TRACER STUDY ON FUTURE PROSPECTS OF THE ADVANCED LEVEL SCIENCE STUDENTS IN SRILANKA

A PROJECT REPORT PRESENTED BY

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Abstract

In 1997, the educational reforms were introduced to bring about manpower needed for the development of the country. This tracer study discusses how far the advanced level science students achieved this goal. The study aimed at finding out the extent of the advanced level science stream students were able to secure on employment related to their advanced level subjects. For this purpose, a sample of 1500 advanced level science past students who left school since 2000, were selected in the Central , North-Western, Northern and Eastern provinces including different nationalities, family backgrounds, geographical backgrounds, standards of schools, urban, semi-urban and rural, remote and disadvantaged areas. The selected sample represented 30% of the population.

A questionnaire was developed to collect the data and views of the sample. Copies of the questionnaire were mailed. Some of the questionnaires were administered by visiting. Ten persons were interviewed with their consent, for further clarifications and conformity of the data.

Analysis of data collected through the questionnaire and the interviews held revealed that, about 80% of advanced level science students who left the school since 2000 were involved in higher education, professional and vocational training coursers, while 20% were not involved following any courses. About 45% of them were involved in the fields relevant to their advanced level science subjects, while 55% of them were not involved in the related fields. About 40% of them were already employed, while 58% were under employed and 2% were not keen to do a job. Among the employees, 43% were in the government sector, 41% were in the private sector and 16% were in other sectors. About 29% of them were involved in the fields related to chemistry. There was no considerable correlation between the grade five scholarship and G.C.E. O/L examination performance, while there was a considerable correlation between G.C.E. O/L and G.C.E. A/L examination performance. In the Biological science stream, performance of females was greater than males, while in Physical science stream, performance of males was greater than females.

According to the students view, major reasons influenced for unemployment were low standard of English, lack of knowledge in Information Technology, poor performances at advanced level, and absence of opportunities in the field of specialty.

Most of the science past students were agreed with G.C.E. A/L compulsory practical work, General English paper, and General Information Technology at G.C.E. A/L, while most of them were disagreed with English medium instruction, z score and projects.

Most of the employers were willing to accept science students for the jobs even without having knowledge of the work that they have to do. There was a considerable demand for science qualified personnel in other fields, such as Information Communication Technology, Management and Business Administration.

According to the above results, the following conclusions and recommendations were made.

As most of the advanced level science students are unable to involve in the fields related to their subjects, it is suggested that more opportunities in such fields should be increased at higher education, professional and vocational training institutes. Awareness, Diploma and Degree programs of the science related fields should be revised to meet the needs of the present job market. Practical skills of the science students should be improved at the advanced level and they should be motivated to be involved in the fields with higher demand rather than waiting for jobs after the advanced level.