



NATIONAL POLICY ON TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

-

NOVEMBER 2018



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NATIONAL EDUCATION COMMISSION
SRI LANKA



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FOREWORD

The National Education Commission Act No. 19 of 1991, has entrusted the formulation of policy proposals on all aspects of education in Sri Lanka to this Commission. Accordingly, policy proposals on Technical and Vocational Education were last published and submitted to His Excellency the President in 2009. Since then many changes have taken place in the socio-economic structure of the country as well as in industry. Both public and private institutions engaged in Technical and Vocational Education and Training have grown in number and complexity.

Developing a skilled workforce is a challenge facing the Government at present. Besides, there is a need to shed archaic attitudes towards white collar works and recognize technical and vocational employment as professional fields of work. Giving equal importance to traditional Higher Education and Technical and Vocational education is a must in the present world of work.

Given this context, introducing a new set of policy proposals revising some of the proposals made in 2009 has become an absolute necessity. With that objective in mind, several workshops with the participation of almost all stakeholders were conducted by the NEC since September 2017. These workshops and subsequent group meetings with researchers have resulted in this comprehensive National Policy Framework.

This document has been initially approved by the Standing Committee on Technical and Vocational Education and finally by the National Education Commission.

I express my sincere gratitude to Dr. T. A. Piyasiri, Vice Chairman, Planning, and his team that contributed to the successful completion of this important task.

Prof. W. I. Siriweera

Chairman

National Education Commission

09.11.2018

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Formulation of the National Policy on Technical and Vocational Education is a task undertaken by the National Education Commission under its mandate, in the years 2017 and 2018, towards achieving a skilled workforce for socio-economic development of Sri Lanka. National Education Commission worked closely with the Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission, Ministry of Skills Development and Vocational Training, Ministry of Labour, National Institute of Education, Public and Private TVET institutions, Industry Sector Skills Councils and Industry Representatives including Employers' Organizations in identifying issues on different aspects of Technical and Vocational Education and formulating policies and key strategies with wider consensus.

Technical and Vocational Education Sector analysis was done under nine topics and each topic was allocated to a group of persons who have long work experience in the related areas. Reports produced by the groups were presented at a stakeholder workshop, feedbacks obtained and the edited reports were validated by the Standing Committee on Technical and Vocational Education before submission to the National Education Commission for approval.

I wish to thank the Chairman and the members of the National Education Commission and the members of the Standing Committee on Technical and Vocational Education for guidance and technical support provided in formulating the policies.

I wish to thank and place on record the appreciation of the technical expertise contributions made by the group members of nine technical groups who provided in-depth analysis on given topics and prepared policy proposals. I also wish to thank the Editor who summarized the reports and the translators who translated the document to Sinhala and Tamil languages.

I appreciate the work of the Secretary of the Commission, Senior Policy Research Officer and the staff of the Commission for providing technical inputs and facilitating the policy development process.

I thank the Ministry of Skills Development and Vocational Training for providing part financial support towards the development of the policy document.

Dr. T. A. Piyasiri,

Vice Chairman (Planning),
Chairman, Standing Committee on Technical and Vocational Education,
National Education Commission.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

National Education Commission commenced the process of formulating National Policy on Technical and Vocational Education in December 2017 and after detailed deliberations the policy document is presented. This policy document is subsequent to the policy document published by the Commission in 2009. National development strategy of the government as stipulated in the Public Investment Programme 2017 – 2020 and Sustainable Development Goals have been taken into account in developing the policies. The development of TVET training system, technological changes and socio-economic changes during the past decade have been taken into consideration in identifying the issues that need to be addressed to provide wider access and to progressively enhance the labour market relevance and quality of technical and vocational education in Sri Lanka.

Increase of Access to TVET

TVET sector especially focuses on the youth in the age cohort of 15 – 29 years who are expected to engage in education and training for acquisition of skills. Those who leave schools at different stages and do not enter conventional higher education remain the main group who shall be diverted for skills acquisition in pre-employment training. Uncertified and experienced workers, returnees from overseas work, employed personnel who expect to upgrade their current skills or aspire to acquire different vocational competencies are also among the clientele of the TVET sector to whom a flexible and wider access need to be provided. Female participation in TVET and in the labour force is lower in Sri Lanka in comparison with developing countries in the region and hence females are to be particularly focused in providing TVET.

Network of public training institutes that have adequate training facilities and learning environment will be available to attract greater participation of youth, with special focus on females, and apprenticeship based training will be expanded to wider range of occupations. Flexible methods will be used to deliver knowledge component of apprenticeship based training. Enabling environment for the private sector to participate in TVET delivery under a fair and sensible

regulatory arrangement by the government within the NVQ framework will be ensured. Mechanism and legal framework will be established that binds large and medium enterprises, including development projects, to provide firm-based Training. Appropriate financial support system for TVET trainees will be made available to increase accessibility to TVET by poor segments of society.

Optimal Utilization of Physical, Financial and Human Resources

Successive governments since 1980's have invested heavily for expansion of physical resources and capacity building of human resources in the TVET sector of Sri Lanka. The intake capacity of public training institutions is approximately 140,000 and that of registered private institutes is approximately 50,000 in 2016. Most of the Public sector TVET institutions operate only on week days during office hours leaving valuable training equipment and machinery idling during week-ends and in vacation periods. Many public training institutions heavily depend on the visiting and contract staff for training delivery many of whom have not been exposed to pedagogical training and hence poor quality of training.

Under the proposed policy directions, TVET institutions will optimally utilize available resources to provide training for youth and to the industry and /or community in the specialized areas during off hours with flexible time tables. TVET institutions will make use of part of funds received from fee levying courses for maintenance and upkeep of the institute and remuneration of staff. Public Training programmes will be implemented only where there is a demand from industry and will not be based on social demand. All training institutions will establish and maintain operational and financial information and provide to a central MIS to be shared with regulatory body and the line Ministry for management decision making. A TVET Development Plan will be prepared under the TVE Act covering the entire sector, in keeping with the mandate of each institute as given in the respective Acts or Service Minute, and the legal effect will be given to the plan.

Rationalization of Training Programmes at Regional Level to Minimize Overlaps

It is observed that several training networks are operating at regional level resulting in duplications and overlapping of courses leading to resources underutilization. This is mainly attributed to lack of coordination between training networks and non-availability of clear guidelines as to how the limited resources are used to achieve common objectives in relation to TVET. It is observed that social demand from young people, their parents and other stakeholders remain the key influencing factors which make TVET provision irrational and imbalance leading to issues of unemployment and underemployment of youth who complete TVET courses.

Policy proposals advocate review of the mandates given to TVET institutions by respective Acts of Parliament or Service Minutes and align them to suit current TVET provision requirements. Public sector TVET networks will bring large majority of their training courses under the NVQ framework and the establishment of NVQ level 5 & 6 courses will be based on the labour market demand and the mandate and capability of respective training institutions. Human and physical resources will be redeployed in line with course rationalization decisions. State and non-State TVET provision will be strengthened through capacity building of staff (Pre-service training and in-service exposure) with possible Public Private Partnerships (PPP) and international linkages. Mechanisms will be formulated to address unexpected TVET demands and challenges where special interventions are required.

Relevance and Quality of TVET Programmes

Sri Lanka established the National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) Framework in 2004 in order to provide labour market relevant and quality assured training programmes and for certifications of competencies acquired. Greater participation of industry in competency standard development, programme design and programme delivery enhance the labour market relevance of programmes. Quality assurance in programme design, programme delivery and in competency assessment are the key aspects in effectively implementing a qualifications framework.

National Competency Standards development and revision process will be critically analysed and mechanism developed to shorten the time period for development or revision. International best practices will be sought for this purpose.

Processes involving Assessment and Certification will be analysed and streamlined for valid, reliable, quality assured and speedy issue of NVQ certificates to those who have completed pre-employment training and for those who are assessed through Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). Avenues will be made available for those who obtained Record of Achievement (RoA) for unit of competency to obtain full NVQ certificate. NVQ Framework will be amended, where appropriate, to award Certificates or similar qualifications falling into higher NVQ levels. Legal provision will be established to facilitate effective implementation of NVQ framework.

Interrelation Among Industry, Employers, Employees and TVET

The TVET networks and the skilled personnel are key variables of the skills supply whereas the industry, employers and the type and number of skilled people which industry need are key variables of the skills demand. Practitioners in the industry always insist a match between labour supply and labour demand which can be achieved only by having an interrelation among the aforesaid partners. At the industry and the enterprise level, employers have expressed concerns over skills mismatch and lack of quality and relevance of TVET curricula in terms of imparting up-to-date knowledge to meet the changing demands of the industry.

Selection of occupations for development of National Competency Standards (NCS) will be based on present and emerging labour market demand nationally and in foreign labour migrant destinations. Valid and current National Industry Training Advisory Committees (NITACs) will be operational for all important industry sectors with each NITAC covering its sub-sectors. Feedback on developed NCS will be sought from industry related professional bodies, Employers Federation of Ceylon, industry associations and trade chambers prior to validation. Government will be advised to direct all employers in the public, private and the NGO sectors to accept the NVQ certificate as an alternative to conventional equivalent educational qualifications in deciding on recruitments and promotions. Wages Board mechanism will be integrated with NVQ system in deciding wages of industry employees. State sector TVET institutions will formulate a dedicated strategy to promote Vocational Training in SMEs which will eventually lead to NVQ certification. Sri Lanka NVQ framework will be mapped with the national, regional or global qualification frameworks widely accepted in regions where Sri Lankan workers seek

foreign employment. Industry Sector Skills Councils, which is essentially an integrated part of the industry, will provide direction of industry growth and facilitate industry inputs for the development of TVET.

Interrelation of TVET with General Education and Higher Education

Technical subjects that were introduced to the general education system in the year 2007 as Practical and Technical Skills (PTS) are taught from Grade 6 to 11. The PTS component consists of five broad areas of technical education, namely; Basic Technology, Food Technology, Textile Technology, Agricultural Technology, and Business Activities with ICT incorporated into each of the five areas. Nine technical subjects are offered in a Basket (Technical Basket) for the students in grade 10-11 to select one out of nine subjects. Thirteen years of certified education programme, which is being piloted at present, provide opportunities to all children to enroll in vocational stream after the GCE O/L, including those children who will not achieve higher academic performance at GCE O/L. However, it is difficult to find any useful links provided by TVET for students who pass the Technical subjects at GCE (O/L).

The SLQF has identified different levels where NVQ levels are equivalent to SLQF. Though the aim and objectives of SLQF are; to ensure lateral and vertical mobility; progression within higher education and career pathways; and recognition of prior learning, it is argued that the foregoing aims have not been adequately achieved as it is not implemented effectively.

Policy proposals herein recommend to develop and implement a technical and vocational education/training system for the general education system that is recognized by relevant authorities for further education/training. It is also recommended to develop a broader and inclusive vision and curriculum for school Technical and Vocational Education through the widest possible participatory approach involving all stakeholders. Schools will continue with the academic path while introducing the vocational path for students who are interested in technical studies. Pre-service teacher education and in-service teacher education and training programmes will be reviewed to meet the competencies required for a technology teacher. Higher education system in Sri Lanka must recognize the qualifications awarded under SLQF and NVQF in providing higher education opportunities.

Recruitment and Career Progression of TVET Academic and Administrative Staff

High quality human resource in the teaching and administration is an essential element contributing to quality education and training. There need to be a proper balance between academic qualifications and professional competence of teaching staff attached in TVET institutions. Attracting, recruiting and retaining qualified instructional staff in the TVET sector has always been a challenging task. There is a considerable remuneration gap between the industry and the TVET institutions for those with similar qualifications. Continuous professional development of staff and providing higher education opportunities to rise to higher managerial positions are some of the main requirements to establish efficient and sustainable TVET institutions.

Policy proposals setout herein recommend that all TVET training institutes should have same educational qualifications and work experience specified in the respective Schemes of Recruitments for comparable posts with common salary scales and common designations. TVET institutions will obtain the services of contract and visiting staff through an established and transparent process to ensure training delivery to achieve relevant competency standards and remunerate such staff appropriately. Academic staff will be provided pre-service training, pedagogical training and short term skills development programmes to be in par with technological advancements and changing work practices in industry. An effective performance appraisal system will be maintained to ensure the delivery of expected performance outcomes while ensuring professional growth and career progression of staff in identified stages of their careers. Training organizations will facilitate and encourage undertaking of TVET related research by the teaching staff for purposes of advancing the TVET systems. Training organizations will provide opportunities for further professional development through higher education and training preparing identified staff for future managerial positions.

Access to TVET for Vulnerable and Disadvantaged People

Providing access to TVET for vulnerable and disadvantaged people is of paramount importance due to the fact that, in most occasions, they are marginalized as a result of the prevailing socio-cultural norms and economic conditions. National as well as international conventions and

legislations are in force to look after interests and welfare of disadvantaged/vulnerable people. These legal frameworks insist that the relevant government and non-governmental organizations that deal with them to maintain inclusiveness and justice in all aspects of social life as applicable for others in society.

The policy framework will focus on the following major vulnerable/disadvantaged groups for promotion of TVET with the aim of improving their life in society:

- Disadvantaged youth
- Disadvantaged/ vulnerable women (Socially disadvantaged)
- People with disabilities (which includes students leaving from special education schools)
- Economically downtrodden/ Poor

Inclusive TVET programmes for vulnerable people will be promoted and developed at the national level. Potential TVET programmes conducted for persons with disabilities will be transformed into the NVQ system. All TVET institutions providing training for disabled personnel will be supported and enhanced.

Flexible learning TVET programmes leading to NVQ will be designed and delivered for economically downtrodden groups.

Information Gathering, Dissemination and Career Guidance

Identifying sources of and information for TVET planning is a fundamental activity in organizing demand-driven courses for wide array of TVET seekers. Training intentions of young people and that of adults differ in terms of type and length of courses and nature of industry they would prefer to work in. Therefore, it is necessary to collect, analyze and disseminate relevant TVET related information through range of means including career guidance for the clientele to take right decisions in choosing courses. Accuracy, completeness and relevance of data collected are found to be utmost important for proper institutional planning to be able to achieve objectives of TVET institutions at national as well as regional level.

The policy proposals herein recommend a National unified and standardized system for Career Advice and Guidance (CAG) to be in operation among all levels of education and

training institutes, in-service and social system. Standardized career guidance materials developed and used by Schools for school children and the TVET sector to match with needs of target groups. Access will be made available to a unified and ICT enabled CAG system supported by reliable Labour Market Information for all stakeholders.

A platform for data analytic system and resources to predict futuristic job and occupational roles in local and foreign labour markets will be established. TVET sector agencies and other stakeholders will cooperate each other for sharing available data and information for national cause of setting up centralised data repository.

ACRONYMS

ADB	Asian Development Bank	IDB	Industrial Development Board
B.Ed	Bachelor of Education	IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
BOI	Board of Investment	ILO	International Labour Organization
CAG	Career Advice and Guidance	IoO	Index of Opportunity
CBA	Competency Based assessment	ISSCs	Industry Sector Skills Councils
CBT	Competency Based Training	LMI	Labour Market Information
CGCCs	Career Guidance and Counseling Centers	M.Ed	Master of Education
CGTTI	Ceylon German Technical Training Institute	MIS	Management Information System
CIDA	Construction Industry Development Authority	NAITA	National Apprentice and Industry Training Authority
CPD	Continuous Professional Development	NITACs	National Industry Training Advisory Committees
DCS	Department of Census and Statistics	NCoE	National Collage of Education
DTET	Department of Technical Education and Training	NCS	National Competency Standard
ECTS	European Credit Transfer System	NEC	National Education Commission
ETF	Employees' Trust Fund	NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
GCE (O/L)	General Certificate of Education (Ordinary Level)	NGO	Non-Government Organization
GCE (A/L)	General Certificate of Education (Advanced Level)	NHREP	National Human Resources and Employment Policy
GDP	Gross Domestic Product	NIBM	National Institute of Business Management
HE	Higher Education	NIE	National Institute of Education
HRD	Human Resources Development	NSBM	National School of Business Management
ICT	Information and Communication Technology	NVQ	National Vocational Qualification

NYP	National Youth Policy	SSDP	Skills Sector Development Program
NYSC	National Youth Services Council	SSM	Secretariat for Senior Minister
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development	TVE	Technical and Vocational Education
OJT	On- the- job Training	TVEC	Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission
PES	Public Employment Service	TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and
PG Level	Post Graduate level	UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
PGDE	Post Graduate Diploma in Education	UNIVOTEC	University of Vocational Technology
PPP	Public-Private-Partnership	VET plan	Vocational Education and Training Plan
PTS	Practical and Technical Skills	VTA	Vocational Training Authority
QMS	Quality Management System		
RoA	Record of Achievement		
ROI	Return on Investment		
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning		
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals		
SLBFE	Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment		
SLIATE	Sri Lanka Institute of Advanced Technological Education		
SLITA	Sri Lanka Institute of Textile and Apparel		
SLQF	Sri Lanka Qualification Framework		
SLTES	Sri Lanka Technical Education Service		
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises		
SoR	Scheme of Recruitment		
SPTAC	Sector Policy and Training Advisory Council		

1.1 General Overview

Increase of access to TVET is referred to as widening the opportunities for training seekers to join the TVET system to acquire skills and become competent in preferred occupations which have demand in the labour market. TVET sector especially focuses on the youth in the age cohort of 15 – 29 years who are expected to engage with the TVET system for acquisition of skills. Uncertified and experienced workers, returnees from overseas work, employed personnel who expect to upgrade their current skills or aspire to acquire different vocational competencies are also among the clientele of the TVET sector to whom a flexible and wider access need to be provided.

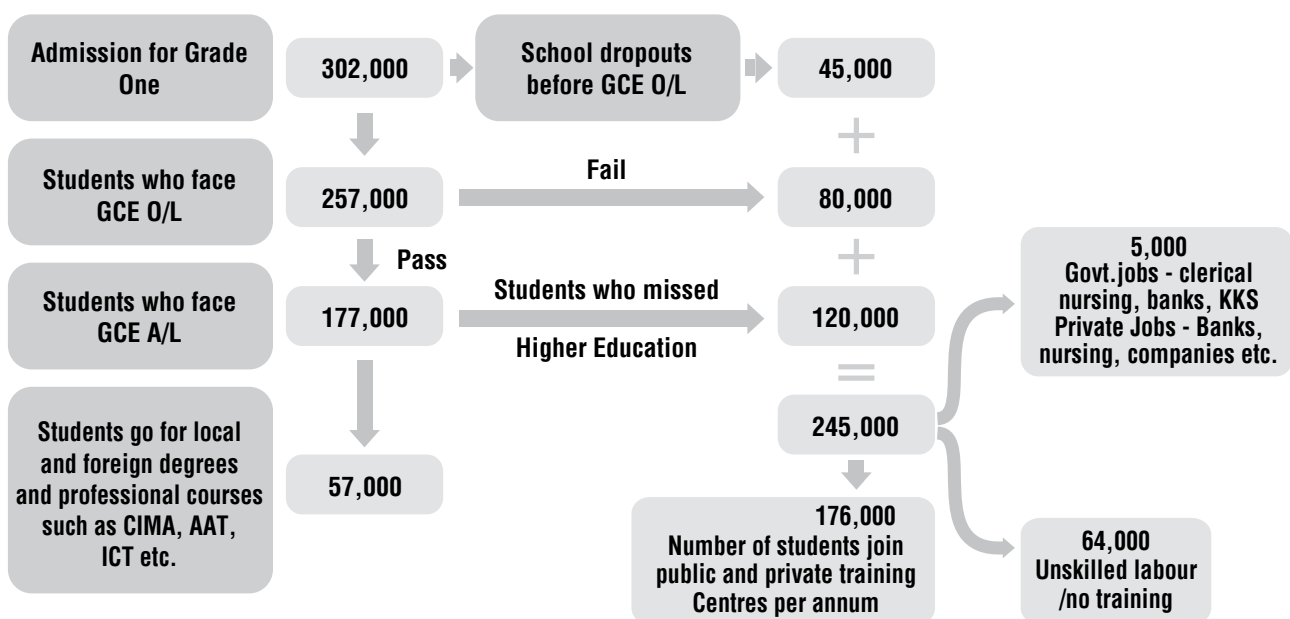
Those who leave schools at different stages and do not enter conventional higher education remain the main group who shall be diverted for skills acquisition in pre-employment training. The Figure 1.1 depicted below indicates that there are several categories of school leavers, i.e. those who leave before GCE (O/L), those who fail GCE (O/L), those

who fail GCE (A/L) and those who pass GCE (A/L) but not selected for placements at the conventional University system. As shown in the Figure 1.1, this group aggregates 245,000 annually however, only around 175,000 join public and private training system per annum leaving out around 64,000 who add up to the group called Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) or engage in informal sector work annually. Therefore, the TVET sector must expand its facilities to be able to enrol around 250,000 for courses with labour market demand so that there would be no addition to the NEET Group.

1.2 The NEET Group

Sri Lanka Labour Force Survey conducted in 2016 by the Department of Census and Statistics (DCS, 2016) reveals a staggering 26.1 percent of youth in the age group of 15–29 years are in the NEET group. This group makes up approximately 400,000 of young persons remaining in the society without engaging in any useful economic activity.

Figure 1.1: School leavers at different stages at School (based on 2004 entry age cohort)



Source: Adopted from PIP, 2017-2020

This group add up annually due to lack of opportunities in education and training avenues in the country and also due to lack of financial strength to go overseas for further education. Table 1.1 depicted below shows that percentage of this group in the labour force has been increasing during the period 2011 to 2016 which would keep on increasing until any progressive steps are taken to bring them into mainstream socio-economic development process by skilling them in employable vocations.

