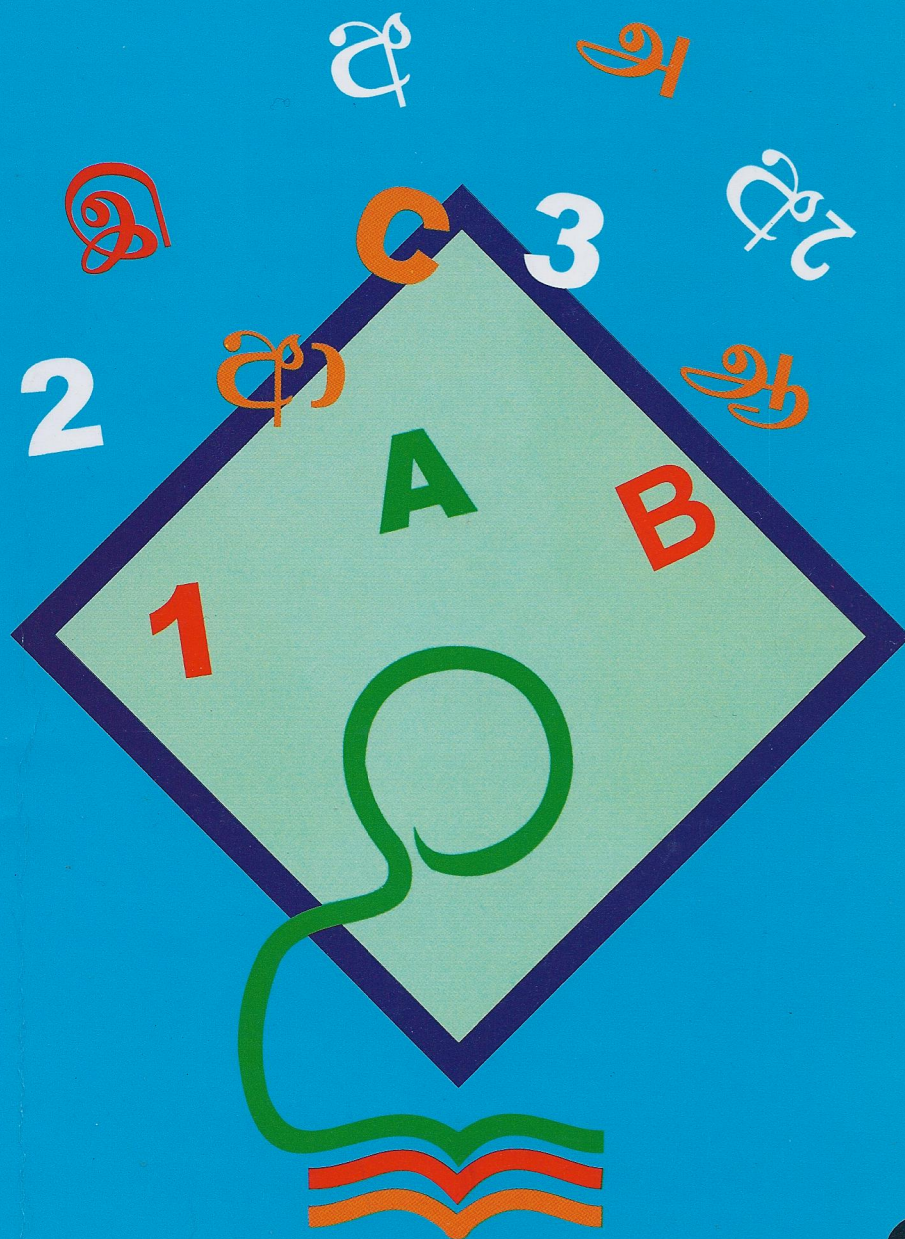# PRIMARY EDUCATION REFORM IN SRI LANKA

Editor: Angela W. Little

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Acknowledgements

The publication of this book coincides with the launch of the Sri Lanka Five Year Plan for Primary Education and eight Six Year Provincial Primary Education Plans. The book and the plans have been produced within the policy framework of the General Education Reforms, developed by the National Education Commission and the Presidential Task Force on Education. The book arises out of studies undertaken for the Primary Education Planning Project (PEPP) of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education and from two national conferences on primary education. We are grateful to all the chapter authors who have made the time to focus their expertise on contemporary issues in primary education, to reflect on the *General Education Reforms* process, and to highlight the challenges that lie ahead in the implementation of the reforms. We are also grateful to the many people who, in different ways, have assisted the authors in making their contributions – Members of the Presidential Task Force, the National Education Commission, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, the Provincial Education Authorities, the National Institute of Education, the donor community, research assistants, production assistants and typists, all of whom are contributing in significant ways to the reform of primary education. Too numerous to mention individually by name, they will know their contribution, both to the book and to the more general process of reform of primary education in Sri Lanka. Thank you.

For financial assistance for the production and printing of this book we are grateful to the Department for International Development (DFID), of the United Kingdom.

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Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ADE	Assistant Director of Education
AED	Academy for Educational Development, Washington DC
APD	Additional Provincial Director
B.Ed.	Bachelor of Education
CBA	Class-based Assessment
CINTEC	Computer and Information Technology Council of Sri Lanka
COE	College of Education
DDE	Deputy Director of Education
DDG	Deputy Director General of Education
DE	Director of Education
DFID	Department for International Development
DFU	Divisional Field Unit
DG	Director General
DSD	Development of Schools by Division
EDC	Education Development Committee
EFA	Education For All
ELC	Essential Learning Continuum
EMIS	Education Management Information System
EPD	Educational Publications Department
ERD	External Resources Department
ETEP	English Teacher Education Project
FC	Finance Commission
GCE (OL)	General Certificate of Education (Ordinary Level)
GCE (AL)	General Certificate of Education (Advanced Level)
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEP	General Education Project
GEP 1	General Education Project 1 (World Bank)
GEP 2	General Education Project 2 (World Bank)
GNP	Gross National Product
GOSL	Government of Sri Lanka
GTZ	German Agency for Technical Co-operation
HNCE	Higher National Certificate of Education
IDA	International Development Association
INSET	In-Service Training
IRDP	Integrated Rural Development Project
ISA	In-Service Adviser
IU	Implementation Unit
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
KS	Key Stage
MEHE	Ministry of Education and Higher Education
MOE	Ministry of Education

MPPE	Master Plan for Primary Education
NATE	National Authority on Teacher Education
NCGE	National Certificate of General Education
NEC	National Education Commission
NIC	Newly Industrialized Country
NIE	National Institute of Education
NIEPA	National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
OUSL	Open University of Sri Lanka
PDE	Provincial Director of Education
PEA	Provincial Education Authority
PED	Provincial Education Department
PEDC	Primary Education Development Committee
PEDP	Primary Education Development Project
PELP	Primary English Language Project
PEPP	Primary Education Planning Project
PIP	Public Investment Programme
PM	Provincial Ministry
PMP	Primary Mathematics Project
PMDP	Primary Mathematics Development Project
PPM	Policy, Planning and System Monitoring (Division)
PPMC	Policy, Planning and Monitoring Committee
PPR	Policy, Planning and Review (Division)
PSDP	Primary Schools Development Project
PSE	Provincial Secretary of Education
PSEDP	Plantation Schools Education Development Project
PSU	Procurement and Supply Unit
PTF	Presidential Task Force
PPTRC	Primary Teacher Resource Centre
RDE	Regional Director of Education
RESCs	Regional English Support Centres
SAR	Staff Appraisal Reports
SBA	School-based Assessment
SDS	School Development Society
SEDP	Secondary Education Development Project
SIDA	Swedish International Development Authority
SLAS	Sri Lanka Administrative Service
SLEAS	Sri Lanka Education Administrative Service
SLTES	Sri Lanka Teacher Educators' Service
SPCoE	Sri Pada College of Education (Project)
STN	Statistician
SYPPEP	Six Year Provincial Primary Education Plans
SWD	School Works Department
TC	Teacher Centre
TEI	Teacher Education Institute
TETD	Teacher Education and Teacher Deployment

TIP	Teacher In-service Training Project
TSC	Technical Sub Committee
TSDP	Teacher Training and Staff Development Project
TTC	Teacher Training College
UGC	University Grants Commission
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific Cultural Organization
UPS	Uninterruptible Power Supply
ZED	Zonal Education Department
ZEO	Zonal Education Office
ZOPP	Zielorientierte Projektplanung (Goal Oriented Project Planning)

Message from The President of Sri Lanka

Message from The Minister of Education and Higher Education

Editor's Introduction

Education For All has been a goal of Sri Lankan society for well over fifty years. In the early years of the twentieth century, education was free in the vernacular-medium government schools. By 1945, the *Free Education Act* had paved the way for children from poor families to gain free access to an English-medium education. At the end of the century and the start of the new millennium, the adult literacy rate in the official languages of Sinhala or Tamil, is estimated to be 92%, and the participation of the 5-9 year old population in education 96.5%.

As participation in education becomes more complete so the goals for education change. In recent years, Sri Lanka has embarked on a major reform of education. At the primary education stage the focus is on educational quality. The outcomes of learning and teaching in Grades 1-5 create the foundation for learning in the higher grades. The quality of the processes of learning in Grades 1-5 determines the quality of the child's learning throughout life. This does not mean however that the reform neglects questions of access and retention. Issues of access, dropout, low attendance and repetition remain, and need to be addressed.

This book is the product of discussions in many seminars and conferences about primary education reform introduced on a pilot basis in the Gampaha district in 1998, and nationwide in 1999. The work of teachers, students and their families lies at the heart of the reform, the end goal of which is change in the learning processes and outcomes of the younger generation. Change in the classroom is guided and supported by the work of many, including policy formulators, curriculum developers, teacher educators and resource planners and funders. These people design the reform and make changes to critical components of the system of education. The authors of the chapters in this book have been intimately connected with these different components.

Chapters 1 and 2 set out the goals of the current reforms in primary education. Chapter 1 consists of verbatim extracts from the document *General Education Reforms,* written by the Presidential Task Force on General Education in 1997. Reforms in nineteen areas were proposed, covering the entire span of general education, from Grade 1 to Grade 13. The chapter presents the sections of the 1997 document on the need for policy reform, the policy diagnosis and main directions of the reform, followed by sections on compulsory education and the primary stage of education. Chapter 2 focuses on the vision and the goals of the primary education reform. These are set alongside the nine national education goals set out by the National Education Commission in its first report in 1992. Subtitled the 'Many Splendoured Gem', the vision speaks of literacy and numeracy and much more besides.

Chapter 3 describes the current characteristics of primary education and schools. It examines the identity of primary education as a distinct stage of education, historically and today. It suggests that the root of current concerns about primary education quality

may lie in the absence of a clear institutional identity. In contrast to many education systems elsewhere, the majority of classes offering primary education in Sri Lanka are embedded within institutions offering post-primary education. The upper grades of these schools attract status, teachers, resources and the attention of the school principals, leaving the primary grades submerged and in a weak position. Suggestions are made about how changes in teacher education, resource inputs and school management might contribute to a stronger identity for primary education and the achievement of 'quality education for all'.

Chapters 4 and 5 examine changes in the primary education curriculum and the assessment of learning. These changes lie at the heart of the new reform. Chapter 4 describes the current achievement levels of children in the primary grades and a number of problems that beset primary education today. It describes the curriculum goals for primary education, the role of basic competencies as the foundation of the revised curriculum and the new curriculum framework. It also describes how short-term action plans to usher in the reforms were developed, and emphasises the need for longer term plans to ensure that these reforms are sustained well into the future.

Chapter 5 presents the results of an early evaluation of the reforms introduced in the Gampaha district in 1998, one year prior to their nationwide implementation. Effort evaluation, process evaluation and effects evaluation constituted the three phases of the evaluation. The results suggest that much effort was invested in the design of curriculum materials, the development of classrooms and supervision of teaching and learning. However, teachers remarked on the weak integration of the teacher guide, the text books and the work books; and on the absence of demonstrations of the new teaching methodology by the in-service advisers and teacher trainers. Observations of teachers suggested that only one fifth demonstrated competency in handling the new curriculum in the classroom, while others demonstrated partial achievement. Nonetheless, the effects on student learning in mathematics and language appear to have been positive. Whether the results may be attributed to the effects of the reform programme alone, however, remains unclear, since the evaluation design included neither baseline nor control group assessments of learning. The chapter concludes with a number of useful recommendations for the further implementation of the reform nation-wide.

Chapters 6 and 7 focus on teachers. As key stakeholders in the reform process, an understanding of teachers' attitudes, behaviours and professional development needs is important. Chapter 6 describes the results of a survey of teachers' perceptions of the reforms in the months leading to their initial implementation in Gampaha district. In general the teachers held positive views about the reform proposals which bode well for the subsequent phase of implementation. However, they expressed some misgivings about the proposals for the restructuring of schools, and for admissions to Grade 1 of popular schools by lottery. Grade 1 admissions in popular schools by lottery had been suggested as a way of increasing social equity, and of reducing the 'competition in fraudulent practices'. The lottery proposal was resisted most by those who already have a major stake in the upper stratum of the education hierarchy, teachers in national and urban schools. It was resisted least by those holding a position in the lower stratum,

teachers in plantation schools. Chapter 7 addresses the professional development needs of primary education teachers and sets out the current system of teacher education and training and proposals for radical changes in this system. In particular, it describes the objectives of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education's *Teacher Education and Teacher Deployment Project*, as it relates to primary education. The reforms will affect not only the classroom teachers but also the teachers of the teachers, the 'teacher educators'. Very few of the country's teacher educators currently have direct experience of teaching children in Grades 1-5. A National Authority on Teacher Education has already been established, colleges of education are being restructured, teacher education curricula revised and teachers' centres established to improve the quality of teacher education.

The final three chapters of the book address questions of resource planning and educational management, vital for the long term success of any reform. Chapter 8 addresses the costs and financing of primary education. Despite the high levels of government subsidy, Sri Lanka's expenditure on education is modest when compared with other countries. Projections of pupil enrolment in primary education suggest a long term decline, raising the possibility of spending more at this level on 'quality inputs'. Such spending would be greatly facilitated by the introduction of a norm-based unit cost resource allocation mechanism. With the devolution of responsibility for educational expenditure to the Provincial Councils, the application of such a mechanism would ensure equitable resource expenditure nationwide. Chapter 9 continues the theme of planning and management, not only of educational finance, but also of educational activity more generally. Highlighting the dearth of reliable information at all levels of the school system from the school to the zone, province and national ministry, the authors call for an integrated system of planning, monitoring and information-gathering for informed decision-making. By the *use* of information and not simply its collection, educational decision-making could be enhanced in a way that supports the improvement of primary education quality.

Finally, Chapter 10 explores the role played by the external donor community in providing resources for primary education. The chapter brings together in one place information about a myriad of projects for primary education funded by external donors in primary education. Advantages and disadvantages of donor support for education are discussed. Integration of information, not only about projects funded by external agencies, but also about projects and activities funded by a range of Sri Lankan agencies, is vital for the implementation of the primary education reform in the longer term.

The vision for the reform is in place. The implementation is well under way. The challenge is to match the elements of that vision with implementation actions and resources from a range of stakeholders.

Angela W. Little

Colombo, 2000

Primary Education Reform in Sri Lanka

Editor: Angela W. Little
Primary Education Planning Project (PEPP)

Educational Publications Department,
Ministry of Education and Higher Education

CHAPTER I

THE GENERAL EDUCATION REFORMS AND PRIMARY EDUCATION

The Presidential Task Force on General Education

Editor's note

*This chapter consists of key extracts (**quoted verbatim**) from the document **General Education Reforms 1997**, written by the Presidential Task Force on General Education. It sets out the need for policy reform, the policy diagnosis and the main directions of the reform followed by the sections on compulsory education and on the primary stage of education (pp. 1-5, 8-9, 10-13).*

INTRODUCTION

'In Sri Lanka the State has provided free education to all her citizens over the last 50 years. As a result we have a literacy rate of about 90%.

During the first few decades, after we gained independence, universities, technical colleges and other tertiary education institutions provided for the training of a wide variety of professional and semi-professional personnel. During this period we produced many scholars, scientists, administrators and national figures of great ability and high distinction.

In recent decades the picture has changed. There has been a sharp decline in the standard and quality of education at all levels. The reading habit and the use of libraries in the learning process have almost disappeared from our education culture.

Serious shortcomings have appeared at every level of the education system. Statistics reveal a dismal situation. Approximately 14% of children in the compulsory school going age (5-14 years), do not attend school. Recent studies show that only about a fifth of Grade V children attain mastery levels in writing and even less in mathematics and health. At the GCE Ordinary Level examination in 1995, the failure rate in all eight subjects was one in ten. At the GCE Advanced Level examination, one in eleven failed in all four subjects offered.

The education system does not produce pupils with the knowledge, understanding, and the skills and attitudes appropriate for successful living. Total personality development, characterised by creativity, initiative, discipline, team spirit, respect and tolerance for other people and other cultures, is not achieved.

Therefore reform and restructuring the education system has become an urgent priority. It is an integral aspect of the development process of the country. It must be done in the spirit of bringing benefit to all people and not as a means of conferring privileges to selected groups and areas. It is clearly a means of empowering every citizen and providing her or him with access to the valuable resources of knowledge and information. None of the proposals for reform should be viewed or interpreted as discriminating against any person or groups of persons. Even where resources are to be targeted specifically, this would be done in conformity with principles of social justice and equity.

Also, it is clear that provinces and districts are not equally provided with physical infrastructure and resources. These differences have a bearing on how the education system functions. They affect the background of the learners, their participation in education, the expression of their potential and their levels of achievement. The learners live, learn and work in the provinces and districts in the context of these differences.

The National Education Commission has worked out a district-wise Composite Index, based on the status of transport, housing, water, sanitation and family income in 1990. The value of this index varies from 77 for the Colombo District to 41 for Moneragala**...**

... the desire for schooling, as reflected by the participation rate, is very high in the most backward districts of Moneragala and Hambantota. This desire should be recognised and supported by strong, targeted interventions, to provide quality education to the children of such backward areas. There is also a need to match education to the demands of people living in those districts. This matching would be the true determinant of quality.

Public demand, unemployment, poor performance at examinations, school drop-out and non-participation rates are all indicative of the need for improvement of education. The specific interventions necessary can also be determined with reference to these factors. Also, there are fundamental issues arising from the very nature of human development and the role that education must play in that development, which are far more compelling.

Poor performance as a nation, civil strife, high crime rates and high suicide rates are but a few indicators of the failures of education, which should really alarm and motivate us. We cannot find solutions by confining ourselves to formal instruction in schools, but must be far more concerned about a *total* approach. If educational reforms are identified in terms of the development of people and of localities, then many reforms would be seen as acceptable and affordable.

The reforms as identified by the Task Force on General Education together constitute a consistent set. They are aimed at human development. Therefore, every effort should be made to implement them as such. They cover five major areas, all of which are inseparable aspects of formal education. These are:

- Extending educational opportunity
- Improving the quality of education
- Developing practical and technical skill
- Education and training of teachers
- Management and resource provision

The improvement of general education does not take place in isolation. It also requires the expansion and creation of opportunities for higher education, technical education and for vocational training. The quality of administration, management, instruction, services, teamwork and leadership depend on these aspects of education and training but lie outside the ambit of formal general education. These sectors of education and training also have sets of policy recommendations for reform. Those proposals too are in the process of being implemented, through the initiatives of two other Presidential Task Forces. These are the Presidential Task Force on University Education Reform and the Presidential Task Force on Technical Education and Vocational Training...

The current education system in our country has been reviewed and researched both formally and informally by many persons with a particular interest in the field of education. Some of their findings have been fed into the policy formulating process. The reform proposals have also been fertilised by information about education systems in other countries. There are strong arguments for a major shift in education policy and a comprehensive and co-ordinated approach to change.

The principal elements of this shift are:

> *Self-realisation, life-long learning with emphasis on learning to learn, inculcating of humanistic values, and emphasis on stimulating the balanced mental and physical growth of the individual.*

The school has to take on some of the functions, which the close-knit family is supposed to fill. These functions include *instilling discipline, inculcating wholesome attitudes and values* which become some of the emerging missions of the education system. Ensuring the safety and protection of the growing child against negative social and commercial interests, and guiding and counselling both the child and the parents are parts of this new mission.

The reforms have the primary objective of creating an education system which will enable our people to live satisfying and peaceful lives, to be productive and to contribute to the well-being of others. Being well-informed and knowledgeable, being practically skilled in the broadest sense, being disciplined and refined, and being able to communicate effectively are essential outcomes of such an education process. Obviously there are certain important responsibilities that have to go hand-in-hand with the implementation of the reforms which devolve upon parents and the community.

Teachers are the most crucial and valuable resource within the system. They must be motivated, dedicated and fully committed to the delivery of quality education. Their capabilities, availability, effectiveness and attitudes are key factors. Even if the physical infrastructure of schools is not of a uniformly high standard and the hierarchy of officials outside the school is deficient, good leadership by the principal backed by efficient school management processes can fill the deficiencies. Driven by wholesome demands the system will be able to deliver quality education.

If, in addition, the officials are management-oriented in the their approach, sensitive to the specific needs of each school within their purview, timely in their responses to the schools and have a strong sense of responsibility, then much can be achieved within the resources that are available.

Another aspect that needs strengthening in management is the monitoring of the costs of operations and assessment of their effectiveness. This is a completely neglected aspect of educational administration and is a major impediment to the improvement of the education system.

Education reform does not imply, merely, the improvement of existing buildings or the provision of additional buildings to schools. Efforts must be targeted to the reorientation and motivation of key personnel to be demand driven, to develop social consciousness, to improve their performance and to be fully committed to responsibilities assigned to them. Ongoing and steady improvement within the resources that are available should be the major thrust.

As a nation, we are committed to rapid economic development. This endeavour demands human resources of highly qualified, motivated, trained or trainable output from the education system. The current system is failing to deliver that required output.

Current expenditure on education is around 2.9 percent of GDP. It is necessary to increase the allocation within the next six years to above 4.5% of GDP. The system will have to depend on substantial inputs of foreign funding in order to carry out the major changes required under the education reforms process. However, sustaining the reforms after introduction cannot continue to be dependent on foreign funds.

The provision of funding to schools has to be on the basis of unit cost per student and the development plans of each individual school as spelt out in the approved school policies. Such policies would cover set periods of time and include (areas) such as, teaching programmes, extra-curricular activities, required support facilities and planned infrastructure development.

Realising the importance of pursuing a settled policy for education which should remain outside the ambit of day-to-day politics, a National Education Commission was established in 1991. The mandate of the Commission was to advise the government on overall policy covering all aspects of education in the country.

During its term of office, the Commission conducted in-depth studies on various aspects of education, held public sittings, received in person and written submissions from a wide range of individuals involved in education and others who had an interest in and a commitment to the education process.

Arising out of the above process the Commission produced the following documents:-

- First Report of the Commission – 1992
- National Policy on General Education
- National Policy on University Education
- National Policy on Technical and Vocational Education

The Commission was reconstituted at the end of the term of the first commission by Her Excellency the President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaranatunga. The documents produced by the first commission were accepted by the new government which had come into power and steps were taken to begin the process of implementation of recommended policies.

The President having studied the recommendations, appointed a Presidential Task Force on General Education Reforms, headed by the Minister of Education and Higher Education, Hon. Richard Pathirana in December 1996. The Task Force was given a mandate to develop and present a comprehensive set of proposals for reforming the general education system. The President also declared 1997 as the year of Education Reform…

The Presidential Task Force in turn worked through thirteen technical committees… An executive summary, embodying the proposals of the technical committees, was presented to Her Excellency the President in March 1997. This document recommended the specific actions to be taken at various levels of the education system, identified the agencies which should be assigned responsibility and suggested possible timeframes for implementation.

The Reforms address not only the formal school years, Grade I to Grade XIII, but also early childhood education. Action is already being taken on reforming every stage of the education process…**'**

'COMPULSORY EDUCATION

BACKGROUND NOTE

About 14% of the age group 5 to 14 years – the compulsory school going age – do not attend school. The figure given is a national average but in reality includes pockets where the percentage of non-attendance is very much higher. Studies have shown that there is a multiplicity of causes for this state of affairs. These are mostly socio-economic and include poverty and the need for children to work in order to supplement the

family income. Girls of this age group may be kept back at home in order to look after the younger children. Non-attendance is also tied up, sometimes, with times of sowing and harvesting of crops and related agricultural activities. In many cases lack of documents, like birth certificates, prevent children from gaining admission to school.

The Presidential Task Force has recommended the following actions, which are being implemented:

- Regulations making education compulsory for children in the age group 5 to 14 were passed by parliament and came into effect in January 1998. These regulations require parents to ensure admission of their children to school and their continuous attendance.

- Surveys... commenced in 1997 in various parts of the country and are ongoing, to determine the reasons for non-attendance of children. Results of these surveys are being used to develop strategies, which will help to induce fuller participation in education, by children of compulsory school going age.

- In cases where parents are not able to provide birth certificates, heads of schools have been instructed to accept affidavits or letters from the local Grama Sevaka Niladaries as proof of a child's age.

- According to perceived needs, incentives such as clothing, stationery and school meals will be provided, in addition to books and other materials, to those requiring help in such a manner. Voluntary organisations and Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) will be encouraged to help in these programmes.

- As part of the Early Childhood Development (ECD) programme, Crèches and Day Care Centres will be established. These will help to release girls from their responsibility for the younger children at home and enable them to attend school.

- Activity Schools will be established to serve children whose levels of educational attainment do not allow them to gain admission to classes appropriate to their age. Appropriate curricula will be developed for these schools which might serve also to help underachievers. In addition, Open Schools will be developed which will function in the distance mode.

- The lead agency for implementing, monitoring and evaluating this programme is the Non-Formal Education Unit of MEHE. The NFEU will be appropriately strengthened to serve in this capacity.

A well planned awareness programme will be mounted islandwide to inform parents about the importance of their children's participation and the steps that are being taken to help them. The approach to be followed is one of persuasion, not of coercion… .'

'THE PRIMARY STAGE OF EDUCATION

BACKGROUND NOTE

The principle that the first five years of a child's life are crucial to the learning process and total personality development applies with equal force to the first five years of formal education – primary education. During these years the child must build the well recognised, five pillars of learning.

- Being knowledgeable and well informed
- Being practically skilled
- Being disciplined
- Being refined
- Being able to speak well

Further, under the reforms, it is expected that, in the primary school years, the child will acquire certain basic competencies. These are:

- Competencies in communication
- Competencies relating to the natural, social and artificial environment
- Competencies in ethics and religion
- Competencies relating to the use of leisure, enjoyment and recreation
- Competencies in learning: learning how to learn

The Presidential Task Force has recommended the following actions, which are being implemented:

- Education will be child-centred, not teacher-centred. The emphasis will be on developing the child's mind, skills, attitudes and abilities.

- An integrated curriculum which incorporates the mother tongue, religion, mathematics and environment related activities will be used.

- English will be used, as a means of communication from Grade I, while the formal teaching of English will commence at Grade III. Children will be encouraged also to use the other national language, in addition to their own.

- Primary Education will consist of three key stages.

    Key Stage 1   -   Grades I and II
    Key Stage 2   -   Grades III and IV
    Key Stage 3   -   Grade V

    Three elements; *guided play, activity, desk work* will go into each of the stages. There will be a stagewise transition in the proportions of the three elements used in the teaching/learning process.

At Key Stage 1, a greater part of the time will be spent on guided play learning through activities and components of activity and lesser amount of deskwork. At Key Stage 2 the three approaches will be given equal prominence, while at Key Stage 3, deskwork will dominate. Concepts relating to stabilisation of morals, inculcation of values, development of tolerance, appreciation of other social groups and cultures, and living in harmony will run as unifying threads through all three Key Stages.

- At the point of entry, the teacher will engage children in a series of specially designed play items and activities, with a view to identifying each child's capabilities at entry, as early as possible. This will help the teacher to plan the learning-teaching process according to the needs of each child. Throughout the learning-teaching process children will be assessed continuously, placing emphasis on informal methods of assessment. Towards the end of each key stage, children will be assessed to determine their levels of mastery of Essential Competencies, lists of which will be available to the teachers. This will enable teachers to assess the degree of success achieved and to take corrective measures where necessary.

In order to implement the actions set out above, the Presidential Task Force has set in place a series of essential measures. These include the following;

- Revision of syllabi, writing and production of text books, work books and supplementary materials

    A general framework for the entire Primary School Curriculum has been worked out. Syllabi are being drawn up on the basis of competencies that have been identified.

    Primary readers, workbooks and teachers' guides for the new syllabi are under preparation and will reach the schools at the appropriate time.

    For the production of supplementary reading materials, an NIE Steering Committee will be formed to select writers from among those registered with the NIE. The Steering Committee will examine books submitted, before they are approved for publication.

- Pre-service and In-service Teacher Training

    Staff of the colleges of education and other teacher training institutes will undergo the necessary orientation for the delivery of training in respect of the new syllabi and teaching methodologies. The required teacher education curriculum modules and support materials have been developed and are being used in the pilot programme that is now on-going.

    Master teacher vacancies have been filled and they will be trained and will conduct in-service programmes, as required.

- Assessment

  Class-based assessment frameworks have been developed, and materials and training provided for assessment of competency levels, throughout the learning-teaching process. Provision has been made to train teachers to conduct teacher-made tests and achievement tests.

- Infrastructure, environment and equipment

  Models of the desired primary school environment and basic infrastructure have been developed. These models will be used to build anew or to enhance the existing infrastructure so that children begin to learn in attractive surroundings using simple materials and furniture.

- School-based management

  Appropriately qualified and trained personnel will be appointed as heads of primary sections and given adequate, devolved authority and suitable remuneration.

  Primary Education Development Committees with strong parent involvement will be set up.

  The concept of the school family, bringing together neighbouring schools, to work for the common good will be implemented.

- Monitoring and supervision of the implementation of reforms

  The Ministry of Education and Higher Education, in collaboration with the National Institute of Education and the provincial education authorities, will develop a system for continuous monitoring and supervision of the implementation of the reform programme.

  The monitoring system will be applied to the reform process at all levels of the general education system.

  A major part of the monitoring and supervision will become the responsibility of the provincial, district and zonal education system.

The implementation of the Reforms in Primary Education commenced in January 1998. The first phase covered Grade 1 in 533 schools in the Gampaha District. This district was chosen because there was already an ongoing primary school project sponsored by UNESCO there. Progress is being closely monitored and indicators of positive response to the reform programme have emerged. Progress review meetings are held at regular intervals with the monitoring group. Experience gathered through this pilot programme will be used in refining the reforms before implementation, islandwide, in January 1999. Meanwhile, the Gampaha District will move into Grade 2. Under this phased programme of Primary Education Reform, the government will have recreated a primary, education school system in the island, relevant to twenty-first century needs by 2003.'

CHAPTER 2

PRIMARY EDUCATION: THE MANY SPLENDOURED GEM WE SEEK[1]

Kamala Peiris

The goals and priorities for primary education are expected to develop not only the knowledge acquired through use of books but also wider and more specific competencies, values and attitudes. While conforming with the global goals identified by world bodies such as UNESCO would be to our advantage, our own goals and priorities should help our future citizens to face the twenty-first century fearlessly. In this context let us first examine our national goals for education.

NATIONAL EDUCATION GOALS

The National Education Commission (NEC) in its first report (May 1992) set out nine goals relevant for planning activities in the field of education. First is the achievement *of national cohesion, national integrity and national unity*. This is specified as a priority on account of the strife and tension that has torn Sri Lankan society apart in recent times. Such a sense of national unity must of necessity draw on the various traditional cultures in general and from the values and attitudes promoted by the rich variety of religious faiths in the country.

The establishment of *pervasive patterns of social justice* has been identified as the second goal for education. This depends both on the genuine goodwill and harmony among groups and on the recognition of one's own duties and rights by all citizens. The third goal is the evolution of *a sustainable pattern of living*, a sustainable life style which is vital for the year 2000 and beyond when, for the first time in the history of mankind, even air and water cannot be taken for granted. This makes it imperative that a sustainable life style is promoted actively as a valuable concept in the minds of young children in their formative years. Moral and spiritual values are derived mainly from religion but can also be introduced through experiences in other disciplines, widening one's outlook and broadening one's vision. In the present situation, where the outward show of wealth seems to be the driving force behind individuals aspiring to enter 'affluent society', this goal seems doubly relevant if Sri Lankan society is to escape degeneration into a people with only superficial values and outward show. Respect for age-old social conventions and the ability to differentiate between wants and needs are thus qualities that education systems should strive to foster.

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[1] An earlier version of this article appeared in the Daily News, 11 January 1998.

The fourth goal is the preparation for *work opportunities that are dignified, satisfying and self-fulfilling*. In developing countries, the rate of growth in full time employment opportunities has seldom matched the increase in the supply of educated manpower. The level of education of the general population has risen considerably in Sri Lanka although the type of education that enables one to be 'employable' has not been given the consideration it deserves. Consequently, and especially in recent years, there are many so called 'educated' youths who do not have the skills necessary for the available jobs. Educators need to take a hard look at the content of education programmes and reorient these to suit present-day needs.

The fifth goal is the institution of a variety of possibilities for all to participate in *human resources development*. This highlights the need to consider education not as a pure service but as an investment in future development. The NEC report states that 'education assumes a wider meaning when placed against economic development' which itself will be enhanced by suitably developed local human resources. A variety of experiences, be they in practical activities, work experience or projects, should be available for children to try out their own skills and understand the complexities of the world of work which they would later face.

The sixth goal is the generation of *a continuous sense of deep and abiding concern for one another*. In the fiercely competitive atmosphere in which children find themselves, this humane sense of concern and consideration for others is an essential goal which should always be kept in view. Children should be taught by practice and example to submerge their inclinations for selfishness and self-aggrandisement. They should substitute instead caring and sharing attitudes, and should learn to speak up for the voiceless in society.

Learning to learn and adapt to changing situations is the seventh goal. As change is the only condition one may expect in the unforeseeable future, ability to meet such a situation with resilience and flexibility becomes a crucial goal. Of necessity, development means change. Instead of stunned disbelief and succumbing to the vagaries of circumstance, one may, if prepared, adapt to it through sound reasoning and informed insight. The future cannot then approach us as a thief and we will be able to welcome it as a friend.

The eighth goal is complementary to the above i.e. *the capacity to cope with the complex and the unforeseen*, achieving a sense of security and stability. The NEC report states that a sense of security and stability is an essential prerequisite for internal peace and harmony but the path to security may be affected by both internal and external factors. One should thus be armed with sound mental and physical health (internal factors). This involves clear and analytical thinking, creative problem solving and a healthy body with strength to resist disease, stress and trauma.

The final goal identified is development of *competencies which will help secure an honourable place in the international community*. Although this may be considered as irrelevant for individual development, human development in general brings strength

and stature to a nation. In problems which the nation encounters, the behaviour of individuals (who comprise the nation) and their attitudes can change the nation's image for better or worse in a world context. Hence, it is proposed to develop independent thinking, consistency of thought and an integrated outlook at all stages of education.

PRIORITIES AT THE PRIMARY LEVEL

In relation to these national educational goals one may derive aspects relevant to the primary level of education. In promoting national cohesion and unity, *a love of one's country and commitment to serve the nation* are seeds that may be sown in children's minds through language, drama, stories, songs, etc. We may also draw upon the treasure trove of the contributions made to this end by cultural traditions and leaders of every ethnic group and religion. In terms of social justice, there is the possibility to activate creatively an *awareness of inequities and sensitivity to their proactive elimination*. In this effort teachers may also promote in children a *sense of personal responsibility and accountability* so that by inner compulsion they would stand up for social justice. If rights and duties of self and others are understood and practised from early life, habits thus formed remain ingrained in individual life styles.

Learning to care is an attitude that can be easily inculcated at the primary stage of education. Children can be taught to care for one another rather that to compete under all circumstances. For this purpose, parents' support should also be obtained because what is promoted in school could be nullified by the pattern of behaviour in the home setting. This leads to an *awareness and respect for other viewpoints, needs and interests* bringing in aspects such as co-operation, tolerance, sensitive compromise and consensus. Even in this initial phase of school participation, the need for discussion and consultation, the ability to give and take constructive criticism and the involvement in participatory action may be experienced through activities undertaken as a group. During this process other aspects such as *appreciation of other cultures as well as one's own* and *commitment to one's work through concentration and perseverance* may also be promoted as wholesome attitudes and habits. It is also possible to give attention to the promotion of *adaptability to change* through practical experiences. *Learning to learn, dealing with facts to solve problems, the ability to anticipate change and act on alternative strategies* may be taught through day to day practical challenges posed in class situations. Other relevant qualities that can be imbibed by children working under creative teachers are *an appreciation of the need to be prepared to meet any situation, resourcefulness to initiate constructive action and taking the initiative to learn anew*.

Even new aspects such as *coping with the complex and the unforeseen*, thereby achieving a sense of security, are not beyond the level of children in primary education. As children have less inhibitions they can be made adventurous in anticipating and taking risks, but care should be taken to emphasise *the need to take precautions, to accept failure gracefully and to try again without losing heart*. Similarly, children at the primary level can be made aware of *how to maintain their own health and well-being as well as*

that of others around them. Adherence to rules and regulations that make social life free of tension and the need for organised planned action in facing problems are still other competencies that can be imbibed, resulting in well balanced mature behaviour in adult life.

BASIC COMPETENCIES

On the basis of these priorities for curriculum development at the primary level, a set of basic competencies relating to broad areas of development has been identified, as follows:

Communication
Literacy
Numeracy
Graphics

Environment
Social
Biological
Physical

Ethics (and religion)
Values and attitudes
Appreciation of cultures and religions
Conflict resolution

Play and the use of leisure
Sports and athletics
Indoor games
Aesthetics
Creative activities
Constructional activities
Process skills

Learning to learn
Sustained attention and perseverance
Updating learning
Attention to detail
Initiative
Resourcefulness
Problem-solving ability

While these competencies will be carefully developed in all children, attention will also be paid to individual differences. This involves ensuring relevant experiences both for children with learning difficulties, as well as for those gifted or talented in different areas of activity.

A NEW FRAMEWORK

The five year primary stage of education will be divided into three key stages. In Key Stage 1 (Grades 1 and 2) learning will take place primarily through physical and mental play and the activity method. In Key Stage 2 (Grade 3 and 4) an integrated thematic approach will be followed, while still using activity methods. Key Stage 3 (Grade 5) will include more desk and academic work leading to demarcated and subject specifications. This approach will help children to cope with the atmosphere they will encounter in the junior secondary stage of education, beginning at Grade 6.

This framework would give special attention to basic competencies earlier specified.

ASSESSMENT

In the assessment of pupil performance there will be a clear demarcation between the approach used at Key Stage 1 and the approach used thereafter. In Key Stage 1 a scheme of continuous evaluation will be used. This will be a process of recording observations by the teacher as the child progresses under normal classroom conditions without the threat of having to face formal time-bound tests that leave children traumatised.

As the child develops physically and mentally, testing will be introduced in easy stages taking care not to use the results in a way that is detrimental to mental growth, such as a comparison between children without paying attention to their individual strengths and weaknesses. To help teachers to gradually develop the capacities of children in basic competencies, such as first language and mathematics, there will be a series of booklets specifying syllabus content in graded steps and identifying Essential Terminal Competencies for each key stage. At entry to Grade 1, a special individual assessment instrument will be used to identify already acquired entry competency levels, not only in subject-based concept development but also in social skills and work habits. The final terminal competencies in Grade 5 will be determined based on the achievement levels expected at the entrance to the junior secondary stage of education. While these instruments and guidelines are expected to support the teachers in providing for individual development of children at the later key stages, teachers need expertise in designing their own classroom assessment procedures. Questioning, and the development of informal test situations, where children may respond in groups or individually, and designing formal tests for the later key stages are skills that will be developed in teachers during in-service and pre-service training.

Finally, analysis of test results with a view to improving the design of questions, analysis of marks for remedial work, development of norms for understanding divisional or zonal levels are other aspects of pupil assessment that will be covered.

The foregoing description of goals and priorities for education shows that educational planners have set their sights high and are determined to work towards achieving these lofty ideals. However, if we are to succeed, all stake-holders, parents, teachers, officials, politicians, academia, media and even the general public, should stand as one, shoulder to shoulder with an earnest determination to be partners in building a worthy citizenry for a resplendent Sri Lanka in the twenty-first century.

CHAPTER 3

PRIMARY EDUCATION IN SRI LANKA: TOWARDS A DISTINCT IDENTITY

Angela W. Little

SRI LANKA'S REMARKABLE ACHIEVEMENTS IN PRIMARY EDUCATION

Sri Lanka is cited frequently as a country whose success in poverty reduction has been remarkable. In comparison with countries with similar levels of GNP per capita, Sri Lanka's achievements in literacy, life expectancy, infant mortality and fertility have exceeded expected values (Sen 1981). Sri Lanka's record has 'held an important place in policy discussions on poverty and human development' (Datt and Gunawardene 1997, 1).

Sri Lanka's achievement in *education for all* is best reflected in her literacy rates. Notwithstanding the problems of interpretation of self-reports of literacy, the growth of literacy during the twentieth century is impressive. At the turn of the century the national literacy rate was 26 per cent. By 1921 it was 40 per cent. By 1946, just prior to independence, it was 58 per cent. In 1991, the literacy rate was estimated to be 87 per cent. Extremely high gross enrolment ratios for boys *and* girls were achieved in the primary grades of formal education in the 1960s. By 1998 the net enrolment rate among the 5 - 9 age group was estimated to be 96.5 per cent (MEHE and Registrar General's Department figures), with almost identical rates for boys and girls.

This achievement in participation and literacy has been accomplished through a combination of factors. These have included strong indigenous religious traditions supporting education for boys and girls, the promotion of vernacular-medium education by the colonial state and by missionary organisations, fee-free education for the poorest groups, and early attempts by the colonial state in the twentieth century to make primary education compulsory.

In recent years, however, attention has focused less on participation rates and access to education, and more on learning achievements beyond basic literacy. Several research studies conducted at the National Institute of Education, published in the 1980s, drew attention to low levels of achievement among primary school children in basic numeracy and literacy. Moreover, the percentages of students judged to be underachieving in relation to curriculum expectations increased steadily from Grade 1 to Grade 5 (Kariyawasam 1985, Ekanayake and Sedere 1989).

A widely quoted and more recent study is based on a survey conducted by George Wijesuriya and colleagues at the National Institute of Education (Navaratne 1995). Assessment tests designed to estimate literacy and numeracy skills in relation to the curriculum among Grade 5 students yielded low levels of 'mastery'. In the literacy sub-areas of vocabulary, comprehension and writing, 'mastery' was achieved by 33 per cent, 27 per cent and 21 per cent of Grade 5 children respectively. In the numeracy sub-areas of problem-solving, knowledge of procedures and understanding of concepts, 'mastery' was attained by 9 per cent, 13 per cent and 32 per cent of Grade 5 children respectively. In the absence of measurements made over time with the same assessment instrument, these results by themselves do not enable us to judge whether or not achievement levels have been increasing or decreasing over time. However, they constituted an important source of evidence for the National Education Commission and as a justification for its recommendations in 1992 for a major reform of the education system (NEC 1992).

This chapter takes this low level of achievement in primary education as its starting point, and suggests that the structure of the national education system may itself have contributed to it. In contrast to many education systems elsewhere, the Sri Lankan system does not encourage the establishment of high quality primary schools with a distinct institutional identity. Over a long period of time, primary schools have been permitted to upgrade themselves into much larger schools catering up to Grades 11 or 13. The chapter describes the historical development of classifications of both schools and curricula. It highlights the role of selection examinations as an important dynamic in the tendency for schools to lose their identity as primary schools and to upgrade themselves into institutions offering primary and post primary education. It suggests that the absence of institutional identity reinforces and is reinforced by the low status of teachers at the primary level and the preference of teachers for positions in the post-primary classes. The lack of identity is exacerbated by administrative procedures that treat primary as a 'subject' of the curriculum rather than a distinct stage of education, and an absence of administrative means to allocate and monitor financial and other resources for/of primary education. The chapter concludes with a consideration of the current reforms and their implications for primary education.

CURRICULUM AND SCHOOL CLASSIFICATIONS

The curriculum for formal education currently comprises four stages: primary (Grades 1 - 5), junior secondary (Grades 6 - 8), senior secondary (Grades 9 - 11) and collegiate (Grades 12 - 13). The curriculum programmes followed by students in Grades 9 - 11 and 12 - 13 are also known by the examinations to which they lead - the GCE O Level and GCE A Level programmes respectively. This curriculum structure is broadly similar to that found in many other countries.

The Grade 1 - 5 primary curriculum has, and will continue to have, a distinct identity and structure (cf. Chapter 4). In the recently launched national education reforms the primary curriculum will retain its identity and coverage of Grades 1 - 5. The secondary curriculum

will be realigned. The 'junior secondary' curriculum will be followed in Grades 6 - 9. The 'senior secondary' curriculum will be followed in Grades 10 - 13, with a subdivision between the GCE O Level programme for Grades 10 - 11, and the GCE A Level programme for Grades 12 - 13 (NEC 1997).

The medium of instruction is central to learning and curriculum. Sri Lanka children attending government schools follow their education in either the Sinhala-medium or the Tamil-medium. Among government schools, 71.5 per cent offer education in the Sinhala- medium of instruction and 27.8 per cent in the Tamil-medium. Just under one per cent of schools are 'Bi-media'. Officially, English is taught as a subject in all schools from Grade 3 primary. The education reforms, to be implemented nationwide from 1999, recommend that English be used informally by teachers in classrooms as part of activity learning from Grade 1. The classification of schools by medium of instruction is consonant with the classification of curriculum. Schools classified as Sinhala-medium receive and teach curriculum materials in Sinhala; schools classified as Tamil-medium receive and teach curriculum materials in Tamil. Bi-media schools use curriculum materials in both language media.

