Research Studies on Tertiary Education Sector

OPTIONS FOR EXPANDING ACCESSS TO HIGHER EDUCATION FOR G.C.E. (A/L) COMPLETERS

Dr. G.L.S. Nanayakkara
George Wijesuriya

National Education Commission
Sri Lanka

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

LIST OF ACRONYMS

G.C.E. (A/L) -	General Certificate of Education – Advanced Level
G.C.E. (O/L) -	General Certificate of Education – Ordinary Level
ACCA -	Association of Chartered Certified Accountants of Sri Lanka
APIIT-	Asia Pacific Institute of Information Technology
CIMA -	Chartered Institute of Management Accounting
SLIIT -	Sri Lanka Institute of Information Technology
UCSC -	University for Colombo School of Computing
AAT -	Association of Accounting Technicians
NIBM -	National Institute of Business Management
NEC -	National Education Commission
PFHE -	Policy Framework on Higher Education
NCOE -	National College of Education
TEVT -	Technical Education and Vocational Training
TVEC -	Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission
NGO -	Non-governmental Organization
DTET -	Department of Technical Education and Training
NAITA -	National Apprenticeship and Industrial Training Authority
NYSC -	National Youth Services Council
VTA -	Vocational Training Authority
SLIATE -	Sri Lanka Institute of Advanced Technical Education
TEDP -	Technical Education Development Project
ADB -	Asian Development Bank
TC -	Technical College
COT -	College of Technology
B.Tec.Ed -.	Bachelor of Technology Education
OJT -	On-the – Job Training
DEMP -	Distance Education Modernization Project
NODES -	On-Line Distance Education Services
IT -	Information Technology
SLICTA -	Sri Lanka Information Communication Technology Association
UGC -	University Grants Commission
NVQ -	National Vocational Qualification
HRD -	Human Resources development
EDC -	Education Development center
JVC	Junior Vocational College
YA/WBL	Youth Apprenticeship/Work-Based Learning
NSS	Sample of students who are not on any study programme at present
SS	Sample of Students who are following study programmes at present
OUSL	Open University of Sri Lanka
SLADE	Sri Lanka Association of Distance Educators

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background and Purpose

Providing Tertiary Education to G.C.E. (A/L) completers is a means of developing the much needed human resources for the country. Owing to the large number of G.C.E. (A/L) completers not securing places in the national universities, tertiary education institutes in Sri Lanka assumes a greater importance in that they have not only to perform the primary functions of providing access to G.C.E. (A/L) completers, but also the function of rectifying any shortcomings of the ongoing tertiary education programmes and making programmes relevant to the national development goals of the country. A study on **Options for Expanding Access to Higher Education for G.C.E.(A/L) Completers** which is the subject of this report, was for obtaining valid and definitive information to base the concerted effort now being undertaken by the National Education Commission to formulate a Policy Framework on Higher Education. This study supported by the World Bank was considered a high priority activity since several other tasks associated with tertiary education will be largely dependent on the outcomes of this study and the accuracy of its findings.

Approaches and Modalities Adopted

The need to consider the tertiary education requirements as those perceived by the G.C.E. (A/L) completers, their parents and the training programme providers determined to a large extent the approaches and modalities adopted, such as the design of questionnaires, familiarizing visits to training institutes and interviewing key persons. As this study has as its purpose formulation of up-to-date recommendations on expanding access to higher education for G.C.E. (A/L) completers for subsequent use by NEC to formulate policy, it had to cover two relevant categories of G.C.E. (A/L) completers, namely, those students who are at present following study programmes after their completion of G.C.E. (A/L) studies and those who are not following any tertiary education programmes and the training programme providers. The sample size had to be manageable but yet large enough to reflects the categories and the wide disparity. Three Questionnaires were designed and pre-tested.

Questionnaire 1 was posted to 3000 G.C.E. (A/L) completers irrespective of their following a tertiary education programme at present or not. Out of the 2010 completed Questionnaire 1 returned to the consultants, 1496 were from those who are not following any tertiary education programme at present. The balance 1504 was from those who were following study programme at present. Some out of the 1504 were students who were selected to national universities based on the results of a subsequent G.C.E. (A/L) examination. Ignoring those who have entered universities, the Questionnaire 2 which was designed to gather detailed information from those who are following tertiary education programmes were mailed to 1250 students. Of this number, 271 students who are following study programmes at present returned completed questionnaires.

Addresses of training programme providers were traced from Education Guide published by JobsNet and Tertiary & Vocational Education Commission publications.128 copies of Questionnaire 3 were mailed to training providers. The consultants received 23 completed copies of the Questionnaire 3.

Although the needs and attitudes were expected to be assessed through the administration of carefully designed survey instruments, the construction of the instruments themselves had

to depend on valid information regarding likely needs and aspirations of students. The listing of likely topics were grouped under the heads; Students' performance at G.C.E.(A/L) examination, Students' interest shown in entering national universities, Interest shown in pursuing other tertiary education programmes, The problems associated with tertiary education programmes, Students' home background, facilities available at home for study and their leisure, Problems associated with providing training and the perception of training providers on tertiary education. The information provided by student questionnaires and course provider questionnaire were analyzed and tabulated under various parameters considered relevant to the purpose of assessment of higher education options exercise. The parameters selected were those anticipated to be useful to expanding access to higher education for G.C.E. (A/L) completers and training programme providers.

Summary of Outcomes

- Open University of Sri Lanka assumes a key position in providing tertiary education for G.C.E. (A/L) completers as a very high percentage of the students who did not find places in national universities opt for distance learning. OUSL study programmes are available through four of itsits four faculties. Some of the study programmes specify passes in subjects at G.C.E. (A/L) while others insist on Foundation Courses at OUSL. Advanced Certificate Courses usually require successful completion of a Certificate course. The Open University also has well equipped provincial centers where they conduct contact sessions with registered students.

- Professional Courses for Management Accountants provided by CIMA, ACCA and AAT are very popular among G.C.E. (A/L) completers. The certificates awarded for successful completion of these courses have international recognition.

- Most students in the sample have been seeking information on higher education opportunities from newspaper advertisements, from their friends, external degree units of national universities and guidance teachers in school.

- Many are not aware of the Technical & Vocational Education Commission, JobsNet, details of OUSL programmes and vocational exhibitions and fairs.

- University of Moratuwa and University of Colombo School of Computing (UCSC) offer many courses including short-term courses. University of Sri Jayawardenapura, Kelaniya, Peradeniya, Sabaragamuwa, Jaffna, Ruhuna, Wayamba and the Eastern University of Sri Lanka offer External degrees through their External Examinations Units. These programmes are specially designed for G.C.E. (A/L) completers with passes in three subjects at G.C.E. (A/L) Examination, who could not enroll at the programmes in national universities. While UCSC provides courses on IT, the University of Moratuwa conducts a large number of short courses targeting industry requirements. More details are given in the web sites of these institutes.

- Opening the doors for the children who were not able to enter university, the Sri Lanka Association of Distance Educators (SLADE) was formed recently at the Sri Lanka Institute of Development Administration. SLADE launched the Online Education Courses through seven partner institutions. SLADE is a result of the ADB funded, Distance Education Modernization Project (DEMP) of the Ministry of Higher Education. This project focuses mostly on using technology to expand the scope for youth in this country as traditional methods cannot deliver the massive expansion and demand.

- Several private organizations providing IT education programmes in Sri Lanka are affiliated to foreign universities and offer first degree and masters degree certificates from universities such as Charles Sturt University of Australia, Keel University, UK, Curtin University of Australia and Staffordshire University , UK

- A high percentage students do not apply for admission to universities due to reasons concerning the economic difficulties in the families.
- Poor family economic conditions and also limited awareness of available alternatives to national university courses are reasons for the students not enrolling in other tertiary education programmes.
- Some of the private computer training classes are congested and access to practical work is limited. Time tables are often adjusted and six-month programmes at times lasts eight months. The final examinations are not held in time and issue of certificates is delayed.
- Some of the problems faced by students who are registered with external degree programmes of national universities are,

  - Conducting examinations and releasing of results are delayed and as a result the programmes are extended and the timetables are adjusted.
  - In private institutes conducting courses for External Degrees of Universities the classrooms are crowded and teacher attention to students is unsatisfactory.
  - No discussion with teacher is possible as the classes are large.
  - Library facilities provided at private institutes are very poor. In some institutes no library is available.
  - No standard books are available for some of the topics
  - There are many External Degree Certificate holders and not much recognition is given to these certificates.
  - The content coverage under some of the topics is inadequate at some of the private institutes.
  - There are instances of conflicting opinions expressed by tutors on subject matter creating problems for the students.
  - Good instructors are not available for some of the topics.
  - The private training institutes are located in cities far away from the residences of the students. A considerable amount of money and time is spent on travelling by some of the students.
  - The programme fees and lecture fees charged at private institutes are found to be unaffordable for some of the students.
  - Initial registration fee and examination fees charged by universities are high.
  - Large numbers of students enroll and the classes are large in most institutes resulting in teaching quality deteriorating.
  - Instructors are recruited on their teaching capabilities and not so much on their academic qualifications.
  - The External Degree programmes get dragged on for several years mainly due to the delay in conducting examinations and releasing results. These students have to plan their living and as such most students drop out.

- According to UCSC Director Low competency in English of the students who register for the BIT programme has been found to be one of the main problems they encounter. As such it has become necessary to support the students not only in IT but also in English. One month orientation programme with special emphasis on English is conducted at the beginning to overcome this problem. Another problem encountered is the high level of drop-out at various levels. The university has no

control over the students dropping out. At present the universities do not have any records of student drop-out.

- Employment oriented study programmes are preferred by the G.C.E. (A/L) completers. It is necessary to assess what the employer needs are and meet them at the training, thus making the education programmes more attractive. Employers have commented that there is an urgent need for training of new recruits in areas such as, soft skills of communication, presentation skills, critical thinking, and interpersonal skills.

- Employment oriented tertiary education programmes based on arts or commerce could attract more students. It is observed from the response percentages, that the study programmes in demand are in the fields of Management, Accountancy, Business Management, Information Communication Technology and Education. Organizing more programmes in these fields can attract more students.

- 50% of the responses are in favour of learning through distance mode and register with professional study programmes such as Accountancy and Law.

- Tertiary education programmes should be adequately publicized indicating the services that go with the programme, duration, fees etc.

- Improved methods of advertising of tertiary education programmes are essential. The main sources of information at present are the newspapers, parents and family members. Intensive use of radio, TV and organized exhibitions could be considered for advertising.

Summary of Conclusions.

- A large majority of G.C.E. (A/L) completers have applied for admission to national universities indicating their willingness to pursue tertiary education.

- Even the students from families with low income level are motivated and like to engage themselves in tertiary education

- Females are in a majority among the G.C.E. (A/L) completers who apply for university admission. An expansion of alternate tertiary education programmes available for females needs to be considered.

- Seventy-five percent of the sample of students who applied for university admission did not find places in the universities. The balance did not opt to enter as they did not get the preferred study programme. The students who did not get the preferred faculties are mostly physical science and bio-science students..

- The most outstanding personal factor that hinders the students' following tertiary education programmes is the poor economic conditions at home.

- Students with training in IT are more likely to find employment. Most employers are not particular about students' study stream at school but they are particular about the soft skills developed by students.

- Most students who are not employed (49%) engage themselves in reading, watching TV or helping parents at home.

- High percentage of students prefer learning in the distance mode (50%) They like to study in the fields of Accountancy or Law. They appreciate the opportunity for self-study and learning with less stress in distance mode of learning.

- High percentage of students (61%) currently follow degree programmes mainly in the External Examination Departments of the national universities and a few in the degree awarding private institutes
- Studying as external students on apart-time basis seems to be more popular among G.C.E. (A/L) completers who follow tertiary education programmes at present

Summary of Recommendations

1. **The External Degree programmes of the National Universities and Degree Programmes at the Open University of Sri Lanka should be expanded**.

    - The expansion should incorporate e-learning to provide course material, provide evaluations, assessments, projects, discussions with e -facilitator and the fellow learners. Work towards establishing digital libraries at the provincial centers.
    - End users of e-learning are the students. They should be provided with and adequate level of computer literacy.
    - Acceptable academic quality and relevance to suit the economic and social needs of the country should be maintained.
    - Hands on experience which is essential for science and technology biased programmes should be provided along with modern E-learning techniques.
    - Conducting examinations on schedule and reliable marking of answer scripts at conferences can win the confidence of the students and relieve them of the burden of waiting long for the certification.

2. **The Quality and Relevance of Computer Education Programmes provided by private sector should improve.**

    - The Technical and Vocational Education Commission needs to specify the norms for facilities and services that should be made available at the training organizations.
    - The TVEC should work towards quality assurance and accreditation of computer education programmes.
    - Continuous development of curricula to meet the needs of industry and other academic institutions as universities providing higher degrees on IT.
    - Provide vocation based IT training (IT for management, IT for business, IT for hotel industry, IT for tourism etc.)

3. **Develop and market the non-university Tertiary Education Sector.**

    - The tertiary education programme providers should conduct a market survey to identify the books, journals, and compact discs relevant to their programmes and keep the students informed of the availability of such resources. In institutes where regional centers are established these resources should be kept in stock at the respective libraries.
    - Advertising of tertiary education programmes emphasizing the upward mobility with the university system should be done. Advertising should be carried out

using the newspapers, the radio and TV, as these are the most popular channels among students.

- Advertising of programmes emphasizing the employment orientation is essential.
- Career guidance network incorporating schools with G.C.E. (A/L) classes and all tertiary education providers should be established. State and private sector cooperation is recommended for updating and maintaining the network.
- Establish linkages with Human Resource Development agencies.
- Organizing fairs and exhibitions to popularize tertiary education programmes is recommended

4. **Development of an expansion strategy for tertiary education opportunities based on the socio-economic status of Sri Lankan community**

- More liberal education grants, scholarships, bursaries, bank loans are recommended.
- Learner support with more apprenticeship and on the job training opportunities to reduce the financial burdens on the families should be organized.
- Create an environment for private sector sponsorship of students in government tertiary education institutes by consulting their views on course renewal and curriculum development
- Upgrading of National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at all levels and guiding trainees to Colleges of Technology and subsequently to the proposed Technical University.
- There are different ways to provide soft skills training to individuals moving into the workforce. A job readiness curriculum that emphasizes employability skills is one approach. Soft skills training can also be incorporated into vocational training and other program activities. Institutes that provide employment-oriented tertiary education can structure programs to simulate the workplace. One challenge for tertiary education institutes is to assess and document soft skills. Universities and other tertiary education institutes can market their soft skills training to employers and work with them to develop standards for job readiness.

5. **Awareness programmes should be organized for more females to undertake studies in the fields of nursing, home economics, hotel receptionists, air line ticketing, beautician courses etc.**

- Needs assessment surveys on women employment are recommended
- Tracer studies are recommended to determine the career development of women.

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER 01

INTRODUCTION

1.1 G.C.E. (A/L) Completers

Sri Lanka has creditable achievements in aspects of education such as school enrolment, literacy and gender equity, compared to other countries in the region. However, the country is faced with problems of unemployment, youth unrest, violence, ethnic conflicts and poverty. The mismatch between education and employment is considered as the main contributor to unemployment in the country. It has been the practice in the past, to focus the G.C.E. (A/L) syllabuses, course structure and examination system on the limited objective of preparing students for university admission resulting in a large majority of G.C.E. (A/L) completers neglected and left unemployed by the system. This situation demanded reforms in General Education and in particular reforms in G.C.E. (A/L) programmes. These General Education Reforms of 1998 proposed far reaching goals and recommended restructuring of G.C.E. (A/L) programme. Some of the aims of reforms were reducing the workload on students by limiting the number of G.C.E. (A/L) subjects to three, selecting the students on the aggregate marks (Z-score at present), providing schools with G.C.E. (A/L) science stream with all the science teaching facilities and establishment of Zonal Monitoring Panels to ensure G.C.E. (A/L) laboratory practical work in science subjects and assignments, writing of project reports in other subjects.

Admission to national universities In Sri Lanka is centrally administered by the University Grants Commission on the basis of the rank order on average Z-scores obtained by candidates at the G.C.E. (A/L) Examination conducted by the Department of Examinations. Candidates who are pronounced as eligible by the Commissioner General of Examinations should have obtained a minimum mark of 30% for the Common General Paper. (UGC Website 2006). For the purpose of the current study G.C.E. (A/L) completers are considered as those students who complete two years of education in Grades 12 & 13 in schools and sit for the G.C.E. (A/L) Examination. The G.C.E. (A/L) completers fall into four groups as,

1. Those who successfully complete the G.C.E. (A/L) Examination apply for university admission and obtain a place in the university.
2. Those who successfully complete the G.C.E. (A/L) Examination apply for university admission but do not obtain a place in the university.
3. Those who successfully complete the G.C.E. (A/L) Examination but do not apply for university admission.
4. Those who partly qualify at G.C.E. (A/L) Examination but do not get the required minimum marks to apply for university admission.

1.2 The Scope of Current Study

The focus of the current study is on categories of students in 2, 3 and 4.given in Section 1.1.

Government's efforts to cater for the education needs of the majority of students who excel at the G.C.E. (A/L) Examination have not been a complete success. Although about 50% of the candidates who sit the G.C.E. (A/L) Examination qualify to seek admission to national universities, only about 13% of the qualified are enrolled per year. For example, out of the 198500 who sat the 2001 G.C.E. (A/L) Examination 98426 were deemed qualified to enter national universities. However, of the qualified number the twelve national universities were able to accommodate only 12431.

Substantial proportions of those who are unable to enter the national universities pursue tertiary education by enrolling in education programmes offered by different higher education institutes. These include Distant Education Courses conducted by the Open University of Sri Lanka, External Degree Programmes offered by seven national universities, education programmes conducted by other national institutes (eg., National Colleges of Education, National Institute of Business Management, Law College and Kotalawala Defence Academy etc.), Private Institutes affiliated with foreign Universities Institutes (eg., IDM, APITT, ACBT, Informatics, CIMA and AAT) and a variety of Technical Education & Vocational Training programmes conducted by training institutes. A small percentage of the rest who fail to seek admission to national universities proceed to foreign countries to pursue higher education through scholarships and other means.

The decision by National Education Commission (NEC) to initiate a process to formulate a Policy Framework on Higher Education (PFHE) is very timely and appropriate. Aim of the current research study assigned to MG Consultants (Pvt) Ltd. is to contribute in identifying policy options or recommendations that could be converted into the proposed PFHE, relating to options for expanding access to higher education for G.C.E. (A/L) completers.

1.3 The Terms of Reference

The Objectives and the Terms of Reference as discussed and finalized with NEC are given below.

i.   Identify the main types of study programmes that are already available for GCE (A/L) completers to pursue higher education.

ii.   Identify reasons that have hindered GCE (A/L) completers from following available higher education study programmes.

iii. Recognize the problems encountered by students who are following higher education programmes.

iv.   Recognize the problems encountered by higher education course providers.

v.   Propose ways and means of making the available higher education study programmes more attractive to G.C.E. (A/L) completers.

vi.   Explore for innovative study programmes conforming to the country's developmental needs and employers' requirements that are appropriate to be introduced in higher education institutes.

vii. Study and interpret lessons that can be learnt from other countries, of similar background, to improve access to higher education.

viii. Contribute to formulating a National Policy Framework on Higher Education in Sri Lanka.

The Chapters in the report are organized to profile the G.C.E. (A/L) completers who are engaged in following tertiary education programmes at present and those who are not respectively. The higher education expectations of the students and facilities available to them for higher education are analyzed. The viewpoints of key persons engaged in providing tertiary education programmes are discussed and finally conclusions and recommendations are given.

CHAPTER 02

SURVEY OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1   Introduction to Literature Survey

There is a growing demand for tertiary education, especially at the post-secondary level, in Sri Lanka and this sector has received special attention of the Government. However, it is evident that the Government's efforts to cater for the education needs of the majority of G.C.E. (A/L) completers have a long way to go to achieve the objectives.

As pointed out in the World Bank Report *Constructing Knowledge Societies: New Challenges for Education*, tertiary education is more than the capstone of the traditional education pyramid; it is a critical pillar of human development worldwide. In today's lifelong-learning framework, tertiary education provides not only the high-level skills necessary for every labour market but also the training essential for many personnel including teachers, nurses, scientists, doctors, engineers and social scientists. In addition to Universities, there are diverse sets of public and private tertiary education institutions in every country.

An attempt has been made here to survey literature that is relevant to present context and also capable of eliciting strategies helpful to address the objectives of this study.

