

TEACHERS AND STUDENTS PERCEPTION ON “SOFT TECHNOLOGY” AS A SUBJECT IN G.C.E. (A/L) ARTS STREAM

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“Soft Technology” is a G.C.E (A/L) arts stream subject introduced to the curriculum in 2005 and subsequently amended in 2009. Food Technology, Agro -Technology and Bio- resource Technology have been identified as specialized subject areas in this stream. Objectives of the present study are; 1) To identify the reasons for students to selecting “Soft Technology” as an A/L subject, 2) To identify the problems encountered by teachers and students involved in the subject, 3) To assess attitudes of teachers and students about the subject of Soft Technology and 4) To propose remedial measures to improve the teaching and learning skills.

Twenty 1AB schools in ten districts namely, Colombo, Galle, Gampaha, Hambantota, Kandy, Kegalle, Kalutara, Kurunegala, Matara and Puttlum districts were selected. Data were collected by using structured questionnaires and informal interviews. Documentary survey was conducted using G.C.E (A/L) Soft Technology syllabuses, chief examiner’s report and annual statistical reports of Department of Examination. A total of 160 students and 20 teachers were selected. Nearly 30% of the teachers were satisfied with the new subject, in terms of its applicability day to day life. Majority 70% of the students has selected this subject with the objective of obtaining a higher “ Z ” score. It was observed that significant discrepancies of the objectives between the N.I.E and A/L students. About 62% of students did not have a good awareness of the subject content and the significance in learning Soft Technology. About 70% of the teachers were dissatisfied due to various causes such as; discrepancies in allocation of time slot in regular time table, over work load, too advance subject matters, incompetent of soft skills, poor coordination and poor cooperation of National Institute of Education, insufficient awareness about the subject, lack of teaching materials, difficulty in conducting practical sessions in schools, unavailability of descriptive teachers’ guides, lack of supervision and, uncertainty of future prospective and job opportunities.

Under my recommendations I would like to suggest the subject content of Soft Technology should be re-arranged or reintroduced it without amendments to the study stream of science and to improve the quality of the practical session. It can be included as a skill test at A/L exam. Moreover, creating a new stream of study including other two technology subjects with soft technology can be suggested as another remedial measure.