While the classification of the curriculum currently distinguishes the stages of primary from secondary and collegiate, the schools' classifier, the school 'Type', cuts across them. Government schools, which comprise the majority of all schools in Sri Lanka, are generally classified by a combination of *terminal* grade and the curriculum stream offered. There are four 'types' of government schools - Type 1AB, Type 1C, Type 2 and Type 3. Type 1AB schools offer science, arts and commerce curriculum streams to the Grade13 GCE A Level examination. Type 1C schools offer arts and commerce, but not the science stream, to the Grade 13 GCE A Level examination. Type 2 schools offer a wide range of subjects up to the Grade 11 GCE O Level examination. Type 3 schools offer education to Grade 5 or Grade 8.

In many countries gender is an important classifier of schools. In Sri Lanka in 1997, the majority of government schools (97%) were co-educational. Boys-only schools comprised 1.2 per cent; girls-only schools 1.8 per cent.

CLASSIFICATIONS AND THE CURRENT NATIONAL POLICY ON EDUCATION

The national education policy is to reorganise and to reclassify the government schools as either junior schools, with classes from Grades 1 - 9 or senior schools with classes from Grades 10 - 13 (NEC 1997, 24). Junior schools will cover the curriculum stages of primary (Grades 1 - 5) and junior secondary (Grades 6 - 9). Senior schools will cover the senior secondary curriculum stages of Grades 10 - 11 (GCE O Level) and Grades 12 - 13 (GCE A Level). The terms used to describe and classify the stages of the curriculum and of schools are confusing. Key terms such as 'junior' and 'secondary' cross-cut the classifications of curriculum and schools. Junior *schools* include, but are not confined to, the junior secondary curriculum. Senior schools cover only the senior secondary curriculum. The secondary *curriculum* is divided into two. The junior secondary curriculum will be followed in junior schools. The senior secondary curriculum will be followed in senior schools.

PRIMARY EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS: GRADE SPAN AND TYPE, SIZE AND CONTROL

GRADE SPAN AND TYPE

Table 3.1 indicates that 9,753 schools offer primary stage (Grade 1-5) education. Only 367 schools, or 4 per cent, admit pupils from Grade 6. Almost every school institution (approximately 96 per cent) is implementing the primary education reform introduced in 1999. Of these, 2,809, or 29 per cent, offer Grade 1-5 education exclusively. This means that 71 per cent of schools offer post-primary as well as primary education.

Table 3.1

Government Schools by Type and Grade Span, 1997

Grade span	Type 1AB	Type 1C	Type 2	Type 3	Total
Grade 1-5	0	3	41	2765	2809
Grade 1-8	1	1	104	1085	1191
Grade 1-11	2	176	3514	107	3799
Grade 1-13	393	1530	31	0	1954
Grade 6-11	0	6	22	3	31
Grade 6-13	191	144	1	0	336
TOTAL	587 (5.8%)	1860 (18.4%)	3713 (36.7%)	3960 (39.1%)	10120 (100%)

Source: School Census 1997, MEHE

Table 3.1 shows that the majority of schools are classified as Type 2 or Type 3 schools. Together, these comprise 75.8 per cent of all schools. A further 18.4 per cent are classified as Type 1C. The prestigious Type 1AB schools comprise 5.8 per cent of all schools. The table also indicates that a number of schools appear to depart from the official 'school type' definitions, outlined in the previous section. For example Type 2 schools offer education across the Grade 1-11 span officially, yet 145 Type 2 schools are classified as offering Grades 1-5 or Grades 1-8. This discrepancy arises from what the ministry terms the 'approved' and the 'functioning' school type. Table 3.1 refers to the 'approved' school type.

Thus, for the majority of schools primary education constitutes only one part of their identity. The term 'primary school' may be applied to those schools that offer only Grades 1-5. These are the Type 3 schools, most of which are located in areas of socio-economic disadvantage.

SCHOOL SIZE

There is a very strong relationship between the school type and the size of student population. As Table 3.2 shows, Type 1AB schools, the schools that terminate at the highest grade and offer the most prestigious GCE A Level courses, are, on average, the

largest. They are followed in turn by Type 1C (offering courses up to A Level in arts and commerce but not science), Type 2 (offering courses up to O Level) and Type 3 (offering courses up to Grade 5 or Grade 8).

Seventy Type 1AB schools enrol more than 3000 students each. By contrast, 2,662 schools enrol one hundred or less students. The majority of these small schools are Type 3 schools. Because of their small student enrolments, these schools have few teachers. Schools with only one teacher number 222; with two teachers 450 and three teachers 580. Provinces vary in the numbers of one and two-teacher schools. Approximately 26 per cent of schools in the Northern Province and 12 per cent of schools in the Eastern Province have only one or two teachers. The percentages in the Central and Sabaragamuwa Provinces are five and seven respectively. The design of the primary stage curriculum is based on the assumption that a teacher is teaching a single year group at any one time. However, where the number of teachers is less than the number of year grades, then teachers will be teaching across year grades (i.e. cross or multi-grade teaching) for some or all of the time. Cross-grade or multi-grade teaching places extra demands on the teachers in terms of classroom and curriculum management. Currently, multi-grade teaching receives only scant attention in the Grades 1-5 syllabus and in teacher education curricula.

Table 3. 2

Approved School Type by Size of Student Population, 1997

Student Population	Type 1AB	Type 1C	Type 2	Type 3	Total
< 50	0	7	69	1177	1253
51-100	3	7	244	1158	1409
101-200	2	33	953	970	1958
201-500	14	533	1887	486	2920
501-1000	102	902	456	142	1632
1001-1500	158	295	57	24	534
1501-2000	117	62	9	5	193
2001-2500	76	13	8	1	98
2501-3000	45	8	0	0	53
3001-3501	36	0	0	0	36
>3500	34	0	0	0	34

Source: School Census 1997, MEHE

CONTROL

While government schools comprise the majority of all schools in Sri Lanka, three other categories of school offer full-time education. Private schools, of which 75 schools were registered with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education in 1997, are of three types – fee levying (in which fees are collected from the students to pay teacher

salaries), non-fee levying (in which teacher salaries are paid by the government), and special schools for disabled children (in which salaries are paid by the government). Pirivena schools, of which there were 550 registered in 1997, provide education for young Buddhist monks (Bhikkus) and for male lay students who wish to follow a Buddhist education. However these schools admit youth over fourteen years of age and do not have classes for Grades 1-5. International schools are registered under the Companies Act and are permitted to offer education in the English-medium. In addition, the MEHE organises literacy classes for children not enrolled in the formal education system.

Recent (1998) estimates of children enrolled in these alternative forms of primary education were 32,638 in private education, 6,288 in international schools and 6,589 in literacy classes. Enrolments in Grades 1-5 in government schools in 1998 were 1,674,842, yielding a total enrolment in primary education of 1,720,357. The majority of children (97.3%) attend government schools, with 1.9 per cent, 0.4 per cent and 0.4 per cent in private schools, international schools and literacy classes respectively.

SUPPLEMENTARY PRIMARY EDUCATION

Government, private, pirivena and international schools offer full-time education in the mornings and early afternoon, Monday to Friday. Running alongside this formal system of education is an extensive informal system of after-hours schooling, known as 'tuition'. No one knows the number of tutors or the number of tutories. Tuition covers many types of teacher/learner arrangements. These include (i) individual tuition from a tutor, held at the home of the student or tutor (ii) small group tuition, held at the home of a group member or tutor (iii) class tuition, held in a rented hall or school classroom, and (iv) class tuition (often large groups) held in a 'tutory' premises owned by an academic or non academic entrepreneur (De Silva 1994). Although the number of tuition classes is unknown, it is clear that the number of students supplementing their education through private tuition is enormous. Tuition is not confined to GCE O and A Level students. A large proportion of primary-age students attend private tuition after school hours and at the weekends.

THE HISTORICAL ANTECEDENTS OF INSTITUTIONAL UPGRADING

Why have primary schools tended to shed their identity as distinct institutions of learning? Historically, two dynamics appear to be important; first, the establishment of separate layers of schools for the masses and the elite, and second, the language of the colonisers and elites and the language of the masses.

The development of all mass school systems begins with primary education. Prior to the onset of European colonisation of Sri Lanka in the early sixteenth century, a network of schools provided a religious and a rudimentary secular education for boys and girls. This education was offered in the Buddhist *gurugedere* (village schools held at the home of the teacher), the Hindu temple and veranda schools, and the Muslim *maktabs*. Post-

primary education was offered in higher level institutions for those who trained to become priests/leaders in the respective religions.

While each of the European colonisers, the Portuguese, then the Dutch and the British, actively discouraged the schooling offered by these three religions, some education for the masses was provided. By the end of the Portuguese period primary education was provided in the media of Sinhala and Tamil through an extensive system of parish schools attached to Catholic churches. These offered education for up to eight years. Jesuits and Franciscans ran colleges for secondary education for those who would enter the church or serve the colonial government (Ruberu 1962). But even in the colleges separate sections were established for the elementary, secondary and theological sections. The Dutch displaced the Portuguese in 1658. They extended the system of Sinhala-medium and Tamil-medium parish primary schools and promoted vigorously the Protestant religion of the Dutch Reformed Church. But the Dutch colonial government took responsibility for these schools and established a central body, the scholarchal commission, or school board, to direct them. The parish schools provided an elementary education up to the age of fifteen years.

The British displaced the Dutch in 1796. In the early years the colonial government supported two tiers of school, designed for two social layers of society. The superior tier was newly-created. It comprised preparatory feeder primary schools and one post-primary institution, the Academy. High-caste Sinhala, Tamil and Dutch Burgher boys attended these schools which prepared candidates for government service and imparted Christianity. Students were taught in the English language. A primary school, known as the Model School, was added to the Academy in 1842 but was abolished in 1849. An amalgamation of the Academy with the Colombo Central School subsequently gave the Academy its own 'lower school'. The inferior layer was rehabilitated. It consisted of the parish primary schools which had been established during the Dutch period. Children were taught through the medium of Sinhala or Tamil. They were not taught English as a subject. It was rare for vernacular-medium schools to offer education beyond Grade 5 or 6.

Thus was established a status and caste-based system of government education, marked by divisions of language and educational promotion prospects. The upper stratum of society developed a literacy in English and the lower a literacy in the vernacular language. Members of the upper stratum attended primary schools which held open the prospect of promotion to a post-primary institution. Those of the lower stratum attended primary schools with no prospect of promotion to a post-primary institution.

Over time, the state passed responsibility for primary education in the vernacular languages to the missions and private bodies, but maintained some involvement through a resource system of 'grants-in-aid' established in the 1840s. This scheme was based on a system of 'payment by results' in various subjects. The terms of the scheme varied according to different types of schools, foreshadowing the school 'types' in place at the end of the twentieth century.

SCHOOL TYPES AND PAYMENT BY RESULTS

Box 1 illustrates the resource system through grants-in-aid as it operated in the 1870s. It demonstrates how resources for schools were based on learning achievements of pupils in different subjects and different grades of primary. The systems for the different types of school and the rates payable were different.

Box 1

School Types and Payment by Results

In 'English' schools, there were generally six 'standards' of education. The grant was based on the results in reading (in English), writing (in English), arithmetic (in English) in Standards 1 to 3, and additional subjects in higher standards: geography (in English) in Standard 4; geography and grammar (both in English) in Standard 5; and geography, grammar and history (all in English) in Standard 6. In the 'Anglo-Vernacular' schools there were four standards. The grant was based on reading, writing and arithmetic (all in Sinhala or Tamil) in Standards 1, 2, 3 and 4, with the addition of reading (in English) in Standard 2, writing (in English) in Standard 3 and geography (in Sinhala or Tamil) in Standard 4. In 'vernacular' schools there were also four standards. The grant was based on performance in reading, writing and arithmetic (all in Sinhala or Tamil) in Standards 1 and 2, and 3, with the addition of geography (in Sinhala or Tamil) in Standard 4. The English schools received the highest rate of grant, followed by the Anglo-vernacular schools and then the vernacular schools. The grant-in-aid contributed considerably to the expansion of the education system in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, and especially to that of vernacular primary schools.

Source: Jayasuriya 1979, 256-257

OVERGROWN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

By the early twentieth century, a number of English-medium schools were gradually upgrading themselves to include post-primary as well as primary grades. In 1912, this attracted the attention of the Macleod Committee. Recommending a simplification of English-medium schools into elementary and secondary schools, the committee judged that several of the so-called 'secondary schools' were in fact

> *"overgrown* (author's emphasis) elementary schools, with arrangements tacked on them by which the more promising pupils are put through courses of work in higher subjects in order that they may be presented for the Cambridge examinations" (Sessional Paper 1912, 15-16 quoted in Jayasuriya 1979, 369).

The committee recommended a division of schools into four types (i) the purely elementary (or primary) school, (ii) the elementary school with a secondary department

working up to the junior standard, (iii) the elementary school with a secondary department working up to the senior standard, and (iv) the fully organised secondary school.

The division of schools into elementary and secondary schools was replaced in 1929 by a division into primary schools, junior secondary schools and senior secondary schools. Despite the Macleod Committee's observation in 1912 on 'overgrown' elementary schools, schools continued to be classified by their *terminal* rather than *entry* grade. A primary school terminated at Standard 5, a junior secondary school at Standard 8 and a senior secondary school at a standard higher than Standard 8. Then, as now, many senior secondary schools contained the primary Standards 1 - 5.

In 1940, the Central School System was introduced. The aim of the Central School System was to provide a high-quality English-medium fully-organised secondary school in each education circuit. These schools attracted deserving scholars from surrounding schools, mainly in rural areas, selected through a scholarship examination administered at the end of the primary grades. With the establishment of the central schools, it was hoped that the work and expense 'involved in having small post primary classes in every or nearly every school would be eliminated' (Jayasuriya 1979, 439). But the central schools were selective and offered a quality education only to those who succeeded in passing the scholarship examination. As long as there were children who failed or did not sit the examination, but who wished to continue their education, the social demand for post-primary classes, large and small, and 'tacked on' to primary schools, would remain.

Through the 1940s and 1950s various recommendations were made to separate the primary and post-primary grades of both the vernacular-medium and English-medium schools. The Special Committee on Education, chaired by the Minister of Education, Dr C.W.W. Kannangara, recommended a diversification of post-primary education, based on similar recommendations current in England at that time. But these were not implemented.

The 1962 National Education Commission recommended that primary schools be replaced by 'elementary' schools covering the compulsory education cycle of 5-14 years. In effect this recommended the nationwide incorporation of the primary classes into a larger institution. Over time, the elementary schools covering nine grades would begin to upgrade themselves to schools offering 10, 11, 12 and 13 grades of education.

When the primary education curriculum was radically revised in the 1970s, a small number of 'model' primary schools was established in Colombo. For a few years these schools offered high quality primary education to children aged 6 - 11 in a primary school institution. As children grew older, their parents placed pressure on the school principal and teachers to upgrade the schools. Parents felt that by keeping their children in a high quality institution, and by avoiding the necessity of their children sitting the scholarship examination for entry to other schools, they would increase their child's chances of succeeding in the all-important GCE O and A Level examinations. By the 1990s, every school so established had become large and flourishing and offered education from Grade 1 - 13.

TRANSPOSITIONS

The non-coincidence of the stages of the curriculum and of institutions of learning is not new. In a discussion of 'elementary education', Munasinghe (1969) reviewed definitions of elementary education since 1920. In the 1929 revision to the 1920 Ordinance, schools were classified according to their terminal grades. Primary schools had a terminal grade, Standard 5; junior secondary schools Standard 8, and senior secondary and collegiate institutions a standard beyond 8. The curriculum for the first eight grades or standards, prescribed through the departmental scheme of studies, was the 'Elementary Scheme of Studies'. This overlapping classification of schools and curriculum continued to 1968 when schools were reorganised into two categories (i) elementary, with Grades 1 - 7, and (ii) secondary, with Grades 8 and above. By the 1970s, however, elementary schools were gradually upgrading themselves to incorporate Grades 8 and above. A major reform of the curriculum, launched in 1972, divided the curriculum into three stages (i) primary (Grades 1 - 5 plus a pre-primary grade); (ii) junior secondary (Grades 6 - 8) leading to the National Certificate of General Education (NCGE); and (iii) senior secondary (Grades 9 - 11) leading to the Higher National Certificate of Education (HNCE).

The classification of the first stage of schooling and the first stage of the curriculum appear to have been transposed. In 1929, the first stage of the curriculum was the 'elementary curriculum', covering Grades 1 - 8. The first stage of schooling was classified as 'primary', with schools admitting children from Grade 1 to Grade 5. By 1972, in contrast, the first stage of the curriculum was classified as 'the primary curriculum', covering Grades 1 - 5. The first stage of schooling was classified as 'elementary', with schools admitting children to Grades 1 - 7.

Then, as now, the classification based on the terminal rather than the entry grade, was consistent with the admission of children to Grade 1 in senior secondary and collegiate schools. Many of the more prestigious schools have been of this type, and parents have always wanted to gain for their children admission to schools that offer education to the highest possible level. Parental demand has encouraged school principals to upgrade their schools to the highest possible level. School principals readily concur as upgrading means a higher salary. A school with six grades will be upgraded gradually to one with 7, 8, 9, grades and so on.

THE ENGINE OF INSTITUTIONAL UPGRADING: EDUCATIONAL SELECTION

The experience in the 1970s of the model primary schools illustrates a longstanding characteristic of the Sri Lankan education system - a tendency for schools to be upgraded to the grades that prepare students for important selection examinations. Selection examinations form the engine of the educational system in general, and the upgrading of schools in particular. Parents, teachers and students judge the success of a school by its examination results at the GCE O and A Levels, and the proportions of school pupils gaining entry to the universities. Earlier, success was judged by the precursors to the GCE O and A Level - for example the Standard 8 Examination (Dore 1997, Little 1997).

Selection examinations were first introduced to schools in the 1860s. In 1862, students in the English-medium schools were able to sit an eighth grade examination. Initially this was used to select candidates for junior positions in the colonial government service, and, subsequently, to award scholarships for study at the Colombo Academy. This locally-designed eighth grade examination survived for eighteen years before the introduction in 1880 of the University of Cambridge local examination and, in 1882, the University of London matriculation examinations.

All three examinations were conducted in the English-medium. Those who had studied in the vernacular-medium, Sinhala or Tamil, were denied access to junior colonial government positions and scholarships at the Colombo Academy. Although a vernacular teacher's certificate was introduced in 1878 for males and in 1882 for females, vernacular schools would have to wait until 1917 before the introduction of a Sinhala and Tamil school leaving examination for their students.

The nineteenth century English-medium examinations became the benchmarks by which individual and school success came to be judged. In the years leading up to independence in 1948, access to fee-paying English-medium schools and English-medium examinations became political issues. Although vernacular-medium education was fee-free, English-medium education was not. Vernacular education was perceived as inferior to the education offered in the English-medium in both government and grant-aided schools. Vernacular education led even the most gifted child 'no higher than to the comparatively unremunerative posts of a vernacular teacher, an ayurvedic physician or a notary' (Jayasuriya 1979). The Kannangara Committee argued that since the English-medium schools offered the best employment opportunities and were attended only by those who could pay fees, then equality of opportunity would become a reality for all only when these superior schools were made free and open to all.

The Free Education Act was passed by the State Council in 1945. It was intended to transform education from a 'patrimony of the rich' to an 'inheritance of the poor'. Its immediate consequence was that richer parents continued to send their children to good government and government-aided schools without paying fees, while the masses 'continued to receive free the poor quality education that had all along been free to them' (Jayasuriya 1979, 475). This continuing inequality was offset to a degree by the system of scholarships designed to help able rural children to study in the English-medium 'central schools'. These scholarships were the forerunners of the current day Grade 5 scholarship examination.

The masses believed that their chances of high status jobs had increased through the possibility of attending English-medium central schools in rural areas. This hope was frustrated when, in 1948, Sinhala and Tamil became the official media of instruction in all government schools, a policy that was introduced gradually, starting with Grade 1. No government school was permitted to teach in English. As this language policy worked its way up through the system, Sinhala-medium and Tamil-medium examinations also came to replace English-medium examinations.

The Grade 5 scholarship examination has survived over fifty years, to the present day. Several have pointed out that its original purpose, to give able, poor children the chance of attending quality secondary schools, has been substantially replaced by the award of places in Grade 6 of national schools to children already attending good schools. The majority of such children are not from poor homes and do not qualify for the financial bursary. Success in the scholarship examination gives them the chance to move from an already good school to an even better school (Kotelawala et al. 1994). Children who are already attending 'good' schools from Grade 1 need not sit the scholarship examination, unless they wish to increase their chances of gaining Grade 6 entry to the very top schools. The motor of educational selection drives the competition to enter Grade 1 classes in good schools, the competition surrounding the Grade 5 scholarship examination, the pressure for schools to constantly upgrade themselves, and the tendency for 'good' schools to grow into extremely large institutions.

THE CORRELATES OF INSTITUTIONAL UPGRADING

In the array of educational systems worldwide, the absence of a distinct layer of primary schools within an educational system is striking. In one sense, of course, the 29 per cent of schools which offer Grades 1 – 5 exclusively are self-contained primary schools, offering education across the Grades 1 - 5. But these are generally low-quality schools that have failed to grow and are located in areas of socio-economic disadvantage. Higher quality primary education is found in Grades 1 - 5 within larger institutions offering the full grade range. High quality primary schools do not exist in the Sri Lankan system as a whole.

What are the correlates of this structural characteristic for primary education? And, more particularly, what are the implications of these for the successful implementation of the National Reform of Primary Education described earlier in Chapter 1? Five correlates of the absence of a distinct institutional identity for primary education are described below.

PRIMARY EDUCATION TEACHERS – THE DRIFT TO THE POST-PRIMARY

Salaries for teachers in Sri Lanka are determined by their educational and professional qualifications and not by the stage of education at which they teach. Teachers with the similar educational and professional qualifications are paid on the same salary scale whether or not they teach at the primary or post-primary level. All school teachers are members of the same Teacher Service, with common prospects of promotion and associated salary raises. In principle, this is an extremely positive feature of the system that can promote the quality of work and the status of the primary teacher.

Despite this, most young persons aspiring to become teachers would prefer to teach in the post-primary grades. The reasons are several. First, teachers in the primary classes are not permitted to mark GCE O Level and A Level examination papers. Marking of examination papers is a major source of additional income for teachers. But access to

this source of additional income means moving into the higher grades and teaching O and A Level classes. Second, teachers believe that their promotional prospects to the positions of principal and education officer are greater if they have experience in the post-primary grades. Third, because the prestige of the school derives from its examination performance, and because performance at the GCE O Level and GCE A Level is of higher status than performance at the Grade 5 scholarship examination, this is reflected in the status accorded the teacher by the education community and society at large. Well-qualified young people with a great deal to offer the primary grades of education, the foundation of the education system, would prefer to teach in the post-primary grades. For example, able A Level untrained teachers, who could become good primary teachers, strive to become 'graduate teachers' through an external degree course. They then claim graduate status and request posts in the post-primary classes within the same school. The co-existence of the primary and post-primary classes within the same school facilitates the drift of qualified and experienced teachers towards the upper school grades.

THE LOW STATUS OF PRIMARY TEACHER EDUCATION COURSES

The low status of primary education among prospective primary education teachers is further signalled by the admissions criteria to teacher training courses. Able young people with GCE A Level passes in mathematics and science are denied access to colleges of education for the three year diploma course in primary education. Although education officials prefer to describe the admission criterion in a more positive way - 'only arts A Level students may apply' - the net result is the same. Maths and science GCE A Level holders, generally considered to be more able than arts A Level students, receive a clear message. If they wish to consider teaching as a career and wish to apply to a college of education, they must apply for post-primary courses.

Until fairly recently, professional qualifications in primary education were attained through a non-graduate qualification route, through the teacher training colleges, and, more recently, as noted above, through the colleges of education and distance-education programmes. In 1997, eleven teacher training colleges and eight colleges of education offered training in primary education (cf Chapter 7). The National Institute of Education established a B.Ed. in primary education in the Sinhala-medium in the late 1980s, and in the Tamil-medium in the mid-1990s. To date none of the universities has elevated the study of primary education to degree status (B.Ed.). The absence of university graduate status for primary education courses reinforces its inferior status.

TEACHER EDUCATORS AND PRIMARY EDUCATION METHODOLOGY

The teacher education system itself is not designed to promote skills in teaching methodology. Very few of those employed in the colleges of education and teacher training colleges as lecturers in primary education methodology have experience of teaching in primary classes. In a study of 48 lecturers in primary education from these colleges, only 8.3 per cent had experience of teaching at the primary level (Kudaligama and Wijeratne 1997). Such lecturers are reluctant to gain experience of teaching in the

primary classroom and there is, currently, no requirement that they should do so. Teachers for the primary classes are being trained by persons who themselves do not have experience at that level.

ADMINISTRATIVE DEFINITIONS OF PRIMARY EDUCATION

One of the most curious aspects of the Sri Lankan education system, to an outsider, is the implicit administrative classification of primary education as a 'subject' of the school curriculum, rather than as a stage of education. For example, when the cadres for specialist officers working at the zonal level for supervision purposes are determined, 'primary' appears as a curriculum subject, subdivided into two, primary general and primary science/mathematics. By contrast, eleven subjects appear at the secondary level (Box 2).

Box 2

Criteria for Determining the Cadre for Specialist Officers in charge of Subjects for Supervision Work at Zonal Level

CRITERIA

	Subject	Norm	Number
1.	Primary General	100 - 200 primary schools	01
2.	Primary Science/Maths	100 - 200 primary schools	01
3.	First Language	75 - 150 secondary schools	01
4.	English	"	01
5.	Science	"	01
6.	Maths	"	01
7.	Social Studies/History	"	01
8.	Physical Education	"	01
9.	Non-formal Education	"	01
10.	Main Religion	"	01
11.	Second Religion	with not less than 50 schools teaching the religion	01
12.	Agriculture	with not less than 50 schools teaching the subject	01
13.	Home Science	"	01

(N.B. in cases where the number of schools in which subjects 11, 12 and 13 are taught is small, provision of subject specialist officers can be made at a higher level i.e. at district or provincial level.)

Source: MEHE Circular issued 1998

This text used in this document is curious for three reasons. First, the classification of schools as primary or secondary is unusual given that schools are usually classified as one of four types. It is not clear how those who determine cadre numbers will interpret this

criterion. Second, there are just two primary officers allocated to cover *eight subjects* at the primary level. By contrast, eleven officers are allocated to cover eleven subjects at the secondary level. Third, the rate of allocation is higher for the secondary than the primary grades. One primary subject officer is allocated per 100 - 200 schools; one post-primary subject officer is allocated per 75 - 150 schools. The implication of these ratios for the amount of time available to support the quality development of teaching and learning of any given subject at the class level will be different for the primary and post-primary subject specialist officer.

This allocation of cadres at the zonal level also has funding implications. When zonal directors apportion their budgets for in-service training or other quality 'inputs', the needs of all subject officers are taken into account. The zonal director is more likely to divide scarce resources among the number of subject officers than by the number of teachers, students or curriculum subjects supported by the relevant subject officer. This can lead to gross distortions in the level of resources allocated at the primary level.

SCHOOL LEVEL FINANCIAL ALLOCATIONS TO PRIMARY EDUCATION

A comparative analysis of expenditures on primary and post-primary education at the national, provincial and zonal level is not currently possible (cf Chapter 8). Expenditures are neither allocated nor accounted for at the primary stage of education. Budget headings at the national and provincial levels refer only to general education, covering Grades 1 to 13. The budget headings reinforce the invisibility of primary education, and do not encourage education officers and school principals to be accountable for expenditure at that level. Expenditure subsidies from primary to post-primary classes remain invisible.

At the school level too, it is difficult to clearly separate expenditures on the primary and post-primary grades. At this level there are two sources of cash income under the control of the school management. The first is the Facilities Fees Fund; the second the School Development Society Fund. Expenditure of the Facilities Fees Fund is guided by a circular dated 1975. There are twelve expenditure heads e.g. library books, stationery and other consumables, first aid, cleaning of toilets and urinals, reimbursement of train or bus fares made on the visits to the bank to deposit fees, etc. Expenditure of the School Development Society Fund is guided by a circular dated 1982. The expenditure heads are very similar to those of the facilities fees - educational activities, cultural and social activities, school needs (teaching aids, furniture, construction and refurbishment of school buildings, teacher allowances), student welfare and staff development.

Information on school level income and expenditure, disaggregated by primary and post-primary, is scarce. The results from two recent studies are instructive. In 1998, Lewin and Mallawarachchi (1999) conducted a survey of the facilities fees collected by 532 schools in 1997. Type 1AB schools collected on average Rs 16.5 per primary student and Rs 36.4 per post-primary student; Type 1C schools Rs 7.9 and Rs 8.8; Type 2 schools Rs 4.8 and Rs 4.6; and Type 3 schools Rs 3.1 and Rs 2.4 respectively per student. The collections in Type 1AB schools corresponded with guidelines deriving

from the Education Amendment Act, No 37 (1958) which determines maximum levels of fees. In 1997, this maximum level was Rs 36 per primary grade student and Rs 60 per post-primary grade student. Collections from the post-primary grades were higher than those collected from the primary. This pattern was reversed in Type 2 and Type 3 schools. Indeed, this survey revealed that 44 per cent of Type 2 and Type 3 schools appeared to collect no facilities fees at all.

The above data were collected from information available, but rarely analysed, in the Annual School Census. Data on expenditure, as opposed to income, are not available in the same data set. A small-scale study by Chandrasiri (1998) provides illustrative evidence on expenditure. Chandrasiri collected data on fee collections and expenditures from ten Type 1AB and 1C schools in the Dehiowita zone of the Sabaragamuwa Province. Table 3.3 shows the total income and expenditure by grade span.

Table 3.3

**School Facilities Fee Income by Grade Span for 10 Schools
in the Sabaragamuwa Province, 1997**

Grade span	**Income (Rs.)**	**%**	**Expenditure (Rs.)**	**%**
Grade 1 - 5	41414	36	25707	22
Grade 6 - 11	72373	61	75141	64
Grade 12 -13	4020	3	17105	14
Total	117807	100	117953	100

Source: Adapted from Chandrasiri 1998, Table 16

As Table 3.3 shows, 36 per cent of total facilities fees income from ten schools (each having students across Grades 1 - 13) was collected from Grades 1 - 5, 61 per cent from Grades 6 - 11 and 3 per cent from Grades 12 - 13. Estimates made by Chandrasiri of expenditure at the three stages suggest that 22 per cent of the available income was spent on students in Grades 1 - 5, 64 per cent on students in Grades 6 - 11 and 14 per cent on students in Grades 12 - 13. Thus while there is a close correspondence of income and expenditure in Grades 6 - 11, there is an imbalance in Grades 1 - 5 and 12 - 13. Effectively, resources generated by students in the lowest grades are used to subsidise expenditure on those in the highest. Cash and material resources drift up the system.

The second source of income at the school level is the School Development Society Fund, described above. This is generated through several means - membership fees from households, based on the number of children enrolled in the school, donations from well-wishers and former students, and specific fund raising activities. Lewin and Mallawarachchi (1999) estimated that the sums collected through this source vary greatly between Type 1AB, 1C, 2 and 3 schools, in the order of Rs 160, 25, 5 and 3 respectively per student. The largest proportion of expenditure of these funds in Type 1AB schools is on sports, followed by books, repairs, teachers' salaries, achievement tests and stationery.

In Type 1C, 2 and 3 schools where total income from this source is small, the greatest amount of available income is spent on achievement tests. Given the importance attached to selection by all sections of society and all schools, referred to several times above in this chapter, expenditure on monthly, term and annual tests would appear to be a fixed expenditure.

Chandrasiri (1998) explored how the SDS revenues benefitted students in different grades in the ten Type 1AB and 1C schools. He estimated that in 1997 30 per cent was spent on items benefitting Grades 1 - 5, 50 per cent on Grades 6 - 11 and 20 per cent on Grades 12 - 13. At the same time, because of its item specific and time-bound nature, expenditure by grade varied considerably between schools. In one school the expenditure on the primary grades in one year was as little as 5 per cent. However, in two other schools expenditure on the primary grades was just over 50 per cent. In one case, the School Development Society erected a temporary building for the use of the primary grade classes. In the second, the Society constructed a childrens' park for the primary students.

Clearly, more evidence is needed to support the claim that revenues collected from pupils studying in the primary grades are spent on pupils in the post-primary grades. Many school principals and education officers can provide anecdotal evidence that this is the case. Rather surprisingly, few perceive that this may constitute an issue of resource equity. They argue that in the long term the primary grade students will benefit, as they move up the school into the post-primary grades. The fact that not all pupils, especially those from the most disadvantaged groups survive in school to reach those grades, fails to be included in the equation of costs and benefits.

THE NATIONAL REFORM ON PRIMARY EDUCATION AND INSTITUTIONAL UPGRADING

Chapter 1 set out the national reforms for primary education. These are part of a broad reform of education across the Grades 1 to 13. The tendency for schools to gradually upgrade to schools with Grades 1 - 11 and 1 - 13 has been addressed by the Task Force through the proposal to reorganise all schools into two tiers, junior schools and senior schools.

However, junior schools are not primary schools. They are much larger. They are expected to deliver two distinct stages of curriculum - the primary for Grades 1-5 and the junior secondary for Grades 6 - 9.

Several of the problems highlighted in the preceding sections about the low status of primary and the upward drift of resources are likely to continue, unless additional efforts are made to recognise the distinct needs of Grades 1 - 5 and Grades 6 - 9. Few would disagree with the goals of education set out in the General Education Reforms document. And few would disagree with the specific actions proposed for the primary education

stage. But if these are to lead to sustained action over a period of time, they need to be matched by a series of carefully worked out long-term and short-term plans at the national, provincial, zonal and school level. These plans need to identify specific strategies and actions to be taken at all these levels with resource needs and gaps identified.

If the proposals for primary education are to be realised, a number of actions need to be taken which will create an identity for the primary stage of education within the proposed junior schools. A dramatic increase in the numbers and proportions of teachers (and the teacher educators) trained in methods for Grades 1 - 5 must be a clear objective of the reform package. Guidelines on teacher deployment should ensure that teachers are deployed to teach in classes for which they have been trained. National-level interventions are critical here. An increase in the provision and utilisation of 'quality inputs' in line with norms for Grades 1 - 5 currently being established by the MEHE and the Finance Commission must also be a clear objective.

Several aspects of the educational management system need urgent attention. Under the proposed reorganisation of schools into junior and senior schools it may not be possible to amalgamate all small schools into larger schools, especially those in areas of very low population density. In such cases, every school must have a principal trained in primary education methods. Every junior school should have a sectional head in charge of the primary grades, and trained in primary methodology. Where the enrolments in a junior school are too small to justify the appointment of a primary section head, then the principal appointed to these schools should be trained and experienced in primary education. In-service advisors for primary education should be primary trained and experienced. The ratio of in-service advisers (ISAs) to primary level teachers should be improved in both media, with appropriate adjustments for those who work in areas of very low population density. Primary education development committees should be established at school, zonal and provincial levels. Every zone, should have a subject specialist in primary education with training and experience in primary education. Every provincial education department should have a primary education development unit headed by an officer skilled in directing the development of primary education. The National Ministry of Education should secure the appointment of a full-time director of primary education under a Deputy Director General for Junior Schools. Separate databases for primary education should be devised at the school, zonal, provincial and national levels. A large number of changes must also be effected in the procedures for allocating and rendering accountable resources for primary education. Separate lines for primary education in national and provincial level budgets are currently being established. These need to be followed by corresponding changes in the way zonal and school level budgets are drawn up and expenditure accounted for.

CONCLUSION

Sri Lanka earned her international reputation for *education for all* many years ago. The National Education Reforms continue to stress the need to ensure access for all. The

reforms also focus on the need to improve the quality of primary education. Currently this is provided for in the revision of the Grades 1-5 curriculum. Essential to the implementation of the revised curriculum will be a series of plans and actions of the kind outlined above. These will help Sri Lankan primary education forge an identity for itself commensurate with the challenge and responsibility currently placed on its shoulders. This identity in turn will help Sri Lanka earn an international reputation in addition to the one she has already earned for education for all. This time it will be for *high quality education for all*.

POSTSCRIPT

The proposal to divide schools into just one of two types – those comprising Grades 1 - 9, and those comprising Grades 10 - 13 met with resistance during its implementation during 1997 and 1998. By 1999, the proposal had been replaced by a revised policy framework for school rationalisation (MEHE circular 30 March 1999). The revised proposal starts from the premise that provision for primary education should normally be available within 2 km, junior secondary education within 4 km, GCE O Level education within 4 km, and GCE A Level education within 8 km. of the child's home. Schools may then be considered for amalgamation/absorption/consolidation through an assessment of the number of pupils per class at the different stages of education (less than ten per class at primary, twelve per class at junior secondary, twelve per class at GCE O Level and twelve per class at GCE A Level). Schools offering Grades 1 - 5 would continue.

The revision reflects a compromise forged through different stake-holder interests. The large schools that have upgraded themselves over a period of time have resisted the break-up of their institutions into two parts. In areas of very low population density the amalgamation of small schools would mean that the distance travelled to school would, in many cases, be more than 2 km. for the youngest children. The revised scheme uses the criteria of distance and class size as guides to provision.

By 2000 each Province had submitted plans for school rationalisation. They indicate that 28 per cent will change their present status. Of those schools which formerly offered Grades 1 - 9, 322 will offer Grades 1 - 5 only. A further 525 schools which formerly offered only Grades 1 - 5 will offer Grades 1 - 9.

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CHAPTER 4

CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT

Kamala Peiris and Senarath Nanayakkara

PROBLEMS AND ISSUES IN PRIMARY EDUCATION

Sri Lanka can be proud of the successes achieved during the past few decades in the field of education, when compared with many other Asian countries. The expansion in school enrolments is among these successes. The participation in the five-year primary stage is now close to universal. A sharp increase is evident in the proportion of pupils continuing into the six-year post-primary stage, with almost 70 per cent still in school at Grade 11. The participation of girls in this expansion is seen to be greater than boys at secondary level, the gender ratio at the GCE O Level examination being almost 115 girls for every 100 boys (PMDP Memorandum 1996). Sri Lanka's literacy rate occupies a top place in the list of countries in the world.

However, there are still shortcomings that require new policy direction. Non-participation and dropouts are on the increase. Nearly 14 per cent of children in the compulsory age-span of schooling are out of schools. Adult illiteracy is still prevalent among disadvantaged groups. The mismatch between education and employment is cited as the biggest drawback in our education system (MEHE 1996). Furthermore, the quality of education that children receive at school level is low, and has become a matter of serious concern. Research studies have revealed that average levels of performance at the primary level are poor in the 'tool' subjects - language, mathematics, and life skills. For example, a study conducted by the NIE, with a pupil sample of about 4,000 selected from 204 schools in 25 educational districts, revealed that the percentages attaining levels of mastery are not satisfactory for all the components assessed (Wijesuriya 1994).

Table 4.1 shows the percentage of pupils attaining 'Mastery' (defined as 80% to 100% performance). The performance of pupils seems to vary widely among schools of different types (with pupils of Types 2 and 3 schools faring less well than pupils of Type 1 schools), and in different geographic locations (with rural pupils faring less well than their urban counterparts).

These findings are further reinforced by the scores of the Grade 5 Scholarship Examination, in which a significant proportion of candidates score between 0 and 5. Table 4.2 indicates that around 6 per cent of pupils sitting the Grade 5 Scholarship Examination score less than 5 per cent of the total score, and a large percentage (varying from 36 to 55%) score less than 30 per cent of the total score.

Table 4.1

Percentages of Pupils Attaining the Level of Mastery

Subject area	Component	% of pupils attaining level of mastery (scoring 80 - 100 percent)
Literacy	Vocabulary	33.2
	Comprehension	26.8
	Writing	21.1
Numeracy	Conceptual understanding	31.7
	Knowledge of procedures	13.0
	Problem solving	8.8
Life Skills	Duties and responsibilities	43.2
	Elementary science skills	9.4
	Environmental skills	13.4
	Health skills	20.4

Source: Wijesuriya 1994

Table 4.2

Grade 5 Scholarship Examination - Performance Level as a Percentage of Total Sitting Examination

Level	1992	1993	1994	1995
Below 5% of the total score	6.3	5.2	5.2	5.6
Below 30% of the total score	51.6	54.9	49.1	35.6

Source: Dept. of Examinations, Sri Lanka

Table 4.3

GCE (O Level) Examination Results

	1993	1994	1995
Number sitting GCE O Level	461,458	483,249	499,754
Qualified for GCE A Level (%)	16.7	16.7	15.1
Passed in 6 or more subjects with first language and maths (%)	18.0	19.6	17.1
Total failures (%)	8.9	8.9	9.9

Source: Dept. of Examinations, Sri Lanka

These trends become more pronounced at post-primary level with less than 20 per cent getting through the GCE O Level and around 16 per cent qualifying for GCE A Level (Table 4.3). Less than 2 per cent enter the universities. The percentages of candidates scoring zero in mathematics and English, failing in all eight subjects at the GCE O Level examination, and failing in all four subjects at the GCE A Level examination are also significant and have been brought into focus in recent times.

Several problems and issues related to primary education seem to have contributed to the shortcomings in education. Views of teachers, teacher educators, documentary and first-hand evidence gathered during school visits have been analysed and problems and the identified issues grouped under nine themes.

PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATION

- For planning and administration purposes, 'primary' is treated as a 'subject' rather than a stage of education that consists of a series of subjects.
- The existing budgetary system allocates funds on a whole-school basis. There is no separate allocation for the primary stage.
- The system of allocating funds for educational development is inequitable towards the primary stage, which is often severely underfinanced. This is because at both the provincial and zonal levels the whole primary stage is considered on par with a single secondary level subject for budgeting purposes.
- The financial aspects of educational planning at the school, zone, province and national level are weak.
- At the MEHE, the Planning Division does not have a financial planning unit. At the zonal and provincial levels there is little concern for financial data. Technical capability for financial analysis is low.
- The communication between the central education authority (MEHE) and local education authorities is poor.
- There is no evidence that planning at school level is based on need.
- The responsibilities and duties for primary education at the national, provincial, zonal and divisional level are not clearly identified.

PRIMARY LEVEL CURRICULUM AND CURRICULAR MATERIALS

- The content of the curriculum in certain subjects is too heavy, resulting in cognitive stress for children.
- Subject content seems to have received more emphasis than relevance to the child at a particular developmental stage. Some aspects of curriculum content are found to be irrelevant and inappropriate to the level of the child.
- There is no accepted pre-school curriculum, and the link between what is taught in pre-schools and in the first year at school is poor.
- As curricular materials for a particular grade are drafted, piloted and finalised all within the same year it has not been possible to try out the draft materials in schools in a systematic manner.
- In mathematics and language the pupil texts currently in use are based on the old syllabi. Teaching a new syllabus using textbooks written for another syllabus causes confusion amongst teachers.
- Most of the textbooks for primary classes lack colour and are unattractive to children.
- Certain lessons and areas of content in Buddhism and Sinhala language textbooks are either too long or too heavy for children and are disliked by them.
- Illustrations in some textbooks are poor and cause confusion.
- The distribution of teachers' guides to schools is frequently delayed.

- Some instructions and explanations in the teachers' guides are not clear and are sometimes ambiguous.
- Adequate numbers of teachers' guides are not distributed to schools with a number of parallel classes.
- The teaching of English is currently undertaken only from the third year of the primary school. It is taught in a formal manner and is not conducive to communication and interaction.

THE SCHOOL CONTEXT

- A proper management system for the primary section (Grades 1 to 5) is lacking in most schools.
- Physical conditions are poor in most primary sections and often several classes are conducted in a single hall without any form of partitioning. As a result, in most places the classroom environment is not conducive for effective learning or teaching to take place.
- In most urban schools primary classes are overcrowded. In some, the number of children in a class exceeds 60. Teaching these classes through the recommended activity-based method is difficult.
- The location of some schools, especially in remote areas, is not suitable and causes serious transport problems.
- There are shortages of furniture and other basic equipment and the facilities needed for primary classes in many schools.
- Repairs and maintenance of school buildings do not receive adequate attention in many schools.
- Primary classrooms are often open half-walled structures. This creates security problems.
- Many primary schools lack electricity and water supply.
- The type of furniture and equipment available do not lend themselves to activity-based learning.
- The school garden layout is not planned with the primary level curriculum in view.

PRINCIPALS

- Many principals lack awareness of the curricula and teaching methodology at the primary level and are unable to provide proper leadership to primary level teachers.
- Supervision and monitoring on pedagogic matters carried out by many principals are inadequate.
- Some principals expect teachers to write elaborate lesson notes and maintain other records creating unnecessary problems for teachers. The accurate maintenance of records seems to take precedence over good teaching.
- There is a lack of freedom to make management decisions at school level without prior approval from education offices.
- Often less attention is paid by principals to primary grades than to post-primary grades.
- Money accumulated through facilities fees collected from the parents of children in the primary grades is sometimes used at secondary level.

- Parents' support is often solicited for material help but not in the process of learning which their children should experience.

TEACHERS

- A recruitment policy for teachers is lacking.
- The knowledge of subject matter of many teachers is inadequate in certain subject areas (e.g. mathematics, beginning science) in order to teach in upper primary classes with confidence.
- Some teachers lack the skills for teaching young children, especially methods based on a curriculum that is activity-oriented.
- Many teachers lack competence in methods of assessing and evaluating pupils' progress.
- In multi-grade schools teachers have not received training on special teaching strategies.
- Individualised attention to children's learning needs is not given due emphasis.
- Children's misconceptions and errors are not adequately addressed by teachers at appropriate points of time. These tend to persist for long periods causing serious problems in the learning process.
- Untrained teachers are assigned to be in charge of lower primary classes.
- Absenteeism and late attendance of teachers.
- Conflicting messages are received by teachers from different sources on matters regarding teaching (e.g. teachers' guides, ISAs, education officers, principals).