Table 1.1: NEET group as a percentage of youth 2011-2016

Gender	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Total	23.5	23.9	26.6	27.8	25.8	26.1
Male	13.0	12.7	17.0	17.6	16.3	17.0
Female	33.4	34.7	35.5	37.4	34.6	34.5

Source: LFS, DCS, 2016

1.3 Existing Policy Directions

National Policy Framework on Higher Education and Technical and Vocational Education insists on providing seamless pathways for youth to enter into the TVET system who do not have direct entry into higher education (NEC, 2009). In response to this policy direction, reforms in the TVET sector and the general education sector are being implemented to attract an increasing number of youth to the TVET system. National Human Resources and Employment Policy (NHREP) for Sri Lanka also emphasises adoption of same policy with integration of National Vocational Qualifications by way of teaching pre-vocational subjects at secondary school level (SSM, 2012). NHREP values the introduction of the technology stream in the GCE (A/L) and emphasises the importance of running relevant agencies in general education and TVET in coordinated manner to promote vocational skills acquisition from the secondary school level.

1.4 Need of Coherent Policies on Accessibility

1.4.1 Increasing trend of NEET group

As shown in Table 1.1, the percentage of NEET group in youth population has been increasing and therefore measures are needed to be taken to engage them in worthwhile economic activities. Appropriate policies and strategies need to be adopted to attract them into the TVET sector and make them

competent in occupations in demand. Systematic provision of TVET within the school or immediately after leaving school will reduce the annual addition to the NEET group.

1.4.2 Inadequate opportunities for youth to follow TVET Courses

It has been observed that existing training facilities and courses are not rationally and geographically organised commensurate with dispersion of youth population in the country. The TVEC, in its efforts to identify the labour demands in provinces developed an indicator called “Index of Opportunities” (IoO) which signifies total annual intake of trainees into TVET as a percentage of total number of students leaving the school system each year in a given geographic area. In the provincial Vocational Education and Training plan prepared for the Southern Province by the TVEC identified IoO percentages of 81% for Galle, 55.7% for Matara and 50% for Hambantota districts (TVEC, 2011). Simply, the IoO shows the existing share of young people in TVET and therefore, resources allocation and rationalisation of existing resources can be done based on this index prepared district-wise. IoOs prepared for each district indicate that there is a significant disparity in opportunities available for TVET in different districts which hinder access to TVET by the youth and other training seekers. Further, availability of preferred training courses of students in districts is a matter of concern.

1.4.3 Lack of TVET courses to cover all occupations in the labour market

Although a wide range of occupations prevail in the labour market, it has been found that all leading TVET institutions offer courses in less than 100 occupations. National Competency Standards which are developed as per labour market demands are also available for nearly 200 occupations and many of which have not yet been implemented under institutional or apprenticeship based training. This implies that training opportunities are lacking in occupations which have demand in the labour market. Today's youth have diverse interests and also the labour market keeps changing which signify the need of introducing new courses as per skills needs of dynamic labour market.

It is not possible to develop institutional training for all the occupations in the labour market, therefore, apprenticeship training should be expanded to be able to play a

complimentary role to meet skills needs of such occupations in which institutional training is not possible to provide.

1.4.4 Low female participation

Sri Lankan population is aging driven by two demographic dynamics: low fertility causing low birth rates and rising life expectancy resulting low death rates.

This leads to an increase in the country's dependency ratio. The Dependency Ratio is an age-population ratio of those typically not in the labour force (those in ages 0 to 14 and 65+years) to those typically in the labour force (the productive ones in ages 15 to 64). It is used to measure the pressure on productive population.

The slower growth of the Sri Lankan working-age population and the increase in the dependency ratio are two most important factors adversely affecting economic growth. Mitigating or reversing this decline in labour force growth means finding additional sources of labour.

The largest possible source of additional labour to counter slow growth of labour force is to increase female labour force participation by removing barriers and promoting enabling factors. Raising the female participation rate in labour force from the current figure of 35% to the average level observed in high-income countries would increase the overall labour force participation.

As shown in Table 1.1, 34.5% of female youth are in NEET group which shows a lower participation by females in Technical and Vocational Education and Training depriving them being gainfully employed. Labour market research of the TVEC shows that out of the aggregate enrolments by public and private sector institutions, 42% represent females and the remaining 58% represent males (Labour Market Information Bulletin, 2017). These statistics indicate that females do not sufficiently participate in TVET due to lack of access or appropriate opportunities in TVET. Family commitments of Sri Lankan females also act negatively in engagement of education and training. Due to socio-cultural norms and workplace conditions, female participation in some courses is higher (in service sector occupations) than males and in some courses male participation is higher (in manufacturing sector occupations) than females. These factors need to be taken into account when increasing female participation in TVET courses.

1.5 Issues to be Dealt with in Order to Improve Access to TVET

1.5.1 Facilities of training centres

General appearance and facilities of most of vocational training institutions in the public sector are not commendable in comparison with facilities of primary and secondary schools of the Government. This negatively affects the decision of young people to join the TVET sector. In terms of size of the institutions, nearly 70% of TVEC registered training institutions deliver three or lesser number of courses (TVEC, 2018). Nearly 7% of registered institutions offer ten or more courses which shows that majority of vocational training institutions in the country are smaller than a primary school in a rural area. Hardly any training institutions provide opportunities for co-curricular activities. Lack of co-curricular activities mainly affect the development of soft skills which complements the formation of technical and vocational skills.

1.5.2 Expansion of apprenticeship

As it is not possible to provide institutional training for all the occupations in the labour market, it is necessary to expand apprenticeship training to fulfil skill needs to cover full spectrum of the labour market. It is also one of the economical ways of skilling people and it may provide training in all the possible occupational areas. Importantly, apprenticeship training shall be strengthened by providing relevant theoretical aspects of training by organizing part time study programmes in training institutions in order to acquire the knowledge component.

1.5.3 Flexible training opportunities

Different client groups as explained before, needs different entry and exit points as per their employment conditions and life styles. Mostly, pre-employment training is provided targeting the school leavers according to annual course plans and time tables. Apart from pre-employment training, need of skills upgrading arises due to change of occupations and change of technology where short duration courses may have to be organized in evenings and weekends. Those who are already employed require flexible course delivery depending on their needs. Those who are in informal sector also would prefer flexible course delivery to match with their work conditions. Distant, mobile or online delivery modes

may be applicable for those already employed. Therefore, access to TVET for different client segments can be increased by bringing flexibility to training delivery. In order to further promote flexible delivery, services of qualified and experienced trainers from industry can be sought when fulltime in-house instructors are not available during off-office hours.

1.5.4 Opportunities for livelihood training

Youth unemployment cannot be solved only through TVET. Large numbers of people are employed in livelihood occupations. Youth as well as adults cannot explore such openings because there are no training opportunities. Productivity in livelihood sector is reported to be low. Productivity can be increased if training on technology and innovations are provided. Therefore, training institutes must operate livelihood training divisions to undertake such training programmes for communities in the locality. If in-house trainers are not available, services of external resource persons can be sought for delivery of such short duration skills. Upgrading and technology orientation courses may be provided preferably in evenings and weekends.

1.5.5 Unavailability of courses in mother tongue

Employment for skilled personnel is available locally as well as globally. All citizens should be able to follow NVQ 1 to 4 courses at craft level in their mother tongue as the mastery of another language cannot be expected at this level. However, all training courses are not available in Tamil and Sinhala medium due to unavailability of facilities and instructors. Under NVQ Framework, all NVQ level 5 and above courses are conducted in English for the trainees to be abreast with the technological developments and for global employment.

1.5.6 Policy directions

Policy 01

Each district should have training centres to deliver courses to meet employment aspiration of youth and skills need of industry and each training centre should be of an economical size with facilities for co-curricular activities to deliver quality pre-employment, skills upgrading training and livelihood training.

Policy 02

TVET institutions should encourage and facilitate greater female participation in TVET courses.

Policy 03

Review and expand apprenticeship based training to cater to wider range of occupations available in the labour market and establish mechanisms to provide knowledge component through flexible delivery methods.

1.5.7 Strategies for policy implementation

- a. Buildings should be designed and built to create an aesthetic appealing appearance to attract youth. Centres should have appealing outlook generating respect among students, teachers and industry partners.
- b. Provide facilities and learning environment for co-curricular activities and soft skills development.
- c. Deliver at least 10 demand-driven fulltime courses with computer aided design facilities even to be used in traditional courses.
- d. Develop and offer training programmes that provide wider occupational opportunities for females.
- e. Provide female friendly facilities in training centres.
- f. Provide part-time courses at NVQ Level 3 with flexible delivery, including modern technology, for those employed and returnees from overseas. This facilitates lateral movement for different occupations and also vertical movement for those who intend acquiring higher skills in same occupation. On-the-job training may not be necessary as they already have workplace experiences.
- g. Provide short duration courses on livelihoods for local communities.
- h. Provide theoretical and basic training for apprentices placed in industry.
- i. Provide technical assistance to industry for promotion of firm-based training. Short courses for industry can be provided to offer theoretical knowledge.

- j. Expand apprenticeship based training especially in areas of emerging occupations..
- k. Provide an allowance to trainees during apprenticeship training to support their living.

1.6 Private Sector Participation in TVET

1.6.1 Overview

It is evident that private sector has been increasingly taking part in delivery of TVET in all parts of the country. Enrolment statistics show that private sector shares approximately 30% of total enrolments of TVET sector of the country. The private sector TVET providers include sole proprietorships, incorporated companies including chambers, private partnerships, NGOs assisted by local and overseas charities and donors. Private sector participation in TVET has to be recognized and facilitated in a legalized quality assurance framework by the government.

1.6.2 Context and issues

Existing quality assurance and regulatory framework of the TVEC allows private sector to play a role in delivery of TVET. However, majority of them provide training in courses that fall in services sector i.e ICT, hair dressing and beauty culture, hospitality, para medical professions etc., mainly due to heavy investment required for training courses that fall in manufacturing or industry sectors. Role of private sector in TVET helps increase accessibility and also the cost of training which otherwise the government would have to bear in skills development. Also, the private providers bring much needed competition with public providers which help improve quality of service and training delivery. Private sector has greater ability and flexibility to offer certain training programmes and those programmes are best done by the private sector without competition from the public sector. Public-Private Partnerships and also Private-Private Partnerships help enhance the quality and cost effectiveness of training delivery.

Private training institutions have been strengthened with course accreditation programs introduced with the launch of NVQ system in the TVET sector of Sri Lanka. In order to support them to bring the training facilities to the expected standards, the TVEC has been implementing a grants scheme to purchase machinery, equipment and tools for training on cost sharing basis.

Skills Sector Development Programme (SSDP) of the Ministry of Skills Development has commenced an initiative called “training purchase model” where the government pay competitively selected private training providers to train specified number of persons in occupations in demand which the public sector providers cannot supply due to resources limitations. It is necessary to continue such programs even after completion of SSDP in order to supply skilled people in demand in a cost effective manner.

1.6.3 Policy directions

Policy 04

Ensure enabling environment for the private sector to participate in TVET delivery under a fair and sensible regulatory arrangement by the government within the NVQ framework. Facilitation and coordination by the government is necessary to encourage the private sector training providers to be in the TVET sector as partners of skills development.

1.6.4 Strategies for policy implementation

- a. Implement fair and sensible training quality assurance system within the NVQ framework in order to recognize delivery of TVET by private sector.
- b. Implement transparent system to provide technical and financial grants to selected private TVET providers for provision of demand-driven courses.
- c. Implement a system to share public sector TVET resources with private sector to increase access to TVET.
- d. Continue training purchase model to increase supply of trainees in occupations in demand.
- e. Operate a guaranteed fund in association with commercial banks to provide loans to private sector training providers at concessionary rates on recommendation of the government to expand training in occupations in demand.
- f. Give tax concessions to import high value equipment and machinery for training by private training providers.

- g. Implement a teacher training program for private sector TVET teachers in association with the UNIVOTEC to enhance their teaching skills.

1.7 Skill Upgrading of Already Employed – Firm Based Training

1.7.1 Context and issues

Both employers and workforce have incentives to engage in training; employers, because a trained workforce is more productive and for workers because higher productivity transforms into higher earnings. Firm-based training is referred to as training provided by employers to employees, whether as informal mentoring, organized training in-house, or organized external training provided, by Universities, TVET agencies, private companies and industry associations.

Research shows that 18.4% of Sri Lankan firms provide training to their employees. Although this is above the average in South Asia, it is well below percentage of firms providing training in East Asia and in developed countries.

Most firm-based training is internal, there is also external training and in-house training by outside providers. OJT or learning as they work with help from more experienced workers is most common internal training followed with training by firm's managers, technical persons and peers. In-house training by outside providers are mainly from sources other than TVET and Universities but by private companies or industry associations.

1.7.2 Policy directions

Policy 05

Mechanism and legal framework be established that binds large and medium enterprises, including development projects, to provide firm-based training and the State to provide incentives to small enterprises for training of their employees.

1.7.3 Strategies for policy implementation

- a. Advocate training as a means to increase productivity and profits within enterprises.
- b. Build the capacity of trade or sector associations to provide training services to their members.
- c. Provide training grants or loans to enterprises to help them cover or recover part of the cost of training.
- d. Provision of a wage subsidy by the state during the period of training with careful planning, execution and control.
- e. Provide assistance to enterprises from Skills Development Fund for an array of programs.
- f. Identify donor and managing organizations such as ETF and initiate a training voucher system for employees of small enterprises.
- g. TVET centres to assist employers to prepare and implement training programmes.
- h. Initiate Public-Private Partnership at policy, the sector and enterprise levels for public sector collaboration with employers.

1.8 Social Image of Craft Occupations

1.8.1 Overview

The TVET sector experiences difficulties in attracting sufficient number of trainees for the courses due to lower social image of craft occupations compared to other occupations in society due to plethora of social, cultural and economic reasons. This is more evident in manufacturing and light engineering related occupations which need to be rectified in order to increase enrolments so that training institutions may operate in full capacity.

1.8.2 Context and issues

In order to attract youth to craft level training, it has become necessary to improve the social image of those occupations. At present these occupations lack social image due to poor workplace conditions, low salaries, poor living pattern of practicing craftsmen, unavailability of social security,

employment and workplace safety etc., which hinder social image of craft occupations. Consequently, these factors act negatively in attracting youth for TVET courses. Low salaries and wages of craftsmen is a prominent problem as captured by the labour force survey conducted by the DCS. Table 1.2 below shows mean and median gross salaries of craftsmen in industry groups as found in the labour force survey conducted in 2016 by the DCS.

Table 1.2: Mean and median gross salaries of craftsmen in industry groups

Measurement	Agriculture	Industry	Service
Monthly wage/salary earners (Rs.)			
Mean	17,280	26,638	35,207
Median	15,000	20,500	32,000
Daily wage/salary earners (Rs.)			
Mean	13,266	20,690	18,961
Median	12,000	20,000	18,000

Source: LFS, DCS, 2016

Because of these low salary levels youth are not attracted to manufacturing and technical jobs available in the industry. Industry complains about lack of skilled people. Nevertheless there is a need of increasing salaries and wages to be able to attract trained people for existing job vacancies. TVET sector also finds it difficult to attract youth for courses which fall in manufacturing and light engineering sectors as a consequence of this issue. Craft level trade associations are not available in all occupational groups to maintain occupational ethics and good practices. Trade associations may play a role to ensure coordination with the industry and the Labour Ministry so that a bargaining can be done to increase the salaries and wages.

1.8.3 Policy directions

Policy 06

Social image of craft occupations should be increased in par with that of white collar occupations.

1.8.4 Strategies for policy implementation

- a. Ensure all workers wear overalls and safety gears while at work.
- b. Insure workers for possible workplace accidents.
- c. Maintain favorable workplace conditions.
- d. Establish trade organizations in association with Industry Sector Skills Councils in order to look after welfare, salaries and wages and continuous professional development of trade craftsmen and their children.
- e. Setup social security system.
- f. Organize regular (annually) skills competitions to give recognition to skills at National, Provincial and district levels.
- g. Issue licenses permitting competent craftsmen with NVQ level III and above to practice in the occupation.
- h. Pay salaries to employees of Industry Sector comparable to those in Service Sector.

1.9 Financial Support to Trainees

1.9.1 Overview

TVET system of Sri Lanka needs to implement and manage appropriate financial support system for the trainees to enrol for courses they prefer which eventually increase accessibility as majority of trainees come from poor segments of society. Public training institutes of DTET, NAITA and VTA, time to time, implemented financial support systems. However, there was no continuity and consistency among such initiatives.

1.9.2 Context and issues

Due to lack of financial strength, many youth from rural areas do not engage in education and training as a result of their poor economic conditions. Training centres especially in rural areas run below capacity owing to insufficient number of trainees in training institutes. Cost per training centre and that of trainee rise due to this problem. Transport cost also constraints poor segments participating in training and education.

1.9.3 Policy directions

Policy 07

Appropriate financial support system for TVET trainees should be made available for the purpose of easing expenses of parents which would eventually increase accessibility to TVET by poor segments of society.

1.9.4 Strategies for policy implementation

- a. Introduce stipend system for trainees of TVET institutions
- b. Provide subsidised transport facilities while in training
- c. Encourage private sector firms to pay a training allowance while trainees in OJT
- d. Implement a voucher system to support students in private TVET institutions enabling them gaining skills in demand

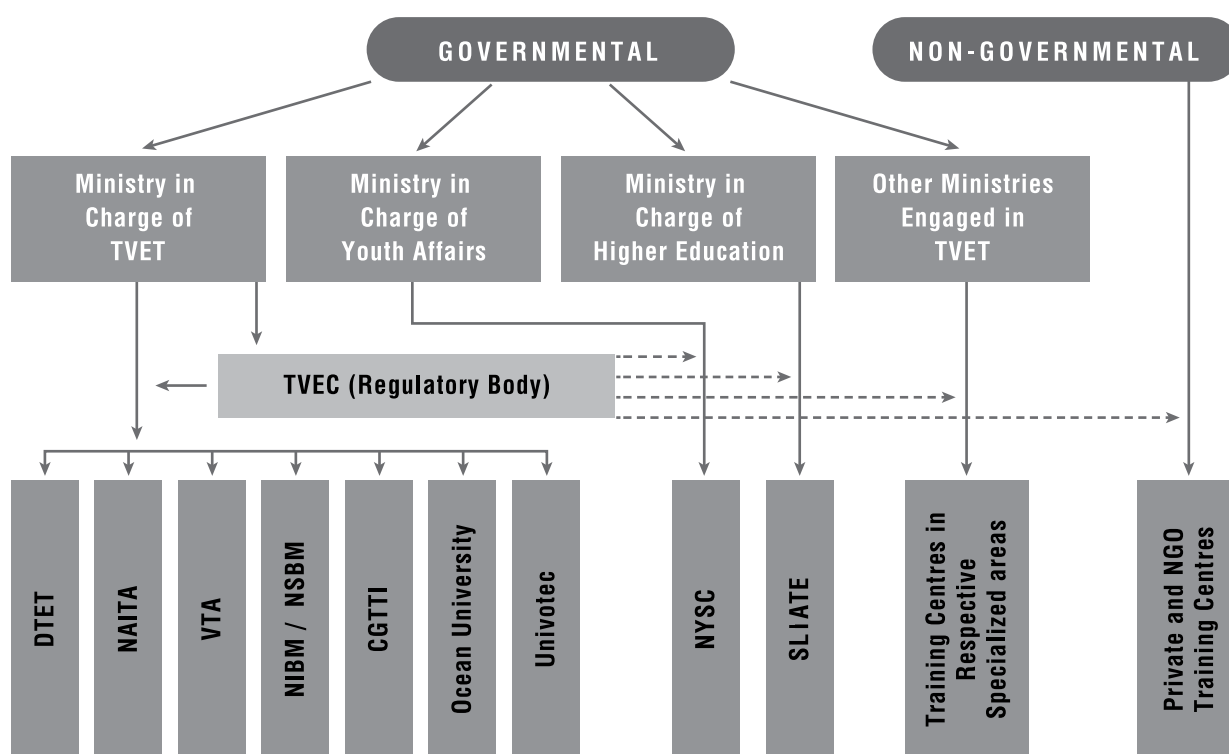
2.1 General Overview

Successive governments since 1980's have invested heavily for expansion of physical resources and capacity building of human resources in the TVET sector Sri Lanka. These investments were made with the objective of increasing the enrolments of youth for TVET courses conducted mainly by public sector training providers. Several major training networks have been established and most of these networks have been brought under a single ministry in charge of the subject of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) since 2004. In addition, there is one TVET training network under the Ministry of Higher Education and another under the Ministry of Youth Affairs.

and machinery idling during week-ends and in vacation periods. Due to this pattern of use, most of the modern equipment brought in by spending millions of rupees remain underutilized during much of the time year around. Some of these equipment get obsolete over the passage of time as well. Many courses in the public sector run below capacity due to lack of trainees, resulting in underutilization of equipment and machinery. Therefore, optimum utilization of resources in the TVET sector remains an issue.

With respect to human resources many institutions heavily depend on the visiting and contract staff for training delivery. Most of them have not been exposed to pedagogical training. They teach using their technical expertise in the

Figure 2.1: Institutional Framework of the TVET sector in Sri Lanka



Institutional Framework of the TVET Sector

The intake capacity of public training institutions is approximately 140,000 and that of registered private institutes is approximately 50,000 in 2016 according to LMI Bulletin of TVEC (Volume 02/16 – Dec 2016). Most of the Public sector TVET institutions operate only on week days during office hours leaving valuable training equipment

way they were taught without using pedagogical principles badly affecting quality of training delivery. Institutions find it difficult to attract and retain quality teachers due to prevailing low salary scales compared with the rates paid in the industry.

It is also observable that different training networks have established their training centres very close to each other and those centres mostly conduct similar courses. This is due to establishing facilities without rationale and proper justifications.

Though the economy needs more craft level technicians (Up to NVQ level 4) for work at factory floor and worksites, most leading public institutions tend to establish training facilities for delivery of NVQ level 5 and above courses disregarding labour market realities. It is extremely important that the training institutions adhere to their respective mandates as specified in relevant Acts of Parliament by which provisions they have been established.

The above described issues at the Training Centre and Institution levels continue to exist as a result of lack of focus on macro level planning in the TVET sector. TVE Act empowers TVEC to establish a Development Plan for the TVET sector which binds all public and private sector training institutions. The Development Plan essentially takes the economic development directions set by the government and the established policies for Technical and Vocational Education and Training into account. Implementation of such plan is facilitated by having most of the TVET training networks under one ministry in charge of TVET.

