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Tracer study of school leavers of the G.C.E. Advanced Level science stream

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From time to time, since in the past, there have been many Educational Reforms introduced in to the National Education system of the country. The Educational Reforms of 1997 that was introduced to the G.C.E.Advanced Level school curriculum is one such example. Major features of these reforms are reducing four main subjects into three, introducing Common General Paper and General English Paper, Compulsory Practical Work, School Based Assessments, Research Projects, and z-score based university admission. The present study was aimed at finding out the prospects of the Advanced Level science stream school leavers with special reference to the employability. For this purpose, a sample of 1500 science students who had followed the Advanced Level and left school after 2000, were selected in the Central, North-Western, Northern and Eastern provinces including different nationalities, family backgrounds, geographical backgrounds, schools in different locations (urban, semi-urban, rural, and disadvantaged areas) by considering the time limitation, financial constraints, data collecting difficulties.

A postal questionnaire survey was conducted to collect data followed by direct interviews for further clarifications and conformity of same. Analysis of data revealed that, about 80% of the school leavers of G.C.E. Advanced Level science stream were involved in higher education including other professional and vocational training courses. About 40% of them were already employed, while 58% were not employed and 2% were not keen to do a job. Among the employed, 43% were in the government sector, 41% were in the private sector, and 16% were in other sectors (NGOs). According to this study, there was no considerable correlation between performance of the grade five scholarship and G.C.E. O/L. However, there was a considerable correlation between G.C.E. O/L and G.C.E. A/L performance. In the Biological science stream, females performed better, while in the Physical science stream, males performed better. Major reasons influenced the unemployment were low standard of English, lack of knowledge in Information Technology, poor performances at Advanced Level, and absence of opportunities in the field of specialty due to the mismatch between the supply and demand of the job market. Majority agreed with the Compulsory Practical Work, General English Paper, and General Information Technology at G.C.E. A/L introduced in the Reforms, while many disagreed with the introduction of research projects and Z score based university admission.

Most of the employers were willing to recruit A/L/ school leavers with science background stating that their work is methodical and they have better analytical skills compared to the students in other streams. There was a considerable demand for science qualified personnel in other fields, such as Information Communication Technology, Management and Business Administration.

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