



**CONTRIBUTIONS OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING
IN FULFILLING THE EXPECTATION OF THE
YOUTH IN SRI LANKA**

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ABSTRACT

Sri Lankan education system mainly focuses on textbook based learning. However, textbook based education cannot address to the labor market demand in new technological, fast growing industrial world. Currently, formal education is compulsory for all children up to a certain age. According to Central bank statistics for year 2019, Youth (15-24 years) unemployment rate, which continued to be at higher levels, recorded 21.5 per cent during 2019, which was a marginal increase from 21.4 per cent recorded during the previous year. Unemployment would be one of the main reasons of youth unrest, depression and insurgencies. Resulting youth frustration has been at the heart of the three youth insurrections that Sri Lanka has experienced since the early 1970s. Due to high unemployment rate, youth employment in informal sectors is fairly high. Further, university graduates frequently demand on government jobs instead of skill-based jobs due to lack of job-based skills and competencies such as language and IT skills. Hence, a solid bridge is needed to fill the gap between our education system and the job market demand locally and internationally. The main objectives of this study are to analyze the relationship between vocational training and youth expectation fulfillment in current context in Sri Lanka and analyze the importance of identifying vocational training gaps between current education and job market movement in Sri Lanka. To analyze this scenario, this survey has been designed by the researcher using 468 graduates from Univotech on convenient sampling method and 20 job holders who completed vocational training courses with reputed training centers using purposive sampling methods. According to the above survey result, it is revealed that majority of respondents have negative impression with current job market trend. They expressed that School leavers are facing difficulties to find a suitable job due to skill gaps which demanding current job market movement. Responses negatively reacted to current school and university education system and positively reacted to vocational training education in current labor demand perspective. Since, school leavers are not trained for blue color jobs; it is difficult to find a suitable job for unskilled students locally and internationally with high remuneration. During the structure interviews with 20 job holders with vocational training qualifications, it is revealed that, they are well earners with satisfactory life-style due to skills and competencies they gained through vocational training. Majority clearly mentioned that, without vocational training, they would not have been gained this kind of lifestyle and school education was not enough to find a suitable job in current context. Current vocational training system is not 100 percent responsive to change in demand for skilled labor. Policy makers have to concentrate on skill-based education for school and university students instead of current text book based education system. Further, educational policy makers should concentrate to modify current vocational training areas instead of following traditional curriculums. Innovations are needed to cater service, agriculture and manufacturing-based economy. Hence, it is proved that to fulfill youth expectation, vocational training plays a vital role as vocational training qualification and skills gained make youth perfectly fit to the job market completion in locally and internationally. Incase of they have better expectancy upon occupations as well as entrepreneurship while no hopes on developmental and independence.

Key word: Vocational Training, Occupational Expectancy, Entrepreneurship Expectancy