2.2 Options for G.C.E. (A/L) completers in Sri Lanka

The Sri Lankan education and training system is organized into four major stages. The earliest stage is that of Early Childhood Education, catering to children aged 3 – 5 years. The second stage is that of formal schooling, with primary (Grades 1 – 5), junior secondary (Grades 6 – 9), and senior secondary (Grades 10 – 13) education sectors. Third stage is that of vocational training and technical education. Entry is open to the vocational and technical levels of the training sector from two points in the formal school system, at Grade 9 upon completing basic education and at Grade 11 upon passing the G.C.E. (O/L) examination. The fourth stage is that of tertiary education and training, with entry open to students successfully completing the G.C.E. (A/L) examination or graduating from a technical institution (Figure 2.1). There is considerable mobility at the tertiary education level, with only entrance to public Universities restricted to G.C.E. (A/L) completers (The World Bank, 2005). Accordingly, tertiary education options in the state system available for G.C.E. (A/L) completers include public Universities, the Open University, Professional Colleges, Non-University Tertiary Education Institutes and Advanced Technical Education Institutes. Postgraduate Education could be sought on successful completion of courses in these institutes.

Early Childhood Development

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                        ┌─────────────────────┐
                        │       Nursery       │
                        └─────────────────────┘
                                  │
                                  ▼
                    ┌───────────────────────────┐
                    │  Kindergarten, Montessori │
                    └───────────────────────────┘
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Primary and Secondary Education

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                    ┌───────────────────────────┐
                    │     Primary Education     │
                    │        Grade 1-5          │
                    └───────────────────────────┘
                                  │
                                  ▼
                    ┌───────────────────────────┐
                    │ Junior Secondary Education │
                    │        Grade 6-9          │
                    └───────────────────────────┘
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The Training System

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┌───────────────────────────┐          ┌───────────────────────────┐
│ Senior Secondary Education │ ───────▶ │    Vocational Training    │
│  GCE O/L Cycle (Grades     │          └───────────────────────────┘
│        10-11)              │                        │
└───────────────────────────┘                        ▼
                                        ┌───────────────────────────┐
                                        │    Technical Education    │
                                        └───────────────────────────┘
┌───────────────────────────┐
│ Senior Secondary Education │
│ GCE A/L Cycle (Grade 12-13)│
└───────────────────────────┘
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Tertiary Education

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┌──────────────┐   ┌───────────────────┐   ┌──────────────┐
│  University  │   │   Professional and│   │   Advanced   │
│ Undergraduate│──▶│   Non- University │   │  Technical   │
│  Education   │   │ Tertiary Education│◀─▶│  Education    │
└──────────────┘   └───────────────────┘   └──────────────┘
                            │
                            ▼
        ┌───────────────────────────────────────┐
        │         Postgraduate Education         │
        └───────────────────────────────────────┘
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Figure 2.1. Organizational Structure of the Sri Lankan Education and Training System
      (Source: World Bank, 2005)

The overall tertiary education enrolment rate is about 11% of the eligible population. This is slightly above the South Asia average (10%). About 70% of the tertiary education enrolment is in the private sector and the balance in the public sector. The University enrolment is approximately 3% and the advanced technical education enrolment about 2% (The World Bank, 2005).

A popular option of G.C.E. (A/L) completers, who fail to seek admission to a University, is a place in one of the National Colleges of Education (NCOEs). Admission to NCOEs is based on the z-score earned at the G.C.E. (A/L) Examination and is also highly competitive. There are 17 NCOEs providing pre-service training for aspiring teachers and the training programme offered is of three year duration, which includes two years of residential institutional training and one year of internship training in a school (Ministry of Education, 2005)..

In recent years it became a matter of great concern that most of the school leavers – Grade 9, G.C.E. (O/L) and (A/L); are ill-prepared for the world of work. As a response to this situation the Government has taken steps to develop Technical Education and Vocational Training (TEVT) to facilitate the school to work transition and to reduce skill gaps and mismatches in the labour market.

The TEVT sector in Sri Lanka is currently made up of an extensive system of public, private and NGO sector training providers. The public sector TEVT providers come under the purview of the Ministry of Tertiary Education and Vocational Training. The Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission functions as the apex body for setting policy and regulating TEVT sector activities.

In 2001, there were about 902 training institutes registered with the TVEC comprising 556 institutions in the public sector, 252 in the private sector and 112 in the NGO sector. In addition, a sizeable number of private sector providers operate in the market without seeking registration with the TEVC.

The major public TEVT providers account for nearly 85 percent of the training provided by the state sector. Among the public sector institutions, the key providers include the Department of Technical Education and Training (DTET), National Apprenticeship and Industrial Training Authority (NAITA), Sri Lanka Institute of Advanced Technical Education (SLIATE), Vocational Training Authority of Sri Lanka (VTA) and National Youth Services Council (NYSC). In addition, several other Ministries, Government Departments, Semi-Government institutions also conduct sector specific skill development programmes relating to fisheries, agriculture, textiles/garments, transport, construction, telecommunication and various other manufacturing fields. The major public TEVT providers account for nearly 85 percent of the training provided by the state sector. The broad institutional framework of the TEVT system in Sri Lanka is presented in Figure 2.2.
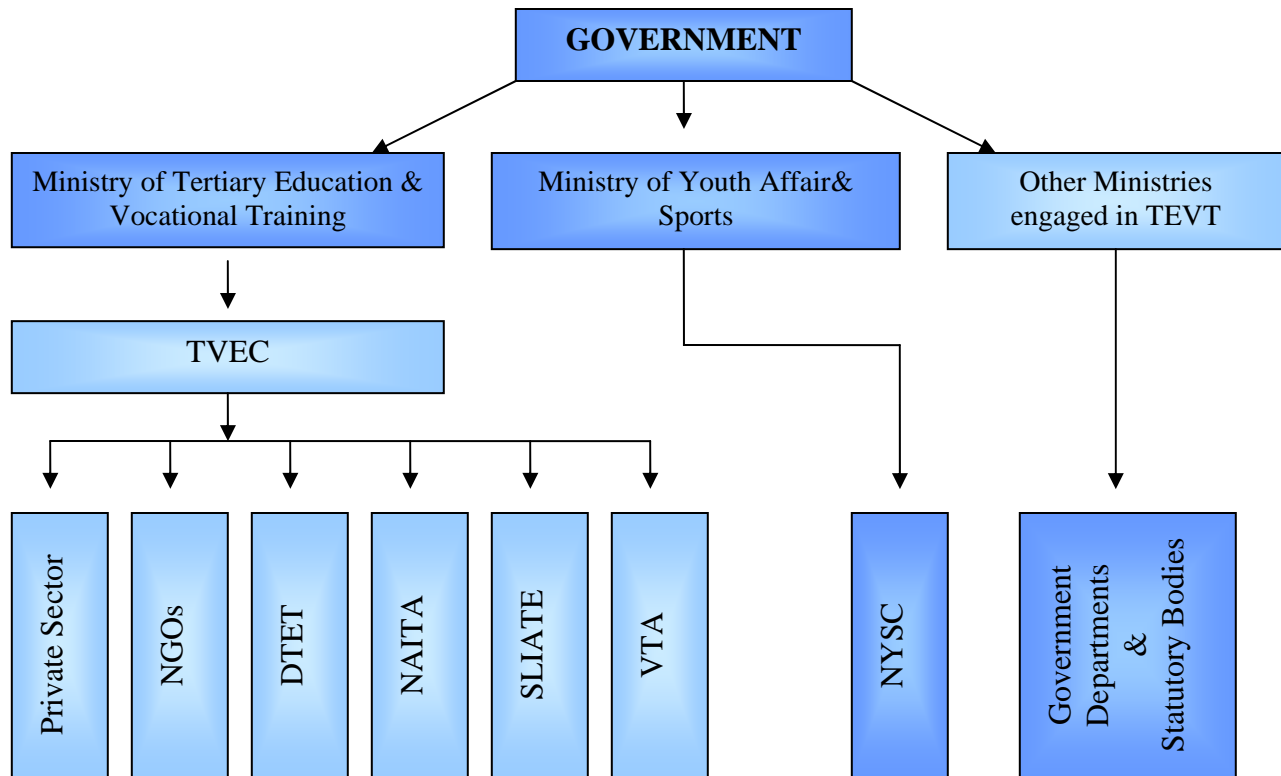
Figure 2.2: TEVT System in Sri Lanka

Two institutions out of the above (SLIATE and NYSC) are particularly important to note here as they offer several courses for G.C.E. (A.L) completers. SLIATE, established in 1995, caters to G.C.E (A/L) qualified interested in TEVT. It oversees 6 Advanced Technical Institutions, 3 Advanced Technical Centres and 10 Technical Colleges, previously run by the DTET, where some higher level technical courses are conducted. The courses at NYSC are offered at two levels: Level 1 – Basic Courses and Level 2 – Semi-skilled Craftsman Courses.

The non-state TEVT sector has grown and expanded into many areas during the recent past. Private training institutes are now well established in occupational areas such as refrigeration and air conditioning, television, computer and communications technology and hotel industry. Many private providers operate on a fee levy basis, especially in urban centres. The NGO training sector covers many religious and voluntary organisations that offer craft-level training, fee-free or on a nominal fee basis, targeting unemployed youth, rural women and school leavers (Tan & Chandrasiri, 2004 and The World Bank, 2005).

Many options are available for G.C.E. (A/L) completers in these public and private sector institutions to access higher education. The details of courses available in these institutes are often advertised through daily newspapers, especially week end issues, brochures, catalogues and other publications. Two documents stand out among them.

The first is the 'Directory of Registered Tertiary and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Institutions, (2004)' published by the Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission. All tertiary and vocational education and training institutes are required to be registered under this Commission, in terms of the provisions of the Tertiary and Vocational Education Act No. 20 0f

1990. This TVET Directory has listed all the institutes that are registered with the Commission, up to 2004. These included public sector, private sector and NGO sector institutes. The 2004 list has been updated and a supplementary list of institutes registered with the Commission is published in the Gazette No. 1407 of the Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, dated 2005 August 18. The training institutes are registered on the basis of the criteria approved by the Commission. The information provided in this Directory mainly includes name and address, category that the institute belongs to and the types of courses conducted. The institutes are classified into four categories, namely, A, B, C and D on the basis of the criteria approved by the Commission. The information is classified under training sector and District. This Directory is a useful source of data, information and guidance to users such as training seekers, training providers, planners, policy makers and the general public.

The second is the 'Education Guide Sri Lanka, First Edition (2005)' published by the Neptune Publications in association with JobsNet. The information in this guide comes from three main sources. Firstly, from the public authorities, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Skills Development – Vocational and Technical Education, National Institute of Education, University Grants Commission, Vocational Training Authority and Skills Development Project. Secondly, Private Institutions from their brochures profiles and reports. Thirdly, from other public sources, web sites, publications and newspapers. Education Guide Sri Lanka is useful for everyone interested in education in Sri Lanka including the students, the parents, the professionals, the education administrators, student counsellors, job seekers, training seekers and the general public interested in supporting educational activities. The Guide is structured into ten Sections; and the following Sections can be considered as useful for G.C.E.(A/L) completers seeking for higher education opportunities: Section 2 - Directories of Educational Authorities and Institutes, Section 3 – National Universities and Institutes, Section 5 – Private Educational and Training Institutes, Section 6 – Overseas Educational Institutes, Agents and Representatives, Section 7 – Tertiary and Vocational Education and Section 8 – Supporting Services.

Strengthening the TEVT System has been a long felt need in Sri Lanka. A new project - Technical Education Development Project (TEDP), is underway to address this need. The aim of TEDP is to strengthen the capacity of the TEVT system in the technical and technological education, and thereby increase the number of mid-level and highly skilled human resources. According to the Project Administration Memorandum (ADB, 2006) one of its main components is to support the Government's strategy of upgrading one Technical College (TC) in each Province to a College of Technology (COT), which will offer Technician Diploma Programmes and make technical education more geographically accessible. The proposed education and training pathway to Technician Diplomas reveals that new opportunities will be opened up for GCE (A/L) completers to get enrolled in Technician Diploma Courses leading to B. Tech/ B.Tech. Ed. Degrees, with an On-the-Job Training (OJT) component.

Distance Education is found to be another popular option for higher education among the G.C.E. (A/L) completers. According to the newspaper article that appeared in Sunday Observer (July 08, 2007, p. 3), the number of students following distance education programmes is increasing at the rate of 40 percent per year. The Ministry of Higher Education and Sri Lanka Institute of Development and Administration have taken steps to launch a Distance Education Programme to cater to the growing demand, under the ADB funded DEMP.

The article states that:

> "Distance learning is a field of education that focuses on pedagogy/andragogy, technology and instructional systems designed and effectively incorporated in delivering education to students, who are not physically 'on-site' to receive their education, through technology (e-mail) that allows them to communicate in real time (synchronously). Computers and the internet have made distance learning easier and faster as in many other day-to-day tasks".

Educational institutions such as the Open University of Sri Lanka, professional organisations, public and private sector institutions have been invited to take over this programme. Over 35 degrees, diploma and certification programmes are available to cater to local education market. These courses are based on the National On-line Distance Educational Services (NODES). Nine educational centres have been already established in 9 Districts to cater to rural youth and twenty more will be launched before the end of 2007. Students who follow tertiary education for personal development and career development are considered as stakeholders or the customers of this project. There is no age barrier to study under this scheme.

2.3 Related studies

Studies conducted in the direction of the topic: 'Options for expanding access to Higher Education for G.C.E. (A/L) Completers' seem to be limited. However, a few studies that have some relevance to the topic were identified during the survey.

The study on: '*The characteristics of G.C.E. (A/L) qualified youth not currently studying' (2006)* conducted for the Distance Education Modernization Project (DEMP) can be considered as one of them. The main focus of the DEMP study was on G.C.E. (A/L) qualified youth who are not currently following a study programme offered by a University or any other tertiary education institution. The study sought to address seven research questions with a view to developing a profile of the target group, based on their characteristics. Information for this study was collected from a sample of 3511 youth who obtained the required qualifications to apply for University admission, at a G.C.E. (A/L) Examination held during the period 2000-2004, through a postal questionnaire.

Likely *options considered by students for further education* were listed in the questionnaire; and they were invited to respond. The Table 2.1 lists these options and the distribution of responses. The options are arranged in the descending order of preference.

Table 2.1: Options considered by students

Option	No.	Percent.
3. Follow a distance education course	1735	49.4
5. Follow a professional course like law or accountancy	1555	44.3
4. Follow a short course in a private institute	921	26.2
2. Self study for a course	867	24.7
6. Seek admission to a local private University	653	18.6
7. Seek admission to a foreign University	424	12.1
1. Repeat G.C.E. (A/L) Examination	204	5.8

It is interesting to note that, about 50% of youth in the sample consider 'learning through distance education' as a popular option. 'Following a professional course' seems to be next popular option.

In another question the students were requested to respond to a list of **fields in which they would like to study further** if the opportunity is made available. Multiple responses were allowed for this question. The total number of students responded was 3388, which included 1255 male students and 2133 female students. The distribution of responses by gender is shown in Table 2.2, and is arranged in the descending order of preference.

Table 2. 2: Preferred field for further study by gender

Field of Study	Total responses		Males (n=1255)		Females (n=2133)	
	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
IT	2336	69.0	829	66.1	1507	70.7
Management	1511	44.6	636	50.7	875	41.0
Education	1399	41.3	315	25.1	1084	50.8
Business Adm.	1154	34.1	524	41.8	630	29.5
Accountancy	1035	30.6	425	33.8	610	28.6
Law	846	25.0	265	21.1	581	27.2
Journalism	817	24.1	211	16.8	606	28.4
Hotel trade	366	10.8	213	17.0	153	7.2
Medicine	327	9.7	113	9.0	214	10.0
Science	311	9.2	133	10.6	178	8.4
Engineering	259	7.7	175	13.9	84	4.0

Results revealed that the most preferred field for further study is Information Technology. From the rest, Management, Education, Business Administration and Accountancy can be grouped as the next set with high response rates. Gender-wise comparisons reveal that nearly equal percentages of male and female students have preferences for IT. Male youth seem to prefer courses in the fields of Management, Accountancy and Business Administration, whereas the female youth prefer courses in the fields of Management and Education. Only a low percentage among both male and female youth seems to prefer courses in Science, Engineering and Medicine. (Nanayakkara et al., 2006)

The report titled *'Rising Demand: The increasing demand for IT workers'* spells a challenging opportunity for the IT industry' based on the National IT Workforce Survey, 2007 conducted by the Sri Lanka ICT Association (SLICTA) reveals some useful information which has relevance to the topic of this study. The overall aim of this survey was to gain a clear understanding of the extent and the composition of IT workforce in Sri Lanka and weigh that against the extent of the supply of skilled personnel. The information for this survey was collected through a postal questionnaire and the sample included 625 organizations (IT, Non-IT and Government) and 119 IT Training Organizations. Out of the 744 questionnaires sent 543 were completed and retuned (72%). The survey has revealed that there is a high demand for IT qualified personnel currently as well as in the near future. For example, nearly 14, 500 IT workers are required in the next two years (2007 – 2008) and 5755 IT graduates are needed in 2007. The study has also revealed the importance of on-the-job training to build the skills of the IT employees. When asked about what the employers thought was the best way of helping employees to develop their further skills, most employers (21%) cited on-the-job training as the preferred method. This

is followed by self-study (20%) and external short term courses (15%). Trade Certification received the lowest number of preferences (9%). Another question asked from the employers was about the skills lacking in employees. Responses revealed that soft skills such as, communication skills (21%), proficiency in English language (14%) and creative thinking skills (12%) are the most scarce in the majority of employees.

Employers have expressed a similar view regarding the attributes that they expect from prospective employees in the study on *'Education-Employment Linkages'* conducted by HRDC/Marga/World Bank (1992).

The report points out that:

> "The employers in the private sector in their recruitment preferences and policies were placing high value on a set of attributes and capabilities which they reported were deficient in the products of the present school and University system who are coming into the labour force. Theses were: an inquiring mind, ability for analysis and reasoning, the application of knowledge to practical problems and a problem solving approach, knowledge and interest in contemporary social and economic development in the country, capacity for leadership, team work, work ethos with values of productivity and discipline imparted through appropriate learning experiences in suitable technical/vocational subjects and most important, good communication skills, both oral as well as written even in the mother tongue, not to mention English"

Some of the findings, conclusions and the recommendations of the report on, *'A Rapid Assessment in Sri Lanka: Jobs for the 21st Century'* (2006) seem to have direct relevance to the present study. This assessment has been conducted by the Education Development Centre (EDC) jointly sponsored by USAID, Bureau of Asia and Near East and USAID/Sri Lanka. Referring to Skills Training for Private Sector Development the report highlights that there is an urgent need for training of new recruits in the following areas: soft skills of communication, presentation skills, critical thinking, and interpersonal skills; English skills and technical skills (IT) and sector specific skills. Based on studies on best practice it is recommended that training incorporates a "IT Plus Strategy", where IT training is contextualized to the specific sector, such as IT and Tourism, IT and Manufacturing, IT and Service. Under this integrative framework, IT is applied to the specific work context of specific sectors of the economy (Recommendation No. 6). "IT Plus Strategy" is further elaborated below:

"IT Plus Strategy": Effective IT skills development at the industry sector level

One of the most effective strategies to emerge from the IT industry worldwide is the linking of information technology skills development with industry sector initiatives. Under this strategy IT needs are linked to the specific context of the industry sector, be it services, agribusiness or tourism. In doing so, the IT know-how is applied to the specific workplace context, and allows the student how best to use IT knowledge to solve real workplace problems. For that reason, the IT Plus Strategy provides contextual learning about IT which develops better communication, decision making and team-building. As studies by the World Bank Global Digital Highway Project, integrating IT instruction into specific workplace settings gets the best results in terms of skills development (World Bank, Susa Sargent, 2006).

A study on: *'Training and labour market outcomes in Sri Lanka'* by Tan and Chandrasiri (2004) focused on two principal areas. First, an overview of the overall policy framework for the TVET sector and the second, the linkages between technical education and vocational training on the one hand and labour market outcomes on the other hand. The study has pointed out that the

TEVT sector intermediates between the skills that the general educational sector provides school leavers and the skills that the labour market demands, providing vocational and technical

training as needed to facilitate the school to work transition for youth. According to their analysis, the TEVT sector has not always addressed this skills demand-supply gap well or in a coordinated fashion. Further the study reveals that sector's interactions with the general education sector also precludes it from having a more active role in providing schools and guidance counsellors with information about training and labour market employment opportunities.

2.4   Experiences from other countries

Higher education options available for secondary school completers seem to be dissimilar in different countries. Tzannoatos and Johnes (1997) have examined the skills development systems in a sample of **East- Asian newly industrialized countries** (Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan, China) with a view to identifying aspects that can improve the design of training in other developing countries. The findings lend support to the argument that there is no single training system appropriate for all countries, and much depends on the country's development stage and specific characteristics including non-economic ones (such as, culture and ethnic composition of the population). However, they report that some characteristics of training seem to be more appropriate than others. These include:

- Late specialization in school curricula and acquisition of specialized skills in-service
- Encouraging private sector training
- Allowing autonomy to training institutions for the selection of students, recruitment of staff and choice of courses
- Employer participation in courses to a great extent
- Regular evaluation of training policies.

