Do you need elocution?

It should be stated that there is no compulsion for students to speak like English, American or other English speaking peoples. However, it is a necessity for them to use a form of pronunciation that can easily be internationally understood. In colonial times and more immediately post-colonial times, there were many English words being worked in schools and teacher training centres. These students acquired a RP that they in turn could pass on to successive students. The poorly conceived government decision, some years ago, to restrict English teaching and usage, had a serious effect on students acquiring satisfactory English speaking skills. What developed in its place was a kind of "stringlish" that in its milder forms is perfectly acceptable, but in its more popular and widely spoken form, can make conversation difficult with native English speakers. Of equal importance is the disability many students display in understanding English spoken by foreigners. Their different pronunciation and speed of delivery can be an impediment to comprehension. In their quest for a RP that the government seems to have overlooked, this aspect of language, through students at all schools, study English every day and very little time is devoted to speaking it. Textbooks and workbooks nudge students towards the use of RP and desire for practical speech. In some cases the teacher's pronunciation will be heavily accented English" which is copied by the students. By the time the students sit for the "O" level examination, a small percentage will achieve good credit passes, but without ability to put their English to practical use. Students who are unable to speak and understand RP are at a distinct disadvantage when applying for employment when English is required. Many parents send their children to elocution classes, and enter them for local English speaking competitions. The results are often little more than the child reciting a standard poem, complete with dramatic hand and facial movements. There is a dearth of classes in most urban areas offering "spoken English". How much emphasis is placed on pronunciation? Recently, a visiting professor of English was surprised to learn that the students, for the asking. Despite a massive amount of money being spent on improving English teaching, nothing tangible has been implemented. Meanwhile, the government seems more concerned with having English imposed as the second language in favour of Tamil. In future, according to government spokesmen, civil servants will be required to be proficient in both Sinhala and Tamil. English is simply a welcome addition.