IN-SERVICE ADVISERS (MASTER TEACHERS)

- Adequate numbers of primary ISAs are not available in many zones.
- Many primary ISAs lack confidence in providing training in certain subject areas (e.g. mathematics, beginning science).
- The advisory service expected by teachers from the ISAs through school visits is not taking place satisfactorily.
- Some ISAs spend most of their time in the zonal office rather than in schools.
- Opportunities for ISAs to enhance their knowledge and professional skills are inadequate.
- Training programmes conducted by ISAs are not appreciated by teachers in many places.
- The monetary allowances paid to ISAs for visiting schools and conducting training programmes are not attractive.

EDUCATION OFFICERS

- Many education officers co-ordinating primary education programmes lack awareness of the curricula and teaching methodology at primary level, and often have to depend on ISAs.
- Advisory services rendered by education officers are inadequate.
- Frequency of visits to certain schools, especially remote ones, by education officers is not satisfactory.

THE LEARNING-TEACHING PROCESS

- In many schools, learning and teaching through activities do not take place to a satisfactory level.
- In many classrooms, especially at the upper primary level, the view that teachers 'provide' information and learners 'receive' it is prevalent.
- In many classrooms, especially at the upper primary level, the learning-teaching process is dominated by textbooks.
- The backwash effect of the Grade 5 Scholarship Examination is marked and leads to a devaluation of the objectives of primary education.
- Formative assessments of pupil learning are not carried out seriously by many teachers, and proper records are rarely maintained.
- The attention paid by teachers to informal assessments such as observation, oral questioning and listening to pupil discussions is very low.
- Summative assessments are limited to paper-pencil tests, many of them designed and prepared by external bodies (e.g. cluster of schools, divisional/zonal offices), and sometimes private organisations.
- The results of summative assessment are rarely subjected to any sort of analysis.
- No attempt is made to improve the quality of assessment instruments based on the feedback information from pupils.
- The information gathered through summative assessments is rarely used to remedy the learning difficulties of children or to improve teaching strategies.
- Most of the teacher assessment practices are norm-referenced. Criterion-referenced assessment is an unfamiliar practice.

TEACHER TRAINING

Pre-service:

- Most of the lecturers at colleges of education (COEs), in which primary education courses are conducted, do not possess sufficient recent experience in teaching at primary level or the experience gained through classroom-based researches.
- Primary education courses offered by COEs tend to emphasise general pedagogical matters, such as classroom organisation and theories of child development, but pay relatively little attention to the application of such theories in classroom practice.
- As a pass in GCE A Level Sinhala/Tamil language is essential to seek entry into a primary education course at COEs, applicants with a science or mathematics background are not selected.
- Relatively little attention is paid by the COEs to the development of basic concepts in mathematics and science.
- Very little classroom-based research is carried out and published at the COEs and teachers' colleges.
- Teacher competencies relating to pupil assessment and evaluation are not adequately developed at COEs and training college courses.
- The link between teacher education institutions and primary schools is weak.
- Few opportunities are available for teacher educators to update their knowledge and professional skills.

In-service:

- The Cascade Model followed for in-service training suffers from several deficiencies. For example, the flow of information and ideas is entirely one way - centre to periphery - with consequent distortion and dilution of the messages.
- Many of the primary ISAs do not possess the competencies to handle all the subjects in the primary curriculum with equal confidence.
- Opportunities provided to ISAs to enhance their knowledge and professional skills are inadequate.

An attempt has been made here to highlight the major issues related to primary education. It should be noted that these lists of issues are not exhaustive, and analyses from different perspectives could bring to light many more issues.

MAJOR GOALS FOR PRIMARY EDUCATION CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT

Goals for primary education in Sri Lanka should be envisaged not only in the context of national goals in education but also in conformity with global goals for the twenty-first century identified by world bodies such as UNESCO.

GLOBAL TRENDS

The report to UNESCO by the International Commission on Education for the Twenty First Century published in 1996 is entitled 'Learning: The Treasure Within' (UNESCO 1996). It calls education the necessary Utopia and takes note of scientific breakthroughs and discoveries that have surfaced within the last 25 years. Although many countries have emerged from underdevelopment, it speaks of a prevailing mood of disenchantment and disillusionment in economic and social terms, listing several major dangers that it warns require urgent corrective action.

In order to withstand these difficulties and to build a common future for humanity the report advocates the need to advance towards a 'learning society' where pleasure in learning and intellectual curiosity are maintained throughout life. In this context, the report identifies what it calls 'four pillars' describing them as foundations of education.

The first pillar is 'learning to live together' - understanding others and creating a new spirit that encourages people to implement common activities and manage inevitable conflicts in an intelligent and peaceful way. The second pillar is 'learning to know'. The need to combine broad general education with the possibility of in-depth study of some subjects is emphasised. Such a general background would give people the chance of redirecting their learning effectively and the flexibility to meet the challenges of a world where employment and social roles are rapidly changing, expanding and becoming more complex. The third pillar is 'learning to do' which involves a competence for

dealing with a variety of situations giving as much importance to practical work as to the academic aspects in education. The final pillar is 'learning to be' which instils the practice of greater independence and judgement with a strong sense of personal responsibility for attainment of common goals. Such a learning society is envisaged as being founded on the acquisition and use of knowledge.

The 'World Conference on Education For All' convened in 1990 defined basic learning needs for the future as comprising essential learning tools (such as literacy and expression, numeracy and problem solving) and basic learning content (such as knowledge, skills, values and attitudes). These would enable human beings to be of service, to develop their full capacities, to live and work in dignity, to participate fully in development, to improve the quality of their lives, to make informed decisions and to continue learning.

NATIONAL EDUCATION GOALS

The above context forms a fitting backdrop to the National Education Goals for Sri Lanka that have been set out in the first report of the National Education Commission (1992). The report states that the national goals for education should be relevant to the individual and significant to the national community. Under these circumstances the commission sets out nine goals as relevant for planning activities in the field of education. They are:

* achievement of national cohesion, national integrity and national unity
* establishment of pervasive patterns of social justice
* evolution of a sustainable pattern of living
* generation of work opportunities that are dignified, satisfying and self-fulfilling
* institution of a variety of possibilities for all to participate in human resource development
* nurturing a continuous sense of deep and abiding concern for one another
* learning to learn and adapt to changing situations
* capacity to cope with the complex and unforeseen, achieving a sense of security and stability
* development of competencies helping to secure an honourable place in the international community.

The goals for primary education which one may derive from the above were described earlier in Chapter 2.

BASIC COMPETENCIES

The NEC has formulated a set of five basic competencies to serve as the foundation to achieve the National Goals of Education (NEC 1992). These are presented in detail in Figure 4.1. In summary, they fall into five groups: competencies of communication; environment; ethics and religion; play and the use of leisure; and learning to learn. While these competencies serve as a foundation for all students, attention will also focus on individual differences i.e. ensuring relevant experiences for children with learning difficulties as well as for those talented in different areas of activity.

There is a basic foundation that must be put in place to enable the superstructure of development to be pursued effectively. This foundation is made up of a set of basic competencies which are a precondition for the attainment of educationally relevant goals.

These basic competencies are outlined in Figure 4.1.

SPECIFIC COMPETENCIES RELATING TO PRIMARY EDUCATION

An NIE document which provides a set of guidelines to develop primary level curricula has listed a series of specific competencies that children are expected to develop as a result of primary education. They are the ability to:

* follow instructions - spoken, written and memorised
* correct errors
* be self-critical and self-appraising
* indulge in simple communication with others
* think in a divergent, convergent, linear and lateral manner
* plan and act in a goal-directed and quality-oriented manner
* be prepared for an unpredictable/uncertain future
* relax, recover, recuperate
* practise sensory awareness
* practise ongoing improvement
* learn in a self-directed and self-guided manner.

Learning in the classroom will initiate the child to most of these behaviours in a rudimentary manner that is in keeping with age and readiness (Jayatilleke 1997).

THE NEW PRIMARY CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

The framework for implementing the curriculum stipulates that the five-year primary school will be divided into three key stages as shown in Figure 4.2. In Key Stage 1 (Grades 1 and 2) learning will take place primarily through play and activity methods. In Key Stage 2 (Grades 3 and 4) an integrated thematic approach will be followed whilst still using play and activity methods. In Key Stage 3 (Grade 5) more desk and academic work will be undertaken. Demarcated subject specifications would help children to cope with learning in the junior secondary stage of education beginning with Grade 6. This framework would give special attention to the basic competencies specified in Chapter 2. Figure 4.2 also presents the proposed primary curriculum framework. The proposed scheme for assessing pupil performance in relation to the competencies and curriculum were described earlier in Chapter 2.

Figure 4.1

**Basic Competencies: An Essential Foundation
for Approaching the National Goals**

COMMUNICATION This first set of competencies is made up of three subsets – Literacy, Numeracy and Graphics	
Literacy includes	Listening attentively, speaking clearly, reading for meaning, and writing accurately and lucidly.
Numeracy includes	Using numbers for things, space and time counting, calculating and measuring systematically.
Graphics includes	Making sense of line and form, expressing and recording details, instructions and ideas with lines, form and colour.

ENVIRONMENT This second set of competencies relates to the environment – Social, Biological and Physical Environments	
Social Environment	Awareness, sensitivity and skills linked to being a member of society, social relationships, personal conduct, general and legal conventions, rights, responsibilities, duties, and obligations.
Biological Environment	Awareness, sensitivity and skills linked to the living world, man and the ecosystem, the trees, forests, seas, water, air and life (plant, animal and human life).
Physical Environment	Awareness, sensitivity and skills relating to space, energy, fuels, matter, materials and their links with human living, food, clothing, shelter, health, comfort, respiration, sleep, relaxation, rest, wastes, and excretion. Included here are the skills in using tools to shape and form materials for living and learning.

ETHICS AND RELIGION This third set of competencies is laden with values and attitudes. It is essential for individuals to assimilate values, so that they may function in a manner consistent with the ethical, moral and religious modes of conduct, rituals, practices in everyday living, selecting that which is the most appropriate.

PLAY AND THE USE OF LEISURE This fourth set of competencies relates to pleasure, joy and human motivations. These find expression in play, sports, athletics and leisure pursuits of many types and are essential for realising mental and physical well being. These also relate to such values as co-operation, teamwork, healthy competition in life and work. Included are the activities involved in aesthetics, arts, drama, literature, exploratory research and other creative modes in human living.

'LEARN TO LEARN' This fifth set of competencies flows directly from the nature of a rapidly changing, complex and crowded world. Whatever one learns, that learning will need updating and reviewing. One should be aware, sensitive and skilful in sustained attention, and be willing to persevere and attend to important details in a given situation. The information revolution makes these competencies imperative.

Figure 4.2
Primary Curriculum Framework

LEARN TO LEARN					
Ensure attainment of Mastery in Essential Competencies of KS 3					

| Key Stage 3 | Grade 5 | First National Language
• English
• Second National Language | • Mathematics | • Religion | Environment Related Activities
Activity based Oral English | Optional curriculum to cater for Learner interests and Needs | Co-curriculum |

| Ensure attainment of Mastery in Essential Competencies of KS 2 | | | | | |

| Key Stage 2 | Grade 4 / Grade 3 | First National Language
• English
• Second National Language | • Mathematics | • Religion | Environment Related Activities
Activity based Oral English | Co-curriculum |

| Ensure attainment of Mastery in Essential Competencies of KS 1 | | | | | |

| Key Stage 1 | Grade 2 / Grade 1 | • First National Language | • Mathematics | • Religion | Environment Related Activities
Activity based Oral English | Interaction with elder children from Grade 6 | Co-curriculum |

| Identification of Children | | | | | |

| COMMUNICATION | ETHICS & RELIGION | ENVIRONMENT PLAY & LEISURE |

Mode of Instruction

Play — Activity — Desk Work

Grade 1 — Grade 5

SPECIAL CHARACTERISTICS - NEW PRIMARY CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING

As already mentioned, the new primary level curriculum has been developed, taking into consideration the policy recommendations made by the NEC (1997) and the Technical Committee on Primary Education appointed by the Presidential Task Force (1997). Several special characteristics can be identified in the new curriculum, including the following:

- In the past, even at the primary level, the subject matter content received more emphasis in developing the curricula to serve the interests of the small proportion of children continuing into higher education. Deviating from this approach, the new primary level curriculum will give more emphasis to competencies that children are expected to acquire at the end of general education. It can be referred to as a *competency-based curriculum*.
- The number of subject areas in the *curriculum is limited to four*: language/languages, mathematics, religion and environment related activities.
- *The integrated nature* is more prominent than in the past as a result of the introduction of the subject area *'Environment Related Activities'* which encompasses several disciplines needed for the total development of the child.
- Introduction of *Activity-Based Oral English* in Key Stage 1, in order to create an environment in the classroom for children and teachers to use a mix of the mother tongue and conversational English with appropriate vocabulary during activity learning and games.
- Provision of planned opportunities for *Key Stage 1 children to interact with children from Grade 6*, during play and activity. The aim of this mixing of grades is to facilitate co-operation and teamwork among peers as well as across groups with a significant age difference.
- Introduction of formal teaching of *English* and a *second national language* (Sinhala/ Tamil) from Key Stage 2.
- Provision for *co-curricular activities* in all the Key Stages and an optional curriculum to cater for learner interests and needs in Key Stage 3.
- Identification of *entry competencies* of children, using specially designed activities with all children individually, so that the Grade 1 teacher will be able to cater to the individual needs of children more effectively.
- Continuous *classroom-based assessment* with increased emphasis on using *informal methods*.
- *Identification of essential competencies* that children are expected to master at the end of each key stage, and making them available to teachers.
- Encouraging teachers to ensure that almost all children in the class are brought to the level of *mastery in essential competencies* at the end of each key stage, with emphasis on those related to first language and mathematics.
- Encouraging the practice of *assigning a class teacher for the entire key stage*, in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, so that a single teacher will be able to stay with a group of children for two years, unless there is a particular mismatch.
- Attempt to deviate from assessment techniques that encourage comparison of

- achievements of children, and move towards *criterion referenced assessment* techniques.
- Learning-teaching will take place through an appropriate mix of *play, activity and desk work*. The proportion of each component in the mix will vary gradually from grade to grade, with play and activity receiving more attention in Grade 1 and activity and desk work receiving more attention in Grade 5.

REFORMS RELATING TO PRIMARY EDUCATION AND IMPLEMENTATION PLANS

REFORMS PROPOSED BY THE NEC

The Presidential Task Force has recommended a series of reforms of general education based on the NEC proposals (PTF 1997 and NEC 1997). The following are the recommendations which can be considered as having direct links to primary education.

Education For All by the Year 2001

The country should work towards the goal of full literacy as we enter the twenty-first century. Whilst functional literacy would be a realistic goal, we should be mindful of the fact that the definition of *literacy* has undergone change. A policy goal is the increase in participation and retention of children in schooling. Regulations for making attendance compulsory for all children between the ages of five to fourteen years will be introduced.

Primary Stage of Schooling

The quality of education of schooling that covers Grades 1 to 5 will be improved. Convenient access will be ensured for all children. The need for balanced growth of the child during the formative years will be catered for with education through an appropriate mix of play, activity and desk work. The emphasis will be on the development of *basic competencies as identified by the NEC*.

This programme will commence at national level in 1999 spreading from Grade 1 to Grade 5 by the year 2003.

Strengthening of English

- English will be used in spoken communication during learning through activity in Key Stage 1. A short vocabulary with the words for available objects and simple action verbs will be used.
- Teaching of formal English from Grade 3 to Grade 5 will be improved.
- The curriculum, textbooks and workbooks will be reviewed, revised and upgraded.

Assessment of Learning Outcomes

School-based assessment (SBA) will be provided at all stages of schooling. This will be done to

- motivate pupils to learn the practical aspects and skills associated with each subject
- provide feedback to the pupils and teachers
- help identify learning difficulties of pupils
- facilitate the performance assessment of teachers

At the primary stage, assessment would be undertaken in a manner that promotes group work and co-operation among pupils.

The scholarship examination at the end of Grade 5 and tests at the end of each stage in the school will help to

- identify needy children who should be helped to further their education
- identify children who should be nurtured to form a national pool of talent and
- facilitate counselling, direction and placement of pupils in schools that best match their aptitude and potential.

Teacher Education

A National Authority for Teacher Education (NATE) will be established. It will direct, co-ordinate and ensure the quality of all teacher education in universities, colleges of education, teacher education institutes and teacher centres. All teachers will be given a pre-service training before being deployed. They will be afforded facilities to acquire full professional qualifications, and to update their competencies.

Reorganisation of Schools

Schools will be restructured on a two-tier basis. Tier 1 will comprise the primary and the junior secondary stages. Tier 2 will comprise the senior secondary stage (GCE O Level and GCE A Level). The school will be the main management unit of the education system and the principal will be the front-line manager. The school will be responsible for its own planning and deployment of its resources. Intervention from the centre and the education offices will be for the purpose of facilitating the effective and efficient management of schools, and to ensure that the schools are adequately resourced.

Textbooks and Other Printed Material for Children

Three kinds of books will be provided to the school, namely

- textbooks for the use of pupils to direct their own learning
- work books designed to help the pupil to master the material
- supplementary readers to help pupils to receive further information through reference.

Education Counselling

All schools will provide educational counselling for pupils. Teachers will be given the necessary training and information required for this purpose.

IMPLEMENTATION PLANS

It has been recognised that the goals and objectives identified in the foregoing section can only be reached through a systematically planned and well focused overall effort. However, in the context of lack of experience of this sophisticated type of long-term planning, especially in the field of primary education, it would take a number of years to perfect such a well co-ordinated plan that would be clearly understood and actively put into effect by all persons involved.

These compulsions have resulted in the decision to overhaul the system as quickly as possible and learn from that experience to gradually formulate more refined plans for sustainable and continuous development. Hence, the following short-term objectives were identified in 1997 as needing immediate attention to improve the status of primary education in the country:

- redesign of the content of primary education so that future citizens of Sri Lanka will be equipped to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century
- provision of quantitative inputs including infrastructure, equipment, materials and adequately qualified committed teachers
- improvement of the teaching, learning and assessment processes under efficient school management and class monitoring and supervision
- mobilisation of support from all sectors including parents and the general public to achieve the expected results.

The above objectives and resulting short-term plans were formulated at participatory workshops by a group of around 40 persons involved in primary education. They comprised staff from the National Institute of Education and the Ministry of Education and Higher Education. Those who participated were primary education teachers as well as officers responsible for co-ordination of the implementation process at all levels, as well as officers in the engineering division who develop designs for the layout and planning of buildings, furniture and equipment. Those implementing special projects at primary level and others involved with the welfare and career development of teachers also joined in this effort. From the provinces, there was representation by officers working on primary education development, those implementing special projects, ISAs in charge of existing teachers' centres, heads of schools, etc. Once the objectives were formulated the large group divided itself into smaller groups to undertake the planning of main and sub tasks (Technical Committee on Primary Education 1997). These are summarised in Figure 4.3.

Figure 4.3

Main Tasks for Implementation Plans

OBJECTIVES OF THE PRIMARY EDUCATION REFORM

- To redesign the content of primary education so that future citizens of Sri Lanka will be equipped to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century
- To provide infrastructure, equipment, materials and qualified and committed teachers
- To improve the process of teaching, learning and assessment through efficient school management, class monitoring and supervision
- To mobilise the support of all, including parents and the general public, to achieve the expected results

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PROGRAMMES TO ACHIEVE OBJECTIVES

1. Inputs to Improve the Process of Teaching, Learning and Assessment

Curriculum and Syllabus Revision	• design a new competency-based curriculum framework organised into 3 key stages • identify entry and terminal competencies at each stage • design, print and distribute syllabus, workbooks and teachers' guides • curriculum evaluation
Textbooks	• write new books, review, print and distribute
Resource materials	• materials prepared at school family level and resource centres as well as centrally produced at NIE
Assessment	• conduct entry/terminal competency assessment • conduct class-based assessment • train teachers and teacher supervisors in assessment research
Human Resource Development	• pre-service teacher education • in-service teacher education • training of trainers and other supervising personnel

2. Inputs to Improve School Infrastructure

- design of school buildings, gardens, and equipment
- construction and maintenance
- provision of furniture
- provision of equipment

3. Creation of an Awareness of the Education Reforms

- principals, supervisors, teachers
- parents
- youth
- influential leaders and groups
- general public

4. Efficient Provincial Administration

- establish two way line of communication upto school level

5. Management for Implementation

- management at school and school family level
- classroom management
- model and typical schools at divisional level
- teacher resource centres
- supervision and monitoring

RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF REFORMS

Among the groups responsible for planning, implementing and monitoring of reforms the following are playing and have played particularly important roles.

PRESIDENTIAL TASK FORCE AND TECHNICAL COMMITTEES

In 1997, the President appointed a Presidential Task Force (PTF) headed by the Minister of Education and Higher Education to formulate action programmes based on the National Education Commission recommendations on general education policy. Thirteen technical committees were appointed by the PTF to study the key areas. The Technical Committee on Primary Education prepared action plans under the main tasks elaborated in Figure 4.3.

SPECIAL IMPLEMENTATION UNIT

The PTF subsequently recommended that a special unit be set up to liaise closely with the NEC, NIE, Provincial Ministries and Departments, and schools be set up at the MEHE. Implementation of plans and monitoring the progress of activities are among the main responsibilities of this unit.

An ex-Secretary of Education was appointed as the Director General (DG) of this unit in May 1997. He has now been replaced by an experienced education official. Hand-picked personnel from the NIE and MEHE with proven track records of efficiency and achievement were appointed as programme directors in charge of implementation of specific programmes. These programme directors are expected to work from their own locations using the resources of their own organisations, and report to the DG - Implementation Unit. The Director of Primary Education at the NIE was appointed as the Programme Director of Implementation of the Primary Education Reforms.

The strategy adopted by the unit is to work through the existing implementation agencies, rather than establish a parallel outfit that would result in duplication. The unit, however, proposes to enlist the services of a few full and part-time consultants when the necessary funds are available. The Implementation Unit set about the task of developing an appropriate implementation strategy for each programme in consultation with the key persons responsible for the reform proposals and the main implementing agencies. The primary education programme was given top priority in view of the importance attached to it by the PTF and the need for it to be established as soon as possible.

LEVELS OF PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

Based on the NEC policy recommendations, plans on primary education reforms have to be prepared and implemented at different levels in the education system. The usual activities carried out at each level and the corresponding agencies responsible are summarised in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4

Primary Education Activities by Level and Institutional Responsibility

Level	Activity	Responsibility
National	Curriculum planning and development work	NIE
	Writing of teachers' guides	NIE
	Development of assessment instruments and strategies	NIE
	Writing and printing of pupil textbooks and workbooks	NIE, EPD
	Training of ISAs	NIE, MEHE
	Distribution of teachers' guides	NIE
	Implementation of the curriculum	IU, MEHE
	Distribution of textbooks	EPD
	Preparation of guidelines for upgrading and construction of physical infrastructure	SWD, MEHE
	Monitoring the progress of implementation	IU, PTF, NIE
	Allocation of funds	MEHE, MFP, FC, ERD
	Provision of adequate cadre at all grades	MEHE
Provincial	Training of teachers	PED
	Allocation of funds – budgets	PM, PED
	Planning the implementation of reforms	PED
Zonal	Monitoring the progress of implementation	PM, PED
	Provision of resources (human and material)	PED, DO
	Allocation of resources	ZED
	Salary of teachers	ZED
	Implementation of plans at provincial level	ZED, PED, DO
	Zonal level planning	ZED
Divisional/ School	Monitoring and supervision	DO
	Preparation of timetables	School – Principal
	Preparation of lesson plans	School – Sectional Head, Class Teacher
	Implementation of the curriculum	School - Class Teacher
	Monitoring and supervision	School - Principal, Sectional Head, Divisional/Zonal Officers
	Upgrading and construction of physical infrastructure	PM, MEHE, Parents
	Professional support and guidance	Divisional Officers, ISAs, Principals, Sectional Heads
	Maintenance and repair	Principals, Parents

Key:

DO	Divisional Office	MFP	Ministry of Finance and Planning
EPD	Educational Publications Department	PED	Provincial Education Department
ERD	External Resources Department	PM	Provincial Ministry
FC	Finance Commission	PTF	Presidential Task Force
IU	Implementation Unit	SWD	School Works Department
MEHE	Ministry of Education and Higher Education	ZED	Zonal Education Department

DEVELOPING A LONG-RANGE PLAN FOR PRIMARY EDUCATION

Finally, we note a number of actions which need to be taken to support the development of a long-range plan for primary education. In 1998 the Special Implementation Unit focused on the implementation of the reforms in Grade 1 in the district of Gampaha in the Western Province. From 1999 the implementation islandwide has been undertaken by MEHE and the provincial, zonal and divisional offices. The work of the Primary Education Planning Project (PEPP), based in the MEHE, is developing provincial and national long-term plans (including financial aspects) that will enable the reforms to take root and be sustained nationwide.

A crucial area of focus in the planning effort will be the financial implications of putting the policy into practice. In planning for primary education, consideration should be given to the fact that several subjects are integrated at the primary level. A necessary condition for producing workable plans would thus be the inclusion of persons knowledgeable in financial planning and the primary level requirements of the policy reform in planning teams at all levels.

CRITERIA, NORMS AND TARGETS

Many factors have to be considered in planning a primary education programme to ensure that the programme is relevant and appropriate for the intended target group of learners. The programme should not only match the development levels of the learners but also be comparable with international standards. Certain criteria and norms with respect to a series of items relating to the teaching-learning process, have to be adopted to achieve this end. The following norms are considered essential:

- school buildings/classrooms
- classroom space per child
- dimensions of furniture for different age groups
- dimensions and number of pages of pupil textbooks and workbooks for specified age groups
- letter sizes in textbooks and workbooks, for different age groups
- qualifications of teachers
- formats of syllabi, teachers' guides, and teacher resource material.

Enquiries made by the authors revealed that written down accepted norms and criteria are not available for most of the items mentioned above. We conclude with our suggestions for norms in the above areas, and a set of targets for the year 2004 (Table 4.5).

Table 4.5

Suggested Norms and Achievement Targets

Item	Norm suggested	Achievement target by 2004 (%)
No of children/class	35	60
Classroom space/child	14 sq ft (Present norm = 10 sq ft)	60
Buildings for primary classes	Enclosed and lockable	75
Furniture (desks and chairs for children)	One set/child Two sizes: Size 1 – for KS 1 Size 2 – for KS 2	80
Furniture (desks and chairs for teachers)	One set/teacher	95
Cupboard	One lockable (built in/metal/wooden) cupboard/class	95
Blackboard	Teacher's blackboard (built in/ freestanding) 1 per class Wall blackboard for KS 1 (for children)	100 75
Worktop	One per class (KS 2 and KS 3)	60
Classroom	Partitioned either by permanent wall or by movable structure	75
Display board	On per class (either built in or movable structure used for partitioning)	75
Library	Movable cupboard for each key stage	75
Mats	1 mat per class for KS 1	75
Display facilities	Soft (2″ X 1″) wood runner fixed on to the wall	75
Play area	1 mini park / primary school (cf. Drg 1517 of SWD, MEHE)	75
Office for primary level supervisor (in large schools)	1 enclosed room with basic facilities/primary school	75
Textbooks and workbooks for children	KS 1: Size -18.5 cm x 24 cm No. of pages - less than 100 No. of colours - not less than 4 Letter sizes - 30 (Heading)/ 24 (sub-heading)/18 (Text) KS 2 and KS 3: Size -18.5 cm x 24 cm/A5 No. of pages – less than 200 No. of colours - not less than 3 for KS 2 not less than 2 for KS 3 Letter sizes - 24/18/14 for KS 2 18/14/12 for KS 3	100

Item	Norm suggested		Achievement target by 2004 (%)
Teachers' Guides	Size - A4 (portrait/landscape)		100
Assessment instruments: Paper /Pencil Test Papers	Gr 1:	No formal testing till end of Gr 1	
	Gr 2:	CBA + Teacher-made, mid-year or year end formal tests. Duration: 30 mins or less	
	KS 2:	CBA + Teacher-made, formal tests. Duration: 45 mins or less	
	KS 3:	CBA + Teacher-made, formal tests. Duration: 1 hr or less	100
Assessment instruments: Quality improvement	One primary teacher meeting at the end of each formal test to critically review the instruments and pupil performance.		75
Reporting: Assessment Reports	- Achievement in each subject in criterion-referenced terms, - Levels of mastery in essential competencies		75
Assessment of Mastery in Essential Competencies	National level test at the end of each key stage to study percentage of pupils attaining levels of mastery		End of KS 1 – 50 KS 2 – 60 KS 3 – 70
Quality improvement of curriculum	National level review at the end of each key stage, based on experiences gathered through implementation of curriculum, to revise and improve		Yr 2000: 75 Yr 2002: 80 Yr 2003: 90
ISA visits to schools	2/term/school		75
Primary co-ordinators in large schools	- For schools with 4/more than 4 parallel classes: 1 class co-ordinator/+ 1 sectional head - For schools with 3/less than 3 parallel classes: sectional head		75
Teacher lesson notes	Content should essentially include: - aim of unit/lesson - specific objectives (in behavioural terms) - resources needed - pedagogic strategies for achieving each objective, with approximate time duration - assessment plan - assignments (if any) - reflections on the lesson (self-assessment after the lesson) (format may vary according to subject/ lesson/level)		75

Key: CBA Class-based assessment KS Key Stage
SWD School Works Department MEHE Ministry of Education and Higher Education

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CHAPTER 5

THE PRIMARY EDUCATION REFORM: THE GAMPAHA EXPERIENCE[1]

Lal Perera and Kusum Dharmawardana

INTRODUCTION

The impetus for reforms in primary education and the pilot project in the Gampaha District derived from several aspirations for national development (see Chapter 1). This chapter focuses on the degree to which the objectives of reforms are being achieved. It presents the experiences of an evaluation conducted to assess the effects of implementation of the competency based primary curriculum introduced to Grade 1 classes of schools in the Gampaha district in 1998.

The evaluation study was designed to assess the curriculum materials; ascertain the quality of infrastructure provisions and their impact on the instructional process; and evaluate the opinions and expectations of principals and teachers with regard to the implementation of reform strategies. The study also aimed at determining the extent to which principals fulfilled the functions envisaged by the reforms. In addition, it examined the effectiveness of reform strategies on teacher competencies and initiatives in the transformation of the classroom. The study also endeavoured to assess the attainment levels of Grade 1 students who had progressed through the new learning process. Finally, it proposed strategies and methods for ensuring sustainability of the developments already achieved, to enhance their effect.

THE EVALUATION STUDY

Following Patton (1978), the evaluation study was structured in three phases: effort evaluation, process evaluation and effects evaluation. Effort evaluation examined whether the implementors and strategy planners succeeded in delivering programme benefits to the intended clients. Process evaluation examined whether any changes had taken place in the process of implementation and monitoring. Process evaluation is developmental, flexible and inductive. Effects evaluation, by contrast, is an evaluation of programme effects. The foci of each of these three phases are shown in Figure 5.1

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[1] This chapter is based on an evaluation report by H.M.K.C. Dharmawardana *et al* (1999).

Figure 5.1

The Evaluation Study

PHASE	DESCRIPTION	THEMES
Phase 1	Effort Evaluation	- Curriculum design, development and assessment - Infrastructure improvement of the classroom and environment - Training of teachers - Creation of awareness amongst parents and pupils - Publicity for the program - Evaluation and research - Monitoring and supervision of the program
Phase 2	Process Evaluation	- Variations in the process within the context of reform implementation - Developmental characteristics of the process of implementation - Status of the process change at the time of evaluation - Learning effectiveness resulting from structural changes in education cycle - Changes in the classroom process due to changes in the content of the curriculum, materials and methodology - Impact of the new assessment scheme on pupil evaluation, monitoring and individual development - Planning processes for task-based learning and effective use of time in implementing flexible approaches to teaching - Attention to individual needs of pupils as a result of adherence to principles embodied in the curriculum - Use of grouping of students as a learning teaching methodology in attaining goals - Increased sense of accountability of the parents and teachers in the development of the child - Changes in the roles and responsibilities of education personnel leading to desired process changes - Changes in the classroom process arising from the setting up of a quality learning environment
Phase 3	Effects Evaluation	- Attainment of expected levels of competencies - Behavioural changes demonstrated by pupils - The competencies demonstrated by teachers

THE RESEARCH TEAM

The present evaluation was conducted by a team consisting of the Director Research, and research officers of the NIE, the then secretary and programme officers of the NEC. The officers of the Primary Education Project of the NIE, who were implementors of the parts of the reform package, were not themselves members of the evaluation team.

Additionally the team consisted of a professor and a senior lecturer of the Faculty of Education, University of Colombo and the Director of the Primary Education Project of the NIE.

RESEARCH METHOD

A fifteen per cent sample of schools stratified according to location, zone, school type and medium of instruction was selected at random from a population of 581 schools of the Gampaha district. Using a multi-stage sampling procedure, 81 Grade 1 classes, principals and teachers of these classes were selected at random. The classes so selected were used for in depth observation of teaching and learning processes. The teachers of these classrooms formed the sample used for observation of teacher competencies and task performance.

Four pupils were selected from each of these classes based on a systematic sampling of names from the school attendance register. Test batteries were administered to these children. The parents of these pupils constituted the parent sample. The sampling procedure yielded a sample of 81 schools, 81 principals, 151 teachers, 324 pupils and 324 parents. Table 5.1 presents the population and the sample.

Figure 5.2 presents the instruments used for data collection in relation to the phase and content area of the evaluation. The effort evaluation phase relied mainly on interviews and self reports; the process evaluation phase on observations; and, the effects evaluation phase on competency tests. All instruments were pre-tested and revised. Based on the pre-test experiences an instructional sheet for data collectors was prepared.

Table 5.1

Population and Sample for the Study

ZONE	1AB-1C Urban		Type 2 Urban		Type 3 Urban		1AB-1C Rural		Type 2 Rural		Type 3 Rural		Total
	Sinhala	Tamil	Sinhala	Tamil	Sinhala	Tamil	Sinhala	Tamil	Sinhala	Tamil	Sinhala	Tamil	
Gampaha	01	-	-	-	01		26	03	62	01	46	02	142
No. of Schools Selected	(01)				(01)		(03)	(02)	(07)	(01)	(04)	(02)	(21)
Minuwangoda	02	01	-	-	01	-	27	01	66	02	66	01	167
No. of Schools Selected	(02)	(01)			(01)		(03)	(01)	(07)	(02)	(07)	(01)	(25)
Kelaniya	04	01	03	01	02		34	01	34	01	33	02	116
No. of Schools Selected	(02)	(01)	(02)	(01)	(02)		(02)	(01)	(02)	(01)	(02)	(02)	(18)
Negombo	12	03	18	01	10	-	16	01	32	-	28	-	121
No. of Schools Selected	(02)	(02)	(02)	(01)	(02)		(2)	(01)	(03)		(02)		(17)
Total No. of Schools	19	05	21	02	14	-	103	06	194	04	173	05	546
Total No. of Schools Selected	07	04	04	02	06	-	10	05	19	04	15	05	81

Figure 5.2

Evaluation Framework

Design of the Evaluation	Areas	Instruments of data collection	Techniques Used	Measurement Level	Method of Data Analysis
Effort Evaluation	Curriculum Materials	Teacher interview schedule	Interview	Ordinal data	Descriptive Statistics
	Infrastructure development	Self administered principal questionnaire	Self reports	-do-	-do-
		Self administered teacher questionnaire	Self reports	-do-	-do-
	Training of teachers and principals	Principal interview schedule	Interview	-do-	-do-
	Awareness creation	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-
	Curriculum implementation	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-
		Parent interview schedule	-do-	-do-	-do-
	Supervision	Principal interview schedule	-do-	-do-	-do-
	Effectiveness of in-service adviser programme	Teacher interview schedule	-do-	-do-	-do-
		Principal interview schedule	-do-	-do-	-do-
Process Evaluation	Task planning and implementation	Classroom observation schedule	Observation	Nominal data	-do-
	Observed changes in the learning teaching process	Questionnaire on teacher records and observation schedule	Observation	Interval data	-do-
Effects Evaluation	Attainment of competencies in medium language (Sinhala/Tamil)	Criteria based test	Tests	Ratio data	Descriptive/Inferential
	Mathematics	Criteria based test	Tests	-do-	-do-
	Environment related studies	Criteria based test	Tests	-do-	-do-

COLLECTION OF DATA

The procedures indicated below were followed to improve the reliability of data collected. Data collectors were chosen and, following a training workshop, they were placed with much care. Training was based on the experiences gained at pre-tests and instructions on how to engage in data collection were issued. A time schedule was distributed to enable the data collectors to work uniformly on the identified activities. The purpose of the time schedule was also to see that data collection activities were completed on all sites simultaneously, in compliance with the instructions on data collection. Procedures for the test administration were carefully designed. Data collection was initiated in November 1998 and continued for two weeks.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Both descriptive and inferential statistical methods were used for the analysis of the data. The effort evaluation and process evaluation were analyzed using descriptive methods and the data on effects evaluation was studied using inferential statistical methods.

RESULTS

EFFORT EVALUATION

Curriculum materials

According to the self reports of teachers, curriculum materials were perceived to be rich in quality. However, they noted a lack of coherence and integration among pupil texts, teacher guides and pupil work books. Teachers were also critical of the binding of work books of pupils and the quality of the paper used. Further, they reported that the methods used to identify emerging competencies of pupils on entry to the formal school were inadequate. They also reported that the methods suggested in the teachers' guide to identify pupil needs, potential and strengths were inadequate. Teachers reported that the list of essential competencies for Key Stage I, to monitor pupil attainment, was not provided in the teacher guide. Neither was sufficient detail provided on the techniques to be used for pupil assessment and monitoring.

Infrastructure development

Through interviews, principals and teachers expressed the following opinions regarding the status, standards and process changes brought about by improvements to the physical environment of Grade 1 classes. Fifty four per cent of the schools in the sample (the majority being Type 2 schools) had received the recommended inputs. These were a partitioned class room with 10 square feet for each child, a chalk board to suit the height of children, display boards to exhibit creative work of children, a work table, book corner, sand corner and a planned play area. Of the principals, 64 per cent perceived

such improvements to be effective in implementing the teaching and learning methods recommended by the curriculum developers.

The strategy had enhanced opportunities for collaborative learning, free movement, social interactions and high task engagement. A number of principals observed the standards of the physical inputs to be high, while others remarked that they were low. Teachers said that the new classrooms were effective in satisfactorily implementing tasks. The new classrooms provided a favourable environment for implementing flexible approaches to learning. Teachers noted the quality standard of the inputs to be moderate.

The schools that did not get the new classrooms generated resources from their well wishers and parents and introduced the changes. The resources and space were used more economically and productively by these schools.

These efforts were made by principals, teachers and parents with the assistance of the public. The principals, with the exception of a few, had successfully dealt with classroom realities and daily concerns of the teachers through such changes, while opening the school to the wider public to assist in such initiatives. The evaluation results led to the conclusion that the schools had enlisted the support of all groups in building up a quality learning environment. About 10 per cent of the principals had made little effort or were dissatisfied with the new strategy.

Training of principals and teachers

In self reports from principals, 80 per cent revealed that they had participated in in-service training courses. Sixty five per cent expressed the view that the training provided to them was adequate. However, they were of the opinion that short-term training was inadequate in guiding teachers and in evaluating strategies used by teachers. Capacity building through short term training was inadequate for monitoring and appraising teachers and to respond to their professional needs in implementing the new changes. The principals expressed the view that they gained an awareness of the vision and philosophy embodied in the scheme of competency based education. They perceived the new scheme as a departure from the traditional.

In self reports from teachers, 44 per cent perceived competency-based education as a concept of education, 13 per cent viewed it as a process and 7 per cent as a method. Responding to questions on the adequacy of training, the teachers observed that the instruction on curriculum transaction was comprehensive. However, efforts at improving their ability to apply this have not met with much success. They also pointed out that no model lessons were conducted by the trainers to enhance the teachers' learning experience.

In the training the emphasis on the use of mathematics and language as tool subjects for purposes of communication was heavy. However, other subjects such as environment related activities and religion did not receive adequate attention.

According to the teachers, the principles for collaborative learning embodied in the group activities were adequately emphasized at training sessions. Training also focused on investing time unequally on subjects and had focused on topics and themes for subject integration.

The trainers displayed shortcomings in some areas. They were not equipped with source materials to enable them to precisely convey their message. The teachers observed that training experiences were adequate in providing an understanding on recording the emerging pre-requisite skills of the learners at entry. Know-how instruction on needs identification, monitoring of pupils' mastery levels, and task management for individual development was not properly conveyed. Poor attention was given to task-based lesson planning.

Expertise and competencies of teacher educators in managing the methodology suited for competency-based education was observed to be inadequate, for effective implementation of the curriculum. The need to develop training packages more suited for the purpose was discerned.

Creation of awareness amongst parents and pupils

The principals created an awareness of the reforms in varied ways. With the in-service advisors and fellow teachers, principals had made a praiseworthy attempt to change traditional values and practices to encourage them to fall in line with the new philosophy. They also enlisted the services and support of experts and resource persons in their neighborhoods.

Curriculum implementation and process changes

Interviews conducted with principals and teachers revealed that the principals were successful in their efforts to make parents aware of the features of the new primary curriculum. In a collaborative effort, parents and teachers worked together with their focus on the development of the children.

Parents observed that their children were enthusiastic about the opportunities for their development. Over 80 per cent rated the new curriculum as being satisfactory or extremely satisfactory and useful for their children.

According to classroom observation data, principals had worked as lead teachers in monitoring pupil progress. Informal, formal assessments and special records kept by teachers were gainfully used for lesson planning in 20 per cent of the classrooms . The evidence from interviews was corroborated by classroom observations. Though 75 per cent of the teachers maintained pupil records, the majority did not use statements of attainment to plan tasks to monitor pupil progress.

According to classroom observations and a perusal of records maintained by teachers, task planning of an exemplary nature was observed in about 20 per cent of the classrooms.

Purposeful planning in attaining learning goals and planning for individual development were noted in these classrooms.

According to self reports from teachers, principals worked as lead teachers in setting learning strategies. They assisted the teachers in setting collaborative learning approaches and subject integration using the new curriculum methodology. The principals appraised teachers by maintaining records of teachers in 20 per cent of the schools. In 63 per cent of the schools principals conducted formal and informal supervision. No quality assurance criteria had been developed by external supervisors or principals to appraise standards of schools and teachers.

According to teacher opinions expressed at interviews, principals had generated resources to transform the physical setting of the classroom and facilitate the new curriculum from parents and well wishers in 76 per cent of the schools.

Monitoring and supervision

The following opinions were expressed at interviews conducted with principals and teachers. The efforts of the advisory staff of the line ministry and the provinces in matters of supervision were observed to be adequate by 50 per cent of the principals.

However, according to the principals and teachers, expertise, readiness to work as co-partners and the use of quality assurance criteria for monitoring the tasks of teachers and principals were poor. The superordinate roles and their attitudes towards fellow professionals had prevented them from developing a collaborative style and partnership in school development. Efforts in resolving school level issues was low.

Effectiveness of In-service Adviser programme

The following opinions were expressed at interviews conducted with principals and teachers. The strategies and styles adopted by the in-service advisers were said to be effective by about 65 per cent of the principals. The teachers, however, perceived them to be moderately effective. They expected the in-service advisers to demonstrate good primary practices and to try out models of learning more suited to the implementation of the curriculum. A much deeper dialogue with teachers on school based strategies for promoting and encouraging teacher development was found to be essential for the development of the professional autonomy of the teachers. The teachers expected the ISA's role to be redefined and their capability for improving classroom processes to be enhanced.

PROCESS EVALUATION

Observations of Grade 1 contexts, evidence gathered from 81 classrooms in action and the long term impact during implementation were analyzed to examine process changes. The process changes were observed in 60 Sinhala medium and 21 Tamil medium classrooms. The records maintained by teachers and the classroom observations

conducted at these sites reveal that the patterns of interaction were more pupil to pupil than pupil to teacher. In 50 per cent of the classrooms, where grouping was used to attain a learning goal, time devoted on tasks was high. Routine interactions were minimal. Disciplinary interactions occurred randomly. The learning proceeded with the group, as well as the teacher, as reference points. Exploratory and discovery styles in learning were observed.

Exemplary assessment practices were observed in 20 per cent of the classrooms. About 75 per cent of the teachers used informal and formal assessment practices. About 25 per cent of the teachers demonstrated competency in the flexible use of furniture for maximising opportunities for productive learning. In schools with exemplary practices, teachers used the grouping of children based on the structure of a learning goal. However, utility and use of grouping for collaborative learning was not fully conceived.

In 90 per cent of the classrooms, teachers had effected a physical transformation of the classroom. In 75 per cent, teachers had competently used play in adapting and adopting the flexible methodology recommended. Teachers had a moderate awareness of managing strategies and were able to explore individual needs and devote time unequally on pupils. New methods were not tried out creatively to support learning.

Pupil records were maintained fully by about 75 per cent of the teachers. About 25 per cent had not maintained any systematic records. Seventy five per cent of teachers had monitored pupils as they acquired new competencies. However, very few had analyzed records to plan varied tasks for different pupils.

Hierarchically ordered criteria of assessment had not been provided to the teachers. As a result of the lack of awareness on methods and techniques to be used emerging competencies in the transition from home to school were not properly identified or monitored.

During lesson observations, it was revealed that teachers use materials to enhance the learning experiences. However, creative materials for organising, sorting, classifying and differentiation were not used in mathematical tasks. In environment related activities the use of appropriate methods and materials were observed.