Different approaches adopted by a sample of countries to address the post-secondary education needs are briefly discussed below.

In **Korea**, Junior Vocational Colleges (JVCs) play a major role in the attainment of short-term higher education. The purpose of the junior vocational education is to produce mid-level technicians, who can contribute to the national development through dissemination of their technical knowledge and skills. The JVC specialized courses are grouped into technical, agricultural, fishery, nursing, sanitation, home economics, social practice, the arts and athletics with two or three year programmes, depending on the course. For the effective achievement of the educational goals JVCs develop and operate a practical curriculum through a school-industry collaborative. Although the JVCs place a high emphasis on practical education aimed at producing mid-level technicians, it is not necessarily a terminal point of education. They also keep doors open for students who would like to continue their education at the University level (Asianinfo.org, 2000).

New Zealand has an international reputation as a provider of quality education, and its higher education set up appears to be very much similar to that of Sri Lanka. In New Zealand, courses are available for post-secondary students for academic, professional and vocational studies at

several institutions – Universities, Polytechnics and Institutes of Technology, Colleges of Education, Private Training Establishments. Programmes offered in these institutions are as follows:

> **Universities:** There are eight Government funded Universities providing undergraduate and post graduate degree programmes. Some also offer foundation programmes.

> **Polytechnics and Institute of Technology:** A popular option for secondary education completers is to study at one of the twenty five Government funded Polytechnics and Institutes of Technology. They offer a wide variety of programmes which can be both academically and vocationally focused. It is possible to choose a short course teaching a specific skill or a course from a wide range of courses resulting in a certificate, a diploma or a degree. Some institutions offer the Year 1 of a degree programme, with subsequent years to be completed at a University.

> **Teacher Training:** There are six Government–funded specialist education institutions, two operating from within Universities, and the others offering their programmes in collaboration with their local University. They offer training for teachers from early childhood to primary, secondary, special and tertiary level.

> **Private Tertiary and Training Establishments:** There are a growing number of private tertiary and training providers offering an alternate study option. They offer a range of programmes including professional certificates, diplomas and degrees in a diverse range of subjects.

> **English Language Training:** The choices for this option are endless. Private English language schools offer a variety of courses for all ages including adventure, business and academic programmes. Adventure courses provide a balance of English language tuition and stimulating activity of one's choice. There are courses in English for business purposes and English to prepare the students for academic study with TOEFL or IELTS testing.

Apprenticeship is a structured training and educational system designated to prepare individuals for specific occupations in the **State of Arkansas**, in United States. It combines on-the-job training (OJT) under the supervision of experienced journey workers at the work site along with education conducted by qualified instructors in related classroom instruction. Apprenticeship programmes are driven by business and industry employers who specify the competencies or processes required for mastery in the occupations; these become the standards for which the the apprentice will master. The State of Arkansas recognizes the significance of apprenticeship programmes in enhancing the skill levels of the employees in Arkansas businesses and industries. Three methods of providing improvement funds are available for employers and apprentices: Traditional Apprenticeship, Youth Apprenticeship and Construction Training. Out of these Youth Apprenticeship seems to be more pertinent to the study topic.

The term 'Youth Apprenticeship' is a shorten version of the term 'Youth Apprenticeship/Work-Based Learning or YA/WBL. These terms designate the high school and post-secondary youth apprenticeship programmes that are approved by the Department of Workforce Education/State

Apprenticeship Office and that receive State Improvement Funds based upon a performance based budget.

The youth apprentice or work-based learning student is usually 16 to 21 years old, entered the YA/WBL programme while in high school, has a six year career plan that includes high school and post-secondary education and training, agreed to a three year (minimum) apprenticeship programme, and will obtain not only certification/license in his/her occupation but a high school diploma and a post-secondary certificate, diploma or degree. These programmes are operated by consortia of employers, employer associations and educational institutions (http://www.dwe.arkansas.gv)

2.5   Discussion

In the preceding sections literature related to the objectives of the study was viewed from different perspectives. The literature survey has revealed some useful messages that could be considered in addressing the objectives of this study.

It was clearly apparent that the options currently available in Sri Lanka for G.C.E (A/L) completers to pursue higher education are many and diverse. These include University Undergraduate Programmes (OUSL and External Degree), Certificate and Diploma Courses conducted by Government and private sector tertiary education institutions and a variety of Technical Education and Vocational Training courses offered by Government, private and NGO sector institutions. With the launching of the National On-line Distance Educational Services (NODES) and the proposed Technical Education Development Project many more opportunities will be open for G.C.E. (A/L) completers in the near future to pursue higher education programmes that are employment oriented. Whether the G.C.E. (A/L) completers are adequately aware of the higher education options currently available for them seems to be a matter that is worth investigating.

The sample of studies surveyed revealed some useful information relating to expectations of the G.C.E. (A/L) completers and also the employers. It was clearly seen that there is a high demand for distant education courses and the majority of G.C.E (A/L) completers prefer to follow higher education programmes relating to Information Technology, Management, Education and Business Administration. Several studies have repeatedly signalled that soft skills such as communication, creative thinking, analysis and problem solving are lacking in many young school leavers who are employed, according to their employers.

It was evident that in many countries higher education opportunities for the majority of secondary level school leavers are provided through non-university tertiary education institutes, such as Junior Vocational Colleges in Korea and Polytechnics/Institutes of Technology in New Zealand. Acquisition of specialized skills in-service, encouraging employer participation in courses and promoting private sector training are some features adopted by several newly industrialized countries, to address this issue.

Another important message revealed from the literature survey was that many countries give high importance to apprenticeship and on-the-job training programmes in providing higher education opportunities for school leavers.

CHAPTER 3

APPROACHES AND MODALITIES ADOPTED

In order to address the objectives for this study it seemed necessary to identify samples of the target beneficiaries and to understand the prevailing contextual background. Accordingly, two samples of G.C.E. (A/L) completers and a sample of tertiary education programme providers were selected for study.

3.1. Tracing of addresses of Non-Study Sample (NSS)

The G.C.E. (A/L) Examination result records available at University Grants Commission (UGC) classify the students as School and Private Applicants. Within these two categories of applicants some students are selected to national universities, some are not selected in spite of their application for university admission and some of the students do not apply for the consideration of UGC for their admission. The latter two categories comprise the G.C.E. (A/L) completers who have not found admission to national universities.

Three thousand names of students who are not selected to public universities were chosen on a random basis from the three result records of years 2003, 2004 and 2005. Obtained from the database of UGC. This amounts to approximately 1000 students per year. Questionnaire 1 (Annex 1) was posted to the private candidates within this 3000 whose addresses were obtained from UGC. These questionnaires accompanied a statement of objectives of the study and a letter by UGC authorizing data collection. The Questionnaires mailed to school candidates were addressed through the Principal of the school. Out of the three thousand copies of Questionnaire 1 mailed to G.C.E. (A/L) completers, 2010 were received by the researchers (67%) with student responses. Of the received completed questionnaires only 1496 were identified as those from G.C.E. (A/L) completers who are not registered with any tertiary education programme at present. This number, 1496, comprised the researchers' sample of students who are not studying at present or 'the non-study sample (NSS)'

3.2. Tracing of addresses of Study Sample (SS)

Out of the 2010 copies of Questionnaire 1 that were received, 514 indicated that they were currently registered with a tertiary education programme. These 514 students and another random sample of 736 students chosen from the Year 2005 list were sent by post the Questionnaire 2 (Annex 2), targeting the students who are following a tertiary education programme at present. Additional names were purposively chosen from the year 2005 list to capture recent G.C.E. (A/L) completers. This amounts to mailing out (514+ 736) 1250 copies of Questionnaire 2. Of this number, 271 completed Questionnaires (22%) were received by the researchers. This number, 271, comprised the researchers' sample of students who are studying at present or 'the study sample (SS)'

The Table 3.1 summarizes the identification of student samples by mail.

Table 3.1: Questionnaire mailing

Target group of students	Type of mailed Questionnaire	Number mailed	Number received	Sample
Who do not study at present (NSS)	Questionnaire 1	3000	2010	1496
Who study at present (SS)	Questionnaire 2	1250	271	271
Total		4250	2281	1767

3.3 Tertiary Education Training Providers

A directory of tertiary education programme providers was obtained from the Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission and a random sample of 130 institutes were selected, The Questionnaire 3 (Annex 3) was mailed to the heads of these 130 institutes. This sample comprised of national university external degree providers, the Open University of Sri Lanka, tertiary education programme providers under the Vocational Training Authority of Sri Lanka, the Colombo University School of Computer Studies, NYSC , NAITA and several other government and non-government institutes.. Interviews were conducted with the Registrars in charge of external degree programmes in the national universities, the Deans of the Open University of Sri Lanka, the Director of the School of Computing at the University of Colombo and with Directors of Studies in a selected few private tertiary education programme providers.

3.4 Design and Distribution of Questionnaires

Three Questionnaires were designed by the consultants for (1) G.C.E. (A/L) completers who are not enrolled in any tertiary education programme at present, (2) G.C.E. (A/L) completers who did not find admission to public universities but currently following tertiary education programmes offered by training providers other than the public universities and (3) tertiary education programme providers both government and non-government.

The Table 3.2 gives the topics of information collected under different sections of the questionnaires.

Table 3.2: Questionnaire Sections

Questionnaire 1	Expected Information from students who are not registered with any tertiary education institute
Section 1	Students' personal information
Section2	Performance at G.C.E. (A/L)
	Reasons for not entering university
	Any tertiary education programmes followed
	Employment and its nature
Section 3	Levels of liking and motivation for trtiary education
	Sources of information on tertiary education programmes
	Alternative tertiary education programmes considered

Section 4	What programmes students prefer if opportunity is provided
	Knowledge and attitude towards distance mode of learning
Section 5	Family background of students
	Facilities at home to pursue tertiary education
Questionnaire 2	**Expected Information form students who are currently registered with a tertiary education institute.**
Section 1	Personal information
	Performance at G.C.E. (A/L)
	Reasons for not entering university
Section 2	Nature of tertiary education programmes followed
	Expectations for future tertiary education
Section 3	Personal factrs to facilitate tertiary education
	Facilities at home to pursue tertiary education
Section 4	Employment and its nature
	Use of leisure time
Section 5	Levels of liking and motivation for trtiary education
	Sources of information on tertiary education programmes
	Problems encountered
Questionnaire 3	**Expected Information from tertiary education programme providers**
Section 1	Contact details of institute
	Titles & Nature of programmes provided
	Suggestions for expansion
Section 2	Student enrollment
	Examination results
	Facilities offered by institute
Section 3	Views on attitude and conduct of students
	Problems and suggestions
	Future plans

All questionnaires were translated to national languages and pre tested. Copies of Questionnaire 1 were mailed first and from the responses received a few addresses of students who were following tertiary education programmes were identified. The Questionnaire 2 was sent to these identified students and a few more from the year 2005 result records. Heads of training institutes were contacted over the telephone and 130 copies of Questionnaire 3 were mailed to them.

Three databases were developed for the three questionnaires on SPSS Version 10. Data was cleaned and entered by experienced data entry operators. Data was analyzed and the summary tables were printed under different objectives of the questionnaire. The number of variables in Questionnaire 1 was 156, in Questionnaire 2 was 132 and in Questionnaire 3 was 213.

Chi-square tests were applied to establish relationships among a few selected variables.

CHAPTER 4

THE STUDY SAMPLE

4.1 Profile of the responded G.C.E. (A/L) completers.

The distribution by civil status of the sample of G.C.E. (A/L) completers who are at present not registered with any study programmes (NSS) and those who are registered with study programmes (SS) are given in Tables 4.1 & 4.2

Table 4.1: Distribution of NSS by civil status

Civil status	Number	Percent
Unmarried	1404	94
Married	92	6
Total	1496	100

Table 4.2: Distribution of SS by civil status

Civil status	Number	Percent
Unmarried	258	95
Married	13	5
Total	271	100

The Figure 4-1: shows the percentages of the total sample (NSS + SS) by civil status.
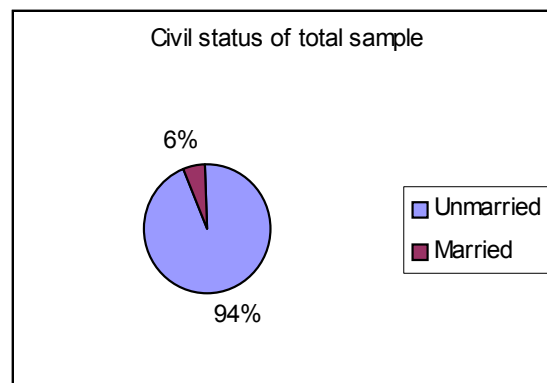
Figure 4-1: Civil Status

The percentage of married students in the sample is negligibly small.

The distribution of the two samples by gender is given in the two Tables 4.3 & 4.4

Table 4.3: Distribution of NSS by gender

Gender	Number	Percent
Males	581	39
Females	915	61
Total	1496	100

Table4.4: Distribution of SS by gender

Gender	Number	Percent
Males	171	63
Females	100	37
Total	271	100

The percentage of females in NSS is comparatively higher, whereas, the percentage of males in SS is higher.

The percentages of males and females in the total sample is given in Fig 4-2
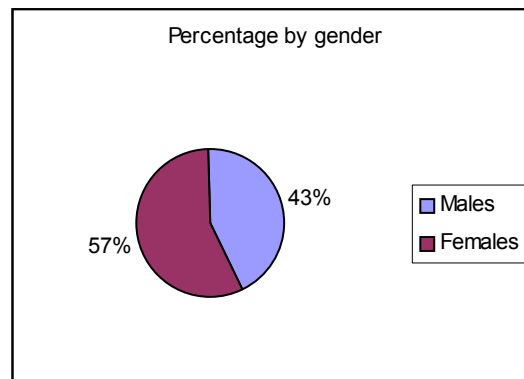
Figure 4-2: Distribution by gender

The female percentage is higher in the total sample.

The distribution of the total sample of students who are in the non-study sample (NSS) and those in study sample (SS) by the province is given in Table 4.5

Table 4.5: Distribution of the sample by province

Province	NSS	SS	Total	Percent
WP	395	61	456	26
CP	102	18	120	7
SP	304	49	353	20
NEP	125	53	178	10
NWP	242	27	269	15
NCP	80	16	96	5
UVA	36	16	52	3
SAB	212	31	243	14
Total	1496	271	1767	100

Out of the total number of students who responded to the postal questionnaires nearly one forth is from the Western Province. This high percentage is in agreement with the comparatively large numbers who sit for G.C.E. (A/L) examination from the Western Province. The lowest percentage is from Uva Province - (3%).

The distribution of the total sample (NSS+SS) by the districts is given in n Table 4.6

Table 4.6: Distribution of total sample by district

District	Number	Percent	District	Number	Percent	District	Number	Percent
Colombo	124	7.0	Jaffna	29	1.6	Kurunegala	206	11.7
Gampaha	142	8.0	Kilinachchi	12	0.7	Puttalam	55	3.1
Kalutara	172	9.7	Mannar	6	0.3	Anuradapura	60	3.4
Kandy	96	5.4	Vavuniya	23	1.3	Polonnaruwa	42	2.4
Matale	12	0.7	Mulativu	3	0.2	Badulla	46	2.6
Nuwara Eliya	9	0.5	Batticaloa	42	2.4	Moneragala	9	0.5
Galle	177	10.0	Ampara	44	2.5	Ratnapura	142	8.0
Matara	101	5.7	Trincomalee	30	1.7	Kegalle	111	6.3
Hambantota	74	4.2						

Nearly 50% of the student sample is from the districts of Kurunegala, Galle, Kalutara, Gampaha, Colombo and Ratnapura.

The distribution of the two samples, NSS and SS by the stream in which the students studied while in G.C.E. (A/L) are given in Tables 4.7 & 4.8

Table4.7: Distribution of NSS

Subject stream	Number	Percent
Arts	734	49
Commerce	462	31
Ph. Science	106	7
Bio. Science	194	13
Total	1496	100

Table4.8: Distribution of SS

Subject stream	Number	Percent
Arts	155	57
Commerce	47	17
Ph. Science	54	20
Bio. Science	15	6
Total	271	100

Figure 4-3 indicates the percentages of students in the total sample by the stream of study in their G.C.E. (A/L) classes.
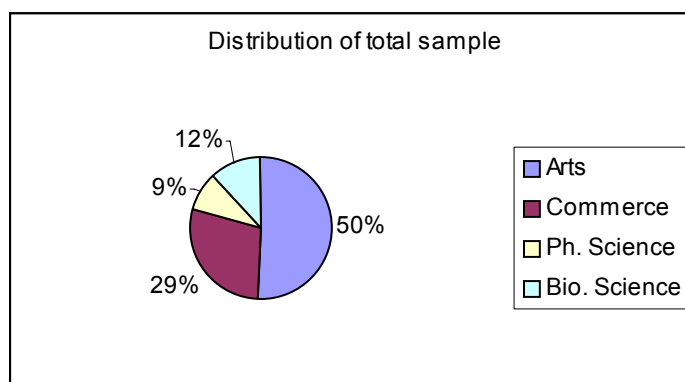
Figure 4-3: Distribution by stream of study.

Over 75% of the students in the total sample are ether from the Art or Commerce streams in schools.

The distribution of the two samples of students by the medium of study are given in Tables 4.9 & 4.10

Table 4.9: Distribution of NSS by medium		
Medium	Number	Percent
Sinhala	1237	83
Tamil	252	17
English	7	0
Total	1496	100

Table 4.10: .Distrubution of SS by medium		
Medium	Number	Percent
Sinhala	219	81
Tamil	52	19
English	0	0
Total	271	100

The Figure 4-4 indicates the percentages of students in the total sample by the medium of study in school.
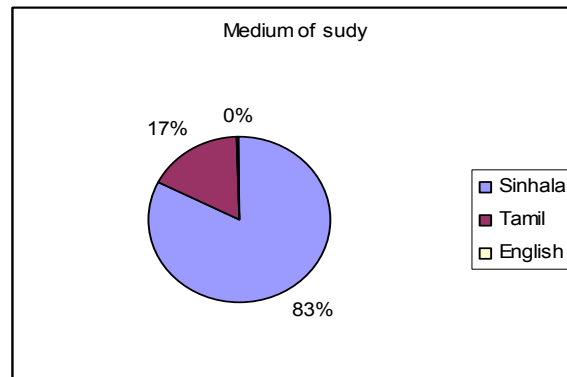
Figure 4-4: Distribution by medium of study

Representation of English medium students in the sample is negligible. The percentages of Sinhala and Tamil students in the sample approximate to population percentages of Sinhala and Tamil in the country. The Muslim students who answered the questionnaire in Sinhala medium are included in the Sinhala sample. Those Muslim students who answered the questionnaire in Tamil medium are included in the Tamil Sample.

CHAPTER 5

NON-STUDY SAMPLE OF G.C.E. (A/L) COMPLETERS (NSS)

5.1 Background.

The National Evaluation and Testing Service (NETS) in releasing the results of the G.C.E. (A/L) Examinations indicate to the students their rank in the country and the in province. Some students whose rank is low decide on other options for study and do not apply for university admission.

The number of students who applied to UGC on the results of the G.C.E. (A/L) Examination in the non-study sample (NSS) is given in Table 5.1

Table 5.1: Applicants to UGC

	Number	Percent
Applied	753	50
Not applied	743	50
Total	1496	100

In this sample, only half the number of G.C.E. (A/L) completers who were qualified to apply for a university has sought admission to universities.

The distribution by gender of the students that applied and not applied for university admission are given by gender in Table 5.2

Table 5.2: Applicants by gender

	Applied	Not applied	Total	Applied %
Males	256	325	581	44
Females	497	418	915	54
Total	753	743	1496	50

The male percentage applied is expressed as a percentage of the total number of males qualified to apply, and similarly for the females. Percentage of females who applied is higher than the corresponding percentage of males. The number qualified to apply and the number applied is given in Figure 5-1 for NSS by gender.
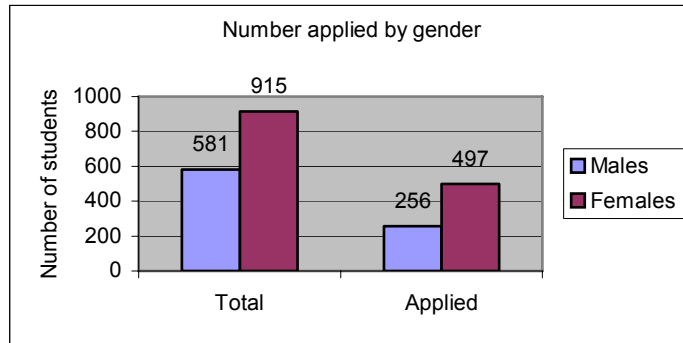
Figure 5-1: Applicants by gender

Figure reveals that the number of males applied is considerably lower than the corresponding number of females.

The percentages of students who applied for university admission are given by the province in Table 5.3

Table 5.3: Applicants by the province ….

