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PAPER

The Suitability of the Advanced Technological Institutes' Education in Developing Soft Skills among Diploma Holders

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The current unemployment rate among the diploma holders of Advanced Technological Institutes remains at a high level. It has been pointed out that the lack of soft skills among the diploma holders has a great impact on finding job opportunities. In this background, the employers, specially the business entities ascribe diplomates' unemployability to the failure of the education system of Advanced Technological Institutes, emphasizing that the prevailing education system is not geared to develop diplomates' soft skills. However, adequate research has not been undertaken to sythesise the possibilities to upgrade the soft skills through the prevailing curriculum of Advanced Technological Institutes.

This paper looks into the challenges and opportunities of the current educational sysytem of developing soft skills among the diploma holders and focuses on soft skills development through language teaching and learning. This study utilized both quantitative and qualitative data collection tools, but is rooted in a qualitative epistemological position that recognizes the importance of locating the research within a particular context.

A questionnaire was administered and the researcher had focused group discussion on a sample-set of 150 students both male and female (age range varies from 21-25) of Advanced Technological Institute, Jaffna. Consequently the paper argues that the present rate of unployment among educated youth including diploma holders is not only due to skills mismatch, but also because the Advanced Technological Institutes' education system does not match the present requirements of the job market.