

NATIONAL POLICY FRAMEWORK
ON
HIGHER EDUCATION
AND
TECHNICAL & VOCATIONAL
EDUCATION



NATIONAL EDUCATION COMMISSION
SRI LANKA

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National Policy Framework
On
Higher Education
And
Technical & Vocational Education



National Education Commission

Sri Lanka

Foreword

I am glad that the National Education Commission is able to present a comprehensive National Policy Framework covering all areas of Tertiary Education, namely the Universities, other Higher Education Institutions and Technical and Vocational Education Institutions in Sri Lanka.

Previously, in 1995 'A Workshop on Higher Education Policy' was held and after further deliberations, in June 1996 a document titled 'National Policy on University Education' had been formulated and forwarded to HE the President. Again, in May 2000 the NEC had submitted a document on 'University Admissions Policy'.

All these documents appear to have confined their attention only to University Education. The need for an extensive National Policy Framework on Tertiary Education covering all areas of education in Sri Lanka commensurable with the National Policy Framework on General Education completed in 2003 was badly felt. With this objective, two workshops were held with the participation of relevant stakeholders and foreign invitees. A number of research projects were also undertaken. The task of preparing the draft proposals had been entrusted to a group of selected resource persons representing all areas of Higher Education including the Universities and the Technical and Vocational Education sector. The recommendations made by Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission had been used to formulate the policies in part two of this document. The draft policy recommendations were subjected to detailed discussion at the Standing Committees on University Education and Technical and Vocational Education. At another two day workshop, all policy recommendations were discussed so as to arrive at a consensus before preparing the draft report.

Taking into consideration the observations and suggestions made at the workshop, and also at a number of Commission meetings, a final draft was prepared which again had been subjected to a strenuous process of editing.

This document has been divided into three parts as follows:

- Part One : Higher Education
- Part Two : Technical and Vocational Education
- Part Three :
 - Quality Assurance Assessment and Accreditation
 - Career Guidance and Counselling

The National Education Commission takes pleasure in presenting to HE the President, for the first time, a comprehensive National Policy Framework on Higher Education to cover all sectors of Tertiary Education in Sri Lanka. These proposals no doubt conform to the principles of education contained in the *Mahinda Chintana, vision for a new Sri Lanka*.

I wish to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to all those who contributed to the success of this endeavour. I also wish to thank the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank for all the assistance rendered. And of course I will be failing in my duty if I do not mention the assistance and encouragement offered by the Hon. Prof. Wiswa Warnapala, Former Minister of Higher Education, Hon. Susil Premjayanth, Former Minister of Education and Hon. Piyasena Gamage, Former Minister of Vocational and Technical Education.

Prof. A V Suraweera
Chairman
National Education Commission
11-06-2010

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ABBREVIATIONS

ICT	Information and Communication Technology
CBA	Competency Based Assessments
CGTTI	Ceylon – German Technical Training Institute
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CVCD	Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Directors
DEMP	Distance Education Modernization Project
DTET	Department of Technical Education and Training
FGS	Faculties of Graduate Studies
GCE (A/L)	General Certificate of Education (Advanced Level)
GPA	Grade Point Average
HEI	Higher Education Institution
ICTAD	Institute of Construction Training and Development
IRQUE	Improving Relevance and Quality of Undergraduate Education
ITUM	Institute of Technology, University of Moratuwa
LMIS	Labor Market Information System
NAITA	National Apprenticeship and Industrial Training Authority
NCS	National Competency Standards
NEC	National Education Commission
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
NITESL	National Institute of Technical Education of Sri Lanka
NQAAC	National Quality Assurance and Accreditation Council
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
NYSC	National Youth Services Council
OUSL	Open University of Sri Lanka
PGI Arch	Post Graduate Institute of Archeology
PGIP & BS	Post Graduate Institute of Pali and Buddhist Studies
PGIS	Post Graduate Institute of Science
QMS	Quality Management Systems
SDC	Staff Development Centers
SLIATE	Sri Lanka Institute of Advanced Technical Education
TVEC	Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UGC	University Grants Commission
UNIVOTEC	University of Vocational Technology
VTA	Vocational Training Authority of Sri Lanka

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Prof. Lal Perera, former Vice-Chairman of the NEC who was mainly responsible for co-ordinating and preparing the initial draft of the report.

Dr. T A Piyasiri who functioned as co-ordinator of the Technical and Vocational Education section.

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Dr. Harsha Aturupane, Senior Economist, World Bank who took a keen interest in the entire process of preparing this document.

The team of World Bank Consultants who participated at the workshops.

Members of the National Education Commission, the Standing Committee on University Education, and the Standing Committee on Technical and Vocational Education.

Panel of resource persons who prepared the initial draft of the policy document of the University and Higher Education Sector.

Members of the six working groups of the TVET sector who prepared the initial document on Technical and Vocational Education and Training.

The Vice Chairman, the Secretary, the Senior Programme Officer and all other members of the NEC for their unreserved co-operation.

The National Education Commission and its Functions

Extracts from the National Education Commission Act. No. 19 of 1991.

- (1) The functions of the Commission shall be -
 - (a) to make recommendations to the President, on educational policy in all its aspects, with a view to ensuring continuity in educational policy and enabling the education system to respond to changing needs in society, including an immediate review of educational policy and plan or plans and the making of recommendations to the President, on a comprehensive National Educational Policy;
 - (b) to review and analyse periodically, the National Educational Policy and Plan or plans in operation and where necessary, to recommend to the President, changes in such Policy. Plan or Plans;
 - (c) to advise the President on any other matter relating to education which may be referred to it by the President, for its advice.

- (2) Without prejudice to the generality of the matters in respect of which recommendations may be made by the Commission under subsection (1), the Commission may make recommendations to the President on the following matters:-
 - (a) the changes in curricula and teaching methods in educational institutions that are necessary to match education to employment, industry and social needs;
 - (b) the adequacy of guidance and counseling to students in educational institutions, to enable them to develop their potential to the full;
 - (c) the measures necessary to strengthen the links between educational institutions and the community;
 - (d) the development of educational institutions as resource centers for all round human development in the community;
 - (e) the measures necessary to reduce area-wise disparities among schools;
 - (f) the measures necessary to enhance the professional standing of teachers and other education service personnel;
 - (g) the alternate programmes that could be provided for the benefit of the children leaving primary and secondary schools prematurely, to enable them to develop their potential to the full;

- (h) the changes in curricula necessary to foster the cultural and religious aspirations of students of all communities and religions;
- (i) the legislative changes necessary to give effect to any such recommendations.

The National Education Policy includes the following matters:-

Aims and goals of education; the structure of the educational system-per-school, primary, secondary, tertiary, higher, informal, nonformal, adult, special, professional and religious; the establishment, location and distribution of educational institutions, including methods and criteria for admission of students and recruitment of teachers; the content of education, including medium of instruction, diversification of curricula, text books and learning material, the place or religious knowledge, observance and practice, assessment and evaluation, the examination system, certificates, diplomas and academic awards and recognition of qualifications; recruitment, placement, disciplinary control and professional growth of education service personnel, including teachers, para – educational personnel, supervisors, and administrators; resources for education, including the mobilization of community participation, and ancillary services, physical education and sports.

**Members of the
National Education Commission
(w.e.f. 2006. April 10)**

Chairman

Prof. A. V. Suraweera

Vice Chairman (Policy and Planning)

Prof. Lal Perera (upto 2008.06.21)

Dr. G. B. Gunawardena (from 2008.09.02)

Ex - Officio Members

Prof. Gamini Samaranyake - Chairman, University Grants Commission

Mr. T. G. Jayasinghe - Chairman, Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission,

Appointed Members

Rev. Professor Bellanwila Wimalaratana Thero - Chancellor, University of Sri Jayawardenapura

Mr. Ariyaratna Hewage - Secretary, Ministry of Education (upto 21/02/2008)

Mr. M. M. N. D. Bandara - Secretary, Ministry of Education (from 21/02/2008)

Mr. H. P. Cashian Herath - Secretary, Ministry of Local Government & Provincial Councils,

Mr. A. Dayarathna - Director, Ministry of Finance and Planning, (upto 24/09/2006)

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Prof. S. Sandarasegaram - Dean, Faculty of Education, University of Colombo

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Prof. Dayantha Wijeyesekera - Team Leader, Technical Education Modernization Project

Prof. Rezvi Sheriff, Director - Post Graduate Institute of Medicine

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Mrs. N. M. Edussuriya - Principal, Leeds International School

Mr. Lakshman Hettiarachchi - Finance and Management Consultant

Secretary to the Commission

Mr. O. W. Ranjith Premasiri

Summary of Policy Recommendations

Part One

Higher Education

Chapter 1. General Introduction

State Universities

- Policy 1 : Develop the existing State Universities so as to offer maximum benefits to a wide spectrum of society, while maintaining high standards.*
- Policy 2 : Allow more autonomy to existing State Universities with regard to academic, administrative and financial matters.*
- Policy 3 : Support existing State Universities to keep abreast of the tide of modern strategies and developments in higher education.*

Chapter 2. Expansion of Higher Education

Admission and Selection Procedure of students for State Universities

- Policy 4 : Review the present admission procedure based on merit and district quota so as to minimize the present disparities within and among districts.*
- Policy 5 : Make provision to provide opportunities for Higher Education for all those seeking such education.*

Distance Mode of Higher Education

- Policy 6 : Establish multiple modes of delivery in the Higher Education Sector.*

Affiliated Institutions

- Policy 7 : Allow institutions to register under a parent university to prepare students for degree programmes*

Establishment of degree awarding institutions outside the purview of the UGC

- Policy 8 : Promote the establishment of non-state degree awarding institutions, subject to quality and accreditation requirements.*

Cross Border Higher Education

Policy 9 : *Regulate establishment of Higher Education Institutes with cross border affiliations by ensuring that the mother institution and the specific programme of work is accredited in the home country, as well as locally.*

Lateral Entry to University Education

Policy 10 : *Promote a scheme for lateral entry to university education*

Professional Bodies offering Higher Education

Policy 11 : *Recognize qualifications equivalent to Degrees, Diplomas and Certificates awarded by professional bodies subject to the quality and accreditation requirements*

Chapter 3. Academic Programmes

Relevance

Policy 12 : *Design the curriculum content of academic programmes so as to provide sufficient opportunities for practical experience in skills required for working in the relevant profession / occupation.*

Policy 13 : *Encourage self directed and reflective learning, independent thinking and creativity, critical analysis and application of knowledge and skills of problem solving.*

Diversity and Duplication

Policy 14 : *Encourage development of diverse programmes of study to cater to the needs of society and offer them through multiple modes of delivery including distance and on line learning.*

Uniform standards, academic freedom, flexibility, student mobility and academic calendars

Policy 15 : *Introduce student exchange programmes, both nationally and internationally, in collaboration with government, non-government organizations and industry.*

Chapter 4. Developing Linkages

Developing Linkages Among Universities

Policy 16 : Promote linkages among Universities.

Developing linkages between University and Technical and Vocational Education Sectors

Policy 17 : Develop linkages between Universities and Technical and Vocational Education Institutions.

Policy 18 : Promote linkages among Higher Education Institutions and Industry, Services and other sectors.

Developing Linkages with Professional bodies

Policy 19 : Encourage Higher Education Institutions to develop linkages with professional bodies.

Linkages with International Institutions

Policy 20 : Promote linkages between Sri Lankan and international Higher Education Institutions.

Enhancing employment opportunities

Policy 21 : Develop linkages with industry and service sector in order to widen the opportunities for employment of graduates.

Internships and training placements

Policy 22 : Introduce internships and training placements for students in Higher Education Institutes.

Sharing of resources

Policy 23 : Establish a scheme which enables Universities and other Higher Education Institutes to share their resources.

Policy 24 : Orient the Universities and other Higher Education Institutes to be responsive to the needs of industry.

Enhancing Industry investment in Higher Education

Policy 25 : Promote investment by industry in Higher Education.

Chapter 5. Research, Innovation and Creativity

Developing a research culture

Policy 26 : Build up a critical mass of knowledgeable and competent research personnel.

Policy 27: Train undergraduates and postgraduates in independent learning and critical thinking through the promotion of research.

Ethical Guidelines

Policy 28 : Emphasize the importance of ethical considerations in conducting research.

Basic and applied research

Policy 29 : Train a critical mass of local scientists competent in identifying and utilizing indigenous resources in a sustainable manner and increase the support for applied and development oriented research.

Dissemination of Research findings

Policy 30 : Develop effective communication skills among all researchers for dissemination of Research findings.

Getting Research into Practice

Policy 31 : Establish suitable mechanisms to transfer research findings to relevant stakeholders

Policy 32 : Increase funds for local research from the State, from foreign sources, and from the corporate sector.

Mechanisms for Protecting Intellectual Property Rights

Policy 33 : Increase institutional support to obtain intellectual property rights for individuals and teams engaged in research.

Incentives for Research

Policy 34 : Offer incentives for academics to remain engaged in research throughout their careers.

Chapter 6. Higher Education and National Development

Responsiveness to national development needs

Policy 35 : Encourage HEIs to be more responsive to the needs of community and industry in developing new courses, modifying existing courses and identifying research priorities.

Broadening capacity

Policy 36 : Encourage HEIs to achieve the right balance between job oriented and academically oriented courses.

Policy 37 : Encourage HEIs to ensure that all students, irrespective of their study discipline, acquire generic skills, a positive work ethic and ability to adapt to the world of work

Encouraging intellectual dialogue and debate

Policy 38 : Create an intellectual environment conducive to independent thinking, with free dialogue and debate, in all Higher Education Institutions

The public image

Policy 39 : Create a better public image of HEIs and encourage them to be involved in projects of direct benefit to the community.

Chapter 7. Student Discipline in Higher Education Institutes

Introduction

Policy 40 : Give more powers to strengthen administrators to maintain discipline in Higher Education Institutions

Inadequate staff-student interaction as a cause for indiscipline in HEIs

Policy 41: Encourage staff to engage in more extensive contact with students, both socially and academically.

Policy 42 : Strengthen democratic processes within Higher Education Institutions, particularly in respect of student union elections, and promote wider student participation in decision making.

Chapter 8. Postgraduate Institutes and Study Programmes

Strengthening existing postgraduate study programs

Policy 43 : Improve the quality and standards of postgraduate programs offered by different HEIs.

Establishment of postgraduate institutes

Policy 44 : Establish postgraduate institutes in all major fields of study

Establishment of centers of excellence

Policy 45 : Provide all facilities to develop universities and postgraduate institutes as centers of excellence

Chapter 9. Human Resources Management

Recruitment and Training of Staff

Policy 46 : Provide flexibility in the recruitment process, and make provision to retain qualified and competent staff in HEIs.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

Policy 47 : Provide sufficient opportunities and incentives for development of academics in their profession

Exposure of Staff to the World of Work

Policy 48 : Encourage academics to work outside HEIs, to broaden their experience in the world of work.

Management Training for Academic and Administrative Staff

Policy 49 : Provide academic and administrative staff of HEIs with opportunities to acquire awareness of administrative, financial and other regulations.

Chapter 10. Management and Administration

Autonomy and independence

Policy 50 : Provide adequate powers and autonomy to governing bodies to run HEIs for optimum performance.

Academic staff

Policy 51: *Establish a Code of Conduct for academic staff.*

Non-academic staff

Policy 52: *Ensure work norms for the non-academic staff*

Implementing Principles of Good Governance

Policy 53: *Encourage the compliance of the HEIs with their respective regulations, rules, circulars and directives which are aimed at providing guidelines for better controls and discipline.*

Corporate Plans

Policy 54: *Strengthen the capability and commitment of HEIs to prepare, implement and monitor corporate plans and action plans*

Management Information System for HEIs

Policy 55: *Establish a regularly updated, integrated, information system for the entire higher education sector.*

Restructuring Management Procedures

Policy 56: *Promote Higher Education Institutions to have their own systems and manuals covering all major operations, regularly revised and updated at institutional level.*

Policy 57: *Revise the University Establishments Code, which is the guide to the regulation of the administration of Higher Education Institutions, issued by the UGC in 1984, to suit the current needs of the system.*

Chapter 11. Financing Higher Education

Funding for higher education

Policy 58: *Allocate financial resources to state-funded HEIs on the basis of need and performance.*

Increasing funding for higher education

Policy 59: *Promote alternative sources of funding, including self-generated income and non-state sector investment*

Student financial aid

Policy 60: *Create a system that aids needy students in all HEIs*

Part Two

Technical and Vocational Education

Chapter 12. Technical and Vocational Education in Sri Lanka: Background

New legislation

Policy 61 : Create a legal environment that facilitates development initiatives and effective implementation of TVET.

Chapter 13. TVET Sector: Economic and Financial Aspects

Economic contribution of the TVET Sector

Policy 62 : Ensure that all TVET institutions in the state sector provide relevant statistics on an annual basis to the TVEC

Policy 63 : Require all registered private sector TVET providers to submit annual financial and statistical reports to the TVEC.

Financial Management

Policy 64 : Encourage state and private sector providers to use basic cost information uploaded to the TVEC in generating financial accounting reports

Policy 65 : TVEC should establish a Management Information System to facilitate generation of financial management reports by institutions

Alternative funding mechanisms

Policy 66 : Curricula and courses provided at state-run TVET institutions should be strictly responsive to economic and social demand and be maintained at national and international competitive levels.

Policy 67: Enhance active participation of industry sector employers in designing courses provided by state-owned TVET institutions.

Policy 68 : The legal provisions of state-run TVET institutions should ensure more financial autonomy.

Policy 69 : Rationalize courses to optimize the use of resources in state TVET institutions.

Supporting non-state sector institutions

Policy 70 : *Provide state assistance where necessary, to non-state sector TVET institutions.*

Policy 71 : *Encourage establishment of formal, long-term public-private-partnerships at institutional and training centre level.*

Coordination of donor assisted TVET initiatives

Policy 72 : *Ensure that donor/lender funding is utilized in a manner that is consistent with the national development plan for the TVET sector.*

Chapter 14. TVET Sector: image, effectiveness, and employability

Image based on resources and staff

Policy 73 : *Provide sufficient funds for the development of TVET institutions.*

Image based on services /courses

Policy 74 : *National Vocational Qualification certification should be the standard of competency in the TVET sector, in content delivery methodology and the overall evaluation process for education and training.*

Image based on the resultant occupations

Policy 75 : *Establish salary scales for certified craft personnel commensurate with the NVQ.*

Policy 76 : *Ensure due recognition of NVQ competency standards in recruitment to state-sector posts, and in awarding government contracts.*

Image based on partnerships

Policy 77 : *Encourage TVET institutions to establish partnerships to conduct training programmes for industry.*

Enhancing foreign employment opportunities for TVET qualified personnel

Policy 78 : *Create better foreign employment opportunities for TVET qualified personnel.*

Development of self employment and entrepreneurship skills

Policy 79 : *Develop entrepreneurship skills to promote self-employability.*

Access to TVET for Vulnerable groups

Policy 80 : Design customized TVET/livelihood training for vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.

Chapter 15. TVET Sector: Human Resource Management

Staff Development (state and non-state sectors)

Policy 81 : Develop staff through pre-service training and in-service exposure to industry.

Teacher Transfers

Policy 82 : Establish a transfer scheme in each training organizational network, based on accepted principles, that will ensure optimal delivery of its training programmes for the benefit of students.

Performance Development

Policy 83 : Develop and implement a Performance Appraisal (PA) system based on the assumption that staff personnel are competent professionals and that institutional frameworks exist to support their development.