Resource inputs to the TVET sector come from various sources such as grants from donor agencies and as concessionary loans from international financial agencies in addition to the government annual allocations. These external funding are tied to agreed performance indicators and outcomes. It is expected that those outputs and outcomes contribute to the overall development and sustenance of the TVET sector. It is noted that there are issues in meeting targets agreed due to various reasons and hence the sector needs to take an analytical view on the optimal utilization of resources.

2.2 Existing Policy Directions

Policy document published in 2009 by the NEC addresses issues on Optimal utilization of physical, financial and human resources in its Chapters 12, 13 and 14. It advocates a creation of a legal framework that facilitates development initiatives and effective implementation of TVET. However, there had not been any legal provisions brought into effect, probably due to unavailability of clear directions on the type of legal provisions to be brought and the complexities

involved in bringing new legislation. The existing provision in the TVE Act for development and implementation of a Sector Development Plan had not been explored in this direction.

Policies and strategies presented in the areas of offering labour market oriented training programmes, training funding, public private partnerships, financial assistance to private sector and improvement of the image of the sector have been implemented to a satisfactory level. However, greater financial autonomy advocated for public sector institutes had not materialized. Further, subsequent decisions taken to offer all TVET courses in the Ministry of Skills Development free of charge has lowered the relevance of this policy. The policy advocated for all public and private institutes to submit to the TVEC, financial and statistical reports and also economic value added had not materialized in full. It is to be noted that such information will contribute to the macro level development planning of the sector.

2.3 Size and Spread of Training Centres

2.3.1 Overview

The majority of training centres are small centres which conduct less than 3 courses as per the database of registered training institutes of the TVEC. Most of these small institutes are located in old buildings which are not attractive for school leavers and other training seekers. Free entry and exit is ensured for training institutes by statute where anyone can start a training centre anywhere and seek registration from the TVEC. The TVEC as the government body vested with powers for registration and quality assurance of TVET in Sri Lanka evaluates the application by making a visit to the location and if it meets the criteria, TVEC registers it as a legal entity for provision of TVET. Upon registration, the centre may seek accreditation of courses where on successful evaluation and approval, the centre can offer NVQ certification to their trainees who successfully complete the assessment criteria.

2.3.2 Context and issues on size and spread of training centres

Given the socio-cultural background and preference of school leavers at present, they always expect facilities in training centres necessitating to maintain attractive classrooms with modern technology. Now most training seekers opt for NVQ

certification considering the recognition that it has earned locally and overseas. Relevance and quality of training cannot be improved to the required levels and retain the trainees unless these requirements are provided. Sufficient space must be available for co-curricular activities as well in order to enhance non-technical soft skills which significantly matters when the trainees join industry for work. Training quality can be significantly improved provided that above mentioned environment exists in the training centres. When it comes to spread of centres, mostly they are not located commensurate with spread of youth population. Therefore, this prevailing environment requires rationalization of Sri Lanka TVET to ensure optimal use of physical, human and financial resources of the sector.

2.3.3 Policy directions

Policy 08

Ensure state run training centres provide facilities to impart relevant and quality TVET while maintaining a trainee friendly environment.

Policy 09

Adequate space should be provided for co-curricular activities for trainees to sharpen their non-technical soft skills to be able to produce quality workers for the industry.

Policy 10

Training centres must be located in rational manner with appropriate number of courses commensurate with spread of population and labour demand ensuring equitable access to TVET.

2.3.4 Strategies for policy implementation

- a. Establish large training centres to impart labour market oriented training programmes with modern equipment and facilities which are attractive to youth.
- b. Provide enabling environment in training centers for co-curricular activities to gain non-technical soft skills.

- c. Introduce criteria by the TVEC for new training centres to seek prior registration approval before setting up an institute, allowing the TVEC to determine whether the setting up of proposed training centre is necessary.

2.4 Utilization of Training Centres, Machinery and Equipment

2.4.1 Context and issues

Given the existing pattern of training delivery, training facilities including machinery, equipment and tools remain underutilized for longer time than the time they are being used. As much of capital expenditure comes as loans from foreign countries, it has become necessary to utilize the training facilities in a way that brings sufficient return on investment. Mechanism has to be brought in to use training facilities during evenings and holidays so that the government can earn an income which may be used at least for repair and maintenance of facilities. Short term courses with flexible time tables may be attractive to those already employed and to those returnees from overseas who intend to start new vocations after foreign employment. Existing financial regulations need to be revisited and measures have to be introduced to spend earned income for training facility upkeep and paying of staff for serving during off office hours.

2.4.2 Policy directions

Policy 11

TVET institutions should optimally utilize available resources to provide training for youth and to the industry and /or community in the specialized areas during off hours with flexible time tables.

Policy 12

TVET institutions must make use of part of funds received from fee levying courses for maintenance and upkeep of the institute and remuneration of staff.

2.4.3 Strategies for policy implementation

- Provide regular pre-employment courses in full capacity for youth.
- Offer courses during off office hours with flexible time tables in order to optimally use training facilities.
- Bring changes to existing financial regulations so that earned income could be utilized for improvement of the institute.

2.5 Inter-Relation Among TVET Institutions when Making Investment Decisions

2.5.1 Overview

Different government TVET providers have established training centres in close proximity to each other which deliver same or similar courses. Anuradhapura and Jaffna Colleges of Technologies and University Colleges provide a classic example for this phenomena. Resources are duplicated or triplicated and the courses are run without optimal number of trainees. Courses conducted by these centres should complement each other rather than competing with each other. Centres can identify their niche areas and specialize on those to offer specialized courses that can lead them to become centres of excellence. If the centres coordinate with each other, Return on Investment (ROI) could be increased as courses could be run with optimal student numbers.

2.5.2 Context and issues

Department of National Planning oversees and approves major government investment from the national perspective. However, absence of a body at the Ministry in charge of TVET level to take investment decisions comprehensively looking at the development of TVET sector is a major issue. TVET institutions have often deviated from their respective mandates and areas or level of expertise further complicating TVET development.

2.5.3 Policy directions

Policy 13

TVET institutions should adhere to their mandate specified in the respective Act of Parliament or in the Service Minute.

Policy 14

TVEC should be empowered to independently assess and grant approval for establishment of new training centres or when upgrading existing centres.

2.5.4 Strategies for policy implementation

- Investment should be approved for new centres or programmes when only those are in line with the mandate of the respective TVET institution.
- Strength of existing institutions in specific sectors such as Hotel School, SLITA, CIDA, Department of Agriculture etc., should be utilized by TVET to regulate the training provision.

2.6 Focusing of Investment in Areas of High Labour Market Demand and Aspects of Return on Investment (ROI)

2.6.1 Overview

Public Investment Programme 2017 – 2020 identifies major development areas in Industry, Service and Agriculture sectors. In the industry sector, construction, manufacturing including apparel, computer software are major areas of growth and in the service sector, tourism and hospitality and health care are major growth areas. over a million new employment is expected to be generated in the medium term in these sectors. industry survey conducted by the Department of Census and Statistics in 2017 provides details of labour demand in several industry areas. Foreign employment opportunities are now moving from unskilled labour and housemaids towards semi-skilled and skilled labour, including middle level technicians and professionals.

2.6.2 Context and issues

Most TVET providers are implementing courses which are based on the social demand. Computer related courses and English courses are good examples. Data available in the TVEC reveals that a large number of NVQ certificate issued belong to this category. These trainees find it difficult to find employment as there is no sufficient labour market demand for these occupations. Private and NGO run training centres are doing well in these areas. Government institutions should not invest the available financial resources on establishing such courses with little or no labour market demand. Instead,

government institutions should invest in courses with high labour market demand and in occupational areas not likely to be implemented by the private training providers due to the higher establishment costs involved. Public sector training institutes need to promote Public-Private Partnerships for quality enhancement and efficient operation of their training centres, which is lacking at present.

2.6.3 Policy directions

Policy 15

Training programmes of public sector should be implemented only where there is a demand from industry and should not be based on social demand.

2.6.4 Strategies for Policy Implementation

- a. Information on segments/sectors that will give high ROI to the country in terms of local and overseas employment should be made available to the training providers.
- b. Prospective students should be made aware of the employment opportunities both local and overseas and career prospects through a suitable mechanism of career guidance.
- c. Rational distribution of workforce at craft, supervisory and higher level should be studied before investing in new training courses.
- d. Number of courses to be conducted and number of students to be admitted must be decided on a rational basis in keeping with the national development goals, labour market demand, feasibility of implementation including availability of teachers, economy of scale and ROI.
- e. Financial viability and sustainability to be considered as an important aspect in making investment decisions.

2.7 Budget Preparation, Effective Utilization and Efficient Internal Operational Procedures of Reporting

2.7.1 Overview

Costing and budgeting system are aimed at achieving proper and efficient management control at all TVET institutions. Management's principle 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. This is not available in the present scenario.

2.7.2 Context and issues

Availability of basic data such as student enrollment, cost per student etc., are not available at a central location. The data is available with different providers but accuracy of those are questionable. MIS established with the assistance of ADB is not functioning effectively at present. This creates several inefficiencies including delay in decision making on day to day operation and future expansion decisions.

2.7.3 Policy directions

Policy 16

All state and private sector training providers should prepare cost information in a given format and provide to the TVEC and other stakeholders in generating financial and accounting reports.

Policy 17

All training institutions must establish and maintain all operational and financial information and provide to a central MIS to be shared with regulatory body and the line Ministry for management decision making.

2.7.4 Strategies for Policy Implementation

- a. Ensure all TVET institutions generate and disseminate financial accounting reports to the TVEC and other stakeholders to ensure transparency and good governance.

- b. Make available trained and assigned staff to collect and analyze financial and management information.
- c. Build capacity for capture and uploading of required data for utilization of information for rational financial management decision making.
- d. Use financial management principles as the basis for better cash and asset management, capital budgeting and investment decisions in the TVET sector.

2.8 Aspects of Macro Level Planning in the TVET Sector

2.8.1 Overview

TVET sector in Sri Lanka comprises of the TVET Institutional Framework as given in Figure 2.1 and Apprenticeship Based training coordinated and implemented by NAITA and firm-based training conducted for own employees for skill upgrading or for external personnel. TVET sector experienced an accelerated development since 2004 with the establishment of the National Vocational Qualification Framework and building of an institutional framework to conduct training programmes at all levels; Certificate, Diploma and Degree. The development programmes launched and financed by the Ministry in charge of TVET focused on its own networks of institutions and the private sector to a certain extent, but had little or no focus on the TVET institutions operating under the purview of other ministries. An initiative was taken in 2013 by the Department of National Planning to develop an Overall Development Plan for TVET encompassing all stakeholders and to couple government and external funding to the plan. The plan was not implemented due to certain reasons.

2.8.2 Context and issues

The TVET institutions under the purview of the Ministry in charge of TVET had mixed reactions in implementing development directions set by their own ministry and hence Sri Lanka could not reap the full benefits of investments made in the last two decades. The final reports and impact assessments conducted by donor or financing organizations reveal this fact. This shows the need for a mechanism to legally bind all TVET institutions to a Development Plan. The provision provided in the TVE Act No. 20 of 1990 as amended, provides for preparation of a Tertiary Education

and Vocational Education Plan for Sri Lanka, under Chapter II, Clause 11. Such plan needs to be submitted to the President by the Minister, and the approved Plan will then be published in the Gazette, giving legal effect to the Plan.

2.8.3 Policy directions

Policy 18

A TVET Development Plan should be prepared under the TVE Act covering the entire sector and give legal effect to the plan.

2.8.4 Strategies for policy implementation

- a. TVEC to prepare a Development Plan for the medium term, taking note of long term aspects, with the participation of all stakeholders including funding agencies.
- b. Policies established by this NEC Policy Document must be used as the basis for deciding development actions.
- c. Establish a strong monitoring mechanism to ensure the implementation of the plan and tie funding to the achievement of targets.

3.1 General Overview

Purpose of rationalization of TVET programmes at regional level is to minimize overlapping of courses in order to use resources efficiently and effectively. Overlapping of courses occurs when two or more institutes located near to each other provide similar courses to the same target group. Efficient use of resources is referred to as getting maximum output by using minimum resources.

It is observed that several training networks are operating at regional level resulting in duplications and overlapping of courses leading to resources underutilization. This is mainly attributed to lack of coordination between training networks and non-availability of clear guidelines as to how the limited resources are used to achieve common objectives in relation to TVET. Therefore, it is of paramount importance to review the existing training provision at the regional level and make policy directives to strengthen the same in order to meet the changing skilled human resource needs of the labour market. It is observed that social demand from young people, their parents and other stakeholders remain the key influencing factors which make TVET provision irrational and imbalance leading to issues of unemployment and underemployment of youth who complete TVET courses. Instead of catering to social demand, the public training institutions need to consider real job market skills demand and allocate resources for provision of TVET that lead to gainful employment.

3.2 Review of Existing Policies

Since the TVET is provided by several networks belong to public sector and also other providers including private sector and non-governmental sector, coordination between training providers is necessary in order to minimize duplication and increase quality of delivery of courses with optimal utilization of available resources. National Policy Framework on Higher Education (HE) and Technical and Vocational Education (TVE) 2009 insists the need of

providing TVET in a coordinated manner according to a National Plan. The TVE Act No. 20 of 1990 entrusts powers to the TVEC to undertake coordination of activities of the entire TVET sector. One of the purposes of national level coordination is to deliver TVET at regions in rational manner. The HE and TVE policy emphasizes that all powers vested on training institutions be implemented so that quality and relevant TVET is delivered at regions in effective manner. As per the powers vested with the Minister in charge of the subject of TVET by the TVE Act No. 20 of 1990, an Executive Order was issued in 2004 to establish National Vocational Qualifications framework as the unified qualification system of the TVET sector. Accordingly, the NVQ framework was established to rationalize TVET qualifications awarded by training institutions in the state sector as well as by the private sector.

3.3 Need of Aligning to the Mandate of Respective TVET Institutions

3.3.1 Context and issues

It is noted that state-run training institutions have deviated from the original mandates set out in the respective Acts of Parliament making duplications and overlapping of TVET delivery to a greater extent. For an example, the National Apprentice and Industrial Training Authority (NAITA) is empowered by the TVE Act to organize apprenticeship training in partnership with the industry. However, NAITA provides institutional based training at their national training centres and at their regional training centres duplicating the role of Department of Technical Education and Training (DTET) and Vocational Training Authority (VTA).

TVET delivery has become more complex as many institutions conduct similar training programmes at different levels under several ministries. Approximately, 22 ministries are presently conducting different vocational training programmes through their respective training arms.

Further, the Colleges of Technology were established for the purpose of offering National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) level 5 & 6 Diploma level courses. Nevertheless, the courses at the same levels are conducted by the NAITA, VTA and University of Vocational Technology (Univotec). The Acts of Parliament for establishment of TVET institutions have been enacted at different times and there are overlapping mandates given to different institutions. The mandates given to the TVET providers have not been revised as per changing needs of the current and the future labour market requirements which have resulted in overlapping and duplication of TVET delivery.

3.3.2. Policy directions

Policy 19

Review the mandates given to TVET institutions by respective Acts of Parliament or Service Minutes and align them to suit current TVET provision requirements.

3.3.3 Strategies for policy implementation

- a. Appoint an expert committee to review Acts of Parliament and Service Minutes of respective TVET networks for the purpose of recommending necessary amendments.
- b. Make necessary amendments to relevant Acts of Parliament to give a focus as per national goals of the TVET Sector Development Plan.
- c. Develop and implement TVET Sector Development Plan by the TVEC in association with the line Ministry for the medium term aiming at long term socio-economic goals of the government and revise the plan every 5 years.
- d. Prepare and implement monitoring and feedback mechanism for TVET Sector Development Plan implementation to trace progress and issues.

3.4 Rationalization of Training Programmes

3.4.1 Overview

It is evident from the TVEC institute Registration Database that the same or similar TVET courses are delivered in a particular geographical area by different training networks of the Ministry in-charge of TVET. The training networks or centres of other Ministries also deliver, in most cases, the same courses in same localities creating confusions among training seekers as to what training provider they have to choose to follow the course they prefer. Apart from public sector, private sector is also playing a significant role in training delivery in regions. This scenario urges the regulatory authorities to rationalize TVET provision in the public sector at regional level in order to rationalize resources utilization.

3.4.2 Context and issues

The NVQ framework has been in operation since the year 2004 as the unified qualification system in Sri Lanka TVET sector. However, there is a gap of progress of NVQ system implementation leaving nearly half the courses in Sri Lanka TVET sector operating outside the NVQ framework. This deprives many young TVET trainees not getting nationally recognized and internationally understood NVQ certificates and do not get the opportunity to progressive upward for acquiring higher level competencies.

Some courses provided by public sector have no real industry demand resulting graduates being unemployed. This is a result of the tendency to cater to social demand. However, in public institutions, the resource allocation for TVET need to be demand-driven as per national socio-economic development goals of the country. Regional skills requirements and availability of sufficient industry base in regions also need to be taken into account when deciding of a course mix of an institute. This would complement placement of students for mandatory on-the-job-training and employment. It is noted that information related to local skills requirements is not adequately shared with training institutions due to lack of industry consultation at regional level. Liaison between training institutions and industry will

facilitate information and resources sharing, OJT and job placements to a greater extent.

Rationalization of human resources is also an important aspect which needs attention of regulatory authorities and respective training networks. Due to unavailability of adequately experienced and qualified personnel, especially for teaching purposes at regional level training institutions, the overall quality of training delivery is affected.

3.4.3 Policy directions

Policy 20

TVET Networks should offer training courses that have labour market demand in a coordinated manner in the districts to minimize overlaps of similar level courses and to utilize resources optimally.

Policy 21

Public sector TVET networks should bring large majority of their training courses under the NVQ framework.

Policy 22

Establishment of NVQ level 5 & 6 courses must be based on the labour market demand and the mandate and capability of respective training institutions.

3.4.4 Strategies for policy implementation

- a. Establish a Committee for Rationalization at the line Ministry level for the purpose of analysing the TVET delivery by state training networks for suggesting suitable strategies for rationalization based on labour market indicators.
- b. Large majority of TVET courses provided by the state training networks should be accredited and brought under the NVQ framework.
- c. Deliver courses based on regional, national and international industry skills requirements.

- d. Develop National Competency Standards (NCS), curricula and assessment resources for all occupations in demand in the labour market.
- e. Seek industry assistance especially for teaching purposes and hire physical resources from industry adhering to government regulations.
- f. Set up and make functional the district training providers forum for the purpose of identifying and resolving issues related to rationalization of training programs.
- g. Create opportunities for the training seekers to become multi-skilled by acquiring competencies in several occupations. Core competencies of a particular occupation and electives of related occupations make available for selection.

3.5 Deployment of Human and Physical Resources

3.5.1 Overview

Selecting and employing suitably qualified personnel for teaching in technical and vocational courses as per Schemes of Recruitment at competitively low salary scales has become a challenging task in the public sector. Teachers are needed for pre-employment training as well as for apprenticeship based training. Apprenticeship training requires training organizers for delivery of knowledge components of the curriculum. Therefore, irrespective of mode of delivery, quality teaching staff is required in the TVET sector but there is a considerable shortage of such teachers in both public and private sectors.

Physical resources include mainly the machinery, equipment and tools necessary for delivering the practical aspects of a training course and the office furniture for administrative activities. Training related equipment are generally expensive and hence require higher investments. Private sector training institutions often conduct training courses that require lower levels of investments. Therefore, the role of the public sector training institutions involves the provision of labour market driven training programmes, optimizing the fund allocations for high value equipment and utilizing such equipment in efficient and effective manner.

3.5.2 Context and issues

Rationalization of training programmes in districts to offer labour market driven courses and to minimize overlaps will lead to introduction of new courses, redistribution of some of the existing courses and the closure of some of the courses that have no labour market demand. Considering these aspects and the fact that the TVET courses within a district are offered by the several training networks and individual centres, redeployment of training staff and equipment under the rationalized structure becomes a complex issue. Attempts made in the past to introduce rational training programmes at district level did not become successful since simple but logical solutions were not found to the issue of redeployment of human and physical resources.

3.5.3 Policy directions

Policy 23

Human and physical resources should be redeployed in line with course rationalization decisions. Introduce a physical resource sharing mechanism among training providers.

Policy 24

Strengthen State and non-State TVET provision through capacity building of staff (Pre service training and in service exposure) with possible Public Private Partnerships (PPP) and international linkages.

3.5.4 Strategies for policy implementation

- Establish all-island National TVET Service similar to other services operating in the country. Expanding of existing Technical Education Service to cover entire TVET sector may be considered.
- Prepare human and physical resources rationalization plan in line with course rationalization plan. Appoint an expert committee for this purpose which will work fulltime for a considerable period until the task is accomplished.

- Establish a mechanism for human and physical resource sharing in public sector institutions without promoting unhealthy competition with the private sector training providers.
- Introduce a transfer scheme that will ensure that courses will be run without any hindrance due to transfers.
- Make mandatory for the trainers to participate for effective Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programmes which is linked to annual performance evaluation.
- Establish collaborations with local and overseas TVET agencies in order to build capacities of TVET sector teachers.

3.6 Accommodating Special Interventions in TVET

3.6.1 Overview

TVET requirements are emerging due to contingencies and special occasions at national level. These are very extraordinary requirements that are unable to meet through general TVET provision plan. Therefore, TVET institutions have to accommodate these requests and interventions as appropriately in addition to their normal plans. At present, these requests are addressed without proper rationale.

Special interventions had been undertaken in the past in needy occasions such as after the Tsunami disaster, immediately after the end of civil war to rehabilitate the ex-combatants in northern and eastern province, special livelihood training programmes for widows and women in north and east etc. In certain instances, financial grant/aid support were given by the international donor agencies for these special interventions.

3.6.2 Context and issues

Unexpected needs for TVET interventions arise due to national or regional demanding situations as experienced in

the past. In such instances, the sector is ill prepared and finds it difficult to deploy existing human and physical resources without causing disturbances to on-going activities. Ill planned interventions mostly lead to waste of resources and not achieving the expected outcomes. Therefore, special interventions must be addressed through national policy framework to cater the urgent needs through a rational and transparent regularized approach.