Province	Qualified to apply	Applied	Percent
WP	395	219	55
CP	102	26	25
SP	304	164	54
NEP	125	58	46
NWP	242	134	55
NCP	80	34	43
UVA	36	11	31
SAB	212	107	50
Total	1496	753	50

The number of students who applied is expressed in Table 5.3 as a percentage of the total number qualified to apply from each of the provinces. Of the total number 1496 G.C.E. (A/L) completers who are not on any study programme at present and qualified to apply for university admission only 50% has applied. The percentages applied from Central, North Central, North & Eastern and Uva provinces are below 50%..

The distribution of the sample of students who are not registered with educational programmes at present (NSS) by their year of their best G.C.E. (A/L) results are shown in Table5.4

Table 5.4: Distribution by year of success

Year of best results	Number of students	Percent	Mean Age (Yrs)	Standard Deviation
2003	569	38	22.68	1.2
2004	540	36	21.74	1.12
2005	387	26	20.8	0.89
Total	1496	100	21.85	1.32

The ages of these students lie within the range 19 to 28 years. The mean is 21.85 and the standard deviation is1.32. The representation of Year 2005 students is comparatively less. The mean age of 2005 year students is 20.8 years and standard deviation of 0.89. They are the youngest group in the sample and some of them may have repeated the G.C.E. (A/L) Examination in 2006 and decided not to complete the questionnaire.

5.2 Higher Education Expectations of G.C.E. (A/L) completers who are not following any study programme at present

Most G.C.E. (A/L) completers seem to attend various education programmes after their examination. They attend these short study programmes till the results of the examination are announced and sometimes till university selections are finalized. The non-study sample (NSS) selected for the current study is no exception. Some of these G.C.E. (A/L) completers, though they are not doing any studies at present, have completed some education programmes since their G.C.E. (A/L) Examination. A total of 895 students in the sample have completed at least one study programme, which is an indication of their interest to engage in higher studies. The education programmes they have completed under each category are given in Table 5.5 by gender.

Table 5.5: Completed education programmes

Gender	Management/ Accountancy	English Language	Computer education	Others	External Degree	Total
Males	38	31	175	79	1	324
Females	40	86	327	103	4	560
Total	78	117	502	182	5	884

The Table reveals that the most popular training programmes have been in the field of computer education, followed by English Language study programmes. These programmes are found to be more popular among female students than the male students. Programmes categorized as 'others' in the Table are those relating to hotel industry, tourism, laboratory technicians, pre-school, agriculture related study programmes, technical programmes of Vocational Training Authority, NYSC programmes and textile industry..

The percentage distribution of students who have followed courses by gender are given in Figure 5-2
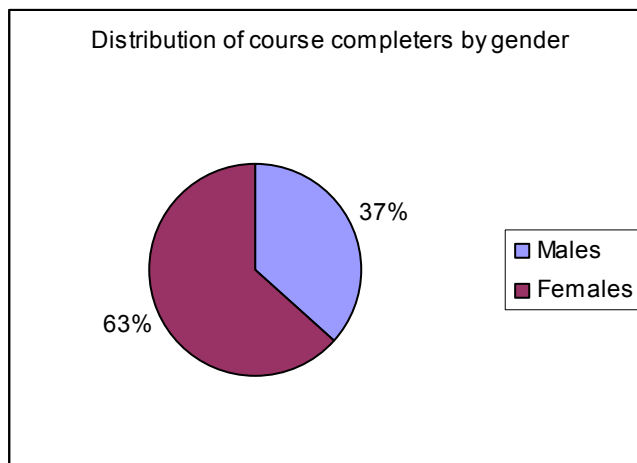
Figure 5-2: Course completers by gender

It is evident from Figure 5.2 that of those students who have followed courses 63% is females.

It is encouraging to note that several students have freely expressed their views to the free response questions included in the questionnaires. They have stated that they would like to pursue higher education in the fields that they are already familiar with in school. They also have mentioned that the new educational programmes should be employment oriented and the existing programmes should be reviewed targeting employment.

The distribution of the non-study sample of students by gender and by their G.C.E. (A/L) study stream is given in Table 5.6.

Table 5.6: Distribution of NSS students by gender and by G.C.E. (A/L) Study stream

Gender	Arts	Commerce	Ph. Science	Bio. Science	Total
Males	214	220	64	83	581
Females	520	242	42	111	915
Total	734	462	106	194	1496

The Table reveals that out of the 1496 students in the NSS the majority is from the Arts stream (49%) and the next from the Commerce stream (31%). The percentage of students belonging to the Science stream is relatively lower (20%). Therefore, on a priority basis options should be made available to students from the Arts and Commerce streams for employment oriented tertiary education, preferably in the fields of arts or commerce.

Usually, the G.C.E. (A/L) completers who apply for university admission do not enter universities due to reasons beyond their control. Those 720 students in the NSS who applied but could not enter universities were asked to select the appropriate reasons from a list. They were also given the option to select more than one reason. The reasons and the response frequencies with percentages are given in Table 5.7.

Table 5.7: Reasons for not entering university

Reasons	Number of responses	Response %
No place in university	518	75
Did not get preferred programme	129	19
Did not get preferred university	44	6
Total	691	100

These 720 G.C.E. (A/L) completers who are not on any study programmes at present have given 691 responses. 75% of the responses are on 'non-availability of places in universities'.

The three variables listed in Table 5.7 are less likely to be independent. As such one of the variables '*did not get the preferred course*' is considered for further analysis

The sample of G.C.E. (A/L) completers who are not following any tertiary education programmes at present, who applied for university entry and did not obtain admission because they were not given the preferred programme at the university is given in Table 5.8 by their study stream in school.

Table 5.8: Students who do not get their preferred programme in NSS

Study stream	Total No. Applied	No. responded as not getting preferred course	% Responded out of applied
Arts	358	40	11
Commerce	170	32	19
Physical Science	72	18	25
Biological Science	119	39	33

Table 5.8 reveals that 129 G.C.E. (A/L) completers who applied for university entry did not obtain admission because they were not offered the preferred university study programmes. It is further revealed that nearly one fourth of the Physical Science Students who applied for university admission have not accepted the programme offered to them. Similarly, nearly one third of the Biological Science students have not accepted the programme offered to them. There is a possibility that the Physical Science students repeat the examination with hopes of entering an Engineering Faculty during the preceding year. Likewise the Biological Science students repeat the examination with hopes of getting better results to enter a Medical Faculty. It is evident that the demand to enroll for medical study programmes among Biological Science students and the demand to enroll for engineering study programmes among Physical Science students is high.

Out of a sample of 743 qualified students who did not apply to UGC for university admission during the years 2003 – 2005, 651 have responded to six reasons as to why they did not apply. The number of responses to each of the reasons for not applying for university admission and percentages are given in Table 5.9.

Table 5.9: Reasons for not applying for university admission

Reason	No. of responses	Response percent
1. Rag scare	24	4
2. Interrupted lectures due to closing of university	52	8
3. Family members object to entering university	22	3
4. Family responsibilities prevent applying	105	16
5. Financial problems prevent applying	277	43
6. Need to do a job	171	26
Total	651	100

Table 5.9 reveals that 88% of the responses are concerned with household of the students. It is possible that the parents show little or no interest in encouraging the children to apply for university admission because of their financial difficulties and the need of the children to work to support the family. Relatively a low percentage of student responses (12%) is concerned with indiscipline in the universities such as ragging and follow up strikes causing interruption of academic sessions.

Several variables listed in Table 5.9 appear to be related. Therefore, cross tabulations were done between the variable '*applied or not applied'* for university entry and each of the six variables listed in Table 5.9. Chi-Square statistics were computed and the results are given in Table 5.10

Table 5.10: Chi-square statistics

Variable	Level of Significance	Chi-sq statistic	df
1. Scared of the fresher ragging	Significant at .05 level	5.894	1
2. Interrupted lectures due to closing of university	Not significant	0.072	1
3. Family members object to entering university	Significant at .05 level	11.32	1
4. Family responsibilities prevents applying	Significant at .05 level	33.375	1
5. Financial problems prevent applying	Significant at .05 level	90.817	1
6. The need to do a job prevents applying	Significant at .05 level	64.075	1

It is less likely that the decision of students not to apply for university admission is independent of variables 1, 3, 4, 5 & 6 of Table 5.10. The decision of the students 'not apply for university admission' is less likely to depend on the interruptions caused to academic sessions in university.

Some of the students in the non-study sample (NSS) have completed study programmes after their G.C.E. (A/L) Table 5.5. But none of them are doing any studies at present. These students were requested to give reasons for not engaging in any education programme at present. Eleven reasons were listed as given in Table 5.11 and they were given the option of responding to one or more reasons from the list. A total of 563 students who do not follow any tertiary education programme at present responded as given in Table.5.11

Table 5.11: Reasons for not following any educational programme

Reason	No. of positive responses	Response %
1. Insufficient information on available alternatives	471	24
2. No knowledge on what should be done	249	13
3. Qualification is not a criterion for employment	51	3
4. Poor personal health	25	1
5. Parents cannot afford to pay	601	31
6. Need to earn to spend on family	182	9
7. Family burdens	180	9
8. Do not like to be away from home	70	4
9. Need to marry	29	1
10. No motivation	85	4
11. Like to be doing nothing	14	1
Total	1957	100

The number of responses to variables 1 & 2 in Table 5.11 can be added as they are on the non-availability of information on existing tertiary education programmes. Likewise, the number of responses to variables 5, 6 & 7 seem strongly related and can be added. Based on this adjustment, it can be deduced that, of the total number of responses 37% is on unawareness of alternatives available to G.C.E. (A/L) completers. Nearly 50% of the responses are on poor economic conditions in the family.

These findings are confirmed by the free responses given by the sample of students. They have mentioned the need of bursaries for the students who are in tertiary education programmes.

The Table 5.12 gives the number of students employed at present classified by the study programme they have completed.

Table 5.12: Employment by education programme

Education Programme	Total	Number employed	Employed percent
Accountancy/Management	76	22	8.0
English Language	112	24	9.1
Computer education	489	143	54.4
Technical Studies	10	2	0.8
Others	175	71	27.0
External Degree	5	2	0.8
Total	867	264	100.0

Out of the 867 students who have completed study programmes, 264 (30%) are employed at present. Out of those employed, 54.4% are with a background of computer education.

Employment oriented educational programmes seem to be more popular among G.C.E. (A/L) completers.

Figure 5-3 shows a comparison of Employment with completed tertiary education programmes.
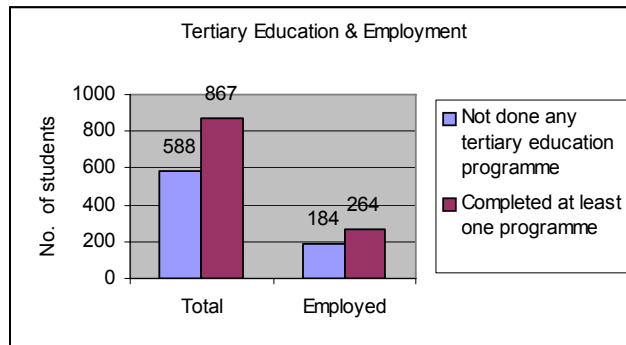
Figure 5-3: Tertiary Education & Employment

Though high percentage (58%) of G.C.E. (A/L) completers who are not following any educational courses at present have completed some training after G.C.E. (A/L), only 30% of the trained are employed. The employed percent is almost the same even for those who have not followed any training programme after completion of G.C.E. (A/L)

A cross tabulation between the variables 'employment' and 'follow at least one educational programme' reveals the following Chi-square statistic.

Table 5.13: Chi-square statistics

	Completed at least one educational programme		
	Significance	Chi-sq statistic	df
Employed	Sig. at 0.05 level	24.501	10

The Chi-square analysis indicates that employment is less likely to be independent of the completed tertiary education programme.

The nature of employment, as to whether full-time or part-time, of 264 students who are employed is given in Figure 5-4.
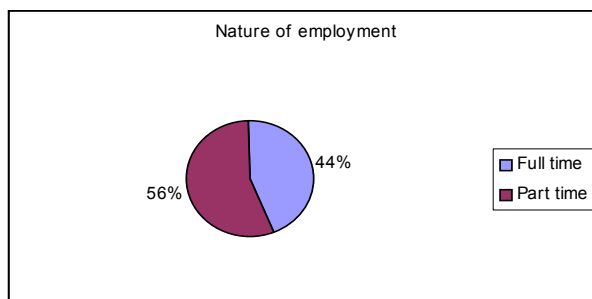
Figure 5-4: Nature of Employment

Percentage of part time employees is higher compared to that employed full time.

The students who are not engaged in any tertiary education at present stated their stream of study at G.C.E. (A/L) while they were in school and whether they are employed or not. Table 5.14 shows the number students employed and the percentages out of the total under each stream of study.

Table 5.14 Employment by study stream

Study stream	Total	No. employed	Employed %
Arts	710	216	30
Commerce	450	153	34
Physical Sc.	103	30	29
Bio. Sc.	192	48	25

Cross tabulation of the stream of study at G.C.E. (A/L) and employment of students reveals a Chi-square statistic of 7.711 and degree of freedom 6 indicating less likelihood of employment dependent on G.C.E. (A/L) study stream.

It is important to find how the students use their leisure time to plan any tertiary education programmes for them. Students who are not doing any studies at present and also not employed were requested to indicate what they do during leisure. The responses given by a total of 968 unemployed students out of 1049 are given in Table 5.15. There is the possibility that unemployed youths are engaged in more than one of the items listed below

Table 5.15: Use of time by unemployed students

Item	No. of responses	%
1. Read books and newspapers	794	15
2. Engaged in self studies	344	6
3. Listen to radio	466	9
4. Watch TV	548	10
5. See films	115	2
6. Use computer	280	5
7. Engage in sports	195	4
8. Listen to music	86	2
9. Help parents at their work	633	12
10. Engage in house work	640	12
11. Engage in social work	379	7
12. Engage in religious work	420	8
13. Engage in political work	32	1
14. Travel	118	2
15. Sleep & relax	122	2
17. Spend time with friends	148	3
18. Do nothing useful	13	0
Total	5333	100

It is seen from the responses that most of the youth not doing a job (49%) engage themselves in reading, watching TV or helping parents in housework.

For students to be engaged in tertiary education, they should like the programmes offered to them and also they should be motivated to study. 268 & 247 students from families of poor economic status indicated their levels of liking to engage in tertiary education and their level of motivation respectively as shown in Table 5.16

Table 5.16: Levels of Liking & Motivation

No. of students from low economic level families	Level of liking			
	High	%	Low	%
268	259	97	9	3
	Level of motivation			
	High	%	Low	%
247	199	81	48	19

Table reveals that high percentages of students like to continue with tertiary education and also they are motivated in spite of the low family economic conditions.

Cross tabulations were done between the variable 'poor family economic conditions' and each of the two variables 'level of liking' and 'level of motivation ' for tertiary education. Chi-Square statistics were computed and the results are given in Table 5.17

Table 5.17: Chi-square Statistics

	Poor family economic conditions		
Variable	Significance	Chi-square statistic	df
Level of liking for tertiary education	Not significant	4.103	3
Level of motivation for tertiary education	Significant at .05 level	15.947	3

Chi-square test reveals that students 'level of liking for tertiary education' is more likely to be independent of the 'poor family economic background' and their 'motivation level' is less likely to be independent of the 'poor family economic background'.

The sample of students who are not currently engaged in any study programmes should be offered as many alternative options as possible for them to decide on higher education. A question was designed to find the various alternatives the students consider for higher education after the completion of G.C.E. (A/L). The Table 5.18 gives the options that the sample of students who are not studying at present would like to consider. 1397 students have stated their options, some indicating more than one.

Table 5.18: Options for tertiary education

Available options	No. of positive responses	Positive response percent
Repeat A/L	123	4
Self Study	365	13
Distance mode learning	742	26
Short course at private institute	427	15
Professional study course	687	24
Enter Private local university	285	10
Enter foreign university	201	7
Total	2830	100

About 50% of the responses are in favour of learning through distance mode and register with professional study programmes such as Accountancy and Law. Only a very few students seems to like repeating the G.C.E. (A/L) examination.

Tertiary education programmes should be adequately publicized indicating the services that go with the programme, duration, fees etc. Several sources of information are currently available to G.C.E. (A/L) completers at different levels. The students responded at the four level 'Very High' 'High''Low' and 'Very Low' on the usefulness of the sources of information. The number of responses under 'Very High' and 'High' are added and given under 'High' in Table 5.19. Similarly the responses under 'Low' and 'Very Low' are added and given under 'Low' in the Table 5.19.The number of 'High' responses is calculated as a percentage of the total number of responses for each source of information and listed in the Table 5.19

Table 5.19: Sources of information

Source of information	High	Low	High %
Career guidance teacher	370	590	39
Principal of school	452	523	46
Career guidance exhibition	412	554	43
Newspapers	1089	155	88
Parents	1055	199	84
Family members	822	302	73
Friends	772	342	69

The percentages reveal that the main sources of information on available tertiary education programmes are the newspapers, parents and family members.

As seen in Table 5.18, a large number of positive responses were for considering distance mode of learning at tertiary education programmes. As such, students who are not registered at present with any tertiary education programme were requested to express their views at 4 levels, namely, Very High, High, Low and Very Low on three aspects regarding distance education mode of learning. The responses by the G.C.E. (A/L) completers who did not apply for university admission are given in Table 5.20

Table 5.20: Distance mode of learning

	High	Low	High %
Informed on distance education mode	194	517	27
Informed on OUSL Programmes	162	543	23
Like to study on distance mode	662	51	93

Table 5.20 shows that the responses of students who did not apply for university entry like to study in distance mode at a very high level.

The G.C.E. (A/L) completers who are not enrolled in any tertiary education programme at present were asked what study programmes they would like to follow if the opportunities are provided. The responses computed for all the students who are not engaged in studies at present are given in Table 5.21.

Table 5.21: Responses on tertiary education programmes

Study programmes	Responses of All students	Response %
1. Management	654	14
2. Accountancy	471	10
3. Business mgt.	471	10
4. Science	168	4
5. Engineering	143	3
6. Medical	190	4
7. IT	1079	23
8. Law	397	9
9. Education	576	12
10. Journalism	345	7
11. Hotel industry	150	3
Total	4644	100

It is observed from the response percentages, that the study programmes in demand for all G.C.E. (A/L) completers who are not on any study programme at present are in the fields of Management, Accountancy, Business Management, Information Communication Technology and Education.

As learning in the distance mode is a major alternative to continue tertiary education for G.C.E. (A/L) completers in Sri Lanka, the sample of students who are not registered with any tertiary education programme were requested to express what they think of a selected few aspects of distance mode learning. 1432 students have given 4288 responses. The distribution of their responses among the properties of distance education and the percentages are given in Table 5.22.

Table 5.22: Responses on distance learning mode.

Distance learning properties	No. of responses	Response %
1. Comparatively easy	682	16
2. Opportunity for self learning	1045	24
3. Less stress	467	11
4. Flexible	348	8
5. Less expensive	511	12
6. More compulsion	90	2
7. Longer duration	240	6
8. Less recognition	131	3
9. Less direct interaction	256	6
10. Heavy load of work	75	2
11. Less teacher guidance	443	10
Total	4288	100

Over 50% of the student responses are in favour of the distance learning properties such as comparatively easiness, opportunity for self-learning and learning with less stress.

Several personal factors influence students to restrict them from engaging in tertiary education. Some of these factors were listed and the G.C.E. (A/L) completers who are not doing any studies at present were requested to respond at 4 levels. In tabulating the responses two columns of responses at high level were combined and labeled as 'High' and two low level columns of responses were combined and labeled as 'Low' and given in Table 5.30. The number of responses in the 'High' column is expressed as a percentage of the total number of responses for each of the factors and labeled as

'High %' in the table 5.23

Table 5.23: Responses at levels of personal factors

Personal factors	High	Low	High %
1. Availability of time for higher education	1228	199	86
2. Availability of space at home for studies	1223	225	84
3. Free from family burdens	2032	296	87
4. Your personal health for engraining in studies	1402	41	97
5. Favourable finances for education	561	870	39
6. Availability of self confidence	1435	20	99
Total	7881	1651	83

It is seen that the student sample possess all the listed factors at a high level except the factor on home economic condition. The highest being the availability of self confidence.

The access to facilities available at home or in the close vicinity of house contributes immensely to the education of the students. A few of these facilities of help to self learning in particular at tertiary education level were listed and the G.C.E (A/L) completers who are not engaged in any tertiary education at present were requested to indicate the availability level on a 4- point scale. In tabulating the responses two columns of responses at high level were combined and labeled

as 'High' and two low level columns of responses were combined and labeled as 'Low' and given in Table 5.24. The number of responses in the 'High' column is expressed as a percentage of the total number of responses for each of the factors and labeled as 'High %' in the Table 5.24.