Promotion of staff

Policy 84 : Develop and implement in each training organization, an internal promotional scheme which is effective, fair and systematic.

Chapter 16. Linking different educational and vocational qualifications

Linking technology and the world of work with general education

Policy 85 : Extend the resources of the TVET sector to the school system, through short term programmes on technology

Establishing Pathways for School Leavers to enter TVET

Policy 86 : Provide a seamless pathway for school leavers who do not have direct entry into higher education, to continue their education in the TVET system.

Linkages with higher education

Policy 87 : Establish linkages with higher education institutions in the area of research, programme development and in policy matters

Recognition of Non-NVQ programmes under NVQ framework

Policy 88 : Establish a standardized system to recognize non-NVQ programmes under the NVQ framework.

Part Three

- **Quality Assurance, Assessment and Accreditation**
- **Career Guidance and Counselling**

Chapter 17. Quality Assurance, Assessment and Accreditation

Policy 89 : Establish a National Quality Assurance and Accreditation Council (NQAAC) to cover all areas of Higher Education and Technical and Vocational Education in Sri Lanka.

Policy 90 : Establish a Common Credit and Qualifications framework for all Universities and Institutions involved in Higher Education

Quality Assessment System for Higher Education

Policy 91 : Establish a Quality Assessment system for Higher Education institutions, which includes internal as well as external assessment

Accreditation of Institutions / Programmes

Policy 92 : Make provisions for accreditation of institutions involved in Higher Education and programmes offered by them.

Adopting Good Practices in Delivery of TVET

Policy 93 : Promote TVET providers to adopt good practices for efficient and effective delivery of training

Registration of Training Institutions

Policy 94 : All TVET providers operating in Sri Lanka should register with TVEC to assure quality of training

Accreditation of courses

Policy 95 : Establish an accreditation and quality assurance framework for all TVET institutions.

Policy 96 : Recognize institutions to conduct competency-based assessments (CBA) for the award of NVQ

Quality Management Systems (QMS)

Policy 97 : Make QMS the essential tool for the maintenance and upkeep of course accreditation

National Competency Standards

Policy 98 : Develop National Competency Standards and Assessment Criteria for occupations based on the labour market analysis.

Competency Based Assessments (CBA)

Policy 99 : Assess skills / competencies against requirements of the relevant National Competency Standard

Chapter 18. Career Guidance and Counselling

Career guidance and counselling for students in Universities and other HEIs

Policy 100 : Enhance the capacity of career guidance units, so that they provide an efficient service to students in HEIs.

Career Guidance and Counselling in the TVET Sector

Policy 101 : Establish a career guidance network for the TVET Sector.

Psycho-social counselling

Policy 102 : Establish units to provide psycho-social counselling.

Part One

Higher Education

Chapter 1. General Introduction

1.1 The present system of university education in Sri Lanka

The history of university education in Sri Lanka goes back to the establishment of the University of Ceylon in Colombo in 1942 by the amalgamation of two reputed institutions, namely the Ceylon Medical College (Estd. 1870) and the Ceylon University College (Estd. 1921) by the Ceylon University Ordinance No. 20 of 1942.

The seat of this University, which was in Colombo, was shifted to Peradeniya in 1952. With the establishment of another University under the name of the University of Ceylon, Colombo in 1957, there were two Universities. The two leading seats of oriental learning in the country, Vidyodaya Pirivena and Vidyalkara Pirivena, were elevated into full-fledged universities in 1959. With the establishment of other universities from time to time, Sri Lanka now has 15 universities in all, including the Open University. In addition, there are 11 Post Graduate Institutes affiliated to these Universities.

All these Universities and Institutions function under the purview of the University Grants Commission (UGC). Undergraduate students are admitted to these Universities through a common examination, namely the GCE (Advanced Level) examination conducted by the Department of Examinations, and a selection procedure conducted by the UGC.

Besides the above universities, there are three other universities, namely the University of Buddhist and Pali Studies, the Kotelawala Defence University, and the University of Vocational Technology (UNIVOTEC), which are not under the UGC.

1.2 Limited access to University Education

In Sri Lanka, admission to Universities is highly competitive and the system has several barriers that hinder access of students to higher education. Each year, about 200,000 students sit for the GCE (A/L) examination, and 40 – 60% of them qualify for admission to the universities. However, since the number of available places is limited, less than 20,000 are selected for admission. There is controversy in different quarters with regard to admission criteria to higher education institutions, particularly in respect of the GCE (A/L) examination. Accordingly the mode of selection needs careful consideration.

1.2.1 Barriers relating to Policy Issues

Admission of students to Universities in Sri Lanka is based on criteria laid down from time to time by the University Grants Commission with the concurrence of the Ministry of Higher Education.

The following are the salient features of the present criteria for admission to Universities.

- i Selection of students made on the basis of the rank order prepared on the average Z Scores obtained by them at the G.C.E. (A/L) Examination.
- ii The minimum requirement laid down for eligibility for applying to the Universities.
 - (a) at least 'S' Grades in all three approved subjects, with a minimum total mark of 150 and
 - (b) a minimum mark of 30% for the Common General Paper

In the case of Arts courses (i.e. Arts, Humanities, Communication Studies, Peace and Conflict Resolution, Islamic Studies, Arabic Language etc.) admission is made on an all-island merit basis subject to the condition that the total number admitted from a given district will not be below the total number admitted from that district in the base academic year namely 1993/94. Admission to courses of study in Ayurveda, Unani and Siddha Medicine too is made on an all-island merit basis.

Admissions to all courses other than the courses stipulated above are made on dual criteria, namely: all-island merit, and district-merit basis.

Admission Under All Island Merit criteria:

- (i) Up to 40% of the available places are filled in order of Z Scores ranked on an all island basis.

Admission Under District Merit criteria:

- (i) Up to 55% of the available places in each course of study are allocated to the 25 administrative districts in proportion to the total population, that is, on the ratio of the population of the district and the total population of the country.
- (ii) In addition, a special allocation up to 5% of the available places in each course of study is set apart for the under-mentioned 16 educationally disadvantaged districts in proportion to the population, that is, on the ratio of the population of each such district to the total population of the 16 districts;

- | | |
|-----------------|------------------|
| 1. Nuwara Eliya | 9. Batticaloa |
| 2. Hambantota | 10. Ampara |
| 3. Jaffna | 11. Puttalam |
| 4. Kilinochchi | 12. Anuradhapura |
| 5. Mannar | 13. Polonnaruwa |
| 6. Mullaitivu | 14. Badulla |
| 7. Vavuniya | 15. Monaragala |
| 8. Trincomalee | 16. Ratnapura |

The places allocated on the district merit quota given in (i) and (ii) above are filled in order of Z Scores ranked on the district basis. In selecting students for a given course of study, it is ensured that the quota allocated to any district under (i) and (ii) above is not below the quota in the base Academic Year of 1993/94.

These admission criteria are considered by certain sectors as one that deprives students of university admission for the reason of studying in schools in areas which are considered as developed. Students from schools in areas considered as underdeveloped, who may have a lower level of performance at the GCE (A/L) examination, are at an advantage over those from schools in the developed areas, due to the quota system.

1.2.2 Issues arising from the disparities among schools

In regard to school administration and management there are many disparities among schools. Accordingly there is the problem of maintaining uniformity in the distribution of infrastructure facilities and human resources among schools of different categories. Therefore, certain schools face difficulties in competing with other schools in preparing their students for the highly competitive examination.

In this context it is necessary to devise a programme to eliminate the disparities that exist in schools. This aspect should be looked into in a policy on higher education.

1.2.3 Social Barriers

It is evident that certain economic groups are at a disadvantageous position in providing facilities for their children to continue higher education. There are wide disparities in the pass rates for GCE (O/L) and (A/L) examinations across provinces. Despite near-universal enrollments at the primary level, rich-poor gaps in secondary and tertiary enrollments and rising private tuition usage suggest that children of low income families are at a disadvantage in gaining admission to higher education.

1.2.4 Economic Constraints

It is generally accepted that many students who pursue higher education face financial difficulties. However the Mahapola Bursary and other financial assistance to students do not seem to be sufficient.

1.3 Optimizing Higher Education Opportunities for All

It is generally accepted that higher education should be made available to all those who aspire to it. This could be achieved by broadening the opportunities to allow the students to enter higher education institutes. In this regard a Higher Education policy should draw attention to the following measures.

- Increasing the number of places in the existing Higher Education Institutes by providing human and physical resources
- Making provisions for lateral entry to Higher Education Institutions
- Providing more financial support to those who face difficulties to continue education due to economic constraints
- Introducing new methodologies such as distance learning mode

1.4 Establishing new HEIs

There has been a trend to establish new HEIs in recent times. The main objective behind establishing new HEIs is to increase opportunities for higher education and diversify higher education. The university intake which was confined to about 12,000 students some years back has now increased up to about 20,000 as a result of establishing new universities and faculties. The opening up of new universities and faculties is welcome if they conform to required norms. However, it is generally observed that there is a dearth of infrastructure facilities as well as human resources. Further, most of the newly established universities are spread out in several campuses in different locations, creating problems of administration and transportation. These problems have resulted in student unrest and non-peaceful environments in the universities. Therefore a policy on Higher Education should look into these aspects and lay down minimum norms and standards for the establishment of new faculties and institutions in order to maintain the sound functioning and efficiency of the Higher Education system.

1.5 Diversification of Academic Programmes

There is a general belief that the majority of university courses and programmes have not been updated over a long period of time. Hence there is dissatisfaction among the academics themselves, the public at large, the employers (state as well as private sector) about the nature, the quality and content of the courses offered

by universities. A complete change is desirable. Among other matters the following considerations need to be addressed:

- Improving the relevance of courses offered in the higher education institutes so that they conform to the needs of the country.
- Avoiding duplication of courses in different faculties and universities.
- Improving the delivery system in order to equip students with competencies required.
- Providing opportunities for teachers to use modern techniques of teaching instead of traditional approaches.
- Improving efficiency in methods and techniques used in assessment and evaluation of students' academic achievement.
- Providing more flexibility in academic programmes, and making allowance for students to have inter-university mobility.

This policy also should have clear indications about a quality assurance system of higher education.

1.6 Inadequate linkages between HEIs and Industry

Another persistent problem in the Higher Education system is the inadequate linkages between higher education and the requirements of the industry sector. The general opinion among employers in the private sector is that the courses offered and graduate out put of the local HEIs are academically biased and lacking in the competencies expected by them. There are two aspects to this problem.

1. Mismatch in the courses offered by HEIs in giving the relevant competencies needed for the industry sector.
2. Lack of co-ordination with the industry sector in designing courses and not obtaining necessary co-operation from the industry sector in developing curricula.

1.7 Research, innovation and creativity

Research, innovation and creativity are hallmarks of higher education. Both academic staff and students should realize their importance and be serious about research and generation of new knowledge. Weight should be given to higher qualifications in giving promotions to academic staff.

There is a need to take suitable measures to promote research and creative activity in HEIs. Necessary changes should be made in academic courses so as to

make every student engage in some kind of research. This would help improve their scientific and critical thinking and broaden their outlook.

Development of innovativeness and creativity must be emphasized among staff and as well as students. The academic courses and other affiliated activities need to be revamped in order to include opportunities for students to develop their innovativeness and creativity. There should be enough co-curricular activities with the objective of developing the above traits and also there should be a range of competitions for students to participate in such activities.

1.8 Higher education needs of academic staff

At present the opportunities available for academic staff to obtain higher qualifications in local and foreign universities are inadequate. This is more acute in the fields of Languages, Social Sciences and Humanities. Exposure to the structure of foreign education systems and their culture could play a vital role in changing the attitudes of new recruits towards higher education and society.

In this background, a new policy framework on higher education should draw its attention to the following aspects as well:

- Restructuring the present promotion scheme to include inbuilt motivational factors to encourage academics and administrators to engage in research, and obtain higher education qualifications.
- Arranging links with foreign universities to broaden opportunities for academics and administrators to obtain foreign exposure and experience.

1.9 Indiscipline and violence in HEIs

Indiscipline prevailing in the Higher Education sector is another issue that needs to be addressed. This is due to a series of problems, some of which are identified as follows:

- Certain students groups affiliated to different political parties create situations in order to strengthen their popularity and gain power within HEIs.
- Incidents of ragging of students sometimes lead to indecent and illegal behavior that result in violence among student groups.
- Student groups which are affiliated to certain political parties organize politically motivated protest and demonstrations that lead to indiscipline and violence.

The indiscipline and violent behavior of students is a factor detrimental to the sound functioning of the higher education system. Suitable measures need to be recommended in a policy on Higher Education in order to achieve undisturbed and continuous functioning of the system.

1.10 Private institutions offering degrees and diplomas

Institutions offering degrees and diplomas outside the purview of the UGC are a recent development in the field of higher education in Sri Lanka. Some of these institutions are affiliated to foreign universities while others are based locally and function independently. Apart from the Higher Education Institutions mentioned above, there are certain local institutions which have been given permission by the UGC to conduct certain courses of study and offer degrees.

1.11 Issues relating to students seeking foreign degrees

At present the number of students seeking admission to foreign universities is increasing. Parents send their children to foreign universities due to a variety of reasons. These include inadequacy of places for admission to local universities; preference in employment opportunities for certain foreign university graduates; better knowledge of English; indiscipline in the local universities; uncertainty of obtaining degrees within the stipulated time frames in local universities.

1.12 Financial constraints

There is a question raised by different sectors in society as to whether the state alone should bear the entire financial responsibility for higher education. The problem of funding or finding necessary funds to meet the requirements of an ever-expanding higher education system is seen in many countries. Broadening of higher education opportunities requires expenditure in constructing buildings, appointing additional staff, providing facilities for students and also giving loans and bursaries and fulfilling other requirements necessary for providing a sound education. Difficulties in finding required funds are experienced both by developing countries as well as developed countries in the world. New methodologies have to be seriously considered for generating funds to introduce attractive changes in the Higher Education Sector.

1.13 State Universities

Policy 1 : Develop the existing State Universities so as to offer maximum benefits to a wide spectrum of society, while maintaining high standards.

Policy 2 : Allow more autonomy to existing state universities with regard to academic, administrative and financial matters.

Policy 3 : Support existing State Universities to keep abreast of the tide of modern strategies and developments in higher education.

Chapter 2. Expansion of Higher Education

2.1 Introduction

Provision of opportunities for all those who are eligible to pursue higher education is essential and it is desirable that such opportunities are designed or created through a multi-sectoral approach. With the rapid global advancement in educational technologies and changing socio-political demands, choice in the mode of acquisition of such higher education should be globally acceptable and locally feasible. Although the development or creation of a framework for expansion should conform to similar global approaches, trends and needs, the local socio-political background in which such changes are expected to be introduced needs to be considered seriously. This chapter will address the following issues with regard to expansion of University education.

- Admission and Selection Procedure for State Universities
- Distance Mode of Higher Education
- Affiliated University Colleges
- Establishment of Degree Awarding Institutions outside the purview of the UGC
- Cross Border Higher Education
- Lateral Entry to University Education
- Professional Bodies offering Higher Education

2.2 Admission and Selection Procedure of students for State Universities

Introduction and Policy Issues

There is a significant demand for higher education by those who qualify for university admission at the GCE (A/L) examination each year. About 85% of those who qualified or 58% of those who applied for admission did not get an opportunity to enroll for a degree program in a State University in 2006. The GCE (A/L) examination is the basic qualification for admission to Universities and additional admission requirements for certain faculties are determined separately.

The overall opportunities available within the country are restricted and grossly inadequate to meet the demand. Presently, selection of students for State Universities is done by the UGC. The selection is done totally on merit basis except for selected high demand professional courses, such as medicine, dentistry, veterinary sciences, agriculture, food science and technology, health

sciences, engineering, architecture, IT and management and commerce where the district quota scheme is applied.

For such professional courses, the selection is done on the basis of 40% on merit, 55% on district and 5% on special quota for underdeveloped districts. However the actual enrolment of students in the three universities in the north and east is constrained by practical problems faced by the students due to the prevailing situation. In addition, a few other state institutions also provide opportunities in certain fields of study leading to degree, diploma and certificate courses.

The Open University of Sri Lanka (OUSL) functions independently to accommodate those who desire to undertake courses available through the open and distance learning (ODL) mode. A fair proportion of students who can afford it, seek admission to overseas institutes, partly because of the limited opportunities presently available locally. Some also enroll in courses offered by the cross border universities that provide higher education in collaboration mainly with non-state institutes in Sri Lanka.

Policy 4: Review the present admission procedure based on merit and district quota so as to minimize the present disparities within and among districts.

Policy 5: Make provision to provide opportunities for Higher Education for all those seeking such education.

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- Introduce scholarship/bursary/student loan schemes in order to enable any student who is eligible on merit, but has financial constraints, to enroll in higher education.
- Develop state initiatives to promote public-private partnership in higher education, to meet the growing demand.
- Identify the current issues in terms of the numbers involved, the funds needed and the relevant major policy changes to be implemented.
- Increase the state contribution to higher education.
- Create an environment that facilitates non state sector participation in Higher Education.

2.3 Distance Mode of Higher Education

Introduction and Policy Issues

The distance mode of Higher Education is widely expanding and accepted globally. The OUSL has already introduced courses in the ODL mode in several

key disciplines. It has now gained sufficient recognition both locally and within the South Asian region. However, although the OUSL has been in existence for over a quarter century, distance mode education is still not utilized optimally. . The participation of other higher education institutes in ODL mode of delivery, is also inadequate.

Policy 6 : *Establish multiple modes of delivery in the Higher Education Sector.*

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- Introduce dual mode courses in universities and other HEIs in order to expand accessibility and encourage flexible programmes.
- Facilitate the development of Human Resources necessary to prepare ODL based learning resources.
- Introduce programmes in HEIs to establish ODL units and identify measures to ensure sustainability.

2.4 Affiliated Institutions

Introduction and Policy Issues

In order to provide more higher education opportunities on a regional basis, it is necessary to establish higher education institutions attached to a parent university, subject to quality and accreditation requirements.

Policy 7 : *Allow institutions to register under a parent university to prepare students for degree programmes*

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- Ensure adequate physical and human resources for such institutes, so that they fulfill all quality and accreditation requirements.
- Ensure that examinations are conducted and degrees are awarded by the parent universities.

2.5 Establishment of degree awarding institutions outside the purview of the UGC

Introduction and Policy Issues

There are some degree awarding institutions established with the approval of the UGC and other HEIs which conduct courses on behalf of overseas and local universities. In the present context, there is a growing need to recognise the role played by non-state degree awarding institutions. It is imperative that desired

standards in aspects of their management, recruitment criteria, fee structure, academic programmes, staff, quality assurance and accreditation of such institutions, are identified.

Policy 8 : *Promote the establishment of non-state degree awarding institutions, subject to quality and accreditation requirements.*

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- Create a mechanism for establishment of non-state degree awarding institutions subject to the quality and accreditation requirements.
- Adopt procedures that are transparent and subject to scrutiny by a recognized and specified legal authority.
- All non-state degree awarding institutions should offer bursaries on merit to deserving students, for not less than 10% of their places.

2.6 Cross Border Higher Education

Introduction and Policy Issues

There are several institutions already operating in and outside Sri Lanka, providing higher education opportunities for Sri Lankan students. Many of them are franchised institutions operating on behalf of a recognized or unrecognized foreign degree awarding institutions. However, there is no legal entity or a regulating body to monitor the functioning of such institutions. There is no clear government policy towards encouraging local students to get enrolled in relevant institutes. The lack of an established authority to recognize the local institutions franchised by the overseas universities, is also a problem in this area.