3.6.3 Policy directions

Policy 25

Formulate mechanisms to address unexpected demands and challenges where special interventions are required.

3.6.4 Strategies for policy implementation

- Prepare guidelines in handling special interventions of national interest at national and regional level.
- Establish twinning arrangements with institutions with similar interests and with the industry for exchange of staff in terms of capacity building during special interventions.
- Establish a special committee at the line Ministry in consultation with TVEC to rationally evaluate the proposals and recommend suitable action plan.

3.7 Administration and Monitoring of Rationalization Process

3.7.1 Overview

Proper administration and monitoring mechanism is necessary to ensure sustainability of the TVET sector rationalization process. There is a need for managing the resistance to changes which may pose from various elements in internal and external environment. Uninterrupted flow of information is required in order to ascertain whether the expected outcomes are achieved in the rationalization

programme. Feedback loops may be necessary to build into the process for sharing of information of progress.

3.7.2 Context and issues

Poor utilization of available resources due to lapses in administration and monitoring of rationalization processes is evident. Commitment and dedication from the side of training networks is crucial for success of a rationalization process. It is vital that a common plan is prepared for any emergency project being implemented which needs to be shared with implementing agencies. Some extent of synergies have been brought in by bringing key training networks under the purview of the Ministry overseeing the subject of TVET. Nevertheless, there are state agencies doing TVET while operating outside of the Ministry in charge of TVET. This makes difficult in administration and monitoring of special interventions to greater extent.

3.7.3 Policy directions

Policy 26

Dedicated administration and monitoring system should be implemented for regular TVET Sector rationalization process.

Policy 27

Uninterrupted flow of information should be established in order to ascertain achievement of outcomes of rationalization decisions being implemented.

3.7.4 Strategies for policy implementation

- Establish a comprehensive information system in the TVET sector which can be used for rationalization and monitoring of rationalization.
- Prepare rationalisation, implementation and monitoring guidelines and make aware all related parties concerned.

- c. Set up national and institutional level committees to monitor the rationalization process.
- d. Review and take corrective action where necessary.
- e. Establish a monitoring mechanism at national and regional level to trace implementation issues and take corrective actions.
- f. Build capacity of TVET administrators to be able to effectively handle rationalization processes.
- g. Institutionalize the rationalization Policy and conduct regular meetings under the leadership of Secretary of the Ministry in charge of the subject of TVET facilitated by the TVEC.

4.1 General Overview

Assuring quality and relevance of TVET programmes in Sri Lanka remains one of the key activities under the regulatory powers vested with the Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission (TVEC). TVEC has been established under the provisions of the Tertiary and Vocational Education (TVE) Act No. 20 of 1990 as amended in 1999. The Commission has the mandate to achieve the under-mentioned objectives;

- Planning, co-ordination and development of the tertiary education and vocational education at all levels in keeping with human resource needs of the economy,
- Development of nationally recognized systems for granting tertiary education awards and vocational education awards including certificates, and other academic distinctions, and
- Maintenance of academic and training standards in institutes, agencies and all other establishments providing tertiary education and vocational education.

As one of the major steps in achieving above mentioned objectives, the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) framework was established in 2004 as the unified qualification system for the TVET sector of Sri Lanka. It supports the development of TVET at all levels with quality and relevance in keeping with the human resource needs of the economy.

The outcomes expected of NVQ framework are as follows:

- Act as unified qualification framework which is recognized nationally and understood internationally.
- Respond to industry competency needs.
- Enhance quality, relevance, performance, effectiveness, efficiency and transparency of TVET.
- Develop upward progressive qualifications for career advancement.
- Provide convenient and flexible access to TVET for potential training seekers.

- Improve international linkages and recognition.
- Promote an education and training culture of responsiveness and excellence.

The Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission (TVEC) is the authority responsible for the development and implementation of NVQ framework. Active participation of all training providers, namely; National Apprentice and Industrial Training Authority (NAITA), Department of Technical Education and Training (DTET), Vocational Training Authority (VTA), National Youth Services Council (NYSC), Ceylon-German Technical Training Institute (CGTTI), University of Vocational Technology (Univotec) and other public and private sector training institutions are vital for effective implementation of the NVQ framework of Sri Lanka.

The major components of NVQ implementation process are as follows;

- Development of National Competency Standards in consultation with industry.
- Development of CBT Curriculum based on National Competency Standards.
- Delivery of training as per the CBT curriculum using appropriate resources (physical and human), infrastructure, environment, variety of training methodologies and up to date technology.
- Assessment of Performance of Students (Formative assessment).
- Competency Based Assessment (Summative assessment), and
- NVQ Certification.

All above processes are to be quality assured. However, in implementing such a system in the entire TVET sector of the country gives rise to many issues and these issues are to be addressed in a regular manner.

4.2 Review of Existing Policies

Following documents which set out policy guidelines in relation to assuring TVET quality and relevance were reviewed for their currency and adequacy.

- a. TVE Act no 20 of 1990 and its amendment.
- b. National Vocational Qualification framework of Sri Lanka – Operation Manual published in November 2009.
- c. National Policy Framework on Higher Education and Technical Education and Vocational Education.

4.2.1 TVE Act No. 20 of 1990 and amended Act No.50 of 1999

The Tertiary and Vocational Education Act No. 20 of 1990 as amended in 1999 sets out the statutory provisions for quality assurance of TVET upon which several programmes and systems have been developed and implemented in order to assure quality of training. The Development Plan published in government gazette (extra ordinary) No. 887/8 dated 7th August 1995 specifies the criteria, conditions and procedure for registration of training institutions as per the provisions of the TVE Act No. 20 of 1990. Apart from training institutions, specified courses and persons who provide training courses can be registered with the Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission under the foregoing provisions. Registered institutions require to send training information to the TVEC bi-annually for planning and development purposes.

4.2.2 National Vocational Qualification framework of Sri Lanka – Operation Manual published in 2004 and amended in November 2009

The operations manual of National Vocational Qualifications framework sets out the general policy related to implementation of the NVQ framework as the unified qualification certification system of the TVET sector of Sri Lanka. The manual describes the policy on National Competency Standard development, curricula preparation, assessment material development, conduct of competency based assessments and installation of Quality Management Systems (QMS).

4.2.3 National Policy Framework on Higher Education and Technical and Vocational Education

Policies and strategies related to quality assurance, assessment and accreditation in the TVET sector are set out in Part III of the National Policy Framework on Higher Education and Technical and Vocational Education. The policy stresses the need of adopting good practices in delivery of TVET including training of training centre managers and grading of centres. The policy requires all training providers

to be registered with the TVEC for the provision of quality assured TVET. In the sphere of courses accreditation, it requires to establish an accreditation and quality assurance framework for all TVET institutions. As of now, the course accreditation programme is underway and an acceleration of processes is necessary to be able to bring large majority of TVET courses within the NVQ framework. The policy insists the need of recognizing institutions to conduct competency-based assessments for award of NVQ. Establishing of QMS at training institutions conducting accredited courses is underway which also needs acceleration to cover full spectrum of institutions. Developing National Competency Standards based on labour market indicators is in progress which pave the way for course accreditation and assessment of competencies for award of NVQ. Awarding of NVQ through recognition of prior learning for experienced workers is also progressing but needs to be expanded and promoted.

4.3 National Competency Standards and Curriculum Development Process

4.3.1 Context and issues

National Competency Standards specify the competencies that a person has to acquire in order to get qualified and obtain National Vocational Qualification in an occupation of a particular industry sector. Since NVQ is the unified qualification in TVET sector of Sri Lanka, many public sector and private sector organizations as well as foreign employment related institutions request NVQ certificate for jobs/occupations. Further, training institutions request accreditation in keeping with NVQ framework for their programmes/courses. Nevertheless, NCS and Curriculum are not available for many occupations or industry sectors to be able to cater these demands. NCS and curricula are to be updated regularly to be abreast with the current technologies and labour market demand. However, due to logistical reasons, it takes long periods to develop new or revise existing NCS and curricula.

According to the guidelines set out in the NVQ Operations Manual published in 2009, TVEC has to identify the occupations to develop NCS and direct NAITA to develop the NCS. NAITA develops draft NCS, validate through relevant National Industrial Training Advisory Committee (NITAC) and forward to TVEC for endorsement. The Univotec is the lead agency responsible for development of Competency Based Training (CBT) curricula. The Univotec conducts task analysis workshop, develop curriculum and forward for validation by NITAC. Since 2004 to mid 2018, 250 NCSs have been developed and published under the NVQ framework.

National Competency Standards (NCSs) are developed for occupations identified based on the labour market demand. The NCS describes the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to perform in a particular occupation and is an essential document to develop Competency Based Training (CBT) curricula and Competency Based Assessment (CBA) resources.

Key issues in these processes are as follows;

- a. Due to the thoroughness of analysis of competency profile, it takes a considerable length of time to develop and/or revise NCS and Curriculum.
- b. Since NCS and curricula are developed by two institutions and two industry panels, there are mismatches between NCS and CBT curricula.
- c. At present only the technical core competencies are included in the competency units of NCS. Co-competencies including Soft skills and employability skills have not been identified adequately.
- d. Difficulty in obtaining services of resource persons representing cross section of industry (large, medium, small and micro size enterprises) for NCS and curricula development.

4.3.2 Policy directions

Policy 28

National Competency Standards development and revision process should be critically analysed and mechanism developed to shorten the time period for development or revision. International best practices should be sought.

Policy 29

Institutions for development of National Competency Standards and CBT Curricula should be broad-based and institutions which have good industry linkages and capacity should be assigned the task in addition to NAITA and Univotec.

4.3.3 Strategies for policy implementation

- a. Develop guidelines for NCS and Curriculum development for process management and facilitation based on international best practices.

- b. Strengthen the capacity of selected state training institutions for development of NCS and curricula.
- c. Delegate NCS and Curriculum development activities to capable institutions with clear guidance and sound monitoring system.
- d. Harmonize course durations of same level courses. Minimum course duration should be introduced at least for NVQ Level 4 courses.
- e. Include Employability Modules such as entrepreneurship, green concept, communication skills, IT for all training programmes.

4.4 Competency Based Assessment and NVQ Certification

4.4.1 Overview

Competency Based Assessment is the process of collecting evidence and making judgments as to whether competency has been achieved by the applicant at a given point of time. The process involves the collection of evidence to ascertain that a candidate can demonstrate the application of knowledge, skills and attitudes specified in the National Competency Standard.

4.4.2 Context and issues

Competency Based Assessments are conducted by trained and registered NVQ Assessors. With the increasing demand for NVQ assessments and certificates, existing assessor pool is not able to cope up with the growing demand for assessments of both public and private sector institutions. Demand for NVQ through Recognition of Prior Learning is also growing exerting more pressure leading to delays and, sometime, inconsistencies in assessments. Specific issues are listed below.

- a. Delays in assessment and certification.
 - The process of nominating an Assessor for an assessment takes long time and this causes the delay of assessment.
 - Delays in assessor payments causes the refuse of some assessments by Assessors.
 - Delays in submission of results by institutions/ Assessors.
 - Delay in issuing certificates (3-12 months).

- b. No common procedure for RPL application submission.
- c. Some Assessors are not sufficiently updated on NCS, assessment rules and regulations.
- d. Assessor database is not updated. Inactive Assessors are in the database.
- e. Assessors are not available in some occupations related to medium (Tamil and English) and geographical area.
- f. Assessment materials not improved, updated and developed sufficiently.
- g. Institutions have to pay a high cost to TVEC for semesterend exam.
- h. There is no proper mechanism to obtain a recognized certificate (Record of Achievement-ROA) for a particular unit/s of NCS. Also no mechanism to obtain a full qualification (NVQ) for a person who obtained required ROAs for a full qualification.
- i. Conducting a common theory test as an eligibility test for CBA.
- j. Consistency of assessment.
 - Number of students / units assessed per day are not clear.
 - No mechanism for verification and auditing of assessments.

4.4.3 Policy directions

Policy 30

Processes involving Assessment and Certification should be analysed and streamlined for valid, reliable, quality assured and speedy issue of NVQ certificates to those who have completed pre-employment training and for those who are assessed through Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).

Policy 31

Avenues should be made available for those who obtained Record of Achievement (RoA) for unit of competency to obtain full NVQ certificate.

4.4.3 Strategies for policy implementation

- a. Establish a system for verification of formative assessment results and auditing of competency assessments to improve validity and reliability of assessment.
- b. Prudent systems should be established to execute assessment related administrative and coordination activities efficiently and effectively.
- c. Increase number of Assessors in the competency based Assessor pool considering the demand for each occupation, medium of assessment and geographical distribution of training programmes.
- d. Steps should be taken to gradually increase the percentage of industry based Assessors from 20% at present to 80% within the next five years.
- e. Prepare computerized Assessor selection software enabling training institutes to select Assessors on need.
- f. Prepare annual assessment calendar based on the training programs available in the country.
- g. Prepare sound mechanism for monitoring, verification and auditing of assessments all over the country.
- h. Prepare questions bank and conduct theory test, if required, to maintain consistency of assessment.
- i. Develop a guideline for Preparation of Portfolios of evidences required for RPL assessment.
- j. Formalise the issue of Record of Achievements in order to increase the recognition.
- k. Make avenues and procedures for those who have ROAs to obtain full qualification in the NVQ system.

4.5 TVET Quality Assurance Through Regulatory Processes

4.5.1 Overview

Registration of training institutions, accreditation of courses and the installation of quality management system are the three main regulatory tools used for assuring relevance and quality of TVET provision. Though it is mandatory by statute to register institutes, some training providers are conducting training programmes without registration from

the TVEC placing the trainees at a disadvantaged position as there is no legal acceptance for certificates issued to them by such training provider.

The TVE Act No. 20 of 1990 specifies the nature and type of institutions which must be registered with the TVEC as explained below.

- a. institutes providing tertiary education or vocational education including training (Section 14 of the Act).
- b. courses in tertiary education and vocational education including training, specified by the government (Section 15 of the Act).
- c. examination conferring or granting any tertiary or vocational education or training awards (Section 16 of the Act).

At present quality assurance of TVET programmes is being done by TVEC in three tier regulatory approaches.

- a. Registration of TVET institutions.
- b. Accreditation of TVET courses to award NVQ certificates.
- c. Installation of a Quality Management System (QMS).

4.5.2 Context and issues

Government regulatory processes are aimed at ensuring the delivery of services in accordance with the set standards and ensuring the establishment of a level playing field for service providing organizations. In the case of TVET, the interests of the trainee should be safeguarded by ensuring that the trainee receives relevant and quality training. Registration of institutes, accreditation of courses and requirement to establish a quality management system contribute towards relevant and quality training as the criteria established for each of the above processes are to be satisfied by the training institute or by the training course.

Both public sector and private sector Tertiary Education and/or Vocational Education/training institutes are expected to comply with the above regulatory requirements. The award of NVQ is possible by an institute if all three regulatory criteria have been satisfied and accepted by TVEC. These regulatory processes should be clearly formulated, unambiguous and efficiently executed for training institutes to comply with the requirements without undue excessive effort and time.

It has been observed that the number of institutes registered

and received accreditation has decreased in the past few years. The following issues are prevalent which need to be solved for proper implementation of the quality assurance measures.

- a. inadequate guidelines (Code of practice) for registration, accreditation and QMS
- b. Renewal of registration has decreased due to cumbersome process
- c. Delays in new registration and accreditation process demoralize TVET providers
- d. QMS is considered as a burden to the training providers/ instructors due to complexity of the process
- e. Inadequate public awareness on registered institutions and accredited courses
- f. No proper mechanism to assign accreditation assessors based on respective subject specialty.

4.5.3 Policy directions

Policy 32

TVEC should implement the regulatory processes in a simple but effective and fair manner throughout the island.

Policy 33

TVET institutions should conduct employment oriented courses with accreditation and issue NVQ certificates, when relevant standards are available.

Policy 34

A legal environment must be established to facilitate effective implementation of NVQ framework.

4.5.4 Strategies for policy implementation

- a. Obtain collaboration of local government resources to identify unregistered institutions.
- b. Introduce legal framework for a prior-registration system where a potential training provider seek registration from the TVEC before commencing the institute.
- c. Encourage and facilitate for accreditation of courses.

- d. Introduce code of practice for quality assurance system.
- e. Inculcate a quality culture in TVET system.
- f. Strengthen accreditation Assessors pool based on subject specialty.
- g. Enact legal provisions for effective implementation of the NVQ framework.

4.6 Further Development of NVQ Framework

4.6.1 Overview

NVQ Framework with seven levels of qualifications was established in 2004 by an Executive Order issued by the Ministry in charge of Technical and Vocational Education under the provisions of the TVE Act. The qualification descriptors of the NVQ framework were adopted from the New Zealand Qualifications Framework. All supporting systems for competency standard development, curricular development, competency based training and assessment of competencies were established. In 2009, Sri Lanka Qualifications Framework (SLQF) was developed covering all qualifications from General Education to Doctoral Degrees in Higher Education and NVQ Framework was mapped to SLQF. SLQF was revised in 2015 and transfer of learners from NVQF to SLQF and vice versa were clearly established.

Processes for operation of NVQF have been established at the initial stage and subsequently evolved to cater developing TVET requirements. It is needed to continuously evolve system to cater emerging human resource development needs of Sri Lanka.

4.6.2 Context and issues

NVQF consists of 4 Certificate levels, 2 Diploma levels and one Bachelor's degree level of 3 years duration. Learning content of two diploma level are 60 and 120 ECTS credits respectively and the Bachelor's degree is 180 ECTS Credits. Certificate levels are not covered by a credit system and the duration of training for different occupation may vary at a particular certificate level.

There are two distinct groups, in addition to the school leavers, seeking employment oriented education and training at present. First group is the personnel already employed and seeking formal vocational qualifications through NVQ without disrupting their employment. This group must be

given the opportunity to accumulate competencies over a period of time and obtain the qualification, whether it is certificate diploma or the degree. The second group is the diploma or degree holders of other disciplines such as Arts and Humanities, who wish to acquire employment oriented education and training that matches with their education level. These study programmes may be of shorter duration but must comply with higher levels of learning descriptors.

4.6.3 Policy directions

Policy 35

Mechanisms and procedures within the NVQ Framework should be established to award all levels of qualifications in a modular basis for those who are employed in the industry.

Policy 36

National Vocational Qualifications Framework must be amended, where appropriate, to award Certificates or similar qualifications falling into higher NVQ levels.

4.6.4 Strategies for policy implementation

- a. Training centres must offer training programmes in a modular basis for those who are employed at appropriately convenient times.
- b. Knowledge component of the training must be delivered through Open and Distance learning methods.
- c. Mechanism and procedures to be established for issue of ROA or similar recording and the award of final qualification.
- d. NVQ framework must be amended, in keeping with international best practices, to award certificates or similar qualifications falling into higher NVQ levels (Diploma and Degree).
- e. Launch a campaign to attract graduates who have less employment opportunities at present to pursue employment oriented higher level TVET programmes.

5.1 General Overview

Interrelation among industry, employers, employees and TVET is a matter of importance as skilled personnel passing out from the TVET institutions seek employment in the industry in streams in which they gained competencies. The TVET networks and the skilled personnel are key variables of the skills supply whereas the industry, employers and the type and number of skilled people which industry need are key variables of the skills demand in labour economics terms. Scholars in the academia and the practitioners in the industry always insist a match between labour supply and labor demand which can be achieved only by having an interrelation among the aforesaid partners.

With a per capita income of US \$ 3889 (2017), Sri Lanka has reached the level of a lower middle income country and has transformed from being a factor-driven economy to an efficiency-driven economy (Global Competitiveness Report 2016-17: World Economic Forum). At the macro level, except for few sample surveys and studies such as the Labour Demand Survey of 2017 (Department of Census and Statistics), which gives a breakdown of occupations and skills having a high demand in the industry, there has not been a mega study aimed at identifying the 'skills profile' needed to meet the demands of an efficiency-driven economy. Despite this lacuna, at the industry and the enterprise level, employers have expressed concerns over skills mismatch and lack of quality and relevance of TVET curricula in terms of imparting up to date knowledge to meet the changing demands of the industry (Building Skills for Economic Growth and Competitiveness, World Bank: 2014).

5.2 Review of Existing Policies

As per the powers vested in the National Apprentice and Industrial Training Authority (NAITA) by the TVE Act No. 20 of 1990, the NAITA may establish committees to assist it for discharging its functions. Accordingly, National Industry Training Advisory Committees (NITACs) have been established sector-wise by NAITA for developing training standards and assessment material (National Competency Standard, assessment tools and other related documents). Operations Manual of the National Vocational Qualifications

Framework (November 2009) clearly defines the role of NITACs in relation to developing NCS, CBT curricula and assessment resources for NVQ implementation. Sector Policy and Training Advisory Council (SPTAC) is another industry committee appointed by the TVEC to get strategic directions on human resources development and to facilitate on-the-job training and private-public-partnerships. National Policy Framework for Higher Education and Technical and Vocational Education outlines a strategy to solicit advice from the SPTACs for identification of emerging occupations that need development of NCSs and curricula. However, it is noted that SPTACs have not functioned as expected and hence this initiative had been abandoned. The Sector Skills Development Programme (SSDP) funded by the ADB and operating in the line Ministry in charge of the subject of vocational training has set up Industry Sector Skills Councils (ISSCs) for growing industry sectors to promote private sector industry representation for matters on training and skills development. The ISSCs are expected to prepare sector skills plans identifying industry skills needs on future directions and provide strategic advice on TVET to make it more market responsive.

5.3 Mechanism to Identify sectors / Occupations to Develop NCS

5.3.1 Overview

The method which is being practiced in relation to selection of occupations/sectors for development of NCS is that the TVEC chooses occupations/sectors based on labour market indicators and research findings. Vocational Education and Training Plans (VET Plans) prepared for industry sectors and for Provinces are also taken as guidance in this regard. Industry views are also sometimes considered in this process.