EFFECTS EVALUATION

The analysis of test results of 324 Grade 1 pupils who faced the activity based assessments in language, mathematics and environment related activities is presented in Tables 5.2, 5.3 and 5.4. 'Competency attainment' is defined as a state of 'demonstrated competence' or 'mastery' in the instructional activities as spelled out in the Grade 1 curriculum, under learning goals. The test items assessed the intellectual basis of action or 'competence' demonstrated by the learner in all test situations. Several test items were given to the learner to exhibit the internalized links, established for complete mastery in all envisaged circumstances for accomplishing a competency. Competency is divided into several sub competencies or a cluster of competencies as given in the tables.

The three columns in each table present the competencies, sub competencies and the percentage of pupils who had effectively attained each competency. The percentages were derived by finding the average attainment in a series of test items under each sub competency.

Table 5.2

Attainment of Competencies in Language

Competencies	Sub competencies	Percentage of pupils Attaining competence
Pre-requisite competencies	Auditory discrimination	90
	Verbal discrimination	68
	Visual discrimination	80
	Eye/hand coordination	95
	Neuro-muscular coordination	74
	Fine motor coordination	76
Listening	Comprehension of ideas through listening	85
	Listening and reporting a simple message	64
	Listening and responding to instructions	80
Presentation (presentation of words and sentences in language)	Identifying and presenting objects	99
	Identifying objects and the sound of the first letter associated with it and presenting the sound	94
	Identifying and presenting letter forms with syllables (Pillam)	65
	Presenting simple sentences	81
	Presenting sentences with syllables	73
Presentation (recitation or expression in verbal form)	Expressive presentation	65
	Verbal and non verbal presentation using gestures and actions	46
	Using thinking skills to create fantasy related role play using rhythm and gestures	80
Presentation of one's name for functional purposes	Oral presentation	90
	Identifying letters to write name	75
	Use of appropriate	
	Shape	72
	Form	70
	Orientation	65
	Principles of spacing to write name	52

Table 5.3

Attainment of Competencies in Mathematics

Competencies	Sub competencies	Percentage of pupils attaining competence
Differentiating and identifying Identifying Identifying with understanding and demonstrating ordinal numbers	Distinguishing differences in a form by size Distinguishing differences in a form in print by size Determining the position of objects on a line by demonstrating ordinal numbers	99 99 96
Categorizing	Grouping objects by Colour Size Shape Type	84 87 83 92
Categorizing	Differentiating objects by colour and type and grouping	93 89
Seriation	Placing true objects by size	94
Seriation	Placing objects in order by size	87
Identifying and differentiating	Stating the value of a given set of units by selecting the appropriate symbol	96
Identifying and differentiating	Abiding by the principle of left to right without exception	94
Identifying positions	Stating the position of a unit in a series	90
Identifying and presenting numerals	Identifying the values of a given set of units and representing these as numerals	93
Identifying	Distinguishing lengths of less than three objects	99
Differentiating Differentiating Differentiating	Distinguishing weights of given objects Distinguishing the highest of a set of objects Distinguishing the value of one, two and five rupee coins	99 96 99
Calculating Calculating and representing	Finding and stating added value using appropriate symbols(=) and (+) Finding and stating the added value using appropriate numbers	95 80

Table 5.4

Attainment of Competencies in Environment Related Activities

Competencies	Sub Competencies	Percentage of pupils attaining competence
Investigation and reporting life processes of living things in the biological environment	Observe and report an animal in the school environment	98
	Report the context in which the animal lived	94
	Describe characteristics of the animal	92
	Report activities and food consumed by the animal	82
Reporting organisational processes, roles duties in relating to the environment	Report details of given sites	50
	Present functions of persons	50
	Present responsibilities of persons given	47
	Present functions related to given sites of the school	71
Relating to a given social event	Relate changes in the environment	95
	Present activities associated with the event	87
	Present customs associated with the event	69
	Present the event as a group using creative expressions	75
Investigation of the physical environment	Differentiate and present materials observed in work site.	91
	Differentiate and present functions of persons in a work site	82
	Present work site using creative expressions	70
	Demonstrate physical forms	95

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The study was designed to assess the success and evaluate the effects of implementation of the primary curriculum reform. The results presented here may be an over-simplification of the complex patterns which the evaluation has revealed. The findings of the three phases of the evaluation are summarized below. The findings point to the failures as well as the successes of the curriculum implementation in the Gampaha District.

The curriculum materials were perceived to be rich in quality. However guidance given in the teacher guide for the interpretation of principles and methodology was inadequate. The integration of teacher guides, text books and work books of pupils was low. Awareness of primary reforms was successfully accomplished by principals and teachers. The duration of training, training approaches and competencies of service providers, were found to be inadequate to build up capability in implementers. However knowledge of methodology and strategies was achieved by parties concerned. The infrastructure improvements and changes have brought about a self fulfillment in pupils and teachers to aid in the effective implementation of the curriculum. The policy of positive discrimination to direct resources to Type 2 and Type 3 schools was effective in that several quality improvements took place in such settings. Parent participation in resource generation in schools that did not receive resources for new classrooms is a noteworthy feature. Eighty per cent of the parents perceived the new curriculum as being either satisfactory or extremely satisfactory. They participated in their children's learning. Monitoring and supervision was found to be adequate by 50 per cent of the principals. Quality assurance criteria for monitoring schools was not provided. A teacher appraisal scheme to maintain uniform standards was observed in only 15 per cent of the schools.

Twenty per cent of the teachers demonstrated desired teacher competencies in managing the new curriculum. The absence of task based planning was observed in more than 75 per cent of the classrooms. However, quality interaction patterns and time management on tasks were high. The methodology presented was used to a great extent to bring about desired process changes in the classrooms. A complete list of competencies and clusters of sub competencies, with clear guidance on monitoring pupils to mastery, was found to be essential. The need for guidance in conducting informal assessment was felt. Identification of needs of pupils and their emerging competencies were not fully conceived by teachers. Seventy five per cent of the teachers maintained records in a systematic way though such records were not fully analyzed in task planning or pupil monitoring.

If 80 per cent is taken as an operational level of mastery, pupils of Grade 1 attained all competencies in mathematics. With the exception of a few competencies, the attainment level in language was high. Low mastery in verbal discrimination, which is a pre-requisite competency, may have resulted in low mastery in presenting words with (pillam) syllables, which is a higher order competency. Listening, though basic to learning, was not mastered by nearly 36 per cent of the pupils. They failed to listen attentively and recall the message to be reported. Verbal and non-verbal presentation was not attained by 35 per cent and 54 per cent respectively. In environment related activities the pupils attained

low mastery in relating to a given environment. There was low awareness of the school sites (50%), poor inquiry skills to investigate the functions of persons in the schools (50%) and their responsibilities in the schools (53%).

The above results with 20 per cent not reaching the mastery level in some competencies give a sense of direction for monitoring pupils to mastery before the end of Key Stage 1. The need for improving learning with a greater element of accountability is increasingly clear. The Gampaha experience generates a number of lessons to assist the implementation of the reforms nationwide.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE GAMPAHA EXPERIENCE

IN-SERVICE SCHOOL BASED MODEL TO BE DEVELOPED

In-service training should not be seen as a "one off" event. A context specific, school based competency model leading to several developmental activities should be developed and introduced. A package based on competency training to participants must also be developed. It should aim at preparing a group of proficient service providers who will be competent to train teachers.

A TRAINING MANUAL FOR THE TRAINERS

A training manual for trainers should be prepared on the assumptions, philosophies, concepts, methodologies and strategies embodied in the primary curriculum, to ensure consistency and clarity in the use of concepts and approaches. Teacher educators need to develop a statement of good primary practice which will serve as a mission statement for all schools. A statement of quality standards may be given to principals and teachers to assess the standards of schools and to conduct a public review of schools.

DESIGNING A HANDBOOK FOR IN-SERVICE SESSIONS TRAINING

In operating competency based training, the following materials may be developed to give training experience to teachers and in-service advisers: (i) preparation of learning materials for planning and organizing a task based on a learning goal; (ii) use of play activities in the accomplishment of a few competencies; and (iii) development of working examples on new features (oral English and use of Grade 6 pupils) and grouping of Grade 6 pupils with Grade 1 pupils in activities given in the curriculum.

PREPARATION OF A MANUAL FOR OBSERVING AND RECORDING COMPETENCIES

A manual should be prepared to identify and record emerging competencies of the child prior to entry in formal school. The Child Development Centre of the Open University and the Childrens' Secretariat should initiate this activity.

PREPARATION OF MATERIALS FOR IMPROVEMENT OF STRATEGIES AT THE SCHOOL LEVEL

A manual on effective and purposeful pre-planning of lessons must be prepared.

INTRODUCTION OF A HEALTH SCHEME FOR PUPILS AT ENTRY

An island-wide medical scheme should be introduced to examine the physical fitness of the children to prevent teacher labeling and enable early detection of handicaps.

A RESOURCES MOBILISATION SCHEME BASED ON THE POLICY OF POSITIVE DISCRIMINATION

As the policy of positive discrimination is extremely fruitful in reducing disparities, resource allocations should be directed further to Type 2 and Type 3 schools facing constraints.

Schools with a smaller number of pupils should establish pre-school education centres within the premises, under the control of the provincial authorities, to try out pre school approaches more suitable to the new curriculum. The National Institute of Education and the Universities will have to conduct a number of research studies to explore the emerging literacy of pre-school children to understand the Sri Lankan child more broadly.

TRAINING OF PRINCIPALS IN EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES MUST BE ENCOURAGED

Principals must be encouraged to develop a performance appraisal scheme, to evaluate teachers. Teachers need to be developed to assume the role of reflective practitioners. Principals must develop teacher professionalism by acting as lead teachers. In-service days should be arranged for subject development, as well as for exploring teaching approaches more suited for competency based education. Principals must be trained to assist teachers in the clarification of classroom issues through action research.

ROLES AND FUNCTIONS OF IN-SERVICE ADVISORS AND SUPERVISORY STAFF TO BE CHANGED

The new roles and functions must meet the needs of the target groups. A continuing education project must be initiated to build up awareness, capability and attributes required to implement the primary curriculum.

PARENT DISCUSSION RECORD BOOK

The preparation of a parent discussion record book to be used by teachers to record pupil potential, patterns of growth and development is imperative. The record book can be maintained by the teacher to identify patterns of growth of a child as well as to identify areas to be developed with parental collaboration. Such collaboration and awareness is useful to gain a better insight of the growing child.

TRAINING TEACHERS TO SEARCH FOR STRATEGIES TO GIVE MEANING TO THE DIVERSE NEEDS OF AN INCREASINGLY LARGE POPULATION OF PUPILS IN THE MAINSTREAM

Teachers should be trained to identify the potential of learners. They should be trained to decipher growth patterns and identify causes of concern for due attention and, if necessary, consult specialists.

Teachers must be trained in school based assessment and record keeping. They must be trained to analyse pupil records to plan individual development activities. Such reviews may be gainfully used in pre-planning and as areas for action research.

Teachers must be trained to select themes that are inventive and topics that will generate learner interest. Methodology must open chances to the child to demonstrate competencies.

Teachers must be trained in planning tasks for collaborative learning.

Teachers must be trained in managing and generating resources. They must know the methods of improving quality classroom interactions using more appropriate grouping methods.

EFFECTIVE EDUCATION FOR ALL PUPILS THROUGH COMPETENCY BASED EDUCATION TO BE EXPLORED MORE FULLY

Teachers must be trained on reflective practice and learning through action research to help pupils to acquire learning skills and competencies. Listening, creative presentation, use of principles and rules through self-learning must be explored more fully.

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CHAPTER 6

TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF THE NATIONAL POLICY ON PRIMARY EDUCATION

Subhashinie Wijesundera and Wilfred J. Perera

INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes a study undertaken in July 1997, a few months before the initial implementation of the education reforms in January 1998. The study focuses on the perceptions of primary education teachers of the reform proposals in primary education. It further examines the specific support that teachers suggest they require, in order to implement the proposals.

The study was undertaken in two phases. In the first phase, data on teacher perceptions of the policy reforms, as they related to primary education, were collected. The teachers met in small groups with the researchers. The reforms relevant to primary education, as they appeared in the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE 1996) document, were read out and explained to them. Teachers were requested to listen carefully to each statement and then to write down on paper, whether they strongly agreed, agreed or disagreed with each statement. They were further requested to comment on the possibilities and pitfalls of the policies and to make suggestions where necessary. One hundred and twenty two teachers[1] participated in the study.

National Schools	19
Urban Schools	45
Rural Schools	25
Plantation Schools	33
Total	122

In the second phase, data on professional and administrative support required by teachers to implement the reforms were collected. For this purpose a random sample of teachers was drawn from the primary school teachers who participated in training workshops in the Gampaha District. This district had been selected by the authorities to pilot the new curriculum in 1998. These teachers had already been oriented to the new policies by the project team responsible for piloting the implementation of the revised primary curriculum. The research team met the teachers in groups and asked them to write down in a free response format the nature of support that they required in order to

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[1] The teachers were drawn from four types of schools. National Schools : schools that are directly financed and administered by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education. Urban Schools : schools situated in Municipal and Urban Council areas. Teachers from type 1 AB, 1C, 2 and 3 schools were included. Rural Schools : schools situated in Pradeshiya Sabha areas. Teachers from type 1 AB, 1C, 2 and 3 schools were included. Plantation Schools : schools situated in plantation areas. Teachers were mostly from type 2 and 3 schools.

implement the policies successfully. The composition of teachers who participated in the second phase of data collection was as follows.

Type[2]	1AB	Urban	21
		Rural	06
	1C	Urban	05
		Rural	32
	2	Urban	-
		Rural	12
	3	Urban	18
		<u>Rural</u>	<u>46</u>
		Total	140

TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF POLICY REFORMS

In the following sections, we record teacher perceptions of the proposed policy reforms in primary education. Seventeen proposals, listed below, were explained to the teachers. Each of these proposals was extracted from the MEHE document (1996). In the sections which follow, each proposal is presented in italics prior to the responses of teachers.

- Compulsory education
- Restructuring of schools
- Limiting the school size
- School admissions
- Upgrading disadvantaged schools
- Curriculum revision
- Class-based assessment
- Grade 5 scholarship examination
- Supplementary reading materials
- Teaching of first language
- Teaching of English language
- Special education
- Education for national integration
- Teacher pupil relationships and 'counselling'
- Teacher education
- Management of education
- Computation of teacher cadre, teacher transfers and handling of grievances

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[2] Type 1 AB – Schools with (GCE) Advanced Level science stream. Type 1C – Schools with (GCE) Advanced Level arts and commerce stream(s). Type 2 – Schools with classes from Years 1 to 11. Type 3 – Schools with classes from Years 1 to 5 or Years 1 to 8.

COMPULSORY EDUCATION

According to school census data the enrolment rate at Grade 1 class is 92 per cent, and the participation rate of the 5–14 age group is 86 per cent. This means 14 per cent of the children in the compulsory school going age are out of school. In order to ensure total participation of children in the 5–14 age group and to meet the learning needs of non-school going children, the following action programmes will be implemented.

Enactment of regulations of compulsory education for children between 5 – 14 years of age.

Development of activity schools to cater to the needs of children who have failed to enter formal schools or who have dropped out early.

Advocacy programmes to encourage parents to send their children to school.

Provide incentives through the supply of stationery, clothing and other necessities to help deprived children to attend school.

Provision to be made for children in the non-formal sector who are capable and willing to re-enter formal schools to do so.

Table 6.1

Teacher Perceptions of the Proposals on Compulsory Education

Category of teachers by school type	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		No response		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
National schools	13	68	06	32	-	-	-	-	19
Urban schools	22	48	23	51	-	-	-	-	45
Rural schools	19	76	06	24	-	-	-	-	25
Plantation schools	24	72	09	27	-	-	-	-	33
Total	78	64	44	36	-	-	-	-	122

All teachers unanimously agreed to the proposals.

Possibilities, pitfalls and suggestions

The teachers were of the view that enactment of regulations would not automatically improve participation. They emphasised the need to implement programmes to provide incentives to poor families to send their children to school. They also highlighted the need to conduct awareness programmes to motivate parents who do not consider the education of their children a primary concern.

Teachers further suggested that School Development Societies (SDSs) should be encouraged to implement programmes to improve participation in primary education.

Teachers welcomed the establishment of activity schools. However, some of them were sceptical about re-entry of those students to formal schools. One teacher explained,

> Activity schools and open schools will be centered more on employment and students of those schools will be less oriented to academic work. It will be difficult to teach them in the formal classroom.

RESTRUCTURING OF SCHOOLS

> *There will be two types of schools as follows:*
>
> *a. Junior schools with classes from Grades 1 to 9, or 1 to 11 in exceptional circumstances.*
>
> *b. Senior schools with classes from Grades 10 to 13.*
>
> *The structure of each school will be determined on the results of a school mapping exercise considering access as well as efficient utilisation of resources.*

Table 6.2

Teacher Perceptions of Restructuring of the School System

Category of teachers by school type	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		No response		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
National schools	02	10	11	58	04	22	02	10	19
Urban schools	-	-	18	40	16	35	11	25	45
Rural schools	02	8	17	68	-	-	06	24	25
Plantation schools	03	9	23	70	03	9	04	12	33
Total	07	6	69	57	23	19	23	18	122

Here the opinion of teachers was divided. While 63 per cent agreed, 37 per cent either disagreed or did not respond. None of the teachers from the rural schools disagreed with the proposal but 24 per cent of them did not respond. Teachers from national and urban schools were the prominent groups that disagreed with the proposal.

Most of the teachers said they generally agreed with the proposal but had some reservations about the implementation process. In their comments, teachers highlighted both positive and negative implications arising out of the restructuring process. They anticipated the process would help to reduce dropouts, facilitate better school administration, draw the attention of the principal towards primary school children and also reduce the competition for admission to popular schools.

Typical responses, which indicated the positive implications, were as follows,

> Restructuring will reduce the present competition to enter Grade 1 and Grade 6 of the popular schools. All junior schools (Grades 1 to 9) have more or less

the same status and parents will be relieved of the burden to find their child a place in a popular school.

Restructuring will facilitate better school administration. Sometimes children are misled by older students causing disciplinary problems. After restructuring, primary school children will not be affected by older pupils.

That is good. Schools can pay more attention to education and child development in the primary cycle. Mostly in big schools, principals pay more attention to Advanced Level results, achievements in sports, etc. They generally spend more time, money and other resources on activities for students at the secondary level.

It is a great advantage for primary children. They will be given due recognition.

It is a good move. Expanding of grade span of schools from Grades 1 – 5 to Grades 1 – 9 will help to reduce dropouts at Grade 5. They will pursue at least up to Grade 9.

Negative implications and the pitfalls were highlighted mostly by the teachers from national and urban schools.

There is a greater possibility for dropouts to increase at Grade 9. They will drop out from schools to find a paid job.

There is a possibility of increasing the anxiety of children presently enrolled in Type 2 schools and who want to sit their GCE (O Level) examination from the same school.

Personality development of children in the Grades 7 to 9 will be hindered when they do not see older children.

Teachers also highlighted the problems of teacher deployment.

There will also be a problem of placement and utilisation of teachers in schools. Trained teachers who teach in Grades 1 to 11 will either be assigned to a Grades 1 to 9 school or to a Grades 10 to 13 school. Graduates who teach in Grades 1 to 13 will also face the same problem. Specialist teachers may sometimes be under-utilised.

Teachers also had doubts about the process of restructuring.

The status (junior or senior) of a school will be determined according to personal or political biases.

Some questioned about the practical aspects of implementation.

How long will it take to scrap Grades 1 to 9 from a school now having Grades 1 to 13? Will it be nine long years?

Teachers offered four specific suggestions for implementation. The criteria used to determine the status of schools at the local level should be clearly stated and made available for public scrutiny. Restructuring of schools should not in any way deprive any child's right to education. All schools should be provided with at least the minimum requirements of physical resources and teachers. Restructuring should also be done in national schools. Even the concept of national schools should be abolished. Otherwise the problems of competition for admission and the unequal distribution of resources will continue to affect the education system. (Note that this last suggestion was made by teachers from schools other than the national schools.)

SCHOOL SIZE

Concern has been expressed regarding the uncontrolled growth in the size of certain popular schools. It has affected standards, discipline and created problems of management. A planned programme to reduce the number of pupils to 2,000 will be carried out. The de-linking of the junior section from the senior section will also help to reduce the numbers.

Table 6.3

Teacher Perceptions of School Size

Category of teachers by school type	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		No response		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
National schools	02	11	11	58	02	11	04	20	19
Urban schools	04	9	30	66	02	4	09	20	45
Rural schools	05	20	14	56	-	-	06	24	25
Plantation schools	08	24	19	57	-	-	06	18	33
Total	19	16	74	60	04	3	25	20	122

Seventy six per cent of the teachers either agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal. Few from national and urban schools disagreed with the proposal. About 20 per cent of teachers from different categories of schools did not respond, the reasons for which were not given.

Possibilities, pitfalls and suggestions

Teachers who welcome the proposal said that it would be easier for the school administration to achieve educational goals. They added that it is also necessary to limit the average number of students per class in the primary section (class size) to 30 pupils.

Those who disagreed were of the view that it would be difficult to implement this proposal as the parents of students in popular schools would oppose it. Others highlighted the need to encourage parents to send their children to schools that are close to their homes.

SCHOOL ADMISSIONS

> *Admissions to Grade 1 in popular schools have turned out to be a competition in fraudulent practices which in turn inculcate undesirable values in young minds at the beginning of their school career. Under these circumstances one method of selection that would give everyone a fair chance would be selection by lottery.*
>
> *Admissions to Grade 1 and other grades at primary level in schools with the heaviest demand in the country will be carried out by drawing lots.*

Table 6.4

Teacher Perceptions of Proposed Policy on Admissions to Grade 1 in Popular Schools

Category of teachers by school type	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		No response		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
National schools	02	11	01	5	14	73	02	11	19
Urban schools	-	-	07	15	36	80	02	4	45
Rural schools	01	4	06	24	16	60	03	12	25
Plantation schools	03	9	13	40	09	27	08	24	33
Total	06	5	27	22	74	60	15	12	122

Twenty five per cent of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed with the proposal. Another 10 to 15 per cent did not respond. More than 60 per cent of teachers from national, urban and rural schools disagreed with the proposal, while only 27 per cent of teachers from plantation schools disagreed. The percentage of teachers in the plantation schools who did not respond to the question was also high. The strongest opposition came from teachers from national and urban schools. Anticipated problems of implementation and the concern for pupils living closer to popular schools were the main reasons for most of them to respond negatively.

Possibilities, pitfalls and suggestions

Those who agreed with the proposal agreed but had reservations.

> Yes I agree. But the people who handle it should do it properly, without mishandling and exercising favouritism.

> I agree but it should be done in a reasonable way. A good thing about it is that the best pupils will be dispersed all over the country.

Some teachers thought that it would be unfair on the pupils who live in the neighbourhood of the schools.

> It is good if it is done honestly. At the same time it may be unfair on the children who live closer to the school.

Others thought it was impractical because elite groups would oppose the implementation.

> All the big people will be against it. It is impossible to implement this in Sri Lanka.

A typical response of the teachers who disagreed was,

> Lottery is not a good strategy. The children who live close to the school will miss the opportunity of admission. There is also a possibility of forgery, bribery and all kinds of undesirable things.

Others highlighted that it would be unfair on the brighter students.

> It is unfair on the bright students who wish to enter a popular school.

Some teachers suggested equal opportunities should be provided in all schools.

> Remove all labels such as 'national', 'popular', etc. and ensure good education for every child from the school closer to the home.

UPGRADING DISADVANTAGED SCHOOLS

> *Upgrading of all junior schools in disadvantaged locations such as remote village areas, plantations, deprived urban centres and the coastal belt by the provision of necessary facilities.*

Table 6.5

Teacher Perceptions of Upgrading Disadvantaged Schools

Category of teachers by school type	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		No response		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
National schools	11	58	08	42	-	-	-	-	19
Urban schools	13	29	31	69	-	-	01	2	45
Rural schools	09	36	16	64	-	-	-	-	25
Plantation schools	16	48	17	52	-	-	-	-	33
Total	49	40	72	59	-	-	01	1	122

All teachers either agreed or strongly agreed to the proposal indicating that promotion of equity should be a priority.

Possibilities, pitfalls and suggestions

Teachers welcomed the proposal on upgrading all junior schools in disadvantaged locations by providing the necessary facilities. Some teachers warned,

If the proposal is to be implemented successfully, there must be commitment by all concerned.

We have to learn from previous attempts.

They also suggested,

Special attention should be given to fill the vacancies, and maintain the required cadre in these schools.

CURRICULUM REVISION

Primary stage of education

Grades 1 to 5, constituting the primary stage of education, will form a part of the junior school. The child-centred approach in the curriculum will be further strengthened to make learning an active, creative and joyful experience.

Curriculum revision

The primary curriculum will be sub-divided into two; the lower primary from Grades 1 to 3 and the upper primary from Grades 4 to 5. The entire primary curriculum will be aimed at all-round and balanced development of the child.

In the lower primary classes pupils will learn through play and activity methods in a friendly, absorbing and mentally stimulating environment.

In the upper primary the thematic approach, paying special attention to integration, will be used throughout. A significant part of each week will be spent on activities related to projects and work experience.

Acquisition of basic competencies will be afforded a progressively increasing amount of time per week as the children move up through the years.

Remedial teaching will be provided for those who need such intervention.

Teachers will be given the discretion and competence to implement the curriculum that has been adapted to meet the needs and interests of a group of children who differ from each other and to suit the environment.

While the national languages will be the medium of instruction, use of English for oral communication will be encouraged from Grade 1. Similarly, the use of Sinhala for Tamil speaking students and Tamil for Sinhala speaking students will be introduced. This will be made compulsory as and when facilities can be made available. The objective is to impart the ability to communicate in all three languages.

First, teachers were asked to indicate whether they agree to the revision of the curriculum. Then, they were asked to comment on the possibilities and pitfalls of the proposed changes.

Table 6.6

Teacher Perceptions of Curriculum Revision

Category of Teachers by school type	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		No response		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
National schools	12	63	07	37	-	-	-	-	19
Urban schools	03	7	35	78	01	2	06	13	45
Rural schools	06	24	18	72	-	-	01	4	25
Plantation schools	18	55	15	45	-	-	-	-	33
Total	39	32	75	61	01	1	07	6	122

More than 90 per cent of teachers agreed to the proposal. The one who disagreed said,

> Changing the curriculum several times within a short period will not help education development.

Possibilities, pitfalls and suggestions

Teachers were of the view that play and activity methods have already been used in the lower primary grades. However, they said,

> It is not properly used now. Provide a good training on methodology for all those who are involved.

They also pointed out the need to modify the assessment procedure. One teacher said,

> Activities help the child to learn concepts better and retain them for a long period. It is sad that only what is written in the note book is tested.

The thematic approach and project work in the upper primary classes received the following reactions from the teachers.

All teachers generally agreed with the proposal to use the thematic approach with special attention to integration and project work. However, some teachers expressed displeasure about the process of introduction, withdrawal and reintroduction that had taken place over the past few decades.

> Thematic approach and integration were practised earlier, then they were withdrawn. Again it is to be introduced? It is bad planning that policies change so quickly.

Another teacher pointed out that it was difficult to integrate all subjects, especially mathematics, and another was worried about the compatibility of other priorities with the proposed curriculum content and methodologies.

> Projects should be introduced from Grade 6 onwards. It is necessary to pay more attention to the development of literacy at the upper primary stage. A heavy curriculum makes it difficult for the teacher to give priority to that. But if the curriculum content is reduced (for example, environment, beginning science) the teacher would be able to improve literacy. Therefore, it is necessary to postpone project work till Grade 6. Otherwise, teachers will have to work harder to cover the syllabi than to develop literacy.

Another teacher added,

> Take care to reduce the curriculum content. Show us how we could integrate new methodologies and priorities on improving numeracy and literacy. Otherwise, transfer the burden of project work to the Grade 6 teacher.

The ideas expressed by these teachers indicate that they need more information with regard to project work.

Teachers unanimously agreed to the proposal that teachers should be given the discretion and competence to adapt and adopt the curriculum effectively to the needs of children and to suit the environment. They also unanimously agreed to the proposal to teach Tamil to Sinhala-medium students and to teach Sinhala to Tamil-medium students. They said,

> All Sinhala-medium teachers should be trained to teach Tamil and all Tamil-medium teachers should be trained to teach Sinhala. It's very good if we can teach our children to communicate in all three languages.

CLASS-BASED ASSESSMENT (CBA)

> *Assessment at school level is a part of the teaching-learning process. It will help the teacher to know the achievement level of the pupil. Classroom-Based Assessment (CBA) and maintenance of pupil records will be regularised and this information can be used for guidance, counselling and remedial teaching.*
>
> *CBA will ensure that the pupils have reached the expected levels of achievement in competencies that cannot be assessed through written tests. Teachers will be trained in the techniques of assessment and in the use of data to enhance the quality of instruction.*

Table 6.7

Teacher Perceptions of Class-Based Assessment (CBA)

Category of teachers by school type	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		No response		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
National schools	04	21	09	47	02	10	04	21	19
Urban schools	-	-	26	57	-	-	19	42	45
Rural schools	05	20	18	72	02	08	-	-	25
Plantation schools	08	24	24	72	-	-	01	03	33
Total	17	14	77	63	04	03	24	20	122

A greater proportion of teachers agreed to the proposal to evaluate students using methods other than paper and pencil tests. A few disagreed and about 28 per cent did not respond. The majority of these were from urban schools.

Possibilities, pitfalls and suggestions

Some teachers indicated their enthusiasm about the proposal saying,

> Oral tests, and observation of student behaviour during activities and class work help the teachers to make sound judgements on student development. Teachers will have to organise field trips, workshops and other activities in order to have more contact with the children.

Other teachers who agreed to the proposal said,

> Teachers know their pupils best and they can make a better assessment.

Those who disagreed to the proposal did so saying that teachers will be biased towards some students.

> I know personally that some teachers give high marks to children who support them and present gifts to them. This will take place very much in national schools. It will be disadvantageous to the students if the marks of continuous assessment are added to the summative assessment marks. Teacher subjectivity plays a big role in continuous assessment.

Comments of two other teachers were as follows,

> Some teachers will cover only a part of the syllabus and give high marks to the students.

> Standards will differ from teacher to teacher and from school to school. It will be difficult to compare achievement.

The views of the teachers indicate that they need more clarification about the purpose and procedures of CBA.

GRADE 5 SCHOLARSHIP EXAMINATION

There is general agreement that the Grade 5 Scholarship Examination distorts the objectives of a sound primary education. It adversely affects the mental health of growing children. A more appropriate scheme will be designed to provide financial assistance to needy children.

Table 6.8

**Teacher Perceptions of the Policy Proposal on the
Grade 5 Scholarship Examination**

Category of teachers by school type	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		No response		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
National schools	06	31	13	68	-	-	-	-	19
Urban schools	-	-	20	44	07	15	18	40	45
Rural schools	-	-	21	84	03	12	01	4	25
Plantation schools	-	-	28	85	04	12	01	3	33
Total	06	5	82	67	14	11	20	16	122

Teachers from national schools unanimously agreed to the proposal. But 12 to 15 per cent from other urban, rural and plantation schools disagreed. In addition, quite a high percentage from urban schools did not respond to the question. Even those who agreed to the proposal did so on condition. They said all subjects should be tested in the examination.

A typical response of those who disagreed was,

> Brilliant students who do not need financial assistance but want to enrol in popular schools will be affected.

The policy statement does not clearly indicate the nature of the proposed change. The teachers who disagreed with the proposal found it inadequate to look after only the needy children. They pointed out the needs of children who are high achievers and who want to attend a good school.

The teachers in national schools were highly supportive of the proposal.

PROVISION OF TEXTBOOKS AND SUPPLEMENTARY READING MATERIALS

Free textbooks will be supplied to pupils in state schools up to Grade 11. Action will be taken to produce three kinds of books:

a. Textbooks intended for the use by the pupils to direct their own learning.
b. Workbooks designed to help the pupil to master the material.
c. Supplementary books to help the pupil to obtain further information through reference. An adequate number of copies of these books will be supplied to school libraries.

d.   The quality of books will be improved to make them more effective and attractive. Suitable persons will be given incentives to prepare supplementary books, which cater to pupils' variability and for in-depth treatment of selected topics.

e.   Incentives will also be provided to professionals to write books for pupils in Advanced Level classes.

Table 6.9

Teacher Perceptions of Proposed Policies for the Provision of Textbooks and Supplementary Reading Materials

Category of teachers by school type	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		No response		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
National schools	12	63	05	26	-	-	02	11	19
Urban schools	14	31	24	53	-	-	07	15	45
Rural schools	11	44	13	52	-	-	01	04	25
Plantation schools	18	54	15	46	-	-	-	-	33
Total	55	45	57	47	-	-	10	08	122

All teachers from plantation schools agreed to the proposal. Teachers in other categories also agreed with the proposal. However, some of the teachers who fully endorsed the proposal were sceptical about its implementation.

Possibilities, pitfalls and suggestions

Teachers welcomed the proposal to provide workbooks for the pupils. They anticipate these workbooks would help students to master the knowledge and skills learnt in the classroom. Some of the teachers who agreed with the proposal did so with some reservations. These were mostly related to the implementation of the proposal.

Their reservations were,

I agree, if they are provided to all the schools on an equitable basis.

I agree. But they should provide necessary materials to all schools on time.

TEACHING OF FIRST LANGUAGE

Teaching of first language will be strengthened to develop all language competencies namely, to listen attentively, speak clearly, read for meaning and write accurately and lucidly.

Table 6.10

Teacher Perceptions of Teaching of First Language

Category of teachers by school type	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		No response		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
National schools	08	42	11	58	-	-	-	-	19
Urban schools	02	4	36	80	-	-	07	16	45
Rural schools	13	52	12	48	-	-	-	-	25
Plantation schools	15	45	18	55	-	-	-	-	33
Total	38	31	77	63	-	-	07	06	122

Almost all the teachers agreed with the proposal.

Possibilities, pitfalls and suggestions

Teachers agreed to the proposal indicating that it was very important. Some teachers who agreed said,

> All teachers must be encouraged to teach language skills.

TEACHING OF ENGLISH

> *English will be used for communication in activity classes from Grade 1. All teachers will be provided with materials and incentives to improve their competence in using simple English.*

Table 6.11

Teacher Perceptions of the use of English for Communication in Activity Classes from Grade 1

Category of teachers by school type	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		No response		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
National schools	08	42	09	47	-	-	02	01	19
Urban schools	08	18	25	55	-	-	12	26	45
Rural schools	06	24	15	60	-	-	04	16	25
Plantation schools	17	51	16	49	-	-	-	-	33
Total	39	32	65	53	-	-	18	15	122

Teachers generally agreed with the proposal. Although some teachers felt that they did not have adequate training or the necessary audio-visual material to implement the proposal.

Possibilities, pitfalls and suggestions

Most teachers believed that this was a good proposal, but had reservations.

Unless a sound training is given it is doubtful that all primary teachers will be able to communicate in English with their children in the classroom.

This is good. But the teachers have to be trained to do this. Will they provide audio-visual materials as stated?

Teachers from rural and plantation schools spoke of the lack of competent English teachers in their schools. A teacher from an urban school said that there were problems in teacher deployment. According to her there was a tendency for English teachers to be concentrated in urban schools.

In our school we have nine English teachers. We want only four of them.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Special education refers to the education of persons who are handicapped due to physical, mental, sensory or social impairment. Programmes will be further strengthened to enable learners with special education needs to develop their potential to the maximum and to enable them to become self-reliant. The goal of special education will be the integration of learners with special education needs into the regular system and eventually the community.

Table 6.12

Teacher Perceptions of Proposals on Special Education

Category of teachers by school type	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		No response		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
National schools	10	53	09	47	-	-	-	-	19
Urban schools	05	11	38	84	-	-	02	04	45
Rural schools	04	16	19	76	-	-	02	08	25
Plantation schools	06	18	26	78	-	-	01	03	33
Total	25	20	92	75	-	-	05	04	122

All teachers generally agreed with the proposal.

Possibilities, pitfalls and suggestions

Teachers welcomed the proposal. They did not make any specific comments.

EDUCATION FOR NATIONAL INTEGRATION

The objective of national integration will be pursued through a variety of educational activities. The teaching of Sinhala to Tamil speaking children and Tamil to Sinhala speaking children will reduce the barriers to communication.

> *Curriculum content should be selected to facilitate the understanding of differences, foster greater tolerance and lead to the appreciation of harmony. As a matter of policy, multi-media schools will be encouraged. Children of different communities will be provided with opportunities to meet each other and interact positively through extra-curricular activities.*
>
> *Concepts on education for conflict resolution, peace and multi-cultural education will be introduced through integrated themes. Extra-curricular activities and holiday camps will provide opportunities for children from different ethnic groups to interact and even engage in national service work.*

Table 6.13

Teacher Perceptions of Education for National Integration

Category of teachers by school type	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		No response		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
National schools	08	42	09	47	-	-	02	10	19
Urban schools	02	04	39	87	-	-	04	09	45
Rural schools	06	24	18	72	-	-	01	04	25
Plantation schools	06	18	24	73	-	-	03	09	33
Total	22	18	90	74	-	-	10	08	122

Teachers agreed with the proposal. They were of the view that its successful implementation would help to inculcate ethnic harmony, tolerance and mutual respect.

TEACHER – PUPIL RELATIONSHIPS

> *The role of the teacher has to be redefined to emphasise the duties of mentor, guide and friend. During the early years of schooling a caring attitude and the ability to instil a sense of security in the child will be emphasised. As the child grows up, a greater degree of freedom will be given to develop responsibility. At collegiate level, the students will be responsible for carrying out many activities in the school. Thus they will learn to enjoy freedom with responsibility.*
>
> *Counselling*
>
> *Counselling and career guidance are essential components of school services. Every teacher will undergo a basic course in counselling as a part of teacher education. They will be able to help children with problems and also advise the parents as to how they should help their children.*
>
> *In the junior school, counselling will be carried out by the class teacher who will have spent sufficient time in the classroom to know each and every child closely to understand his/her problems. A file containing the records required for counselling will be maintained for every child.*

Table 6.14

Perceptions of Teacher-Pupil Relationships and Counselling Services

Category of teachers by school type	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		No response		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
National schools	12	63	07	37	-	-	-	-	19
Urban schools	20	44	23	51	-	-	02	04	45
Rural schools	05	20	18	72	-	-	02	08	25
Plantation schools	12	36	18	54	-	-	03	09	33
Total	49	40	66	54	-	-	07	06	122

All teachers generally agreed with the proposal. They mentioned that counselling was an essential service and highlighted the need to provide adequate training to the teachers.

TEACHER EDUCATION

Training of all In-Service Teachers by the Year 2000

All teachers in service will be professionally trained by the Year 2000. A plan will be implemented to train the backlog of untrained teachers in service within the next four years. The teachers colleges, the NIE, and the universities will undertake this task through their full-time and distance training programmes.

Pre-service Training of Teachers

Under the Teacher Service Minute in future only qualified persons will be recruited to the teaching service. Graduates who may be recruited without a professional training will undergo a post-graduate diploma course in education.

The present number of colleges of education will be increased in order to produce a sufficient number of trained teachers with pre-service training to meet the needs of the school system.

University education faculties/departments will introduce a Bachelor of Education Course.

The curricula in teacher-education institutes, in addition to knowledge and practice of pedagogy and specialised subject areas, will include multi-cultural education, value education, guidance and counselling and community relations.

Continuing Education for Teachers

Opportunities will be provided for continuing teacher education to meet the changing needs of the school system and for the professional enhancement of the teacher. Teacher centres will be established throughout the country for this purpose. They will also function as support centres for teachers where books, periodicals, audio and

video cassettes and tapes will be available.

The NIE and the universities will conduct Bachelor of Education courses and Post-graduate courses for teachers in service to obtain higher educational qualifications.

National Authority on Teacher Education

A National Authority on Teacher Education (NATE) will be established for overall policy development, planning, co-ordination and monitoring and accreditation of programmes of the integrated National Teacher Education system.

Teacher Educators Service

A Teacher Educators Service will be established to develop a cadre of competent professionals to operate the Institutes of Teacher Education.

Professional Council for Teachers

There is a need for a Teacher Professional Council to function as a regulating body for the teaching profession and to develop a code of ethics. NATE will initiate action in this regard in active co-operation with the teachers' organisations.

Table 6.15

Teacher Perceptions of Proposals on Teacher Education

Category of teachers by school type	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		No response		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
National schools	06	32	10	52	-	-	03	16	19
Urban schools	12	27	27	60	-	-	06	13	45
Rural schools	12	48	13	52	-	-	-	-	25
Plantation schools	23	70	10	30	-	-	-	-	33
Total	53	43	60	49	-	-	09	07	122

Teachers agreed with the proposals on teacher education. They particularly welcomed the proposal on the establishment of a professional council for teachers.

> It is good to have a professional council for teachers. At present, all decisions related to teachers are made by people who have no relationship with the profession. This is one reason for the stagnation of the profession.

MANAGEMENT OF EDUCATION AND PROVISION OF RESOURCES

Role of the School Development Society (SDS)

The school will have the freedom and authority to plan its programmes within the accepted policy framework and be held accountable for the successful implementation of these plans. The school as an organic entity, which has to respond to demands and pressures of the community needs this degree of freedom. The management council of the School Development Society will be entrusted with the task of drawing up a development plan and an annual implementation plan for each school.

Role of the Principal

The principal as head of the school will be held responsible for the management of the school subject to the general directives laid down by the Ministry of Education. He/she will be assisted by a cadre of senior teachers holding the positions of the deputy principal, assistant principals and heads of departments depending on the size and the complexity of courses offered in the school.

The recruitment and the training of principals will be streamlined to enable them to perform their role effectively.

School-based Supervision

Every school will have its internal scheme of 'school-based' supervision. The principal, the deputy principals and heads of departments will carry out a regular, routine system of supervision in the school. Teachers will also be encouraged to self-evaluate to improve their performances.

Teachers and supervisors will meet weekly in subject groups to prepare their lesson plans for the following week. This will be a collegial exercise.

Supervision by Regional Authority

Regular supervision of schools will be carried out by divisional, zonal, and provincial authorities to assess the performance of schools as well as to assist and guide the teachers.

The field administration will be strengthened to carry out school supervision work effectively.

Table 6.16

**Teacher Perceptions of Proposals for the
Management of Education and Provision of Resources**

Category of teachers by school type	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		No response		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
National schools	01	05	06	32	02	10	10	53	19
Urban schools	-	-	28	62	-	-	17	38	45
Rural schools	-	-	20	80	-	-	05	20	25
Plantation schools	05	15	12	36	-	-	16	48	33
Total	06	05	66	54	02	02	48	39	122

Nearly 40 per cent of the teachers did not comment. Few made specific comments on selected aspects.

Role of the SDSs

Teachers felt that SDSs had been in operation for quite sometime. They agreed that SDSs should be modified according to present day needs.

> Participation is very low in SDS meetings. Parents and others have to be made aware of the new developments in the management of schools.

School-based Supervision

Teachers agreed to the proposal in principle, but highlighted a few constraints such as lack of time, lack of training, etc. A teacher who had been a grade co-ordinator explained the problem of lack of time as follows.

> Supervision by the principal and the management committee is good. Time must be allocated in the timetable for teachers who supervise other teachers. Even now we have a system of school-based supervision. But lack of time is a problem. To implement everything that is mentioned in the proposal we need specific time periods in the timetable.

Another teacher thought that school-based supervision should be impartial. It should provide guidance to the teacher.

> This is good. But it should be impartial and fair. It should not be an error-hunting exercise. It has to be a friendly encounter. The supervisor should be in the classroom during the entire period. Any weakness in the teaching-learning process should be discussed directly with the teacher.

Supervision by Regional Authorities

Teachers mentioned that the focus of supervision by regional authorities is mainly on the teacher. The total teaching/learning situation is not properly examined. The supervisors should not only point out errors and omissions but also guide the school to overcome weaknesses.

> Officers generally supervise the teachers. They do not have any idea about the students. They should not look for errors all the time. They must give us guidance to overcome weaknesses.

COMPUTATION OF TEACHER-CADRE, TEACHER TRANSFERS AND HANDLING OF GRIEVANCES

Computation of teacher-cadre

A team of competent persons will revise the rules relating to the computation of the cadre of teachers in schools. In future the cadre requirements of each school will be determined in terms of these rules. Schools will not be permitted to keep excess staff and the salary grant to the schools will be determined on the basis of the eligible cadre.

Teacher transfers

The present scheme of transferring teachers has caused many problems and affected the efficient functioning of schools. In order to minimise the need for transfers, a scheme will be devised to have a more stable school-based staff.

Handling of grievances of teachers

A scheme to attend to grievances of teachers expeditiously at departmental level offices will be designed to avoid delays in attending to establishment matters of teachers.

Teachers were of the opinion that there should be at least one additional teacher at the primary level.

> When a teacher is on leave, there should be a teacher to take over that class, especially when teachers go on maternity leave. At other times, this extra teacher can help in the administration and in the conduct of remedial classes.

Teachers were also of the view that a systematic transfer system was necessary. One said,

> Now, we can't get a transfer. Teacher transfers are made on personal influence.

TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF POLICY REFORMS IN DIFFERENT CATEGORIES OF SCHOOLS

A total of 17 reform proposals relating to primary education was presented to the teachers. The following response patterns could be identified through the analysis of data.