Policy 9 : *Regulate establishment of Higher Education Institutes with cross border affiliations by ensuring that the mother institution and the specific programme of work is accredited in the home country, as well as locally.*

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- Establish a unit to study the activities of the institutions affiliated to foreign universities, which are already functioning in the country.
- Prepare a set of guidelines for recognition of overseas institutions.
- Ensure that the mother institution and the specific programme of work is accredited in the home country and if not, accredit them locally.

2.7 Lateral Entry to University Education

Introduction and Policy Issues

There is a great demand for higher education by those qualified at the GCE Advanced Level and Ordinary Level examinations, and also from the employed. A pathway should be available for those who cannot secure a place in a regular university or in any other HEI, to acquire higher qualifications. Each course conducted by a recognized institution should have a lateral entry programme to facilitate such needs. There is a general lack of understanding about the concept of lateral entry and such an understanding would help to remedy and popularize such a scheme. The absence of a suitably designed set of procedures to formalize lateral entry to higher education institutes arises as a consequence of the lack of such understanding.

Policy 10 : *Promote a scheme for lateral entry to university education*

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- Identify the entry requirements for lateral entry to each programme of study.
- Prepare a validated set of programmes to be used for lateral entrants.

2.8 Professional Bodies offering Higher Education

Introduction and Policy Issues

There are several professional courses conducted by agencies such as the Institutes of Chemistry, Engineering, Accountancy, Marketing etc. Some of them are of high standard and already recognized locally and overseas. At present there are opportunities for at least 2000 to 3000 students to be registered in such courses, but it is difficult for students from distant districts to avail themselves of such opportunities. The state does not adequately support the conduct of such professional courses in a more formal and regulated manner. There is also a lack of necessary regulations to recognize such courses at national level.

Policy 11: *Recognize qualifications equivalent to Degrees, Diplomas and Certificates awarded by professional bodies subject to the quality and accreditation requirements.*

Strategies for policy implementation

- Prepare a set of guidelines for recognition of qualifications from professional bodies.

Chapter 3 : Academic Programmes

3.1 Introduction

The aim of higher education is to provide access to broad general education that focuses on knowledge, competencies, skills and attitudes that would equip individuals with the capacity to work towards national development. Encouraging independent learning, critical thinking, creativity and research to generate new knowledge and innovation are other functions of universities and other institutes of higher education. Therefore higher education should ideally provide an environment conducive to the inculcation of ethical norms and cultural values, so that the knowledge and competency based intellectuals who emerge will be fully equipped with appropriate attitudes to fulfill their expected role in society.

Taking into consideration the expansion of higher education in Sri Lanka and the world over, this chapter will take a fresh look at academic programmes conducted in Higher Education Institutions with regard to the following aspects:

- Relevance
- Diversity and duplication
- Uniform standards, academic freedom, flexibility, inter-university mobility and synchronization of academic calendars.

3.2 Relevance

Introduction and Policy Issues

Relevance in education involves the fulfillment of national and societal needs and the question of whether such needs are being met by the current academic programmes on offer. If not, it would be necessary to introduce new programmes and take other measures to meet those needs. The content of courses within academic programmes should be such that graduates not only possess general and theoretical knowledge, but also have the skills to work and practice in a particular occupation. This highlights the importance of incorporating periods of internship or work placements in the final stages of an academic programme.

In the current context, relevance should also address the necessity for generic competencies expected of a graduate, such as English language proficiency, writing skills and computer literacy. All academic programmes should stimulate independent thinking, innovation and creativity. Since advances in Information and Communication Technology permeate all activities leading to national and economic development, higher education should keep pace by integrating modern technologies within new academic programmes. Relevance also

includes attention to students' needs and aspirations, entry criteria, market forces operating at the time, etc. It would be also necessary to update academic programmes to make them more pertinent to economic and national development, without prejudice to the acquisition of knowledge.

There should be a paradigm shift from preparing for a degree within the conventional education system and traditional curricula, to modern curricula and methods of teaching, learning and assessment. Such curricula should encourage self directed learning, independent thinking and creativity, critical analysis, and application of knowledge and skills to problem solving through good communication and teamwork. It is also important to create a research culture within HEIs where new knowledge and innovations would be generated.

Policy 12 : Design the curriculum content of academic programmes so as to provide sufficient opportunities for practical experience in skills required for working in the relevant profession / occupation.

Policy 13 : Encourage self directed and reflective learning, independent thinking and creativity, critical analysis and application of knowledge and skills of problem solving.

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- Assess the current status of academic programmes as relevant to academic integrity and economic and national development.
- Develop new academic programmes in line with human resource needs at national level.
- Regularize, review and update academic programmes in all disciplines.
- Include advanced ICT skills and language skills required for the relevant disciplines and a knowledge-based society.
- Review existing programmes to evaluate their output, employability and contribution to human resource development.
- Enhance career prospects and job opportunities by linkages with industry.

3.3 Diversity and Duplication

Introduction and Policy Issues

Increasing diversity involves the setting up of new faculties and departments to introduce new disciplines, programmes and courses to include future needs of the country and society. Higher education needs to be diversified through new

admission policies to meet the demand for new degree programmes with flexible entry and exit points. For example, prior learning could be recognized in lateral entry for those who have professional qualifications and experience. Diversity also includes changes in the mode of delivery such as the distance mode, that would reach a wider cross section of the stakeholders. Open and distance learning would enable life long learning for working adults to meet their educational aspirations. Through open and distance learning, those who already have the necessary qualifications could familiarize themselves with the latest developments in their own disciplines and engage in continuing professional development.

Existing programmes need to be reviewed to examine whether there is unnecessary duplication within and across HEIs, whether they are cost beneficial, whether the job market is already saturated etc. Such programmes should be reviewed and funds and resources diverted to new programmes that will be beneficial to society and more relevant to national development.

Policy 14: Encourage development of diverse programmes of study to cater to the needs of society and offer them through multiple modes of delivery including distance and on line learning.

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- Diversify academic programmes through new faculties or inter-faculty programmes
- Change conventional systems and traditional curricula to modular curriculum systems of teaching, learning and assessment
- Encourage flexibility with regard to entry and exit points and mode of delivery
- Collaborate with other faculties, tertiary education institutions, governmental and non governmental organizations and industry where appropriate
- Make conventional programmes flexible by permitting lateral entry through recognition of prior learning such as professional qualifications and experience
- Rationalize similar courses among faculties and departments within universities to minimize duplication.

3.4 Uniform standards, academic freedom, flexibility, student mobility and academic calendars

Introduction and Policy Issues

A significant degree of variation exists in the structure, standards and quality of degree programmes conducted by different HEIs in Sri Lanka. There is a need to formulate a common Credit and Qualification Framework so that qualifications are uniform and consistent. Definition of a common credit and qualifications framework would enable credit transfers and student mobility between HEIs. Maintaining standards to ensure quality would help maintain national and international comparability of standards so that student and graduate mobility would be facilitated. Development of subject benchmarks is a further step that would facilitate mutual recognition of degrees. More flexible learning programmes will bring about academic freedom that would further facilitate credit transfers and promote student mobility between HEIs, nationally as well as internationally. Those with prior knowledge through professional qualifications and experience (experiential learning) should be allowed flexible entry points into the system so that higher education becomes available and accessible to all. Synchronization of academic calendars will also facilitate this process. Knowledge-sharing by encouraging staff exchange, both nationally and internationally, would be desirable.

Policy 15 : Introduce student exchange programmes, both nationally and internationally, in collaboration with government, non-government organizations and industry.

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- Formulate a common Credit and Qualifications Framework for Sri Lankan HEIs.
- Define quantum of maximum number of credits per semester and time limits within which credit transfers could be allowed.
- Create flexible learning programmes and opportunities to promote student mobility.
- Implement a common credit currency for all HEIs, based upon student workload, contact hours and achievement of learning outcomes.
- Develop uniform grade point values, cumulative grade point average (GPA), cut off levels for GPA, pass mark of a course, minimum and maximum credits per year, number of attempts allowed etc.
- Synchronize academic calendars of Universities.

Chapter 4. Developing Linkages

4.1 Introduction

Developing linkages is as important as producing quality graduates from HEIs, as at the end it requires sufficient confidence among employers to entrust work to graduates in their companies and other organizations. Linkages are the results of cementing initial work on relationship building.

Since HEIs are expected to build people who would contribute positively to national development, systematic and organized efforts are required from both public and private sectors to achieve these goals.

Private sector organizations expect graduate employees to be equipped with broad general knowledge and essential skills required for leadership and problem solving. There is a negative perception of university students due to frequent violence in the universities, ragging, wrong attitudes, lack of social skills, inability to solve problems skilfully, lack of presentation skills and speech, lack of writing skills and poor English language skills. Many university students also seemingly make poor efforts and try to get high results as reflected by lack of attendance at lectures, inept project work and plagiarized tutorial assignments. This is much feared by employers as it can affect productivity at work.

These drawbacks make it more difficult for students to adjust to the work culture in the engine of growth. Due to this overall deprivation of students at university, they end up being jobless and the general tendency is to depend on the government to provide jobs. This is even more harmful to an economy with many potential threats than keeping a workforce on welfare.

A major benefit of interaction with outside organizations is to find opportunities for future engagements and securing employment for new graduates with minimal waiting time. These are future employment opportunities. All organizations have an attrition of employees annually, which has to be redressed while expansions and new initiatives require more people. These opportunities could be utilised by HEIs, with systematic efforts to build relations with industry. A systematic approach requires a strategy and a driver for the strategy under the senior management.

This chapter will discuss the following points of interest.

- Developing linkages among universities
- Developing linkages between university and technical and vocational education sectors
- Developing linkages with professional bodies

- Linkages with international institutions
- Enhancing employment opportunities
- Internships and training placements
- Sharing of resources
- Responsiveness to industry needs
- Enhancing industry investment in higher education

4.2 Developing Linkages Among Universities

Introduction and Policy Issues

Linkages among universities are necessary to share knowledge, expertise and conduct combined activities. Most universities have specialized expertise in areas which are needed by other universities. There are rare instances where a team of experts from different universities would work together on a project. Visiting staff are often sourced from other universities using linkages.

Policy 16 : Promote linkages among Universities.

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- Facilitate staff exchanges among universities.
- Allow academic staff to work in other universities on secondment basis.
- Establish mechanisms to have university interaction at different levels by sharing of resources, including laboratory equipment and teaching resources.
- Facilitate and conduct joint research projects among universities with multidisciplinary expertise.

4.3 Developing linkages between University and Technical and Vocational Education Sectors

Introduction and Policy Issues

Universities and the vocational education sector can help each other to develop skills and knowledge. The vocational education sector will have access to university education through UNIVOTEC. Thus there will be recognition given to courses now conducted by the vocational education sector for admission to the universities. State universities should consider recognizing such courses for lateral entry into their regular degree programs wherever relevant.

Policy 17: Develop linkages between Universities and Technical and Vocational Education Institutions.

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- Link the university Credit and Qualifications Framework with the National Vocational Qualifications Framework.
- Enable formal mechanisms for linkages with positive impacts on the institutions through the governing bodies.
- Recognize credits for tertiary education courses for lateral entry.
- Establish mechanisms to share good practices between universities and technical and vocational education institutes.

Policy 18: Promote linkages between Higher Education Institutions and Industry, Services and other sectors.

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- Establish mechanisms to promote HEI-industry interaction.
- Appoint advisory committees, consultative boards, industry interaction cells, science parks and incubators, to promote linkages with industry, service and other sectors.
- Provide incentives for the establishment of industrial linkages.
- Make provisions to share the physical and human resources of the industry and private sector for improving higher education.

4.4 Developing Linkages with Professional bodies

Introduction and Policy Issues

Professional bodies in Sri Lanka have done yeoman service to fulfil the need for professionals such as accountants, engineers, chemists, computing, marketing specialists, technologists, etc., in the country. Universities have mostly positioned themselves to provide people with academic qualifications except in the case of specialists in Medicine. While academic achievement is held in high esteem, professional achievements are highly remunerative.

Policy 19: Encourage Higher Education Institutions to develop linkages with professional bodies.

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- Develop greater participation of academics from all HEIs in activities of professional bodies and vice versa.
- Establish formal institutionalized mechanisms for interaction between professional bodies and HEIs.
- Recognize professional qualifications to match academic qualifications for lateral entry into an academic programme.

4.5 Linkages with International Institutions

Introduction and Policy Issues

International bodies are valuable to HEIs to gain exposure in areas where they find themselves weak. They also gain from exchanges of staff and students. Courses can be made more useful with knowledge gained through such linkages.

Policy 20 : Promote linkages between Sri Lankan and international Higher Education Institutions.

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- Establish partnerships and affiliations with international HEIs.
- Establish student and staff exchange programmes.
- Establish visiting fellowships for foreign academics on sabbatical leave.
- Enable specific missions to promote linkages and make allowance for budgetary provisions in each HEI.
- Enable academic and non-academic staff and students to visit overseas universities for short periods.

4.6 Enhancing employment opportunities

Introduction and Policy Issues

A major advantage of interaction with outside organizations is the identification of opportunities for future engagements and employment. These opportunities could be enhanced by HEIs through systematic efforts to build relations with industry.

Policy 21 : Develop linkages with industry and service sector in order to widen the opportunities for employment of graduates.

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- Include a strategic goal in the corporate plan of all HEIs, for developing interactions with industry and service sectors.

4.7 Internships and training placements

Introduction and Policy Issues

While interacting with industry provides many opportunities for employment and research, another aspect of students' preparation for their future is realized through placements and internships. Students need exposure to working in the private sector or relevant organizations to shape them better for the future. Each university has to make a concerted effort to provide every student with an opportunity to work in the private sector or in the public sector during their studentship.

Policy 22: Introduce internships and training placements for students in Higher Education Institutes.

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- Set aside time for training or internship in outside organizations in undergraduate degree programmes.
- Promote corporate social responsibility among private companies as a means of motivating them to take undergraduates for internships and training.
- Promote internships and training with tax-deductible benefits.
- Provide tax benefits to cover all investments, including the hiring of people and infrastructure investment, needed for training and internships.

4.8 Sharing of resources

Introduction and Policy Issues

Sharing of resources will enhance teaching and research capacities of HEIs. Industry has many physical and human resources that it would willingly offer to HEIs if industry also benefits in the long run. There are many professionals working in industry, who would be willing to engage in lecturing, and serve on faculty boards and participate in curriculum development efforts. This can be reciprocated by the HEI with acceptance of such offers and offering expertise from the university to serve on boards of management or as directors. Similar initiatives can be taken by offering expertise on various projects and technical advisory services from either side.

Policy 23: *Establish a scheme which enables Universities and other Higher Education Institutes to share their resources.*

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- Identify mechanisms by which resources can be shared between HEIs and industry.
- Encourage university authorities to work in partnership with private sector or organizations on projects sharing resources.

4.09 Responsiveness to industry needs

Introduction and Policy Issues

Industries tend to develop by capturing new market opportunities and expanding existing markets. They also respond to downward cycles in the economy by trimming capacity. They need scientific knowledge and technology to meet such challenges. They acquire market knowledge, technology inputs and scientific knowledge mostly by conducting in-house research and through their technology providers overseas. Somehow there has been not much engagement with local HEIs in fulfilling such needs. This hiatus could be transformed into beneficial relationships by responding to the industry needs. However it requires both parties to have confidence in each other.

Policy 24: *Orient the Universities and other Higher Education Institutes to be responsive to the needs of industry.*

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- Use academic staff to provide technical support for exploration and identification of industry needs.
- Develop policies within HEIs to be consistent in managing relationships in order to develop confidence and trust.

4.10 Enhancing Industry investment in Higher Education

Introduction and Policy Issues

Higher education is seen as a sacrosanct domain of public sector investment. Provision of infrastructure and mechanisms to include the large number of aspirants who are currently excluded from the system despite obtaining the requisite qualifications at the GCE Advanced Level examination, poses a major challenge.

It is likely that industry would readily invest in higher education and contribute to its growth, as it represents good social responsibility that contributes to sustainable development. Such investment could be in the form of physical

infrastructure development. The state retains control of the delivery of education and concomitant budgetary constraints, while the private sector contributes in the form of infrastructure investments for which a reasonable return could be expected through recurrent expenditure.

Policy 25 : Promote investment by industry in Higher Education.

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- Develop several models for public-private partnership in higher education
 - Allow the private sector to invest in infrastructure development by entering into partnerships with state HEIs.
 - Encourage state HEIs to provide study programmes in accordance with industry needs.
 - Provide tax benefits for large investments with considerable risk factor.

Chapter 5. Research, Innovation and Creativity

5.1 Introduction

Emphasis on engagement in research is a key function of higher education institutions, especially universities. Higher education must also focus on student-centered learning which allows independent thinking that leads to new knowledge and innovation. However, the dearth of employment opportunities in Sri Lanka has led to the creation of courses that cater to the needs of particular employment avenues. This is most clearly evident in HEIs managed by the private sector, which are totally committed towards preparing graduates for lucrative employment. This trend has contributed positively towards improving graduate employability, and in the employment of graduates in posts commensurate with their education. However, over-emphasis of this aspect could have a negative impact on open-minded free thinking and innovation which are the hallmarks of higher education. Developing countries cannot afford the luxury of having solely research-oriented higher education. Nonetheless, even in developing countries, it is desirable that higher education institutes should cater not only to the needs of prospective employers, but also for national development needs.

Aspects that need attention in improving research, innovation and creativity in higher education institutions will be discussed under the following topics.

- Developing a research culture
- Ethical guidelines
- Basic and applied research
- Dissemination of research findings
- Getting research into practice
- Research funding
- Mechanisms for protecting intellectual property rights
- Incentives for research

5.2 Developing a research culture

Introduction and Policy Issues

While most universities have included research projects in their special degree curricula, students following general degree programmes have hardly any exposure to research. Even some M.Sc. programmes are based entirely on course work, with no research component. Orientation towards research and creative

thinking must be introduced to all general degree students, at least by way of assignments, and postgraduate courses that are based entirely on course work should be discouraged.

Higher education must also train young minds to view knowledge and information in a critical manner, and not to accept anything at face value. Critical thinking requires students and teachers to move away from the conventional attitude of unquestioningly accepting information purveyed by teachers or the published literature. However, it must be emphasized that it is the responsibility of senior academics to engage in research that serves the needs of national development.

Policy 26 : Build up a critical mass of knowledgeable and competent research personnel.

Policy 27: Train undergraduates and postgraduates in independent learning and critical thinking through the promotion of research.

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- Encourage HEIs to engage in research that contributes to national development, as a fundamental responsibility of the institution.
- Give adequate postgraduate training to academic staff to enable them to engage in meaningful research.
- Ensure that academic staff promotions are linked with research productivity.
- Ensure mechanisms to formulate, review, implement and monitor research activities.
- Encourage HEIs to work towards developing a research culture in all degree programmes.
- Ensure that all postgraduate degree programs have a research component.
- Provide incentives to engage in research leading to M.Phil. and Ph.D. degrees.
- Formulate study programs that move away from rote learning and stimulate independent learning and critical thinking.
- Introduce special programs to enhance the use of English, IT and other soft skills that facilitate independent learning.
- Include a component on creativity and innovation in all undergraduate degree programs.

5.3 Ethical Guidelines

Introduction and Policy Issues

In the past, ethics in education and research were inculcated through close interaction between teachers and their students. With increasingly large undergraduate populations, such personal interactions have gradually diminished, but HEIs still have a special responsibility to instill ethical guidelines among their students. For example, a basic ethical principle is to acknowledge previous work through references during proposal, preparation and report writing.