5.3.2 Context and issues

The agencies sometimes deviate from procedures outlined in NVQ Operational manual in selection of sectors/occupations for the development of National Competency Standards and proceed developing NCS for such sectors/occupations. Such

ad-hoc actions sometimes create incompatibilities within the NVQ system, which may lead to credibility issues. Ad-hoc actions in the identification of Sectors/occupations for NCS development may arise as a result of lack of knowledge in established procedures or the established procedures themselves are lengthy and complicated that compel some institutes to deviate from the procedure to achieve quick results. The latter must be further investigated and steps must be taken to ensure a simple and effective sector/occupation identification procedure for NCS development.

5.3.3 Policy directions

Policy 37

Selection of occupations for development of NCS should be based on present and emerging labour market demand nationally and in foreign labour migrant destinations globally.

5.3.4 Strategies for Policy Implementation

- a. Review the sector/occupation identification process for NCS development published in NVQ manual and improve, if necessary.
- b. Liaise with industry and professional associations/lead government organizations to realize their skills requirements.
- c. Liaise with Foreign Employment Bureau to assess the occupations in demand in foreign labour markets.

5.4 Difficulties to Obtain The Services of Relevant Trade Experts from Industry to Develop National Competency Standards (NCS)

5.4.1 Overview

The responsibility of development of Competency Standards rests with the National Apprentice and Industrial Training Authority (NAITA). Having received the request from the TVEC to develop a Competency Standard, NAITA appoints a Development Committee consisting of 6 to 12 members that will include at least 2/3 of its members from the industry. The draft Competency Standard prepared by the development committee is considered by the National Industry Training

Advisory Committee (NITAC) of the respective industry area for validation. NITAC is represented by the industry personnel, trade unions, training providers etc. There are 27 NITACs covering different industry areas at present.

5.4.2 Context and Issues

NAITA mainly collects information about industry resource persons to serve in the Development Committees through NITAC members, industry linkages, industry sector skill councils and the Internet, and telephone directory. Development Committee for a particular occupation should consist of trade specialists, supervisory level members and few managerial levels members. Difficulties faced when developing NCS are as follows.

- Finding suitable trade specialists who have the ability to clearly present industry requirements.
- Getting the release of trade specialists from industry to serve in the committees.
- Unplanned changes in the membership of NITAC committees due to resignations, migration etc.
- Shortage of technically qualified and trained facilitators for development of NCS.

5.4.3 Policy directions

Policy 38

Valid and current National Industry Training Advisory Committees (NITACs) should be operational for all important industry sectors with each NITAC covering its sub-sectors.

5.4.3 Strategies for policy implementation

- a. Appoint NITACs for all important industry sectors with each NITAC consisting of members from all sub-sectors.
- b. Industry Sector Skills Council of the appropriate industry may nominate Industry experts for NITACs and Development Committees.
- c. Review and update the membership of NITACs regularly and maintain active membership in each NITAC.

- d. Develop NCS with the prescribed participation of sufficiently qualified industry practitioners.
- e. Give due recognition for services of NITAC members.

5.5 Industry Feedback on Developed NCS

5.5.1 Overview

Industry feedback is obtained via the NITACs and the ISSCs for development and validation of NCS and curricula and other NVQ related documents. However, there is no practice of presenting the developed NCS to the relevant industry before validation for obtaining industry feedback. This is a lacuna of the process which may be brought in for improving quality of the NCS. The ISSCs, in addition to their other roles, are entrusted with validating of the industry sector VET plans and provincial VET plans developed by the TVEC with the aid of either industry associations or professional research organizations.

5.5.2 Context and issues

Non-existence of a standardized mechanism to obtain wider industry feedback on developed NCS before validation and endorsement is an issue currently contemplating in the TVET sector. According to the current procedure, the TVEC first identifies the occupations for developing National Competency Standard and thereafter informs the NAITA to develop the document with industry participations. It is the responsibility of the NAITA to find suitable resource persons after consulting NITAC for development of the NCS. Upon development, the draft NCS is presented to the relevant NITAC for validation. Once this is done, the validated NCS is sent to TVEC for endorsement. However, if feedback from a wider segment of the industry is obtained before the validation, there will be a higher level of acceptance of the developed NCS by the industry.

5.5.3 Policy directions

Policy 39

Feedback on developed NCS should be sought from industry related professional bodies, Employers Federation of Ceylon, industry associations and trade chambers prior to validation.

5.5.4 Strategies for policy implementation

- a. Seek feedback from industry lead bodies for developed NCS.
- b. Provide opportunities via NAITA website and other platforms for the interested parties to give feedback on NCS.

5.6 Raising Employer and Employee Awareness on TVET Programmes

5.6.1 Overview

Since inception of the NVQ framework in Sri Lanka, the TVEC, regulatory body of the TVET, has taken some steps to create awareness about the NVQ framework and its relevance among different stakeholders. This has been done by organizing seminars and workshops mainly in collaboration with industry associations and the regional chambers of commerce in different provinces. However, current awareness of NVQ in the private sector is relatively low and it may be due to the poor social marketing strategies adopted in the past.

5.6.2 Context and issues

The share of private sector employment in the labour force is significant, that out of the 8.1 million persons in the labour force, 3.5 million or 43% are in the private sector (DCS 2017). Much more time and effort should be spent than at present to create greater awareness of the NVQ framework among the training providers as well as employers in the private sector. There are two pertinent issues in this regard;

i.e

- Capability of the TVEC and other state institutions to embark on a large scale awareness exercise.
- Selection of effective communication channels in order to create awareness among a critical mass of people in each sub-sector of the national economy.

As revealed by a TVEC study conducted recently among a sample of small scale business establishments engaged in beauty culture and restaurants business, social media has been the most popular channel through which small business owners have learned about the NVQ framework (Study on the Application of NVQ Certificates for Recruitment of Employees by Private Sector Employers - TVEC 2017).

Apart from the ICT field, there has been a rising demand for NVQ certificates in respect of such occupations as beautician, electrician, domestic housekeeping attendant and automobile mechanic, but it has not penetrated into certain other industries employing large numbers of people. For example, in the large scale plantation sector, there are 22 regional plantation companies employing more than 8500 persons in the staff category including a large number of field officers and factory officers, but only 23 certificates - 12 for factory officers and 11 for field officers, have been issued during the period under review. Thus the available data clearly shows that the response towards the adoption of the NVQ scheme has not been uniformly positive across different sub sectors and occupations.

5.6.3 Policy directions

Policy 40

Sector-specific targeted approach should be adopted in awareness building and certifying workers under NVQ system for different sub sectors of service, industry and agriculture sectors.

5.6.4 Strategies for policy implementation

- a. TVET sector should build up partnerships with employer organizations such as the Employers' Federation of Ceylon, the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce, Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Sri Lanka as well as the Regional Chambers of Commerce and Industry in order to expedite the awareness creation process among managers in the medium and large business establishments. This is particularly important since all these employer organizations have in their membership a large number of medium and large scale firms representing different economic subsectors.
- b. Adopt carefully planned social marketing campaigns for creating awareness of NVQ in industry and with general public.
- c. Give due prominence to sub sectors of Service, Industry and Agriculture sectors in conducting awareness programmes and assessing and awarding NVQs.

- d. Allocate resources for social marketing of NVQ through print, electronic and social media.

5.7 Relevance of NVQ to the Industry

5.7.1 Overview

NVQ is highly relevant for assessing and categorizing of workers in the industry based on competency levels. Human resources management in areas of employee promotions, salary and wage management becomes complex when having people with different qualifications and different occupational titles performing similar functions in the industry. However, the industries have not reaped full benefits of the NVQ system though it has operated for more than a period of decade.

5.7.2 Context and issues

- a. **Non-availability of legislative controls to emphasize the NVQ requirement in employee recruitments, promotions and wage fixation**

At present, except for the Public Administration Circular No. 2 of 2009 issued by the Ministry of Public Administration urging the public sector institutions to consider the NVQ certificate as an alternative to the conventional educational qualifications for purposes of recruitment and promotions, there is no legislative or administrative direction from the state having a binding impact on employers to recognize the NVQ certificate. This is more so in the private sector where the government has virtually no control over matters of employee recruitment, training and granting promotions.

Moreover, for selected trades in the private sector, wages for employees in the non-executive categories are fixed as per decisions of Wages Boards established under the Wages Boards Ordinance of 1941. At present there are 43 Wages Boards for different trades and being tripartite mechanisms, these boards comprise representatives of the state, employers and the employees. For purposes of wage determination, occupations falling within the relevant trade have been categorized into various grades and/or skill levels, but unlike in the NVQ framework, the levels have not been defined in terms of competency standards.

- b. **Failure of imparting the importance of NVQ for Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) sector**

SMEs play an important role in the manufacturing sector of Sri Lanka by representing 90% in terms of the number of industries and 52% in terms of the contribution to the national GDP. SMEs are mostly dependent on a workforce, who have been given only on-the-job training (OJT) to suit minimal requirements of the respective jobs.

In 2017 the Ministry of Industry and Commerce together with Industrial Development Board (IDB) and related institutions published a National Policy Framework for SMEs setting out the definitions for SMEs and related policies and strategies. Compared to large scale enterprises, the response of the SME sector towards the NVQ scheme has been somewhat lukewarm. This has been due to the following reasons.

- Budgetary constraints preventing the SME to invest in employee training.
- Lack of alignment between NVQ courses and the specific requirements of SMEs.
- The preference of SMEs to higher multi-skilled workers than workers with specialized skills largely due to low volumes of production.
- The high cost of certifying employees under the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) scheme.
- Poor linkages between vocational training institutions and SMEs.
- Perceived fear among SME owners/managers that training exposures to employees are likely to result in leakage of company specific trade/technical secrets.
- Misconception that skill enhancement of employees will only help them to find better employment opportunities at the expense of the sponsoring employer.

5.7.3 Policy directions

Policy 41

Direct all employers in the public, private and the NGO sectors to accept the NVQ certificate as an alternative to conventional equivalent educational qualifications in deciding on recruitments and promotions.

Policy 42

Integrate Wages Board mechanism with NVQ system in deciding wages of industry employees.

Policy 43

State sector TVET institutions should formulate a dedicated strategy to promote Vocational Training in SMEs which will eventually lead to NVQ certification.

5.7.4 Strategies for Policy Implementation

- Issue a legally binding Executive Order to all employers in the public, private and the NGO sectors to accept the NVQ certificate as an alternative to conventional equivalent educational qualifications in deciding on recruitments and promotions.
- Establish a mechanism in the Wages Boards to decide wages of workers based on NVQ levels.
- Offer package training solutions to SMEs to solve specific enterprise based issues linked to productivity and quality enhancement through training and other interventions.
- RPL assessment should be made simple and faster. Ideally the certificate should be issued within 2 months after the assessment.
- Sri Lankan TVET sector may learn lessons from more advanced countries such as Singapore & Malaysia, which have reached out to the SME sector through similar interventions.

5.8 Collaborations for Reaping Full Benefits from Foreign Employment

5.8.1 Overview

TVET qualified personnel find employment in Sri Lanka labour market, industries operating under the Board of Investment, foreign employment markets or start their own work. Foreign Employment is one of the leading income generating sources of Sri Lanka and it contributes approximately 8% to the GDP. The total labour force within Sri Lanka is approximately 15.6 million and only 8.6 million are economically active. The number of unemployed

persons is estimated as 0.4 million during the first quarter of 2017[Sri Lanka Labour Force Statistics Quarterly Bulletin: 2017 1st Quarter]. It is estimated that around 1.5 million Sri Lankans are employed overseas. However, a favorable trend is seen in foreign employment that the departure for housemaid category decreased gradually from 2012 to 2016 and an increasing trend is seen in middle level and professional job categories. [Corporate Plan 2017-2021: Sri Lanka Bureau of foreign employment (SLBFE) & LMI Bulletin -2016]. Several policy decisions taken by the SLBFE during the latter half of the year 2013 have caused the decline of female migration. Increasing the minimum age limit of women migrating for domestic work, upgrading the training given to female domestic workers to the level 3 National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) and making this qualification compulsory for women migrating to Saudi Arabia for domestic work, and introducing the mandatory requirement for potential women migrant workers to submit a family background report etc. are among the most influential policy decisions.

The majority of those in foreign employment are in jobs with low skills requirements and thus their remuneration is also relatively low. Availability of workers with higher levels of skills will necessarily result in a higher earning potential in foreign employment markets. Sri Lanka has not been able to send skilled personnel overseas due to unavailability of competent and certified personnel for the job orders the country receives every year. It is essential to introduce strategies to increase the number of skilled workers and to promote skilled migration for overseas employment, without disturbing the local labour market. Hence, it is important to obtain the foreign employment demand to be able to plan special targeted TVET programs at the beginning of the year to cater the demand for skilled personnel from overseas labour market.

5.8.2 Context and issues

Main issues connected with training, certification and placement of Sri Lankan workers in foreign employment are as follows;

- Limited utilization of available statistics on foreign employment in forecasting foreign employment opportunities and to analyze trainee needs and requirements to align foreign employment opportunities.

- Limited cross recognition of National Vocational Qualification with Regional Vocational Qualifications and limited number of training centre to cater the requirements of regional and global competencies.
- Limited recognition of foreign exposure and competencies developed through foreign employment and training

5.8.3 Policy directions

Policy 44

Establish a system of forecasting foreign employment opportunities in skilled and semi-skilled categories and make TVET courses available in occupations of demand in overseas labour market.

5.8.4 Strategies for policy implementation

- Obtain demand data of occupations from Embassies, High Commissions and Foreign Employment Bureau for development of TVET courses in NVQ framework.
- Consult foreign employment agencies in developing TVET courses for overseas work.

Policy 45

Sri Lanka NVQ framework should be mapped with the national, regional or global qualification frameworks widely accepted in regions where Sri Lankan workers seek foreign employment.

5.8.5 Strategies for policy implementation

- Mapping of NVQ framework with similar qualifications frameworks in other countries.
- Assess and award NVQ for all those who leave for overseas work.
- Collaborate between SLFEB and TVEC in awarding NVQ for overseas workers.

Policy 46

The competencies obtained through foreign employment should be taken into account through Recognition of Prior Learning under NVQ framework.

5.8.6 Strategies for policy implementation

- Obtain details of returnees from the SLFEB and the Emigration and Immigration Department.
- Launch an awareness programme on RPL system of NVQ certification and its benefits.
- Facilitate returnees to obtain NVQ through RPL.

5.9 Identification of BOI Zone's Job Opportunities and Utilizing the Potential Training Opportunities

5.9.1 Overview

Board of Investment (BOI) companies employ over 470,000 workers. They account for nearly 65% of Sri Lankan exports and 86% of the country's industrial exports. The BOI is therefore a significant agent of social change and its existence of over 38 years has radically transformed Sri Lanka both economically and socially, placing the country in a position where it can compete in an increasingly globalized world.

5.9.2 Context and Issues

Moving into a middle-income country from lower middle-income level, it is essential to train to produce skilled labour fulfilling the requirements of BOI industries. Since the BOI firms use high technology in their production systems, it is essential that TVET institutions use technology in par with the technology being used in these BOI firms for TVET training. Further, there are opportunities for On the Job Training (OJT) in BOI firms that should be fully harnessed for benefit of trainees of TVET sector.

5.9.3 Policy directions

Policy 47

TVET sector should gear to meet the high technology skills needs of BOI firms.

Policy 48

BOI firms should be encouraged to share On the Job Training opportunities with TVET sector.

5.9.4 Strategies for policy implementation

- A platform or portal to be established to disseminate the job opportunities arise in the BOI companies.
- Training institutions to be established to train in high demanded skills in the BOI zones.
- The expertise knowledge of BOI companies should be used to train local people.
- Consider skills needs of BOI firms in NCS development.

5.10 Industry Collaborations for On-the-Job Training

5.10.1 Overview

On-the-job training (OJT) is advocated for all NVQ level but is mandatory for NVQ level 4 and above courses to be able to provide the trainees with real workplace experiences. NVQ level 4 qualification enables them to work without supervision. On completion of OJT, the trainees face the final assessment to be considered for certification. NAITA is empowered to place students and administer OJT, however, respective training providers also take initiative to identify potential industries that are willing to provide OJT. NAITA paid a training allowance to trainees undergoing OJT in the past but this system has been terminated due to financial shortages.

5.10.2 Context and issues

Students are expected to be engaged in relevant industry activities during OJT to enhance their competencies. This requires the identification of industries that can provide training in all or majority of competency areas that the trainee is expected to cover. Therefore, TVET institutions are expected to identify and build relations with relevant industries. The industries may be in the same region where the TVET institute is located or outside the region. It is expected that trainees contribute to the operation of industrial processes during the training and hence the industry will also receive benefits from providing OJT. Therefore, it is essential to maintain a positive relationship between TVET providers and relevant industries to obtain a win-win situation for both the industry and the trainees.

5.10.3 Policy directions

Policy 49

All TVET providers should maintain functional links with relevant industries to improve the access and quality of on-the-job training.

5.10.4 Strategies for policy implementation

- Liaise between TVET providers and industry for mutual benefit.
- Offer part time teaching opportunities for industry practitioners.
- Maintain database of industry firms where opportunities available for effective OJT.
- Encourage industries to provide a training allowance to trainees.
- Providing skills upgrading programmes for industry employees.

5.11 Role of Industry Sector Skills Councils (ISSCs)

5.11.1 Overview

TVET is a process that requires strong industry participation because the competent personnel produced by TVET should meet the requirement of industry in numbers and in respective vocational competencies for the functioning and development of industry as well as for the career development of the individual. Industry must provide the directions of industry growth and projected workforce requirements and also the competencies of persons who are expected to fit into various occupations. In addition, government may provide strategic directions on workforce development in emerging areas of industry, as part of the broad development plan, which may not have been captured in the industry forecasts. TVET institutions are expected to respond to these needs, ensuring the relevance and quality of trained output.

5.11.2 Context and Issues

The information to be provided by the industry as described above were or still are being gathered by various government institutions through various processes. Department of Census and Statistics conduct Industry Surveys to ascertain the workforce requirements. National Apprentice and Industrial Training Authority has established National Industry Training Advisory Committees for various sectors to identify the competency requirements of vocations under those industry sectors. Organizations such as TVEC, work for the formal acceptance of TVET qualifications by the industry and for the identification of occupations for development of TVET Competency Standards. These government led processes must become internal processes of the industry, if the TVET system is to respond to the needs of the industry and also to ensure gainful employment to the TVET qualification holders.

5.11.3 Policy directions

Policy 50

Industry Sector Skills Councils, which is essentially an integrated part of the industry, should provide direction of industry growth and facilitate industry inputs for the development of TVET.

5.11.4 Strategies for policy implementation

- Functions of ISSCs should be clearly identified through discussions with the line ministry and TVEC.
- ISSCs should work in close collaboration with TVET sector and other government institutions.
- Capacity of ISSCs for strategic planning and technical competence should be enhanced to perform the identified functions effectively.
- ISSCs should prepare activity plans in relations to TVET development of the sector and also the plan for sustenance of their own activities.
- Financially assist the ISSCs for an agreed period for ISSCs to become self-sustaining.
- ISSCs of a particular sector must incorporate representation from all sub-sectors.

CHAPTER 6 | INTERRELATION OF TVET WITH GENERAL EDUCATION AND HIGHER EDUCATION

6

6.1 General Overview

Technical subjects that were introduced to the general education system in the year 2007 as Practical and Technical Skills (PTS) are taught from Grade 6 to 11. The PTS component consists of five broad areas of technical education, namely; Basic Technology, Food Technology, Textile Technology, Agricultural Technology, and Business Activities with ICT incorporated into each of the five areas. PTS which is currently being taught was specially designed to develop problem solving skills, communication skills and thinking skills etc. As literature on the history of education in Sri Lanka reveals, technical subjects had been taught in schools since early 1930s under different names with different models (wādahuruwa, Pre- Vocational Subjects, Life Skills, and Activity Room were some of the models).

The objectives of teaching those subjects were:

- To spend the leisure time meaningfully.
- To introduce the world of work.
- To appreciate the contribution of different types of workers in society.
- To develop practical and technical skills.
- To inculcate correct and economical use of tools, equipment and materials.

With regard to the PTS being provided at schools, the technical subjects taught were not examination oriented. The syllabi and text books were loaded with theoretical content rather than being focused on practical tasks where the students could leisurely enjoy the activities. Furthermore, assessments were often based on the students' knowledge of the theoretical content rather than the practical skills they have gained at the end of the programme. It was also revealed that the teachers often teach only one or two areas out of five as they were not confident enough in all five areas.

Currently, nine technical subjects are offered in the Third Basket (Technical Basket) for the students in grade 10-11 to select one out of nine subjects in the basket.

The nine subjects are:

▶	Design and Construction Technology
▶	Aquatic Bio Resources Technology
▶	Design and Mechanical Technology
▶	ICT
▶	Design Electrical and Electronic Technology
▶	Home Economics
▶	Arts and Crafts
▶	Health and Physical Education
▶	Agro and Food Technology

Although each of these subjects has its own subject-specific objectives, the general and overall long term objectives of the nine subjects of the Technical Basket are much similar to the objectives of the PTS taught in grades 6-9. However, teachers and students agree that the choice of a technical subject at grade 10 is mainly based on the prospects of obtaining A'pass at grade 11; and secondly, on the availability of the subject in the school. They further claim that one of the reasons for their selection criteria is the fact that the technical subjects they select do not link with further studies neither at the Advanced Level at school, nor with vocational studies out of the schools. Therefore, the prospects of obtaining an A' pass at the GCE (O/L) examination is more important to face the competition to be selected for a more popular stream at GCE (A/L) or to be able to admit to a school with such stream.

6.2 Review of Existing Policies

The literature shows that similar issues have been identified and relevant policies and strategies are recommended by NEC report 2009 and The National Human Resources and Employment Policy for Sri Lanka (2012). The above two policy documents stress the following strategies for implementation by relevant agencies;

- Establishing the links between General Education and TVET.
- Introducing career education for students at different exit points of general education.
- Developing links between line ministries and organizations.
- Strengthening the secondary curriculum with Technical and Vocational education.
- Introducing NVQ level 1 at GCE (O/L).
- Preparing Teachers to teach technology subjects at schools by UNIVOTEC.
- Developing a system where students can study at TVET during their vacation and conduct short courses.
- Provide alternative pathways for students at secondary and senior secondary level.
- Promoting a scheme for lateral entry to university education.
- Developing linkage between universities and TVET sector.
- Providing opportunities for lateral entries to universities by legalizing SLQF.

