

Impacts of the 13 Years of Guaranteed Education Stream: A Survey of the Students in Kandy District

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Abstract

The Ministry of Education in Sri Lanka introduced the “13 Years of Guaranteed Education” programme (13YGEP) to the Grade 12/13 curriculum in 2017 targeting the GCE O/L dropouts. The programme aims to provide opportunities for the students who fail in GCE O/L to qualify for GCE A/L to continue school education based on vocational subjects. This study aimed to evaluate the impacts of the programme, particularly on the employment prospects and income of the students who followed the programme compared to those who left school education after O/L. The study is based on a sample of 200 students from the Kandy district in the 19-21 years’ age group including 100 students who followed the programme. Graphical data analysis and Chi-Square tests of independence were used to analyse the data. The results suggest that there is no statistically significant association between the 13YGEP and employability at present and that the students who followed the programme and those who didn’t follow the programme are equally employable. However, a significant percentage (15%) of youngsters who followed the programme pursued self-employment which is an encouraging trend. The monthly income was found to be higher among those who didn’t follow the programme possibly due to their early employment. Out of the 26 vocational subjects available under the programme, Automobile Studies is the most popular subject followed by Tourism & Hospitality Management and Graphics Design. The results indicate that the students who followed the programme are generally satisfied with the content and outcomes while the majority of those who did not follow the programme have no regret. The small sample size, limited geographical coverage and short-term experience with the programme are the key limitations of this study. Such surveys should be carried out continuously to monitor the impacts and outcomes of the programme.

Keywords: *Employment, higher education, income, school dropouts, vocational education*

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