(a)   The following proposals received unanimous support from teachers irrespective of school category.

i.   Enactment of regulations on compulsory education for 5 to 14 year olds.
ii.   Upgrading disadvantaged schools.
iii.   Provision of textbooks and supplementary readers.
iv.   Strengthening the teaching of a first language.
v.   Teaching of English from Grade 1.
vi.   Special education.
vii.   Education for national integration, teaching Tamil to Sinhala students and Sinhala to Tamil students.
viii.   Improving teacher-pupil relations and introducing a counselling service.
ix.   Improving teacher education.

(b)   Restructuring of school system was not acceptable to a considerable number of teachers from national schools and urban schools as 22 per cent and 35 per cent respectively disagreed. However, none of the teachers in rural schools disagreed with the proposal. Nine per cent of teachers in plantation schools disagreed.

(c)   Less than 75 per cent of teachers in national and urban schools agreed with the proposal to reduce school size while 4 to 11 per cent respectively disagreed. None of the teachers in rural and plantation schools disagreed and 76 and 81 per cent respectively agreed. Others did not respond.

(d)   Sixty to 80 per cent of teachers in categories of national, urban and rural schools disagreed with the proposal to introduce a lottery system for admission to Grade 1. Only 27 per cent of the plantation school teachers disagreed.

(e)   Curriculum revision was welcomed by almost all teachers in national, rural and plantation schools. A few teachers in urban schools disagreed with the proposal.

(f)   Teachers from urban schools were cautious about improving rapport with parents. In the other categories, teachers fully endorsed the proposal.

(g)   CBA was more acceptable to rural and plantation school teachers. Only 57 to 68 per cent of teachers in national and urban schools approved the proposal. Those who disagreed were worried about the acceptability of teachers' assessment marks.

(h)   Teachers from national schools unanimously agreed to the revision of the Grade 5 scholarship examination. Only 44 per cent of urban teachers approved the proposal. Teachers in rural and plantation schools were more supportive of the proposal.

(i)   The teachers did not follow policies on Management of Education and provision of resources very keenly. The greatest number of non-responses occurred in relation to the policies in the management of the education system. Teachers in urban and rural categories supported the proposals more than the others.

According to the above summary it is obvious that most of the policy proposals are agreeable to the majority of teachers. However, it was revealed that some proposals such as the lottery method, restructuring of schools and revision of Grade 5 scholarship examination, have to be further discussed and examined.

TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF PROFESSIONAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

In the previous section we discussed the perceptions of teachers on policy reforms. In this section we will discuss the perceptions of teachers of the professional and administrative support they require in order to implement the reforms. Teachers' perceptions on professional and administrative support were expressed in both phases of the data collection. We will present the evidence gathered in the two phases separately as the content of data collection and the nature of respondents in the two phases differ.

In the first phase the teachers were reacting to separate reform proposals presented to them. While indicating their perceptions, some teachers have specifically stated the type of additional support they would require to implement the new policies. The following is a summary of perceptions gathered in the first phase.

1.   Train all teachers on proposed teaching methodologies for lower and upper primary grades.

2.   Train Sinhala-medium teachers to teach the Tamil language and Tamil-medium teachers to teach the Sinhala language.

3.   Provide necessary training and resource material for teachers to use English in activity classes.

4.   Provide training on guidance and counselling of pupils.

5.   Make parents aware of all the changes that are to be implemented, through the mass media.

6.   Systematise the teacher transfer system.

7.   Provide at least one extra teacher to take over the classes of absent teachers.

All the teachers who participated in the second phase of the data collection were Grade 1 teachers. They were from the same district, representing schools with diverse organisational characteristics. They had received a complete briefing on the primary education reforms implemented in their district in 1998. Researchers met them afterwards and collected their views, in writing according to a free response format. A few selected teachers were also interviewed. Perceptions of these teachers could be categorised as follows:

- Physical environment of the classroom and the school
- Teaching materials, furniture and equipment
- Teachers' guides and syllabi
- Class size
- Guidance, supervision and follow-up
- In-service training
- Support from parents
- Support from the sectional heads
- Support from the principal
- Support from the education office

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT OF THE CLASSROOM AND THE SCHOOL

The responses in respect of the requirements under this category are as follows:

Separate and enclosed classrooms	25
Adequate space in the classroom	20
Sufficient play area within the classroom and outdoors	16
Facilities for storing materials and equipment for aesthetic and sports activities	15
Orderly and clean school premises	08
Water and sanitary facilities	06

Reforms in the primary school curriculum clearly emphasise the need to have an orderly and clean school environment and activity-based learning. Teachers grasped the idea clearly and seemed to be visualising how this could be implemented in their own situation. Separate classrooms or the partitioning of the school halls to provide an enclosed area for each classroom has been a prime concern of the teachers. A typical explanation was,

> The unpartitioned school hall is shared by four to five classes. There is no way of arranging the children's blackboard, no place to sit with the children for storytelling or singing. We need an enclosed classroom to do these activities.

Analysis of teacher responses revealed that the nature of requirements depends on the characteristics of different schools. The following excerpts from the interviews give some indication of the diversity of requirements of different schools.

Teachers in large schools were worried about the lack of space, due to overcrowding. A teacher from an overcrowded rural primary school commented,

> A large number of students seek admission to our school, but we cannot accommodate all of them. Our classes are overcrowded. None of the parallel Year 1 classes has separate rooms. We don't have free space for storytelling or group singing.

Some schools, especially the Type 2 and Type 3 schools, do not have children's playgrounds. Teachers from such schools highlighted the need to have a separate play area for primary students.

A few teachers from Type 1AB and 1C schools pointed out that water facilities are a must for each and every school with a primary section since they have to deal with very small children. Teachers from small schools wanted additional support from the authorities to maintain an orderly school environment. Small schools probably do not receive adequate attention from the authorities. A teacher from one such school said,

> Our school has only one hall. All of its doors are broken. The school is not protected by a wall or a fence. We also did not receive any equipment for primary students.

Another teacher from a Type 2 school added,

> Classrooms are not separated. The school hall is not protected even by a wire mesh and during the rainy season water beats into the classroom.

Irrespective of the type of school, the teachers pointed out the necessity to have at least one steel cupboard per classroom to store equipment and material. Teachers said that a steel cupboard is necessary to protect the materials from rats and insects.

TEACHING MATERIALS, FURNITURE AND EQUIPMENT

The expectations of teachers regarding materials, furniture and equipment requirements are as follows.

Require materials for activities	49
Provide adequate classroom furniture	17
Provide equipment for aesthetic and sports activities	12
Provide radio cassette-recorders	08
Provide supplementary readers, storybooks and newspapers	07
Provide equipment and facilities for preparation of mid-day meals	07

Teachers from all types of schools wanted additional material for activities. Typical responses were as follows.

> Provide pastel, clay, bristol board and other stationery.

> Provide cassette players, a TV and other equipment. These are required for singing, story telling and other activities.

Teachers from schools with parallel classes in the same grade asked for additional sets of equipment.

> Ours is a school with parallel classes in the same grade, and there is a need for additional sets of equipment.

> Ours is a school with parallel classes. We need one set of equipment per two classes at least.

Teachers also wanted additional resource material for activities such as storytelling and singing, etc.

> Provide story books, songs, pictures, children's newspapers and toys and sports items.

Teachers also highlighted disparities in the distribution of resources and requested that these be distributed timely and equitably. The teachers were of the view that urban schools receive more facilities than rural schools.

Teachers from some of the Type 3, 2 and 1C schools highlighted the need to provide facilities for pupils who come from poor families. The needs of such pupils are illustrated in the following excerpts from the interviews.

> Some pupils do not bring a pen or a pencil to school. They fail to buy even a new exercise book. It is very difficult to work with them. Parents just can't afford the cost of materials needed. These materials should be provided at a subsidised price.

> Pupils come to the school without having breakfast or even without dinner the previous night. We try to provide some food to such children at our own expense but it is not a solution. It is good if schools get some money for student welfare.

CLASS SIZE

Teachers from 23 schools, which have large classes, requested a reduction of the class size. The schools include both rural and urban schools belonging to all four categories.

The class size is associated with curtailment of classroom space and the inability to organise activities for pupils.

A teacher from an urban 1C school said,

> It is stated in the teachers' guide that we should provide activities for children to discover on their own. This is impossible to do with 50 children. Children do not have enough space even to move about.

Another teacher from a rural Type 2 school lamented the size of her class and lack of adequate teachers.

> Class size should be reduced. I have 58 children in my class (Grade 1). The principal says he can't divide the class. Circulars do not allow him to do so. Even if he divides the class, there is no teacher to take over the additional class.

Recent circulars issued on teacher cadre do not specify a ceiling for class size in the primary section. It is necessary to specify this aspect in a fresh circular. Teachers requested the limiting of the size of a class to between 30 to 35 pupils.

While the teachers from popular schools complained about the presence of large numbers, teachers from small schools lamented the lack of pupils and its consequences. The following quotations enlightened us about their perceptions.

> We have only sixteen pupils. Only six pupils in Year 1. We need more pupils and a principal for our school.

Another teacher said,

> In my class I have only two pupils. I feel my efforts and energy are wasted.

Some teachers in these schools also complained about the fact that they have to use multi-grade teaching. One such teacher wanted an alternative for multi-grade teaching.

> Ours is a small school. I have to teach both Grade 1 and Grade 2 at the same time. Provide an alternative for multi-grade teaching.

Another teacher thus indicated her displeasure about multi-grade teaching.

> Ours is a very small school. Though we have five grades we have only three teachers, including the principal and the English language teacher. Therefore, we have to teach two grades at the same time.

These teachers need to be given additional training on the concept and strategies of multi-grade teaching.

TEACHER GUIDES AND SYLLABI

The responses regarding teacher guides could be categorised as follows.

Provide detailed and simplified teacher guides on time	17
Provide a copy of the syllabus and teacher guide for each and every teacher	15
Indicate in the syllabus and in the teacher guide the amount of work to be covered in each school term	15

Teachers also mentioned that teachers' guides should be simple, clear and free of errors. Some teachers also felt that they should include more songs, poems and play activities, and adequate details. The need to provide syllabi and the teachers' guides before the beginning of the school year was highlighted by many teachers.

More experienced teachers in the sample thought that the teachers' guides they use are too verbose and complicated. They were of the view that there was too much content and hence they were unable to complete it during the given year. Some of them said that it is better if the syllabus is broken up in terms of periods in order to ascertain the full implementation of activities.

GUIDANCE, SUPERVISION AND FOLLOW-UP

Teachers indicated that they need further guidance, supervision and follow-up. Specific requirements of the teachers could be categorised as follows.

Proper guidance from master teachers who are more competent	36
Supervision must be better organised	12
Work of good teachers must be appreciated and respected	08
Provide feedback on observations made during supervision	07

Some teachers commented that supervision is an opportunity to receive feedback.

> Frequent supervision and evaluation are necessary. Teachers will be encouraged to implement reforms if supervisors visit schools frequently. We can discuss our problems with them and receive advice if they come to school regularly.

Some other teachers were critical about the master teachers and other supervisors. A teacher from a Type 1 AB school said,

> When you give advice, please be consistent. We receive contradictory advice on the same thing from different supervisors. This happens especially in receiving advice on language teaching.

A teacher from a Type 3 school was also critical about the way the supervisors make observations about teaching and learning. He said,

Master teachers and officers should not examine only the written records such as lesson notes and assessment records. They should examine whether progress has been made in the students' achievement.

Another teacher suggested that,

They must come frequently, stay longer in the classroom, talk to the children, go through the notebooks and have some understanding about different students. Observing teaching for 45 minutes is not enough. They should observe two or three lessons before they comment on teaching.

Teachers who had positive attitudes towards the master teachers requested the following specific support from them.

i.   Evaluate and appreciate the good work of teachers.
ii.   Visit the schools regularly, at least once a month, and help teachers to solve problems in teaching and learning.
iii.   Give guidance in lesson planning and writing daily, weekly and term notes.
iv.   Provide opportunities for teachers to meet, discuss and find solutions to the problems they encounter.
v.   Conduct demonstration lessons.
vi.   Provide opportunities to visit the classrooms of other teachers.

Teachers expect master teachers to be more knowledgeable, collegial and professional.

IN-SERVICE TRAINING (INSET)

The requirements of in-service training are given below.

Training sessions must be held more frequently	25
Training sessions must be properly planned to suit the needs of participants	12
Opportunities must be provided to satisfy the requirements of the Sri Lanka Teachers' Service	10
Provision must be made for group discussions and sharing experiences	09

Teachers also mentioned that they need training to teach pupils with special needs, using activities in classroom teaching and English language.

Teachers emphasised the need to conduct INSET more frequently to cater for the diverse needs of participants and to provide opportunities for all teachers to participate. They also mentioned that there should be a follow-up procedure to see whether teachers practice what is learnt during INSET while teaching. They were also of the view that vitality and inspiration should characterise the INSET sessions.

SUPPORT FROM PARENTS

Teachers highlighted the following requirements.

Conduct awareness programmes for parents about the
changes in the curriculum   54
Ensure that parents, politicians, officials and
the public do not interfere with the work of the teachers   17

Irrespective of the type of school that they serve, teachers identified the need to educate parents through mass media and also through meetings held at school level.

Teachers wanted parents to be aware of the play and activity methods used in the classroom. They did not want parents to demand them to teach the letters in the alphabet as soon as the children enter Grade 1. They were hopeful that parents would understand if they are made aware of the new curriculum and the methodologies.

Teachers also requested that politicians, officials and the public should not tarnish the dignity of teachers when they talk about education through the mass media.

SUPPORT FROM SECTIONAL HEADS

Teachers had mixed reactions about the support they receive from the sectional heads.

A teacher from an urban Type 1 C school pointed out that although there is a sectional head in her school, they do not receive any support since the sectional head is a full time teacher.

Our primary sectional head is only a name. She is in charge of a class with the responsibility of teaching throughout the day. She has no time to talk to us, let alone to see what we are doing.

Teachers from another large primary school were dissatisfied about the service of the sectional head. They remarked,

Sectional heads should not intervene frequently to advise teachers.

We don't need a sectional head.

Sectional heads should be compassionate towards the teachers.

Teachers from a Type 1AB school suggested that they need sectional heads with enthusiasm and leadership qualities. The implications of these teachers' reactions are that they are not satisfied with the current procedures for appointing sectional heads or with the services provided by them.

SUPPORT FROM THE PRINCIPALS

About half the teachers in the sample mentioned that they need support from an able and understanding principal. The specific support that they expect from the principal is as follows.

i.   Arrange and maintain an orderly environment in and out of the classroom.
ii.   Allow time to prepare teaching aids.
iii.   Relieve primary teachers from teaching in other classes.
iv.   Be aware of the curriculum and the methodologies adopted in the primary grades.
v.   Make parents aware of the reforms.
vi.   Do not admit pupils to classes after the first month of the year.

The final suggestion was made mostly by teachers from Type 1AB schools.

SUPPORT FROM THE EDUCATION OFFICE

Teachers expected a variety of support from the education office.

i.   Increments and other establishment matters must be processed regularly and unnecessary leave by teachers must be avoided. Delays in these matters lead to frustration of teachers.
ii.   Guidance from the zonal education office is necessary. However, teachers expect the officers to be constructive in pointing out weaknesses.
iii.   Implementation must be monitored.
iv.   Adequate teachers must be provided.
v.   Common assessment forms to all schools must be provided.
vi.   At least one officer must participate in the meetings organised to educate parents.

Teachers from Type 3 schools made the following remarks to indicate their specific requirements.

We get marginal support from the office.

Implement a health and nutrition programme.

Officers should participate in the functions arranged to display pupil competencies. Their participation will encourage teachers and the pupils. The occasions could also be used to raise parental awareness.

The necessary material is obtained by us with great difficulty. We get very little co-operation from the parents because of their poverty. We need additional support from the office.

A teacher, apparently from a school affected by teacher and student absenteeism and other problems, requested support from all those who are responsible.

> Lack of teachers, student absenteeism, teacher absenteeism and poor parental support make it difficult for us to perform better. We need additional support from parents and also from provincial and school management.

The teacher responses clearly indicate that they expect the education office to be more responsive to the unique needs of each school while providing necessary and adequate support to all schools that come under their purview.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSIONS

The researchers would like to highlight two methodological limitations of this study before giving the conclusions and recommendations.

As the reform proposals are comprehensive and cover almost every aspect of the education system, the data collection process took a long time. Towards the end of the data collection exercise, teachers showed signs of weariness and were not eager to respond. As a result, reactions to the proposals presented towards the end of data collection were very limited. There is a possibility that some new concepts such as school-based management may not have been clearly understood by the teachers. Therefore, the researchers believe that the reactions to the proposals on teacher education and management of education should be further investigated.

At the time of data collection, the whole set of reform proposals was not communicated to the teachers and the general public through mass media or any other means. Most of the teachers who participated in the data collection process had their first briefing only at the data collection itself. Therefore the perceptions of teachers presented in this chapter could be considered as first reactions. The perceptions could change over time as they become more aware of the reforms and during implementation.

Conclusions on Specific Support required by the Teachers

- Teachers showed enthusiasm about the reforms and wanted to change the physical environment of the school and the classrooms.

- They were also receptive to the idea that students need individual attention and guidance. The need for the reduction of class size is an indication of this fact.

- Teachers in small schools felt that their schools do not attract adequate attention from the authorities and indicated clearly that they require additional support to do better.

- The concept of multi-grade teaching is not clearly understood by the teachers in small schools. The need to provide special training on multi-grade teaching to all the teachers who are appointed to small schools is a priority.

- Teachers expect teachers' guides to be clear, simple and detailed. They expect not only to be told what to teach, but also how and when it should be taught. However, to improve the professional quality of a teacher it would be necessary to give the teacher enough freedom to take the initiative and make independent decisions on teaching.

- It was evident that some teachers were over dependent on the teaching material provided by the government. They wanted the education office to provide them with songs, poems and children's stories.

- The need to provide quality material for activities was also highlighted by the teachers. They did not clearly indicate who should provide these materials to the school. School principals and the education offices may have to pay attention to this need.

- Teachers wanted the support of a friendly guide who would provide necessary reinforcement for their good work. He/she must advise them to solve problems they encounter in the classroom. The overall implication of teacher comments was the need to improve supervision by master teachers, education officers, sectional heads and principals.

- Teachers indicated that they want to come together to discuss educational problems and to share experiences with each other on a regular basis. This could be considered a positive sign and the education office has to develop mechanisms to facilitate such meetings.

- Teachers who participated in Phase 1 of the data collection indicated that they want comprehensive training on new methodologies and student assessment procedures. Both groups of teachers indicated that they need training on special education, guidance and counselling and teaching English/Sinhala and Tamil languages.

- Teachers want parents to be aware of the new curriculum and the methodologies. They expect that if parents are aware of the changes they would not make unnecessary demands on teachers.

- Teachers pointed out that they do not receive adequate support from the sectional heads for various reasons. They indicated that they would like to have enthusiastic leaders as their sectional heads.

- Teachers expect the principals to be aware of the new developments and to provide administrative support by allowing them time to prepare teaching aids and helping them to maintain an orderly environment in the school and in the classroom. They also expect the principals to play a liaison role with parents.

- Teachers expect both administrative and professional support from the education office. Equitable resource allocation, additional support for small schools, frequent visits and participation in school functions, guidance for implementation, monitoring implementation and the provision of an efficient service to the teachers are the main functions expected from the office.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It was revealed in the study that the teachers generally have favourable attitudes towards the reforms in primary education. A few proposals such as admission of pupils to Grade 1 based by lottery, the Grade 5 scholarship examination and restructuring of schools need to be discussed further.

Teachers require material as well as professional support to implement reforms. An implementation unit established at the provincial level could provide the required support. The provincial implementation unit, which would also liaise with the officers and master teachers at the zonal level, could:

a.   Assess physical resource needs of each school and prepare a three year investment plan to provide the necessary facilities.

b.   Find funds necessary, through the government and various other sources, to implement the above plan.

c.   Ensure an equitable supply of material and stationery to all schools in the province.

d.   Identify the specific training demands of each teacher and liaise with various agencies responsible for in-service training of teachers to provide demand-based training programmes.

e.   Implement a regular supervision system through master teachers and specialist education officers. Conduct regular meetings for the supervisory officers to share their experiences and to identify measures to overcome problems they encounter in their work.

f.   Monitor implementation of reforms at the classroom level and provide necessary feed back to the teachers and principals.

g.   Monitor student achievement and attendance in schools to identify strengths and weaknesses in those aspects. Implement remedial programmes where necessary.

h.   Devise a reward system to motivate teachers and principals who excel in their work.

i.   Maintain a complete database on primary education to include data on students, teachers, principals, sectional heads, master teachers, specialist education officers, etc. and on the important processes of student assessment, supervision, INSET and attendance of teachers and students.

At national level the following aspects are to be considered.

a.   Prepare a master plan to provide physical resources to schools, based on plans prepared at the provincial level and develop links with donor agencies and other sources to find the necessary funds for implementation.

b.   Conduct studies to identify strengths and weaknesses in the curriculum, teachers' guides and textbooks in order to improve their quality.

c.   Devise and implement a programme to improve the professional quality of master teachers, principals and sectional heads.

d.   Implement parental education programmes on primary education using mass media.

e.   Implement distance education programmes to train primary teachers in teaching English, Sinhala and Tamil languages.

POSTSCRIPT

The study was conducted in July 1997. The proposals presented to teachers were based on the MEHE document, "National Education Policy - A Framework for Action on General Education (Draft Proposals)" of 1996.

Late in 1997 the National Education Commission (NEC) published a document, 'Reforms in General Education'. This document gave comprehensive proposals on pre-school education. These proposals cover the suggestions made by teachers in this study. The new document makes no reference to the lottery method, which was rejected by the majority of teachers.

Meanwhile the regulations on compulsory education cited as the "Compulsory Attendance of Children" were published as an Education Ordinance in the Gazette of Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka - Extraordinary" on 25 November 1997. This was a reform proposal that was unanimously supported by the teachers.

The MEHE conducted an all island survey on non-school going children during 1997-98. It found 61,598 non-school going children between 5 - 14 years. Steps are now being taken to bring them either to schools or literacy centres or, in some cases, to vocational centres.

The Grade 1 curriculum was introduced to the schools in the Gampaha District on schedule. Preparatory work to introduce the Grade 1 curriculum islandwide and the Grade 2 curriculum to Gampaha district is proceeding. Television and radio programmes to educate the teachers and the public on reforms are regularly held. Workshops for teachers on themes such as Classroom-Based Assessment and for school managers on themes such as School-Based Management are being held.

There is a strong political commitment to get the educational reform under way. Both the government and other political parties have shown a keen interest in the reforms. An implementation unit was established at the MEHE to facilitate the process. Several networks have emerged between the NEC, MEHE and NIE for the same purpose.

CHAPTER 7

PRIMARY TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMMES: THE PRESENT AND THE FUTURE

Nihal Herath

INTRODUCTION

Teacher education in Sri Lanka caters to a wide range of teachers with varying professional needs. The variation in professional needs among serving teachers is due mainly to schemes of recruitment of teachers devised to solve teaching problems in schools during different periods of time. Untrained teachers of varying professional needs are teaching in the system. This affects the overall quality of teaching and generates problems for systematic teacher training. During the period 1990 to 1994 approximately 50,000 untrained teachers, with a wide range of educational qualifications and requiring educational and professional upgrading, were recruited.

TEACHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING

TEACHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAMMES

Teacher education and training in Sri Lanka can be classified into five main programmes:

- initial training leading to a Post-graduate Diploma in Education (full time and distance), offered to graduate teachers who are in the service

- initial training leading to a Trained Teacher's Certificate (full time residential and distance), offered to non-graduates who are in the service

- initial training leading to a National Diploma in Teaching (full time residential), offered to non-graduates who are not yet in the education service

- professional development of trained teachers (non-graduates) leading to the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) degree (part-time, face-to-face and distance), offered to trained teachers (non-graduates)

- teacher education programmes conducted as refresher courses for teachers who are in service. These programmes are popularly known as in-service training (INSET) sessions conducted by In-service Advisers (ISAs) of the provincial departments of education, in collaboration with the National Institute of Education (NIE). These courses are conducted locally for periods of one to five days.

TEACHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

The main agencies offering teacher education programmes are of four types:

- Colleges of education offer a three year pre-service teacher education programme leading to the National Diploma in Teaching.

- Teachers' colleges offer a two year in-service initial teacher education programme for untrained teachers presently in service as uncertificated teachers.

- The National Institute of Education conducts five types of teacher education programme:

  - Distance mode for untrained non-graduate teachers presently in service
  - Bachelor of Education degrees for trained teachers
  - Post-graduate Diploma in Education for graduate teachers
  - Post-graduate Degrees in Education
  - Short term in-service training of teachers. These are conducted with the help of provincial departments and zonal offices of education through the ISAs.

- Universities offer three programmes:

  - Post-graduate Diploma in Education
  - Post-graduate Degrees in Education
  - Bachelor of Education degrees.

Only four of the seven universities offer teacher education programmes. They are the Universities of Colombo, Peradeniya, Jaffna and the Open University.

TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMMES FOR THE PRIMARY STAGE

Initial Training for Teachers Already Serving in the System

Most of the teachers involved in teaching at the primary stage are non-graduates. Some have had training at the teacher training colleges or colleges of education. Others are not trained professionally and have only GCE A Level or GCE O Level certificates. Presently, they teach at primary level and can anticipate admission to teacher training colleges for their initial training. A census conducted by the Teacher Education Department of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) in April 1997 revealed that there are 2,250 Sinhala-medium teachers and 2,211 Tamil-medium teachers awaiting training (Table 7.1).

Table 7.1

Untrained Primary and English Teachers in Sri Lankan Schools, 1997

Course	SINHALA-MEDIUM			TAMIL-MEDIUM			Total
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	
Primary	281	302	583	652	839	1,491	2,074
English	212	783	995	119	184	303	1,298
Others	209	463	672	223	194	417	1,089
Total	702	1,548	2,250	994	1,217	2,211	4,461

There are 2,074 untrained primary teachers in the system. The 1,298 untrained English teachers in the Sinhala-medium and Tamil-medium schools teach at both primary and secondary levels. All await admission to teacher training colleges in the Sinhala-medium. Altogether, 583 primary teachers out of a total of 2,250 Sinhala-medium and 1,491 primary teachers out of a total of 2,211 Tamil-medium teachers are in the system as untrained teachers. Out of a total of 4,461 primary teachers, 2,074 are untrained:- i.e. about 47 per cent. The percentage of Sinhala untrained primary teachers is about 27, and the percentage of Tamil untrained primary teachers is higher at 65.

Teacher training colleges conduct primary level training courses. The trainee enrolment of those training colleges in 1996 (2nd Year students) and 1997 (1st Year students) are presented in Table 7.2.

Table 7.2

Trainees in Teacher Training Colleges for the Primary Course
(1996 and 1997)

Training College	Medium	No. of Students		Total
		1st Year	2nd Year	
Gampola	Sinhala	66	60	126
Matara	Sinhala	63	43	106
Unawatuna	Sinhala	28	47	75
Balapitiya	Sinhala	31	40	71
Anuradhapura	Sinhala	45	38	83
Bolawalana	Sinhala	65	89	154
Addalachenai	Tamil	19	51	70
Aluthgama	Tamil	08	17	25
Batticaloa	Tamil	16	37	53
Yathanside	Tamil	22	27	49
Kopay	Tamil	13	-	13
Total		377	449	826

In 1997, 377 untrained teachers were admitted to teacher training colleges. Of these, 78 were from the Tamil-medium schools and 299 from the Sinhala-medium schools. The census conducted by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education provides valuable information for the organisation of the courses for 1998 in the teacher training colleges. Courses that are repeated in different teacher training colleges which do not have an adequate number of trainees each may be amalgamated, providing more facilities to train teachers especially in English and in teaching at primary level. Thus, more classes with acceptable numbers for each class may be held to train all the untrained teachers in the system during a shorter period of time.

The ministry plans to increase the intake of Sinhala-medium primary teachers in 1998 from 299 to 350, and the Tamil-medium from 78 to 300. The Sinhala block of untrained teachers could be admitted in 1998 and 1999 and the Tamil-medium block in 1998, 1999 and 2000. All the training should be completed by 2001.

Pre-service Training for Prospective Primary Teachers

Colleges of education conduct primary pre-service teacher education programmes in Sinhala and Tamil media. They conduct a three-year programme leading to a diploma in teacher education. Of the three years, two are spent at the college and the last year is in a school as an intern. Table 7.3 presents the number of students admitted to each of the colleges in 1995 and 1996.

Table 7.3

Primary Teacher Trainees in Colleges of Education (1995 and 1996)

College of Education	Sinhala-Medium			Tamil-Medium			Total (A+B)
	1st Year	2nd Year	Total (A)	1st Year	2nd Year	Total (B)	
Mahaweli	232	249	481	-	-	0	481
Hapitigama	244	231	475	-	-	0	475
Nilwala	77	71	148	-	-	0	148
Uva	28	42	70	-	-	0	70
Sri Pada	21	24	45	175	124	299	344
Vavuniya	11	46	57	28	35	63	120
Batticaloa	-	-	0	39	28	67	67
Addalaichenai	-	-	0	96	56	152	152
Total	613	663	1276	338	243	581	1857

The total annual intake for colleges of education for 1995 and 1996 for all courses including the primary course was 1,871 and 1,831 respectively. The total number of trainees admitted for the primary course in those years was 965 and 892 respectively. About 50 per cent of the trainees in the colleges of education are trained for the primary stage.

Degree Courses for Primary Teachers in the System

The NIE conducts a three-year Bachelor of Education programme for trained teachers in the following fields:

- Primary Education
- English Education
- Special Education
- Aesthetic Education
- Non-Formal Education
- Agriculture Education
- Mathematics Education
- Physical Education and Sports
- Technical Skills Education
- Home Economics Education
- Tamil Language Education

Most of the applicants for this B.Ed. programme seek registration for the primary education course (Table 7.4). The course is part-time and is conducted by the distance mode, supplemented by frequent face-to-face sessions.

Table 7.4

Teachers Registered for the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) Programme at NIE

Year	1996 1st Year	1994 2nd Year	1993 3rd Year	1991 No. Registered	No. Successful (1991 Batch)
Primary	**1,687**	928	**554**	*120*	**54**
Other	752	**364**	160	226	71
Total	2,439	1,292	814	346	125

Out of 4,791 registered to date for the B.Ed. Programme at the NIE, 3,282 or 72 per cent of the total are registered for the primary education course.

Distance Mode Initial Training Programmes

During the period 1984 to 1994 a total of 68,345 teachers were registered for several courses at the NIE for training by distance mode. Most, about 60 per cent, registered for the primary stage course. By 1997, a total of 44,621 teachers had been successful. A further 15,250 sat the examination in March 1997. About 3,000 sat the examination in April 1998. These students were registered during the period 1984 to 1994. No students were enrolled from 1995 to 1997.

In-service Training (INSET) Programmes

Other than the structured courses referred to above, the normal INSET sessions are also conducted for the primary level teachers. These INSET courses are planned by the NIE and are conducted with the help of the provincial and zonal education offices by the master teachers (or ISAs) of that particular zone. INSET of teachers is a devolved function and the provincial administration handles this activity with the aid of the NIE. There are about 260 master teachers involved in INSET for the primary stage of teachers in the zonal offices: approximately 200 for the Sinhala-medium and 60 for the Tamil-medium.

These master teachers plan their programmes with the assistance of officers of the NIE, and the sessions relate mostly to the primary school curriculum.

TEACHER EDUCATION AND TEACHER DEPLOYMENT

THE PROPOSALS

The Teacher Education and Teacher Deployment (TETD) project proposals embrace, as the name indicates, teacher deployment as well as teacher education.

The proposals attempt to:

- reverse the trend of teacher recruitment enabling the country to match teacher supply and demand
- establish a national co-ordination body to standardise teacher training approaches while establishing cross-accreditation
- consolidate facilities and integrate programmes to double output and improve regional equity of training institutions
- upgrade teacher educators to allow the introduction of major/minor training to ensure a more effective coverage of subject specialisations
- upgrade teacher management through link institutional arrangements, and
- establish monitoring mechanisms of teacher needs and utilisation for quality inputs.

The project would:

- establish a National Authority on Teacher Education (NATE) to oversee all teacher education activities
- consolidate 32 teacher training institutions into 19 while increasing the teacher educator: trainee ratio from about 1:9 to 1:15
- make the teacher education curriculum more responsive to needs and establish achievement standards at all levels with assistance from overseas link institutions and
- upgrade teacher educators and managers and train them in interactive methodology.

The project proposes that teaching appointments be given to teachers only after professional training and pre-service training. As a result, the main pre-service teacher education institutions will be the National Colleges of Education (NCOEs), of which there will be fourteen. Out of the present eleven colleges of education, nine will become national colleges of education. Five new NCOEs will be set up in Ratnapura, Polonnaruwa, Galle, Kurunegala and Jaffna.

About 100 Teacher Centres (TCs) will be set up along with three Teacher Education Institutes (TEI) for Continuing Education Programmes. The Anuradhapura Teacher Training College will be converted to a Teacher Education Institute along with Uva and Hapitigama Colleges of Education. The remaining fifteen Teacher Training Colleges will be converted to TCs. About 75 TCs will be in schools and the places that have been identified for rehabilitation.

PROPOSED PRE-SERVICE TRAINING AND THE TRAINING OF PRIMARY TEACHERS

Institutional Organisation

With the regrading of the colleges of education to NCOEs, courses will be rationalised. Seventeen courses will be conducted in the fourteen NCOEs in the Tamil and Sinhala media. The Primary Pre-service Programme will be conducted in the nine NCOEs presented in Table 7.5.

Table 7.5

**Annual Accommodation of Primary Trainees at
National Colleges of Education in the Future**

NCOE	Annual Total No. of Trainees		Total
	Sinhala	**Tamil**	
Mahaweli	90	-	90
Sri Pada	60	90	150
Vavuniya	60	120	180
Galle	210	-	210
Polonnaruwa	240	-	240
Ratnapura	210	-	210
Addalaichenai	-	30	30
Batticoloa	-	30	30
Jaffna	-	60	60
Total	870	330	1,200

The annual output of the trained teachers for the primary grades will be 1,200. This number will be in keeping with the annual requirement and provides for attrition of primary teachers.

Curricular Organisation

The primary pre-service teacher education programmes of the colleges of education will be guided by the following curriculum principles:

(i)   Vision statement

The pre-service teacher education programmes in the colleges of education of Sri Lanka will develop teachers who will be responsible and accountable for stimulating student learning. To this end, teacher educators and student teachers alike will analyse, question and seek solutions to complex problems of practice. This challenge will require teacher educators to model effective teaching and ensure that current educational theories are interwoven with, and directly related to, real teaching situations. The programme will reflect such integration through a realisation of linkages among programme components and collaboration among academic staff, administrators, student teachers and schools.

(ii)   Principles

The pre-service teacher education programme in the colleges of education of Sri Lanka will be guided by and evaluated in the light of the following principles:

National Goals

Pre-service teacher education will create an awareness of and a sensitivity to the role of education in the achievement of the national goals.

Focus of Learning

Pre-service teacher education will be learner-centred. This requires:

* active participation of the learner in the learning process
* exchange of ideas amongst learners and teachers
* learners to take responsibility for their own learning
* teacher educators to be mentors
* flexible timetables and learning methods.

Attitudes

Pre-service teacher education will encourage self-directedness, responsibility, accountability, collegiality and ethical conduct. Teacher educators will be expected to be self-directed and make pedagogical choices. Teacher educators will model commitment to professional growth.

Skills

Pre-service teacher education will emphasise the development and practice of learning and teaching skills through the modelling of effective instruction.

Integration

Pre-service teacher education will highlight links within each area of study, among subject areas, and with school activities.

Life-centred

Pre-service teacher education will be designed to relate school curricular objectives to real-life events and to issues affecting the pupils directly and the broader community generally.

Community

Pre-service teacher education will build relationships with the community by:

- addressing issues, problems and learning needs of communities and schools
- using community resources
- contributing to the community.

Theory and Practice

Pre-service teacher education will interweave theory and practice by:

- solving problems in practical situations
- drawing on theories in the problem-solving process
- relating practical applications to theory
- basing evaluation on practical demonstrations of competencies.

Assessment

Pre-service teacher education assessment will assist in the progressive development of the learner by:

- focusing on the demonstration of competencies to the level considered acceptable for beginning teachers
- identifying targets to be attained by individual learners
- encouraging self-assessment
- reporting progress and final attainment relative to identified targets
- using continuous assessment as an integral part of the teaching and learning process
- drawing on multiple sources of assessment information.

Technology

Pre-service teacher education will model the use of educational technology as a tool for teaching and learning.

(iii)   *Competency-based curriculum*

Practising teacher educators have identified a set of competencies that are vital for a prospective candidate to be a good teacher. The NEC states that to have a competency means to possess certain elements of knowledge, some value aspects, and a set of skills. A beginning teacher, having successfully completed the pre-service programme at a NCOE in Sri Lanka, should demonstrate these competencies which are categorised under the following:

1.   The Nature, Structure and Content of a Discipline
2.   Learner Differences
3.   Factors Affecting Learning
4.   Methodologies
5.   Evaluation
6.   Management
7.   Linkages
8.   Teacher Expectations
9.   Reflective Practice
10.   Sri Lankan Education System

Seventy competencies have been identified under the above headings. The curriculum development will be based on attempts to achieve these competencies.

CONTINUING EDUCATION PROGRAMMES AND TEACHER CENTRES

Continuing education programmes are vital for upgrading the teacher cadre of the country, for teachers to be conversant with modern trends in education and subject matter and thereby improve the quality of teaching. The fourteen NCOEs, three TEIs and 100 TCs will form the nuclei of activities for these continuing education programmes.

The TEIs and the TCs will be fully involved in continuing education programmes. The TEIs will conduct continuing education programmes offering residential facilities and the courses will be mainly in broadening and retraining, for a period of three weeks to three months. The staff of a TEI will consist of a director and about ten to twelve lecturers, depending on the programmes conducted by the TEI. The continuing education programmes are presented in Table 7.6.

Table 7.6

Continuing Education Programmes for Teachers

Type of Program	Modes	Duration	Developed by	Delivered by
Upgrading	Distance, contact or intensive residential	3 weeks	NIE and NCOEs	TCs and NCOEs
Broadening	Distance	1 to 3 Years	NIE, Universities and NCOEs	TCs
Retraining	On-campus or Distance	Varies up to 3 Years	NIE, Universities and NCOEs	Universities, NCOEs, NIE and TCs
Refresher	Workshops and/or Seminars	½ to 2 days	NCOEs, TCs Division Offices	Schools, TCs and Divisional Offices

Full-time teacher educators will direct the academic activities of the TCs. They will be specially trained in distance mode teacher education. Other staff will comprise one resource person skilled in preparing teaching aids and librarian functions and one English language tutor, if necessary. The centre will be managed by a director.

The TCs will serve as centres offering continuing education programmes for teachers from the schools of the locality. They will serve as resource bases for teachers, and as learning and administrative outlets for distance teacher education activities run by the NIE and the universities. They will also serve as centres for the interaction of teachers with advisers of the area, as well as being a meeting place for teachers to share their experiences for the betterment of education of the area.

The *upgrading* courses, as the name indicates, will keep teachers abreast of present trends in subject content and teaching methodology. These could be provided as structured courses so that they supplement the requirements of the Teachers Service Minute and also, if required, terminate in an award like the Diploma in Teaching. The training will be a combination of distance mode and the three-week residential contact sessions at the TEIs or NCOEs. The *broadening* courses will provide the facility for teachers to broaden their knowledge and skills so that they could obtain additional qualifications. These courses will be offered by universities and the NIE leading to recognised awards. It is anticipated that the range of courses will be expanded by the funding and the technical assistance provided by the TETD Project. The *retraining* courses will provide teachers with opportunities to adapt their areas of specialisation to meet particular demands for specific subject teaching. These courses may be conducted in any teacher education institution, the NCOE, TEI, TC, NIE or a university. The *refresher* courses will be for teachers with identified local training needs. Such needs may be identified by a systematic training needs assessment carried out with the technical assistance provided by the TETD Project. This training will be of very short duration, a half day to three days, conducted in TCs or in local schools, whichever is the more convenient for participating teachers. The courses will be conducted mostly by the ISAs

of the divisional and zonal offices with the help of TC staff. These courses would be most necessary when new curricular material is introduced in the school system.

The NCOEs will conduct three-week continuing education programmes for upgrading training in accordance with the Teachers Service Minute or as a partial fulfilment of a Diploma in Teaching. The NCOEs and their programme specialities are presented in Table 7.7.

Table 7.7

Facilities for Continuing Education Programmes in Upgrading at the NCOEs

NCOE	Continuing Education Programme	Groups	Teachers
Siyane	Science, Mathematics, Technical	2+2+1	150
Pasdunrata	English	3	90
Galle	Primary, Home Science	3+1	120
Nilwala	Science, Mathematics	2+2	120
Mahaweli	Primary, English	3+3	180
Sri Pada	Primary (S), Primary (T)	1+2	90
Polonnaruwa	Primary, Agriculture	3+1	120
Kurunegala	Social Science, First Language	1+3	120
Ratnapura	Primary, Social Studies	3+1	120
Jaffna	Primary (T), English	2+2	120
Vavuniya	Primary (S), Primary (T)	1+2	90
Addalachenai	Primary, English	1+2	90
Batticaloa	Primary (T), First Language, Social Studies	2+1+1	120

The upgrading courses will be on professional development and subject specialisation. Twenty five periods per week will be allocated for professional development and ten periods for the subject specialisation area. Provision for the primary continuing education programmes in NCOEs is comparatively high and facilities for 630 teachers will be available in NCOEs for continuing programmes out of a total provision for 1,500 teachers.

IMPROVEMENT OF TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

With the reorganisation of teacher education programmes, vast changes in teacher education would be made through rationalisation and reorganisation to suit the present needs of the system.

The following are some of the improvements proposed in teacher education in general, and in most instances will also be related to the primary stage.

SETTING UP OF THE NATIONAL AUTHORITY ON TEACHER EDUCATION (NATE)

NATE will form a co-ordinated national system of teacher education bringing all teacher education institutions and all teacher education programmes under its authority. It will be responsible for overall policy development and co-ordination of the national system of teacher education.

The functions of NATE are stated below:

- Co-ordination of teacher education programmes
- Planning at national level
- Facilitating implementation of a national system
- Monitoring and research
- Providing public information on teacher education

NATE will have the following Standing Committees:

- Course accreditation
- Staff development and scholarship awards
- Resource allocation and monitoring
- Teacher demand and supply and student enrolment and progression
- Physical facilities, buildings and equipment

IMPROVEMENT OF THE CAPACITIES OF TRAINING IN THE INSTITUTIONS

The training capacities of all teacher education institutions will be increased. The NCOEs, the main pre-service training institutions, will accommodate about 3,400 trainees, out of which 1,200 will follow the primary course. At present in the group admitted for COEs in 1996, out of the 1,831 student trainees, 892 trainees were for the primary course. The annual intake for NCOEs will nearly double and the trainees for the primary course will increase by about 300.

The continuing education programmes conducted by fourteen NCOEs, three TEIs and the 100 TCs will provide sufficient centres in the country for the teachers to attend the sessions and they will be sufficiently equipped and manned by teacher educators. At present, one of the deficiencies in conducting the in-service programmes is the lack of such centres organised in the proposed manner. These centres will help to cater to quite a large number of teachers and make it possible to have these programmes cover a variety of fields or subjects.

STRENGTHENING OF THE FACILITIES OF TEACHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

The NCOEs, TCs and universities will be strengthened by this project.

Buildings

Investment costs for (i) civil works and architectural studies and (ii) technical studies are estimated at US$ 36.7 million and US$ 3.1 million respectively. US$ 36.2 million would be spent on the NCOEs, for rehabilitation and for the construction of the five new NCOEs. US$ 3.18 million will be spent on the provision of physical facilities for TCs and US$ 0.42 million on the four universities.

Equipment and Books

Equipment is essential for the successful execution of the teacher education programmes and is needed for teaching as well as to prepare teaching aids. Audio visual equipment will improve the quality of the delivery of content in the classroom. For teacher education programmes to keep abreast with the rest of the world, modern technologies have to be introduced and used in the system, and arrangements have been made to do this.

Library facilities are also essential. The trainees will have to use books to gather information since the courses encourage the principles of 'learning to learn', 'learners taking responsibility for their own learning' and 'flexible learning methods'. Modern books, journals and magazines would also encourage the habit of learning through self-study. About US$ 7.0 million will be spent on equipment, books and vehicles. Libraries will be upgraded by networking the library facilities and providing Internet and CD ROM facilities.

Furniture

US$ 2.7 million will be spent on furniture for classrooms, offices and hostels for all the institutions mentioned above.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHER EDUCATORS

The Sri Lanka Teacher Educators' Service (SLTES) will be established to form a separate service similar to the Sri Lanka Education Administrative Service (SLEAS) so that all teacher educators will be in a unified service within teacher education. This service will have a tiered class system similar to the SLEAS and will have the same salary structure.

A high professional standard is expected from the teacher educators. The project will provide opportunities for the teacher educators to gain professional development locally and abroad. There is provision for 100 Fellowships for teacher educators to gain professional qualifications from foreign institutions, i.e. 17 Ph.Ds, 46 Master's Degrees and 37 Post-graduate Diplomas in Education. There is also provision for 150 teacher educators to gain 16 Ph.Ds, 7 Master's Degrees, 104 Post-graduate Diplomas in Education and 23 Bachelor's Degrees locally. Other than these long-term degree and diploma courses, there is provision for 160 people to make overseas visits of three months' duration for the purpose of obtaining training. In addition, there is provision for a further 140 people to obtain overseas training for four to six weeks.

TEACHER EDUCATION CURRICULUM

Pre-service Teacher Education

(i) Provision of more courses

At present seven courses are available in the colleges of education. The number of courses available in the NCOEs would be increased to seventeen as presented in Table 7.8.