6.3 Thirteen-Years Certified Education Programme

The Thirteen-years of certified education programme provide opportunities to all children to enroll to vocational stream after the GCE O/L including those children who will not achieve higher academic performance at GCE O/L. It also introduces vocational subjects with highly demanded job opportunities at national and international levels, use local tacit knowledge as a catalyst for strengthening the youth's capacity for active involvement in production and creativity based knowledge economy. This system has been introduced to 42 pilot schools in 2017. The objectives are as follows as per the unpublished NIE documents.

- To make students well prepared for life-long learning and responsible global citizenship.
- To promote means of preparation for occupational fields/ with occupational interests for effective participation in the World of Work.

- To use local tacit knowledge as a catalyst for strengthening the youth's capacity for active involvement in production and creativity based knowledge economy.
- To institutionalize promotion of environmentally sound sustainable development.
- To attempt at facilitating poverty alleviation.
- To enhance learner-awareness for education for life.

6.4 Technical / Vocational Education in General Education

6.4.1 Context and issues

The technical subjects introduced from time to time at different levels have failed to build links with TVET or with the industry. The failure can be attributed to the lack of a clear vision in introducing such subjects to the General Education curriculum. Although the curriculum has identified the objectives clearly, there is a mismatch between the overall objectives and contents identified and methodologies suggested. In many technical subjects introduced as such, it is not clear whether the overall objectives or contents/ methodologies match with National goals. There were many critics among the stakeholders who pointed out that some of the subjects included in the technical basket do not support to develop technical skills among students or that link with the TVET. It negatively contributes to mismatching of students' true potential with their chosen career paths, and compel students to select a narrow scope of subjects. Eg. Health and Physical education has been identified and included in the technical basket at GCE OL. The technical subjects provide very little opportunity for students to become aware of the TVET system and the world of work.

The five broad areas introduced in PTS are not practiced by the teachers to allow students to understand the diversity of the technological world. Furthermore, teaching is limited to the area that is more familiar to the teacher.

Unequal distribution of resources is a serious issue which violates the rights of some students to equality and parity in the quality of education they receive. For an example, for the technology stream introduced in 2013, the Government

has provided technology laboratories only for 251 schools with necessary equipment, while 35 other schools received only the laboratory building with no equipment and another 94 schools remain with neither laboratories nor equipment. Appointment of teachers to schools also suffers with many disparities.

6.4.2 Policy directions

Policy 51

Develop and implement a technical and vocational education/training system for the general education system that is recognized by relevant authorities for further education/training.

6.4.3 Strategies for policy Implementation

- a. Develop and implement a viable and flexible policy with the involvement of all relevant authorities.
- b. Accredited/recognize schools which conduct TVET courses.
- c. Re-organize school policies in order to create technology-friendly teaching-learning environment within schools.
- d. Adopt a holistic approach to technical subjects or subject areas suitable for different stages of learning at schools.
- e. Develop curriculum by the NIE with active participation of key stakeholders to provide soft skills and technical skills in pragmatic manner.
- f. Prepare evaluation and assessment system to recognize the school work without measuring only the memorizing skill of students.
- g. Revise learning and teaching processes to accommodate problem/project based and work based learning, hence the content based learning and teaching and assessment could be minimized.

6.5 Holistic and Integrated Approach to Technical / Vocational Education in General Education

6.5.1 Context and issues

Less-participatory and non-holistic approach to curriculum development has produced irrelevant course contents and has created imbalances in course loads between subjects. “Basketing” of subjects at GCE (O/L) negatively contribute to mismatching of students’ true potentials and chosen career paths, and compel students to select a narrow scope of subjects. It has been observed that the provision for developing soft skills is less or none in many technological subjects from grades 6 to 13 as the curriculum are mostly content based. The opportunities are less or none for the youngsters to understand and experience the world of work and future career paths available. The proposal of 13 Years Certified Education seems to cover the scope of TVET as the specific curricula are prepared in such a way to target the school leavers and award certificates in the NVQ framework. The scope of technical and vocation education in General education has to motivate school students to enter TVET and not deliver job specific skills. It is very important that roles of these sectors need to be clearly identified.

6.5.2 Policy directions

Policy 52

Develop a broader and inclusive vision and curriculum for school Technical and Vocational Education through the widest possible participatory approach involving all stakeholders.

6.5.3 Strategies for policy Implementation

- a. Replace the PTS with a system that allows young students experience more emerging technological areas while accommodating space to develop soft skills during learning.
- b. Replace the existing assessment system with a system that creates student and teacher-friendly environment by minimizing the pressure of examinations.
- c. Develop and implement a career guidance system that helps young students choose appropriate paths of study.

- d. Introduce a TVET path from grade 10 with the professional and technical assistance of TVET authorities that provides students with more opportunities to choose career paths.
- e. The 13 year subject content must be developed to give basic knowledge towards to completion of TVET courses followed in the school education. With that skills, the students will be able to move to TVET with confidence.
- f. Develop personality to be ready for TVET culture.

6.6 Promoting and Facilitating School Leavers to Take TVET Courses

6.6.1 Overview

Creating TVET opportunities for school leavers who do not enter higher education to enroll in the demand-driven courses is crucial as they very soon expect to engage in employment mainly in the private sector or start their own business activities. Employment opportunities in the public sector are relatively limited and thus facilitating the young people to acquire technical skills with soft skills would ensure them finding gainful employment mainly in the private sector.

6.6.2 Context and issues

Links from General Education to Tertiary Education have been adequately established at conventional Universities, the University of Vocational Technology, University Colleges, Colleges of Technology, and at the National Colleges of Education. Technology faculties have been established at several state Universities that offer study programs leading to degrees of Bachelor of Engineering Technology, Bachelor of Bio System Technology, and Bachelor of ICT where annual intake is around 2000. The University of Vocational Technology, University Colleges, and Colleges of Technology in the TVET sector have changed their enrollment policies to accommodate students who have successfully completed the Technology Stream. The students who complete the degree programs are offered NVQ level 7 at the UNIVOTEC and NVQ 5 and 6 diplomas at the University Colleges and Colleges of Technology.

Moreover, private higher educational institutions such as; Sri Lanka Institute of Information Technology and the Technology Campus also offer few degree programs, specially designed for Engineering Technology students. Furthermore, Technology students are accommodated also by private 'qualification providers' such as; Pierson and City and Guilds. National Colleges of Education also provide opportunities for technology students to enroll as prospective teachers to follow National Diploma in Teaching since the beginning of 2018 intake. Furthermore, Technology students are given the opportunity to join the Technological service (Grade III) training grade in the public sector since 2018. The Stakeholders' view is that all provisions mentioned above are established for students who pass three subjects at GCE (AL). However, nearly 45% of Engineering Technology students and 40% of Bio System Technology students fail to secure three passes at GCE (A/L). Furthermore, TVET Institutes do not provide for students adequate and more attractive links for furthering their education along the same lines. The case is even worse with students in Bio System Technology.

It is extremely hard to find any useful links provided by TVET for students who pass the Technical subjects at GCE (O/L) and this valuable service seems to have been totally neglected by all further training sectors. There are many opportunities provided by the TVET for dropout students at GCE (O/L), but none of them recognize the potential of the technical knowledge/skills of those students have acquired at the school. Therefore, such students are not encouraged to continue their training in appropriate institutions on the strength of such technical knowledge and skills.

There are some strong views from TVET regarding the issue, as listed below;

- Inadequate content and depth covered at schools.
- Inadequacy of practical components covered.
- Lack of focus on industrial requirements.
- Mismatch between the NVQ competencies and the school syllabus.
- Inadequacy or unavailability of resources at schools.
- Lack of competent teachers to teach technical subjects at schools.
- knowledge-based assessment for practice-based learning.

6.6.3 Policy directions

Policy 53

Curriculum, learning-teaching, and assessment systems should be developed in general education to accommodate necessary links with TVET.

6.6.4 Strategies for Policy Implementation

- a. introduce a systematic and logically developed mechanism for students with lesser academic interests to continue with higher education in a vocational path within the school system from grade 10.
- b. Introduce the vocational path to a selected number of schools that are geographically distributed across the country in a fair manner, and few selected vocational subjects should be introduced to those schools initially. Availability of TVET facility within the region would be one criteria for selecting the schools for vocational path. Hence the schools can share the available facilities instead of trying to establishing state-of-the-art laboratories in every school.
- c. Provide students who have achieved prescribed criteria the opportunities to cross between the academic path and the vocational path at predetermined stages.
- d. Include a reasonable number of academic subjects in the curriculum.
- e. Provide more opportunities in the curriculum for the students to engage in problem/project based and work based learning rather than chalk n' board learning.
- f. Allow students to qualify for minimum-level achievement certificate prescribed for the selected occupation/s at the secondary level, and be allowed to continue with further education at senior secondary level in the school or transfer to TVET for NVQ path.
- g. Introduce a flexible mode of assessment and evaluation system for technological subjects that minimize the examination pressure.
- h. Lead the students towards the vocational path in the NVQ system.

6.7 Accreditation of School Based Technical / Vocational Education Courses for Award of NVQs

6.7.1 Overview

For the consideration of awarding certificates in the NVQ framework, a TVET course must obtain accreditation from the TVEC as per the relevant National Competency Standard. This is to ensure that the necessary resources are available and teaching/learning are conducted in a quality assured manner. This policy applies to the School system as well. Use of national curricula and teaching by sufficiently qualified teachers and instructors are also other requirements of accreditation.

6.7.2 Context and issues

Currently, technical subjects at school level are not, accredited for awarding certificates in the NVQ framework, except in non-formal education schools. The reasons are:

- Mismatch of the curriculum and relevant National Competency Standards (NCS) as General education is more focused on academic root.
- The school vocational curriculum is more focused on theoretical aspects of learning rather than developing practical skills.
- Lack of required facilities in the school system as prescribed by the NCS.
- Lack of on-the-job training as a mandatory component.

The majority of stakeholders accept that schools should provide the links between schools and TVET or industry but do not agree with the proposal of providing NVQ qualification within the system of school education. They argue against spending more funds for upgrading schools to teach vocational courses whereas there are numerous government and private organizations that have the capacity in terms of equipment and other physical and human resources to provide vocational qualifications.

6.7.3 Policy directions

Policy 54

Schools should continue with the academic path while introducing the vocational path for students who are interested in technical studies.

6.7.4 Strategies for policy implementation

- a. Introduce a vocational path at grade 10 which will continue to grade 13 with exit point at grade 11.
- b. Award an achievement certificate for those who are successful at grade 11 in vocational subjects. Award a National certificate, eg. GCE O/L (Vocational), upon successful completion.
- c. Provide opportunities for qualified students to continue senior secondary education with the vocational path, or allow them to transfer to the academic path if they meet the necessary criteria. This option should be given to both directions; i.e., from academic to vocational, and from vocational to academic.
- d. Link with regional TVET or industry so that students could visit such places for exposure and practical activities or internships.
- e. Introduce credit system for the students with pre vocational certification from school system in NVQ courses. So that they can complete institute based TVET courses in lesser time.
- f. Introduce pre-vocational subjects align with TVET courses from grade 6 to GCE (A/L) to encourage them to enroll in TVET. The project or problem based assessment should be introduced which will transfer to the GCE (O/L) and GCE (A/L) results.
- g. Link/affiliate TVET institutions with school system to smooth content delivery in school system.

6.8 Technical / Vocational Teacher Training at Diploma and Degree Levels

6.8.1 Overview

Educational and professional qualifications of the teachers significantly contribute to the students' selection of subjects within the school curriculum. Therefore, it is very necessary that technology teachers should have the similar or better level of qualifications as teachers who teach these subjects. Teacher training and teacher education are mandates of the National Institute of Education (NIE). As such, the NIE currently offers programs leading to B.Ed., PGDE, M.Ed., and M.Phil degrees. There are few Universities too that offer similar courses for teachers to upgrade their knowledge and skills. Additionally, the NIE also contributes to the academic part of the NCoE where the three-year pre-service teacher training program that leads to the awarding of the National Diploma in Teaching in different areas such as Primary, Science, Mathematics, English, Technology etc.,. Teachers who are trained in the NCoE program are eligible to teach for grades from 1 to 11 in schools while University degree holders teach for grades 12 and 13 according to the "Teachers Minutes".

6.8.2 Context and issues

There are two NCoE programs that provide teacher training in technology study programs. Those are the Siyene NCoE in the Sinhala medium, and Batticaloa NCoE in the Tamil medium. The maximum training capacity of each NCoE program is 60 teachers per year in the four technological subjects (15 per each subject). According to the NCoE sources, they have failed to recruit the maximum capacity of 60 teachers due to the unavailability of qualified candidates. However the full capacity of 60 student teachers is registered in 2018 as a result of Technology stream. The issue is the relevance, validity and sustainability of the training program conducted at both institutions without properly trained and qualified lecturers and training equipment. The laboratory facilities of both Institutions are not up to even the minimum standards; and thus, the lecturers and student-teachers are struggling to learn without proper facilities. The curriculum is not adequate to provide the necessary technological skills. Course structure of both NCoE programs does not help teacher-students develop necessary skills such as both teaching skills and technological skills.

Due to unavailability of properly trained graduate teachers, NCoE trained teachers are teaching at GCE (A/L) technology subjects which they are not trained to. Faculties of Education in public universities currently do not offer any degree or PGDE programs in the fields of Technology Education while the University of Vocational Technology offer a B.Ed. program which is more focused on teachers at tertiary level. The NIE has recently introduced a B.Ed. program for Engineering Technology where nearly 300 teacher-students are registered. The program is conducted with the assistance of few universities as NIE lacks necessary facilities. The sustainability of the program is an issue as the NIE had not been able to register the second group even after the laps of two years.

6.8.3 Policy directions

Policy 55

Pre-service teacher education and in-service teacher education and training programs should be reviewed to meet the competencies required for a technology teacher.

6.8.4 Strategies for policy implementation

- a. Identify and establish minimum standards to become a teacher in Technology stream.
- b. Monitor teacher training and education for both pre-service and in-service by a single authority.
- c. Upgrade training facilities at NIE to accommodate in-service teacher training and teacher education.
- d. Review and upgrade facilities and the curriculum of technology teacher education program at NCoE to accommodate emerging needs.
- e. Establish a reliable and sustainable teacher education program to upgrade the professional qualifications of technology teachers.
- f. Give periodic industry in service exposure to technical stream teachers through NIE - NAITA.

6.9 Recognition of TVET Qualifications for University Education at Diplomas, Degree and PG Levels Through SLQF

6.9.1 Overview

Sri Lanka Qualifications Framework (SLQF) has been developed in 2012 and revised in 2015 in order to bring all formal qualifications awarded in general and tertiary education within one qualifications system in Sri Lanka. The SLQF integrates the NVQ framework developed and implemented by the Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission. SLQF provides pathways for upward mobility and lateral mobility between SLQF and NVQ frameworks.

6.9.2 Context and issues

The SLQF has identified different levels where NVQ levels are equivalent to SLQF. Though the aim and objectives of SLQF are; to ensure lateral and vertical mobility; progression within higher education and career pathways; and recognition of prior learning, it is argued that the foregoing aims have not been achieved as it is not implemented effectively. It must be noted that persons progressing through vocational pathways may not possess qualifications awarded in general or higher education and making such qualifications mandatory together with vocational qualifications to pursue higher education has caused problems. For an example, some universities have not accepted graduates of the University of Vocational Technology for admission to their postgraduate programmes because the graduate did not possess GCE A/L qualification. Further, this issue must be viewed in the light of 13 years of certified education where some late developers who have the capability may opt for higher education opportunities.

6.9.3 Policy directions

Policy 56

Higher education system in Sri Lanka must recognize the qualifications awarded under SLQF and NVQF in providing higher education opportunities.

6.9.4 Strategies for policy implementation

- a. Legally establish SLQF and its implementation.
- b. Offer bridging programmes by Higher Education and TVET sectors for lateral mobility between the two qualification frameworks.
- c. Promote lateral mobility between the two qualification systems in order to increase the skill levels and employability and also the academic standing of Sri Lankan youth.

7.1 General Overview

High quality human resource in the teaching and administration is an essential element contributing to quality education and training. There need to be a proper balance between academic qualifications and professional competence of teaching staff attached in TVET institutions. TVET sector has the key role in the development of competencies in youth which includes knowledge, skills and attitudes relevant to the occupations demanded by the labor market. Attracting, recruiting and retaining qualified instructional staff in the TVET sector has always been a challenging task. There is a considerable remuneration gap between the industry and the TVET institutions for those with similar qualifications. As such, it has become extremely difficult to recruit and retain competent and motivated trainers to the TVET sector.

A coherent set of policies and strategies has to be in place to be able to attract and retain the best talent for teaching and administration in TVET institutions. Continuous professional development of staff and providing higher education opportunities to rise to higher managerial positions are some of the main requirements to establish efficient and sustainable TVET institutions.

7.2 Review of existing policies

National Policy Framework on Higher Education and Technical and Vocational Education stresses the need of developing staff through pre-service training and in-service exposure to industry. Further, it sets policies in relation to teacher transfers, performance development and promotion for consideration by the training institutions. However, there are no common policies or guidelines stipulated in TVET sector, covering all institutions to recruit, train and retain the teaching staff. TVET training institutions have their own Schemes of Recruitments (SORs) developed and approved. Different institutions may use different job titles such as Coordinator, Inspector, Training Assistant in the apprenticeship training while Instructor, Senior Instructor and Lecturer are used in institutional training.

A comprehensive Human Resources Development (HRD) policy was formulated in 2014 under the Skills Sector Development Programme (SSDP) in collaboration with all the stakeholders of the TVET sector with the objective of introducing and adopting Human Resources Development policies to ensure the availability of competent academic and non-academic staff with high degree of professionalism to produce competent human resources from TVET Sector. This policy document was formulated in line with the recommendations given in the National Human Resources and Employment Policy (NHREP). The proposed HRD policies are to be adopted to facilitate and guide TVET agencies over a range of HRD activities of staffing, recruitment and retention, training and professional development, performance management, promotions, retirement with necessary succession planning. It is given due recognition and importance for both academic and non-academic staff.

TVET sector in Sri Lanka has undergone major reforms with the establishment of National Vocational Qualifications Framework (NVQF) in 2004. TVET qualifications are offered at certificate (NVQ 1-4), diploma (NVQ 5&6) and degree (NVQ 7) levels and the qualification and skills requirements of teaching staff have been identified to each level.

All TVET agencies, except VTA, recruit teachers on probation for three years. They will be considered for confirmation in the post upon completion of probation period depending on their performance and passing of the efficiency bar tests. They are entitled for annual salary increments during the probation period. VTA with the largest institutional based TVET training network finds it difficult to recruit staff satisfying the qualifications and experience stipulated in the respective SORs and hence recruit all academic staff initially on contract basis and place at the initial salary step of the scale. They would not get any salary increment during the contract period and will be considered for permanent positions depending on their qualifications and performance at the end of the contract period.

Regular exposure with industry to get knowledge of emerging technologies shall be encouraged for academic staff to be able to transfer knowledge and skills required by the industry to the trainees. In many organizations, only

a period of service is sufficient for the promotion of staff members, resulting automatic promotions. This is as a result of unavailability of proper promotion policies. Performance of staff members has to be measured and assessed through an effective performance appraisal system through which they can be promoted to higher positions. Career path problems shall not become a constraint for development of the sector. Therefore, introduction and adopting of coherent HRD policies in TVET sector to achieve effective and efficient use of human resource is extremely important.

7.3 Educational Qualifications and Work Experience at Recruitment

7.3.1 Context and issues

Main TVET Institutions such as DTET, NAITA and VTA are having different procedures and policies in recruiting academic staff members. DTET must adhere to the accepted and transparent recruitment procedures in accordance with approved SoRs to ensure adequately qualified and competent persons are recruited. This is done in accordance with the Service Minute, approved by the Public Service Commission. DTET is in the process of revising the Service Minute for Sri Lanka Technical Education Service (SLTES). Present Service Minute is reviewed and amended in terms of the provisions of Circular 6/2006 by HR Division of DTET with the guidance from Department of Management Services and National Salaries and Cadre Commission. The purpose of this exercise is for SLTES to fall in line with similar Public Sector Service Minutes and salary structures, designations and functions to be able to bring uniformity and consistency prevailing in the Public Administration sector.

VTA and NAITA have their own SoR approved by the Department of Management Services (DMS) and National Salaries and Cadre Commission. Both Authorities have their own salary scales with different designations. Other disparities that prevail among TVET institutions are as follows;

- Qualifications at the recruitment of academic staff for same NVQ levels are different between TVET institutes of VTA, DTET, NAITA.
- Same minimum qualifications for the recruitment at different NVQ levels.

- Lack of required qualifications and experience at the recruitment as set out in relevant SoR.
- Unequal salary scales and other benefits between government TVET institutes.
- Different job titles for academic staff between government sector TVET institutes.
- Considerable remuneration gap for same qualification levels among industry and training institutions.

It has become an extremely difficult task to attract, recruit and retain teaching staff for TVET sector owing to above identified drawbacks.

7.3.2 Policy directions

Policy 57

All TVET training institutes should have same educational qualifications and work experience specified in the respective Schemes of Recruitments for comparable posts with common salary scales and common designations.

7.3.3 Strategies for policy implementation

- Analyze competency profiles of each position to identify the qualification and experience needed for recruitment and promotions.
- Prepare common Schemes of Recruitment applicable to all TVET institutions and obtain approval.
- Establish appropriate salary scales.
- Ministry in charge of the subject of Skills Development and Vocational Training to lead the implementation of the uniform system.
- Give opportunities to all academic staff to acquire further qualifications as specified in SoRs for promotions.