Table 5.24: Level of facilities available

Facility	High	Low	High %
1. Telephone	905	446	67
2. Computer	421	811	34
3. Internet	147	1002	13
4. E-mail	152	975	13
5. Radio	1270	121	91
6. Audio cassette	782	459	63
7. Video cassette	476	700	40
8. DVD	472	681	41
9. TV	1244	139	90
10. OUSL Center	418	804	34
11. Library	1033	242	81

The use of Radio and TV is available to a high level as indicated by the percentages of responses. 81% of the responses recorded at high level indicates the availability of access to library use. 67% of the responses are for 'High' on the availability of a telephone. But the response percent on the availability of E-mail and Internet are low.

CHAPTER 6

G.C.E. (A/L) COMPLETERS WHO ARE AT PRESENT FOLLOWING TERTIARY EDUCATION PROGRAMMES (SS)

The sample of G.C.E. (A/L) completers who are currently following tertiary education programmes comprise of 271 students (SS). The numbers and percentages of students who applied and did not apply after the results of G.C.E. (A/L) Examination are given in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1 Applied percent for universities (SS)

	Number of students	Percentage
Applied for university admission	238	88
Did not apply	33	12
Total	271	100

The percentage of students seeking university admission is high.

The reasons given by them for not entering a national university are given in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2: Reasons for not entering university

Reason	Number	Percent
Z Score comparatively low	253	93
Did not get the preferred study programme	17	6
Did not get the preferred university	1	0
Total	271	100

The UGC selects students for the national universities based on the Z-score rank of the students. 93% of the of the sample (SS) of G.C.E. (A/L) completers who are currently following tertiary education programmes did not get selected because of the low Z-score rank.

The levels of the education programmes followed by the students in the study-sample (SS) and the institutes vary. The Table 6.3 gives the distribution of students by the level of programme.

6.3: Registered with a tertiary education programme

Level of Study Programme	Number	Percent
Degree	109	61
Diploma	47	26
Certificate	23	13
Total	179	100

Ninety two students out of the sample of 271 have completed education programmes. High percentage of 61% currently follows degree programmes mainly in the External Examination Departments of the national universities and a few in the degree awarding private institutes.

The nature of the education programmes the students follow at present is given in Tables 6.4 (1). & 6.4 (2)

Table 6.4(1): Nature of study programme (1)

Nature of programme	Number	Percent
Internal	57	32
External	122	68
Total	179	100

Table 6.4 (2): Nature of study programme (2)

Nature of Programme	Number	Percent
Part time	113	63
Full time	66	37
Total	179	100

Studying as external students on apart-time basis seems to be more popular among G.C.E. (A/L) completers who follow tertiary education programmes at present.

6.2 Higher Education Expectations of G.C.E. (A/L) completers who are following study programmes

The percentages of students in Study –sample (SS) who have completed tertiary education programmes at present and the titles of programmes still followed by students are given in Tables 6.5 & 6.6

Table 6.5: Programme status

Status of Programme	Number	Percent
Completed	92	34
Continue	179	66
Total	271	100

Table 6.6: Programme titles

Programme Title	Number	Percent
Computer Science	100	56
English language	17	9
Technician (VTA)	51	28
Accountancy	11	6
Total	179	100

Sixtysix percent of SS continue in their study programmes and 56% of those who continue are on computer education programmes. 28% continue on technical programmes provided by Vocational Training Authority.

The G.C.E. (A/L) completers look for information on tertiary education programmes available in the country to enable them to pursue higher education. The common sources of information are listed in Table 6.7 and the students in the sample were requested to respond to the sources that they have found useful.

Table 6.7: Responses on sources of information

Source	Responses	Response %
Advertisements	81	26
Friends	77	25
TEVC	15	5
JobsNet	3	1
OUSL	14	4
External Deg units	71	23
Guidance teacher	42	13
Exhibitions/fairs	9	3
Total	312	100

Most students in the sample have been seeking information from newspaper advertisements, from their friends, external degree units of national universities and guidance teachers in school. Many are not aware of the Technical & Vocational Education Commission, JobsNet, Open University programmes and vocational exhibitions and fairs.

The sample of G.C.E. (A/L) completers who are registered with tertiary education programmes were asked for the reasons on why they have selected the particular programme. The responses are listed in Table 6.8

Table 6.8: Reasons for selecting a particular programme.

Reason	No. of responses	Response %
Employment -oriented	163	47
Close to residence	10	3
Reasonable fees	26	7
Popular among friends	17	5
Small classes	11	3
Good teaching methods	70	20
Good evaluation methods	52	15
Total	349	100

Students prefer employment-oriented programmes of study. They are also particular about the teaching and evaluation methods used in the classroom.

The G.C.E. (A/L) completers who are currently following tertiary education programmes were asked what other programmes should be made available for the national development of the country. The responses received are listed in Table 6.9.

Table 6.9: Programmes for future

Programme	No. of responses	Response %
Management	96	12
Accountancy	50	6
Business administration	59	7
Science	24	3
Engineering	50	6
Medicine	18	2
Information Technology	180	23
Law	85	11
Education	119	15
Journalism	75	9
Hotel industry	18	2
Security services	19	2
Total	793	100

Programmes in the fields of Information Technology, Education, Management and Law are outstanding.

G.C.E. (A/L) completers have indicated the levels of facilities available to them and their home environment for higher education. Tables 6.10 & 6.11

Table 6.10: Level of facility

Item	High	Low	High %
Telephone	153	90	63
Computer	94	128	42
Internet	30	178	14
E-mail	34	176	16
Radio	203	42	83
Audio Cassette	128	94	58
Video Cassette	85	128	40
DVD	76	141	35
TV	197	51	79
Library	124	115	52
OUSL Center	47	166	22
Total	1171	1309	47

Table 6.11: Home Environment

Facility	High	Low	High %
Time for studies	216	38	85
Quiet home environment	219	33	87
Free from family problems	167	80	68
Personal health	246	6	98
Availability of finances	87	158	36
Self confidence	249	2	99
Total	1184	317	79

Total number of responses in the 'High' column is expressed as a percentage of the total number of 'High' and 'Low' responses and given in 'High %' column. Over 50% of the 'High' responses are for availability of Telephone, Radio, Audio Cassette, TV and Library facility. Home environment is highly favorable for tertiary education of children except in the field of finances.

Out of the sample of 271 G.C.E. (A/L) completers who are currently following tertiary education programmes only 55 (20%) are employed. Nature of their employment is given in Figure6-1
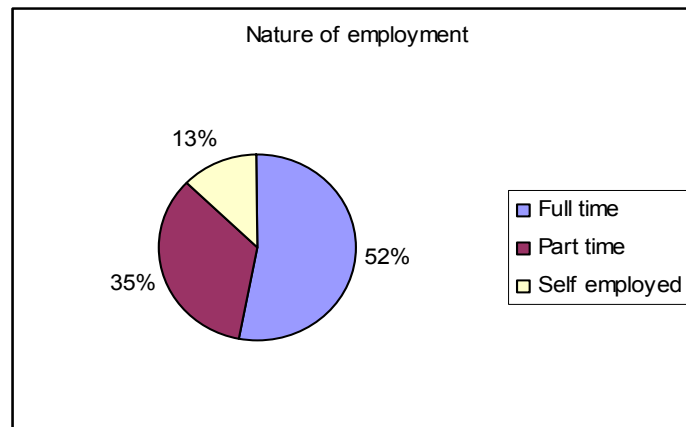
Figure 6-1: Employed percent

Main employment areas are,

- Receptionist in a private company
- Administrative assistant
- Private tutor
- Computer operater
- Audit trainee
- Electrician

Knowledge of how the G.C.E. (A/L) completers spend their free time is important to propose new study programmes for them. Table 6.12 lists the possible free time activities and the responses of students who are registered with study programmes at present.

Table 6.12: Free time activity

Item	Responses	Response %
Read	190	14
Self study	109	8
Listen to radio	109	8
Watch TV	118	9
Watch Films	29	2
Use Computer	70	5
Engage in sports	52	4
Music	49	4
Help Parents	147	11
Help in house work	157	12
Social work	92	7
Religious work	112	8
Political work	5	0
Travel	42	3
Sleep	46	3
Time with friends	31	2
Nothing useful	5	0
Total	1363	100

High percentage of students engages themselves in reading news papers, books and other documents and also help parents in house work.

The level of liking and level of motivation of G.C.E. (A/L) completers who are currently engaged in study, for tertiary education are given in Table 6.13

Table **6.13:** Levels of liking and motivation

Level	High	Low	High %
Liking	261	1	100
Motivation	208	53	80

All the students in the study-sample (SS) like to follow tertiary education programmes.. Motivation level is also very high.

Publicity to tertiary education programmes available in the country is important as accurate information has to reach the G.C.E. (A/L) completers. The levels of sources of information used by students in the study sample are given in Table 6.14.

Table 6.14: Sources of information

Source of information	High	Low	High %
Career guidance teacher	62	72	46
Principal of school	102	47	68
Career exhibition	48	79	38
Newspaper	133	27	83
Parents	150	26	85
Family members	124	34	78
Friends	118	41	74
Total	737	326	69

Parents had been the main source of information for the students who are currently following education programmes. Also the information provided by parents and family members had been useful at a high level.

CHAPTER 7

VIEWPOINTS OF EXTERNAL DEGREE AWARDING INSTITUTES

7.1   Introduction

Data from three external degree awarding institutes was gathered through a postal questionnaire and a series of interviews with key personnel. The three institutes were: Centre for Distance and Continuing Education -University of Peradeniya, External Degree Department – University of Sri Jayawardenapura and University of Colombo School of Computing. Although the mandate of all the three institutes is conducting external degree examinations for G.C.E. (A/L) students registered with them there seemed to some differences in the modus operandi among the three.

The Centre for Distance and Continuing Centre (formerly known as External Examinations Branch) of University of Peradeniya has been in operation for the longest period among the three and conducted external degree examinations for two educational programmes – B.A. and B.Sc. The Centre supplies the syllabi for the examinations, conducts examinations, evaluates answer scripts and releases the results. It also conducts general seminars for students and provides a list of private organizations that can help students but does not get involved in teaching the external students.

The External Degree Department of University of Sri Jayawadenapura is responsible for conducting three Management Degree Programmes and one Arts Degree Programme covering all the subjects. The Department organizes and conducts preliminary .seminars for students in several locations, including rural areas, with the participation of University lecturers. University lecturers conduct classes and seminars for external students during week-ends and also conduct training programmes for other non-university lecturers and instructors who conduct sessions at various centres (eg., National Youth Council Centres). NYSC also proposes to the university new courses for their centers.

The University of Colombo School of Computing (UCSC), formerly known as the Institute of Computer Technology, has launched the External Degree programme leading to the award of Bachelor of Information Technology (External). UCSC provides a well-defined detailed syllabus, model question papers and a list of recommended textbooks for students who register with them. Further support is given to BIT students through the regular weekly TV programme telecast over TVLanka, mainly for the first year students.

7.2   Information on Educational Programmes Offered

The qualification required to register for the BA or B Sc External Degree programme of CDCC of University of Peradeniya is 3 G.C.E (A/L) passes and the courses are of 5 years duration. Out of the two programmes BA External Degree programme has a higher market demand. The number of students who registered for the BA External

Degree Programme is about 9500 this year (2007).The BIT (External Degree) of the UCSC is designed specially to enable those who could not enter the University to read for a ICT degree to work towards obtaining such a degree and give an opportunity to those non-graduates already working in the field of ICT to obtain a formal qualification through self-study.   The duration of the external degree BIT programme is three academic years. A **Diploma in Information Technology (External)** is awarded on successful completion of the course examinations of the first year; a **Higher Diploma in Information Technology (External)** is awarded to holders of the IT Diploma on successful completion of course examinations of the second year; and the **Degree Certificate** is awarded to on successful completion of Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3 examinations and fulfilment of other requirements. About 2000 students apply for this programme every year and out of them about 1800 are selected based on the performance at an Aptitude Test.

7.3   New Educational Programmes Envisaged

Department of Management of the University of Peradeniya has designed an external on-line (distant learning) Bachelor of Business Administration programme to be launched in March 2008, in the English medium. This programme involves no teaching by the University but the Department will conduct preliminary general seminars, develop the syllabi, set examinations and evaluate answer scripts. Initially it is envisaged to enrol about 500 for this distant learning programme and increase the number to several thousands subsequently. Those who have achieved higher z-scores but have been denied University entrance are eligible to apply for this programme.

UCSC has already introduced E-learning facilities to the Year 1 BIT students through a Learning Management System, and it is envisaged to extend this facility to all the BIT students.   UCSC intends to improve the links that they maintain with the relevant industries to enable more students with IT Diplomas and Higher Diplomas to be absorbed for on-the-job training.

7.4   Problems Encountered and Suggested Solutions

Generally there is a delay in releasing the External Degree Examination results of the University of Peradeniya. According to the University authorities the delay is caused due to the largeness of the numbers appearing for the examination and also because the marks are not submitted on time by the marking examiners. To overcome this issue it is intended to adopt the Conference Marking system to evaluate the answer scripts and to appoint a non-University panel of examiners with the necessary postgraduate qualifications to serve as marking examiners.

According to UCSC Director low competency in English of the students who register for the BIT programme has been found to be one of the main problems they encounter. As such it has become necessary to support the students not only in IT but also in English. One month orientation programme with special emphasis on English is conducted at the beginning to overcome this problem. Another problem encountered is the large number

of drop-outs at various levels. The tragedy appears to be that some of the students drop out very early even without without trying.

7.5   Examinations

In year 2006, 4258 students sat for the University of Peradeniya, BA External Degree Examination and of them 1889 (44%) passed.

Out of about 1800 that register for the BIT programme of the UCSC about 70% sit the Diploma Examination at the end of first year. Out of them about 80% get through. Since 2001, six batches have completed the BIT Programme of UCSC and about 2300 Diplomas, 900 Higher Diplomas and 400 BIT Degrees have been awarded. As large numbers sit the first year examination, the IT Diploma, the examination centres are de-centralised. The Second Year and the Final Examination are conducted in Colombo at convenient centres such as Royal College, Aquinas, Hindu College, and Devi Balika Vidyalaya. The examinations are conducted only during week-ends and extend over a month. The answer scripts are marked with the help of lecturers from other Universities. The examination results are posted in the web under the names of the training institutes.

CHAPTER 8

VIEW POINT OF HIGHER EDUCATION COURSE PROVIDERS

8.1   Introduction

Altogether twenty three course providers responded to the mail questionnaire which focused mainly on gathering information on the nature of courses provided, new courses envisaged and problems encountered in conducting courses. These course providers, who responded, included approximately equal numbers of government institutes and private institutes. The government institutes included a few Universities, Advanced Technical Institutes, Technical Colleges, and institutes managed by Vocational Training Authority (VTA), National Apprentice and Industrial Training Authority (NAITA), National Youth Services Council (NYSC) and Ministries (eg., Mahapola Training Institute - Sri Lanka Ports Authority and Sri Lanka Export Development Board). Similarly, the private institutes also consisted of different types of institutes. These included institutes affiliated to foreign Universities offering degree and diplomas, institutes conducting study programmes leading to their own diplomas and certificates, institutes conducting study programmes for local external degrees, and institutes offering more than one of these type of programmes.

Analysis of these questionnaires revealed that only a few government institutes [eg., Open University of Sri Lanka (OUSL), Faculty of Graduate Studies – University of Colombo and Advanced Technological Institute – Kandy] and private institutes (eg., Aquinas College of Higher Studies, IDM, ICBT Campus, APIIT, ACBIT and Sarananda Pirivena – Peradeniya) conduct courses specifically aimed at G.C.E. (A/L) completers. The majority of respondents, which included Technical Colleges and institutes managed by NAITA, VTA and NYSC, conduct study programmes to cater mainly for the G.C.E (O/L) completers and the less qualified. However, it was reported that some of the courses offered to G.C.E. (O/L) completers are followed by G.C.E (A/L) completers as well.

As the focus of this study is on G.C.E. (A/L) completers the emphasis here is on those institutes that offer higher education courses specifically for G.C.E (A/L) completers. Information revealed by such government institutions and private institutions is discussed below, separately.

8.2   Information on Education Programmes offered by Government Institutes

Only three *government institutes* that offer courses for the G.C.E. (A/L) completers responded to the questionnaire. They are: OUSL, Faculty of Graduate Studies and the Advanced Technological Institute – Kandy. The background information and courses offered by these institutes are briefly discussed below.

The Open University of Sri Lanka

The Open University of Sri Lanka (OUSL) was set up for the purpose of providing higher educational facilities to persons above 18 years of age with relevant basic qualifications. It is the only recognized University in Sri Lanka where students are able to pursue further education by distance education techniques in keeping with the philosophy of Open and Distance Learning.

The University consists of four <u>Faculties</u> and nineteen Departments, viz.
i.   Education Faculty (with 3 Departments)
ii.   Engineering Technology Faculty (with 6 Departments)
iii.   Humanities and Social Sciences Faculty (with 4 Departments)
iv.   Natural Sciences Faculty (with 6 Departments)

The *Faculty of Education* offers several programmes, all of which lead to the award of a Certificate, Diploma, Degree or a Post Graduate Diploma /Degree. Three study programmes presently conducted by the Faculty of Education are: (i) Advanced Certificate in Pre-School Education (1 year duration), (ii) Diploma in Pre-School / Early Childhood Education (2 years duration) and (iii) B. Ed. in Natural Sciences (4 years duration). G.C.E. (A/L) completers are eligible to apply for these programmes.

The *Faculty of Engineering Technology* consists of six academic departments. Academic programmes of the faculty are offered under the Technology stream and the Industrial Studies stream. The programmes offered under these streams lead to qualification and awards at Certificate, Advanced Certificate, Diploma, Degree, Postgraduate Diploma or a Masters Degree level. The Advanced Certificate in Technology programme of the Faculty is a programme introduced recently. This qualification is expected to open an avenue for entry-level technical grades within the Engineering profession. The minimum duration of the programme is two years for a candidate qualified in GCE (A/L) – Physical Science stream. (Others may have to spend a minimum of one additional year at the Foundation Level 1 until they reach the required standard of the GCE A/L - Mathematics). The medium of instruction of this programme is English. The Diploma in Technology programme of the OUSL (along with the NDT, NDES and the HNDE programmes at other institutions) is one of the main avenues for entry to middle-level technical grades within the engineering profession. However, unlike the other programmes, it is open mainly to working students. The minimum duration of the Diploma programme is three years and the medium of instruction is English. However, courses at Levels 1 and 2 are offered in Sinhala, Tamil, and English.

The four Departments of the *Faculty of Social Sciences* also offer a range of programmes of study leading to the award of certificates, diplomas, degrees or postgraduate diplomas/degrees.

The *Faculty of Natural Sciences* offers a variety of programmes covering a wide spectrum of topics. Many of them are interdisciplinary by nature. The Foundation

Courses, constitute courses offered at Levels 1 and 2, for those not having three G.C.E. (A/L) passes or equivalent qualifications necessary for registration for the degree/diploma/advanced certificate programme at Level 3. Students will be eligible to register for courses at Level 3 of the Bachelor of Science Degree Programme by obtaining a minimum of three passes in any number of sittings at the G.C.E. (A/L) examination in approved science subjects. The Level 3 is equivalent to the first year of the B.Sc. degree programme of a conventional University.

For the students who register for OUSL courses usually the University provides the course syllabus; study modules; access to the OUSL library, OUSL website and the OUSL Counsellors; a list of relevant tutors who can help the students; a list of recommended textbooks; and supplementary TV/Radio programmes.

Faculty of Graduate Studies, University of Colombo

The *Faculty of Graduate Studies* (FGS) of the University of Colombo is one of the leading postgraduate institutions in Sri Lanka.

The FGS offers 22 study programmes, mainly at the postgraduate level, in a diverse range of specialized fields including applied social sciences, business studies, and international affairs. The ongoing study programmes conducted at FGS include ten Postgraduate Diplomas, four Masters Degrees and one Executive Diploma in Marketing.

The Executive Diploma in Marketing (EDM) is designed for candidates who are concerned with managing the marketing process at an operational level as well as those who are looking to build on the knowledge gained at the higher diploma level, and who has a marketing management role in mind for the future. This is a one year programme and includes ten taught modules and an internship report. The students are expected to follow 150 hours of lectures, submit 10 assignments and sit for 10 examination papers.

The entry qualification for the EDM is 3 G.C.E. (A/L) passes (new syllabus), good working knowledge in English and 3 years experience in a recognized organization in the field of business/commerce/marketing. There are 53 students in the current EDM batch.

Advanced Technological Institute - Kandy

The *Advanced Technological Institute* (ATI) in Kandy is one of the ATIs managed and supervised by the Sri Lanka Institute of Advanced Technological Education (SLIATE).

