

Technical Education in Sri Lanka: Appropriateness and Effectiveness of Training Programmes Initiated through Foreign Grants

R.N. Senadheera¹ and V. Medhavini Wickramasinghe²

Technical education plays a major role in the field of higher education in Sri Lanka. The expansion of the technical education sector was slow during the first half of the 20th century due to the limited demand for technical skills generated in the colonial economy. However, since the independence this sector has received a high priority. Technical education can be regarded as one of the avenues to get foreign technology transferred into Sri Lanka through foreign grants for technical corporation. Under technical corporation grants, generally, foreign countries come into agreements to provide physical facilities, assistance to develop training programmes, training materials, training for local staff, etc for an agreed time period. Though the agreed grant period of some of the technical corporation programmes now elapsed, training programmes that had initially developed are still running. The evidence reveals that the increased demand for the technical education programmes has been mainly due to the fact that the universities have not been able to meet the demand for job-oriented technical education.

The aim of the paper is to investigate training programmes that were initiated through technical corporation grants to assess appropriateness and effectiveness of the technology transferred from these programmes to Sri Lanka. For the study, an analytical model was developed and equivalent technical training programmes, where agreed grant period elapsed were selected. Data was collected through questionnaires and interviews. The investigation revealed that in all the technical training programmes, both donors and recipients mainly concerned with buildings, vehicles, machinery, etc and less concerned with the training of trainers, technology upgrading channels, arrangement of institute management procedures, etc. Overall, the findings led to conclude that technical training programmes that were initiated through German grants were the most appropriate and effective.

Key Words: Foreign grants; Technical education; Technical corporation

¹ Department of Management of Technology, University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka. E.mail: senadeerarn@yahoo.com

² Department of Management of Technology, University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka. E.mail: wickramasinghev@gmail.com