7.4 Contract and Visiting Instructors / Lecturers

7.4.1 Context and issues

All TVET institutions have the options of recruiting academic staff either on permanent, contract or on visiting basis. Each institution could therefore, determine an acceptable ratio between permanent (Core Staff) to visiting staff to be able to ensure smooth running of the programmes. This ratio should also consider optimizing the benefits of having visiting staff that will bring new ideas and technology into the institution especially through those who come from the industry. Role of the visiting lecturer from the industry is more relevant in diploma level courses where the permanent staff may be lacking such industry experience.

Staff who are retired from TVET institutions are also engaged on visiting basis and in some institutions they continue to teach for long periods after retirement. Staff who are retired many years ago are unable to bring new industry developments and standards to the training process.

Specific issues of contract and visiting instructors/lecturers are as follows;

- Lack of established and transparent mechanism to recruit visiting lecturers/instructors during the period where permanent staff is not available for teaching purposes.
- Payment criteria for visiting Lecturers/Instructors are not attractive to attract competent personnel who are abreast with the technology advancements.

7.4.2 Policy directions

Policy 58

TVET institutions must obtain the services of contract and visiting staff through an established and transparent process to ensure training delivery to achieve relevant competency standards and remunerate such staff appropriately.

7.4.3 Strategies for policy implementation

- Each institution should establish a transparent process of engaging contract and visiting lecturers/instructors.
- Identify trades for which services of visiting staff are required.
- Collaborate and liaise with industry to obtain services of industry experts for teaching on visiting basis.
- Establish attractive remuneration packages to be able to obtain services of industry experts.
- Establish a system to know in advance when teachers/trainers become absent or unable to attend a class for any reason.
- Maintain a pool of industry resource persons with required qualifications to obtain their services when and where necessary.
- Each institution must maintain a data base of eligible resource persons to serve as visiting Lecturers/instructors and share the database with other institutions.
- Make arrangements for appropriate mechanism to obtain the services of students who have achieved merit performances in the previous years as substitute teachers/trainers.

7.5 Development of Teaching / Training Skills

7.5.1 Context and issues

All staff in TVET sector shall be provided with clear career paths adequately supported by continuous professional development opportunities and industry attachment to be able to enhance their teaching and technical competencies. In-service training provided for the staff by many organizations are not properly organized. Pre-service training which is important has given less priority in the TVET system. However, some institutions organize institute-specific pre-service or orientation programmes in ad-hoc manner without a proper plan as and when they recruit new staff. Sufficient preparation of new recruits to be able to use appropriate teaching methods, supported by supervised

teaching practices, and introduction to the organizational environment and culture is necessary for them to be able to confidently begin their teaching careers.

Competencies of academic staff of TVET providers shall be continuously improved to be in par with current global standards, emerging technologies and trends. Therefore, opportunities to obtain regular exposure to such emerging technologies and trends in the industry sectors as well as in foreign countries for the trainers of TVET need to be explored and promoted. All TVET institutions shall encourage academic staff to return to industry to get industry exposure and knowledge on emerging technologies.

Academic staff needs to be deployed properly to ensure their effective utilization in delivery of training at various levels. The pedagogical training for all newly recruited academic staff with periodic upgrading shall be a mandatory requirement. This concurrently ensures that the students will consistently receive quality and professional training.

Therefore, it is expected to implement the HRD master plan in TVET institutions in the next five years. The plan is expected to be reviewed each year in order to identify the emerging requirements. The pre-preparation of new recruits for intended teaching activities shall be a priority task of all training institutions.

7.5.2 Policy directions

Policy 59

Academic staff shall be provided pre-service training, pedagogical training and short term skills development programmes to be in par with technological advancements and changing work practices in industry.

7.5.3 Strategies for Policy Implementation

- Each institution should have a HRD Plan with appropriate budgeting.
- Establish a dedicated teacher training Institute for TVET sector.
- Make pedagogical training mandatory for all newly recruited academic staff of all TVET institutions before assuming duties at the respective posts. No

confirmation is granted unless pedagogical training is obtained by new recruits.

- Provide pedagogical skills on regular basis for academic staff.
- Update SoRs of all TVET institutions accordingly.
- Provide all academic staff with at least one short-term training program (preferably two weeks) per year.
- Make arrangements for all academic staff to undergo a minimum of two weeks industry exposure once in two years.
- Organize training programs by training institutions in collaboration with the UNIVOTEC for the staff recruited on contract and visiting basis.
- Provide opportunities for academic staff to obtain overseas training and education.
- Encourage interchange and partnerships between TVET institutions and industry.
- Encourage trainers across all TVET institutions to pursue and qualify at least one level above the level that they teach.
- Offer academic staff an option of early retirement if subject being taught becomes obsolete due to technology change.
- Consider successful completion of such training programme as one of the criteria for salary increment, promotions, scholarships and getting benefits of the performance based incentive scheme.

7.6 Performance Appraisal and Promotions

7.6.1 Context and issues

Human resources are considered to be the most important asset of any organization and investment in them is well recognized. Thus competencies of academic staff of TVET providers shall be continuously updated and upgraded in par with current global standards and trends. Hence training organizations shall provide facilities for them to pursue education and training programmes to acquire higher competencies and qualifications. Presently,

the promotional path or opportunities for higher positions for academic staff are limited to few administration positions in the organizational hierarchy.

In order to make the system equitable, a systematic promotion scheme shall be introduced as part of performance management of academic staff in training organizations. Performance appraisal systems shall be introduced to ensure the delivery of expected performance outcomes so that any gaps of teaching or administrative performance can be identified and rectified.

7.6.2 Policy directions

Policy 60

An internal promotion scheme which is effective, fair and systematic shall be introduced and implemented in each training organization. Outcome of performance appraisal should be the main criteria for promotion.

Policy 61

An effective performance appraisal system should be maintained to ensure the delivery of expected performance outcomes while ensuring professional growth and career progression of staff in identified stages of their careers.

7.6.3 Strategies for policy implementation

- Introduce an internal promotional scheme in each training institution.
- Appraise performance of teaching staff members annually with predetermined and mutually agreed performance indicators.
- Interlink career development, rewards and incentives of staff members to performance appraisal outcomes
- Manage performance of all staff through Performance appraisal system and identify their training needs for facilitation.
- Promote professionalism among all staff.

7.7 Developing TVET Research Capabilities of Academic Staff

7.7.1 Context and Issues

TVET related applied researches are means of generating new knowledge for the advancement of the TVET sector. Two types of research can be identified in this connection, namely; macro level research aiming at development of new policies, strategies and systems and micro level research analyzing needs in training institutions for the purpose of improving existing processes. The teaching staff shall be encouraged to do such research in a systematic manner. Currently, research related to TVET issues are facilitated to a certain extent. However, it is recommended to further support applied research activities in the TVET sector. Such research will support continuous innovations and provide a reliable feedback for the advancement of the sector.

TVET institutions do not have established mechanisms to implement the findings of research and hence researchers are sometimes discouraged in continuing research activities. Further, time available outside training and administration work for TVET teachers to engage in research is very limited.

7.7.2 Policy directions

Policy 62

Training organizations shall facilitate and encourage undertaking of TVET related research by the teaching staff for purposes of advancing the TVET systems.

7.7.3 Strategies for policy implementation

- Identify issues which hamper performance of the TVET system or of organizations.
- Identify issues which need research interventions to find answers.
- Include research activity in the annual work plan with budget allocation.
- Liaise with other organizations and let staff conduct research in association with such organizations.
- Facilitate staff to engage in applied research.

- f. Upgrade research capabilities of teaching staff by providing appropriate training.
- g. Hold regular Research Seminars and disseminate the research findings.
- h. Institutions to implement the findings of research through an established mechanism.
- c. Provide necessary training for staff in productivity improvement tools such as effective management, conflict resolution, students counseling, team skills, skills in carrying out multi tasks etc., and institutionalize such practices.
- d. Provide necessary training to staff for efficient and effective conduct of their functions through formal training programs on Administrative Regulations, Financial Regulations and other institutional procedures.
- e. Provide international exposure to the middle and higher managers.

7.8 Further Professional Development of Academic and Administrative Staff

7.8.1 Context and issues

TVET sector institutions lack professional education management capabilities for planning and operation in order to transform the institutes to innovative and efficient organizations. Academic and administrative staff who are progressing well need to be identified in their mid-careers and provided with higher studies in Education Management. Staff progressing within the training institutions and gaining further education and experience possess greater institutional knowledge. This will enable the development of professional education managers who are able to take practically implementable decisions, take ownership of development activities and to take the institutions forward.

7.8.2 Policy directions

Policy 63

Training organizations shall provide opportunities for further professional development through higher education and training preparing identified staff for future managerial positions.

7.8.3 Strategies for policy implementation

- a. Each TVET institution must prepare a Human Resource Development Plan to recruit or fill lower, middle and higher management positions with professionally qualified managers.
- b. Provide higher education and training in Education Management for promising mid-career officers to occupy middle and higher management positions.

8.1 General Overview

Providing access to TVET for vulnerable and disadvantaged people is of paramount importance due to the fact that, in most occasions, they are marginalized as a result of the prevailing socio-cultural norms and economic conditions of Sri Lanka. By providing them access to TVET, they will be transformed into a productive workforce for the nation and will be able to contribute actively and dynamically to the mainstream socio-economic development of Sri Lanka.

National as well as international conventions and legislations are in force to look after interests and welfare of disadvantaged/vulnerable people of Sri Lanka. All these legal frameworks insist that the relevant government and non-governmental organizations that deal with them to maintain inclusiveness and justice in all aspects of social life as applicable for others in society. Special provisions need to be provided especially in employment, education and public facilities for these groups to maintain their life conveniently.

There has been progress in developing training and employment policies targeting vulnerable and disadvantaged groups and to bring them out of poverty. However, vulnerability of some groups still remains an issue and this chapter discusses the TVET interventions to support different vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.

8.2 Vulnerable and Disadvantaged Groups in Sri Lanka

This policy framework will focus on the following major vulnerable/disadvantaged groups for promotion of TVET with the aim of improving their life in society:

- Disadvantaged youth.
- Disadvantaged / vulnerable women (Socially disadvantaged).

- People with disabilities (which includes students leaving from special education schools).
- Economically downtrodden / Poor.

8.2.1 Disadvantaged youth

In Sri Lanka, a youth is generally considered as being 15-29 years of age. According to Sri Lanka Labour Force Survey (2017, 3rd quarter) unemployment rate of Sri Lanka is 4.2% of which 28.1% are youth and this causes serious socio-economic problems. This is a group of youth who are currently struggling to be successful in their roles as adolescents and are socially, educationally and economically disadvantaged relative to their peers. The majority of them are not connected to society through mainstream public systems and agencies, or even though they are connected, not in a meaningful way that assists their smooth transition throughout adolescence and young adulthood.

According to official statistics, young people aged between 15 to 29 years are estimated at 4.73 million and they account for 23.2% of the total population (Department of Census, Statistics, 2012). Youth disengaged from education and unemployed and youth in the probation centres are the major categories that fall in to this category of disadvantaged youth.

8.2.2 Disadvantaged/ Vulnerable women

Though female population consists 51.5% of the total population of Sri Lanka, their participation in the labour force of the country, is less than men. Due to cultural and social barriers women are relatively disadvantaged. They often have limited access to resources and services and less control over employment opportunities.

8.2.3 People with disabilities

The legal definition of disability in Sri Lanka is found in the Act for the Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Accordingly, a “person with disability means any person who, as a result of any deficiency in his physical or mental capabilities, whether congenital or not, is unable by himself to ensure for himself, wholly or partly, the necessities of life”.

8.2.4 Review of existing policies

One of the most used measures of vulnerability is consumption based vulnerability measured by the consumption aggregate. In this respect, the absolute poor are considered vulnerable since they live in poverty and face economic hardships which is hard to overcome. The economic constraints are barriers to education, labor market participation, job security, and sustaining livelihoods. In Sri Lanka, Poverty status is determined by comparing the monthly real per capita expenditure to official poverty line. If the real per capita monthly expenditure is less than the value of the official poverty line, then that individual is considered to be in poverty.

In 2016, approximately 843,913 individuals (Urban - 67,649, Rural - 693,956, Estate - 82,308) were in poverty. As per 2012/13 survey, it was 1.3 million. This represents a 0.5 million decline from 2012/13 to 2016. The total poor households were 3.1 percent of the total households and it was approximately 169,392 households in 2016.

8.3 Review of Existing Policies

Concerning the importance of providing equal opportunities for vulnerable and disadvantaged people in society, relatively a significant coverage of legal provisions and policy directions prevail internationally and nationally.

8.3.1 International legal provisions and policy directions

a. Universal Declaration of Human Rights

The General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), meeting

in Paris from 3 to 18 November 2015, at its 38th session recalled the principles of following:

- Articles 23 and 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948).
- Articles 6.2 and 13 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966) guaranteeing the right of everyone to work and to education, and the principles contained in the Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960),
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979).
- Convention on Technical and Vocational Education (1989).
- Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and
- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006).

As per the recommendation concerning Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), the member States should make TVET more accessible to all disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, including marginalized rural and remote populations, by providing targeted support to reduce the cost burden and to remove other obstacles. According to national contexts, member States should give attention to learners with disabilities, indigenous people, nomadic populations, ethnic minority groups, socially-excluded groups, migrants, refugees, stateless people and populations affected by conflict or disaster, as well as to unemployed people and vulnerable workers.

The International Labour Convention No.142 and Recommendation No. 150 concerning Human Resources Development, which deals with vocational guidance and vocational training in the development of human resources, are the key ILO policy statements on TVET. Their articles and provisions cover “vocational training throughout life of both young persons and adults in all sectors of the economy and branches of activity and at all levels of skills and responsibility” (Article 4 of Convention and paragraph 5.2.c

of Recommendation). Accordingly, the need to provide TVET in an inclusive, equitable, nondiscriminatory manner to all groups in society is clearly stated. In addition, however, countries “should pay special attention” to, inter alia, “providing vocational training for members of the population who had not received adequate attention in the past, in particular for groups which are economically or socially disadvantaged” (paragraph 15.2.c of Recommendation).

In addition, the ILO Convention 159 (Article 7, Article 8 and Article 9) also pays attention to needs of disadvantaged people. ILO recommendation 195 raises concerns over human resources development, education, training and lifelong learning. Accordingly, the member states shall develop and implement policies on education and training targeting people with special needs.

b. Sustainable Development Goals of the UNESCO, UN

The growing international interest and the inclusion of vocational education and training as explicit outcomes in the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) gives TVET and skills systems an important place on the international stage. The UNESCO, UN Sustainable Development Goal No. 04 calls for “inclusive and quality education for all”. This clearly includes persons with a disability or marginalized people most likely to suffer from exclusion from any form of education. “Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, nonviolent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all” is one of the targets of the goal no. 04 of the SDG.

8.3.2 National legal provisions and policy directions

a. The Constitution of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka

The Constitution of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka requires the parties concerned to safeguard the rights of disabled persons including opportunities for education and training. It also requires the authorities to take effective steps in the fields of teaching, education and information in order to eliminate discrimination and prejudices.

b. Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act no. 28 of 1996 and Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (amendment) act, no. 33 of 2003

This Act has set out provisions related to accessibility for education including vocational training as shown below.

- No person with a disability shall be discriminated against on the ground of such disability in recruitment for any employment or office or admission to any educational institution.
- No person with a disability shall, on the ground of such disability, be subject to any liability, restriction or condition with regard to access to, or use of, any building or place which any other member of the public has access to or is entitled to use, whether on the payment of any fee or not.
- The manner and mode of providing facilities to allow access by disabled persons to public buildings, public places and common services, shall be as prescribed.

Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act No. 28 of 1996 specifically addresses equality in recruitment for employment and admission to educational institutes and for physical accessibility to public places.

c. Rehabilitation of the Visually Handicapped Trust Fund Act No. 09 of 1992

This Act set out provisions on needs of visually handicapped as quoted below;

“(a) to provide educational and vocational training facilities for the visually handicapped”

d. National Policy on Disability for Sri Lanka - Ministry of Social Welfare, May 2003

This Act set out provisions on needs of disabled as given below;

“The National Policy on Disability promotes and protects the rights of people who have disability in the spirit of social

justice. They will have opportunities for enjoying a full and satisfying life and for contributing to national development by utilizing their knowledge, experience and particular skills and capabilities as equal citizens of Sri Lanka”

e. National Action Plan for Disability in Sri Lanka

Main Objective of this plan is to implement the National Policy on Disability for Sri Lanka. This Action Plan further takes into account other existing policies, laws, delivery systems and plans related to disability concerns in Sri Lanka.

f. National Policy Framework on Higher Education and Technical and Vocational Education, National Education Commission, June 2009

This document emphasizes that special attention needs to be paid to vulnerable/underprivileged groups to access TVET so that they too can become partners in the national development process.

g. National Strategy on TVET Provision for Vulnerable People in Sri Lanka - Strategies and Action Plans, Dec., 2010

The aim of this document is to convert the TVET Policy related to vulnerable people into action. The National Consultation on Skills Development for Vulnerable Group in July 2008, identified six groups as vulnerable groups which would require immediate attention to find awareness of Vocational Training. These six groups were subsequently incorporated in the section of vulnerable groups in the overall National TVET Policy as listed below.

- Disadvantaged Women, especially those heading households.
- People with disabilities (Mental and Physical)
- Disadvantaged youth (including school dropout and former child labour)
- Poor (including people in plantation areas, rural and urban poor)

- Persons affected by conflict (including Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and ex-combatants)
- Migrant Workers.

h. National Youth Policy (NYP) Sri Lanka, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Skills Development, 2014

This policy framework focuses on needs of range of different youth groups targeting ensuring, enabling and empowering youth including differently-able youth.

i. Vision 2025 - the Development Policy Framework of the Government of Sri Lanka

Under Social Safety Nets section of the Vision 2025, it has committed to look after interests of the differently-able persons as excerpted below.

“We will improve access to public services, education, and employment opportunities for the differently able people. The Government will improve basic infrastructure facilities to empower differently-able persons to be independent and self-reliant. For example, the Government will provide wheelchair access for buildings, tactile paving for the visually impaired and audio video announcements in public places and public transport. Targeted education will facilitate the learning process and enable active participation in economic activities”.

8.4 Institutions Involved in the Provision of Vocational Training for Vulnerable and Disadvantaged Groups

8.4.1 Department of Social Services

The Department of Social Services was established on 1st of February 1948, on the recommendation of the Social Services Commission under the Chairmanship of Sir Ivor Jennings in 1944. From that day to the present, Department of Social Services has been performing its functions under the Ministry in charge of the subject of social services.

Under this welfare program, the following activities are carried out by the Department of Social Services.

- Rehabilitation of and vocational training for disabled male and female youth
- Early detection and early intervention with regard to children with special needs
- Providing vocational training for patients with spinal code disabilities at the rehabilitation Hospital, Ragama and also persons with such disabilities referred by Divisional Secretariats
- Providing protection for mentally retarded male children who do not have guardians
- Trust Fund for the rehabilitation of visually handicapped persons

There are nine (09) Vocational training institutes located in Seeduwa, Wattegama, Katawala, Thelambuyaya, Amunukumbura, Ragama, Maharagama, Avissawella and Kalawana conducting 54 vocational training courses.

8.4.2 Vocational Training Authority of Sri Lanka

The institute has taken steps to provide vocational training for youth who suffered various types of vulnerability in Sri Lanka. Youth in probation centres and disabled youth are being undergoing inclusive vocational training in selected trades. Meanwhile, VTA conducts vocational training programmes for soldiers including disabled and prisoners at selected vocational training centres located within their premises. Trainees who successfully complete the training programs will receive NVQ certificate at the specified competency level achieved.

8.4.3 Non-formal and Special Education Branch of the Ministry of Education

The main functions of this branch:

- Providing education for children of school going age and adults

- Planning entrepreneur and technical education opportunities to school leavers
- Planning facilities to 'special-need' children

There are four (04) categories of student settings:

- Special units of schools,
- Inclusive mainstream classrooms,
- Special schools, and
- Special resource centres.

Altogether there are 25 special schools, under the purview of this branch functioning in Sri Lanka. In addition, as of 2002, there were 95 special schools funded by nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) registered with the Department of Social Services and the Ministry of Education.

8.4.4 Blind Schools

There are around ten (10) Blind schools in the country. The School for the Blind, Ratmalana, is the pioneering school in Sri Lanka, established in 1910 by the Church of England Zenana Missionary Society to educate visually impaired children has emerged as the leading school in this country.

School caters to visually impaired children from total blindness to low vision students, focusing on giving a sound education based on the government curriculum. Although the school has a good percentage of students entering universities to pursue their higher studies in arts stream, it has become extremely difficult for them to find employment with the education they have received. Most of the blind graduates end up as teachers and some find employment at the social services department in various positions. Therefore, the School for the Blind, Ratmalana, feel, in order to prepare visually impaired young population to face a globalized economy, in addition to giving them various other vocational training, is mainly focusing on giving them an English oriented education with IT software and hardware training.

8.4.5 Deaf Schools

There are 25 deaf schools around the country and nearly 1025 students are studying from grade one to ordinary level. Out of 25 schools, nearly 10 schools are teaching vocational training initiatives while teaching the general school curriculum.

The oldest and pioneer deaf school is the Ratmalana School for the Deaf where nearly 178 students are studying. Most of the students who are studying in the school are hearing impaired students. The school is equipped with hostel facilities and 90% of students are hostellers. Students from grade 06 upwards are following same kind of vocational training or livelihood which are available in school after the school hours. Apart from that, students who have completed G.C.E. O/L exams follow either full time pastry & bakery training program or sewing program for one year. The school ensures employment opportunities for each and every student who successfully complete the program. Aspiration and skills of each student identified by the staff of the school when choosing suitable courses for them.

8.5 Analysis and Recommendations

8.5.1 Context and issues

It has been observed that an increasing and larger amount of people remain in the vulnerable and disadvantaged category as per national statistics. According to the Census of Population and Housing done in 2012, around 1.6 million have some form of difficulties. This includes approximately 1 million with impaired vision; around 390,000 with impaired hearing or speech; about 734,000 with disability related to legs; about 340,000 with cognition inability; around 180,000 with communication difficulties. When compared with census 2001 which estimated 275,000 people with difficulties (except northern and eastern provinces), has risen by 06 folds.

