

VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT NEEDS OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN SRI LANKA

WM. Dhanapala

Senior Lecturer,

Department of Sociology & Anthropology,

University of Sri Jayewardenepura,

Nugegoda

Sri Lanka.

This paper is concerned with the vocational training and career preparation of young people in Sri Lanka. A national survey was conducted for the National Youth Services Council and some of the findings of this survey are analyzed in this paper with the objective of ascertaining the vocational preparation of youth in Sri Lanka. The national survey had a sample of 6060 youths between 16-29. The sample comprised of all the ethnic groups in Sri Lanka. As is evident from the survey findings vocational training can be cited as a component which has been taken for granted by the relevant authorities. Though vocational training in a suitable area for the young people should be treated as a significant step of their career development and career planning, such an attention was not evident. Most of the training programs have provided short term (less than 6 months) training for the young people who have followed them. Such courses can be considered as introductory programs. What is required is not an introductory course but a course which provides young people with thorough development of knowledge and skills leading to employability. As found in the survey the introductory courses or training programs have not been sufficient for developing future careers of young people. At the same time the trend of providing vocational training is not compatible with the socio-economic status-quo of the country. This insufficiency of training has compelled young people to follow many courses though most of them have not met their real needs and they have ended in vein. The findings of the types and duration of vocational training courses suggest that authorities should pay proper attention to organize well planned career oriented long term vocational training for the young people so that such programs directly solve the major problem of finding a future means of sustenance.

Key Words:

Vocational training, Career development, young people