

NVQ- new qualification system for vocational training

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NVQ: Today is a memorable day for vocational training in Sri Lanka, as the inaugural certificate awarding of National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) takes place. The ceremony will be presided over by Prime Minister Ratnasiri Wickremanayake as chief guest and Ministers Athauda Seneviratne and Piyasena Gamage as guests of honour, at the BMICH.

The history of vocational training has more than 100 years in the Department of Technical Education & Training, and hardly any major reform has taken place before. The need of a reform has been realized in last few years and as a result a new qualification system is being developed and now it is in implementation. Hon. Piyasena Gamage as the Minister for Vocational & Technical Training for three consecutive times, initiated to introduce National Vocational Qualification system.

In the past, there was no mechanism to update or review the vocational training. The vocational training as a whole has main pillars viz. training institutions, industry and trainees. The interlink among these is a must for a better training outcome. Further, there was no central monitoring body to study the real requirements of training, the demand and supplying capabilities. Most importantly the industry requirements as against the time changed were not analyzed. Further, the vocational training institutions irrespective of public or private sector, issued their own certificates for trainees. The system was not a Nationalized common system to evaluate the qualifications those awarded for training. Due to these drawbacks, the image on certain occupations from the general public are becoming bad shape and also the industry has shown reluctance to accept some of the qualifications issued by these training institutions. As such, high time of a reform in vocational training is existed and the National Vocational Qualification framework which is known as NVQ, now in light. 125 vocationally trained ones from the total of 300 NVQ qualifiers are awarded with NVQ certificates at this occasion.

Structure of NVQ

The NVQ framework is consisted with four main pillars with close interconnections and interrelations. Four pillars are vocational training institutions, Industry, trainees and Tertiary & Vocational Education Commission (TVEC).

TVEC - Training Institutes - Trainees - Industry

NVQ framework

Interlink among the four pillars facilitates to exchange industry requirements, technological advancements in the industry, labour market information, monitoring of training institutes, and of which, the TVEC plays a major role as a monitoring and overall coordinating body in the framework, as similar to that of the University Grants Commission acts for all Universities.

Roles of main pillars of the NVQ framework

mission - The monitoring and coordination among other members for effective implementation of NVQ framework is the main role of TVEC. Apart from the monitoring, identification of occupations to incorporate into the framework, registration/accreditation of vocational training institutes, conducting researches on the framework and allied areas and final preparation of NVQ certificates are some to name.

Training Institutes - The main role of vocational training institutes is to deliver a consistent quality service in terms of training as per the stipulated National Skill Standards and curriculum developed for particular occupation. To ascertain the assurance of quality, all training providers are expected to adopt to a predefined Quality Management System, introduced in the NVQ framework.

Trainees - In the NVQ framework, a proper feedback and level of satisfaction from all vocational trainees are sought for the improvement and to upgrade the service.

Industry - Industry requirements on labour, technology updates and feedback of performance of vocational trainees those join the industry are expected. Further, the Industry expert participation as the National Industrial & Technical Advisory Committees for the development of National Skill Standards and curricula for occupations.

Features of NVQ

NVQ is a unified qualification system, common to anywhere in Sri Lanka. If a trainee enrolls to follow for a vocational training in Hambantota, the certificate he gets is similar, if another one from some other place for same occupation with same vocational training. Therefore the NVQ certification is standardized all over in Sri Lanka. Further, this qualification system is opened for those who already acquired skills in informal means or other means to get NVQ certificates. This mode of awarding NVQ qualification is called as RPL, Recognition of Prior Learning. In this context the trainee should need not follow or enroll for a vocational training course, instead he could show his capabilities before a certified assessor and obtain NVQ certificate. The traditional mode of vocational training is to enroll for a course of an institution and after successful completion of the training; the trainee gets the NVQ certificate. Any vocational training institution that expects to offer NVQ should register with TVEC and also particular course should be accredited.

NVQ consisted with seven distinct levels. NVQ level 1 to 4 are for craftsmen level and issued with National certificates. NVQ level 5 is for diploma level, NVQ level 6 for Higher Diploma and the last NVQ level-7 for degree equivalent level.

Implementation of NVQ

So far the NVQ system has implemented for 45 occupations in various vocational training institutions including private sector. And they offer NVQ qualification up to level 4 of those occupations. All assessments for NVQ are done by licensed assessors impartially. The RPL mode of getting NVQ qualification has to be channeled through the National Apprentices & Industrial Training Authority (NAITA). The NAITA will appoint independent assessors for the assessment of

date's workplace or an agreed place where necessary facilities available with the discretion of assessor. If the candidate found to be successful at the assessment he will be qualified to receive NVQ. There are few RPL NVQ certificates also to be given away at today's occasion.

At the RPL assessment the candidate could submit all relevant supportive evidences that could help him to prove his competency. These could include his previous performances/experience relevant to the occupation and hard copies of evidences.

The NVQ level 1 to 4 are currently implemented in all public & private sector vocational training institutions in Sri Lanka.

The NVQ level 5 & 6 are conducted in nine selected Technical Colleges of Department of Technical Education & Training, covering all nine provinces - one each.

The NVQ level 7 which is to be the degree equivalent is expected to conduct at the only University of Vocational Technology in Sri Lanka, which is now under constructions in Ratmalana, the premises of National Institute of Technical Education of Sri Lanka. The only University for Vocational Education is expected to initially commence with three faculties called, Faculty of Industrial Technology, Faculty of Training Technology, and Faculty of Vocational Technology. The

first intake batch is expected to enroll in 2008.

Basis of NVQ Implementation

NVQ level - 7 -
University of Vocational Technology
Faculty of
Faculty of
Faculty of

NVQ level 6 & 7 -
Colleges of Technologies - one each in nine provinces (Technical Colleges)

NVQ level 1 to 4 -
All Vocational Training providers - Public & Private

Benefits of NVQ

The NVQ concept is a derivative of vocational practices adopted in most of developed countries, viz. Australia, UK, and New Zealand etc. Therefore the global recognition on our NVQ system and certificates issued are assured. The NVQ system facilitates to update and review National Skill Standards and other training methodologies with the technology advancements in the world. Further, the National Skill Standards are developed with the help of Industry experts and as such the updates are directly

applied to the system. Therefore the trainees able to receive updated technology to enhance their skills. NVQ is not only a training certificate but also confirms the skills of the certificate holder. Therefore the Industry preferably attempts to recruit more NVQ holders for their workplace. Since the system has upward laddering to get more qualification, the trainees are encouraged to seek higher NVQ qualification. The Industry could consider their salary structures based on the NVQ laddering system, so as for their promotions. The NVQ system is comprised with a comprehensive MIS, to disseminate information among all stakeholders of framework appropriately. Therefore all quarries on NVQ certificates and certificate holders are able to retrieve within few seconds. All NVQ certificates are prepared and issued from the TVEC with the highest reliability and authenticity and NVQ certificate are printed and contains with necessary information; with respect to the holder and his competence. The other salient benefit of NVQ is that there is no limitation of age, gender or level of education.

The Ministry of Vocational & Technical Training expects a considerable solution for unemployment problem, youth unrest and mismatch of Industry requirements against the labour supply.