According to national statistics, female population (51%) of Sri Lanka is relatively higher than that of male population. Female contribution has a major impact on the national

economy and social development. However, the post-conflict era has given rise to the number of widows and different social conditions have made many women single parents. Further, those women who have fallen victim to abuse and engage in unethical practices become a responsibility of society. Providing a reliable livelihood or employment oriented vocational training program could address this issue.

Although, Sri Lanka has entered into the category of lower middle income countries, a significant percentage of population still continues to live below the poverty line. There may be various reasons for this phenomenon which can be only overcome by providing guidance and some form of vocational training in order to help them come out of this situation.

Vulnerable and disadvantaged people have varying needs when it comes to entering and successfully completing training courses, depending on the type of their vulnerability and the educational opportunities they have had in schools. They often have low levels of education, with implications for literacy and numeracy requirements of many skills development programs. They often cannot access TVET, due to reasons such as lack of accommodation facilities within or in the vicinity of training institutions, lack of inclusive/tailor made training programs, disability, poverty or lack of awareness etc.

Providing equal opportunities for everyone to access TVET is a key principle underlying modern skills development policies and strategies. Thus, specific measures should be included in the national policy or strategy governing the TVET to encourage and support their participation in and successful completion of training courses.

Though Sri Lanka has achieved many improvements in the economy, vulnerability of some people still remains an issue. Vulnerable people are at higher risk of social exclusion as well as exclusion from the labor market thus negatively impacting their livelihoods, and putting their children at risk of continuing being in a vulnerable state of life. Major issues and problems faced by the vulnerable and disadvantaged people in Sri Lanka are:

- Negative socio-cultural attitudes of people towards these groups. Attitudinal barriers play a major role in stagnation of policies and regulations.
- Overall, Sri Lanka's record of poverty reduction has been encouraging but living standards remain low and pockets of severe poverty persist. Across the country, poverty rates are disproportionately high for vulnerable groups.
- Lower level of access to education and healthcare, low quality of diet and poor condition of housing is still persisting in some part of the country, especially in the estate sector.
- Although there is a 3% quota allocated to persons with disabilities when recruiting for government jobs, it is not being practiced. Unfortunately this quota is severely underutilized. Lack of statistical data with regard to persons with disabilities working in the public sector as well as private sector is another problem.
- No legal provisions are available to provide persons with disabilities employment opportunities in the private sector.
- The courses offered for these groups are often not market responsive resulting in skills mismatch between training given and employment opportunities.
- Non-implementation of regulations on accessibility to assist persons with disabilities.
- Lack of accessibility to public transportation for persons with disabilities.

8.5.2 Policy directions

Policy 64

Inclusive TVET programmes for vulnerable people should be promoted and developed at the national level.

8.5.3 Strategies for policy implementation

- Set up a sub-committee in the TVEC to promote and develop inclusive TVET.
- Conduct awareness on inclusive TVET for staff and students.
- Conduct awareness on social movements involved on behalf of vulnerable groups.
- Establish a mechanism to monitor the maintenance of accessing facilities at training institutions (ramp, lift, toilets).
- Identify existing training facilities to create possible inclusive TVET environment.
- Identify possible TVET programmes that can be implemented for relevant vulnerable groups.
- Establish specialized training facility to relevant vulnerable groups.
- Design curricula including a module with the concept of inclusive TVET and prepare training supportive materials for relevant vulnerable groups.
- Establish a mechanism for on-the-job training (OJT) and job placement.
- Establish and maintain support system including career guidance and counselling for vulnerable groups to continue TVET.
- Develop specialised trainers and assessors to serve disabled trainees.
- Set entry criteria as appropriate.

Policy 65

Potential TVET programmes conducted for persons with disabilities should be transformed into the NVQ system. All TVET institutions providing training for disabled personnel should be supported and enhanced.

8.5.4 Strategies for policy implementation

- a. Identify labour market responsive occupations available for persons with disabilities.
- b. Select and prioritize market responsive TVET programmes that can be transformed into NVQ status.
- c. Provide financial assistance to procure equipment, machines, tools required for training delivery.
- d. Design and prepare curricula and assessment methodologies.
- e. Establish a mechanism for on-the-job training (OJT) and job placement.
- f. Recognize current skills of employees including self-employed through Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).
- g. Provide entrepreneurial skills.
- f. Set entry criteria as per severity of the vulnerable status.
- g. Provide welfare benefits where necessary.

Policy 66

Design and deliver flexible learning TVET programmes leading to NVQ for economically downtrodden groups.

8.5.5 Strategies for policy implementation

- a. Identify and prioritize occupations that are dire need of the industry.
- b. Identify and prioritize TVET programmes that can be delivered flexibly.
- c. Identify and select locations geographically based on the industry demand.
- d. Make aware the industry on availability of flexible learning programmes.
- e. Establish a mechanism to monitor employment status of training recipients.

9.1 General Overview

This chapter of the National Policy and Strategy on TVET will focus on proposing coherent policies and strategies for establishment and maintenance of an integrated information gathering, analysis and dissemination for TVET planning and career guidance system for the TVET sector of Sri Lanka. Towards this end, it will explore existing policy thrusts, gaps, and issues and then present a set of policies and strategies for implementation by the relevant government and private institutions for setting up and operation of a dependable and efficient information gathering and dissemination for TVET planning and career guidance service in the country.

Identifying sources of and information for TVET planning is a fundamental activity in organizing demand-driven courses for wide array of TVET seekers. Training intentions of young people and that of adults differ in terms of type and length of courses and nature of industry they would prefer to work in. Therefore, it is necessary to collect, analyze and disseminate relevant TVET related information through range of means including career guidance for the clientele to take right decisions in choosing courses. Primarily, courses need to be employment oriented and then they need to meet the interests of the clientele for better achieving objectives of both parties. Therefore, proper planning based on reliable information is the key for success of TVET institutions. TVET Planning is referred to as determining what to do, how to do, and when to do a set of activities identified within the institutional mandates and how much of money to be allocated in order to implement such activities. Accuracy, completeness and relevance of data collected are found to be utmost important for proper institutional planning to be able to achieve objectives of TVET institutions at national as well as regional level.

Sri Lanka has been investing on education and training in order to build capacities of people targeting sustainable socio-economic development over the years. The development activities underway in key economic sectors of the country require people with right competencies for work in respective workplaces. It has been observed that overseas workplaces also require trained people for which

Sri Lankans opt for in significant numbers over the past few decades which would continue in same pace in the future as well. Available employment data in terms of education, work experiences and other qualities in various places need to be gathered, analyzed and disseminated for the purpose of guiding employment seekers in a reliable way. A person's work-life or the career needs to be guided by sufficiently qualified and experienced persons with accurate and reliable information for a new person to successfully start and continue in an employment with contentment. For this purpose, an organized and dependable career guidance service is absolutely needed with an integrated information base on training, occupational outlooks and labour market information of both demand for and supply of skills.

9.2 Review of Existing Policies

National Human Resources and Employment Policy (NHREP) observes that lack of comprehensive information on human resources requirements make it difficult to train right number of skills people for current and emerging human resources needs. Authorities find it difficult to conduct proper TVET planning sans relevant national and provincial information for planning purposes. The NHREP further emphasizes the importance of reliable and coordinated career guidance and counseling service in the country for which also reliable TVET information matters. The policy observes that many organizations including schools, vocational training institutions, youth service centers, government ministries, and private sector institutions involve in the provision of career guidance creating issues for proper coordination between the agencies. Career guidance units of the DTET, NAITA, VTA, NYSC and other private and public training providers focus on institute-specific training opportunities available with these Institutions.

The UNESCO report on Education for All, Action Plan of Sri Lanka report elaborates that extended opportunities for basic education and training and programmes to acquire life and vocational skills or all youth and adults. This includes enhancing the existing non-formal learning structures, developing new ones and providing diversified forms of technical and vocational training and lifelong learning for

both males and females. Further it says, ensuring mastery of basic learning skills and excellence for all through the empowerment of all learners to attain outstanding achievement levels that make full use of their potential, starting with the mastery of basic skills, vocational and life skills, and attaining excellence in creativity and inventiveness. This will require improving the quality of education in all its aspects, including teachers' qualifications and conditions of employment, curricula, teaching and assessment methods, and the learning environment.

The National Policy Framework on Higher Education and Technical and Vocational Education prepared and published by the National Education Commission (NEC, 2009) recommends to set up a career guidance network for the TVET sector and also to establish a system of providing psycho-social counselling. National Education Commission had already recommended a National Career Guidance Council for the purpose of coordination of career guidance activities in all agencies in education and training sectors.

9.3 Current Status of Career guidance, Labour Market Information and Employment Services

9.3.1 Career guidance

Career guidance services at secondary schools provided by the Ministry of Education through Career Guidance Units suffer from totally inadequate numbers of teachers trained in career guidance providing services. These teachers lack contact and understanding of the world of work to be successful in guidance. As a result, career guidance is not available to the bulk of the students during their school careers.

Considering the broader status of career guidance at present, the connected issues can be summarized as follows;

- i. There is no efficient nationally coordinated career guidance service at all levels and within reach of persons who require it.
- ii. There is no accepted methodology set up to attract school leavers to VET programmes subsequent to the mandatory school attendance period.

- iii. Career guidance officers who have the aptitude and skills to guide not only the youth but also the parents and school authorities have to be recruited and developed.
- iv. Traditional ways of thinking tended to downgrade Vocational Education and Training (VET) programmes. They were considered a default option for “dropouts” from, and “failures” of, the academically oriented formal educational system. There is the need to bring VET programmes into “preferred options” available for the youth.
- v. Lack of systematic information on available vacancies, labour demand trends, training opportunities and the types and conditions of different types of employment opportunities limit the ability of the career guidance counsellors to effectively guide youth.

9.3.2 Labour Market Information and Employment Services

The data needed by policy-makers dealing with employment issues on the one hand, and by educational and training authorities to plan, organize and operationalize programmes of education, training and skills development on the other, are not readily available in Sri Lanka. The skills development activities in this context need to meet the local demand, as well as the demand created by migration for temporary foreign employment and losses through brain drain. Policy action to collect and analyze labour market information (LMI) is thus needed to effectively assess, estimate and monitor the rapidly changing demand for skilled human resources over a wide range of skills.

The Government has strengthened the systems in place for collection and compilation of human resources data. But there are still major data gaps. A labour market information system that is demand driven and of a multi-purpose nature is needed and yet to be fully developed. The LMI system planned should produce regular, timely and relevant labour force, employment and human resources information to meet the needs of the variety of users of the relevant information noted in the foregoing paragraph in both government and private sectors. These are the institutions having responsibility for human resources development and employment creation programmes. Employers who are planning changes in production structures of their firms need

LMI data to manage their industrial and service enterprises. Institutions having the responsibility for producing LMI data are in a highly decentralized form and they require mechanisms for coordination of the data collection and compilation activities. Arrangements to pool the data that have been gathered are required so that data users could easily access them. The significance of developing the capacity of the institutions responsible for collection, compilation and dissemination of data cannot thus be over-emphasized.

Public Employment Service (PES) could be used in activities related to registration for employment. The mandate of the PES wherever such institutions operate is facilitation of job matching rather than placement in jobs. This avoids the perception that PES is responsible for finding jobs for people, which is more likely to be the role of private recruitment agencies. It could also serve as a platform to operationalize contributory social security and pension schemes, as well as to generate an LMI. A PES could also help undertaking career guidance and counselling services and in the identification and promotion of employment for vulnerable groups.

9.4 Career Guidance Standardization

9.4.1 Overview

Career Guidance is defined in OECD reports as assisting individuals to manage their educational and vocational career paths as per national and personal interests. This includes services and activities intended to assist individuals of any age and at any point throughout their lives, to make educational, training and occupational choices and to manage their careers. Career guidance standardization is necessary which ensures preparation and dissemination of materials prepared based on reliable and accurate information to intended parties.

9.4.2 Context and issues

As multitude of agencies provides career guidance to their clientele, but it has been observed that there is a lack of common materials and resources for delivery of career guidance services. Need of standardizing and regulating career guidance programs by an authorized government agency has been identified as necessary in order to restrain

training promotional activities done in the name of career guidance by training institutions. Lack of reliable career related information has been observed which need to be rectified for proper conduct of career guidance at all levels. The two key Ministries which work with youth i.e the Ministry of Education and the TVET line Ministry need to prepare specific career guidance materials targeting school children and those who intend to join and already joined with the TVET sector respectively.

9.4.3 Policy directions

Policy 67

National unified and standardized system for Career Advice and Guidance (CAG) should be in operation among all levels of education and training institutes, in-service and social system.

Policy 68

Standardized career guidance materials developed and used by Schools for school children and the TVET sector to match with needs of target groups.

9.4.4 Strategies for Policy Implementation

- a. Establish a National Career Advice and Guidance mechanism with island-wide presence which will eventually lead to a CAG Service
- b. Develop and disseminate standardized national career advice and guidance material to ensure uniformity of guidance
- c. Make use of national LMI in doing career advice and guidance
- d. Build capacities of Career Advice and Guidance personnel with exposure to developed systems

9.5 Career Guidance Coverage / Outreach

9.5.1 Overview

In the TVET sector, Career Guidance and Counseling Centres (CGCCs) have been established to provide a range of services including career guidance, career counselling, job placement, referral system for further training, conduct

programs, access to facilities, and provision of information materials. Minister of the TVET line Ministry had issued a Policy Guideline for Institutionalization of Career Guidance and Counselling Services in the TVET Sector in 2004. Accordingly, 52 CGCCs have been established in 23 districts covering all provinces. A Career Interest Test was introduced which was meant for youth to identify their career interest on the basis of individual's inherent traits. The general education system of Sri Lanka lacks providing counseling and career guidance at schools though there is a policy guideline to deploy a dedicated teacher for all schools which have more than 300 students for career guidance activities. All stakeholders have realized that career guidance is an important aspect especially for school children for the purpose of educating them as to what opportunities are available to pursue after leaving the school. It has been noticed that the guidance is necessary in selecting subjects and course streams based on labour market information and finding appropriate job placements in the job market. A national level Career Advice and Guidance (CAG) Service needs to work with the education and training sectors and with relevant Ministries in coordinated manner to effectively run a client friendly career guidance service.

9.5.2 Context and issues

Even though National Policy on career guidance was developed in the year 2009, not much work has been done due to lack of a lead institution. Issues in access to and material development hamper the career guidance activities in centers. Lack of trained staff in rural centers and capacity of them further hamper provision of quality career guidance service. The centres lack LMI thus affecting the reliability of career guidance.

9.5.3 Policy directions

Policy 69

Availability of and access to unified and ICT enabled CAG system supported by reliable Labour Market Information for all stakeholders

9.5.4 Strategies for policy implementation

- a. Establish National Career Guidance Council as the lead body for Sri Lanka career guidance service. Establish an interim mechanism until such council is formed.

- b. Improve access to career guidance information and resources.
- c. Establish nation-wide CAG network with general education, TVET centers and industry. School library must contain a Career Information unit.
- d. Introduce co-curricular lessons on World of work and career guidance, where appropriate, in general education.
- e. Encourage use of IT to improve CAG systems.

9.6 Career Guidance Research and Innovation

9.6.1 Overview

Transformation of Labour market information into usable material for career guidance needs significant improvements in the existing system. Outlook of labour market changes over time and latest information of such changes can be obtained by doing research of labour market issues. Information gaps exist owing to insufficient sharing and lack of proper dissemination between stakeholders. Institutions and people are not connected appropriately leading to information asymmetry depriving them with right information. Students often lack quality information about jobs denying access to good job opportunities.

ICT Enabled Career Guidance and Job Matching System (www.youthjobs.lk) which is in operation is an outcome of a progressive effort by the TVET line Ministry in order to bridge the gap of demand for and supply of skills in Sri Lanka labour market. This system is fully web based and hosted in cloud environment in all three languages. Latest LMI is provided with job matching reports for both employers and potential employees.

9.6.2 Context and issues

It is evident that there is a shortage of research and innovation which can be used for career guidance especially related to the dynamism of labour market. This creates low awareness about new and emerging career opportunities. Existing career guidance model does not use much of international best practices which have been used by other countries. Success stories and failures related to peoples' careers are much of use which need to be highlighted to be able

to further nourish the career guidance and advice service. Existing practices do not sufficiently use resources such as ICT and databases for forecasting of existing and emerging occupations. Use of ICT strengthens and empowers Career Guidance operators with updated knowledge and best practices. Since mobile apps are largely used by the youth, absence of such modern practices would pose as barriers to reach the intended audiences with easy access and cost-effective methods. It is evident of administrative barriers for setting up public and private sector joint programs in relation to career guidance and advice services.

9.6.3 Policy directions

Policy 70

Career guidance research and innovation take place on regular basis.

Policy 71

Government to encourage setting up public-private-partnerships (PPP) for operation of joint programmes.

9.6.4 Strategies for policy implementation

- a. Establish CAG Research body under the Career Guidance Council at national level.
- b. Establish think tank with the contribution of stakeholders with expert inputs to adapt international resources and best practices.
- c. Establish National Web Portal for CAG.
- d. Establish linkages with similar CAG institutes internationally.
- e. Collaborate with relevant private and NGO partner agencies to be able to create PPP for career guidance purposes.

9.7 Data Sourcing and Analytics

9.7.1 Overview

Big Data Analysts generate insights from large volumes of classified and unclassified data making use of knowledge on data acquisition, data mining, data structuring, and

data analysis. They examine Big Data to decipher hidden patterns, correlations, market trends, customer preferences etc. Experts use technology to handle high volumes of data streaming from a variety of sources such as business transactions, social media, sensor or machine-to-machine data. They structure data rapidly streaming in real time as well as data in seasonal and periodic peaks. This requires management of data in formats such as text, numeric, audio, video, email, money transactions etc, and link, match, cleanse and transform data streaming from a variety of sources across computer systems. Systems must aim to provide data analysis to enhance cost management, product development, time reduction, and smart decision making and finally can harness machine learning technology to build and train predictive analytic apps. The LMI bulletin of the TVEC encompasses such data provided by many stakeholders such as Department of Census and Statistics, Sri Lanka Foreign Employment Bureau, University Grants Commission, Ministry of Higher Education and Training Institutions. Data need to be converted to useful information for the purpose of career guidance and making other planning and management decisions.

9.7.2 Context and issues

Sri Lanka TVET sector experiences several constraints for proper delivery of career guidance including lack of comprehensive and updated databases being the prominent issue. Information sources of TVET demand and supply are fragmented in the country and lack of integration has caused low reliability in data and information. Predictive analysis is not much in use and therefore difficult to predict future job opportunities which is vital for career guidance as well as for TVET planning. Data sharing policies and electronic interfaces among different data producers and users have not been built and this caused difficulties in taking right decisions based on the information. Centralized data repository needs to be established with data analytics facilities to solve the issue of data fragmentation.

9.7.3 Policy directions

Policy 72

A platform for data analytic system and resources to predict futuristic job and occupational roles in local and foreign labour markets

Policy 73

TVET sector agencies and other stakeholders co-operate each other for sharing available data and information for national cause of setting up centralized data repository.

9.7.4 Strategies for policy implementation

- a. Identify sources, capture and map data relevant to demand and supply of labour market.
- b. Analyze data with intelligent systems and predict future jobs and occupational roles.
- c. Improve linkages and promote collaborations between employers for information on job opportunities for the TVET sector.
- d. Improve data sharing among peer organizations and stakeholders.
- e. Establish expert committee to support and steer the big data analytic and presentation for TVET planning, career guidance and job scaling in future labour markets.

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PROCESS OF TVET POLICY FORMULATION

1. Workshop held with the participation of 60 stakeholders to gather existing policy issues in the TVET system and foreseeable policy issues that may arise due to technological and socio-economic changes. Nine identified topics were given to different groups for deliberations and the output from each group was gathered.
12 Dec 2017
2. Finalized the titles of nine topics and identified the sub-topics based on the output of the stakeholder workshop and presented to the Standing Committee on Technical and Vocational Education for discussion and comments. Nine groups of persons, comprising 6 – 10 persons in each group who have the relevant subject expertise, were identified to work on identified topics and prepare reports containing policy proposals.
26 Jan 2018
3. Policy formulating groups gathered information, analysed information and met in several occasions for discussions.
Period from 9 Feb 2018 to 30 May 2018
4. Group leaders presented the outcome of discussions and identified policy issues to the Standing Committee of Technical and Vocational Education for discussion and comments. The format of the policy report was discussed and agreed.
27 Mar 2018
5. Group leaders meeting to present and discuss the scope of each report and to avoid overlaps in reports.
5 Jun 2018
6. Draft policy reports submitted by the groups. Meeting of group leaders to identify peer review groups for review of policy reports. Examples: Group 1 report to be reviewed by group 6, group 2 report to be reviewed by group 8 etc.
10 Jul 2018
7. Stakeholder workshop held to present and discuss draft reports. Participation from the Ministry of Skills Development and Vocational Training, Ministry of Education, TVEC, NIE, representatives of all state training providers, private training providers, industry representatives nominated by Sector Skills Councils and students attended. Review reports presented after the presentation of respective policy reports. Discussion and comments recorded.
23 Jul 2018
8. Final reports submitted by the panels considering the review reports and the discussion and comments made at the stakeholder workshop.
9. Editing of reports. Circulation of edited reports to respective policy formulating groups and receiving of comments. Preparation of draft final reports.
Period from 1 Aug to 15 Sep 2018
10. Circulation of reports to members of the Standing Committee on Technical and Vocational Education, discussion and validation of reports. Three meetings of the Standing Committee were held to validate 9 reports. Group leaders were invited to respective meetings.
4 Sep 2018, 25 Sep 2018 and 9 Oct 2018
11. Forwarded to the National Education Commission for approval.
25 Oct 2018

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Group 01: Increase of Access to TVET

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3. **Mr. H. D. Sunil Karunaratna**
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10. **Eng. Dr. Lionel Pinto**
Chairman, Vocational Training Authority
11. **Mr. A. R. Peiris**
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12. **Mr. Nevil Edirisinghe**
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13. **Eng. S. Ilangovan**
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33. **Mrs. W. A. W. Chandrani Premaratne**
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