The SLIATE is a leading educational institution in Sri Lanka for higher education and is a statutory body coming under the purview of Higher Education Division, Ministry of Education. SLIATE is mandated to establish Advanced Technical Institutes in every Province for both Engineering and Business Studies At present SLIATE manages and supervises 11 separate ATIs and 7 Sections housed in the Technical Colleges under Department of Technical Education and Training to conduct the courses leading to

Higher National Diplomas and National Diplomas. Facilities available for ATI students include the following:

- Libraries with a large collection of text books and well equipped laboratories.
- Well qualified academic staff and supporting staff.
- Excellent curricula revised from time to time based on the industrial demand.
- Student welfare such as subsided bus season ticket and finance assistant with the help of Mahapola scholarship fund.
- Well equipped computer laboratory with full time internet facility.
- Hostel accommodation for students of ATI's in Colombo and suburban

ATI, Kandy conducts five Higher National Diplomas (HNDs) in the fields of Accountancy, Management, Business Studies, English and Information Technology., in the Sinhala and English media. It also conducts a part time Higher National Diploma in Accountancy course in the Tamil medium.

The entry qualification for the HND study programmes is usually 3 G.C.E. (A/L) passes. To gain entry for the HND in Accountancy, the 3 G.C.E. (A/L) passes should include credit passes in at least two of the subjects.

The duration of HND study programmes ranges from 24 months to 48 months. For HND in Accountancy and HND in Management courses the duration is 48 months, for HND in IT course it is 30 months and for the HND in English and HND in Business Studies courses it is 24 months.

Higher National Diploma in Accountancy Course (final) is accepted as an equivalent to the Degree in Commerce,(Ordinary Pass) awarded by a recognized University.
.

At present 191 students are following the HND in Accountancy as full-time students and 222 as part-time students, including 27 Tamil medium students, at ATI, Kandy.. This is considered as the most popular study programme. The other popular programmes are HND in English (part-time: 88 students and full-time: 48 students) and HND in IT (50 students). The demand for HND in Business Studies is relatively less.

8.3   New Education Programmes Envisaged by Government Institutes

Almost all the institutes conducting courses for G.C.E. (A/L) completers that responded to the questionnaire have reported their intention to commence new courses to address the national development goals and employer needs.

The *Faculty of Education of the OUSL* envisages commencing three new study programmes leading to B. Ed. Degrees in Early Childhood/Primary Education, Special Education Needs (SEN) and Drama & Theatre Education.

The *Faculty of Graduate Studies at the University of Colombo* plans to introduce a set of highly specialized and fully customized study programmes in the future, to cater for the private sector demands. Another forthcoming study programme in the pipeline is Master of Arts in Regional and Development Planning.

Since there is a big demand for Information Technology study programmes, the *Advanced Technological Institute in Kandy* envisages to introduce more IT related study programmes.

8.4   Problems Encountered by Government Institutes and Suggested Solutions

The course providers for G.C.E. (A/L) completers have reported that they have encountered a variety of problems in conducting courses. They have been able to suggest suitable solutions to overcome some of these problems. The problems and the suggested solutions are briefly discussed below.

The *OUSL* has reported that for some of their courses it is difficult to find the required number of applicants (eg., B. Ed. in Natural Sciences). Improving the marketing strategies is suggested as a solution to overcome this issue. Another problem faced by them is finding adequate accommodation for all the applicants for some popular courses (eg., Diploma in Early Childhood Education/Primary Education). Strengthening the facilities at the Centres and recruiting additional visiting academics are suggested as solutions to overcome these problems. Dropping out of students from courses is another serious problem faced by the OUSL. It is estimated that approximately 10% of the Education faculty students who enrol for courses of long durations drop out without completing the courses, at various stages. Improving support extended to students and providing necessary counselling facilities are suggested as possible solutions for this issue. Lack of necessary competencies in English needed to follow the courses is another problem often faced by the University authorities. Introducing a crash programme in English and a special English course for the needy students are considered as possible solutions to address this problem.

The *Faculty of Graduate Studies* also seems to face problems due to lack of basic entry competencies and required English knowledge of students as well as dropping out from the EDM study programme. As a solution to address the issue of entry skills they hope to introduce a basic introductory crash programme at the beginning of the course. To improve the English knowledge of students it is intended to conduct special English sessions and to provide study material in simple English. They are of the view that the drop out rate could be reduced by making the study programme continuous, with less break time intervals, and exposing the students to more practical sessions.

The Advanced Technological Institute in Kandy also has experienced problems due to lack of basic entry skills and English knowledge in students, as well as dropping out from courses at different stages. They intend to provide additional support to needy students to improve their basic entry skills and an extra intensive English course to improve the language difficulties. They are of the view that the dropping out problem could be

curtailed by constantly monitoring the educational progress and other activities of students. High failure rate at the examinations is another serious problem witnessed by the ATI, Kandy. For example, in HND (Accountancy) out of 40 Sinhala medium students only 17 passed the 1st semester examination in 2006. The corresponding pass rate for the English medium was 7 out of 40. The pass rate for the same examination in HND (Management) was 2 out of 16. Providing additional support to develop the self study skills of students and constant monitoring of educational progress are suggested as remedial action.

8.5   Information on Education Programmes Offered by Private Institutes

Out of the private institutes that responded to the questionnaire only six institutes were found to offer higher education study programmes specifically for G.C.E. (A/L) completers. These institutes are: Aquinas College of Higher Studies, IDM, ICBT Campus, APIIT, ACBIT and Sarananda Pirivena – Peradeniya. Information revealed by these institutions on the courses conducted for G.C.E. (A/L) completers is discussed below.

Aquinas College of Higher Studies

.Aquinas College of Higher Education is a leading higher education institute in Sri Lanka; and was awarded the degree awarding status by the University Grants Commission (UGC) in December 2005. It is also registered with the Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission of Sri Lanka to conduct courses and examinations at the tertiary level. Aquinas College offers a wide range of full time and part time certificates, diploma and degree courses. The College is affiliated to the International Federation of Catholic Universities in Paris and the National University of Ireland.

The UGC has granted permission to Aquinas College to award four degrees, viz., B.A. (General), B.A. (Religious Studies), B.I.T. and B. Sc. (Psychology and Counselling). At present it offers three degree programmes leading to BA (General), B.I.T. and B. Sc. (Psychology and Counselling) degrees. These are conducted as internal programmes and are of 3 years duration. The entry requirement for these degree programmes is three G.C.E. (A/L) passes.

Aquinas College also conducts two internal Diploma programmes aimed at G.C.E. (A/L) completers. The first, Diploma in Agriculture is of one year duration and is full-time. The second, Diploma in Psychology of Counselling is conducted in association with the National University of Ireland and is a part-time programme of two year duration. The Diploma in Agriculture is a popular study programme and 53 students are enrolled in the ongoing programme.

Study programmes for external degrees offered by local and foreign Universities are also conducted by Aquinas College. Local external degree study programmes are aimed at B.A. (University of Kelaniya), B.A. (University of Peradeniya), B.A. and B. Sc.- Business

Administration (University of Sri Jayawardenapura). These study programmes are conducted both in Sinhala and English media. Aquinas College also conducts study programmes for external degrees awarded by the University of London.

IDM Computer Studies (Pvt.) Ltd.

The *Institute of Data Management* popularly known as *IDM* is a group of companies dedicated to serve the computer and information technology industry. IDM provides professional computer education and training for school leavers to gain meaningful employment. Courses are designed and developed rapidly to meet the changing demand in the industry. IDM conducts study programmes in a wide range of fields including IT, Business, Management and Engineering leading to the award of Certificates, Diplomas, Advanced Diplomas, Degrees and Postgraduate Degrees.

IDM is affiliated to several foreign Universities (eg, London Metropolitan University - UK, University of Wolverhampton UK, Charles Sturt University – Australia) and Institutes (eg., National Computing Centre – UK, British Computer Society – UK, and Edexcel – UK).

IDM also conducts study programmes for students preparing for BIT Degree offered by the University of Colombo.

Most popular IDM study programmes are found to be B.Sc. in Computing & Information Systems (London Metropolitan University), International Advanced Diploma in Computer Studies (NCC – UK) and International Diploma in Computer Studies (NCC – UK). The numbers of students registered for these study programmes in 2006 are 123, 237 and 364 respectively. IDM finds it difficult to enroll students for Foundation Diplomas, Advanced Diplomas and Postgraduate Degrees.

International College of Business & Technology (ICBT) Campus

ICBT Campus is consolidated to conduct internationally recognized educational programs in association with world class Universities and educational institutes. ICBT is affiliated to: Asian Institute of Technology – Bangkok, Edexcel International – UK, Curtin University of Technology – Australia, University of Western Sydney, Sikkim Manipal University – India and Middlesex University – UK. Eight different Diploma, Higher National Diploma and Degree Programmes in the fields of Computing, Management, Quantity Surveying and Business Administration are conducted at ICBT for G.C.E. (A/L) completers. Out of these Edexcel HND in Computing (UK) TAFE HND in International Business Management (Australia) are found to be most popular among the G.C.E. (A/L) Completers. The demand for B. Sc. in Teaching Technology of Manipal University - India and B.B.A. of Curtin University – Australia are reported as relatively low.

Asia Pacific Institute of Information Technology (APIIT)

APIIT- Sri Lanka is part of an international collaboration with links to a wide range of reputable universities in the UK and Australia. APIIT-Sri Lanka's principal purpose is to produce internationally recognised computing and business professionals who will meet the demands of the industry and commerce. To achieve these objectives, APIIT-Sri Lanka provides excellent opportunities for classroom learning, independent and group studies and research

APIIT School of Computing offers Diploma and Degree programmes in Computing/ IT. Equal emphasis on theory and practice of computing and emphasis on project work towards the latter part of the programme is a distinctive feature of the Computing Degrees.

The Computing Degree programmes aim to develop professional skills as well as provide good practical grounding in the chosen area of study. All the specialisations provide prospects of employment in a wide spectrum of Computing/IT and cater to the growing demand for industry specialists such as System Analysts, Project Managers, Database Administrators, Analyst Programmers and Data Communication Specialists

APIIT School of Computing offers the following Degree Programmes aimed at G.C.E (A/L) completers, in association with Staffordshire University – UK.   - B.Sc (Hons) Computing,

- B.Sc (Hons) Computing with specialisation in Software Engineering
- B.Sc (Hons) – Business Information Technology
- B.Sc (Hons) – Business Computing
- B.Sc (Hons) – Business Administration

Out of these degree programmes B.Sc. (Hons.) Computing, B.Sc. (Hons.) Buss. Admin. and B.Sc. (Hons.) in BIT are reported as the most popular programmes. APIIT finds it difficult to enroll adequate number of students for the part time degree programmes.

The general requirements for admission for the above study programmes are 2 passes in GCE Advanced Level Examination and 5 Passes inclusive of Credit passes for English and Mathematics in G.C.E. (O/L) Examination. Those with G.C.E (O/L) qualifications may enter the Degree/Diploma programmes on completion of an eight - month Foundation Course. Advanced entry options are available for students who have prior   qualifications   in   Business   or   Computing/IT   fields.

The duration for Degree programmes is 3 year (full-time) or 4 1/2 years (part-time); and for Diploma programmes is 1year (full-time) or 1 1/2 years (part-time).

APIIT-Sri Lanka's affiliation to over twenty universities in the UK and Australia enables students to obtain credit transfers to foreign Universities if they wish to complete part of

their studies abroad. APIIT students have the option of transferring to the second year or final year of relevant Degree Programmes.

AIMS College of Business and Information Technology (ACBIT)

ACBIT of AIMS Educational Services (Pvt) Ltd has established an affiliated campus of Preston University – USA in Sri Lanka. Sri Lankan students can now obtain Preston University degrees by following courses conducted by ACBIT.

Two degree programmes aimed at G.C.E. (A/L) completers have been introduced, namely, Bachelor of Business Administration and Bachelor of Science in Information Technology. Both these degree programmes are available either as full-time degrees of two and half years duration or as top-up degrees of twelve months duration. Those who opt for the top-up degrees could admit to the final year of the respective Preston University degree programme directly, provided they have earned the necessary pre-qualifications.

These degree programmes are still at an early stage of implementation and only the top-up degree programmes have been commenced so far. There are 10 students following each of the ongoing BBA and B. Sc. (IT) degree programmes.

Sarananda Pirivena, Peradeniya

Sarananda Pirivena is a school run for Buddhist monks as well as for lay students, free of charge Teachers of this institute are paid by the Government and its educational activities are monitored by the Ministry of Education. Unlike in a normal school at Sarananda Pirivena classes are conducted beyond the G.C.E. (A/L) also, to include GAQ and degree levels. The GAQ and degree classes are also taught by teachers of the Piirivena. The Pirivena caters for almost all the BA General Degree subjects.

Those students who succeed at the G.C.E. (A/L) examination can join a General Arts Qualifying (GAQ) class and proceed to obtain an external degree from the University of Peradeniya. Currently 70 students are following the GAQ classes and 20 following the BA Degree classes. The University does not provide any special facilities to the external degree programmes conducted by the Pirivena, other than providing the syllabi. Library facilities for students are provided by the Priivena.

The pass rates of the examinations of the external degree programme are fairly satisfactory. Nearly 80% of the students who sit the GAQ examination and a slightly lower percentage who sit the BA degree examination usually get through.

8.6   New Education Programmes Envisaged by Private Institutes

With a view to producing knowledgeable persons to manage the plantation sector of the country *Aquinas College* intends to introduce a Diploma in Plantation Management.

Taking in to consideration the high industrial demand and the employer needs, the *IDM* envisages introducing new study programmes relating to IT Enabled Services, Soft Skills Development and Trade Certification.

The *ICBT Campus* intends to start a HND in Electronic Communication study programme to cater for the demand of students who failed to gain entry to the NDT programme of the University of Moratuwa. Further, by reckoning the worldwide demand ICBT envisages to commence study programmes in HND in e-Business and B. Sc. in Bio-technology, as well.

Going by the demand for specialised skilled workers to contribute for the future development of the country *APIIT – Sri Lanka* intends to expand their portfolio of courses in the fields of Business and Computing.

Since there is a great demand in the private sector organisations for persons with postgraduate qualifications in Administration and Information Technology the *ACBIT* has just commenced a MBA programme and a M. Sc. (IT) programme.

Sarananda Pirivena, which currently conducts classes only for external degree Arts subjects, intends to extend their study programmes to include external degree programmes in Management subjects. At present Sarananda Pirivena serves only as a course provider for the external degrees of the University of Peradeniya. Their aspiration is to get the Pirivena promoted as an institute affiliated to the University of Peradeniya, to enable them to prepare students for degree programmes more effectively.

8.7   Problems Encountered by Private Institutes and Suggested Solutions

For those students identified as not possessing the required entry skills the *Aquinas College* provides extra assistance to overcome their weaknesses. Further, special English classes are conducted for students who are not up to the required standard in English. Dropping out from courses is witnessed at Aquinas College, as well. The College attributes dropping out to reasons such as family burdens, financial problems and English difficulties. Identifying students with such difficulties and extending possible assistance for them to continue their studies are considered as possible suggestions to overcome this issue.

At the *IDM,* a Foundation Programme is conducted for students who do not possess the necessary basic knowledge and entry skills. Student dropping out from courses is experienced at IDM Centres as well. To overcome this issue students with problems are

given extra guidance and are directed to repeat programmes or transferred to other programmes that match to their interests and aptitude. Lack of required knowledge and skills in English is not considered as a serious problem in IDM Colombo Centres. However, students in IDM Branch Centres do experience difficulties in English. To overcome this difficulty sessions are conducted bi-lingually.

ICBT seems to have encountered significant problems due to the student drop out from courses and the lack of English and self study skills in students. Regular monitoring of students, counselling and promoting parent care are suggested as solutions to overcome the dropping out issue. Special training programmes in self study skills and intensive programmes in English are conducted to address the other problems.

APIIT – Sri Lanka has adopted several strategies to address the problems relating to lack of entry skills, dropping out, lack of self study skills and lack of English skills. They are as follows: A foundation programme is conducted to enhance the entry skills. A counselling programme aimed at guiding the students to focus on studies and achieve the objectives has been introduced to minimize the dropping out numbers. The courses are suitably structured to promote students use to self study skills. Special training is offered to students with difficulties in English.

The problems highlighted by *Saranada Pirivena* were found to be somewhat different from those mentioned above. They have reported that lack of entry skills and dropping out of students are not serious problems for them. The main problems and suggested solutions are as follows:

- As GAQ and Degree classes are conducted during normal school hours and because most of these students are adults engaged in various activities the attendance of students has been found to be generally weak. Financial difficulties faced by the students are considered as one of the main reasons causing this issue. Pirivena authorities suggest: (i) to grant subsidised bus season tickets for their external degree students; and (ii) to offer external degree students scholarships, such as Mahapola, and loan schemes.

- External degree students of Sarananda Pirivena are seriously affected by the long delays, usually over a year, caused in releasing the examination results of both the GAQ as well as the BA degree. They urge the University authorities to take action to reduce this long delay and expedite the release of examination results. Adopting the Conference System of evaluating answer scripts is suggested as a possible solution to overcome this problem.

- It is reported that no convocation is held for successful external degree students of University of Peradeniya, at present. The Pirivena authorities suggest to conduct a convocation for the external degree students of University of Peradeniya also, as done in other external degree awarding Universities (eg., University of Sri Jayawardenapura and University of Kelaniya).

CHAPTER 9

DISCUSSION UNDER THE OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

i. ***Identify the main types of study programmes that are already available for G.C.E. (A/L) completers to pursue higher education.***

The Open University of Sri Lanka

Nearly fifty percent of the G.C.E. (A/L) completers who have not secured places in the national universities consider learning through distance mode as a means of tertiary education. (DEMP, 2006). Out of responses of the G.C.E. (A/L) completers who did not apply for admission to national universities when requested to rank their liking for learning in the distance mode, 93% was at high level. (Tables 5.26 & 5.29)

The Open University of Sri Lanka is the main education programme provider in the distance mode. The OUSL offers Certificate Courses, Diploma Courses, and Advanced Diploma Courses from its four faculties of Education, Engineering Technology, Humanities and Social Sciences and Natural Sciences. There are no specific entry qualifications to enroll as student unless specified. Any person above 18 years can enroll as a student. The main types of study programmes popular among G.C.E. (A/L) completers available at OUSL are as follows.

- Degree of Bachelor of Education
- Advanced Certificate in Pre-school Education
- Certificate in Pre-school Education
- Diploma in Technology
- Diploma in Industrial Studies
- Certificate in Industrial Studies
- Foundation Programme in Engineering
- Bachelor of Law
- Bachelors Degree in Management Studies
- Bachelor of Arts in Social Sciences
- Diploma in English
- Bachelor of Science
- Bachelor of Science in Nursing
- Advanced Certificate in Laboratory Technology

Some of the above courses specify passes in subjects at G.C.E. (A/L) while others insist on Foundation Courses at OUSL. Advanced Certificate Courses usually require successful completion of a Certificate course. The courses at OUSL are not limited to the ones listed here. Several other courses are available for which the entry requirements and the course details

could be obtained from the Registrar, OUSL. The Open University also has provincial centers where they conduct contact sessions with registered students. These centers are equipped with computer facilities, library, seminar rooms and welfare services to students.

Professional Courses for Management Accountants

Professional courses in Management, Accountancy, Business Management, Information Communication Technology and Education are very popular among G.C.E. (A/L) completers. (Table 5.21).

The three most popular institutes providing professional courses in accountancy are,

- The Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA),
- Association of Chartered Certified Accountants Sri Lanka.(ACCA) and
- Association of Accounting Technicians of Sri Lanka (AAT)

The courses provided by the above three institutes are in stages leading to CIMA Advanced Diploma in Management Accounting, Chartered Certified Accountant and AAT (SL) respectively. The Association for Accounting Technicians has their own provincial study centers, while there are several private institutes offering training programmes for CIMA, ACCA and AAT in major cities in Sri Lanka (Chapter 2 – Literature Survey)

External Degree & Certificate Programmes of National Universities

Most students in the sample have been seeking information from newspaper advertisements, from their friends, external degree units of national universities and guidance teachers in school. Many are not aware of the Technical & Vocational Education Commission, JobsNet, Open University programmes and vocational exhibitions and fairs. (Tables 6.2, 6.3 and 6.7)

University of Moratuwa and University of Colombo School of Computing offer many courses including short-term courses. University of Sri Jayawardenapura, Kelaniya, Peradeniya, Sabaragamuwa, Jaffna, Ruhuna, Wayamba and the Eastern University of Sri Lanka offer External degrees through their External Examinations Units. These programmes are specially designed for G.C.E. (A/L) completers with passes in three subjects at G.C.E. (A/L) Examination, who could not enroll at the programmes in national universities.