Ethical guidelines should also be adhered to when using animal and human subjects for research purposes. Even in the social sciences and humanities, confidentiality of data obtained through questionnaires should be given utmost priority. New ethical considerations have to be adopted with the advent of modern techniques of recombinant DNA technology and genetic engineering in order to ensure that new knowledge and discoveries through such studies are always directed towards the well being of all living beings.

Policy 28 : Emphasize the importance of ethical considerations in conducting research.

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- Ensure that every HEI has a mechanism for review of ethical considerations and compliance with ethical guidelines in all research activities.

5.4 Basic and applied research

Introduction and Policy Issues

Basic research builds up fundamental knowledge of nature, laying a foundation without which no progress can be made in all other aspects of research. Applied research, in contrast, is usually directed towards improving human well-being. For obvious reasons, such research is given priority over basic research. However, it is increasingly evident that unbridled industrialization could lead to the extinction of many living things, including humans. Realization of such catastrophic possibilities now requires us to focus on the sustainable utilization of natural resources. Among the different universities in Sri Lanka, those having the capacity, facilities and trained manpower should devote at least part of their research efforts to the basic aspects of the natural resources of Sri Lanka.

As a third world country still trying to achieve rapid economic growth, a high proportion of research efforts should be applied and development oriented. Although discoveries that lead to novel industrial products are rare, research that

improves or adapts available technology to local conditions, or enables more efficient utilization of local resources, must be encouraged. The corporate sector, which has hitherto contributed very little towards higher education, should become partners in this process.

In a developing country with limited resources, effective teams could be built up by bringing together staff from different higher education institutions trained in diverse aspects of a common area of study. Such interactions will not only increase productivity in research, but also minimize duplication of work and make better use of facilities.

Policy 29 : Train a critical mass of local scientists competent in identifying and utilizing indigenous resources in a sustainable manner and increase the support for applied and development oriented research.

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- Support basic research on the natural resources of Sri Lanka and their sustainable use.
- Establish a special scheme of state funding for research studies on natural resources and indigenous knowledge in Sri Lanka.
- Facilitate partnerships between higher education institutions and the corporate sector for applied, problem-oriented and commissioned research.
- Develop multi-disciplinary team research with expertise drawn from higher education institutes, research institutes and the private sector.

5.5 Dissemination of Research findings

Introduction and Policy Issues

Dissemination of research findings is as important as conducting research. Effective communication of results should be a compulsory component of all research activities since it exposes research activities to peer review and critical evaluation which enables further improvement. In today's context, a working knowledge of English, and the preparation of effective presentations using new ICT equipment are also essential skills for researchers.

Policy 30 : Develop effective communication skills among all researchers for dissemination of Research findings.

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- Include in every degree course, a component that requires presentations by students.
- Encourage research groups to have pre-proposal presentations, progress review presentations and in-house presentations.
- Postgraduate programs should have thesis committees to which presentations are made periodically by candidates.
- Encourage all HEIs to have annual research sessions during which their research findings are presented to a wide audience.
- Provide incentives, including pecuniary benefits, for publications in peer-reviewed journals.
- Encourage development of skills in the use of modern IT equipment for the preparation and presentation of research findings.
- Implement special programs for strengthening the use of English as a medium of communication.

5.6 Getting Research into Practice

Introduction and Policy Issues

Most researchers see the publication of their research findings in reputed journals as the primary aim and the end point of their research since it enables them to gain recognition and progress professionally. Unfortunately, such publication rarely has any impact on society at large, even though public funds have often supported the research. Research personnel, particularly in developing countries, must be sensitive to their moral obligation to deliver a product that justifies the cost of their research activities.

Competent researchers should be encouraged to embark upon projects that are of value to industry. Such studies should be aimed at developing technologies to produce quality products, using local resources at lower cost.

Policy 31 : Establish suitable mechanisms to transfer research findings to relevant stakeholders.

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- Facilitate closer interaction between researchers and entrepreneurs.
- Provide support for scaling up and industrialization of research findings to produce marketable commodities.

5.7 Research Funding

Introduction and Policy Issues

Although Sri Lanka dreams of leapfrogging into the 21st century through the application of ICT, Biotechnology and Nanotechnology, there is little funding available for research in the higher education sector. A potential source of funding that has not been explored in this country is the corporate sector. Facilitating closer collaboration between this sector and formalization of its connection to higher education can be used to promote research. Organizations that contribute funds for research should be rewarded with tax concessions, while HEIs should be encouraged to embark upon projects that are beneficial to private sector activities.

Policy 32 : *Increase funds for local research from the State, from foreign sources, and from the corporate sector.*

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- Increase state funding for high quality local research.
- Negotiate with international agencies to secure support for collaborative research.
- Establish a *University Research Fund* at the UGC to which donations could be made by way of endowments, trusts and contributions from the corporate sector. Such contributions should qualify for income tax benefits.

5.8 Mechanisms for Protecting Intellectual Property Rights

Introduction and Policy Issues

Research sometimes results in innovative technologies and products that could have either immediate or potential commercial applications in the future. Most researchers would like to obtain patents for such products to ensure protection of their intellectual property rights. However very few of them are familiar with the procedure to secure such rights. Furthermore, the cost of obtaining patents is high, even in Sri Lanka, and prohibitively so for international patents. A policy should therefore be adopted for institutional assistance, including financial support to secure patent rights for innovative products of research. When an institution where the research was carried out files such an application, it should share the patent rights with individual researchers, provide legal support, follow through the procedure and pay for the cost of obtaining the patent.

Policy 33 : *Increase institutional support to obtain intellectual property rights for individuals and teams engaged in research.*

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- Entrust 'industry-interaction cells' or similar bodies in HEIs with responsibility for assisting their research personnel to secure patents.
- Provide information and documents to prospective applicants for patents.
- Establish an institutional funding mechanism to support applications for intellectual property rights. Depending on the requirements of the applicant, such support could be made available as loans or grants.

5.9 Incentives for Research

Introduction and Policy Issues

Having satisfied the basic requirements to secure permanent employment, academics adopt different strategies in pursuing their careers. Many perform their teaching responsibilities as expected by their departments and do little else. Some engage in extra-curricular and administrative responsibilities of the institution. A few make use of their professional expertise to earn additional income. Very few continue their research interests with vigour by writing proposals, securing funds and employing graduate students. This is largely because adequate recognition and compensation is not given to those engaged in research.

Policy 34: Offer incentives for academics to remain engaged in research throughout their careers.

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- Base the calculation of points for promotion and appointment of academic staff on research productivity and merit.
- Permit HEIs to support academic staff in bearing the cost of membership fees for national and international professional societies/associations; publication in open-access journals and for reprints of publications; registration fees for conferences, seminars, workshops etc, and provide partial financial support even for overseas travel, where necessary.
- Assist researchers in securing positions and sponsorships for short-term and long term research fellowships, both local and foreign.
- Make provision to grant overseas leave over and above the normal allocation, in cases of exceptional merit in research productivity.
- Nominate researchers for local and foreign awards and prizes.

Chapter 6. Higher Education and National Development

6.1 Introduction

HEIs contribute to social change and development. The four essential functions of higher education in supporting knowledge driven economic growth are:

- Training a qualified work force that is skilled and adaptable.
- Generating new knowledge through research, creativity and innovation.
- Accessing existing stores of global knowledge and adapting it for local use.
- Transmitting norms, values, attitudes and ethics necessary to construct healthy civil societies.

6.2 Responsiveness to national development needs

Introduction and policy issues

While acknowledging that HEIs in Sri Lanka have contributed significantly to national development in the past, most discerning critics would find them wanting in this respect at present. The current performance of HEIs is less than satisfactory in all four aspects. The public image of HEIs has deteriorated in recent times. HEIs implement far too few projects that directly benefit the community at large. Major reforms which will have impact on the interaction between universities and the state, the community and the corporate sector are needed to improve the present situation.

Universities frequently work as ivory towers without much sensitivity to the needs of society, and are often criticized for this reason. There is lack of understanding within universities about the knowledge and skills required of their graduates in future employment. It is felt that universities should be more responsive to the needs of society and industry.

Policy 31 : Encourage HEIs to be more responsive to the needs of community and industry in developing new courses, modifying existing courses and identifying research priorities.

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- Make provisions for external representation from industry, professional bodies and state sector research institutes in governing bodies of HEIs, Faculty Boards and Academic Syndicates.

- Ensure consultation with employers and alumni, in both state and corporate sectors, in designing new courses and curricula.
- Enable senior academics to spend their sabbatical leave in a working environment in the state sector, industry or community organizations.

6.3 Broadening capacity

Introduction and policy issues

It is frequently pointed out that graduates are not sufficiently equipped with skills needed for employment. The courses overly emphasize academic abilities and do not make sufficient allowance for development of generic skills appropriate for the job-market. There is a need to establish a balance between job-oriented and academically-oriented courses. All study programmes must have provision to develop the generic skills required, and to encourage positive attitudes towards work.

Policy 32 : Encourage HEIs to achieve the right balance between job oriented and academically oriented courses.

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- Encourage HEIs to develop more professional courses and courses of an applied nature which have greater relevance to market and industry needs.
- Encourage HEIs to identify specific interests and geographic factors in achieving this balance.

Policy 33 : Encourage HEIs to ensure that all students, irrespective of their study discipline, acquire generic skills, a positive work ethic and ability to adapt to the world of work

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- Learning support units such as the Library, Computer Centre, English Language Teaching Unit, and the Career Guidance Unit should be adequately staffed and equipped in all HEIs.

6.4 Encouraging intellectual dialogue and debate

Introduction and policy issues

HEIs are expected to be seats of intellectual excellence. It is of vital importance to safeguard the role of universities in intellectual freedom and excellence. More

prominence should be given to open discussions and exchange of views and ideas. It is also necessary to maintain democratic processes in administration as well as in other academic activities. It appears that students frequently deviate from democratic principles in their activities, thus impeding the smooth functioning of HEIs.

Policy 34 : *Create an intellectual environment conducive to independent thinking, with free dialogue and debate, in all Higher Education Institutions*

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- Encourage greater academic and social interaction between staff and students in all organizations (e.g. student unions and societies) within HEIs.
- Regulate all activities not conducive to smooth functioning of the institutions.

6.5 The public image

Introduction and policy issues

Student unrest and disciplinary problems that frequently lead to closure of HEIs have resulted in deterioration in the public trust in them. This deterioration of trust has made the public distant from these institutions. Members of the public often speak negatively of the HEIs. There is an urgent need to change this perception. To achieve this objective, it is desirable that HEIs engage in community work that would create and enhance good understanding with the public.

Policy 35 : *Create a better public image of HEIs and encourage them to be involved in projects of direct benefit to the community.*

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- Encourage all HEIs to have a strong Alumni Association which helps in creating a good public image, engages in fund raising for development projects and advocacy on behalf of the institution when required.
- Encourage each HEI to establish a dynamic website with links to all academic and extra curricular activities in the institution.
- All HEIs should identify and implement projects that directly benefit the community, especially locally.

Chapter 7. Student Discipline in Higher Education Institutes

7.1 Introduction

The lack of discipline among the students is often highlighted and is a highly visible phenomenon. Urgent preventive and remedial measures are required to deal with this recurrent issue that regularly disrupts the smooth functioning of HEIs. There are disciplinary By-Laws in each university, as well as *The Prohibition of Ragging and other forms of Violence in Educational Institutions Act No. 20 of 1998* (“Anti-Ragging Act”) that can be used to maintain student discipline. It is possible to distinguish between indiscipline which can be punished legally and that which can be controlled by other means. The latter includes Codes of Conduct and Ethical Guidelines that can be instituted and included into the disciplinary process.

A common problem in student discipline is the fact that though the undergraduate degree programmes are supposed to be full-time, a significant number of students, particularly in the Faculties of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, and even in the Faculties of Law, Science and Applied Science, are part-time students in reality. Many students follow other courses such as CIMA, Marketing, Attorney-at-Law in the private sector, while registered as internal students. Others are in full employment. Attendance at lectures, tutorial and practical classes is often low, since many Faculties do not insist on a required minimum attendance.

Lack of financial accountability is another problem, observed in particular with the Student Unions. Even though there are Senior Treasurers appointed to each student union or other student associations, there is very poor accountability on the part of these student unions and associations about their finances.

Policy 40 : Give more powers to strengthen administrators to maintain discipline in Higher Education Institutes

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- Establish a well-trained and equipped security division in each institute.
- Introduce an efficient disciplinary system with staff who will expeditiously investigate minor disciplinary infringements and misdemeanors, and have limited powers to punish offenders.
- Establish an efficient and responsive student counseling system to counsel offenders.

- Introduce all students to a Code of Conduct during their orientation programme.

7.2 Inadequate staff-student interaction as a cause for indiscipline in HEIs

Introduction and Policy Issues

HEIs in Sri Lanka, universities in particular, are well known as epicenters of violence and indiscipline. This is undoubtedly due to the actions of students, often instigated by external agencies. This situation can be remedied at least to some extent, through improved contact between academic staff and students, considering the fact that the majority of students respect their teachers.

Policy 41 : Encourage staff to engage in more extensive contact with students, both socially and academically.

Strategies for Policy Implementation

Have a continuous and meaningful dialogue with student groups, so that they can share their problems and express their opinions.

- Involve students in curriculum and course planning.
- Obtain student feedback frequently and make use of it in decision making.
- Enhance genuine social and political debate within the campus, with participation of academic staff.
- Encourage academics to actively involve themselves in extra-curricular activities in HEIs.
- Provide students with a stimulating academic environment with practical exposure, career orientation and guidance.
- Assign academic staff members to small groups of students as their mentors.
- Encourage staff to work together with students on activities that benefit the community and in enhancing the public image of the institution.

Policy 42 : Strengthen democratic processes within Higher Education Institutions, particularly in respect of student union elections, and promote wider student participation in decision making.

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- Establish a well-developed student welfare division and a strong mechanism for student discipline in all HEIs.
- Monitor closely the democratic process in election of student representatives.
- Conduct disciplinary processes in a fair and transparent manner.

Chapter 8. Postgraduate Institutes and Study Programmes

8.1 Introduction

In the 1950's and 60's postgraduate education in the universities of Sri Lanka was restricted to a few subject areas mostly dealing with indigenous culture, languages and religion. At that time, most postgraduate training and qualifications were obtained overseas, notably from universities in the United Kingdom. From 1970's onwards, primarily due to the high cost, limitation of opportunities and restrictions on overseas travel, universities in Sri Lanka started to expand their postgraduate programs. Initially most of the postgraduate studies were conducted as a part of research projects within defined subject areas leading to degrees such as M.Phil.s. and PhDs. These were conducted in different Departments under the supervision of qualified senior staff who often secured research grants with provision to enroll graduate students. Such programs still continue but the opportunities are few, due to the limited number of studentships available under research grants.

One of the earliest postgraduate taught courses to be offered was the postgraduate Diploma in Education conducted by the Faculty of Arts, University of Ceylon, later followed by a M.Ed. degree. In the late 70's the Postgraduate Institute of Agriculture was established at the University of Peradeniya as the first discipline-based institute for postgraduate studies. Today there are several other discipline-based postgraduate institutes namely: Postgraduate Institute of Archeology, Postgraduate Institute of English, Postgraduate Institute of Medicine, Postgraduate Institute of Management, Postgraduate Institute of Pali and Buddhist Studies, the Postgraduate Institute of Science and the National Institute of Library Science. The establishment of a Postgraduate Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences at Peradeniya has been proposed and accepted. In addition to postgraduate degree programs, these institutes offer diplomas, certificate courses and organize specialized workshops and training programs. Besides these, there are Faculties of Graduate Studies at the Universities of Colombo, Jaffna, Kelaniya and Sri Jayewardenapura.

This Chapter will briefly discuss policy issues and propose recommendations for the improvement of postgraduate education in Sri Lanka under the following areas.

- Strengthening existing postgraduate study programs.
- Establishment of postgraduate institutions
- Establishment of regional centers.
- Autonomy and degree awarding status.
- Orientation towards national development.

8.2 Strengthening existing postgraduate study programs

Introduction and Policy Issues

Among the disciplined-based postgraduate institutes, those that are affiliated to specific professions like agriculture, engineering, medicine and management, tailor their programs to cater to the needs of the respective professions. The type of courses offered by them depends upon the demands of their professions and the skills expected of the graduates they produce. Other institutes such as the PGIS, PGI Arch. PGIP & BS have more flexibility for course formulation. Nevertheless, student enrollment for courses is linked to employment opportunities and/or promotions that could be obtained as a result of the additional qualifications.

While the overall administration of these Institutes is entrusted to their respective Boards of Management, the study programs are administered by subject area oriented Boards of Study that are responsible for the formulation, curriculum design and review and evaluations of the courses offered.

The quality of the programs offered by these institutes is largely dependent upon its staff and facilities. These programs are often self-financed and the remuneration packages are proportional to the course fees which are not uniform in the different courses offered.

Currently, most postgraduate taught courses are scheduled for the week-ends. This is to enable employed students (who form the majority of the student population) to follow them while continuing their employment. This restriction can be considered as a major constraint for expanding and strengthening these programs. While all classes have to be confined to two days a week, this limitation severely restricts staff-student interactions, free discussions and exchange of ideas which are essential for the development of skills among individual students. It is also an impediment for independent library work by students who frequently rush from one class to another and get back to their home towns and/or work places during the week days. The employers should consider this training as an investment that is going to improve the performance of their employees and thereby enhance the productivity of their enterprises.

All postgraduate courses are fee-levying and this imposes a restriction on certain good students seeking admission unless they can afford the fees.

The establishment of Faculties of Graduate Studies (FGS) is a new concept to the university system in Sri Lanka and was not successful when it was first introduced to Peradeniya in the late 1980's. However, it is a positive development that has enabled the formulation of inter-faculty, inter-disciplinary programs, but their success will largely depend upon the close collaboration and coordination among the Faculties involved.

Since postgraduate courses are self-financed, their success and viability depend upon their ability to attract fee-paying students and that itself would be a good assessment of their value and quality. Perhaps it would be desirable to allow healthy competition among these different organizations to offer quality programs, attract good students, and consolidate their status and reputations based upon performance.

Research based degrees, especially M.Phils and Ph.Ds in the natural sciences, are often dependent upon studentships available through research grants. Enrollment to such advanced higher degrees is therefore determined by the opportunities created in the grants awarded to senior researchers.

Policy 43: Improve the quality and standards of postgraduate programs offered by different HEIs.

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- Increase the manpower and capacity of postgraduate institutes.
- Review and revise postgraduate programs regularly, so that they comply with requirements of the Quality Assurance and Accreditation Council.
- Provide institutional support and financial assistance to students from both public and private sectors, to enable the full time functioning of PGIs during week days.
- Provide additional incentives to teachers and research staff from other institutes to participate in the teaching and research programs of PGIs.
- Introduce a scheme of Financial Assistance (even on a repayment basis) to enable unemployed graduates to enroll in postgraduate courses.
- Create an environment to stimulate international aid agencies to contribute to programmes in Post Graduate Institutes.
- Initiate corporate sector participation and contribution towards the development of research programs that could create more opportunities for students to follow higher research degrees.