Table 7.8

Courses Available in COEs and NCOEs in the Future

Colleges of Education	National Colleges of Education	
Primary	Primary	Social Studies
English	English	Sinhala
Science	Science	Art
Mathematics	Mathematics	Music
Physical Education	Physical Education	Dance
Home Science	Home Science	Technical Education
Buddhism	Buddhism	Tamil
	Agriculture	Hinduism
	Library Studies	

(ii) Preparation of new curricular material

New curricular material will be prepared for the seventeen courses on the basis of a vision statement and will be guided by and evaluated on the accepted set of principles stated earlier. The professional component will be common to all courses and will include the following subjects:

1. Educational psychology
2. Sociology of education
3. Guidance and counselling
4. Elements of education
5. Measurement and evaluation
6. Methodology
7. School organisation and class management

(iii) Link of teacher education material to actual class situations

One of the major deficiencies highlighted in earlier research studies is the divorce of teacher education and training from actual classroom situations. The curricular material

that will be prepared would be interwoven and co-ordinated with the present curriculum of the schools. The trainees will experience teaching practice during sessions every term in their first two years and in a year of internship in a school before the completion of the course. The trainees would be more familiar with the current curriculum and hence the performance during these periods would be more relevant to the classroom situation.

(iv)   Introduction of education technology

Education technology is a subject more often discussed than practised in teacher education and in schools. Arrangements have been made to introduce this subject in a systematic manner, allocating 32 hours for the introduction of the subject, and later for the integration of this subject with the professional and special subject areas. It is expected that the trainees themselves would use the teaching of the subject in the NCOEs to gather material to be used during the teaching practice sessions, internship year and later in the schools to which they get their permanent teaching appointments.

(v)   Supply of teacher educator material and student teacher material

Arrangements have been made to prepare teacher educator material as well as student teacher material for use at the NCOEs. The material will be prepared with the assistance of foreign and local consultants. The teacher educator guides will guide the teacher educator on the content, methodology and the direction of activities of the trainees.

The curricular material for the trainees would provide the principles of the course and would direct them to learn to learn, to undertake self-study and project work with independent inquiry and group activity.

(vi)   Training to handle a wider range of subjects

Currently trainees specialise in only one subject area. In future, trainees are expected to master two subject areas, a major and a minor subject. This will enable the heads of schools to make use of the teachers in a wider range of subjects. Table 7.9 shows the major and minor courses for teaching at primary level, and for those trained to teach Grades 6 to 11. In the case of the latter, the teacher would be expected to teach the minor disciplines only up to Grade 9.

Continuing Teacher Education

As noted above, continuing education programmes are of four types. These programmes either help teachers fulfil service requirements or gain additional professional qualifications. This will stimulate the teacher to continue with these programmes so that both the system and the teacher benefit.

Table 7.9

Major and Corresponding Minor Courses

Major Course	Minor Course
Primary	Mother Tongue, Aesthetic Education, Physical Education, Special Education, Creative Activities, Primary Mathematics, Primary Science, English
Science	Mathematics, Health Education
Mathematics	Science, Computer Education
First Language	Social Studies, Religion
Home Science	Religion, First Language
Social Studies	First Language, Religion
Religion	First Language, Social Studies
Technical Studies	Physical Education, Life Skills
English	Library and Information Studies
Physical Education	Health Education
Agriculture	Science
Art	Aesthetics
Music	Aesthetics
Dance	Aesthetics

MAJOR GOALS FOR 2004

After a careful study of the existing system of teacher education, vast changes have been planned, to be implemented by the TETD. The reform proposals touch on nearly all aspects of teacher education from primary to secondary stages. Changes in the teacher education curriculum, its delivery and physical facilities are planned. Above all, the professional development of the teacher educators and overall capacity building of the institutions are envisaged. Hence the following major goals could be achieved by the year 2004.

1. Achievement of a fully professionally trained teacher population
2. NCOEs to function as degree-awarding institutions
3. NCOEs, TEIs and TCs to function as centres of education research
4. TEIs and TCs to identify the needs of their province and develop their own programme of teacher education designing their own curricular material.

CHAPTER 8

THE COSTS AND FINANCING OF PRIMARY EDUCATION

Harsha Aturupane and Bodipakshage Abeygunewardena

INTRODUCTION

Sri Lanka has been celebrated in international economic policy literature for its excellent social development. A long history of public investment in education has been identified as one of the major reasons for its outstanding social achievements (UNDP 1990, Kakwani 1993). Currently, Sri Lanka provides nearly universal access to primary education. The Government of Sri Lanka (GOSL) is also strongly committed to the attainment of a high level of quality in its primary education system.

One critical constraint on the promotion of high quality primary education in Sri Lanka has been the absence of an efficient and equitable mechanism to allocate and distribute resources for primary schooling.

STUDENT ENROLMENT IN THE EDUCATION SECTOR

The demand for primary education in Sri Lanka is strong. The total gross primary enrolment rate (Grades 1 – 5) is over 100 per cent of the relevant age cohort. The total net primary enrolment rate was approximately 92 per cent in 1996. Primary enrolment is high among male and female students, with over 90 per cent of boys and girls in the age range 6 to 10 years attending school.

The population growth rate in Sri Lanka decreased over the 1980s and 1990s. In consequence, the total number of children in the primary school age cohorts has been falling in recent years. The declining stock of students is projected to flow through the entire education cycle over the next decade. The actual number of students during 1994 to 1996 and the projected pattern of student enrolment over the period 1997 to 2005 are presented, by grade and gender, in Table 8.1. The actual and projected patterns of Grades 1 - 5 enrolment and Grades 1 - 13 enrolment, 1996 to 2005, are also displayed in Figures 8.1 and 8.2, respectively.

Table 8.1

Actual and Projected Enrolments, 1994-2005

Enrolment	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Grade 1	360,384	355,000	350,182	345,456	340,794	336,196	331,659	327,184	322,769	318,414	314,118	309,880
Grade 2	380,731	370,010	364,116	359,107	354,252	349,470	344,754	340,101	335,512	330,984	326,517	322,111
Grade 3	388,096	378,886	368,337	362,121	357,047	352,204	347,448	342,758	338,132	333,569	329,067	324,626
Grade 4	402,986	380,436	370,426	360,133	353,765	348,709	343,959	339,311	334,731	330,213	325,757	321,361
Grade 5	395,820	386,165	365,371	355,067	345,167	338,839	333,906	329,337	324,883	320,498	316,172	311,906
Total Primary	**1,928,017**	**1,870,498**	**1,818,433**	**1,781,885**	**1,751,026**	**1,725,419**	**1,701,727**	**1,678,691**	**1,656,027**	**1,633,680**	**1,611,632**	**1,589,882**
Male	**998,981**	**969,063**	**942,223**	**923,273**	**907,448**	**893,880**	**881,293**	**869,080**	**857,077**	**845,248**	**833,581**	**822,076**
Female	**929,036**	**901,435**	**876,210**	**858,612**	**843,578**	**831,539**	**820,434**	**809,611**	**798,950**	**788,432**	**778,051**	**767,806**
Grade 6	**386,676**	**377,298**	**368,120**	**348,950**	**338,600**	**329,101**	**322,883**	**318,100**	**313,725**	**309,478**	**305,300**	**301,180**
Grade 7	368,508	363,152	354,501	345,907	328,338	318,281	309,293	303,320	298,766	294,641	290,650	286,727
Grade 8	346,522	342,814	337,848	329,899	321,923	305,868	296,301	287,887	282,240	277,960	274,111	270,396
Grade 9	309,552	319,411	316,314	311,748	304,471	297,124	282,481	273,533	265,735	260,469	256,493	252,934
Grade 10	270,568	283,586	292,639	289,987	285,810	279,168	272,441	259,116	250,846	243,675	238,815	235,155
Grade 11	378,763	409,766	434,353	452,599	456,933	454,480	447,021	437,574	420,900	406,435	393,892	384,645
Total Secondary	**2,060,589**	**2,096,027**	**2,103,775**	**2,079,091**	**2,036,077**	**1,984,021**	**1,930,421**	**1,879,530**	**1,832,213**	**1,792,659**	**1,759,261**	**1,730,742**
Grade 12	93,937	94,037	94,978	95,929	96,890	97,861	98,841	99,833	100,832	101,843	102,862	103,893
Grade 13	109,560	125,771	131,643	134,603	136,538	138,116	139,576	141,002	142,425	143,857	145,300	146,755
College 12 & 13	**203,497**	**219,808**	**226,621**	**230,532**	**233,428**	**235,977**	**238,417**	**240,835**	**243,257**	**245,700**	**248,162**	**250,648**
All Levels	**4,192,103**	**4,186,333**	**4,148,826**	**4,091,507**	**4,020,531**	**3,945,417**	**3,870,566**	**3,799,055**	**3,731,497**	**3,672,038**	**3,619,054**	**3,571,273**
Male	**2,106,113**	**2,101,420**	**2,082,073**	**2,053,599**	**2,017,903**	**1,980,190**	**1,942,427**	**1,906,064**	**1,871,643**	**1,841,124**	**1,813,887**	**1,789,104**
Female	**2,085,990**	**2,084,912**	**2,066,753**	**2,037,908**	**2,002,628**	**1,965,227**	**1,928,139**	**1,892,991**	**1,859,854**	**183,914**	**1,805,167**	**1,782,169**

Note: 1994-1996 are actual numbers, 1997 onwards are projections

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Figure 8.1

Actual and Projected Enrolment, Grades 1 - 5, 1996-2005

Figure 8.2

Actual and Projected Enrolment, Grades 1 - 13, 1996-2005
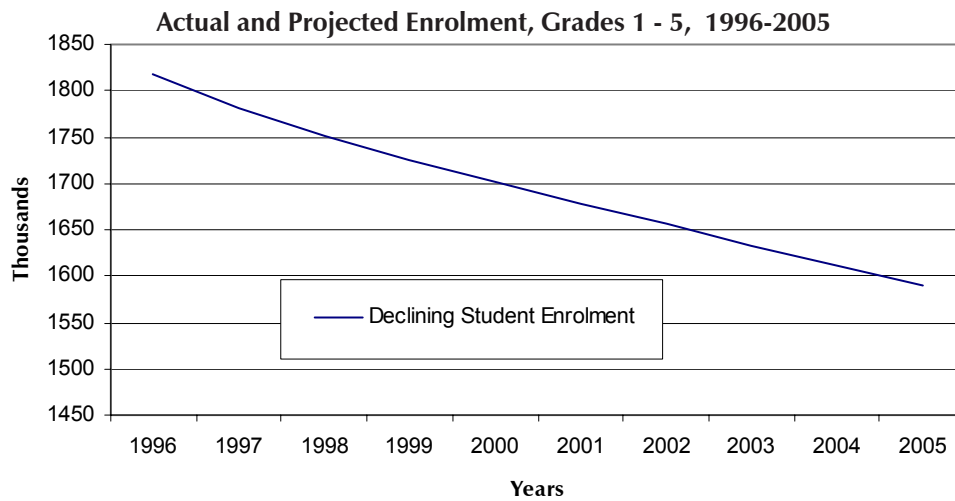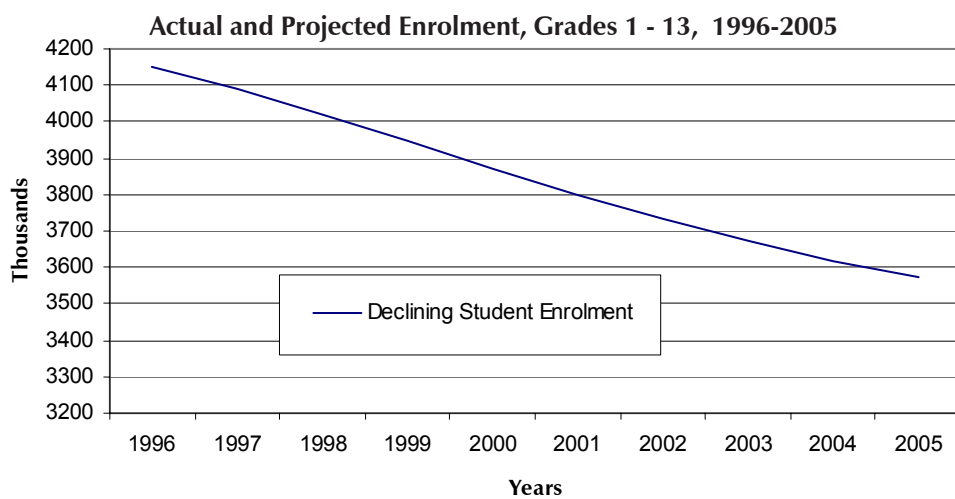
The trend curve in Figure 8.1 reveals that primary enrolment will decline, for both boys and girls, over the period 1996 to 2005. Table 8.1 shows that male primary enrolment, which was approximately 942,000 in 1996, will decrease to 822,000 by 2005. Female primary enrolment will decline from 876,000 in 1996 to 768,000 by 2005. Total primary enrolment is projected to decrease from approximately 1.8 million students in 1996 to about 1.6 million students by 2005. This represents a 11.1 per cent decline over the period from 1996 to 2005, or approximately 1.1 per cent per year on average.

The trend curve in Figure 8.1A reveals that the decline in primary enrolment will flow through the entire schooling system, causing total enrolment as well to decline over time. According to Table 8.1, total enrolment will decrease from 4.1 million students in 1996 to 3.6 million students by 2005. This represents a 12.2 per cent decline over the period 1996 to 2005, or approximately 1.2 per cent per year on average.

The distribution of primary students by province and district in 1996, is shown in Table 8.2. At the primary level, there were approximately 368,000 students in the Western Province. The Central and Southern Provinces had the next highest primary enrolments, 252,000 and 239,000 students, respectively. The Northern Province had the lowest primary enrolment, 114,000 students, followed by the North Central Province, 121,000 students and the Uva Province, 142,000 students.

TEACHER DEMAND IN THE EDUCATION SECTOR

The teacher requirement in an education system depends crucially on the number of pupils and the desired student to teacher ratio. Following the pattern of declining student enrolment, the demand for teachers, too, is predicted to decrease over the next decade. In addition, the Ministry of Education intends to implement a policy by which the teacher to pupil ratio, at the primary level, will become 1:26 in 2001 and 1:27 in 2003. At the secondary level, the teacher to pupil ratio is to reach 1:22 in 2001. Overall, this will shift the teacher to pupil ratio from 1:22 in 1996 to 1:24 by 2001. The implications of these policies for all island primary and total teacher requirements are shown in Figures 8.3 and 8.4 respectively.

Figure 8.3 shows that the number of primary school teachers is predicted to decline from approximately 73,000 in 1996 to just over 65,000 in 2005. Figure 8.3 reveals that the total teacher cadre is projected to decrease from approximately 175,000 in 1996 to about 157,000 in 2005. The decrease in the number of teachers will enable policy makers to contain the cost of teachers' salaries and release resources for investment in quality inputs.

The distribution of teachers across the provinces in 1996 is shown in Table 8.3. There are teacher shortages in the Northern and Eastern Provinces, the war-torn areas of the country. It is difficult to attract teachers to these provinces. Furthermore, a substantial proportion of teaching, especially in the Northern Province, needs to be in the Tamil language. Educated Tamils, however, tend to flee the area thus increasing the difficulty of recruiting and retaining an adequate number of teachers.

Table 8.2

Primary Enrolments by Province and District (Grades 1 - 5), 1996

District/Province	Male	Female	Total
Total			
Colombo	72,161	68,384	140,545
Gampaha	72,364	68,452	140,816
Kalutara	44,444	41,893	86,337
(Western)	188,969	178,729	367,698
Kandy	62,872	59,244	122,116
Matale	23,833	27,967	45,800
Nuwara Eliya	43,583	40,877	84,460
(Central)	130,288	122,088	252,376
Galle	50,706	47,385	98,091
Matara	41,097	37,336	78,433
Hambantota	32,502	30,044	62,546
(Southern)	124,305	114,765	239,070
Jaffna	22,545	20,869	43,414
Killinochchi	13,388	12,567	25,955
Mannar	5,987	5,620	11,607
Vavuniya	9,836	8,803	18,189
Mullaitivu	7,566	7,021	14,587
(Northern)	58,872	54,880	113,752
Batticaloa	29,455	27,903	57,358
Ampara	37,929	35,618	73,547
Trincomalee	21,497	20,432	41,929
(Eastern)	88,881	83,953	172,834
Kurunegala	73,662	67,833	141,495
Puttalam	40,243	36,891	77,125
(North Western)	113,896	104,724	218,620
Anuradhapura	43,547	40,254	83,801
Polonnaruwa	19,344	18,064	37,408
(North Central)	62,891	58,318	121,209
Badulla	46,381	44,103	90,484
Monaragala	26,381	24,793	51,099
(Uva)	72,682	68,901	141,583
Ratnapura	56,938	53,102	110,040
Kegalle	37,612	35,534	73,146
(Sabaragamuwa)	94,550	88,636	183,186
Sri Lanka	935,334	874,994	1,810,328

Table 8.3

Distribution of Teachers by Province, 1996

Province	Actual Teacher Nos.
Western	36,801
Central	24,540
Southern	26,514
Northern	8,096
Eastern	12,556
North Western	22,723
North Central	11,805
Uva	13,706
Sabaragamuwa	18,777
Sri Lanka	175,518

Figure 8.3

Actual and Projected Supply of Primary Teachers, 1996-2005

Figure 8.4

Actual and Projected Supply of All Teachers, 1996-2005
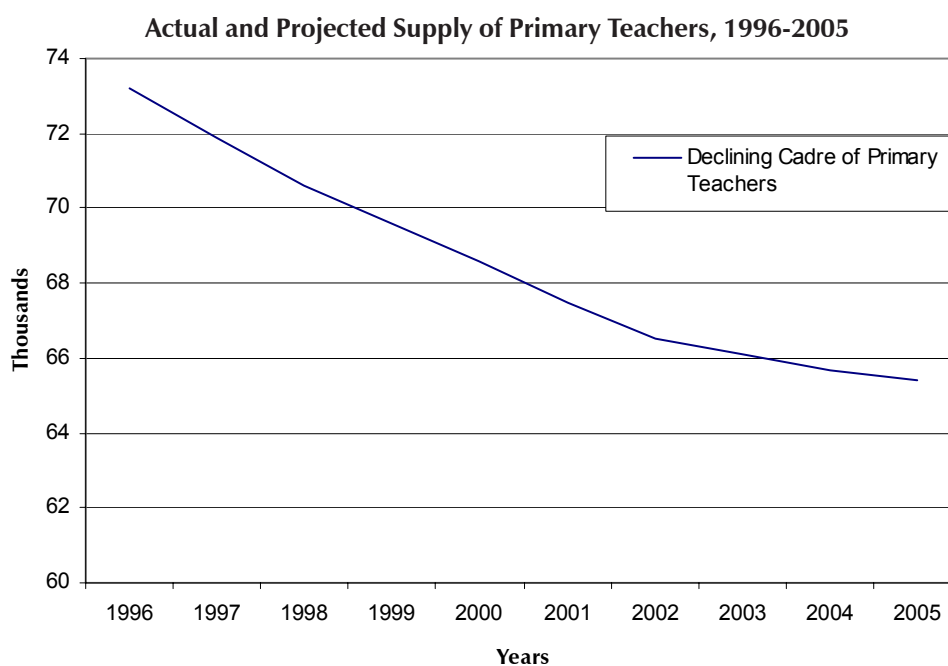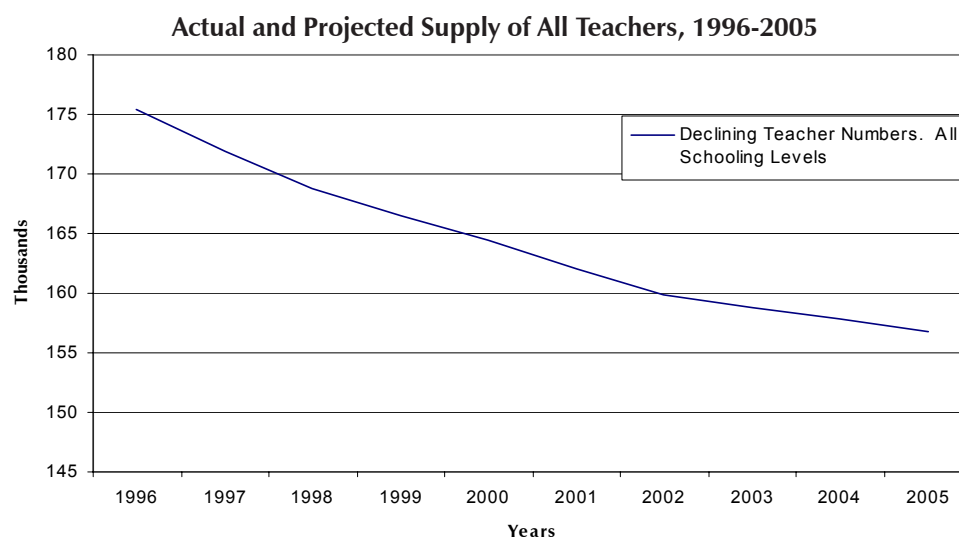
The predicted teacher requirements in 2001 and 2003, the years in which the government policy of establishing a teacher to pupil ratio of 1:26 (2001) and 1:27 (2003) are to be implemented, are shown in Table 8.4. The overall teacher requirement will increase between 1996 and 2001 in the Western, Northern, Eastern and North Central Provinces. Between 2001 and 2003, however, it will decrease in all provinces. This pattern of teacher demand is likely to cause difficulties with respect to teacher deployment. The Western Province is a popular area of the country, with relatively high standards of living, so the deployment of additional teachers into this province is likely to be easy. The Northern, Eastern and North Central Provinces, however, are unpopular areas of the country. The North and the Eastern Provinces are the battle ground between the separatist guerrillas, and the Sri Lankan government. The North Central Province borders the war-torn areas and is a relatively poor and underdeveloped area. Hence, attracting teachers to these provinces is likely to be a difficult task. The government should seriously consider introducing financial incentives to attract teachers to serve in the more difficult areas of the country.

Table 8.4

Projected Number of Teachers, 1996-2005

Year	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Primary Teachers	68,574	67,772	66,970	66,168	65,366	64,565	62,536	60,507	59,960	58,885
Secondary Teachers	106,944	104,831	102,718	100,605	98,492	96,380	94,517	92,653	91,245	90,063

EDUCATION EXPENDITURE IN SRI LANKA: INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS

The average proportion of GDP and government expenditure devoted to education in Sri Lanka in the recent past are shown in Table 8.5 below. The share of GDP and government expenditure spent on education in selected Asian countries and other reasonably similar developing countries are also shown in Table 8.5 for purposes of comparison. By international standards, Sri Lanka spends comparatively little on education. Over the past decade, the average share of education in GDP has been approximately 3 per cent per year. This is less than the 3.5 per cent average for Asia and the 3.9 per cent mean for developing countries. Further, among the Asian countries shown in Table 8.5, only Bangladesh, China, Nepal and the Philippines allocated a lower proportion of resources to education. Among the other developing countries shown in Table 8.5, the only nations that devoted a lower share of resources to education were Guinea and Nicaragua.

Table 8.5

**The Share of Education Spending in GDP
and the Government Budget, Selected Countries**

Asian Countries Average	% of Education in GDP 1990s	% of Education in the Government Budget 1990s
Sri Lanka	**3.0**	9.6
Bangladesh	2.0	10.3
China	2.3	12.4
Hong Kong	3.0	17.4
India	3.5	11.2
Indonesia	3.7	15.5
Japan	4.7	16.2
Korea	3.6	22.4
Malaysia	6.9	18.8
Nepal	2.8	10.8
Pakistan	3.4	na
Philippines	2.9	10.1
Singapore	3.4	11.5
Thailand	3.8	20.0
Mean for Asia	**3.5**	**13.9**
Other Developing Countries		
Egypt	3.8	10.6
Ghana	3.3	24.3
Guinea	1.4	21.5
Honduras	4.2	15.9
Lesotho	3.8	12.2
Mauritania	4.7	22.0
Nicaragua	2.6	12.0
'World' Mean	**3.9**	**15.1**

Source: Sri Lanka, calculated from Central Bank Reports, various issues. Other countries, calculated from UNESCO, World Tables.

The proportion of the government budget devoted to education expenditure is also relatively low by international standards. In recent years, Sri Lanka has spent approximately 10 per cent of the government budget on education. This is below the 14 per cent average for Asia and the 15 per cent average for developing countries. Further, among the countries shown in Table 8.5, the proportion of the government budget allocated to education is lowest in Sri Lanka.

The annual time pattern of the proportion of GDP devoted to education in recent years is shown in Figure 8.5. The information reveals that the share of education in GDP has, in most years, been under 3 per cent. Further, it has tended to decline, falling from 3.13 per cent in 1993 to 2.6 per cent in 1996.

The annual time pattern of education in government expenditure in recent years is shown in Figure 8.6. This reveals that the share of education in government expenditure has been generally higher, from 1992 onwards, in comparison to the period 1985 to 1991. However, this share declined in 1995 and 1996, falling below 10 per cent in 1996.

Figure 8.5

Education Expenditure as a Percentage of GDP, 1985-1996
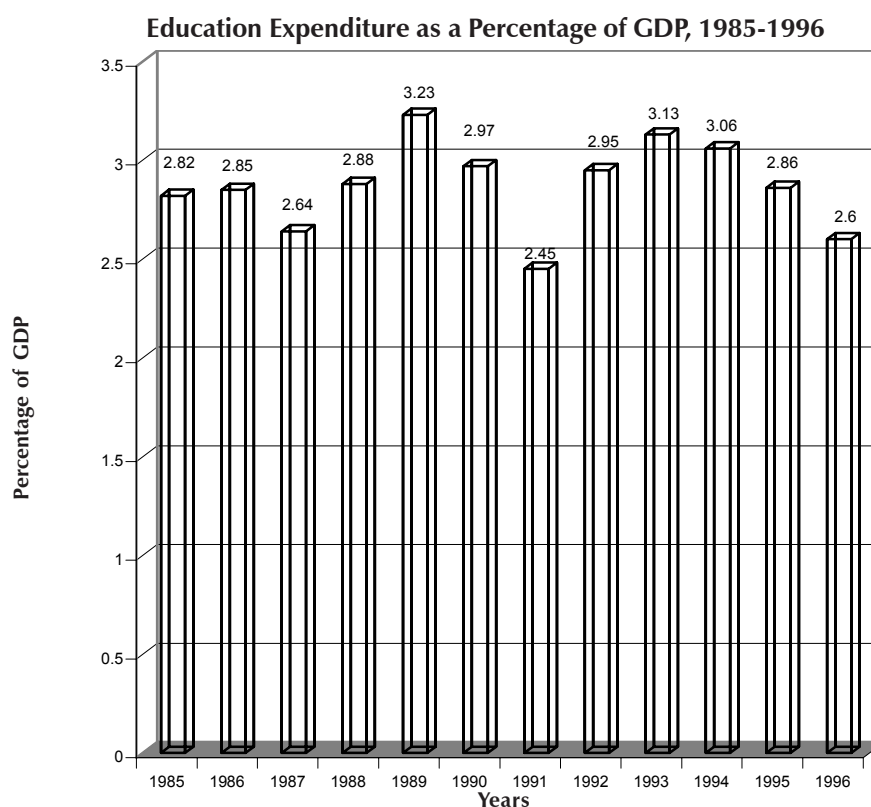
Source: Calculated from various issues of the Sri Lanka Central Bank Reports

Figure 8.6

Education Expenditure as a Percentage of Government Expenditure
1985-1996

Source: Central Bank Annual Reports
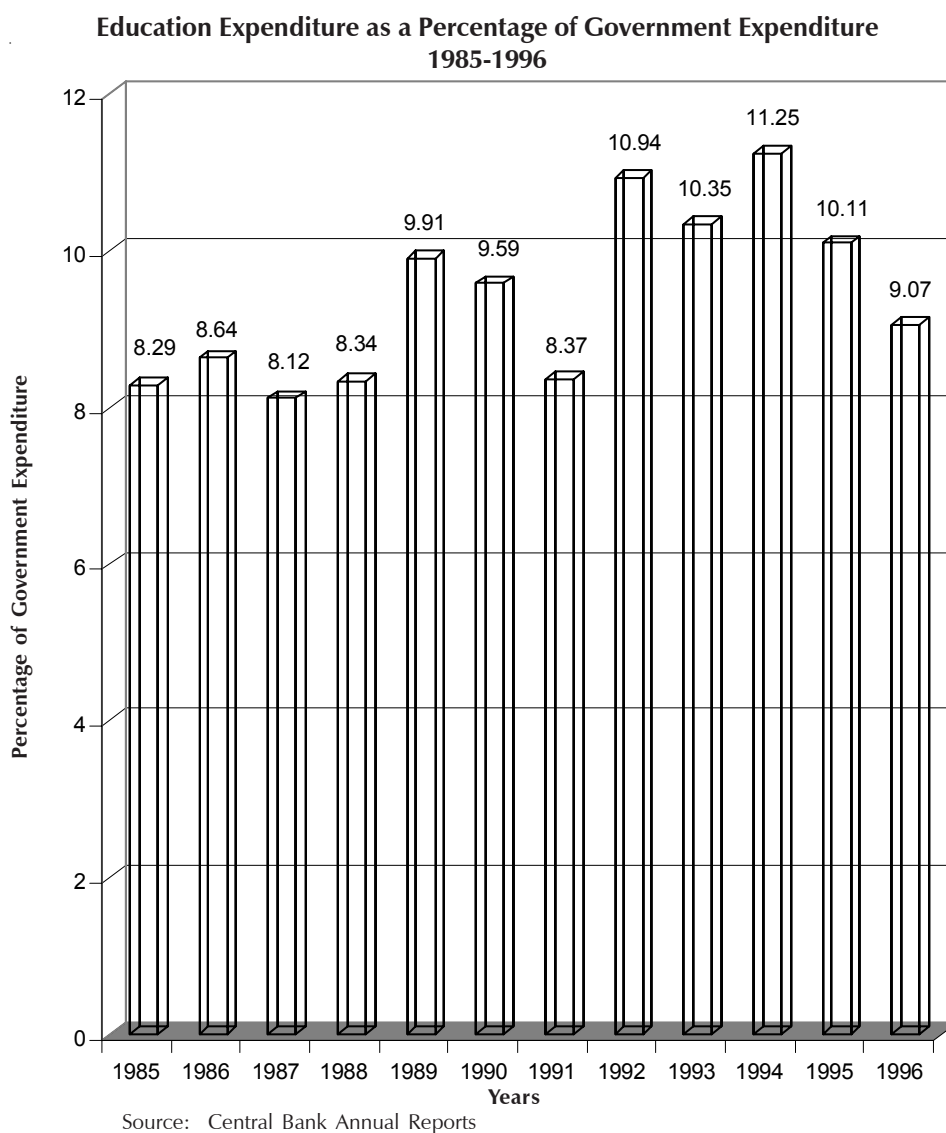
There are two main reasons for the low share for education in GDP and in government expenditure in Sri Lanka.   First, education expenditure in the 1950s and 1960s was high, with an average of 5 per cent of GDP and 15 per cent of the government budget being devoted to education. This high spending reflected infrastructure investment to implement the government policy of providing access to free public education at primary and secondary levels to all school age children. With the construction of basic school facilities to provide universal access to general education relatively complete by the early 1970s, the government allocated priority to other sectors in the budget, particularly agriculture

and energy, from the late 1970s onwards. However, this resulted in a sacrifice of quality inputs, teacher education, curriculum development, maintenance and replacement activity and managerial improvements in the education system. Educational quality at the primary level, in particular, was neglected. Second, from the mid-1980s onwards, the government has borne a heavy military burden owing to the civil war in the Northern and Eastern Provinces. High defence expenditure has acted as a binding constraint on the capacity of the government to invest in human capital and social development.

TRENDS IN EDUCATION EXPENDITURE IN SRI LANKA

The pattern of overall education expenditure in Sri Lanka, over the period 1985 to 1996, is shown in Table 8.6.

Table 8.6 shows that educational expenditure fluctuated rather sharply during the period 1985 to 1996. This is especially true of capital expenditure, which fell drastically during 1990 to 1991 but picked up again steeply in 1992. Capital expenditure on education in Sri Lanka is mainly financed through donor assistance. Hence, its level is highly sensitive to the time phasing and implementation of donor programmes. The chief reason for the sharp decline in capital expenditure on education in 1990 was a politically destabilising insurrection over the period 1987 to 1989, which caused implementation delays and prevented disbursement of donor funds. The steep increase in capital expenditure from 1992 onwards has been largely a result of renewed flows of assistance from donors. Capital expenditure has been devoted chiefly to the construction of buildings, provision of basic services, and purchase of equipment and furniture.

Table 8.6 also shows a steep increase in recurrent expenditure from 1992 onwards. The main component of recurrent expenditure in education is the teacher salary bill. The increase in recurrent expenditure since 1992 has been caused, chiefly, by a substantial expansion of the teaching cadre in 1992 and a sharp rise in teachers' salaries in 1995.

The division of educational expenditure between recurrent and capital spending is presented in Figure 8.6. This reveals that the proportion of education expenditure devoted to recurrent spending has been in the range 75 to 89 per cent, while the share of capital expenditure has been in the range 11 to 25 per cent. In general, recurrent expenditure has tended to overshadow capital expenditure. Only in 1986, 1993, 1995 and 1996 has capital expenditure accounted for 20 per cent or more of the education budget. The lack of capital spending has been reflected in a scarcity of resources for investment in long-term quality inputs, especially for primary schools (Type 3 schools) and the primary grades of poorer schools (usually the Type 2 and Type 1C schools).

The pattern of per capita expenditure on education over time is illustrated in Figure 8.7. Per capita educational spending increased substantially from 1994 onwards. This reflects a government policy shift after 1994 which recognised education as a high priority.

Table 8.6

Expenditure on Education in Sri Lanka, 1985-1996 (Constant 1982 Prices)

Year	Recurrent Expenditure on Education (Rupees million)	Capital Expenditure on Education (Rupees million)	Total Expenditure on Education (Rupees million)
1985	2,957	675	3,632
1986	2,739	915	3,654
1987	2,853	605	3,458
1988	3,159	596	3,755
1989	3,480	805	4,285
1990	3,877	474	4,351
1991	3,180	471	3,651
1992	5,267	1,004	6,271
1993	5,345	1,355	6,700
1994	7,065	1,370	8,435
1995	7,516	1,965	9,481
1996	8,009	2,192	10,201

Source: Calculated from Central Bank of Sri Lanka Annual Reports of various years

Recurrent unit costs for the three education levels, primary (Grades 1 to 5), secondary (Grades 6 to 11) and upper secondary (Grades 12 to 13) are shown in Table 8.7.

Table 8.7

Recurrent Unit Cost per Student by Education Levels, 1996

Schooling Level	Unit Cost (Rupees)	Percentage Share of the Unit Cost of Total Education
Grades 1 to 5	4,066	29
Grades 6 to 11	4,428	31
Grades 12 to 13	5,768	40
All Years	4,343	100

Source: World Bank 1997

Table 8.7 shows that recurrent expenditure per student, in 1996, was Rs. 4,066 for Grades 1-5, Rs. 4,428 for Grades 6-11 and Rs. 5,768 for Grades 12-13. In terms of percentage shares, 29 per cent of student recurrent expenditure on education is devoted to Grades 1-5, 31 per cent is devoted to Grades 6-11 and 40 per cent is devoted to Grades 12-13. The cost per student at the primary and secondary levels is similar as the major proportion of recurrent expenditure consists of teachers' salaries, and teacher to pupil ratios tend to be lower in the primary stage. This is especially the case in Type 3 schools in rural areas. The main reasons for the higher unit cost of upper secondary education are that this stage of education is served by better qualified, more highly paid teachers and that quality inputs like equipment, consumables and materials are generally more expensive at this level.

Figure 8.7

**Shares of Recurrent and Capital Expenditure in Total Education Expenditure
1985-1996**

Figure 8.8

**Per Capita Expenditure on Education (1982 Prices)
1985-1996**
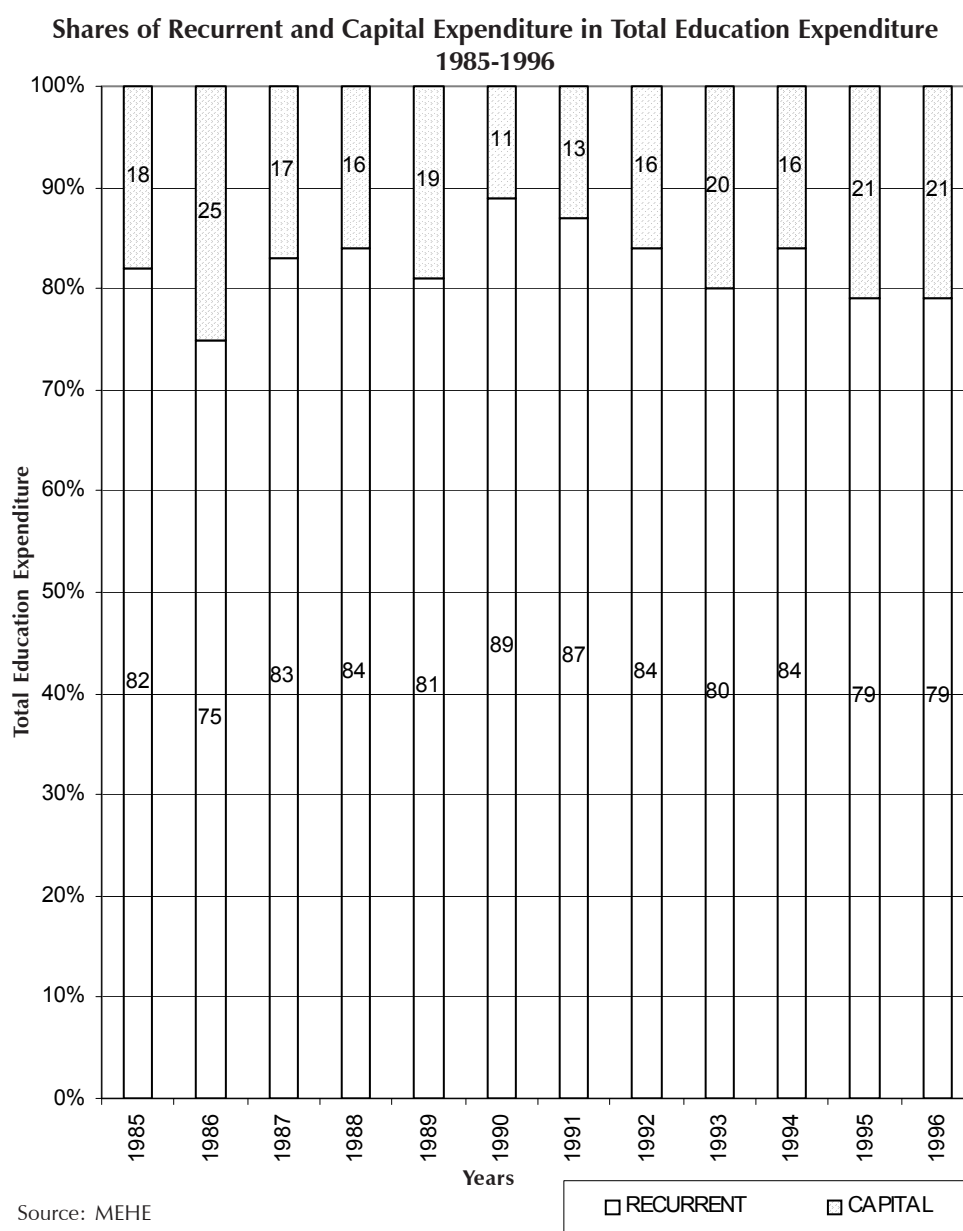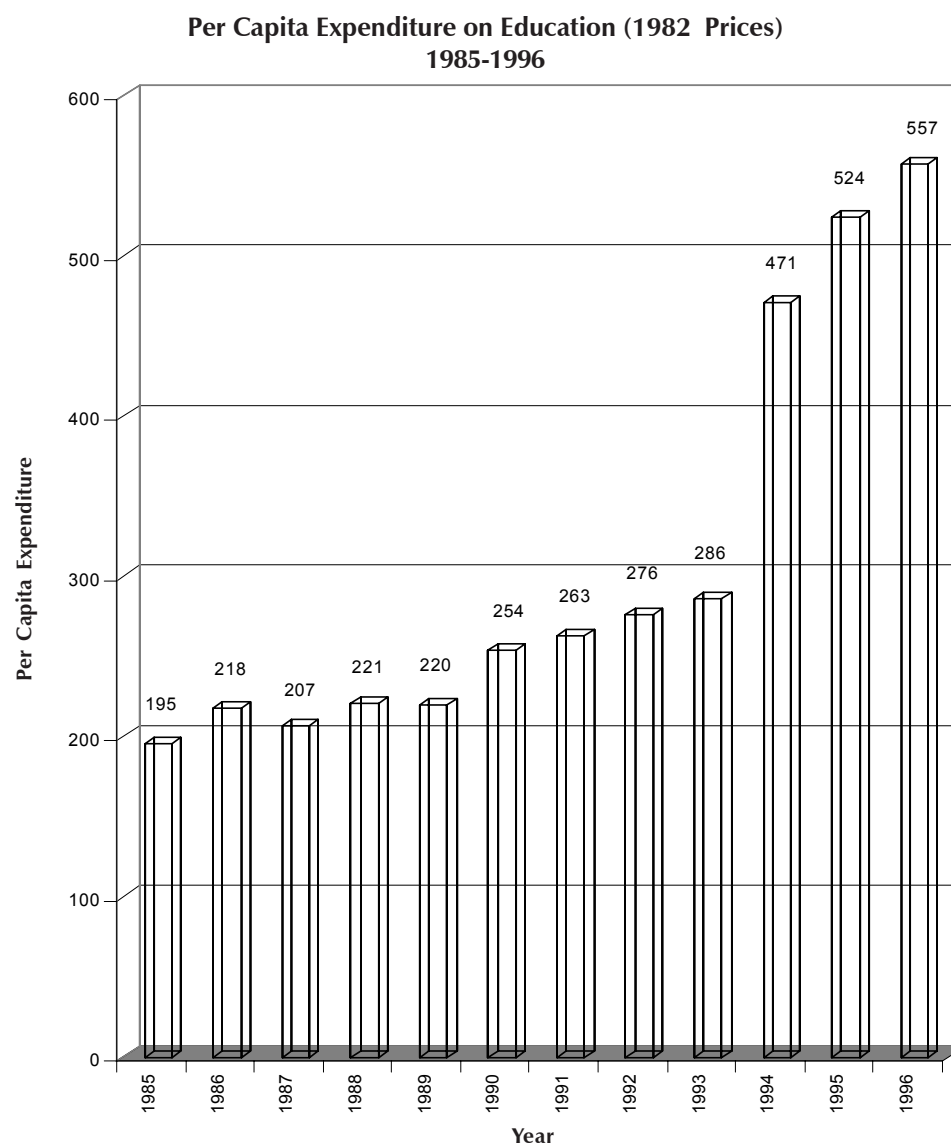
Source: Calculated from Central Bank Reports and MEHE Data

DEVOLUTION AND EDUCATION: NATIONAL GOVERNMENT AND PROVINCIAL COUNCILS' RESPONSIBILITIES FOR EDUCATION

Sri Lanka has a devolved system of education administration. Currently, the country consists of eight provinces, with each province assuming responsibility for the administration of the schools located within its borders, except those designated as national schools. The national government, through the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE), assumes responsibility for the administration of national schools. The pattern of education administration and financing between the national government and the provincial government is shown in Figures 8.9.

The national Ministry of Finance and Planning allocates resources through two channels: recurrent expenditure through the Budget Division and capital expenditure through the Department of National Planning. The flow of recurrent expenditure is then channelled through the Finance Commission to the Provincial Education Authorities (PEAs). PEAs consist of the provincial Ministries of Education, provincial Directorates of Education under the provincial ministries and the zonal education authorities (ZEA) which come under the provincial directors. The ZEAs channel the recurrent expenditure, including payment of salaries, to the schools that come under the PEAs, the Types 1AB, 1C, 2 and 3 schools. The recurrent expenditure for national schools, however, is channelled through the MEHE.

Capital expenditure is channelled by the Department of National Planning to the MEHE as a block education grant. The MEHE allocates this capital grant among schools. The actual delivery of capital resources is accomplished through the PEAs and the ZEAs.

NATIONAL GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE

The national government budget consists of two broad categories: recurrent expenditure, defined as items that are consumed within one year and capital expenditure, defined as items that can be utilised over a period in excess of one year. The national and provincial governments education budgets are shown in Table 8.8.

Table 8.8

National and Provincial Capital and Recurrent Expenditure on Education, 1996

	Recurrent Spending (Rs. Million)	Capital Spending (Rs. million)	Total Spending (Rs. Million)	% of Recurrent Expenditure	% of Capital Expenditure	Total
National	7,400	4,037	11,438	65	35	100
Provincial	11,268	406	11,674	97	3	100
Total	18,668	4,443	23,112	81	19	100

Source: Ministry of Finance and Planning, MEHE and Provincial Education Authorities

According to Table 8.8 the total national government education budget in 1996 was approximately Rs. 11.5 billion. Recurrent expenditure was 7.4 billion (65%) and capital expenditure 4.0 billion (35%). The principal items of national government recurrent and capital expenditure are shown in Table 8.9 and Table 8.10, respectively.

