification. Job descriptions of the Mihila consist of job title, report to, location, job duties and hours of work. Work days and arrival and work time also incorporated in the Job description as Monday to Saturday 7.30 am to 4.30 pm. Job specification includes qualification & skills. They expect degree or diploma with experience & communication skills also.

##### **b) Daya Apparel**

Job titles are Employment Assistant, Human Resource Manager, Marketing Executive, Finance

Officer and General Manager. Daya apparel develop and implement the job description & job specification. Job description include job title, division, department, job analyst, data analyst, wages and duties & responsibilities

##### **c) Star Garments Ltd**

Star garments conduct job analysis and develop the job description and job specification. Under the job description included job title, reports to, and duties.

Job titles are Accountant, Receptionist, Security guard, Production Supervisor and Human Resource Manager. Managerial level employees report to director board of the factory. Based on their job position their duties also differ. Under job specification education qualification only mentioned. Accountant and Human resource manager's basic qualification must be degree. Receptionist and production supervisor are high school and diploma qualification. Security guard qualification is O/L six subjects pass. They have not well maintained the job description and job specification.

##### **d) Interfashion Garment**

They develop and follow the job description and specification. The job descriptions consist of job title, accountability, brief description, working hours and rate of pay. Five types of job holders are selected in this organization. They are Assistant Accountant, Accounts Clerk, Coordinator, Quality Control Executive, and Assistant Manager. Working hours of the job holders in that organization are 8.00am to 5.00pm. the managerial level employees report to director of the company. They defined specification for all job. Managerial level people are expected to have academic or professional qualification and relevant experience at least one year experience.

#### **Other Organization**

##### **a) Nippon Paint Lanka (PVT) Ltd**

Job titles are Regional Sales manager, Assistant Manager, Assistant Sales Manager, Sales Executive & Marketing Coordinator. These 05 Job holders report to the Marketing manager. All Job have Job description and job specification but job description included only job title, division, report to & key responsibilities too. All job responsibilities mention on sales target, because this is a private organization. Job specification included in person qualification and experience. Here all job are higher level post so this company expect the degree holders, professional qualifications, experience and customer relationship also.



**b) NNE distributors**

Job titles are Production Manager, Human Resource Manager, Accounts Clerk, Assistant Account and Sales Representative. In this organization, all Jobs are divided as Job description and job specification. Job description consist of Job title, Report to, Location, Duties and Responsibilities. Production manager report to director & responsible for production process. Human Resource Manager also report to director & responsible for employees. Accountant Clerk & Assistant Accountant report to Accountant. Their responsibilities for financial activities. Sales Rep report for the Sales Manager. Job specification include in Academic qualification, Professional qualification & Experience. .

**c) Puttalam Salt LTD.**

Job titles are Administrative Assistant, Communications Manager, Marketing Manager, Mechanical engineer & Administrative Credit Controller. This organization has not divided job description from job specification. But they keep the job titles, branch, Report to, Hours of work, duties & responsibilities & qualification only. Here don't expect the degree holders. They expect qualified to SLQF level g – ordinary degree or appropriate SVQ4.

**d) Damro showroom in Hambantota**

Job titles are Sales executive, Branch Manager, Showroom Supervisor, Showroom Assistant and Finance accountant. Job description and specification are developed by the Head office. The job descriptions consist of Job title, Branch, Department, Principal Responsibilities & Duties. Skills required are in the Job specification. Sales executive, Showroom supervisor, & Showroom Assistants department are performing sales and marketing. Branch manager report to the head office. They mostly expect the communication skills for market their product.

**e) Mega company (Pvt) Ltd**

This organization has not maintained the job description and job specification. They have it only in the document. In the Job description and specification they indicated what the requirements are. Only they record educational qualification, experience and their job duties and responsibilities. Job holders are Assistant General Manager, Coordinator, Project Manager, Manager Planning Development, Financial Consultant and Senior Accountant. All job holders have relevant degree and experience.

**f) Nature secrete company**

This organization has not maintained standard the job description and job specification. Only they record educational qualification, and their job duties. Job holders are Construction Manager, Cashier, Production Supervisor, Marketing Manager and Human Resource Manager. Construction manager, marketing manager and human resource managers are degree holders. Cashier and production supervisors are A/L pass.

## 7.0 FINDINGS

From the analysis and discussion the research revealed that Banking and finance organization are developing and maintain the job description and specification at the head office level. Some of the elements of the job description and specifications are practiced at the branch level managing the business operations. Even though the organizations involve similar activities, the job titles differ organization to organization.

Government organizations job description and specification differ from the finance and banking sector. The job title, duties, responsibilities, salary scale, and duty time differ within the government sector based on the activities performed by the organization. The job descriptions are developed by the relevant ministry.

As far as concern Garment Industries, they develop and practice job description and specification for all jobs. The job titles are similar among the organization. They give more important for specification. They consider academic and professional qualifications for staffing.

In other organization, some small medium size enterprises have not developed job description and specification systematically. They have job specification which is used for staffing. Large organizations have well developed Job description and specification for each job. They use it for several purposes in the organization.



## 8.0 RECOMMENDATION & CONCLUSION

This study reveals that organizations practice job description and specification at different level based on the organization size, type etc. The job description and specification are important to implement other human resource management activities such as recruitment, selection, tarring and performance appraisal etc. Except few organizations, most of the organization develop and maintain job description and specification. Some types of organization are not maintaining it, because they have not proper knowledge and skills. Therefore those who are not practicing concentrate more on developing them via properly analyze the job. It request to develop human resource management knowledge and skills to the staff.

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