8.3 Establishment of postgraduate institutes

Introduction and Policy Issues

With the establishment of the proposed Postgraduate Institute of Arts and Humanities, most of the major fields of study would be covered. Notable exceptions are Engineering, Computer Science and Information Communication

Technology and Veterinary Medicine and Animal Health. Proliferation of postgraduate institutions should be approached with caution, giving due consideration to what they can offer. Establishment of such institutes should depend primarily upon the demand and the capacity to develop good quality programs. For instance, postgraduate institutes on Computer Science and ICT and on Molecular Biology and Biotechnology would be in high demand and the graduates they produce could have a profound impact on national development. It may be more appropriate to strengthen and improve the existing institutes with the limited resources available. However, priority should be given to provide all incentives and encouragement to those disciplines in demand to build up their capacities and reach a status to offer postgraduate programs.

Policy 44: Establish postgraduate institutes in all major fields of study

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- Establish postgraduate institutes in those fields which have the capacity to offer quality programs.
- Provide incentives on a priority basis to those disciplines that are in demand and have a positive impact on national development to build up their capacities and commence postgraduate programs.

8.4 Establishment of centers of excellence

Introduction and Policy Issues

A university or postgraduate institute that resolves to develop to a centre of excellence should identify an area in which it has the manpower and other capacities for such development. The capacity for this should be evaluated by an independent team of experts. If the potential is proven, every encouragement should be provided to the institution. Well-established postgraduate institutes may have the option of extending their operations to areas other than their main locations.

Policy 45: Provide all facilities to develop universities and postgraduate institutes as centers of excellence

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- Establish a scheme to assess the capacity of universities and postgraduate institutes to develop into regional and/or global centers of excellence.
- Support postgraduate institutes that are found to have the capacity to develop into centres of excellence to achieve their goals.

Chapter 9. Human Resources Management

9.1 Introduction

In the successful development of a Higher Education System, much depends on building and enhancing the capacity in its personnel, i.e. Human Resource Development. It will enable the Higher Education system to contribute to the common good of society through production, acquisition and application of new knowledge, building of human capacity and provision of lifelong learning opportunities.

This chapter will discuss the following aspects of human resource management.

- Recruitment and Training of Staff
- Continuing Professional Development (CPD)
- Exposure of Staff to the World of Work
- Management Training for Academic and Administrative Staff

9.2 Recruitment and Training of Staff

Introduction and Policy Issues

Availability of well-qualified/trained staff is a major asset to HEI. However, it has become extremely difficult to recruit and retain qualified staff to remote / new HEIs, to disciplines of great demand, and to disciplines where private sector salaries are considerably higher than public sector salaries. Furthermore, it is difficult to provide much-needed foreign exposure to academic staff in some disciplines due to paucity of opportunities.

While acknowledging the need to maintain uniformity among HEIs, the recruitment of staff, provision of opportunities for training and postgraduate education, and terms and conditions of employment should facilitate the best talent to be attracted and retained in the HEIs.

Furthermore, very few opportunities are available to administrative and non-academic staff for their career development. There is lack of emphasis on their training, and they are not sufficiently motivated to undergo continuing professional development for various reasons.

Policy 46: *Provide flexibility in the recruitment process, and make provision to retain qualified and competent staff in HEIs.*

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- Lay down clearly the procedures and qualifications for recruitment of staff in all HEIs.
- Encourage recruitment of staff at all levels, taking into consideration the specific challenges in attracting and retaining qualified staff.
- Give every opportunity to junior academic staff to complete their post-graduate studies within recruitment reasonable period of time, particularly in foreign universities, if possible.
- Provide opportunities for split degrees with a foreign university in disciplines where full-time study in a foreign university is difficult or unavailable.
- Make terms and conditions of employment sufficiently attractive to retain the best talent in specific disciplines. Create mechanisms that allow flexibility for increased remuneration and other incentives in disciplines with high industry demand and in HEIs situated in difficult areas.
- Provide non-academic and administrative staff with opportunities to obtain training in relevant areas and update their knowledge and skills on regular basis.

9.3 Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

Introduction and Policy Issues

Continuing professional development is an essential requirement for any discipline to keep abreast with development of subject knowledge and good practices although the specific requirements may be different for various disciplines. Despite existence of a large number of training institutions, specialized training programmes, and staff development centers in most universities, a significant proportion of university academics lack essential knowledge required for effective knowledge creation and teaching to facilitate student learning. It is imperative that teachers gain exposure in areas such as the philosophical basis of education; learning – teaching strategies; methodologies involved in the design of curricula; assessment criteria; and the use of information and communication technologies in teaching. As such, appropriate mechanisms should be in place to encourage and ensure that all staff undergo necessary training in English Language and Information Technology training as well as continuing professional development.

Policy 47 : *Provide sufficient opportunities and incentives for development of academics in their profession.*

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- Provide academic staff with training in pedagogical skills to enhance their teaching capabilities and effectiveness.
- Make it compulsory for every lecturer to undergo a course on training in educational theory and practice relevant to university teaching before confirmation.
- Make regulations to establish full fledged Staff Development Centres (SDC) with substantial financial allocation, in more HEIs. These Centres should facilitate continuing professional development of all categories of staff.
- The main objective of the SDC should be to identify, facilitate and provide in-house or external CPD programs to meet the specific training requirements of the internal staff.
- Open these training programs to staff from other HEIs to enable more effective and efficient use of resources.
- Encourage HEIs to develop and adopt suitable mechanisms to ensure that all staff undergo necessary CPD activities on a regular basis.
- Motivate SDCs to include proactive identification of CPD requirements of all categories of staff and to make arrangements for speedy provision of such programs both internally and externally.

9.4 Exposure of Staff to the World of Work

Introduction and Policy Issues

There is continuous criticism from the industry that graduates are not readily employable, lack essential skills, poor in attitudes, team skills and not aligned for industry needs. One of the main reasons for this situation is the lack of interaction of academic staff with industry, as well as lack of interest in gaining industry exposure. Exposure of academic staff to the world of work in industry is desirable in all disciplines. It is essential in some disciplines, in order to provide quality education leading to production of readily and highly employable graduates, to provide advisory services for national development and to have close industry – university collaboration that is of mutual benefit.

Policy 48 : *Encourage academics to work outside HEIs, to broaden their experience in the world of work.*

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- Introduce a scheme to provide sufficient incentives to academic staff to take up employment opportunities in relevant sectors for limited periods of time.
- Promote involvement of academic staff in expert consultancy services and for national development programs while maintaining strict academic discipline with regard to workload and academic accountability.

9.5 Management Training for Academic and Administrative Staff

Introduction and Policy Issues

Presently there is no formal training or job orientation for university officers, academic and administrative staff, compelling them to learn through trial and error. Sometimes the inability to comprehend the provisions of regulations, circulars, etc., leads to incorrect interpretations resulting in violation of procedures. Lack of leadership and management capabilities of officers, academic and administrative staff has sometimes resulted in escalating student unrest. There has to be a concerted effort to improve these shortcomings in order to maintain a positive and conducive working environment, with efficient and effective management of higher education institutions.

Policy 49: Provide academic and administrative staff of HEIs with opportunities to acquire awareness of administrative, financial and other regulations.

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- Make arrangements to provide a comprehensive orientation /induction program at the time of recruitment for all new staff/every post to impart skills necessary to perform their functions successfully.
- Provide officers, Heads of Departments and Administrative staff with necessary training for efficient and effective conduct of their functions through formal training programs on AR, FR and other institutional procedures.
- Provide necessary training for officers, academic and administrative staff in productivity improvement tools such as effective management, conflict resolution, student counseling, team skills, skills in carrying out multi tasks etc. and institutionalize such practices.

Chapter 10. Management and Administration

10.1 Introduction

The norms for activities pertaining to Management and Administration of Higher Educational Institutions [HEIs] are determined by the regulatory framework comprising statutory provisions, regulations, rules, circulars directives and best practices. For example the powers, functions and duties of Universities and HEIs coming under the purview of the University Grants Commission [UGC] are governed by the Universities Act, University Establishments Code and nearly 900 Circulars have been issued by the UGC since its' inception.

While the UGC normally operates as the regulatory authority of the university system in accordance with the powers vested in it by the Universities Act, the Universities and HEIs too have a great deal of autonomy and independence.

Though the higher education system has expanded over the years, the demand for higher education continues to grow. HEIs are expected to improve quality, relevance and access, all at the same time. It is evident that the higher education system is facing many challenges and the question arises as to whether the higher education system in Sri Lanka could respond to these challenges within the existing systems / parameters. If, in the long term, the state is to remain the predominant system providing for higher education in Sri Lanka, resource allocation, maximum utilization of such resources in an effective and efficient manner and governance of these institutions will be required to operate under state regulations and standards or criteria of performance formulated by the state.

Given the above background, formulation of a national policy for the management and administration of HEIs for the betterment of the existing system is further discussed under following areas:

- Autonomy and independence of HEIs
- Implementing principles of good governance [including controls]
- Corporate Plan for every HEI
- Management Information System for HEIs
- Restructuring Management Procedures

10.2 Autonomy and independence

Introduction and Policy Issues

Autonomy and independence of HEIs is a controversial subject. Nevertheless, it is generally accepted that universities and other HEIs the world over enjoy a

certain degree of autonomy. The powers, duties and functions of HEIs are specified in the regulatory framework i.e. the Acts of Parliament under which those HEIs were established.

Policy 50: *Provide adequate powers and autonomy to governing bodies to run HEIs for optimum performance.*

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- Conduct dialogues with HEIs in order to identify the areas which need to be, or could be devolved further, so that the HEIs can run smoothly to achieve their set goals and objectives.
- Create an environment conducive for resource mobilization within the Higher Education System, but with the introduction of monitoring mechanisms to enhance efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources.
- Identify the powers and functions to be devolved in this regard.
- Redefine the role of the state and the regulatory authorities to implement such devolution.
- Allow HEIs to generate funds and spend such funds for the well-being of those institutions in a transparent and accountable manner after taking such funds into annual accounts through the University Fund, without affecting the annual grant due for such HEIs.

10.3 Academic staff

Introduction and Policy Issues

Indiscipline among academic and administrative staff is not as clearly discernible as student indiscipline, but is nevertheless an important problem. It is unfortunate that some academics consider their responsibilities to the institution and students, as of lesser or secondary importance. Attempts have been made to establish work norms for academics in terms of student contact hours but they have not been widely adopted.

Policy 51: *Establish a Code of Conduct for academic staff.*

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- Prepare a Code of Conduct and guidelines for a new work ethic for academics in HEIs.
- Prepare guidelines on the functions of Heads of Departments, and other posts held by academic staff.

10.4 Non-academic staff

Introduction and Policy Issues

There is a general lack of commitment, and inefficiency in the manner in which non-academic staff perform routine tasks assigned to them. Their attitude to work is generally unsatisfactory, if not poor, with very little pro-activeness. It is not often that one finds a non-academic officer who will look for work to be done. Assigned or routine work is carried out with minimum interest. Many tend to avoid decision-making that is within their purview and authority. Of late, there has been a tendency to resort to trade union activity that disrupts the smooth functioning of institutions.

Policy 52 : Ensure work norms for the non-academic staff

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- Prepare a Code of Conduct for each category of employee and guidelines for a new work ethic to be included in their 'list of duties'.
- Formulate a new appraisal-based scheme for annual increments and promotions.

10.5 Implementing Principles of Good Governance

Introduction and Policy Issues

Good Governance systems ensure that institutions are controlled and managed for purposes of transparency and accountability so that they are responsive to peoples' needs. Best practices in good governance lead to good performance, economic development and better standards and quality of life of the public. It ensures that legal requirements are fulfilled and the Institution operates in accordance with the provisions of the regulatory framework.

Policy 53 : Encourage the compliance of the HEIs with their respective regulations, rules, circulars and directives which are aimed at providing guidelines for better controls and discipline.

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- Determine the mission of the Institution and how best they could serve the interests of its stakeholders and frame policies for implementation by Management so as to achieve optimum returns and benefits.

- Review policy objectives periodically and provide strategic direction to formulate long term goals and objectives for future growth.
- Organize an efficient, independent, internal audit system to review systems and procedures to ensure that operations are carried out in a true and fair manner.
- Make arrangements for monitoring at frequent intervals i.e. monthly, quarterly, and half yearly and annually, through Performance Reports, Operating Statements and other Financial and Audit Reports.
- Make arrangements to submit Annual Reports and Accounts to appropriate authorities within the stipulated time frames with all relevant disclosures.
- Encourage all HEIs to have their own Systems/ Manuals covering all major operations regularly revised and updated.

10.6 Corporate Plans

Introduction and Policy Issues

The Corporate Plan sets out the goals, tasks and responsibilities of an organization for the next three to five years. It includes strategies for future direction of an institution. It is a reflection of the commitment of the governing authority and senior management to the future prospects of the institution.

Policy 54 : Strengthen the capability and commitment of HEIs to prepare, implement and monitor corporate plans and action plans

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- Each HEI should have its own Corporate Plan, prepared according to the guidelines given by the General Treasury
- The Corporate Plan should be prepared for a period of five years and a rolling plan effective for a period of not less than three years.
- Each HEI should develop annual implementation plans based on the approved Corporate Plan.
- Each HEI should check at the end of each financial year, as to whether the planned activities were performed, and if not, introduce appropriate measures for implementation.
- Each HEI should review its Corporate Plan periodically, in order to update them in line with the needs of the state.

- Each HEI should have a Master Plan for infrastructure development of the institution and the Corporate Plan should be based on the same.
- Appoint committees for evaluation and assessment of implementation of action plans and periodically review the goals, objectives and strategies of the Corporate Plan.

10.7 Management Information System for HEIs

Introduction and Policy Issues

A Higher Education Management Information System [HEMIS] is vital for decision making, policy planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluating various initiatives. Therefore a comprehensive MIS that gives an easy access to information on major aspects of the operations and performance of HEIs including enrolment, graduate output, study programs, faculty, facilities and infrastructure, student support activities and data on funding and cost through the implementation of the state of art IT systems needs to be evolved.

Policy 55 : Establish a regularly updated, integrated, information system for the entire higher education sector.

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- Establish an integrated Management Information System which has facilities to update the database on-line regularly at the apex body linking with all HEIs operating under the purview of that apex body
- Make arrangements to automate and develop an on-line communication system with HEIs in order to ensure the smooth flow of information between core systems.
- Make each HEI responsible for maintaining up to date information. Authentication of data should be done at institutional level to prevent unauthorized access.
- Design user friendly interfaces to provide a better working environment for users, while also ensuring high security precautions.
- Phase out implementation of the system in order to simplify operational activities.
- Improve IT infrastructure facilities at institutional level : automation of all main activities.

10.8 Restructuring Management Procedures

Introduction and Policy Issues

A management procedure is a systematic process of reviewing and improving processes and outcomes that support achievement of an organization's vision, mission and goals. Management procedures are intended to achieve a specified outcome, standardize the way a task is to be performed so as to minimize variation, provide an informational tool that supports the performers, form the basis for training the task performers and to fulfill a regulatory requirement. For this purpose, it is important that the procedures should be accurate, consistent, up to date and easy to understand.

Policy 56 : Promote Higher Education Institutions to have their own systems and manuals covering all major operations, regularly revised and updated at institutional level.

Policy 57 : Revise the University Establishments Code, which is the guide to the regulation of the administration of Higher Education Institutions, issued by the UGC in 1984, to suit the current needs of the system.

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- Review and reformulate where necessary, the existing systems and procedures and introduce new codes of ethics and practices to facilitate better management practices and procedures.
- Review all the circulars issued by the UGC from time to time, in order to summarize existing procedures, remove those that are obsolete and modify or create new procedures. This is necessary in order to maintain accuracy, consistency and clarity and to meet the current developments and trends for an effective management system for good governance.
- Make arrangements for each HEI to have an organizational chart for the institution in order to clarify roles and responsibilities of each position.
- Have an e-network of key administrators or senior managers of the Apex Bodies and the HEIs coming under their purview, facilitated by those institutions in order to have a more effective communication system in place, which is an essential component in the best management practices.

Chapter 11. Financing Higher Education

11.1 Introduction

Higher education contributes significantly to economic development, through advancement of knowledge and training of competent personnel. The present state-funded system enables students who show high academic merit to pursue higher education. However, it is evident that the state alone cannot accommodate and provide funds for all eligible students who desire to enter higher education.

11.2 Funding for higher education

11.2.1 Allocation of state funds

Introduction and Policy Issues

At present, government funds are allocated based on estimates submitted to the General Treasury by the UGC. The UGC allocates funds among the universities based on historical data: the previous year's allocation is taken into consideration together with a certain additional percentage. Universities are not sufficiently motivated to generate income on their own, because of rigidity in financial regulations regarding use of such funds. In other countries, university education is financed using criteria such as performance, competitive funding, voucher system, student loans, donor funding, unit cost, and formula based funding. There are advantages as well as disadvantages in such criteria.

Policy 58 : Allocate financial resources to state-funded HEIs on the basis of need and performance.

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- Introduce flexible, formula-based funding that takes into consideration factors such as the number of students, infrastructure facilities and research, as a basis for distribution of recurrent and capital expenditure.
- Ensure institutional autonomy in utilization of allocated funds, subject to public accountability.
- Allocate a proportion of funds based on performance of HEIs in relation to selected criteria.

11.2.2 Increasing funding for higher education

Introduction and policy issues

The percentage of the Gross Domestic Product spent on higher education measures the strength of higher education in a country. Public spending on higher education is justifiable as it contributes to the growth of a country. In Sri Lanka, the proportion of GDP spent on HE is calculated solely on the basis of government expenditure. However, in other countries, both government and private sector expenditure are included in this calculation.

Policy 59 : Promote alternative sources of funding, including self-generated income and non-state sector investment

Strategies for policy implementation

- Encourage state HEIs to generate more income through a range of different activities
- Encourage public-private partnerships and private capital investment for development of HEIs.

11.3 Student financial aid

Introduction and Policy Issues

Although education is provided free of charge at first degree level, a considerable number of students do not proceed for higher education due to socio-economic problems. Therefore, students from low income families need additional support. The current Mahapola Scholarships scheme makes a considerable contribution towards assisting needy students. The bursary scheme also assists students to receive additional financial support.

Policy 60 : Create a system that aids needy students in all HEIs

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- Introduce a cost-recovery method shifting from public subsidies to private financing
- Introduce a student loan scheme that allows students to settle the loans when employed after graduation.
- Encourage scholarship schemes with private sector participation.
- Require all non-state HEIs to offer financial assistance by way of scholarships and bursaries, to not less than 10% of its student body.

Part Two

Technical and Vocational Education

Chapter 12. Technical and Vocational Education in Sri Lanka: Background

12.1 Evolution of the Institutional Training System

As evident in the surviving monuments and artifacts, and the extended irrigation network, ancient Sri Lanka had a skill base of a very high level. This would have continued through the medieval period too, even though the technology may have been lost over the course of time.

In modern times, a significant event in this area was the establishment of the first technical school in Maradana in 1893. Over the past 40 years, institutions engaged in Technical and Vocational Education and Training have grown in number and complexity. In large part, the expansion of institutional training and the proliferation of programmes reflect the concern of successive governments to build up a skilled work base, provide employment and alleviate poverty. Different institutions and training modalities have been introduced by the state, and through bilateral and multilateral projects.

Despite its expansion over the years, institutional training is yet to become the dominant and industry-preferred mode of skills acquisition. As studies reveal that a large majority of the population acquire skills through working in industry, as well as through the formal apprenticeship scheme of the National Apprenticeship and Industrial Training Authority (NAITA). Informal apprenticeship arrangements also play dominant roles.