Figure 8.9

Pattern of Education Spending Between the National Government and Provincial Councils

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│              MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND PLANNING                     │
│                                                                   │
│   BUDGET DIVISION              DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL PLANNING     │
│   (RECURRENT EXPENDITURE)      (CAPITAL EXPENDITURE)               │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
         │                    ╲                        │
         │          RECURRENT EXPENDITURE              │
         │          FOR NATIONAL SCHOOLS               │
         ▼                        ▼                    ▼
┌──────────────────┐        ┌──────────────────────────────┐
│                  │        │                              │
│     FINANCE      │        │     MINISTRY OF EDUCATION     │
│   COMMISSION     │        │     AND HIGHER EDUCATION      │
│                  │        │                              │
└──────────────────┘        └──────────────────────────────┘
         │                    ╲                        │
         │          CAPITAL GRANTS FOR                 │
         │          PROVINCIAL SCHOOLS                 │
         ▼                 ◀                           │
┌──────────────────┐                                   │
│   PROVINCIAL     │                                   │
│   EDUCATION      │                                   │
│   AUTHORITIES    │                                   │
└──────────────────┘                                   │
         │                                             │
         ▼                                             ▼
┌──────────────────┐                  ┌──────────────────────────┐
│ TYPE 1AB SCHOOLS │                  │                          │
│ TYPE 1C SCHOOLS  │                  │     NATIONAL SCHOOLS      │
│ TYPE 2 SCHOOLS   │                  │                          │
│ TYPE 3 SCHOOLS   │                  │                          │
└──────────────────┘                  └──────────────────────────┘
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Table 8.9

National Government Recurrent Expenditure (Actual and Projected), 1994-2005

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Total Salaries (Teachers and non-Teachers)(Rs mil) National Salaries	2,932	2,800	2,830	2,802	2,795	2,788	2,781	2,774	2,778	2,782	2,785	2,794
Total National non salary												
Travelling expenses	28	25	31	33	34	36	38	40	42	44	46	48
Supplies	146	133	157	165	173	181	191	200	210	221	232	243
Contractual services	546	562	808	849	891	936	983	1,032	1,083	1,138	1,194	1,254
Other expenditure	91	91	132	139	145	153	160	168	177	186	195	205
Transfer to household (including mid-day meal)	206	11	17	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	26
Other current transfer and subsidies	1,708	1,789	2566	2,694	2,829	2,970	3,119	3,275	3,438	3,610	3,791	3,980
Design inservice Tr & Research	76	230	209	220	231	242	254	267	280	294	309	325
Textbooks cost	473	551	651	660	653	647	640	634	628	621	615	609
Total National non-salary	3,274	3,392	4,571	4,777	4,974	5,184	5,405	5,637	5,880	6,137	6,406	6,690

Table 8.10

National Government Capital Expenditure (Actual and Projected), 1994-2005

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
National Government Capital Expenditure												
Rehab and Improvements of Capital Assets	87	183	253	261	268	276	285	293	302	311	320	330
Acquisition of equipment	396	645	667	687	708	729	751	773	796	820	845	870
Construction of buildings	816	1,218	1,286	1,299	1,312	1,325	1,338	1,352	1,365	1,379	1,393	1,406
Capital grants for Provincial Councils	577	640	700	721	743	765	788	811	836	861	887	913
Others	26	4	10	10	11	11	11	12	12	12	13	13
Total	1,902	2,690	2,916	2,978	3,042	3,106	3,173	3,241	3,311	3,383	3,458	3,532

Table 8.9 shows that the main components of the national government's recurrent expenditure are salaries of national school teachers and central administrative officials, Rs. 2.8 billion (38% of total national government recurrent expenditure); transfers and subsidies, Rs. 2.6 billion (35%); contractual services, Rs. 808 million (11%); and textbooks, supplies, travel, in-service training and research, household transfers and other expenditures, Rs. 1.2 billion (16%). The bulk of expenditure on subsidies is spent on free school uniforms, scholarships and bursaries. Contractual services include consumables and materials for teaching science and technical subjects in schools and minor repairs and maintenance activities.

Table 8.10 shows that the principal components of national government capital expenditure are building construction, Rs. 1.8 billion (45% of total national government capital expenditure) and acquisition of equipment, Rs. 1.1 billion (26%). The remaining 29 per cent of capital spending covers the capital grants to provincial councils, Rs. 0.7 billion; and rehabilitation and improvement of capital assets, Rs. 0.5 billion. The major proportion of this expenditure is financed by foreign donors.

PROVINCIAL COUNCIL EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION

The provinces receive revenue from the national government in three forms:

(i)   **A block grant**. This is based on the population within each province. Provincial governments meet their recurrent expenditure needs through these block grants;

(ii)   **A criteria-based grant.** This is a compensation grant, with higher priority awarded to provinces with lower levels of socio-economic development;

(iii)   **A matching grant**. This is based on the ability of provinces to raise their own revenue.

The value of revenue received by the provinces through these three grants is shown in Table 8.11. In 1997, the block grant accounted for 94 per cent of national government disbursements to the provinces. The criteria-based grant accounted for 5 per cent and the matching grant accounted for 1 per cent of revenue. Thus, the block grant clearly dominates the revenue flow from national government to the provinces. The values per student of the resources allocated to the provinces through the block grants are shown in Table 8.12. The Finance Commission does not allocate funds strictly on a per student basis. Instead, financial allocations are made chiefly as a percentage mark-up over the previous year. It was only in 1990, the year in which the Provincial System was implemented, that predicted student enrolment was used as a criterion to determine education allocations.

The Central and Southern Provinces enjoyed the highest grants, per student, in 1994, while the North East Province received the lowest grant. The North Western province

ranked fourth from the top, although the difference with the Sabaragamuwa Province is negligible. The Western Province, which is the wealthiest province, ranked sixth in the per student value of national government grants received. There are no special reasons for the variations in the per student block grant to the different provinces. The differences, which are relatively small, are generally due to variations between predicted and actual enrolments in the provinces, in any particular year. The differences seem to have made a significant impact, in terms of provincial variations in per student allocations, only in the Western, North Central and North Eastern Provinces in 1994.

The main components of provincial recurrent education spending are shown in Table 8.13. The principal items of provincial capital education spending are presented in Table 8.14. The information in Table 8.13 shows that in 1996 the provincial total recurrent education expenditure was Rs. 11.3 billion. Of this, salaries of provincial school teachers and education officials, which are paid out of the block grant, amounted to Rs. 10.9 billion (97% of total provincial recurrent expenditure). Expenditure on other items, like office consumables, welfare bursaries, school uniforms, travel and transport and communications and utilities, amounted to only Rs. 362 million (3%). Given the large share of the salary bill in provincial expenditures, the scope for quality improving investments at the provincial level is extremely low. Table 8.14 shows that provincial capital spending is mainly on civil works, Rs. 269.3 million (66% of total provincial capital spending on education), repairs and maintenance, Rs. 83.8 million (21%) and instructional material, Rs. 52.9 million (13%).

RECURRENT EXPENDITURE AT SCHOOL LEVEL

The pattern of recurrent expenditure of schools reported in this section is based on two surveys. The first is a survey conducted by the author for a study on Financing of the Social Sectors (ADB 1996), covering 120 schools in three provinces, the North Western Province, the Central Province and the Western Province. The second, a school survey of the North Western Province conducted for the present study and used in the analysis of the preceding section, was an extension and development of the survey conducted for the ADB study, 1996, although restricted to a smaller sample of schools.

The proportions of recurrent expenditure of schools, by type, are presented in Table 8.15. The major proportion of recurrent expenditure, approximately 73 per cent, is spent on teacher salaries. This is normal for schooling systems, where teacher salaries is the highest item of recurrent expenditure. The next highest share of expenditure is incurred on school textbooks, followed by school uniforms. Teacher salaries, textbooks and uniforms account for 93 per cent of all recurrent expenditure.

Teaching materials receive 1.3 per cent of recurrent expenditure at school level, laboratory materials 0.5 per cent and library materials 0.4 per cent. Teachers in prominent schools in the Western Province enjoy average expenditure of Rs. 3,072 per year on teaching materials.

Table 8.11

Projected Teacher Requirements for Year 2001 and 2003, Primary and Secondary Schools by Province

Province	Projected No. of Students in 2001		No. of Teachers Required in Year 2001		Total No of Teachers Required in Year 2001	Projected No. of Students in 2001		No. of Teachers required in Year 2003		Total No. of Teachers Required in Year 2003
	Primary	Secondary	for Prim@ STR =26 : 1	for Sec @ STR = 22 : 1		Primary	Secondary	for Prim @ STR = 27 : 1	for Sec @ STR = 22 : 1	
Western	346,034	519,530	13,309	23,615	36,924	331,236	507,870	12,268	23,085	35,353
Central	243,880	323,356	9,380	14,698	24,078	234,063	316,470	8,669	14,385	23,054
Southern	227,162	325,732	8,737	14,806	23,543	218,457	318,780	8,091	14,490	22,581
Northern	111,904	130,768	4,304	5,944	10,248	107,460	128,128	3,980	5,824	9,804
Eastern	165,880	182,314	6,380	8,287	14,667	159,003	178,310	5,889	8,105	13,994
North Western	234,702	297,264	9,027	13,512	22,539	235,980	297,264	8,740	13,512	22,252
North Central	117,728	161,810	4,528	7,355	11,883	113,130	158,004	4,190	7,182	11,372
Uva	137,072	167,706	5,272	7,623	12,895	132,084	164,076	4,892	7,458	12,350
Sabaragamuwa	178,464	245,300	6,864	11,150	18,014	171,288	241,692	6,344	10,986	17,240
Sri Lanka	**1,762,826**	**2,353,780**	**67,801**	**106,990**	**174,791**	**1,702,701**	**2,310,594**	**63,063**	**104,937**	**168,000**

Table 8.12

Per Student Block Grants for Education

Province	1992	1993	1994
Western	1,446.78	1,803.25	1,944.28
Central	1,528.80	1,891.44	2,197.99
North Western	1,466.78	1,832.58	2,112.87
Sabaragamuwa	1,464.70	1,768.90	2,116.32
Southern	1,516.16	1,837.13	2,192.83
North Central	1,160.75	1,503.36	1,795.78
North Eastern[1]	1,184.26	1,484.87	1,713.66
Uva	1,392.44	1,796.43	2,052.47

Source: Calculated from Finance Commission.

[1]For current administration the North and Eastern Provinces are combined.

Table 8.13

Provincial Government Recurrent Expenditure (Actual and Projected) 1994 – 2005

Year	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Provincial Salaries	7,928	9,931	10,906	10,757	10,649	10,544	10,432	10,326	10,281	10,239	10,191	10,172
Provincial (non-Salary Exp)	163	202	362	380	399	419	440	462	485	509	535	562
Total	8,091	10,133	11,268	11,137	11,048	10,963	10,872	10,788	10,766	10,748	10,726	10,734

Table 8.14

Provincial Government Capital Expenditure (Actual and Projected) 1994 - 2005

Year	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Provincial Capital Budget:												
Instructional Material	89	45	53	54	56	58	60	61	63	65	67	69
Construction of Buildings	223	89	269	277	286	294	303	312	322	331	341	351
Repairs and Maintenance	79	49	84	88	92	97	102	107	112	118	124	130
Total	390	183	406	420	434	449	464	480	497	514	532	550

Table 8.15

Allocation of Recurrent Expenditure by Category and by Type of School

	National Schools %	Type 1AB Schools %	Type 1C Schools %	Type 2 Schools %	Type 3 Schools %	All Schools %
Teacher salaries	76.3	72.4	75.4	76.4	84.4	73.2
Other salaries	1.9	1.2	0.4	0.9	0.2	1.0
Teaching material	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.1
Library material	0.6	0.5	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.4
Laboratory Expenditure	0.1	0.6	0.4	0.2	0.0	0.5
Sports expenditure	2.2	3.5	0.4	0.2	0.1	2.4
Extra-curricular Activities	0.6	0.1	0.4	0.3	0.1	0.2
Other equipment	0.0	0.4	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.3
Maintenance expenditure	0.5	0.8	0.3	0.7	0.4	0.6
School uniforms	8.6	8.5	9.7	12.3	9.1	8.9
School textbooks	8.5	11.5	12.5	8.4	5.3	10.9
Other	0.4	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Aturupane and Tilak, 1996

Teachers in poor Type 2 and Type 3 schools, by contrast, receive as little as Rs. 26 for materials per year. The average expenditure per teacher in the North Western Province is Rs.187 and the average in the Central Province is Rs. 128. These amounts are low. Furthermore, teachers in primary schools, and teachers in the primary levels of other schools, appear to receive the lowest allocations for teaching material.

The average per student and per teacher expenditure, on the various categories in Table 8.15, is presented in Appendix 1 (Tables 8.A1 to 8.A12).

According to the expenditure information in Appendix 1, average expenditure on library material per student is Rs. 12 per year. This is a very low amount, equal to the cost of a single issue of a daily newspaper. Even in National and Type 1AB schools, which have the highest library expenditure per student, the average of Rs. 18 is negligible.

Mean expenditure per student on laboratory material, which includes minor items of equipment and consumables, is also low. The average is Rs. 19 per student. In National and Type 1AB schools the average is Rs. 25 per student. These levels are substantially below expenditure levels in prestigious private schools. Note that the level of mean expenditure in this section is also on the high side for government schools, as the sample included the most prestigious public schools in the three provinces. Expenditure on miscellaneous items, which includes spending on consumables for technical subjects, is also low, with an average of Rs. 15 per student per year. Note that in Type 1C, Type 2 and Type 3 schools, the average expenditure per student is under Rs. 10 in all but one case.

Overall, the pattern of recurrent expenditure per teacher and per student, especially for quality inputs like teaching materials, consumables for science and technical subjects, and library material, is clearly very low. Among schools, the primary levels receive the lowest allocations of school funds. In many schools, the primary level does not receive any resources apart from textbooks and a few boxes of chalk for the use of teachers.

FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT

BASIC FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT

The availability of a stock of basic facilities and items of equipment was checked, for a sample of 30 schools in the North Western Province, in a survey conducted by the author in 1997. The proportion of schools which possessed the stock of basic facilities, by type of facility, is shown in Table 8.16.

The evidence in Table 8.16 reveals that only a small number of schools possess the most basic of facilities, adequate classroom space. Only 50 percent of National Schools, 83 percent of Type 1AB schools, 33 percent of Type 1C schools, 20 percent of Type 2 schools and 33 percent of Type 3 schools, had sufficient classroom space. It should be noted that Type 3 schools in the survey included schools with Grades 1 to 8 and not

schools limited to Grades 1 to 5. The sample size is too small to break up the survey data further. However, the survey enumerators reported that, in general, schools which covered only Grades 1 to 5 were poorer and experienced a more acute shortage of resources than schools which covered Grades 1 to 8. The shortage of space is exacerbated by the absence of wall dividers in the classrooms of many schools, so that a high level of disturbance is experienced during classes.

Most schools possess science rooms, although there is a shortfall in Type 1C schools and Type 2 schools. However, some of the equipment in such rooms, in the majority of schools, was not in working order. Maintenance activity was poor. In addition, owing to the shortage of space, the science rooms are also occasionally used as classrooms and storerooms. This speeds up depreciation of equipment, especially brittle items like glassware. A shortage of workshops exists, especially in Type 1C schools and Type 2 schools. Storeroom space is also inadequate, particularly in Type 3 schools. Even in schools where storerooms existed, space was sometimes inadequate. Thus, broken items of furniture are stored in classrooms, or even in the library, because of the shortage of storeroom space. The problem is compounded by the absence of a system of speedy disposal of broken items. It should also be noted that the substantial additions to equipment, to bridge shortfalls and gaps, would increase the requirement for storeroom space.

Staff room facilities are inadequate, especially in Type 3 schools. The condition of existing staff rooms, in some schools, is also poor. In particular, where office space is inadequate, the staff room tends to double as an office. In addition, staff rooms are partially used as storerooms. Library facilities are poor. Most type 3 schools have no libraries. Among other types of schools, while a nominal library room exists, it is more a storage room for books and periodicals, donated at random in the past, than a functioning library. None of the schools surveyed had a trained librarian on staff. Libraries also tend to be used as classrooms during school hours, because of the shortage of classroom space. Type 1C, Type 2 and Type 3 schools experience a shortage of small and medium-sized desks and chairs. These items of furniture are used by primary school children. All types of schools experience a shortage of desks and chairs, which are used by pupils in the secondary school stage.

An acute shortage of facilities exists for teachers. This is partly a reflection of past teacher recruitment policies, where large numbers of teachers were employed as a solution to the problem of graduate unemployment. However, the shortage of facilities clearly lowers teacher performance. Schools also experience a shortage of facilities for their offices. This impairs the efficiency of the school administration. In addition, cupboards for the storage of teaching materials and consumables are in short supply.

Table 8.16

Availability of Basic Equipment and Facilities in Schools, by Type of School

Type of Equipment or Facility	National Schools %	Type 1AB Schools %	Type 1C Schools %	Type 2 Schools %	Type 3 Schools %
Adequate classroom space	50	83	33	20	33
Possess science rooms	100	100	83	80	-
Possess home science rooms	75	100	55	80	11
Possess workshops	100	83	33	20	-
Possess storerooms	100	83	83	80	33
Possess a staff room	75	83	83	80	56
Possess a library	100	100	83	80	11
Adequate small desks	100	100	83	80	78
Adequate small chairs	100	100	83	80	78
Adequate medium sized desks	100	100	60	80	89
Adequate medium sized chairs	100	100	60	80	89
Adequate pupil desks	75	66	50	40	89
Adequate pupil chairs	75	66	50	40	89
Adequate teacher desks	25	17	50	0	56
Adequate teacher chairs	25	17	50	0	56
Adequate office tables	25	17	17	0	22
Adequate cupboards	0	0	0	0	11
Water supply facilities	100	100	83	80	45
Telephone facilities	100	100	17	17	0
Electricity connection	100	100	66	80	11
Blackboards	75	50	66	60	66
Toilet facilities for students	100	100	100	100	100
Toilet facilities for teachers	100	100	83	100	100

Source: Aturupane 1997 Note:na = not applicable. Adequate classroom space is defined by the MEHE as an area of 12 square feet per student.

Type 3 schools are badly affected in terms of basic utilities, water supply, telephone facilities and electricity connections. Type 1C and Type 2 schools also experience a shortage of telephone facilities. Electricity and telephone connections depend on the provision of electricity and the availability of telecommunication facilities in the area in which the school is located. Hence, the solution to this problem depends largely on improvements to the general infrastructure. The inadequacy of classrooms is also reflected in a shortage of blackboards. For health reasons, the substitution of white boards for blackboards needs to be considered. Sanitation facilities were generally adequate, partly owing to past investments through donor assisted programmes and NGOs. However, the quality of sanitary facilities and hygiene levels appear to be poor.

Overall, the evidence suggests that schools are under resourced and poorly equipped. Further, Type 3 schools are the worst affected. It also needs to be noted that the sample survey of schools was conducted in the North Western Province, which is an average province in terms of wealth and level of economic development. Schools in the poorer, less developed provinces, like the Uva Province and the North Central Province, are likely to face far more acute shortages of equipment, furniture and basic facilities. In addition, schools in the war-affected North Eastern Province will need reconstruction when the war is over.

The shortage of facilities and equipment in schools is experienced most acutely at the primary level. In all types of schools, including the relatively well-endowed National and Type 1AB schools, whenever shortages are experienced, they are invariably in the primary section. Interviews with principals and teachers showed that among school administrators, teachers, students and parents considerably greater importance is directed to secondary education than to primary education. There appears to be three main reasons for this. First, it is the GCE O Level and GCE A Level that determine the future employment and earning prospects of students. Hence, these two schooling levels, that occur within the secondary stage, are perceived as the two most important points in the education system. Second, the prestige of a school depends on the number of years of schooling it offers, and its grading in the classification scheme of the MEHE. Thus, National Schools are the most prestigious, followed by Type 1AB schools, while Type 3 schools are the least important. As a result, schools tend to attach greater importance to their highest grades. Third, the most visible achievements of a school, whether in scholastic attainment or sports, are obtained by older children. Hence, secondary education occupies a more prominent position in the public eye. The perception that secondary education is more important than primary education is reflected in the allocation of resources at the school level.

MEDIUM-LEVEL AND HIGH-LEVEL FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT

The availability of teaching aids, medium-level and high-level items of educational facilities and equipment was also checked in the school survey in the North Western Province. The results are summarised in Table 8.17. This table shows that Type 3, Type 2 and Type 1C schools are the least endowed with facilities and equipment. In general, the schools possess basic teaching aids like globes and charts. This is mainly

the result of past donor assisted programmes that have supplied such items. However, schools are poorly endowed with such items of equipment as computers, printers, roneo machines and overhead projectors. Even in schools that possess such items, quantities are very small. For instance, the average number of computers among National schools is two, with the maximum being four. Only one National school had an overhead projector. The average number of roneo machines in National schools is two to three, with the maximum four. Overall, the availability and quantities of items of medium-level and high-level equipment are negligible.

Most of the items of equipment listed above have been obtained by schools either as donations from well-wishers or as purchases from their facility fees or PTA contributions. There is, as yet, no entitlement to such items from the education budget. Further, the sources of financing of such items leads to their infrequent purchase, and to the absence of a regular replacement cycle. Thus, some of the items of equipment, including nearly all the computers, were obsolete models.

Table 8.17

Availability of Teaching Aids and Medium-Level and High-Level Equipment in Schools, by Type of School

Type of Teaching Aid or Equipment	National Schools %	Type 1AB Schools %	Type 1C Schools %	Type 2 Schools %	Type 3 Schools %
Globes	100	83	100	20	33
Charts for teaching	100	100	100	0	0
Roneo machines	100	100	50	20	0
Photocopying machines	25	33	0	0	0
Radio sets	100	83	33	40	0
Television sets	100	100	33	20	0
Video cassette players	100	83	0	20	0
Typewriters	100	100	83	80	33
Printers	50	17	0	0	0
Computers	75	33	0	0	0
Overhead projectors	25	0	0	0	0

Source: Aturupane 1997

The primary stages of schools tend to possess the lowest quantities of medium-level and high-level equipment and quality inputs. For instance, no school had allocated computers, printers, television sets, video cassette players, radio sets, overhead projectors, roneo machines or photocopying machines for use in primary education.

CASE STUDIES OF SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL REVENUES

The present study sought to undertake a qualitative analysis of a sample of eight schools, with the objective of assessing the importance attached to primary education in the distribution of resources within schools.

The eight schools with primary classes (Grades 1-5) included one National school, one Type 1AB school, one Type 1C school, one Type 2 school, two Type 3 schools with classes up to Grade 8, and two Type 3 schools with classes up to Grade 5.

Principals and teachers in all schools were generally favourably disposed towards primary education. In particular, the point that the quality of primary education received by a child determines his/her future learning potential was clearly understood and appreciated by all principals and teachers. However, in the distribution of resources within schools, school authorities stated that they were generally under pressure to award greater prominence to the post-primary education level, especially in the non-Type 3 schools. The main reason for this was that communities in general, and parents in particular, attached greatest importance to the performance of children at the GCE O Level and GCE A Level stages. This is a rational choice from the perspective of parents concerned with the future economic prospects of their children. However, it does exert undue pressure on school authorities to award priority to secondary schools in resource allocation.

School time tables and teaching hours can be examined to obtain an idea of the relative proportions of teachers' time devoted to primary education and secondary education. This information is available in school census data. Along with salary data for teachers, the expenditure on primary teaching time and post-primary teaching time can be calculated. However, school reports are inadequate in estimating non-teacher expenditure, within schools, by level of education. For instance, a box of chalk brought to a school can be used by both primary and post-primary teachers. The relative shares of chalk used by the two groups of teachers are not recorded. Hence, the total costs of education in respect of primary and post-primary schooling cannot be estimated separately.

INCOMES OF SCHOOLS

In addition to their government grant, schools receive income from a variety of sources. These include SDS facilities fees, funds, donations, and revenue raised by school fairs, events and special appeals. The amount of income received from these sources was estimated by the author in the 120 sample survey of schools conducted in 1996. The distribution of revenue is shown in Table 8.18. It can be seen that Type 3 schools receive on average Rs. 79 per child per year. This is about Rs. 6.50 per student per month. Children in National schools, Type 1AB and Type 1C schools received considerably more. However, it is likely that this income is mainly spent on the post-primary grades.

A NORM-BASED UNIT COST RESOURCE ALLOCATION MECHANISM FOR THE EDUCATION SECTOR

The government of Sri Lanka plans to adopt a norm-based, unit cost resource allocation mechanism for the education sector in Sri Lanka. The preparatory work, including training of education planning officials, refinement of budgetary formats and pilot testing of the mechanism, took place in 1998-9. It is intended that by the year 2000 the new resource allocation mechanism could be implemented in the entire country.

Table 8.18

Average Total Income per Student, by School Type and Province

	Western Rs.	North Western Rs.	Central Rs.	All Provinces Rs.
Type 1AB Schools	198.01	393.82	258.93	283.59
Type 1C Schools	234.26	169.87	152.13	253.20
Type 2 Schools	195.46	263.38	67.10	156.44
Type 3 Schools	89.92	65.57	81.45	78.63
All Schools	246.93	249.36	159.09	215.32

Source: Aturupane 1996

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF A NORM-BASED, UNIT COST RESOURCE ALLOCATION MECHANISM

The conceptual framework of a cost-based, resource allocation mechanism for the education sector contains three main components:

(i) **Salaries, wages and associated payments.** These are the costs associated with labour and human resources required to run the education system. The items that fall into this category are teacher salaries, salaries of school principals, salaries of administrative staff, wages of lower grade employees, allowances, overtime payments, holiday pay and other emoluments. Typically, the major proportion of expenditure in the education system is devoted to the payments of teacher salaries. Hence, this component accounts for the highest share of the education budget.

(ii) **Expenditure on facilities, equipment and inputs.** These are costs associated with facilities, equipment and inputs that are required for the education system to function at a high level of quality. The facilities and inputs cover a wide array of items, ranging from civil works, equipment and instructional materials to consumables and stationery. These resources are complementary inputs to labour, and represent the productive physical assets and quality inputs of the education system.

(iii) **Maintenance and replacement expenditure.** These are costs associated with activities that are needed to maintain the stock of productive assets and resources of the education system and sustain a high level of performance.

A budgetary framework typically contains two components:

▪ **Recurrent expenditure.** This is defined as expenditure on items that are consumed within one calendar year, and hence need annual replenishment.

▪ **Capital expenditure.** This is defined as expenditure on items that are consumed over time periods in excess of one year, and hence do not require annual replenishment.

The relationship between the three components of a cost-based allocation mechanism and the two components of a budgetary framework are outlined in Table 8.19.

Table 8.19

The Relationship Between Components of a Cost-based Mechanism and a Budgetary Framework

Components of a Cost-based Mechanism	Components of a Budgetary Framework	
	Recurrent Expenditure	Capital Expenditure
Salaries, Wages and Associated Payments	Contained	-
Expenditure on Facilities, Equipment and Inputs	Contained	Contained
Maintenance and Replacement Expenditure	-	Contained

Source: Aturupane 1997

The classification in Table 8.19 shows that salaries, wages and associated payments appear as recurrent expenditure in a budget; expenditure on assets and inputs can appear as either recurrent expenditure or capital expenditure, depending on the particular item; and maintenance and replacement expenditure appear as capital expenditure.

Norms for an education system can be set for both components of the budgetary framework, recurrent and capital expenditure, and for all three components of the cost-based mechanism, salaries and wages, assets and inputs. Logically, norms for items of recurrent expenditure are set on a unit cost basis, as norms per student or norms per teacher. Norms for items of capital expenditure are set in terms related to students and teachers, such as a ratio of students to classroom space, but on the basis of ratios, rather than unit costs. A formal model of a norm-based, unit cost allocation mechanism is presented below.

A FORMAL MODEL OF A NORM-BASED UNIT COST RESOURCE ALLOCATION MECHANISM

Basic norms for productive inputs in general education can be divided into two components:

- Norms for student related educational inputs
- Norms for teacher related educational inputs

Student Related Educational Inputs

Student related educational inputs include items such as textbooks, workbooks, supplementary readers, uniforms, library books and periodicals, desks, chairs, science laboratory equipment and consumables, equipment and kits for technical subjects and consumables, equipment and material for learning activities like computing equipment

and related peripherals, equipment and material for sports and other extra-curricular activities.

Teacher Related Educational Inputs

Teacher related educational inputs typically consist of items such as teacher guides, stationery, blackboards, chalk, globes, maps, charts, rulers, visual aids (models, overhead projectors), mathematical sets, roneo machines, audio-visual aids like radios, television sets and video cassette players, photocopying machines, computers and printers.

Norms for Student Related Inputs and Teacher Related Inputs

The norms for items per student and per teacher can be defined, for a school with an S number of students, an I number of student related educational inputs, a T number of teachers and a J number of teacher related educational inputs, as follows.

N_{is} = Norm for the i'th item for student s, $i = 1,.......,I$
                                                           $s = 1,.......,S$

N_{jt} = Norm for the j'th item for teacher t, $j = 1,.......,J$
                                                            $t = 1,.......,T$

Relationship between Norms and Costs

The relationship between the norms and the implied costs of items can be outlined as follows. Define the unit cost of the i'th item for student related expenditure as C_i and the cost of the j'th item for teacher related expenditure as C_j. Then, the unit cost of student related expenditure, C_s, can be expressed as:

$$C_s = \sum_{i=1}^{I} C_i \qquad\qquad (1)$$

which presents the total cost per student as the sum of the cost of all items of expenditure per student implied by the norms, n.

The total cost of student related expenditure for all students is the sum of the costs per student, and can be expressed as:

$$C_s = \sum_{s=1}^{S} C_s \qquad\qquad (2)$$

Equation (2) above presents the total cost of student related expenditure as the sum of the costs per student across all students.

Similarly, the unit cost of teacher related expenditure can be expressed as:

$$C_t = \sum_{j=1}^{J} C_j \qquad\qquad (3)$$

which presents the total cost per teacher as the sum of the cost of all items of expenditure per teacher implied by the norms.

The total cost of teacher related expenditure for all teachers is the sum of the costs per teacher, and can be expressed as:

$$C_T = \sum_{t=1}^{T} C_t \qquad \text{(4)}$$

Equation (4) above presents the total cost of teacher related expenditure as the sum of the costs per teacher across all teachers.

The total recurrent cost of resources for a school, C_R, can be expressed as:

$$C_R = C_S + C_T + C_O \qquad \text{(5)}$$

where C_O = cost of other items, such as administration, energy, communications and overtime.

The formulae above are applicable to recurrent expenditure. For capital expenditure, the norms imply a desired stock of capital over a set of input items containing k elements. This desired capital stock can be denoted by K_{kD}. A school will also have an existing stock of these capital items. The existing stock can be denoted by K_{kE}.

The relationship between the desired stock and the existing stock can be written as:

$$\Delta K = K_{kD} - K_{kE} \qquad \text{(6)}$$

ΔK represents the gap between the actual and desired capital stock.

Where a gap exists between the desired stock and the existing stock, the schools needs to invest in items, over a period of time, to bridge the gap. If the annual costs of investment in capital item k is written as C_k, then the total cost of investment per year can be expressed as:

$$C_K = \sum_{k=1}^{K} C_k \qquad \text{(7)}$$

The total expenditure per year is the sum of annual expenditure on recurrent items and capital items:

$$C = C_s + C_r + C_O + C_K = C_R + C_K \qquad \text{(8)}$$

In terms of unit costs, C_U, the formula can be expressed as:

$$C_U = \frac{\sum_{s=1}^{S} C_s}{S} + \frac{\sum_{t=1}^{T} C_t}{T} + C_O + C_K \qquad \textbf{(9)}$$

Equity is achieved in this framework by allocating the same resources per student, for all students studying the same subject in the same grade. In principle, once the norms are set, costs calculated and resourcing plans worked out, this formula would provide a rational and equitable resource allocation mechanism.

Where schools are small in size, and the allocation they receive on a per student basis too low, there will be a minimum floor level of resources provided. Similarly, where schools are large, so that economics of scale can be exploited, an upper limit on the allocation to schools, per item, can be set.

THE NORM-BASED UNIT COST RESOURCE ALLOCATION MECHANISM IN ACTION: ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES

Norms for the first component of the cost mechanism, salaries and wages, are derived from the relationship between the level of teacher salaries and the student-teacher ratio. The student to teacher ratio, computed through a ready-reckoner formula, is part of the Teacher Education and Teacher Deployment (TETD) Project of the Ministry of Education (MEHE). In addition, under the World Bank sponsored General Education Project 2 (GEP2), a set of essential and desired curriculum related quality inputs and facilities recommended by the National Institute of Education (NIE) is to be delivered. Hence, the present study concentrates on additional components of the norm-based unit cost resource allocation mechanism: equipment, facilities and inputs, and maintenance and replacement activities, that can be related to the improvement of educational quality in primary schools.

Norms and unit costs for medium category capital inputs that improve the general quality of (primary) school education are outlined in Table 8.20. It should be noted that these norms are those of the author. They illustrate how a norm-based unit cost resource allocation mechanism could work.

Table 8.20

Norms and Unit Costs for Medium Category Capital Inputs

Capital Item	Price per Unit	Recommended Norm
Typewriters	40,000	One typewriter per 10 teachers
Roneo machines	60,000	One roneo machine per 25 teachers
Radio sets	10,000	One radio set per 500 students
White boards	4,000	One per classroom

Source: Author

Norms and unit costs for the categories of high quality capital items that improve the general quality of (primary) school education are presented in Table 8.21.

Table 8.21

Norms and Unit Costs for the Category of High-Quality Capital Inputs

Capital Item	Price per Unit (Rupees)	Recommended Norm
Photocopying machines	200,000	One per 100 teachers
Television sets	40,000	One per 400 students
Video cassette players	40,000	One per 400 students
Overhead projectors	35,000	One per 20 teachers
Computers	200,000	One for every five students in the GCE "A" Level classes and one for every five teachers
Printers	125,000	One laser-printer per ten computers

Source: Author

Norms and unit costs for replacement cycles of equipment are outlined in Table 8.22.

Table 8.22

Norms for Replacement Cycles for Equipment

Item	Suggested Replacement Cycle
Typewriters	Every five years
Roneo machines	Every five years
Radio sets	Every five years
Photocopying machines	Every five years
Television sets	Every five years
Video cassette players	Every five years
Overhead projectors	Every five years
Computers	Every five years
Printers	Every five years

Source: Author

Norms for basic items of recurrent expenditure are given in Table 8.23. These are based on norms which have been developed by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education.

Table 8.23

Categories of Basic Items of Recurrent Expenditures for which Norms Exist

Category of Recurrent Expenditure	Description of Items	Allocation Formula
Stationery	Paper, pens, pencils, paper clips, staplers, stapler pins, files etc.	Rs. 8,000 per school (maximum)
Chalk	Chalk for use on blackboards	Rs. 4,000 per school (maximum)
Repairs to equipment	Maintenance and repairs	Rs. 5,000 per school (maximum)
Building repairs	Maintenance and repairs	Rs. 5,000 per school (maximum)
Telephone costs	Half the telephone costs	Rs. 15,000 per school (maximum)
Electricity costs	Expenditure on electricity	The cost varies by school size and location. The highest expenditures are for National Schools in the Western Province, which cost an average of Rs. 83,000 per school.
Science Teaching	Elementary Science for School Years 4 to 5	Rs. 150 per school
	School Years 6 to 11, less than 150 students	Rs. 300 per school
	School Years 6 to 11, 150-500 students	Rs. 500 per school
	School Years 6 to 11, more than 500 students per school	Rs. 700 per school
	GCE A Level Science, Zoology	Rs. 8 per student
	GCE A Level Science, Biology	Rs. 2 per student
	GCE A Level Science, Chemistry	Rs. 2 per student
	GCE A Level Science, Physics	Rs. 2 per student
	LP gas for GCE A Level Science, less than 100 students	Rs. 800 per school
	LP gas for GCE A Level Science, more than 100 students	Rs. 1,000 per school
	LP gas for GCE O Level science, less than 500 students	Rs. 400 per school
	LP gas for GCE O Level Science, more than 500 students	Rs. 600 per school

Source: Ministry of Education and Higher Education

Norms for categories of recurrent expenditure needed to operate and maintain medium-quality equipment are given in Table 8.24.

Norms for categories of recurrent expenditure needed to operate and maintain high-quality equipment are given in Table 8.25.

Table 8.24

**Categories of Recurrent Items Needed to Operate and Maintain
the Equipment Recommended in the Medium-Level package**

Category	Description of Items	Unit Expenditures
Consumables for typewriter	Ribbons, erasing liquid, etc.	Rs. 2,000 per typewriter
Consumables for roneo machine	Paper for printing, stencil sheets, cleaning fluid, duplicating ink, etc.	Rs. 3,000 per roneo machine
Radio sets	Batteries and maintenance	Rs. 500 per radio set
White boards	Marker pens, dust cloth, etc.	Rs. 600 per board

Source: Author

Table 8.25

**Categories of Recurrent Items Needed to Operate and Maintain
the Equipment Recommended in the High-Level Package**

Category	Description of Items	Unit Expenditures
Consumables for photocopying machines	Photocopy paper, toner, maintenance fluid, brushes for the drum, etc.	Rs. 20,000 per photocopying machine
Television sets and video cassette players	Educational videos, cleaning fluid, maintenance	Rs. 10,000 per set of TV and video
Overhead projectors	Transparency sheets, pens and ink for use on transparencies, cleaning fluid and maintenance	Rs. 7,000 per overhead projector
Computers	Diskettes, maintenance, etc.	Rs. 5,000 per computer
Printers	Toner cartridges, paper for printing, maintenance fluids, repairs, etc.	Rs. 25,000 per printer

Source: Author

These norms, applied according to a norm-based unit cost resource allocation formula, would establish the foundation for high quality primary education in the country. Two worked examples of the implementation of norms are provided in Tables 8.26 and 8.27. Table 8.26 assumes a primary school running from school Grades 1 to 5. Table 8.27 assumes a junior school, running from school Grades 1 to 9, but with a separate primary section, Grades 1 to 5.

Overall, the cost per pupil of a primary student in a primary school would be higher than that of a primary student in a junior school. This is because the larger junior school would enable cost savings through economies of scale. At the same time, in view of the points made earlier about the distribution of utilised resources in the primary and post-primary sections of non-Type 3 schools, the greater unit cost of a primary student in a primary school may be offset by the greater utilisation of resources for students at this level.

Table 8.26

**Total Cost of the Medium-Level and High-Level Packages:
An Illustration for a Primary School (Rupees)**

Primary School	Number of items of equipment	Cost per item	Cost of equipment	Consumables per item	Cost of consumables and annual maintenance	Total cost
Typewriters	3	40,000	120,000	2,000	6,000	126,000
Roneo machines	1	60,000	60,000	3,000	3,000	63,000
Radio sets	1	10,000	10,000	500	500	10,500
Photo-copying machines	1	200,000	200,000	20,000	20,000	220,000
Television sets	2	40,000	80,000	5,000	10,000	90,000
Video Cassette recorders	2	40,000	80,000	5,000	10,000	90,000
Overhead Projectors	2	35,000	70,000	7,000	14,000	84,000
Computers	4	200,000	800,000	5,000	20,000	820,000
Printers	1	125,000	125,000	25,000	25,000	150,000
Total cost			1545000		108,500	1653,500
Cost per student					217	

Source: Author's calculations
Note: Assumed number of students = 500. Assumed number of teachers = 20

Table 8.27

**Total Cost of Medium-Level and High-Level Packages:
An Illustration for the Primary Section of a Junior School (Rupees)**

Junior School	Number of items of equipment	Cost per item	Cost of equipment	Consumables per item	Cost of consumables and annual maintenance	Total cost
Typewriters	5	40,000	200,000	2,000	10,000	210,000
Roneo machines	2	60,000	120,000	3,000	6,000	126,000
Radio sets	2	10,000	20,000	500	1,000	21,000
Photo-copying machines	1	200,000	200,000	20,000	20,000	220,000
Television sets	3	40,000	120,000	5,000	15,000	135,000
Video Cassette recorders	3	40,000	120,000	5,000	15,000	135,000
Overhead Projectors	3	35,000	105,000	7,000	21,000	126,000
Computers	10	200,000	2000,000	5,000	50,000	2050,000
Printers	1	125,000	125,000	25,000	25,000	150,000
Total cost			3010,000		163,500	3173,500
Cost per student					164	

Source:Author's calculations. Note: Assumed number of students = 1,000. Assumed number of teachers = 50

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the analysis in the preceding sections, the following principal conclusions can be drawn. Serious shortages of facilities, equipment, materials and consumables exist at all levels of schooling in Sri Lanka. The scarcity of resources is particularly acute at the primary level. The level of investment in education in Sri Lanka is relatively low in comparison with other developing countries. The scarcity of the stock of capital goods in the education sector can be attributed partly to the lack of resources. The adoption of a norm-based, unit cost resource allocation mechanism in Sri Lanka would enhance both efficiency and equity in the education sector. However, care needs to be taken to ensure that primary education would receive equal priority as that of other levels of education.

A norm-based, unit cost resource allocation mechanism is of particular importance in the development of a scientific framework for the provision of quality inputs into an education system. The framework offers a logical, readily comprehensible formula for the allocation of resources, according to a systematic priority ranking, over a wide range of educational quality inputs. Application of the framework also provides a rational basis for the calculation of expenditure and the prediction of future resource requirements. Given the current policy emphasis on improving the quality of education in Sri Lanka, a norm-based, unit cost mechanism provides the appropriate framework for the allocation of resources to the education sector.

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APPENDIX

Table 8.A1

**Average Recurrent Expenditure on Teaching Materials Per Teacher,
by School Type and Province**

	Western	North Western	Central	All Provinces
Type 1AB School	3,072.46	296.96	289.87	1,274.46
Type 1C School	226.09	82.63	92.00	122.62
Type 2 School	53.83	119.15	75.13	81.80
Type 3 School	145.24	-	26.45	56.15
All Schools	1,755.64	187.17	128.14	562.32

Table 8.A2

**Average Recurrent Expenditure on Library Materials Per Student,
by School Type and Province**

	Western	North Western	Central	All Provinces
Type 1AB School	17.85	19.58	15.75	17.72
Type 1C School	12.81	6.45	7.73	8.90
Type 2 School	18.06	9.12	4.28	9.18
Type 3 School	7.18	4.45	1.36	5.13
All Schools	14.77	12.98	9.74	12.28

Table 8.A3

**Average Recurrent Expenditure on Science Materials Per Student,
by School Type and Province**

	Western	North Western	Central	All Provinces
Type 1AB School	11.36	55.83	13.10	25.41
Type 1C School	16.69	9.43	15.05	13.78
Type 2 School	45.40	18.98	2.31	17.09
Type 3 School	3.05	0	3.31	3.22
All Schools	17.06	34.85	10.56	19.41

Table 8.A4

**Average Recurrent Expenditure on Sporting Materials
Per Student, School Type and Province**

	Western	North Western	Central	All Provinces
Type 1AB School	28.65	20.93	200.22	85.81
Type 1C School	9.71	6.17	22.86	14.32
Type 2 School	15.58	2.00	4.66	7.27
Type 3 School	3.37	2.51	4.84	3.62
All Schools	17.08	12.49	85.03	41.71

Table 8.A5

**Average Recurrent Expenditure on Other Extra-Curricular Activities
Per Student, by School Type and Province**

	Western	North Western	Central	All Provinces
Type 1AB School	10.15	3.76	14.95	9.24
Type 1C School	2.17	14.13	29.87	19.85
Type 2 School	6.04	0.84	6.97	5.39
Type 3 School	1.54	4.94	6.25	3.85
All Schools	6.36	5.11	15.85	9.53

Table 8.A6

**Average Recurrent Expenditure on Other Equipment
Per Student, by School Type and Province**

	Western	North Western	Central	All Provinces
Type 1AB School	4.23	30.62	34.09	22.98
Type 1C School	0	4.92	16.05	11.10
Type 2 School	1.03	0	2.31	2.52
Type 3 School	3.07	9.27	5.39	6.27
All Schools	3.98	18.70	15.96	14.19

Table 8.A7

**Average Recurrent Expenditure on Maintenance Spending
Per Student, by School Type and Province**

	Western	North Western	Central	All Provinces
Type 1AB School	37.86	26.66	32.86	32.94
Type 1C School	10.88	8.52	15.79	12.49
Type 2 School	38.65	8.52	11.41	18.17
Type 3 School	17.36	21.50	9.66	17.20
All Schools	27.60	17.31	20.98	22.08

Table 8.A8

**Average Recurrent Expenditure on School Uniforms
Per Student, by School Type and Province**

	Western	North Western	Central	All Provinces
Type 1AB School	248.55	281.04	274.35	267.98
Type 1C School	285.80	256.55	258.67	264.79
Type 2 School	256.46	237.71	250.33	248.18
Type 3 School	205.24	202.64	211.08	205.64
All Schools	248.52	251.65	256.57	252.52

Table 8.A9

**Average Recurrent Expenditure on School Textbooks
Per Student, by School Type and Province**

	Western	North Western	Central	All Provinces
Type 1AB School	523.84	590.01	487.72	533.86
Type 1C School	697.22	505.29	474.33	539.73
Type 2 School	460.00	250.38	374.57	359.70
Type 3 School	75.71	71.24	77.58	74.45
All Schools	454.08	405.64	410.32	422.06

Table 8.A10

**Average Recurrent Expenditure on Other Items
Per Student, by School Type and Province**

	Western	North Western	Central	All Provinces
Type 1AB School	-	-	-	-
Type 1C School	-	-	2.95	2.95
Type 2 School	-	-	12.60	12.60
Type 3 School	-	0.73	21.19	10.96
All Schools	-	0.73	12.34	10.01

Table 8.A11

**Average Recurrent Expenditure on Miscellaneous Items
Per Student, by School Type and Province**

	Western	North Western	Central	All Provinces
Type 1AB School	10.36	33.32	34.94	27.43
Type 1C School	8.14	8.01	5.29	6.30
Type 2 School	12.00	1.51	5.70	7.54
Type 3 School	4.40	3.24	9.88	5.64
All Schools	9.03	15.50	17.91	14.78

Table 8.A12

**Average Total Recurrent Expenditure
Per Student, by School Type and Province**

	Western	North Western	Central	All Provinces
Type 1AB School	4,335.86	4,148.67	3,435.27	3,973.27
Type 1C School	2,764.91	3,953.75	2,425.69	2,988.01
Type 2 School	2,570.91	3,198.67	1,677.72	2,344.63
Type 3 School	3,077.49	8,790.81	1,744.87	4,936.70
All Schools	3,437.91	4,862.12	2,503.73	3,560.29

CHAPTER 9

PLANNING, MONITORING & MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS FOR PRIMARY EDUCATION

Sugath Mallawarachchi and Muthu Sivagnanam

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the current status of planning, monitoring and information systems within the overall educational management system, at national, provincial, zonal, divisional and school level, with special reference to the stage of primary education.

