As part of the planning for skills development for the service sector, the Services Sector Education and Training Authority (SETA) commissioned a research on the future of jobs in the sector, in light of the rapid advancements in technology and the implications of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR).

The purpose of this project was to identify occupations that may become obsolete in the next ten years and new ones that might emerge. The study sought to understand the key drivers of change for the South African services sector; the future emerging jobs in the South African services sector; the future endangered jobs in the South African services sector, and the status of skills provisioning in the services sector.

A mixed methods approach was used including expert engagement, and scenario development workshops with business owners and associations across services industries to identify plausible futures to map out the implications of social, economic, technological, environmental and political trends on future jobs and skills. The report also presents findings from a digital survey that was conducted with 300 youth, aged between 18 and 30, to garner their views about the future world of work, jobs and skills. The study was conducted between October 2017 and March 2019.

Findings from this research indicated that the following occupations are likely to be adversely affected by technology:

- Cleaning and laundry services
- Marketing services
- Postal services
- Business consulting services
- Project management services
- Real estate services
In the case of menial labour occupations, the impact is severe at the local elementary occupational level. However, in the case of complex occupations, the impact is felt mostly at management, professional and technical occupational categories.

The impact of technology on the future of jobs in South Africa varies from subsector to subsector and occupational categories. Less menial and complex occupations are likely to be severely impacted upon by technology. The upper-echelons of occupational levels are more likely to be affected by technology.

A key recommendation is that the Services SETA should foster closer collaboration with and between employers, universities of technology and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Colleges to better understand future skills needs and devise timely interventions in the form of curriculum designs and training programmes.

The full draft report paper is available on the following link:


Authors:

- Dr Tsiliso Tamasane is the Research and Strategic Planning Manager at the Services SETA (TsilisoT@serviceseta.org.za).
- Mr Sibusiso Dhladhla is an Executive Manager at Services SETA (SibusisoD@serviceseta.org.za).