12.2 Institutional Framework of the current TVET system

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is undertaken by a wide array of institutions in the state and non-state sectors. Almost all leading public sector TVET institutions whose primary function is training, operate under the Ministry of Vocational and Technical Training. In addition, many other Ministries and Provincial Councils, through the Departments and Corporations under their purview, undertake training as an associate function. Although institutional arrangements under ministries have been changed from time to time, Sri Lanka now has a well established institutional structure.

a. Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission (TVEC)

Part I of the Tertiary and Vocational Education (TVE) Act No. 20 of 1990, established the Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission, with a mandate to formulate policy, plan and coordinate, as well as set standards and regulate the TEVT sector for relevance and quality of training. This Act was revised by amendment Act No. 50 of 1999 with the provision of additional powers to the Commission for funding and research.

b. National Institute of Technical Education of Sri Lanka (NITESL)

The National Institute of Technical Education of Sri Lanka, established under Act No. 59 of 1998, performs the functions of teacher training and curriculum development activity for the TEVT sector, and also provides training at the certificate and diploma level, and conducts degree level programmes.

c. Public sector training providers with primary responsibility in TVET

- **Department of Technical Education and Training (DTET)** with a network of 38 Technical Colleges with annual enrolment of about 20,000 trainees. Further, nine technical colleges (one in each province) have been upgraded to conduct diploma level courses.
- **National Apprentice and Industrial Training Authority (NAITA)** established by Part II of TVE Act No. 20 of 1990, has an island wide network of inspectorate to conduct apprenticeship programmes with annual recruitment capacity of about 20,000 apprentices while operating three national level institutes. NAITA is the successor to National Apprentice Board (NAB).
- **Vocational Training Authority of Sri Lanka (VTA)** with a network of approximately 240 training centres with annual enrollment of about 20,000 students. Established by Act No. 12 of 1995, the Vocational Training Authority has a special focus on training youth in rural areas.
- **National Youth Services Council (NYSC)**, established in 1970 under the National Youth Services Council Act, undertakes the training of youth in rural areas as a subsidiary function.
- **Sri Lanka Institute of Advanced Technical Education (SLIATE)** established by Act No. 29 of 1995, provides training towards higher National Diploma and Diploma Level Qualifications and operates under the Ministry of Higher Education.
- **Institute of Technology, University of Moratuwa (ITUM)**, established by Ordinance No. 3 of 2000, under the University Act No. 16 of 1978, primarily conducts the National Diploma in Technology course, which was previously conducted by the Faculty of Engineering of the University of Moratuwa.
- **Ceylon – German Technical Training Institute (CGTTI)**, presently operating under the Sri Lanka Transport Board, is the main institution for the training of automobile-related technicians.

d. Training institutions attached to public sector agencies whose primary responsibility is not training

Some of these institutions are:

- Institute of Construction Training and Development (ICTAD)
- Farm Machinery Training Institute, Department of Agriculture.
- Gem and Jewellery Research and Training Institute
- Ceylon Electricity Board Training Centre
- Sri Lanka Telecom Training Centres
- Sri Lanka Railway Technical Training Centre
- Sri Lanka Port Authority – Mahapola Training Institute
- National Institute of Plantation Management
- National Institute of Health Sciences

e. Non-state sector training providers

There are a large number of TVET institutions operating on a fee-levying basis. However, the majority of them are in the IT sector. In addition, there is a widespread network of non-fee levying institutions supported by national and international charities.

12.3 Reforms and policy revisions in the TVET Sector

In the past, the TVET system underwent rapid expansion without adequate national level focus on quality and relevance. From about 1990, an attempt was made to co-ordinate different training institutions to deliver training with quality and relevance according to a national plan. This was symbolized by the establishment of the TVEC, the apex body in TVET in 1990, and establishment of a Ministry for Vocational Training in 1994. In 1995, a Presidential Taskforce was appointed to make recommendations on development of the TVET sector. The report of this Presidential Taskforce, presented in 1998, focused on TVET policies under the broad topics of the role of government; involvement of the private sector in training; linkages between general education and TVET; and training for self-employment and the unorganized sector. The Skills Development Project (SDP) that was implemented subsequent to this report, introduced major reforms to the TVET sector. These include:

- Establishment of a unified Qualification Framework based on National Competency Standards.
- Conversion of certificate level TVET courses into Competency Based Training Mode of Training.

- Establishment of a Network of Career Guidance Centers and a Learning Resources Development centre with a network of Learning Resources Utilization Centres.

The Ministry of Skills Development, Vocational and Technical Education was established in 2004, and an executive order was issued under the TVE Act for implementation of the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) system. The Skills Development Project was followed by the Technical Education Development Project to implement the NVQ Framework from Levels 5 to 7. Accordingly, action has been taken to develop one technical college in each province as a College of Technology, to award NVQ level 5 and 6 qualifications. Further, the University of Vocational Technology (Univotec) was established in 2008, to award NVQ Level 7 degree qualifications.

The principal policy document of the current government, '*Mahinda Chinthana: Vision for a New Sri Lanka – A Ten Year Horizon Development Framework 2006-2016*' identifies three distinct sub-sectors: 'General Education', 'Technical & Vocational Education' and 'Higher Education' within the education sector. This document identifies the following as the main policy initiatives in the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sub-sector:

- Improving the quality and relevance of programmes
- Increasing enrolment at TVET institutions
- Improving operational and managerial efficiency at TVET institutions

With the policies and strategies outlined above, and the establishment of the National Vocational Qualifications framework, public and private training facilities have increased to provide access to a large section of youth. Training quality assurance measures have been established to a great extent. It has now become necessary to take an analytical view, considering the present position of TVET, as to which policies should govern the TVET sector for fulfillment of educational aspirations of youth, cater to the demands of the industry and the socio-economic development of the nation.

12.4 Effective policy implementation in relation to the present legal and administrative structure

Analysis of the powers vested with the training organizations and the legal and administrative provisions built into them is a necessity when embarking on new policy reforms. A document entitled '*Background of Vocational Education in Sri Lanka and the Rationale for Change in the TVET*' (2008) gives a detailed analysis of the provisions in the relevant Acts and their current level of implementation. Some of those are highlighted below.

- Establishment of a development plan as per TVE Act, covering all aspects of planning and monitoring of TVET and bringing all institutions to a common focus.

- Expansion of the scope of the current NVQ Steering Committee of the TVEC to cover all issues related to development of the TVET system.
- Specification of qualifications for lecturers, instructors and demonstrators in keeping with the requirements of NVQ framework.
- Establishment of Vocational Training Councils as per VTA Act.
- Criteria for allocation of funds among the institutions.
- Formulation of regulations for the key activities of institutions and publication of these in the Gazette.

If leading TVET institutions used all powers vested with them by the relevant Acts, the TVET system could be more effective.

It is strongly recommended that all powers vested in TVET institutions by their relevant Acts are implemented.

12.5 New legislation

Introduction and policy issues

Many public sector institutions have been established to address different aspects of TVET and to facilitate different modes of delivery. However, these institutions operate under different ministries and there is lack of unified focus in their operations. In addition, many state organizations have established sector-oriented TVET institutions to address their manpower requirements. According to the current institutional framework, the pace and direction of the development of TVET system in Sri Lanka is largely determined by the following institutions.

- Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission
- Department of Technical Education and Training
- National Apprentice and Industrial Training Authority
- Vocational Training Authority of Sri Lanka
- University of Vocational Technology

National development policies should focus on strengthening these institutions to enable them to navigate the TVET sector. In order to facilitate their coordination and ensure that the NVQ Framework is well established in Sri Lanka, it is important to keep them under one Ministry. The NVQ Framework was introduced in 2004 with an executive order under the provision of the Tertiary and Vocational Education Act No 20 of 1990. This NVQ Framework must be reinforced with a separate legislation.

According to TVE Act No 20 of 1990 and its Amendment Act No 50 of 1999, TVEC has been given sufficient power to coordinate all relevant institutions. However, all other TVET institutions are also established with separate Acts and separate mandates. As a result, coordination of activities by some other institution is not effective. Accordingly, a collective approach and rationalization of activities should be built into the legislation of all TVET Acts.

Policy 61 : Create a legal environment that facilitates development initiatives and effective implementation of TVET.

Strategy for policy implementation

- Enact legislation to bind all public, private and NGO institutions providing Technical and Vocational Education and Training to a common qualification and development framework. This legislation may be called 'National Vocational Qualifications Act'.

Chapter 13. TVET Sector: Economic and Financial Aspects

13.1 Introduction

The question as to who should bear or share the cost of TVET is much debated. Employers are reluctant to invest in human resource development unless forced to do so. Governments in other parts of the world have therefore imposed compulsory training levies on employers, to be used in providing training. In Sri Lanka, where businesses are already burdened with heavy taxation, imposition of a training levy was not a popular proposition. Marketable skills are most needed by those affected by abject poverty and they obviously cannot bear the cost of acquisition of such coveted skills. Moreover providing basic technical and vocational skills and competencies needed for securing gainful employment should necessarily form an integral part of a non-fee-levying education system. This is especially so in light of the fact that 5-6% of the age cohort passing through the general education system is provided undergraduate education in state universities without paying fees.

The following areas will be discussed in this chapter.

- Economic contribution of the TVET sector.
- Financial management systems at the institutional level.
- Alternative funding mechanisms.
- Private sector institutions and their contribution to the TVET sector.
- Coordination of donor assisted TVET initiatives and their sustainability.

13.2 Economic contribution of the TVET sector

Introduction and Policy Issues

In order to determine the economic contribution of the the TVET sector, accurate monitoring of all economic factor inputs is necessary. The data needed to extract this information are available at all state-run TVET institutions since they are subject to financial control and audit. However, at present there is no regular computation of 'economic value added' by each institution for reporting purposes. Moreover even if these calculations are performed the results will be based solely on inputs as it is rather difficult, though not impossible, to assign a precise money value to the trained human resources 'produced' by such institutions.

Policy 62: *Ensure that all TVET institutions in the state sector provide relevant statistics on an annual basis to the TVEC*

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- Upgrade the present Management Information System (MIS) to enable it to cater to all information needs in the sector
- Build capacity at the centre and at the periphery to enable efficient data capture and ensure optimum utilization of the MIS for the generation of required reports on economic contribution from the sector

Policy 63 : *Require all registered private sector TVET providers to submit annual financial and statistical reports to the TVEC.*

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- Provide economic value added statements to private sector institutions to enable evaluation of their relative effectiveness.
- Build capacity at private sector TVET institutions to enable them to make meaningful analysis of their performance and effectiveness as an incentive to obtain their cooperation in submitting accurate returns.
- Make the submission of annual reports a pre-condition for renewal of registration.

13.3 Financial Management

Introduction and Policy Issues

Costing and budgeting systems are aimed at achieving proper and efficient management control at all TVET institutions. Management's principal role as decision makers can only be performed effectively and efficiently if they have access to right information at the right time. Management accounting system as a part of the broader Management Information System (MIS) performs this function in all well-run organizations.

Policy 64 : *Encourage state and private sector providers to use basic cost information uploaded to the TVEC in generating financial accounting reports*

Policy 65 : *TVEC should establish a Management Information System to facilitate generation of financial management reports by institutions*

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- All TVET institutions should ensure that financial accounting reports are made freely available to their stakeholders and other interested parties to ensure transparency and good governance.
- Train personnel from state and private sector TVET providers to enable them to make meaningful analyses from the financial accounting reports provided to them.
- Build capacity at the centre and at the periphery for capture and uploading of required data and for utilization of information for rational financial management decision-making.
- Use financial management principles as the basis for better cash and asset management, capital budgeting and investment decisions in the TVET sector.

13.4 Alternative funding mechanisms

Introduction and Policy Issues

At present, a large proportion of students is provided education and training free of charge, together with a daily allowance. Some public training institutions charge fees for high demand courses such as computing, beauty culture, bakery etc, and engage in production connected with training to generate income. It may not be possible to expand the TVET sector and fulfill its intended mission while maintaining the same level of state subsidy. Therefore, it is necessary to search for alternative funding sources for the TVET sector.

Policy 66: *Curricula and courses provided at state-run TVET institutions should be strictly responsive to economic and social demand and be maintained at national and international competitive levels.*

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- Marketing Management should be a principle component of the management functions at all state run TVET institutions.
- All course and curriculum development activities should be based on market research.
- Local demand for skills/competencies should be determined through market research.
- Promote courses in overseas markets for enrolment of students.

Policy 67 : *Enhance active participation of industry sector employers in designing courses provided by state-owned TVET institutions.*

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- Design courses in consultation with the active participation of industry and employer organizations in order to meet demand in the national and international labour markets.
- Take steps for state-owned TVET institutions to provide consultancy and on the job training services to industry.
- Actively involve officials from the Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment and JobsNet, in designing courses.

Policy 68 : *The legal provisions of state-run TVET institutions should ensure more financial autonomy.*

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- State-run TVET institutions should be given the ability to generate funds from acceptable sources and utilize these funds within the institution for its development and effective operation.
- Existing legislation should be revised with appropriate laws that suit current needs.
- The Skills Development Fund (SDF) plc should be used to run fee levying courses at state TVET institutions on a profit-sharing basis (improvements in kind, equipment support & direct remuneration).
- Broaden the capital base of the SDF plc with wider private sector participation.

Policy 69 : *Rationalize courses to optimize the use of resources in state TVET institutions.*

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- Conduct thorough review of capacity utilization, resource deployment and course / training provision at state TVET institutions.
- Engage experts to advise on rationalization of course / training provision by the state sector and optimum utilization of resources.

13.5 Supporting non-state sector institutions

Introduction and Policy Issues

The policy framework for supporting the non-state sector TVET providers is based on the following assumptions.

- a. Profit-conscious private sector TEVT institutions are likely to provide technical and vocational education and training in a more cost-effective manner, with optimal use of resources.
- b. Existence of a significant private sector presence in the TVET sector could prod the state sector towards efficiency by providing healthy competition.
- c. Non-state sector TVET institutions are not in a position to meet all capital expenditure needed to provide training and education of an acceptable standard, unless substantial assistance is provided by the state.
- d. The private sector is not an alternative for state managed TVET providers but they complement what is provided by the state.

Policy 70 : *Provide state assistance where necessary, to non-state sector TVET institutions.*

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- Carry out a comprehensive assessment of the needs of non-state sector TVET institutions registered with the TVEC and provide necessary assistance.
- Make the non-state sector training institutions bear part of the education and training responsibility.
- Make renewal of registration of non-state sector institutions conditional on maintenance of quality standards and compliance with MIS record maintenance.

Policy 71 : *Encourage establishment of formal, long-term public-private-partnerships at institutional and training centre level.*

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- Appoint a high level committee with adequate representation from all stakeholders, to identify the essential framework conditions for establishment and sustenance of public-private partnerships in all areas of TVET course design and delivery.

- Establish a legislative framework necessary for strong, viable, public-private partnerships in the TVET arena.

13.6 Coordination of donor assisted TVET initiatives

Introduction and Policy Issues

At present the state TVET sector depends to a significant extent on donor/lender funding and interventions for development activities but these donors and lenders often determine the type of assistance provided to state sector TVET institutions without adequate attention to local needs and priorities. This often results in the collapse of such ventures once the donor/lender support is withdrawn. The state will take ownership of any new venture only if it is identified as a priority need and a necessity. This type of misdirection of foreign assistance has been overcome to a large extent with the introduction of a **Sector-Wide Approach (SWAp)** in the general education sector. A similar initiative is urgently needed in the TVET sector.

Policy 72: Ensure that donor/lender funding is utilized in a manner that is consistent with the national development plan for the TVET sector.

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- Review the existing development plan by a high level steering committee.
- Determine the availability of state funds for envisaged development projects.
- Apportion the task of filling the funding gaps among donors and lenders taking into consideration their strengths and preferences.
- Establish a high level external resource management unit to draw up medium and long term development plans for the TVET sector, determine funding needs and funding gaps and liaise with donors and lenders.

Chapter 14. TVET sector: image, effectiveness, and employability

14.1 Introduction

Sri Lanka has the highest participation rate in primary education in South Asia and provides free education up to the first degree level. Parents aspire to provide their children with the highest possible education, most preferably ending up with a university degree. Any qualification below a degree is considered with lower recognition, irrespective of its relevance in securing gainful employment.

TVET sector training institutes are sought as a default option by students and parents in many cases. All available training places in state TVET institutions are not filled. The drop-out rates are also high, compared to other specialized training institutes and universities. The public acceptance of TVET institutes is comparatively low due to poor image, low recognition of the vocation, and relatively low recognition of the qualifications.

Vulnerable or underprivileged groups need special attention to bring them into the mainstream economic development process. Such groups often cannot access to TVET, due to reasons such as distance from training centres, lack of enrolment criteria, poverty, disability, lack of awareness etc. The quality of life of such vulnerable and underprivileged individuals can be improved greatly through introduction of appropriate life skills, livelihood skills and vocational training.

This chapter focuses on the improvement of image, effectiveness, and employability of the TVET sector under the following aspects.

- Assessment of the present system and institutional image
- Enhancing the employability of TVET qualified personnel
- Development of self employment/ entrepreneurship skills
- TVET for vulnerable groups

The problem of enhancing of image will be discussed under the following areas:

- a. Image based on resources and Faculty position
- b. Image based on Services /courses
- c. Image based on the resultant occupations
- d. Image based on partnerships

14.2 Image based on resources and staff

Introduction and Policy Issues

Although many inputs have been provided by the state, often with donor assistance, TVET institutions are not equally equipped or staffed and sometimes do not offer good learning environment. The image of a training institute is also built up around its interactions with the relevant industry, its responses to the needs of the industry, and acceptance of its products for employment.

Policy 73 : Provide sufficient funds for the development of TVET institutions.

Strategies for Policy Implementation :

- Upgrade the skills of staff, the training materials and equipment.
- Introduce quality assurance methodologies.
- Enhance the relationship with Industry by forming Advisory Committees.
- Enhance the relationship with the prime target market – schools, youth clubs etc.
- Reposition the TVET institutes as a training provider leading to worthwhile careers, with further career enhancement opportunities.
- Conduct industry related discussions/seminars/workshops for the local industry.
- Establish research units for analysis of technological changes in the industry and offer transfer of technology.
- Review regularly and update courses and course contents to meet the industry requirements.

14.3 Image based on services /courses

Introduction and Policy Issues

The general recognition of TVET qualifications is not high due to varied levels and standards, the lack of clear career development paths, the impact of differing levels of resources at the Institutes, low level of interaction with industry etc. The NVQ framework was established to counteract this situation. Competency Standards identified by industry, at certificate or diploma levels, is the basis for formulation of competency based training courses. These courses are now being

implemented in public and private sector training institutes but the expected level of implementation has not been reached yet.

Policy 74: *National Vocational Qualification certification should be the standard of competency in the TVET sector, in content delivery methodology and the overall evaluation process for education and training.*

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- Implement the NVQ framework and curricula to all courses offered by the Institutes.
- Review infrastructure, facilities, skills of staff, etc, to deliver quality training commensurate with NVQ requirements.
- Publicize the implementation of NVQ certification process.
- Initiate measures for acceptance of qualifications for lateral entry into study programmes in other institutions.
- Employ knowledgeable and competent trainers for TVET training institutes

14.4 Image based on the resultant occupations

Introduction and Policy Issues

The absence of a fixed salary structure for personnel at the craft level, and the lack of compulsion for public institutions to recruit certified craft personnel, contributes to the low recognition of TVET sector personnel. Changes in these areas are required in order to make society accept the TVET sector as a worthwhile area of employment with high earning potential.

