

REACHING THE CAREER AND SOCIAL MOBILITY GOALS THROUGH HIGHER EDUCATION

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This study investigates the family background, student characteristics and learning environment that shape the female graduates to acquire competencies which facilitate them to move up in the career and society. When considering the social mobility of graduates, everyone does not show a common pattern but each person has a different level of achievement in the contemporary Sri Lankan society. Even with concepts like "Free Education" for all from pre-school level up to the university education, this system has failed to behave as a fair means of providing equal opportunities of social mobility. Theoretical assertions on forms of capital of Pierre Bourdieu are applied to describe how social inequalities are created, focusing on socio – economic differences. A sample of 12 female graduates who have completed their degrees and been employed for more than 10 years was selected using purposive sampling method and data were gathered through life story narrations and observations. The results are expected to reveal the factors that impact the students to achieve their goals in terms of social mobility.

Keywords: *Female graduates; Forms of capital; Social mobility*