Short courses conducted at the University of Moratuwa are mainly for industry. These courses are administered by the Moratuwa University Industry Interaction Cell. The popular programmes are in the fields of,

- Ceramics,
- Construction Management
- Quality Assurance in Construction
- Refrigeration,
- Productivity Management
- GIS Applications
- Waste water treatment
- Fabrics
- Structural Design of Steel work
- Communication skills

The External Degree Programmes at the University of Kelaniya are in the fields of,

- Arts
- Commerce
- Science &
- Management

The University of Colombo School of Computing (UCSC), formerly known as Institute of Computer Technology, conducts short training programmes in the most advanced and up to date topics that are in demand in the industry. These programmes are designed with a view to enable a participant to learn about a particular programming language, a design methodology, new technologies or the use of specialized packages.

Bachelor of Information Technology is a very popular programme conducted by the School of Computing. The UCSC provides a well-defined detailed syllabus, model question papers and a list of recommended textbooks for students qho register with them. After the completion of the first year in this three year programme, most students find employment and continue to study on a part time basis to complete the final BIT Degree. The School of Computing conducts weekly TV programmes telecast over TVLanka mainly for the first year students.UCSC has already introduced e-learning facilities to the Year 1 BIT students through a learning management system and it is envisaged to exited this facility to all BIT students.

The External Degree Department of University of Sri Jayawardenapura is responsible for conducting the following programmes.

- B.Sc. in Business Administration,
- B.Sc. In Public Administration &
- Bachelor of Commerce.
- Bachelor of Arts

The Department organizes and conducts preliminary seminars for students in severa locations including rural areas, with the help of university academic staff. The academic staff of the university designs the Examination Syllabuses for these programmes and the learning modules. The SJU uses the facilities at the National Youth Services Centers in major cities of Sri Lanka to conduct lectures, seminars and conferences. While the academic staff of university provides tuition during weekends the organizational work is done by the NYSC. Requests for new programmes are usually done by NYSC depending on the local demand.

University of Sabaragamuwa, Department of External Examinations conducts the following programmes for the G.C.E. ((A/L) completers

- Certificate in Computer Applications,
- Diploma in Software Engineering,
- Diploma in Advanced English,
- Diploma in Tourism Management &
- Diploma in Business management.

The University of Ruhuna conducts External Examinations on Bachelors' Degree (General) in Arts, Business Administration and Commerce. The Examination Syllabuses and Course

material are developed by the university academic staff and the students attend classes held in several private institutes. The examinations are conducted by the university.

In addition to the degree programmes the University of Ruhuna conducts the following Diploma and certificate programmes for the G.C.E. (A/L) complerers.

- Higher Diploma in Accountancy & Finance Management,
- Diploma in Computer Science,
- Diploma in English,
- Certificate in Computer Applications &
- Certificate in English.

University of Rajarata conducts Certificate & Diploma Courses in English.

Eastern University, External Degree Unit conducts Bachelors' Degree programmes in Agriculture, Science & Commerce.

University of Jaffna provides External degree programmes in

- Bachelor of Commerce,
- Bachelor of Arts &
- Bachelor of Fine Arts

The Center for Distance & Continuing Education (formerly known as external examination branch) of university of Peradeniya has organized educational programmes leading to B.A. and B.Sc. during the last three years. The Center provides the Examination Syllabus, conducts examinations, evaluates the answer scripts and releases the results. It also conducts seminars for registered students and helps them in finding suitable private tuition providing organizations. G.C.E. (A/L) completers with three passes at A/L are eligible to apply for degree programmes. The demand is high for the B.A. External Degree programme and about 9500 students are registered for the year 2007.

The Department of Mamagement of the University of Peradeniya has designed an external on-line (distant learning) Bachelor of Business Administration programme to be launched in March 2008 in English medium. It is envisaged to enroll 500 students with high Z-score rating to this programme.

Distance and Online Education Programmes

Opening the doors for the children who were not able to enter university, the Sri Lanka Association of Distance Educators (SLADE) was formed recently at the Sri Lanka Institute of Development Administration. With SLADE launched the Online Education Course through seven partner institutions.

SLADE is a result of the ADB funded, Distance Education Modernization Project (DEMP) of the Ministry of Higher Education. This project focuses mostly on using technology to expand the scope for youth in this country as traditional methods cannot deliver the massive expansion and demand.

Seven programmes offered by leading higher educational institutes of Sri Lanka such as the University of Peradeniya, the University of Jaffna, the University of Moratuwa and many more, have already been developed using online techniques.

There are 21 other institutions both in the public and private sector embarking into this online education, which is going to be beneficial to the large number of youth aspiring to tertiary education and also those employed, seeking personal development for career upgrading.

Computers and Internet have made distance learning easy and faster as in much other day to day tasks. Education Institutes such as OUSL, professional organizations, public and private sector institutions have been invited to take over this programme. Over 35 Degrees, Diplamas and Certicication programmes are available to cater to the local education market. These courses are based on National On-Line Distance Educational Services (NODES). Nine district education centers have been established It is envisaged to open 20 more centers by end of 2007.

Sri Lanka Institute of Information Technology (SLIIT)

The admission requirement for B.Sc.Degree is A/L passes in three subjects. And the requirement to enter Bachelor of Information Technology is a minimum of one pass at the G.C.E. (A/L). The programmes at SLIIT for G.C.E. (A/L) completers are,

- B.Sc. (Hon) in Information Technology.
- B.Sc. (Hon) in Information Systems,
- B.Sc. (Hon) in Computer Systems and Networking,
- B.Sc. in Information Technology &
- Bachelor of Information Technology.
-

M.Sc. programmes in Information Technology are also available at SLIIT for which the admission requirement is a Bachelor's Degree.

Private Computing and Information Technology Programmes leading to foreign University Degrees

Leading private computer education institutes in Sri Lanka prepare students for the BIT Examination conducted by the University Of Colombo School Of Computing. Some of the programmes leading to degrees from foreign universtities are,

- BIT Internal Degree Programme of Charles Sturt University of Australia,
- M.Sc in Information Technology, Keel University, UK,
- B.Sc. in Information Technology, Curtin University of Australia.
- B. Sc. (Hon) in Computing, Staffordshire University , UK

ii. *Identify reasons that have hindered GCE (A/L) completers from following available higher education study programmes*.

The principal reasons for G.C.E. (A/L) completers not to apply for university admission after acquiring the necessary grades at the examination were listed and 743 qualified students who did not apply were requested to show their responses (Table 5.9). Eighty eight percent of the responses were on reasons concerning the economic difficulties in the household. The balance12% of the responses was from students who are concerned with indiscipline in the universities such as 'fresher ragging' resulting in student strikes causing 'interruption to academic sessions'.

A total of 563 G.C.E. (A/L) completers who are not following any study programmes at the time of answering the Questionnaire have responded to a list of reasons as to why they are not on any tertiary education programme. (Table 5.11). Out of the total number of responses 37% is on unawareness of alternatives available to G.C.E. (A/L) completers. Nearly 50% of the responses are on poor economic conditions in the family.

These findings are confirmed by the free responses given by the sample of students. They have mentioned the need of bursaries, scholarships, easy tuition fee payment schemes etc. for the students who are in tertiary education programmes.

Personal factors influence students for not engaging in tertiary education. A list of 6 such factors was presented to students to respond at four levels. It is seen that the student sample possess all the listed factors at a high level except the factor on home economic condition. The highest being the availability of self confidence (Table 5.23)

iii. *Recognize the problems encountered by students who are following higher education programmes*

The problems encountered by G.C.E. (A/L) completers who are following study programmes at present are many. The open response questions in the questionnaires were designed to identify these problems. The problems were analyzed under the broad programme titles.

Computer training programmes

Problems stated by some of the students who follow computer training classes at private institutes are as follows.

- The time allocated for practical work with computers is not sufficient.
- Computers are shared and the facilities for practical work are inadequate.

- Classes are large and the lecture rooms are crowded. Seats have to be shared.
- Time table is unsatisfactorily structured. A six-month training programme is sometimes extended to 8 months, some Units taking more teaching time than expected.
- The end of course examination results are delayed inconveniencing the students to make their follow-up study plans
- The issue of certificates is delayed. Inconveniencing the job seekers.

External Degree Programmes of Universities

Out of the 109 students who follow External Degree Programmes of universities, some of the problems stated by 58 (53%) are as follows.

- Conducting examinations and releasing of results are delayed and as a result the programmes are extended and the timetables are adjusted.
- In private institutes providing tuition for External Degrees of Universities the classrooms are crowded & teacher attention to pupils is unsatisfactory.
- No discussion with teacher is possible as the classes are large.
- Library facilities provided at private institutes are very poor. In some institutes no library is available.
- No standard books are available for some the topics
- There are many External Degree Certificate holders and not much recognition is given to these certificates. As a result the students are not motivated.
- The content coverage under some of the topics is inadequate at some of the private institutes.
- There are instances where the opinion of tutors differs creating problems for the students.
- Good instructors are not available for some of the topics.
- The private training institutes are located in cities far away from the residences of the students. A considerable amount of money and time is spent on travelling by some of the students.
- The programme fees and lecture fees charged at private institutes are found to be unaffordable for some of the students.
- Initial registration fee and examination fees charged by universities are high.

- Large numbers of students enroll and the classes are large in most institutes resulting in teaching quality deteriorating.
- Instructors are recruited on heir teaching capabilities and not so much on their academic qualifications.

- The External Degree programmes get dragged on for several years mainly due to the delay in conducting examinations and releasing results. These students have to plan their living and as such most students drop out.

(It should be noted that all the private institutes do not have all the shortcomings listed above. Only the most common ones are identified for reporting)

Problems more specific:

Few comments made by individuals directed towards specific institutes are given below.

- Some of the OUSL gets unduly dragged on causing lot of inconvenience to students.
- The duration of the training programme at German-Lanka Technical Training Institute is inadequate. Students recommend a further 6 months of extension of the programme.
- Navy Engineering TTI programme has competition from private sector institutes. Private institute certificates get more recognition and many government institute certificate holders are unemployed.
- The course duration of 4 years on Town and Country Planning Programme at the university of Moratuwa is too long.
- The allowance paid to NAITA trainees is insufficient.
- The attendance of tutors at some of the NYSC Programmes is poor, resulting in training programmes getting prolonged. There are delays in the issue of NYSC Certificates and also the recognition given to these certificates is low. Large numbers of students drop out due to these delays.
- The curricula of some of the NYSC Programmes needs revision to meet the need of the country.

37. Over 50% of the 'High' responses are for availability of Telephone, Radio, Audio Cassette, TV and Library facility. Home environment is highly favourable for tertiary education of children except in the field of finances.

iv. *Recognize the problems encountered by higher education course providers*

Generally there is a delay in releasing the External Degree Examination results of the universities. According to the University authorities the delay is caused due to the largeness of the numbers appearing for the examination and also because the marks are not submitted on time by the marking examiners. The examinations are usually held in schools. Holding of the examinations is delayed due to non-availability of free classrooms in schools for the purpose. To overcome this problem the University Of Colombo School Of Computing conducts the examination in parts during weekends. For speedy marking of answer scripts it is intended to

adopt the Conference Marking system and to appoint a non-University panel of examiners with the necessary postgraduate qualifications to serve as marking examiners.

According to UCSC Director Low competency in English of the students who register for the BIT programme has been found to be one of the main problems they encounter. As such it has become necessary to support the students not only in IT but also in English. One month orientation programme with special emphasis on English is conducted at the beginning to overcome this problem. Another problem encountered is the high level of drop-out at various

levels. The university has no control over the students dropping out. At present the universities do not have any records of student dropout.

v. *Propose ways and means of making the available higher education studyprogrammes more attractive to GCE (A/L) completers.*

It is clearly evident that, employment oriented study programmes are preferred by the G.C.E. (A/L) completers. (Table 6.8) Therefore it is necessary to look at what the employer needs are and meet them at the training, thus making the education programmes more attractive. The employers in the private sector in their recruitment preferences and policies were placing high value on a set of attributes and capabilities which they reported were deficient in the products of the present school and University system that are coming into the labour force. Theses were: an inquiring mind, ability for analysis and reasoning, the application of knowledge to practical problems and a problem solving approach, knowledge and interest in contemporary social and economic development in the country, capacity for leadership, team work, work ethos with values of productivity and discipline imparted through appropriate learning experiences in suitable technical/vocational subjects and most important, good communication skills, both oral as well as written even in the mother tongue, not to mention English" (WB, 2005)

Development Centre (EDC) jointly sponsored by USAID, Bureau of Asia and Near East and USAID/Sri Lanka. Referring to Skills Training for Private Sector Development the report highlights that there is an urgent need for training of new recruits in the following areas: soft skills of communication, presentation skills, critical thinking, and interpersonal skills; English skills and technical skills (IT) and sector specific skills. Based on studies on best practice it is recommended that training incorporates a "IT Plus Strategy", where IT training is contextualised to the specific sector, such as IT and Tourism, IT and Manufacturing, IT and Service. Under this

integrative framework, IT is applied to the specific work context of specific sectors of the economy (Recommendation No. 6). "IT Plus Strategy" is further elaborated below:

It is evident from Table 4.3 that a signifiantly high percentage of female students (61%) is not following any study programme. It is necessary to organize more of education programmes that would be of interest to females. These programmes preferably should include nursing, home economics, receptionist etc.

Over 75% of the students in the total sample are ether from the Art or Commerce streams in schools. Education programmes based towards arts could attract more students.

It is observed from the response percentages, that the study programmes in demand for all G.C.E. (A/L) completers who are not on any study programme at present are in the fields of Management, Accountancy, Business Management, Information Communication Technology and Education. Organizing more programmes in these fields can attract more students. Over 50% of the student responses are in favour of the distance learning properties such as

comparatively easiness, opportunity for self-learning and learning with less stress. Organizing the programmes in demand for students learning in the distance mode could attract more students. Studying as external students on a part-time basis seems to be more popular among G.C.E. (A/L) completers who follow tertiary education programmes at present.

The use of Radio and TV is available to a high level as indicated by the percentages of responses. 81% of the responses recorded at high level indicate the availability of access to library use. 67% of the responses are for 'High' on the availability of a telephone. But the response percent on the availability of E-mail and Intrnet are low.

50% of the responses are in favour of learning through distance mode and register with professional study programmes such as Accountancy and Law. Only a very few like to repeat the G.C.E. (A/L) examination.

Tertiary education programmes should be adequately publicized indicating the services that go with the programme, duration, fees etc. Several sources of information are currently available to G.C.E. (A/L) completers at different levels. The students responded

The percentages reveal that the main sources of information on available tertiary education programmes are the newspapers, parents and family member.

      vi.   *Explore for innovative study programmes conforming to the country's developmental needs and employers requirements that are appropriate to be introduced in higher education institutes.*

- Courses for employed persons
- Course emphasizing soft skills
- Highly specialized and customized study programmes for working people
- Pharmacists
- Lab technicians

      vii.   *Study and interpret lessons that can be learnt from other countries, of similar background, to improve access to higher education.*

- IT for professions
- High Technology non-university courses
- Apprenticeship

CHAPTER 10

CONCLUSIONS

10.1   The sample of students who are not on any study programme at   present

- The large majority of G.C.E. (A/L) completers like to continue tertiary education. 50% of those who are not engaged in any studies at present applied for admission to national universities. (Tables 5.1). This is an indication of the students, willingness to pursue tertiary education.

- Even the students from families with low income level like to engage themselves in tertiary education and they are also highly motivated. (Table 5.16)

- The percentage of students who applied for university admission is high (88%) (Table 6.1) Tis indicates the students' interest in following university study programmes

- More females apply for university admission than males (Table 5.2). An expansion of alternate tertiary education programmes available for females needs to be considered.

- Out of the number of students who were eligible to apply for university admission, the percentages applied from Central, North Central, North & Eastern and Uva provinces are below 50%.(Table 5.3)

- Eighty percent of the non-study sample was from the Arts & Commerce streams in schools (Table 5.6). It s implied that tertiary education opportunities BE made available for students with arts and commerce background.

- Seventy-five percent of the sample of students who applied for university admission did not find places in the universities. The balance 25% is on related reasons as 'did not get the preferred course or the preferred university' (Table 5.7).

- Nearly one forth of the responses from Physical Science Students indicates that they are not accepting the programme offered to them. Nearly one third of responses from Biological Science students indicate that they are not accepting the programme offered to them. (Table 5.8) The ambition of these students is to enter medical and engineering faculties.

- Out of responses given by students to a list of reasons on why they did not apply for university admission, 88% concern economic problems in the family. The balance 12% of student responses is concerned with indiscipline in the universities such as ragging and follows up strikes causing interruption of academic sessions (Table 5.9). Poverty of family and the need of the students for work to support the parents prevent them from applying for university admission.

- The most outstanding personal factor that hinders the students' following tertiary education programmes is the poor economic conditions at home.(Table 5.23)

- The reasons for not following other programmes alternative to university programmes were listed and 37% of the responses were on 'unawareness of alternate programmes' and 50% on ,poor economic conditions in the family'(Table5.11)

- Out of the 867 students in the non-study sample who completed study programmes, 30% is employed. Of the employed 54.4% is with a background of computer education. (Table 5.12). IT study programmes are more employment oriented.

- sixty-six percent of the students in the study-sample still follow study programmes and 56% of them are in the field of computer education.(Tables 6.5 &6.6) Quality improvement of computer education programmes, specially those conducted by the private sector is essential.(Free responses of students)

- There is a less likelihood of employment dependent of the Students' G.C.E. (A/L) study stream (Table 5.14)

- Most students who are not employed (49%) engage themselves in reading, watching TV or helping parents at home. (Table 5.15)

- High percentage of students prefer learning in the distance mode (50%) They like to study in the fields of Accountancy or Law. They appreciate the opportunity for self-study and learning with less stress in distance mode of learning.(Table 5.22)

10.2 The sample of students who are at present following tertiary education programmes (ss)

- Almost all the students in the sample (SS) did not get selected to universities because of their low Z-score rating. (Table 6.1). Out of the students who are qualified to enter universities only 12 – 15% finds places in national universities.

- High percentage of students (61%) currently follow degree programmes mainly in the External Examination Departments of the national universities and a few in the degree awarding private institutes.(Table 6.3)

- Studying as external students on apart-time basis seems to be more popular among G.C.E. (A/L) completers who follow tertiary education programmes at present Tables 6.4 (1) & (2). These students are mature and some of them are n part-time employment.

- The sources of information used by students in deciding higher education are informal. Many are not aware of the Technical & Vovational Education Commission, JobsNet, Open University programmes and vocational exhibitions and fairs. (Table 6.7) Career guidance programmes and formal advertising should open doors for many students to offer tertiary education programmes.

- Students prefer employment-oriented programmes of study. They are also particular about the teaching and evaluation methods used in the classroom (Table 6.8) Students prefer on a priority basis further development of study programmes in the fields of Information Technology, Education, Management and Law. (Table 6.9).

- High percentage of students engages themselves in reading news papers, books and other documents and also help parents in house work. During leisure. (Table 6.12)

- All the students in the study-sample (SS) like to follow tertiary education programmes. Motivation level is also very high (Table 6.13)

- Parents had been the main source of information for the students who are currently following education programmes. Also the information provided by parents and family members had been useful at a high level (Table 6.13)

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CHAPTER 11

RECOMMENDATIONS

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The following recommendations are made amongst others to provide direction for the formulation of a Policy on Tertiary Education.

1. **The External Degree programmes of the National Universities including those at the Open University of Sri Lanka should be expanded**.

   - The expansion should incorporate e-learning to provide course material, provide evaluations, assessments, projects, discussions with e -facilitator and the fellow learners. Work towards establishing digital libraries at the provincial centers.
   - End users of e-learning are the students. They should be provided with and adequate level of computer literacy.
   - Acceptable academic quality and relevance to suit the economic and social needs of the country should be maintained.
   - Hands on experience which is essential for science and technology biased programmes should be provided along with modern
     E-learning techniques.
   - Conducting examinations on schedule and reliable marking of answer scripts at conferences can win the confidence of the students and relieve them of the burden of waiting long for the certification.

2. **The Quality and Relevance of Computer Education Programmes provided by private sector should improve.**

   - The Technical and Vocational Education Commission needs to specify the norms for facilities and services that should be made available at the training organizations.
   - The TVEC should work towards quality assurance and accreditation of computer education programmes.
   - Continuous development of curricula to meet the needs of industry and other academic institutions as universities providing higher degrees on IT.
   - Provide vocation based IT training (It for management, IT for business, IT for hotel industry, IT for tourism etc.)