Policy 75: *Establish salary scales for certified craft personnel commensurable with the NVQ.*

Policy 76: *Ensure due recognition of NVQ competency standards in recruitment to state-sector posts, and in awarding government contracts.*

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- Develop and implement a publicity plan to reposition the occupations in society based on acceptance of the NVQ system and their contribution to society.
- Encourage formation of Trade Associations/Skills Associations for the members to have a forum to express their views and form a solidarity group.

14.5 Image based on partnerships

Introduction and Policy Issues

The partnerships which are operational in the TVET sector at present are of two types: international and national. International partnerships mostly involve projects in the Ministry of Vocational and Technical Training, operated on behalf of the government of Sri Lanka, with either another country or an international organization. In these partnerships, the work and the period have been clearly identified.

National partnerships are normally initiated by the Institutes. At present there are several hundreds of effective partnerships which cover a range of different situations. A particularly important type of partnership are partnerships made to provide “on-site training” for the trainees. NAITA is mandated through the TVE Act no. 20 of 1990 to arrange apprenticeship training. Therefore NAITA has entered into partnership agreements with a number of enterprises for on-the-job training for their apprentices. These partnerships are available only through NAITA.

Policies regarding involvement of state institutions in partnerships are addressed only by the following government circulars.

- Circular No. 12/2000 of 19th July 2000 issued by the Secretary of the Ministry of Public Administration to Secretaries of the Ministries, Chief Secretaries, District Secretaries and Heads of Departments on affiliation of trainees to state organizations for practical training.
- Technical Education Circular 2/2000 of 15th August 2000 issued by the Director General of DTET to principals of Technical Colleges and affiliated Technical Colleges, on conducting external courses. This circular has brought consistency to the fees charged by different colleges.

Policy 77 : *Encourage TVET institutions to establish partnerships to conduct training programmes for industry.*

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- Invite industry participation in design and tailoring of special training programmes for industry.
- Make the industry aware of the training programmes conducted in the TVET sector.
- Introduce a system to compensate the effort made by staff to find employment for their trainees.

- Introduce tax deductibility for the training expenses borne by industry for training.

14.6 Enhancing foreign employment opportunities for TVET qualified personnel

Introduction and Policy Issues

TVET qualified personnel find employment in the Sri Lankan labour market, industries operating under the Board of Investment, and in foreign employment markets. The total labour force within Sri Lanka is approximately 7.5 million and it is estimated that approximately 1.5 million Sri Lankans work overseas at any given time. The majority of those in foreign employment are in jobs with low skills requirements and thus their remuneration is also very low. Availability of workers with higher levels of skills will necessarily result in a higher earning potential in foreign employment markets.

Policy 78 : Create better foreign employment opportunities for TVET qualified personnel.

Strategies for Policy Implantation

- Make necessary changes in course curricula to obtain acceptance of TVET courses from relevant labour markets.
- Introduce English Language as a subject to all TVET courses to enhance eligibility for foreign employment.
- Include knowledge and information on foreign work environment into the relevant course curricula.
- Create a funding scheme that will facilitate foreign employment for TVET qualified personnel.
- Establish a formal system to secure foreign employment for TVET qualified personnel.

14.7 Development of self employment and entrepreneurship skills

Introduction and Policy Issues

Training is a powerful means of preparing young people for employment, but training alone is not sufficient for self-employment. Post-training support measures such as development of self-employment skills, start-up capital, and

business know-how, access to raw materials and markets are essential for promoting self-employment. The means to strengthen the links between the training system and the mechanisms available for providing post-training support measures need to be identified and strengthened. Self-employment by trainees also reduces the burden on the government to create employment opportunities for the trainees.

Policy 79: Develop entrepreneurship skills to promote self-employability.

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- Introduce basic understanding of entrepreneurship to all TVET trainees
- Develop methods to identify TVET trainees with required attributes
- Provide financial allocation for starter loan schemes.
- Develop training packages for self employment and entrepreneurship programmes.
- Develop mechanisms to assist entrepreneurs, through mentoring programmes, developing links with relevant agencies, etc
- Set up a steering committee in the Ministry of Vocational and Technical Training, for development of the self-employment/entrepreneurship sector.

14.8 Access to TVET for Vulnerable groups

Introduction and Policy Issues

Whilst making available opportunities for the general public to access TVET, special attention needs to be paid to vulnerable/underprivileged groups so that they too can become partners in the national development process. The following groups in Sri Lanka may be considered especially vulnerable or underprivileged:

- Women, especially those heading households
- People with Disabilities (Mental & Physical)
- Disadvantaged youth (including school drop-out and former child labour)
- Poor (including people in plantation areas, rural and urban poor)
- Persons affected by conflict (including IDPs and ex-combatants)
- Migrant Workers

According to the Department of Census and Statistics, 50.58% of the total population represents females but their labour force participation rates have been around 30 – 35% in the period 2002 – 2006. These rates indicate a need for articulating training programmes for women so that the skills of the current workforce and training of new entrants could be improved.

The 2001 population census found that about 275,000 Sri Lankans have some form of disability. This includes approximately 70,000 with impaired vision; about 73,000 with impaired hearing or speech; about 50,000 with disability related to hands; about 90,000 with disability related to the legs; about 13,000 with other physical disabilities; and about 70,000 with mental disability. Even though they are disabled, they can learn different skills and be appropriately employed. Therefore it is necessary to design training programmes targeting this population.

A considerable number of children leave school due to numerous reasons, before they sit for public examinations. Street children may never have had primary education and some children may be engaged in child labour. Both rural and urban areas have a significant number of disadvantaged youth. Those who are above the compulsory primary education age could be provided TVET programs at training institutions leading to employment and inclusion in main stream society.

Poverty in Sri Lanka had been declining over the years but remains relatively high especially in rural and plantation areas. Urban areas also record a significant number of poor due to numerous reasons. Areas with irrigated agriculture have shown a significant reduction of poverty. TVET programmes need a pro-poor approach. National level poverty alleviation programmes need to have a TVET approach to equip them with necessary skills and to make them employable.

Many people in areas affected by conflict have been displaced and temporarily housed in other areas. Provision of TVET, livelihood training and life skills must become an integral part of the development of conflict affected areas, considering the demand for different occupations, particularly in the respective provinces and in the country at large. However, government training networks had very little or no training activity in many areas affected by conflict. Some non-state sector organizations have made considerable contributions towards establishing and operating training institutions with NVQ in such areas, but they are still inadequate in numbers.

Over 200,000 persons leave the country for foreign employment each year. The majority are unskilled and do not possess any vocational qualifications. The earnings of unskilled workers are very low. With little savings and no recognizable skills, such workers become caught up in a vicious circle. Many of them re-enter foreign employment despite family and social problems to earn a living. There is a need to impart vocational and livelihood training to unskilled

foreign workers so that they can integrate with the skilled national labour force or seek higher paying foreign employment.

Policy 80 : Design customized TVET/livelihood training for vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- Introduce training courses relevant to needs of each vulnerable group.
- Introduce livelihood training programmes and entrepreneurship training.
- Establish specialised training facility to relevant vulnerable groups, where necessary.
- Establish support systems for vulnerable persons to continue TVET.
- Recognize current skills through Recognition of Prior Learning.
- Establish mechanisms for career guidance and counselling for vulnerable people.
- Set admission criteria as appropriate.

The detailed strategies and plan of actions addressing the needs of each vulnerable group will be formulated separately to assist implementation of this policy.

Chapter 15. TVET Sector: Human Resource Management

15.1 Introduction

The quality of TVET programmes is directly impacted on by the qualifications and compliances of staff delivering the training and assessment. There are no specific or distinct human resource management and development policies in the TVET sector. At present, the rules, regulations and procedures laid down in the government Establishment Code are generally adapted by the training organizations in the public sector. Although these organizations adapt personnel management practices, only a few organizations really pursue human resource management (HRM) policies.

Although there are certain guidelines and procedures laid down for recruitment, deployment, and transfers, there are anomalies which create disadvantages for staff members of one organization when compared with another.

Formal HR planning assists organizations to achieve more effective and efficient use of human resources. All public and private sector training providers must adhere to accepted and transparent recruitment procedures to ensure that qualified and competent staff is recruited to the TVET sector.

The goal of HRM in the TVET system is to provide manpower for the required instruction volume and range which includes teachers, administrators, support staff, system developers as well as the underlying development and administration structure.

15.2 Staff Development (state and non-state sectors)

Introduction and Policy Issues

At present there is no proper policy stipulated for staff development. Although in-service training is provided for the staff of many organizations, in an *ad-hoc* manner, pre-service training which is comparatively important, is rare in both state and non-state sectors.

Training providers need to believe that people are the most important asset of any organization and the investment in them is well-rewarded. Knowledge and competencies of both academic and non-academic staff of TVET providers should be continuously updated and upgraded in par with current global standards and trends.

Policy 81 : *Develop staff through pre-service training and in-service exposure to industry.*

Strategies for Policy Implementation:

- Coordinate teacher training planning with technical training institutes and pedagogical training institutes (NITESL/Univotec).
- When institutions conduct training courses at various levels, deploy staff so that their qualifications and competency level is always higher than the level that they teach.
- Use well-defined criteria for employment of instructors / teachers.
- Recognize the capacity acquired by teachers through in-service training as a criterion for salary increments, promotions, scholarships and rewards.
- Prepare at institutional level, an action plan for re-training, which updates teachers and provides regular re-training.
- Introduce staff exchange programmes with industry, guest lectures, industrial visits etc. in order to provide industry exposure.
- Allocate appropriate training places in NITESL / Univotec to non-state sector training institutes.

15.3 Teacher Transfers

Introduction and Policy Issues

A well formulated and implemented transfer scheme ensures just and fair working conditions for staff to serve under optimal conditions, and enables students to receive quality training. At present, transfers of staff are done in an informal manner due to lack of proper policies. Although some government training organizations adapt the transfer scheme stipulated by the Ministry of Public Administration, it has not shown qualitative results. Other non-governmental and statutory organizations are not practicing any kind of policy for staff transfers, at present.

Policy 82: *Establish a transfer scheme in each training organizational network, based on accepted principles, that will ensure optimal delivery of its training programmes for the benefit of students.*

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- Develop a transfer scheme that will ensure that courses will be run without hindrance due to transfers.
- The transfer scheme should have provision for mutual transfers and to consider appeals from affected teachers.

- Transfer of teachers serving in a training provider network should always be within its cluster.
- Transfers should be in accordance with the accepted scheme of transfer and approved by the appointing authority of the organization.

15.4 Performance Development

Introduction and Policy Issues

Some government training organizations use a common performance appraisal system in which the head of division records the performance of subordinates in a set format. However, the follow up processes for staff development are rarely based on those records. Other training organizations do not use a regular and systematic methodology to evaluate performance of their staff. Since regular staff development based on proper performance appraisal leads to institutional and sector improvement, a common framework should be adopted for all state and non-state sector training organizations.

Policy 83 : *Develop and implement a Performance Appraisal (PA) system based on the assumption that staff personnel are competent professionals and that institutional frameworks exist to support their development.*

Strategies for Policy Implementation:

- Develop job profiles and career pathways for each role, especially for teachers and managers/principals of training centers.
- Develop a performance appraisal system where the roles and responsibilities of teachers, principals and managers are clearly specified and articulated.
- Interlink career development with the performance appraisal system.
- Introduce professional standards to all significant occupational groups of employees in the organizations and ensure that such standards are maintained on a continuing basis.
- Manage performance of all staff through the performance appraisal system.
- Make specific provision for both human and material resources to support improved practice.
- Define clearly, appeal processes at all key decision points.

15.5 Promotion of staff

Introduction and Policy Issues

In this area too, no systematic policies seem to be in place. Some organizations consider only the period of service for the promotion of staff members, resulting in automatic promotions with time. Staff members should be encouraged towards efficiency at work through an effective performance appraisal system, leading to internal promotions for higher teaching and managerial positions. On the other hand, an open advertisement process is also necessary to maintain transparency. At present there seems to be no policy framework for this area that could be adopted by all state and non-state sector training organizations.

In order to make the system more effective, a fair and systematic promotion scheme must be introduced as part of performance management, in which the staff can move upwards to higher positions.

Policy 84 : Develop and implement in each training organization, an internal promotional scheme which is effective, fair and systematic.

Strategies for Policy Implementation :

- Introduce a structural framework within organizations, to promote professionalism among staff.
- Consider performance appraisal reports as a source of reference for promotions, and take measures to stop automatic, time-scale promotions.
- Create academic cadre positions in par with principal or centre manager to provide promotional avenues for good teachers in relevant institutions.
- Use feedback, coaching and training to support staff in their development
- In recruitment through open advertisements, give preference to employees already in service in the particular training organization, if he or she satisfies the recruitment criteria.
- Make provisions for selected candidates to undergo a leadership preparation programme before assigning responsibilities.

Chapter 16. Linking different educational and vocational qualifications

16.1 Introduction

Sri Lanka has one of the highest enrolment rates in general education in Asia. Pupils leave general education at different stages. The largest number leaves after the GCE Ordinary Level examination and again a large number leaves after the GCE Advanced Level examination. In 2008, only about 20,000 students out of about 330,000 in the age cohort entered state universities for higher education.

General education has introduced subjects relating to technology at various stages. While supporting cognitive development of students, these subjects provide the fundamental knowledge necessary to embark on Technical and Vocational Education. As institutions equipped to provide technical and vocational education, TVET institutions can assist the general education system to conduct the technology subjects and to give students a technological orientation. Similarly, TVET institutions and universities can play a complementary role in the areas of research, policy development and in providing specialized teaching and learning to students.

The formal TVET system in Sri Lanka has been developed over a long period and in this process, some courses have become bench mark qualifications at different levels. While the government has committed itself to the unified National Vocational Qualifications and courses of study leading to them, there is a need to incorporate well-recognized non-NVQ programmes in the NVQ framework.

This chapter therefore focuses on the following areas:

- Linking technology and the world of work during general education
- Establishing pathways for school leavers to enter to TVET
- Linkages with higher education
- Recognition of non-NVQ programmes under NVQ framework

16.2 Linking technology and the world of work with general education

Introduction and Policy Issues

Though initiation to technology and the World of Work is an important aspect of General Education, the school system does not have technical facilities, technical staff and linkages to the industry. In fact, the TVET sector is comparatively stronger in these areas, with an institutional network through out the country. The TVET sector can extend this facility to the school system to have short term programmes that introduce children to Technology and the World of Work. It is expected that

strengths of the TVET sector in technology and linkages with the industry should be recognized in National Educational Policies and they would focus on further facilitating the TVET sector with investment in technology development.

Policy 85 : *Extend the resources of the TVET sector to the school system, through short term programmes on technology*

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- During the vacations of Technical Colleges and Training Centres, make them available to conduct short term introductory programmes for school children.
- Assign instructors of TVET institutions to conduct short courses for school children and support practical and technical skills development activities in schools.
- Assist schools in arranging short term programmes that expose school children to industry.

16.3 Establishing Pathways for School Leavers to enter TVET

Introduction and Policy Issues

In Sri Lanka, though education is compulsory up to age of 14 years, many children leave school at different grades. Many of them enter work places without completing the learning cycle in the school. The TVET system will facilitate a seamless pathway for school leavers who cannot directly enter higher education, to continue their education in the TVET system. The TVET system has different levels of programmes that accommodate children with different levels of school education. Further, the TVET system will develop bridging programmes to fill gaps in general education when they enter in to the TVET system. School leavers who make direct entry into the industry and acquire competencies in this manner, will be awarded qualifications through Recognition of Prior Learning and will be provided with opportunities for further education and training in TVET courses.

Policy 86 : *Provide a seamless pathway for school leavers who do not have direct entry into higher education, to continue their education in the TVET system.*

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- Develop bridging programmes to fill the gap in general education when school leavers enter the TVET system.
- Build Recognition of Prior Learning into student enrolment for TVET courses, in order to enable school leavers who make direct entry into industry, to follow TVET courses.

16.4 Linkages with higher education : Introduction and Policy Issues

A trainee in a TVET course will be effective only if he chooses the course with proper career guidance and awareness of his aptitude. The TVET system will establish an island wide network of career guidance facilities and those facilities will be extended to provide career guidance programmes for school children. The General Education system and the TVET system have to work in cooperation to launch joint career guidance programmes.

As the higher education system has limited enrolment capacity, the TVET system will not expect to have a pathway for TVET students to enter degree programmes in higher education institutions in the near future. Besides, the TVET system has a more occupational and sector focus in its programmes. It is difficult to bridge these two systems as they are today. Therefore, the TVET system will be expanded to have NVQ levels 5, 6 and 7 programmes within the TVET system.

However, there should be linkages between TVET institutions and higher education institutions as well, for mutual and complementary benefits. Higher Education Institutions should provide TVET students with avenues to follow short term programmes and open learning programmes, specially the courses of the Open University. The TVET institutions should undertake responsibility to arrange on the job training opportunities for students in higher education, especially for students in technical streams. Accordingly, TVET institutions have strengths to help higher education institutions to introduce vocational aspects in higher education. Mutual recognition of credits earned in the two systems will facilitate the movement of the students between the systems, where possible.

Policy 87 : Establish linkages with higher education institutions in the area of research, programme development and in policy matters

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- Obtain the services of academics and qualified staff for TVET institutions in the areas of programme development and in policy matters
- Provide opportunities for TVET students to follow short term training and open learning programmes at Higher Education Institutions
- Information on learning opportunities in Higher Education Institutions should be made available in the Career Guidance Centres of TVET institutions.
- TVET Institutions should assist HEIs to arrange on the job training for students in higher education, especially in technical streams.

16.5 Recognition of Non-NVQ programmes under NVQ framework

Introduction and Policy Issues

Considering the fact that established or well recognized vocational training programmes are available in the country, it is necessary to map the existing TVE qualifications on to the new NVQ system. The mapping may be based on a credit system that is acceptable across the range of NVQ. In this respect, it is not expected to link secondary and higher educational qualifications directly to different levels of the NVQ system.

Provisions can be made to evaluate the competencies acquired through vocational training programs, based on an appropriate credit system that grants exemptions according to a standard system. This will enable the non-NVQ certificate holders to obtain NVQ qualifications.

Policy 88 : Establish a standardized system to recognize non-NVQ programmes under the NVQ framework.

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- The TVEC should appoint a committee to draw up the standards for recognition of non-NVQ programmes within the NVQ framework..
- Invite the organizations that conduct formal, well-established programs and evaluate them for granting exceptions/accreditations within the NVQ framework.

Part Three

- **Quality Assurance, Assessment and Accreditation**
- **Career Guidance & Counselling**

Chapter 17. Quality Assurance, Assessment and Accreditation

17.1 General Introduction

According to Article 11 of the World Declaration on Higher Education, quality in higher education is a multidimensional concept which embraces all its functions and activities including teaching and academic programmes, research and scholarship, staffing, students, buildings, equipment, facilities, services provided to the community and academic environment. Institutional accountability for quality is vital for promoting public confidence in higher education. Therefore, it is necessary that relevant authorities continuously exercise their responsibilities to ensure quality in education.

Quality in higher education has been discussed as a relative concept which is viewed by different stakeholders in different angles. For example, when considering quality, the students may focus on facilities available at the higher education institution and usefulness of education for future employability; the faculty may focus on the teaching-learning environment, research output and academic excellence of the higher education institution; the management may focus on the institution's achievements; the parents may consider the employability and achievements of their children and the employers may pay attention to competence of the graduates. As such, each stakeholder will have different approaches to define quality.

Recognizing the need for a system of maintaining quality, the Sri Lankan universities have taken initiatives in this regard. As far back as 2001, the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Directors (CVCD) developed a quality assurance framework with the concurrence of the UGC. The Improving Relevance and Quality of Undergraduate Education (IRQUE) and the Distance Education Modernization Project (DEMP) may be also mentioned as projects under the Ministry of Higher Education that have facilitated steps in this vital area. The TVEC has responsibility for quality assurance in the technical and vocational education sector. It fulfils this function principally by accrediting the courses conducted by training institutions registered with the TVEC. However, course accreditation is voluntary at present.

It is well accepted all over the world that quality assurance agencies should be autonomous bodies which operate independently so that the judgments made in their reports cannot be influenced by third parties. They should evince independent, impartial, rigorous, thorough, fair and consistent decision making. However, in Sri Lanka, such a body is not in existence. Judgments on external quality assessments are done by the reviewers themselves and there is no regulatory body. In addition, there is no agency to ensure the quality of the

programmes offered by private higher education institutions including those providing cross border higher education. Therefore, there is an urgent need to establish a national quality assurance agency in Sri Lanka.

Policy 89 : *Establish a National Quality Assurance and Accreditation Council (NQAAC) to cover all areas of Higher Education and Technical and Vocational Education in Sri Lanka.*

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- The NQAAC should be established by an Act of Parliament, as an independent body appointed by, and serving directly under, His Excellency the President of Sri Lanka.
- The functions of the NQAAC should include the following:
 - Ensuring academic standards by setting national standards and guidelines e.g. credit and qualifications framework; subject benchmark statements, codes of practice, criteria and guidelines for subject/ programme / institutional reviews.
 - Enhancing the quality of education in all higher educational institutions through cyclical reviews of academic activities conducted by such institutions
 - Providing independently verified information regarding HEIs that operate in Sri Lanka, through registration of such institutions and courses run by them
 - Recognition of degrees/diplomas/certificates awarded by HEIs.
- The governing body of the NQAAC should have representation from the relevant bodies in the HE and TVE sector. This includes the Ministries of Higher Education and Vocational and Technical Training; the University Grants Commission; the Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission; institutions that conduct study programmes in the open and distance learning mode; professional institutions; and non-state sector higher education institutions.

Sections 17.2 and 17.3 address the issues of quality assurance in the Higher Education and Technical and Vocational Education sectors, respectively, in view of their different organizational structures and operational mechanisms. **However, implementation of the policies enunciated in both sections will be the responsibility of the NQAAC with concurrence of the respective authorities.**

17.2 Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education

17.2.1 Credit and qualifications framework

Introduction and Policy Issues

A common credit and qualifications framework at the national level helps to maintain comparability of standards among the different courses offered by universities and other higher education institutions. Such a framework facilitates the consistency of qualification titles and levels of achievement. When a common framework is available, the different stakeholders, including the employers, would be able to get a better understanding of different qualifications and levels of achievements. The students will also be able to identify the best routes for their progression, from among different qualifications.

At present, different universities in Sri Lanka are operating on credit patterns which are identical or similar to the Carnegie credit pattern used in North American universities. A common credit and qualifications framework helps to maintain international comparability. It also facilitates student mobility between universities and lateral entry too.

A common credit and qualifications framework should accommodate diversity among programmes and should not hinder innovative programme development. Such a framework has already been developed for the Sri Lankan University system. However it is not mandatory for universities to follow this framework at present.

Qualification descriptors, which are also a component of a credit and qualifications framework, describe the qualification at each level, such as Bachelor's degree, postgraduate certificate, postgraduate diploma, Masters degree and Doctoral degree. They provide paths of progression for life long learning. Qualification descriptors for each level have been developed for the Sri Lankan University system. However, they are rarely used by the academic community at present, when developing programmes. They are helpful in designing, approving and reviewing academic programmes and also provide students the opportunities to demonstrate the achievement of learning outcomes. These are also helpful to summarize the broader abilities possessed by graduates and would therefore be useful to potential employers and professional bodies.

Subject benchmark statements are another component of the credit and qualifications framework. They provide reference points to show how the key features of a programme, its intended learning outcomes and the standards that derive from the intended learning outcomes, relate to what is deemed appropriate by the subject community. These are important reference sources for higher education institutions when new programmes are designed. In quality

assurance programmes, these benchmark statements enable review and evaluation of learning outcomes against agreed general expectations about standards.

Policy 90 : *Establish a Common Credit and Qualifications framework for all Universities and Institutions involved in Higher Education*

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- Implement the already developed common credit and qualifications framework in the Sri Lankan University system.
- Implement a common credit currency in all universities, comparable to existing international credit currencies.
- Incorporate the use of qualification descriptors in developing study programmes.
- Develop subject benchmark statements for all subjects offered in the university system and ensure that study programmes conform to them.

17.2.2 Quality Assessment System for Higher Education

Introduction and Policy Issues

The quality assurance system is based on peer review of subjects/programmes and institutions. Subject reviews evaluate the quality of the students' learning experience at subject /programme level. It deals with quality management and assurance at subject /programme level. Institutional reviews analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of an institution's process for managing and assuring the quality of academic activities undertaken by an institution and evaluates the extent to which internal quality assurance mechanisms can be relied on to maintain the quality of provision over time.

The aspects that are usually reviewed in the subject /programme reviews conducted by external reviewers include curriculum design, content and review; teaching, learning and assessment methods; quality of students, student progress and achievements; student feedback; postgraduate studies; peer observation; skills development; and academic guidance and counseling. The aspects that are assessed in institutional reviews include university goals and corporate planning; financial resources and management; research; quality management and administration; quality assurance; learning resources and student support; external degree programmes; and university, industry and community linkages and other extension activities.

Quality assessment is needed to ensure that acceptable levels of standards of awards and quality are maintained in the delivery of academic programmes. In addition to encouraging good management of universities and other higher education institutions, it helps to identify and share good practices. This is based on external peer reviews conducted by trained reviewers from universities, other higher education institutions and professional organizations.

Policy 91: *Establish a Quality Assessment system for Higher Education institutions, which includes internal as well as external assessment*

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- Implement an external quality assessment system for all higher education institutions, including non-state HEIs.
- Develop documentation that sets out reference points covering the main aspects of academic standards, and guidelines for good practice.
- Develop codes of practice indicating the standards.
- Encourage HEIs to follow the guidelines indicated in the already developed codes of practices.

17.2.3 Accreditation of Institutions / Programmes

Introduction and Policy Issues

Accreditation is essential to ensure quality of a higher education institute/programme. It provides certification to students and potential employers, that the courses offered by a particular institution conform to acceptable standards. At present, although a large number of non-state higher education institutes, including those that provide cross border higher education, are established in Sri Lanka, no accreditation is carried out, and students, parents and potential employers are unaware of the quality of education they provide. Accreditation enables an institution to show the public that it has undergone external independent assessment and has met the standards required by the accrediting agencies.

Policy 92: *Make provisions for accreditation of institutions involved in Higher Education and programmes offered by them.*

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- Develop guidelines for accreditation of HEIs.
- Make provisions for the NQAAC to obtain the services of qualified external assessors from the university system, professional bodies and reputed international agencies/institutions in conducting external quality assessments and accreditation exercises in the universities and other higher education institutes.

17.3 Quality Assurance, Assessment and Accreditation in the TVET Sector

17.3.1 Introduction

A significant feature of Sri Lankan Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is its heterogeneity. Training is delivered by registered as well as non-registered training institutions belonging to both state and non-state sectors. In addition, training programs which are organized by business entities to cater to their own skills requirements are also a key feature of training delivery. Traditional craftsmanship has been a conventional mode of skills acquisition in rural areas where skills are transferred to the next generation without formal training and assessment of skills. In this context, it is important to assure quality of training delivery and consistency of assessment of competencies.

The National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) Framework was introduced in 2004 under which development of National Competency Standards, Competency Assessment and Certification are done as per the requirements of the NVQ system.

17.3.2 Adopting Good Practices in Delivery of TVET

Introduction and policy issues

There is a need to identify good practices that improve the quality of delivery of training. The Government expects that all training providers supply training consistently in par with national competency standards. Good practices enhance adoption of national competency standards and help reach requirements of institute registration and course accreditation.

The quality of training delivery in Sri Lanka remains relatively low due to adoption of traditional training practices and as well as the low level of application of modern technology. Training centre management practices, student services, and training delivery practices remain the major areas that need

improvement in terms of good practices that will ensure efficient and effective training delivery. Good practices that may be adopted in training institutions include those regarding training centre management, student services, and delivery of training.

Policy 93 : *Promote TVET providers to adopt good practices for efficient and effective delivery of training*

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- Provide managers of training institutions with training on good practices regarding training centre management, student services and delivery of training.
- Take follow up action with training institutions to make them practice good management techniques.
- Adopt good practices specified in this policy framework into the institutional grading system and grade them accordingly.

17.3.3 Registration of Training Institutions

Introduction and Policy Issues

The Tertiary and Vocational Education (TVE) Act No. 20 of 1990 read with the TVE Act (amendment) No. 50 of 1999, lays down provisions for registration of institutions under this Act. The process and procedure of registration of training institutions are set out in the Development Plan published in Government Gazette (Extraordinary) No. 887/8 of 7th September 1995. The purpose of registration is to ensure that the education and training offered by the institutes are market relevant and sufficient quality assurance measures are applied. There is no intention to interfere with the management of the institutes.

The requirements that need to be fulfilled by training institutions that seek registration from the TVEC are set out in the Development Plan. The TVEC will undertake periodic conformity audits to ascertain whether registered institutions maintain the standards, as agreed.

Policy 94 : *All TVET providers operating in Sri Lanka should register with TVEC to assure quality of training*

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- Where necessary, grant prior registration to start a training institution, before granting formal registration.

- Grant formal registration to those who fulfill requirements for registration.
- Take legal action against those who do not comply with registration requirements as per provisions of TVE Act no. 20 of 1990.
- Make the general public aware of the need to select TVEC-registered institutions for training.
- Provide incentives to registered training institutions.
- Use regional level resources to identify unregistered institutions.
- Undertake periodic audits for conformity.

17.3.4 Accreditation of courses

Introduction and Policy Issues

Accreditation denotes confirmation that TVEC requirements with regard to course formulation, training delivery and assessment have been met. Accreditation verifies the training content and supporting facilities in relation to the relevant Standard. In the case of National Vocational Qualifications, the standard is the National Competency Standard of the relevant occupation or the field of study. As set out in the National Vocational Qualification operational manual, policies have been set out in three areas detailed below.

- Accreditation of training provider courses.
- Accreditation of institutes to conduct competency based assessments.
- Extension of accreditation of training providers and establishments to assess recognition of prior learning.

Registered training institutions are eligible to submit applications for course accreditation. Accreditation is awarded separately for each course, based on the suitability of the following aspects: ability to deliver full content of training required for the qualification; adequacy of teacher qualifications; suitability and sufficiency of facilities including machinery, equipment and tools for delivery of training. Accreditation is awarded for a specified period of time and on completion of such period, the institutions have to take action for reaccreditation of the particular course.

The NVQ Framework has provision for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). It is a mechanism which recognizes competencies acquired through non-formal means of learning. The competencies so acquired are counted towards the award of NVQ or a 'Record of Achievement', as appropriate.

Policy 95 : *Establish an accreditation and quality assurance framework for all TVET institutions.*

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- With the concurrence of the TVEC, the NQAAC should draw up an accreditation and quality assurance framework for TVET institutions.
- Ensure that within the period of first registration, the institutions take action to accredit courses for which national standards are available.
- Take measures not to extend or renew registration unless the institute takes actions to accredit courses for which national standards are available.
- Operate a scheme to provide financial assistance to help procure equipment needed for accreditation.
- Coordinate a short term teacher training program on accreditation, in association with NITESL / Univotec.
- Provide training institutions with regular guidance towards accreditation.

Policy 96 : *Recognize institutions to conduct competency-based assessments (CBA) for the award of NVQ*

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- Strengthen the capacity of all state training networks to conduct competency-based assessments.
- NAITA to delegate powers to conduct RPL assessments to other state training networks.
- Undertake periodic conformity audits to ensure that the conditions of accreditation of the TVEC are met

17.3.5 Quality Management Systems (QMS)

Introduction and Policy Issues

Registered training institutions may establish Quality Management System (QMS) in order to ensure that training is delivered as specified in documents submitted to the TVEC, proper internal monitoring and corrective mechanisms are in place and the institute is committed to continuous improvement of its services. The institute may adopt an accepted quality management system or use the TVEC quality management system that has been tailor-made for training institutions engaged in TVET.

The institutions are expected to undertake periodic internal and external audits to ascertain the conformity as set out in the quality manual approved by the TVEC. TVEC may award a quality conformity certificate to those who install and maintain a quality management system.

Policy 97: Make QMS the essential tool for the maintenance and upkeep of course accreditation

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- Establish a QMS at institutions that conduct accredited courses
- Provide training for QMS personnel

17.3.6 National Competency Standards

National Competency Standards (NCS) were introduced to the Sri Lankan TVET system with the introduction of NVQ framework. It is a written specification of knowledge, skills and attitudes required for efficient and effective performance in a particular occupation. NCS are developed incorporating the knowledge, skills and attitudes as required by the industry. The TVEC identifies the occupational areas for NCS development based on the labour market demand as well as industry sector skills requirements. Upon identification, TVEC requests NAITA to commence the development process in accordance with procedures set out in the NVQ operation manual.

The Labor Market Information System (LMIS) of the TVEC plays a key role in identifying the occupations for development of National Competency Standards. The criteria for selection of occupations include: current and future local employment opportunities; occupational contribution to the economy and society; feasibility to provide training and assessment; and special requests from industry/professional bodies.

Policy 98 : *Develop National Competency Standards and Assessment Criteria for occupations based on the labour market analysis.*

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- Solicit advice from Sector Policy Training Advisory Councils (SPTACs) for identification of emerging occupations that need national skills/competency standards
- Strengthen the TVEC- Labour Market Information System
- Develop Vocational Education and Training plans for industry sectors
- Increase responsiveness of the Vocational Education and Training Planning process to current and future demands.

17.3.7 Competency Based Assessments (CBA)

Assessment is the process of collecting evidence and making judgments on whether competency has been achieved by the applicant. Competency Based Assessment (CBA) is based on objective evidence of competencies pertaining to demonstration of skills, knowledge and attitudes setout in a particular National Competency Standard over a period of time. Assessors collect sufficient, valid and authenticated evidence in terms of a portfolio on the four dimensions specified below and decide whether the applicant is competent or not yet competent in performing in the occupation.

- Task skills - undertaking a specific workplace task(s);
- Task Management Skills - Managing a number of different tasks to complete a whole work activity;
- Contingency management skills - responding to problems and irregularities when undertaking a work activity,
- Performance according to specific workplace environments

Based on the guidance provided by the TVEC, the NAITA selects suitable assessors for competency based assessments. NAITA will make arrangements to provide those assessors with relevant competencies in association with the NITESL. TVEC will take necessary steps to give them a license on successful completion of an approved number of assessments.

The acceptability and the reliability of the qualifications depend on the competency of the assessor and the impartial manner by which he has conducted

the assessments. Therefore, training of assessors and upkeep of their competencies will help in maintaining consistency of assessment.

Policy 99: *Assess skills / competencies against requirements of the relevant National Competency Standard*

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- Base all NVQ assessment decisions on objective evidence
- Require those who seek certificates through the RPL pathway to maintain a portfolio of evidence
- Conduct valid, reliable, fair and flexible assessments
- Ensure that all NVQ Assessors possess qualifications as per relevant National Competency Standard for Assessors.

Chapter 18. Career Guidance and Counselling

18.1 Introduction

Providing information on different occupations and their career pathways, the employment potential and some indication of earning, can help students to make appropriate choices both in school and after leaving school. Students must be encouraged to consider a wide range of different career options and select that which is most suited to their own individual aptitudes, instead of focussing on a limited selection of traditional University Degrees. The National Education Commission has already recommended the establishment of a National Career Guidance Council which will coordinate career guidance activities in all education sectors.

Students in HEIs and TVET institutions may require both career guidance as well as career counselling. The former involves guidance offered to groups of students, whereas the latter usually involves one-to-one counselling regarding career options, based on the student's individual aptitude and performance.

Students in HEIs and TVET institutions mostly belong to the age group ranging from 18 to 24 years, which includes the latter part of adolescence. Many need assistance in solving their problems through correct psycho-social counselling and career guidance. Correct measures will help students to cope with their problems and find solutions to them.

This chapter will discuss the following aspects:

- Career guidance and counselling for students in universities and other HEIs
- Career guidance and counselling for students in the TVE sector
- Psycho-social counselling for students in HEIs and TVET institutions.

18.2 Career guidance and counselling for students in Universities and other HEIs

Introduction and Policy Issues

Career guidance units headed by a Director have been established in each University under a directive from the UGC. These Directors, who are appointed from among the academic staff, are paid an allowance for looking after the activities of the Unit. Students following courses in Arts, Humanities, and Science Faculties require much career guidance as the courses offered in these Faculties

are not aligned to specific jobs. Some universities may require more than one career guidance counsellor, appointed on a full-time basis, to attend to students' needs.

Policy 100 : *Enhance the capacity of career guidance units, so that they provide an efficient service to students in HEIs.*

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- Appoint experienced full-time counsellors to career guidance units.
- Provide training for career guidance counsellors.
- Promote good practices, sharing knowledge and providing assistance.
- Promote education, research, innovation and publications related to career guidance.
- Establish a network that links the National Career Guidance Council with career guidance units in all HEIs, and co-ordinates career guidance activities in the Higher Education sector.
- Maintain a data base for information on job opportunities at each career guidance unit.

18.3 Career Guidance and Counselling in the TVET Sector

Introduction and Policy Issues

Provision of information on the TVET sector, its employment potential and some indication of earnings, could create interest among students in this career path. Such a process will enable early identification of the target group and promote enrolment on TVET courses. Further, career guidance based enrollees would be better suited and more likely to complete the courses as their attributes have been matched with the requirements of the selected occupation as an important aspect of career guidance services. TVET trainees may also require one-to-one counselling regarding further education and employment prospects in different sectors.

Policy 101 : *Establish a career guidance network for the TVET Sector.*

Strategies for Policy Implementation

- Make utilization of career guidance services a mandatory step for all applicants before enrolment on TVET courses.

- Formulate and update career guidance policies and establish a Career Guidance Operations manual.
- Establish District Action Committees.
- Establish regional Career Guidance Information Centres.
- Coordinate all career guidance implementing agencies for quality assurance, monitoring and evaluation.
- Maintain a data base for information on job opportunities

18.4 Psycho-social counselling

Introduction and Policy Issues

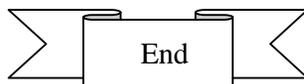
Students following courses in HEIs and TVET institutions are usually adolescents or young adults who face a variety of problems. However, the problems faced by this age group often relate to love affairs and marriage, studies and examinations, friends and peers, as well as family matters.

Therefore there should be well established psycho-social counselling services to help them with difficulties related to their studies, examinations, and personal matters.

Policy 102 : Establish units to provide psycho-social counselling.

Strategies for Policy Implementation:

- Define the role of student counsellors in HEIs and TVET institutions.
- Provide facilities for psycho-social counselling centres to cater to the needs of students in an efficient manner.
- Appoint qualified counsellors to such centres.
- Provide the counsellors with training to upgrade their skills.



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