- **Develop and market the non-university Tertiary Education Sector.**

  ▪ The tertiary education programme providers should conduct a market survey to identify the books, journals, and compact discs relevant to their programmes and keep the students informed of the availability of such resources. In institutes where regional centers are established these resources should be kept in stock at the respective libraries.
  ▪ Advertising of tertiary education programmes emphasizing the upward mobility with the university system should be done. Advertising should be carried out using the newspapers, the radio and TV, as these are the most popular channels among students.
  ▪ Advertising of programmes emphasizing the employment orientation is essential.
  ▪ Career guidance network incorporating schools with G.C.E. (A/L) classes and all tertiary education providers should be established. State and private sector cooperation is recommended for updating and maintaining the network.
  ▪ Establish linkages with Human Resource Development agencies.
  ▪ Organizing fairs and exhibitions to popularize tertiary education programmes is recommended

- **Development of an expansion strategy for tertiary education opportunities based on the socio-economic status of Sri Lankan community**

  ▪ More liberal education grants, scholarships, bursaries, bank loans are recommended.
  ▪ Learner support with more apprenticeship and on the job training opportunities to lesson the financial burdens on the families should be organized.
  ▪ Create an environment for private sector sponsorship of students in government tertiary education institutes by consulting their views on course renewal and curriculum development
  ▪ Upgrading of National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at all levels and guiding trainees to Colleges of Technology and subsequently to the proposed Technical University.
  ▪ There are different ways to provide soft skills training to individuals moving into the workforce. A job readiness curriculum that emphasizes employability skills is one approach. Soft skills training can also be incorporated into vocational training and other program activities. Institutes that provide employment-oriented tertiary education can structure programs to simulate the workplace. One challenge for tertiary education institutes is to assess and document soft skills. Universities and other tertiary education institutes can market their soft skills training to employers and work with them to develop standards for job readiness.

- **Awareness programmes should be organized for more females to undertake studies in the fields of nursing, home economics, hotel receptionists, air line ticketing, beautician courses etc.**

- Needs assessment surveys on women employment are recommended
- Tracer studies are recommended to determine the career development of women.

ANNEXE 1

QUESTIONNAIRE 1

QUESTIONNAIRE TO GCE (A/L) COMPLETERS WHO ARE NOT REGISTERED WITH ANYTERTIARY EDUCATION COURSE AT PRESENT

SECTION 1; Background Information

1. Name with initials		2. Gender	Male / Female

3. Age in years	Yrs. ….	4. Civil status	Married / unmarried

5. Name of your AL school		Province	

6. Private address		District	

7. Study Stream	Arts/Commerce/Physical Science/Bio science/Other	8.Medium	S/T/E

SECTION 2: For students who are not doing any studies at present

1.0. GCE (A/L) & Other Qualifications

1.1 Year/s in which university entry eligibility was obtained	200.. /200.. /200..
1.2 Have you applied for university entry on your qualifications?	Yes / No
1.3 During which year/s did you apply for university entry?	200.. /200.. /200..
1.4 In which attempt did you apply for university entry?	1st / 2nd / 3rd

1.5 State below your best GCE (A/L) results on which you applied to university.

Year	Subjects	Grades
	1. 2. 3. 4.	

1.6 Indicate with a tick the reason/s that influenced your not entering university.

	Reason	Yes		Reason	Yes
i	Did not get a place in university		vi	Family members dislike	
ii	Did not get the course of choice		vii	Family responsibilities	
iii	Did not get the university of choice		viii	Economic problems	
iv	Fresher rag scare		ix	Necessity to find employment	
v	Prolonged courses due to closure		x	Other	

1.7 What Qualifications have you obtained after GCE (A/L)?

Qualification	Institute	Year

1.8 If you have not obtained any qualification after GCE (A/L), indicate the reason/s that prevented your higher education with a tick.

	Reason	Yes		Reason	Yes
i	No information about alternatives		vii	Family responsibilities	
ii	No knowledge about further education		viii	Dislike to be away from family	
iii	Education unnecessary for employment		ix	Need to marry	
iv	Poor health		x	No incentives for further education	
v	Poor family economic status		xi	Like to be doing nothing	
vi	Need to earn to meet family expenses		xii	Any other	

2.0 Employment Status

2.1 Are you employed at present? Yes/No	2.2 If 'Yes' what is the nature of employment? Full-time / Part-time / Self Employed
2.2.1 What type of work do you do?	

2.3 If you are not employed, how do you send most of your time? (more than one tick is possible)

	Reason	Yes		Reason	Yes
i	Reading books/news papers		x	Do home work	
ii	Self study		xi	Social work	
iii	Listening to radio		xii	Religious work	
iv	Watch TV		xiii	Politics	
v	See films		xiv	Touring	
vi	Use computer		xv	Sleep	
vii	Sports		xvix	Spend time with friends	
viii	Play musical instrument		xvii	Do not do anything worthwhile	
ix	Help parents		xviii	Any other	

3.0 The liking & Motivation for Higher education

3.1 Indicate with a tick your level of liking and motivation for higher education

	VHigh	High	Low	V. Low
i. Liking level				
ii. Motivation level				

3.2 What alternatives have you considered to continue higher education?
   (You may tick more than one)

	Reason	Yes		Reason	Yes
i	Repeat GCE (A/L) Examination		v	Professional course (Accounts,law)	
ii	Self study on a selected study course		vi	Enter local private university	
iii	Study in the distance mode		vii	Enter foreign university	
iv	Short courses in private institutes		viii	Any other (Pl. mention)	

3.3 How useful were the following sources in considering the alternatives?

No	Source	VHigh	High	Low	V. Low
i.	Guidance teacher in school				
ii.	Principal or other teacher				
iii.	Career guidance fair/ exhibition				

iv.	Newspapers				
v.	Parents				
vi.	Other family members				
vii.	Friends				
viii.	Other (Pl. mention)				

4.0 Distance Education Methodology

No.		VHigh	High	Low	V. Low
4.1	How knowledgeable are you on Distance education methodology?				
4.2	How knowledgeable are you on Open University Courses?				
4.3	What is your level of liking to have higher education in Distance Mode?				

4.4 Given the opportunity, which of the following field/s you like to choose for further education?

i	Management		vii	Information Technology	
ii	Accountancy		viii	Law	
iii	Business Administration		Ix	Education	
iv	Science		x	Journalism	
v	Engineering		xi	Hotel Employments	
vi	Medicine		xii	Other (Pl. specify)	

4.5 What do you think of Distance education methodology?

i	Very convenient		vii	Takes more time	
ii	More opportunity for self learning		viii	Less acceptance	
iii	Less stressful		Ix	Less direct interaction	
iv	More flexible		x	Heavy work load	
v	Less expensive		xi	Less guidance from teacher	
vi	More demanding		xii	Other (Pl. specify)	

5.0 Personal Status

No.		VH igh	Hi gh	Lo w	V. Lo w
5.1	Wow much time can you devote for distance learning?				
5.2	What provision is available in your house for distance learning? (separate room, privacy)				
5.3	Are you detached from family responsibilities?				
5.4	Are you in good health to study in distance mode?				
5.5	How satisfactory is your economic condition?				
5.6	What is the level of self confidence you have to study in distance mode?				

5.7 What is the level of availability of following facilities to you for distance learning?

No.	Facility	VH igh	Hi gh	Lo w	V. Lo w
i.	Telephone				
ii.	Computer				
iii.	Internet				
iv.	E-mail				
V	Radio				
vi	Audio cassette player				
vii	Video cassette player				
Viii	DVD				
Ix	TV				
x	Open University center close to home				
xi	Library services				

ANNEX 2

QUESTIONNAIRE 2

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS WHO DID NOT GET ADMITTED
TO UNIVERSITIES BUT REGISTERED AT OTHER
TERTIARY EDUCATION COURSES

This Questionnaire invites you to provide information for a research study on 'Options for Expanding Access to Higher Education for GCE (A/L) Completers' The information you provide will be kept confidential and used by the National Education Commission in formulating a national policy on Tertiary Education for Sri Lanka. This questionnaire is for students who have completed studies in GCE (A/L), sat for the GCE (A/L) Examination and presently following a tertiary education course.

You may respond either by underlining or ticking the appropriate option and by writing in the spaces provided.

SECTION 1; Background Information

1. On the results of the GCE (A/L) examination you may be in one of the four following categories. Use the attempt that gave the best results to indicate with a tick '√' the category to which you belong.

i. Did not get minimum requirements to apply to university	
ii. Obtained qualifications but did not apply	
iii. Applied but did not get selected	
iv. Applied and got selected but did not accept the course offered.	

2. Name with initials		**3. Gender**	Male / Female

4. Age in years	Yrs. ….	**5. Civil status**	Married / unmarried

6. Name of your AL school		**7.Province**	

8. Private address		**9.District**	

10. A/L Study Stream	Arts/Commerce/Physical Science/Other Science/Bio	11.Medium	S/T/E

12. Indicate your GCE (A/L) results below for the attempt that gave the best results.

(Those who belong to category (i) need not fill this)

Your best GCE (A/L) Results	
Year	Subjects & Grades
	1. 2. 3. 4.

10   If you belong to category (ii) of Q. 1, what reason/s influenced you <u>not</u> to apply for university admission? (Tick '√'the reason or reasons)

No.	Reason	Yes '√'
i.	Scared of the ragging given to new entrants	
ii.	Courses get prolonged due to intermittent closure of universities.	
iii.	Family responsibilities	
iv.	Need to find employment	
v.	Need to get married	
vi.	Any other (Specify)	

14. If you belong to categories (iii) or (iv) of Q. 1, what reason/s influenced you not to get admitted to a university?   (Tick '√' the reason or reasons)

No.	Reason	Yes '√'
i.	Comparatively low aggregate (Z-Score)	
ii.	Did not get the preferred course of study	
iii.	Did not get the preferred campus	

SECTION 2: Other Tertiary Education Course/s

1. Are you are currently registered with any institute to follow a tertiary education course of study?	Yes / No

2. i. Level of course	Degree/Diploma/Certificate/Other		2.ii. Institute	
2.iii. Course duration in months	…..mon	2.iv. Study area		
2.v. Nature of registration	Internal / External / Fulltime / Part-time			

3 (i). Are you are still continuing the tertiary education course of study, for which you have got registered?	Yes / No
3 (ii) If your response is 'No' please give reasons?	

4. What other study courses have you already completed after GCE (A/L)?

Study Area	Level of Course Deg/Dip/Cert./Other	Institute	Year	Duration in months
i.				
ii.				
iii.				

5. Selection of the current course of studies that you are registered with

5.1 What was the source of information that helped you to choose the course? Tick '√' the appropriate source/s.

Source	Yes '√'
i. Newspaper advertisements	
ii. Friends who follow courses	
iii. Tertiary & Vocational Education Commission	
iv. JobsNet (Rakiyapiyasa).	
v. Open University of Sri Lanka	
vi. External Degree providers of universities.	
vii. Career guidance teacher in school	
viii. Career Guidance Fairs / Exhibitions	

5.2 What features attracted you to the present course of studies? Tick '√' the appropriate features.

Feature	Yes '√'
i. Course is employment oriented	
ii. The institute is located close to my residence	
iii. Course fee is reasonable	
iv. Several of my friends follow the course	
v. Classes are small & individual attention is given	
vi. Teaching methodology is good.	
vii. System of assessment is acceptable	

5.3. Given the opportunity to do another course,, which of the following field/s you like to choose for further education? Indicate with a tick. '√'

Field	√	Field	√
i. Management		viii. Law	
ii. Accountancy		ix. Education	
iii. Business Administration		x. Journalism	
iv. Science		xi. Hotel related	
v. Engineering		xii. Country's Defence related	
vi. Medicine		xiii. Others (Pl. specify)	
vii. Information Technology		xiv. Others	

SECTION 3 Readiness for Further Education

1. **Indicate with a tick '√' the level at which the following facilities are available to you for the current course of studies that you have undertaken..**

No.	Facility	V. High	High	Low	V. Low
1.1	Time available for learning				
1.2	Quiet study space available in your house				
1.3	Your detachment from family responsibilities				
1.4	Your health condition				
1.5	Your financial / economic condition?				
1.6	Your self confidence to study				
1.7	Any other (Please specify)				

2. **Availability of personal access to the items listed below can enhance your studies at home. Indicate with a tick '√' the level at which you have access to the items.**

No.	Facility	V. High	High	Low	V. Low
2.1	Telephone				
2.2	Computer				
2.3	Internet				
2.4	E-mail				
2.5	Radio				
2.6	Audio cassette player				
2.7	Video cassette player				
2.8	DVD				
2.9	TV				
2.10	Library facilities				
2.11	An Open University Center				

SECTION 4: Status of Employment

Answer Questions 1&2 of SECTION 4 only if you are employed at present while following a tertiary education course.

1. What is the nature of your job?	Full-time / Part-time / Self-employed

2. Briefly describe the type of your job	…………………………………………………………………… …………………………………………………………………… ……………………………………………………………………

3.   **If you are not employed, indicate with a tick'√' how you spend most of your time. (You may tick more than one)**

3.1	Reading books/newspapers		3.10	Help at house work	
3.2	Self study		3.11	Social work	
3.3	Listen to radio		3.12	Religious work	
3.4	Watch TV		3.13	Politics	
3.5	See films		3.14	Touring	
3.6	Use computer		3.15	Sleep	
3.7	Play games		3.16	Spend time with friends	

| 3.8 | Music | | 3.17 | Do not do anything worthwhile | |
| 3.9 | Help parents at work | | 3.18 | Any other (Pl. specify) | |

SECTION 5; Ambition & Motivation for further education.

1. Indicate with a tick '√' your levels of ambition and motivation for further education

Level	Very High	High	Low	Very low
i. Level of ambition				
ii. Level of Motivation				

2.   State the problems you encounter at your present course of further studies after A/L

Field	Problem/s
i. Quality of training course	
ii. The tutorial staff & their quality	
iii. The credibility of the certificate	
iv. The quality of tutorials	
v. Course duration and timetable	
vi. Class space and no. of students	

SECTION 6: Your views for the future of Tertiary education

i . What solutions can you offer to solve the problems stated in Question 5 of SECTION 5	Solutions
ii. Any suggestion to make the tertiary education courses more attractive	**Suggestions**
iii. Any new tertiary education courses that you can suggest	**New courses**
iv. Any policies or regulation that the government should formulate in this area	**Regulations and Policies**
v. Any other comments (Please specify)	Comments

Please use the enclosed stamped envelop to return the completed Questionnaire to –

The Education Researcher

MG Consultants (Pvt) Ltd

540 Thimbirigasyaya Road,

Colombo 5

ANNEX 3
QUESTIONNAIRE 3

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TRAINING COURSE PROVIDERS TO
GCE (A/L) COMPLETERS

The National Education Commission of Sri Lanka has initiated a research study on 'Options for Expanding Access to Higher Education for GCE (A/L) Completers'. The following form compiled by the researchers is for gathering information about the training courses provided by your institute. There are two types of training course providers (1) The external degree or diploma course providers such as the universities that enroll students, provide curriculum and conduct examinations and (2) course providers such as the private training institutes with face to face interactions with trainees. Both categories of these training course providers are invited to complete SECTION A of this questionnaire.

SECTION A (To be completed by both categories 1 & 2 course providers)

1. Name of Institute		2.Postal address	

3. Telephone
 	
   Fax
 	
   E-mail address
		4. No. of courses provided	

5. Do you only provide curriculum /syllabus and examinations only?	Yes / No	6. Do you provide courses where you come in face to face contact with students	Yes / No

7. **Give particulars of courses (up to a maximum of 5) that the institute provides for**

   GCE (A/L) completers. Please give the most popular courses arranged in order of popularity. Please write the course titles in tables 7.1 – 7.3 in the same order.

7.1 Admission requirements

Course Title	Admission to the course is by 1.Written exam. 2. interview.3.Both test & interview. 4. Pass in GCE {A/L) exam only	Indicate the A/L Subjects. & the Grades you insist on for course entry.	Do you insist on passes in the same sitting? 1. Yes, 2. No.
1.			
2.			

3.			
4.			
5.			

7.2 Nature of Courses

Course Title (enter in the same order as in 7.1)	Is the course (1)internal or (2) external ?	Is the course (1) full-time or (2) part-time?	Course duration Yrs/Mons/Weeks
1 .			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			

7.3 The course duration and enrolment

Course No. (enter in the same order as in 7.1)	Course duration in years	Current (2007) Student enrolment				
		1st Year students	2nd Year students	3rd Year students	4th Year students	Approximate drop out %
1. 2. 3. 4. 5.						

7.4 What reasons do you attribute to the student drop out from the courses?

        i. Initial interest is not maintained   Y/N

        ii. Students cannot cope up with the work   Y/N

        iii. Students confronted with family burdens Y/N

        iv. Travel expenses   Y/N

        v. Language difficulties   Y/N

        vi. Others (Specify

7.5 What additional teaching equipment/facilities would like to have to make the courses more attractive to students?

        i. More space in classroom/workshop room Y/N

        ii. More attractive furniture   Y/N

        Iii.Audio/Visual material   Y/N

        iv. More reference (library) material   Y/N

        v. Computers with access to internet   Y/N

        vi. OHP and Multimedia Projectors   Y/N

        vii. Any other (specify)

SECTION B (To be completed only by Category 2 course providers)

8. Indicate the duration & nature of courses that you have listed

Course No.(enter in the same order as in 7.1)	No. of hours of the entire course on the following items							
	Lectures	Seminars	Practical	Assignments	Examinations	Tutorials	Correspondence	Any other (Specify)
1.								
2.								
3.								
4.								
5.								

9. Problems encountered in providing courses

i.   Indicate the course numbers for which you get a sufficient number of applicants
        for you to select from. ………….

ii.   Indicate the course numbers for which you cannot find the required
         number of trainees …………..

iii.   Indicate the course numbers in which you cannot accommodate
         all the applicants…………..

iv.   Indicate the numbers of courses for which you can be satisfied that the
         applicants have the required entry knowledge that you expect ………….

10. What suggestions can you make to solve the following problems/issues?

i.   There are more applicants than the number that can be
        Accommodated at the course.

         ……………………………………………………
         ……………………………………………………

ii.   It is not possible to find the required number of students
        from among the applicants.

         ……………………………………………………
         ……………………………………………………

iii.   Students do not possess the basic entry knowledge & skills
        expected of the course.

         ……………………………………………………
         ……………………………………………………

iv.   Students drop out without completing the course.

         ……………………………………………………
         ……………………………………………………

v.   Students lack the self-study skills as using library reference,
        internet, discussions with resource persons, multi media use etc

         ……………………………………………………
         ……………………………………………………

vi.   Students lack the knowledge of English language to follow high level courses

         ……………………………………………………
         ……………………………………………………

SECTION C (To be completed by course providers of category 1)

1. **What facilities do you provide the students who register with you?**

i. The examination syllabus	Y/N
ii. Detailed course guides (modules)	Y/N
iii. Access to the library at your institute	Y/N
iv. Access to any advisory committees at the institute	Y/N
v. Do you maintain a register of private tutors who can help the students who register with you?	Y/N
vi. Do you recommend any relevant textbooks	Y/N
vii. Student leaning modules available at institute for sale	Y/N
viii. Do these learning modules cover the entire course	Y/N
vii. Others (Specify)	

2. **Indicate the course number as given by you in Table 7.1 & submit the student enrolment and exam success data**

2.1

Course No. (enter in the same order as in 7.1)	No. of students initially registered for academic Yr. 1			* An estimate of percentage that sit Yr 1 examination			** An estimate of percentage that pass Yr 1 examination		
	Year 2003	Year 2004	Year 2005	Year 2004	Year 2005	Year 2006	Year 2004	Year 2005	Year 2006
1. 2. 3. 4. 5.									

*   The number that sat the exam as a percentage of no. initially registered

* *The number that passed the exam as a percentage of no. sat

2.2

Course No. (enter in the same order as in 7.1)	No. of students initially registered			* An estimate of percentage that sit Yr 2 examination			** An estimate of percentage that pass Yr 2 examination		
	Year 2003	Year 2004	Year 2005	Year 2004	Year 2005	Year 2006	Year 2004	Year 2005	Year 2006
1. 2.									

3. 4. 5.									

*   The number that sat the exam as a percentage of no. initially registered

* *The number that passed the exam as a percentage of no. sat

2.3

Course No. (enter in the same order as in 7.1)	No. of students initially registered			* An estimate of percentage that sit Yr 3 examination			** An estimate of percentage that pass Yr 3 examination		
	Year 2003	Year 2004	Year 2005	Year 2004	Year 2005	Year 2006	Year 2004	Year 2005	Year 2006
1. 2. 3. 4. 5.									

*   The number that sat the exam as a percentage of no. initially registered

* *The number that passed the exam as a percentage of no. sat

3.   **State the problems you encounter**,

   a.   in selecting the students for initial enrolment.

   ………………………………………………
   ………………………………………………
   ………………………………………………

   b.   in marketing the courses

   ………………………………………………
   ………………………………………………
   ………………………………………………

   c.   in selling the course material

   ………………………………………………
   ………………………………………………

   d.   in conducting examinations & releasing results

   ………………………………………………
   ………………………………………………
   ………………………………………………

   e.   in revising the curriculum

   ………………………………………………

……………………………………………
……………………………………………

f.   with private tuition providers

……………………………………………
……………………………………………
……………………………………………

g.   in any other fields

……………………………………………
……………………………………………
……………………………………………

4.   State the solutions you can offer to the above problems you encounter.

……………………………………………
……………………………………………
……………………………………………
……………………………………………
……………………………………………
……………………………………………

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