THE EDUCATIONAL PLANNING SYSTEM IN SRI LANKA

Educational planning is not an entirely new concept in the Sri Lankan education system. A Planning and Research Branch was established in the Ministry of Education in 1968. The need for this arose particularly because the system of government schools experienced a sudden expansion of great magnitude due to the takeover of almost all the assisted and private schools and the teacher training colleges by the government in 1962. The takeover of assisted and private schools necessitated the decentralisation of administration to the provinces and districts. Earlier, the administration matters of the education system were handled by the Department of Education in Colombo, with the assistance of sub-offices under education officers in the provinces. With the schools taken over, the provincial sub-offices were upgraded to the level of sub-departments with greater responsibilities under Assistant Directors of Education. In 1966, the provincial sub-departments became full fledged departments under Directors of Education at the level of Heads of Departments. The decentralisation trend continued and regional departments of education were later established at district level.

These developments brought in practices in macro and micro level planning. The Planning and Research Branch, of rather modest proportions, grew with time and by the mid-1980s had developed into a full-fledged Policy, Planning and Review (PPR) Division under a Deputy Director General of Education.

In 1983, a major exercise in decentralising and reorganising education administration took place creating divisional offices under district level departments of education. Planning units were established in the district as well as in the divisional education offices and systematic micro level planning commenced at sub-regional levels with this exercise. A cadre of 75 planning officers and 25 chief planning officers was created to facilitate planning at provincial and sub-provincial levels. Each education division was divided into cohesive geographical units comprising ten to fifteen schools called zones. These zones were established for the purpose of planning resources.

Divisional plans were prepared and district plans were designed based on them. The National Education Plan was developed to encompass projects in provincial education plans. So, in 1983 a serious attempt at systematic bottom-up planning, encompassing the total school system, was made. During this period a set of guidelines for school level planning was issued to all schools by the Ministry of Education. Part One of these guidelines dealt with routine administrative activities of the schools and Part Two focused on development planning.

With the devolution of power to the provincial councils in 1989, the devolved educational functions were recentralised to the provincial level and provincial departments of education were created. In 1991, a fresh attempt at further decentralisation of provincial functions to the divisional level was made. The Divisional Education Office consisting of about 40 schools was entrusted with administrative and financial control as well as development of education in the division. A new structure called the Education Zone comprising three or four divisions was created to undertake, exclusively, supervision and monitoring. These new Education Zones were much larger than the zones established in 1983 and were expected to undertake different functions. The divisional office which was the main administrative unit immediately above the schools was supervised by the zonal office (MEHE 1992). Since this structure failed to achieve the expected objectives, the functions of the divisional office were transferred to the zonal office in 1995. The zonal education office at present is the main instrument of the Provincial Education Authorities (PEAs) for development planning at sub-provincial level. The monitoring and supervision of the zonal level activities were expected to be undertaken by additional provincial directors stationed at district level. The Divisional Education Office which is manned by a single officer was left with some minor functions such as the collection of annual returns and statistics, boards of surveys, distribution of inputs such as textbooks and course guides, monitoring school activities and liasing between the schools and the zonal education office.

NATIONAL LEVEL

The Policy, Planning and Monitoring (PPM, formerly the PPR) Division of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) is responsible for planning and programming at national level and monitoring and co-ordinating planning activities at provincial level. It is supposed to undertake school location planning, resource planning, analyse policy and study policy impact, maintain an educational management information system (EMIS), undertake strategic planning and research, and monitor progress and provide information. In 1999, the division which is under an additional secretary was divided into five branches which are headed by directors of education. These are:

- Policy, Planning and Monitoring Branch
- Financial Planning Branch
- Human Resources Development Branch
- External Affairs and Foreign Agencies Branch
- Education Management Information Systems Branch

There are a number of young officers who have followed masters and diploma courses in different fields of planning serving in this division at present. However, the skills and capabilities of these officers are not fully tapped due to several reasons. On the one hand there is disorganisation in the division. Although duties and responsibilities are already identified and assigned on the organisation chart, there seems to be no clarity as to who should be doing what in practice. Hence, there is confusion, duplication and a lack of co-ordination. Some officers are too busy all the time while some others are idling for want of anything to do. On the other hand, the division is burdened by a large amount of extraneous activity largely unconnected with policy analysis, planning or monitoring which uses up the valuable time of a considerable number of senior officers. These situations affect the performance of the division, hampering the planning activities that should be generally undertaken by a line ministry. For example, the PPM division does not undertake routine studies to assess the needs of the school system. Although very little planning activity was evident in the recent past, the establishment of Provincial Planning Units and the preparation of SYPPEPs and action plans have motivated the PPM Division to design development plans and implementation programmes. However, no visible work is being done by the EMIS and financial planning branches. The education sector of the five year Rolling National Public Investment Programme, which should really be prepared by the PPM division, is now done by the Chief Accountant's Office.

In 1995/96,at a considerable expense the ministry trained sixteen officers abroad in different aspects of educational planning to serve in the PPM division of the ministry. However, only eight work in the PPR division of the ministry. The majority of the others work in areas not directly connected with policy analysis, planning, programming, monitoring or review.

The line ministry pays little attention to primary education. Until very recently there was no separate branch in charge of primary education. Although the PPM division regularly collects statistics on age specific enrolments and computes primary enrolment rates, no plans have been designed so far to increase primary participation. There are no arrangements to monitor achievement levels in the primary cycle other than through results of the Grade 5 scholarship examination. There has never been any serious effort to ensure that all primary trained teachers are deployed to teach primary classes. The only development plans directed towards the primary stage are the ones developed by the foreign funded projects such as the PSDP and PSEDP which are limited in scope. Further, the PPM division responsible for development planning has had very little involvement in them.

PROVINCIAL LEVEL

Prior to 1983, little education planning was undertaken at sub-national level. As was described earlier, systematic micro level planning started at divisional and district levels with the decentralisation of educational administration in 1983. This practice, however, started to weaken with the establishment of divisional offices throughout the country. The main reason for this was the unavailability of officers trained in educational planning to be deployed to all divisional offices.

Devolution of education administration to the provinces in 1988 caused a split in administrative functions formerly performed by the then Regional Director of Education (RDE). Two executive roles were created where before there was only one. The Provincial Secretary (PSE) works in the provincial ministry of education. The Provincial Director of Education (PDE) works in the provincial department of education. In addition to the functions handed down by the centre, the PSEs took over some of the functions formerly performed by the RDEs including educational planning functions such as :

- Design of the Provincial Education Policy in accordance with the national policy
- Issue of directives and guidelines
- Preparation of the provincial budget
- Provision of allocations to the lower levels
- Deployment of teachers, and
- School work (in some instances)

Figure 9.1 depicts the structure of the Provincial Department of Education in which planning, EMIS and Monitoring, as well as quality assurance functions, are placed under a separate Additional Provincial Director (APD). This shows that the ministry officials who designed the structure intended to place a special emphasis on these activities. However, this aim has not been achieved.

Hardly any planning activities were undertaken at the level of the provincial department of education, and at provincial and sub-provincial levels planning was largely neglected.

In March 1993, the World Bank funded General Education Project commissioned the Academy for Education Development (AED), Washington DC, to study and report on strengthening strategic planning, policy analysis and formulation of the ministry. In August 1993, its report made six important recommendations.

1. The central ministry needs to focus on true strategic planning level issues. Administrative and quantitative planning should be the focus of the PPR within the MEHE, the provinces and divisions. Qualitative issues should be addressed, primarily, by the PPR and at the zonal level. To do this more training and support than is presently available will be required.

2. The MEHE should create a Co-ordinating Council for Educational Planning or equivalent to focus exclusively on strategic planning. The Co-ordinating Council should be composed of the senior members of several ministries and commissions, and focus on the ten to twenty year time horizon, to assist in positioning Sri Lanka for the twenty-first century and towards its emerging NIC status.

3. The restructuring of the Policy, Planning and Review (PPR) Division of the MEHE as a Directorate General for Educational Planning, with an Office for Policy Analysis, Research, Evaluation, and Educational Forecasting (PAREEF) and an Office for Technical Services and EMIS (TSEMIS). Ideally, the offices of Budgeting and those of Physical Planning would also be under the General Directorate. If such a transformation is

Figure 9.1

The Organisational Structure of a Provincial Department of Education
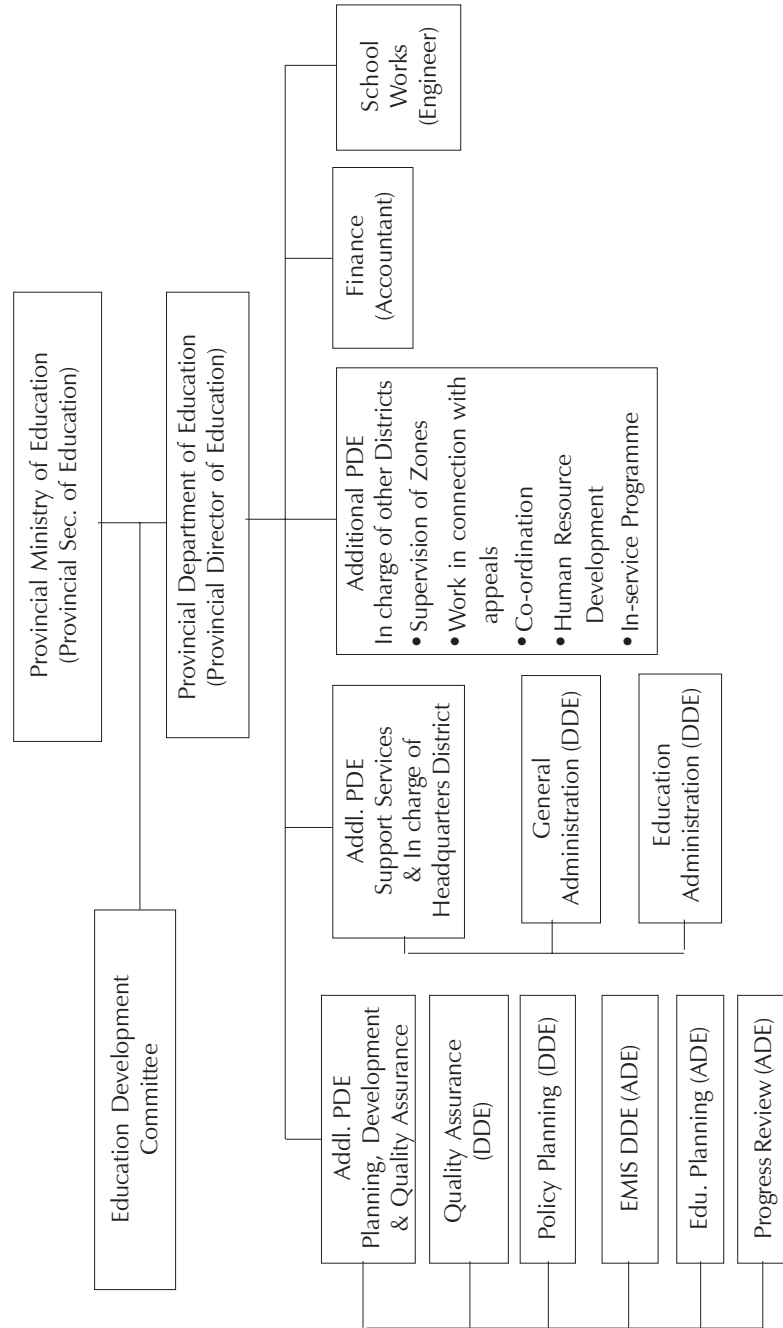
not possible, dramatically increasing co-ordination between existing units was recommended.

4. Co-ordinate and engage the services of many other applied research providers at the provincial and central level to assist the functions of the PPR. Other providers include the universities, institutes, and selected private groups. Create applied research models that can be issued, with minimal training and support, at the school and divisional levels.

5. Obtain additional external assistance in the following areas - initially centrally and later at the provincial and divisional levels:

   • Education forecasting and computer modelling
   • Streamlined educational training
   • Social science research and economics of education
   • Management information systems
   • Computer system operation
   • Policy analysis
   • Educational finance (critical with increased local taxation authority)
   • Manpower planning (matching manpower needs with manpower supply)

6. Recognise that those factors in education which can be measured, and which are measured and reviewed, will be the factors to which the educational system pays attention. Hence, a free and timely exchange of information is critical to harness local initiative, and to generate corrective action at the lowest possible level.

Following the recommendations of the AED Report (AED and LAMSCO 1993), planning units were established in the Provincial Departments of Education. Officers were identified to operate these units and a number of them were trained at the National Institute of Education Planning and Administration (NIEPA), India and the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) Manila. Others were trained locally. Links were established between these units and the PPR division of the ministry to co-ordinate provincial planning and render any assistance needed.

Despite these changes and the training provided, planning at provincial level remains weak. This is due to several reasons. The officers in charge of planning receive little support from top executives at provincial level. The day-to-day running of the educational system and routine activities take precedence over systematic education planning. In many provincial departments the planning unit has not even been given adequate space or personnel. The few officers who are assigned to education planning are constantly called upon to carry out other activities such as co-ordinating of examinations and competitions, distributing free text books and free uniforms, taking part in team inspections and attending meetings. Many of the officers who have been trained in planning have been assigned to do other work. The majority of the officers who man planning units lack proper training. There is little regular review of planning activities. Earlier there were regular monthly meetings of provincial planning officers at the ministry to review

the progress of planning activities. These also appear to have been discontinued. A concerted effort has to be made to streamline provincial educational planning and put it back on track.

Development planning in the primary stage was even weaker at provincial level until Provincial Planning Teams (PPTs) were established and trained by the Primary Education Planning Project (PEPP). Normally the provincial departments of education pay little attention to primary level data. No effort has been made to bring the non-schoolgoing primary age children into the education system. The assistance of the provincial authorities is obtained in the implementation of special projects launched by the centre and funded by aid agencies. This is done, in most instances, by creating special cells at provincial or district level which bear only weak links with the provincial planning set-up.

The provincial authorities do not make an effort to ensure that primary trained teachers are deployed to teach in the primary stage. Some primary trained teachers can be seen teaching in the secondary stage while untrained teachers serve in primary schools. It is a common practice for school principals to assign untrained teachers to the primary section and trained teachers to the secondary section in the belief that untrained teachers are suitable to teach primary classes but are unsuitable to teach secondary classes.

ZONAL LEVEL

The zonal education office has perhaps become the most important administrative unit in the provincial education structure. It is entrusted with all administrative and financial matters pertaining to the general education system, supervision, monitoring and quality control of curriculum implementation, in-service training of teachers, development planning, resource allocation and maintaining EMIS (MEHE 1992). Planning units have been established in most of the zonal education offices and personnel to operate them have been identified. However, educational planning at zonal level is even weaker than that of the provincial departments. The reasons are several.

Many of the zonal directors have little or no understanding of the importance of planning for the development of education. Hence, they have no interest in planning and provide little assistance to the educational planners. Many of the officers assigned to the planning units of the zonal offices have not had any formal training in educational planning. They have had little experience of planning and therefore are at a loss as to what is to be done. Zonal level planners are handicapped because they receive no professional assistance from the provincial departments or the line ministry. Officers who have been appointed to the education administrative service (Special Cadre Planning) and those who were trained in planning have not been posted to the planning units. Officers serving in zonal planning units are often required to undertake unrelated duties that the zonal directors deem to be more important. Thus, there is very little time left for them to carry out their main responsibilities.

The zonal education office is the main instrument in the organisational structure for planning and monitoring at sub-provincial level. Zonal planners are expected to have

close links with school level planning and provide necessary technical and logistical support for the design and implementation of school level plans. However, capabilities in and awareness about planning is weak among zonal officers. Support and guidance to schools from that quarter is the exception rather than the rule.

DIVISIONAL LEVEL

The education division is a small unit comprising about 40 schools at most, managed by a single officer. The duties of the divisional officers are several. They visit schools to ensure their smooth day-to-day operation and assist heads of schools to resolve minor problems. They undertake minor administrative tasks such as the approval of timetables, facilities fees estimates and boards of survey of Type 2 and 3 schools, the recommendation of minor repairs and approval of their expenditures, collection of annual returns and issuance of increment certificates. They supervise the master teachers. They ensure the adequate and timely supply of textbooks, teaching materials and other needs to schools and liaise between the zonal education office and the schools.

Hence, educational development planning is not one of the main responsibilities of the divisional officers. Although there are roughly 300 education divisions they are still in the formative stage, and some offices have not been set up yet. Therefore, no planning activity takes place at divisional level.

SCHOOL LEVEL

Although the Ministry of Education sent out a circular on school level planning in 1983 and regularly held training courses in planning for almost all heads of schools, systematic and meaningful planning has never taken root in the school system. The preparation of school plans in response to the circular was a mere paper exercise. A limited number of schools prepare plans, and these are preserved in school cupboards as exhibition items. Although the need for, and the importance of, preparing and implementing school level plans is emphasised at almost every seminar and training course for school principals, few of them take planning seriously.

The reasons for this disinterest and apathy on the part of the school principals seem to be many. Planning is a concept imposed upon the principals from above. Although lectures have been given at seminars/workshops as a part of training, planning has never been emphasised as a vital necessity to good management. Planning is not a high priority as far as school principals are concerned. Few schools have a cadre of non-academic staff and even these schools often do not have the positions filled. The large majority of principals have many roles - administrator, supervisor, counsellor, class teacher, accountant, store-keeper, clerk, office aide and porter too. Their workload is so heavy that they have neither the time nor the inclination to think about developmental planning. The provincial/zonal/divisional officers who visit schools on inspection/evaluation tasks seldom inquire after plans and planning. Their main concerns are the attendance registers, inventory books, facilities fees and SDS accounts. Hence the schools principals naturally place planning at a very low priority. Schools do not have clear-cut missions, goals or

targets. Therefore, they do not see the necessity to plan to achieve something which is non-existent. The only planning most of them undertake is preparing next year's facilities fees budget which, in many instances, is a routine exercise of rewriting current year's estimates. Some principals, however, prepare a calendar of events for the next year.

PLANNING AND RESOURCE ALLOCATION

The five year rolling Public Investment Programme (PIP) that is being prepared at the centre gives the ministry a certain degree of control over the budget allocations for capital expenditure. The Treasury is usually guided by the amount indicated in the PIP in allocating capital funds. Planned expenditures in special projects such as the Primary School Development Programme (PSDP) and the Development of Schools by Division (DSD) are also taken into account in allocating funds (both capital and recurrent).

The situation in the provinces is not the same. Development plans designed by the provincial departments have little bearing on the estimates prepared by the chief secretary. Although the Finance Commission allocates a block grant to the provinces based upon the estimates prepared by the Chief Secretary's Office, there is no guarantee that the money will be allocated to the different provincial ministries strictly in accordance with the estimates prepared earlier.

As there is no separate budget line for primary education activities the provincial officers in charge of primary education have very little control over funds. In many instances, priority is given to the secondary level over the primary in allocating scarce resources. Recently, there has been a move to remedy this situation and ensure that a fair share of the government allocation goes to the development of primary education. As a result, steps are being taken to create a separate budget line for primary education from the year 2000.

THE EDUCATIONAL MONITORING SYSTEM IN SRI LANKA

The Policy, Planning and Review Division of the MEHE is responsible for the design and application of a monitoring mechanism. It monitors the progress of different activities implemented by the line ministry and the provincial education ministries and departments. There are seven main instruments of monitoring.

NATIONAL LEVEL

Education Development Committee Meetings (EDC)

The monthly Education Development Committee meeting is chaired by the Secretary, MEHE. The Provincial Secretaries of Education, Provincial Directors of Education, representatives from the Department of National Planning and heads of various departments and divisions of the MEHE participate. At this meeting, the progress of different development projects of the MEHE implemented by the provincial authorities

are reviewed, based upon their current position in terms of capital expenditure against the allocation for the year. A review of physical progress is too complex for it to be undertaken at this meeting. Instead, as capital expenditure is correlated with physical progress, expenditure serves as a rough indicator of progress. Monthly targets are assumed to be roughly one-twelfth of the annual budgetary allocation. Tabulated information educed from the monthly reports, stating the percentage of financial expenditure against the annual allocation to the end of the month in review, controls the decision-making process and provides opportunity for adjustment and modification of inputs and process. However, the status of qualitative inputs and their progress are not monitored on a systematic basis at this meeting (Minutes EDC meetings, MEHE 1996-1997).

The line ministry, provincial ministries, provincial departments and the National Institute of Education (NIE) carry out activities related to quality inputs to schools. These activities include the following:

- provision of free textbooks
- preparation and provision of syllabi and teacher guides
- procurement of modern teaching/learning aids and distribution to schools
- supervision of colleges of education, teachers' colleges and schools
- recruitment and deployment of teachers, principals, master teachers and local supervisors
- training of management and supervisory personnel at various levels i.e. SLEAS officers, principals, sectional heads and master teachers
- provision of pre-service and in-service training to teachers
- professional evaluation of teachers and objective performance evaluation of officers

The planning and implementation of these important activities are not monitored at these meetings. No one is accountable for any shortfall in progress.

Primary education is not given the consideration it deserves and is submerged in deliberations that lack focus on the quality of primary education. Although strategies for quality improvement are discussed, their progress is seldom reviewed against benchmarks and targets.

An attempt was made to hold a second monthly meeting of the same senior staff to monitor aspects of the quality of education and to discuss issues that could emerge. This exercise turned out to be counterproductive and costly owing to the too frequent nature of the meeting and the excessive amount of information handled and the meeting was abandoned.

Meetings of the Senior Officers of the MEHE

These meeting are chaired by the secretary, MEHE with the participation of the senior officers of the MEHE. About five to six meetings are held in a year depending on need. The progress of the various departments of the MEHE in terms of their planned activities is discussed. This serves as a forum for problem solving and decision making in terms of

mid-course adjustments.

Staff Meetings at MEHE

These meetings are also chaired by the secretary, MEHE and attended by all the executive officers in the MEHE. The frequency of the meetings depends on the outcomes of the senior officers' meetings. An in-depth discussion of issues identified at the senior officers group meeting is undertaken to arrive at decisions to resolve problems. Progress of tasks and responsibilities assigned to different officers are discussed and the opportunity is used to modify or adjust inputs and process.

Technical Sub-Committee Meetings (TSC)

These meetings are held every month, two weeks before the monthly EDC meeting which was discussed earlier. The TSC meetings are chaired by the head of the PPR division of the MEHE with the participation of the engineers and accountants of the provincial education ministries and departments. The main task of these meetings is to assess the progress of each province in terms of civil works and the provision of furniture and equipment. Technical and financial issues are discussed, and appropriate information is fed to the provincial education authorities in order to facilitate decision making at the EDC meeting (Minutes TSC, MEHE 1996-1997).

Steering Committees Meetings

Close monitoring of activities of each foreign-funded project is undertaken by the steering committees of the respective projects established for this purpose. The secretary, MEHE, chairs these meetings which are held with the participation of the agencies involved in the relevant projects. The frequency of these meetings varies from project to project. The monitoring function at these meetings is limited to the project concerned and is carried out in detail to facilitate adjustments in objectives, inputs and execution. The Steering Committee of the Primary Education Planning Project (PEPP) is one of them.

Monthly Reports

Provinces send monthly reports on capital expenditure to the PPR division. They also send monthly summaries of expenditure of all items to the Chief Accountant of the MEHE for accounting purposes. The PPR division, which has the functional identity of monitoring at the MEHE, does not receive reports on progress of the activities to be carried out by the provinces to improve the quality of education.

Progress Control Charts

Gannt charts have been used by the PPR division to record information on progress of various activities of the different divisions of the MEHE. Gannt charts were displayed in the progress control room of the MEHE and were updated monthly. However, as the

officers assigned for this task were frequently called upon to undertake other activities, the updating of monitoring charts fell into neglect. Furthermore, this exercise was viewed unnecessary by higher officials and the progress control room has been allocated to some other purpose. The progress control room had no provision to focus on the primary stage of the system. Although the policy, planning and monitoring branch has now been placed under a Class 1 director, monitoring activities have so far not been revived.

WEAKNESSES IN THE MONITORING SYSTEM

National Level

The frequent nature of the EDC and TSC meetings render them costly and counterproductive. There has emerged a feeling among the participants that little is achieved through these exercises. The internal organisation of the PPR division remains weak. Although this division has personnel with technical competence in planning and monitoring, and responsibilities are clearly identified and assigned, the smooth functioning of the structure is hindered by the constant intrusion of unrelated and extraneous activities which keep the officers otherwise occupied. Activities related to quality improvement are not monitored by the MEHE. Primary education, which is accepted to be the foundation of the whole education system, is not given the focus it deserves in the current monitoring mechanism at national level. As there is no separate budgetary allocation for primary education, current monitoring mechanisms do not provide scope for reviewing the progress of the primary stage. However, some special projects placed under the PPR division have involved monitoring mechanisms with careful reporting at regular intervals in well designed and user-friendly formats. They record and update information for feedback. The monitoring mechanism includes frequent observation visits and regular review meetings.

Provincial Level

The main monitoring tool used by the provinces is the monthly meeting of the zonal directors. These meetings are used to review the implementation of routine activities and resolve problems. Concise reporting at regular intervals, the recording and updating of information flows through the monitoring exercise is hardly found, except for accounting purposes.

A recent structural change has created offices of additional provincial directors of education in each district which will be primarily responsible for coordinating and monitoring of zonal activities. This office is mobile and visits zones for observation and check up. However, such offices have not yet been established in all provinces.

Although the provincial departments collect data on primary grades, this is done as a routine matter. No attempt is made to analyse the primary level data for the purpose of monitoring performance. The only monitoring tool that is being used at present is the results of the Year 5 Scholarship examination. The provinces do not make any attempt

to monitor the achievement levels of the primary children. The additional provincial directors in charge of districts, whose main responsibility is supposed to be monitoring the performance of ZEO's and schools, are in almost all instances otherwise engaged. They are restricted to the provincial departments handling routine matters instead of visiting zonal offices and schools.

Zonal Level

The zones have the functional responsibility of monitoring the activities of divisional officers and schools in addition to their administrative functions. The divisional office consists of a divisional education officer with SLEAS grade and master teachers. These units are different from the earlier divisional education offices which were responsible for the administration of all aspects of schools and for the planning, implementation and monitoring of quality improvement activities at school level and divisional level. These responsibilities have now been shifted to the zonal offices leaving the divisional level officer as a facilitator and a link between the zonal office and the schools. Because of the administrative influence the zonal offices possess, they have real power to undertake effective supervision over the divisional offices and the schools. The zonal director supervises the schools with the help of subject specific SLEAS officers and master teachers who are expected to undertake systematic supervision of classroom teaching and learning activities. The zonal director monitors both the teaching and learning process and general management of schools with the help of officers at the zonal office and the divisional officer. Subject specific SLEAS officers and master teachers are especially assigned for the improvement of quality in teaching and learning activities, while other officers are deployed to look into institutional management aspects. The divisional officer is expected to monitor and facilitate general administrative aspects as well as the supervision of classroom teaching and learning activities by master teachers.

Zonal level monthly meetings are held to co-ordinate and review the activities of the field staff. Zonal directors of education are responsible for the monitoring of the implementation of curriculum at school level. In this exercise, they are assisted by specialist education officers and master teachers. The supervision visits to schools are not appropriately planned at present. The zones have not been provided with adequate officers and master teachers to carry out the task efficiently and effectively. According to the new organisational structure, a team of twelve subject specialist SLEAS officers should serve in each zonal education office to monitor curriculum implementation. However, none of the zonal offices has a full complement of specialist officers. As a result of the ad-hoc recruitment policy adopted in the past when recruiting master teachers, the majority are ill-equipped to fulfil the task of supportive supervision of the learning process in schools. Systematic recording of information pertaining to the monitoring of curriculum implementation is barely available in any zonal office. Primary education is treated as an unimportant area for monitoring purposes by many officers and therefore it is largely left to fend for itself. Primary education is not a priority at any level. Although there is cadre provision for two specialist SLEAS officers to be in charge of primary general subjects and primary mathematics and science, they have not yet been provided. Planned activities related to primary education are too scantily undertaken

to warrant purposeful monitoring.

The primary stage is treated as one of the subjects in the school curriculum. The integrated nature of its curriculum and the way it differs from the secondary stage in terms of methods of teaching/learning is not clearly understood by many at the operational level. The minimum conditions for making the primary stage of education effective and efficient are not provided as there is no systemic focus.

Divisional Education Office (DEO)

GEP 2 has recommended three administrative levels namely central, provincial and zonal in the organisational structure for the education system. A zone consists of about 160 schools. As this number is too large to be managed efficiently and effectively, MEHE has introduced a Divisional Education Office (DEO) for every 40 schools, to reduce the supervisor-supervised ratio to an acceptable level (World Bank PAD 1997).

The DEO links the schools with the zonal office. This unit resembles the circuit education office which was discontinued in 1983. The DEO is charged with responsibilities of monitoring the following:

- administrative supervision of the activities of Master Teachers attached to the DEO
- monitoring curriculum implementation at school level
- monitoring quality inputs such as in-service teacher training, supply of textbooks, syllabi, teachers' guides and materials for classroom teaching/learning activities
- monitoring the maintenance of the school plant
- monitoring the general administration and management of the school
- monitoring the accomplishment of curricular and co-curricular activities assigned to teachers and recommending the annual increments of teachers

School Level

The crucial operational level of the education system is the school. The principals, deputy principals and sectional heads such as grade co-ordinators and subject co-ordinators are responsible for the internal monitoring of academic activities at school level. The internal school monitoring system is very important as the monitoring by external education authorities are infrequent and not intensive. The system does not have a sufficient number of competent personnel to undertake well planned monitoring of school activities by the higher levels. The development of the school as a responsible autonomous unit and the establishment of an efficient internal monitoring system are advocated by the current practitioners in the system.

The number of sectional heads to assist the principal in internal supervision is determined on the basis of the size of the school in terms of number of pupils. Owing to inequality in teacher deployment in schools, many schools, especially a considerable number of primary schools located in remote areas, do not have adequate teachers to carry out at least the normal duty of teaching, let alone to assign sectional heads for internal supervision.

The principals of primary schools are not provided support staff to help in administrative work, and as a result, they attend to routine administrative duties themselves, at the expense of internal monitoring and supervision of classroom level academic activities. Some principals maintain checklists to record whether the teachers have schemes of work, plans of lessons and notes of lessons. This is a superfluous exercise to show officers visiting the schools that official requirements are conformed to. Most of the principals are not competent enough to organise and sustain an efficient and effective monitoring system in the schools. The monitoring system at school level fails to identify problems, fails to help the problem-solving process and fails to provide professional support to teachers.

THE EDUCATION MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM IN SRI LANKA

The Ministry of Education started collecting information about the education system, by way of an annual school census, from the early 1960s. Education statistics had been collected as far back as 1829. There is evidence that it was a regular exercise. The data collected during the early period of the school census was of a basic nature comprising pupil and teacher numbers. However, age specific data of pupils had been collected as far back as 1969. Gradually the data collection became more and more comprehensive and diversified.

In 1986, the annual collection of age specific pupil data, statistics on physical facilities and data on non-academic staff in schools was discontinued. Instead, data was collected once in five years. However, the annual collection of age specific pupil data was resumed in 1993.

Earlier, the data collected through the school census was processed manually and a limited number of tables were produced. In 1983, the ministry started using the mainframe computer of the Department of Examinations to process the school census. In 1985, the ministry installed a mainframe computer of its own to establish a computer based EMIS. This step facilitated the establishment of a more efficient database which made it possible to produce more varied statistical reports and also provided for making ad-hoc queries for specialised information. However, the use of information was restricted to the ministries and departments at the central level, universities, NGO's and a small circle of academics. Although the officers at divisional level collected the data from schools and forwarded them to the ministry through the provincial departments, neither the provincial authorities nor the divisional officers received processed statistics from the ministry for their own use. Hence, neither the schools nor the provincial authorities were motivated to conduct the school census as a serious exercise. This situation affected the accuracy and validity of data to a considerable extent. In addition, the above parties often delayed the return of enumeration schedules to the ministry resulting in delays in the production of census reports.

In 1995, with financial assistance from the World Bank General Education Project, a

modern computer system with all necessary peripherals was installed in the ministry. Computer systems were also supplied to all provincial departments of education and all zonal education offices (World Bank PIP 1997). It was expected that the data collected in the annual school census would be input at zonal level and then uploaded to the provincial computer systems to create provincial databases. The MEHE was to create its own database with aggregated data uploaded from the provincial departments. Further, the ministry was expected to access the provincial databases whenever detailed information was required. However, the zonal officers were not able to input the data and create their databases until recently. Even at this time the process does not take place smoothly and on time in all the zonal offices. Further, telephone communication for the MEHE computer system to access the provincial databases has still not been established.

NATIONAL LEVEL

The MEHE has a very extensive collection of information on all aspects of the general education system. Since 1983 statistics have been available on computer tape. Data since 1987 is available online on the IBM RISC 600 system recently installed in the ministry. However, qualitative data such as examination results and performance indicators are not available.

The Data Processing Branch of the ministry was created in 1985 combining the newly formed computer unit with the statistics unit which had existed since 1960s. Computer personnel were recruited and trained. Data processing commenced as a major activity of the PPR Division. At present, the ministry has a well equipped computer network spread throughout the different divisions, but this is not fully utilised.

Since 1994, the ministry started collecting data for each individual pupil and teacher. This was done to ensure the accuracy of data because there were a considerable number of careless errors by heads of schools in completing the enumeration schedules. However, this increased the amount of data items more than 30 fold which in turn, increased the data entry time substantially. Hence, this practice was discontinued. The dearth of data entry operators has also contributed to the delay in completing the processing of census data as quickly as desired. Even with the data input and processing distributed amongst the zonal offices, the production of statistical reports has been delayed for more than a year. Analytical information for 1997 such as drop-out rates, has not been processed even in 1999.

The PPR division has often been criticised that the data provided is unreliable. This is mainly due to the fact that the provinces come up with different figures, especially of teachers, at different times. The PPR division produces a limited number of statistical reports after each census. These are comprehensive but are of limited use due to the restricted number of copies produced. A statistical report consisting of data for 11 years (1982-1992) was published with financial assistance from UNICEF (UNICEF 1992). The second edition of this valuable publication is still to come although UNICEF was prepared to fund annual productions. It is unfortunate that the ministry has not started producing summarised booklets of statistical information to be made available to the public, although

it has the capacity to do so.

PROVINCIAL LEVEL

Most of the computer systems provided to the provincial departments as well as the system at the NIE are kept unused. The planning branches of the provincial departments do not seem to have taken much interest in establishing adequate databases to cater to their needs (Hall 1996a). The zonal education offices, which are responsible for inputting into the computers the data collected in the school census, are also expected to upload the data to the provincial systems once the processing is completed. It is the responsibility of the provincial department of education to ensure that this process takes place according to a set timetable. However, provincial departments have to often depend on the zonal offices to provide them with information when required. This leads to delays in collecting information seriously affecting their decision-making potential. Moreover, the accuracy of hastily collected data is often in doubt. It is necessary for the provincial departments of education to ensure the maintenance of an updated database at provincial level if they are to have an efficient management process.

The provincial departments do not feel the need for a comprehensive EMIS because they seldom use the data for serious planning. Trend data is not used for enrollment projections and hence teacher demand and resource needs in the future are not calculated. Requests to the centre for teachers are always based on the needs of the day. Resources are not supplied to the schools according to a medium or long term plan but in an ad hoc manner, mostly to satisfy politicians or influential principals. This invariably leads to serious disparities in provision of resources to schools thereby aggravating the inequalities among schools. Qualitative data is seldom used to plan intervention measures and therefore quality development of education cannot be monitored. This situation can only be corrected if serious development planning is undertaken. If planning is to be practiced as a useful exercise, the provincial authorities will need a comprehensive database and hence will realise the need to develop an efficient EMIS.

ZONAL LEVEL

Computer systems were provided to 87 zonal education offices in 1996 for the purpose of creating the first level of an EMIS database out of the source documents received from schools. Three officers from each of these offices were given initial training in data entry and in creating the database by the line ministry's DP staff. However, by 1999, a considerable number of zonal offices had still not made an effort to commence data entry work in respect of the 1996 school census. There are several reasons for this.

Due to various problems,construction work of the computer rooms has not been completed in some offices. Computers given to these offices are still in their original packaging. In some offices in which computers have been installed, the officers who were trained have either been transferred or deployed to other work. The zonal directors

in these offices have not taken any interest in remedying this situation. The officers who were trained in certain offices confess that they have not mastered the skills but make no attempt to improve themselves. They expect someone to assist them.

Many zonal directors demand that they be given additional staff to carry out data entry work. They complain that they are shortstaffed, but do not make an attempt to computerise some of the routine work undertaken manually at present to relieve some of the existing staff.

Above all, most of the zonal directors have not realised the importance of having a comprehensive ready-to-use EMIS on computer to assist their administrative and developmental activities, and therefore, do not take enough interest in organising their DP work. Unfortunately, the provincial departments too do not make an effort to take the necessary steps to see that the zonal databases are established to feed their databases. Some provincial departments had started entering census data at their offices instead of depending on the zones for their information requirements. The present practice in the zonal offices is to collect data from schools every time they need some information.

Although the zonal education office is supposed to be the basic administrative unit of the education administrative structure which is responsible for development planning and monitoring school level performance, none of the zonal offices have taken planning seriously. They neither analyse the data to understand trends and discover weaknesses nor do they do any forecasting to plan for future needs. Hence, there is no planning to obtain resources according to the needs of the schools in the zone.

This has seriously weakened the capability to influence provincial authorities in financial planning and resource allocation. Thus, they have become ill-equipped to perform the responsibility of undertaking planned development of education in their areas. The need for a database arises only if they function as planners without which it is impossible to achieve equity in education and improve quality.

DIVISIONAL LEVEL

As stated earlier, the divisional system is still in the formative stage and some divisional offices have not yet been set up. EMIS is a stranger to the offices which have been established. The divisional offices have not been provided with computers and are ill-equipped to organise EMIS. It may be useful if these offices are provided with a PC each so that they may set up their own databases. This may be a solution to some of the prevailing problems.

SCHOOL LEVEL

The PPR division of the MEHE prepared a booklet in 1985 with detailed guidelines on organising EMIS at the school level. This set of guidelines was sent to all schools for implementation. Although this scheme was internationally acclaimed, the heads of schools apparently did not share the sentiment. Establishing EMIS at school level has

been a failure. Although the better organised schools boast of a fairly good information base with classified data, very few, if any, have followed the guidelines faithfully.

Most of the schools do not have collected data at all. Perhaps, they may be of the opinion that it is a useless exercise to keep collected data when the source is at hand. However, the absence of a database has made the job difficult for school heads especially as the zonal office calls for information with annoying frequency. Lack of an efficient database has also hampered quality development in schools as the principals and teachers work in blissful ignorance even though the internal efficiency of the school could be much improved.

Many principals think that the frequent demand for information from higher levels is an unnecessary burden on them. More often than not they are late in providing the data, and when they do, their accuracy leaves much to be desired. Often the principals are too preoccupied with the day-to-day running of the school as they seldom have any office aides. Therefore, the more important data analysis for diagnosis and remedial measures for quality development are left untouched. It is unfortunate that they do not realise that a good EMIS will ease their burden to a great extent. Most heads of schools simply run their schools without taking the trouble to indulge in diagnostic studies to monitor performance and improve quality. Development of a school is normally considered as increasing enrolment, putting up buildings (preferably storied) and upgrading its status. Even school buildings are not requested or constructed according to a long-term plan but whatever can be had is accepted regardless of the need.

Quality development is usually measured in terms of the number (not the percentages) of children successful at Grade 5 scholarship, O Level and A Level examinations. No principal ever tries to measure the internal or external efficiency of the school or find out how many of the students have not achieved ELC. Hence, no serious measures are taken to improve quality or maintain standards. This situation seriously affects the performance of the school. If the schools analyse data and set up an EMIS, attention will be automatically drawn to its shortcomings and future needs paving the way to meaningful planning.

CONCLUSION

Planning, monitoring and information systems are vital components of an effective management system. Unfortunately an effective management system does not seem to have received due recognition in the education system, despite the fact that foreign funded projects such as GEP 1 and GEP 2 have highlighted its importance. If planning is to be used as an effective means of proper management and development of education it has to be undertaken as a regular serious exercise at all levels. The provincial authorities have a major responsibility in this. They should encourage the schools to prepare long/medium-term plans and annual action plans. The zones should base their plans on school plans and the provinces should base their plans upon zonal plans. The national plans should reflect the provincial plans. However, it is the MEHE which should take the

lead in this exercise and provide necessary support to the provinces. The officers who have been trained in planning should be relieved from other duties and posted to planning branches. Those who are untrained should be given a thorough training. One point to be stressed is that only those who are expected to continue serving in the planning branches and those who are earmarked for posting to them should be given training. The planners should be exempted from extraneous duties to do their work. Above all, the top managers should take a personal interest in the planning process. They should discuss plans and review progress of implementation at their monitoring committee meetings. Of course, the prepared plans have to be implemented for the process to be meaningful. Monitoring is part and parcel of planning and cannot be separated from it. There are, at present, sufficient mechanisms for monitoring. Even the schools have their staff meetings. What is necessary is to use them more effectively and meaningfully so that plan implementation is kept on track. An efficient information system is an essential prerequisite for planning as well as monitoring. Although expensive electronic equipment has been supplied to the zones, provinces and the ministry at considerable cost, they are not being utilised effectively (Hall 1996b). One of the major problems in the present EMIS is the inaccuracy of data. This is the result of using untrained and uninterested school principals as enumerators. It may be possible to select a sufficient number of officers from the present cadre of ISAs and train them as enumerators as a solution to this problem. The zonal offices as well as the provincial departments should have trained officers to handle the EMIS. The provincial computer systems should be linked to the MEHE computer to facilitate two way data communication. Most importantly, the top managers of the Ministry should have a personal involvement in the process of creating an efficient EMIS, planning and monitoring implementation without leaving these entirely in the hands of junior officers.

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CHAPTER 10

DONORS AND PRIMARY EDUCATION

Mahinda Ranaweera

DONOR ASSISTANCE FOR EDUCATION IN SRI LANKA

Since the early 1950s Sri Lanka has benefited from foreign funded projects in the education sector, particularly in the science and technical education fields. The volume of aid to education in 1982 was US$ 2.4 million. By 1995, it was US$ 33.36 million (National Planning Department, quoted in Little, Flavell, Theobold and Peiris 1995). In 1998, aid to education amounted to 6.6 percent of all foreign aid.

Large scale support for technical, vocational and university upgrading projects that had characterised the pattern of educational aid in the 1980s changed in the 1990s and, by 1994, external aid for education focused on primary and secondary school education. The major loans and grants for the quality improvement of primary and secondary education during this period came from the International Development Association (IDA)/World Bank, Asian Development Bank (ADB), the Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA) and the German Agency for Technical Co-operation (GTZ). The IDA/World Bank granted a loan to launch the first General Education Project (GEP-1) for the development of infrastructure, planning and management and capacity building at the provincial level. The ADB assisted the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) in the implementation of the Secondary Education Development Project (SEDP) for the development of the school curriculum, examination and evaluation practices, teacher education and infrastructure for secondary education. The SIDA grant focused mainly on the development of disadvantaged primary schools in the plantation districts and remote rural areas, and the development of distance education, special education and education management.

The GTZ aid supported a major programme in teacher education involving the building of a college of education for the pre-service education of teachers, setting up teacher resource centres for in-service education and developing primary schools in the plantation sector.

Since 1986, the following foreign funded projects have supported the development of primary and secondary education, including teacher education in Sri Lanka, through grants and loans (up to 1998):

DFID	English Teacher Education Project (ETEP), Primary English Language Project (PELP), Primary Education Planning Project (PEPP) and Primary Mathematics Projects (PMP), grants totalling £6.868 million
SIDA	Primary Schools Development Project (PSDP), Plantation Schools Education Development Project (PSEDP), grants totaling SEK 288.2 million
GTZ	Sri Pada College of Education Project (SPCoE), Teacher Training and Staff Development Project (TSDP) and Teacher In-service Training Project (TIP), grants totalling DM 34.48 million
ADB	Secondary Education Development Project (SEDP), loan totalling US $ 31 million
IDA/World Bank	First General Education Project (GEP-1), Teacher Education and Teacher Development Project (TETD) and Second General Education Project (GEP-2), credit totalling US $ 183.4 million
UNICEF	Primary Education Development Project (PEDP), grant totalling Rs.32.1 million during the period from 1990 to 1998
JICA	Development of selected primary schools, grant totalling 1,329 million Japanese Yen (1998)

The foreign assistance to education in the public investment programme has been projected to be 25 percent of capital expenditure over the period 1994-1998. The dialogue generated in the IDA-sponsored donor conferences held in 1996 and 1997 resulted in increased donor interest in the education sector and led to several donors undertaking complementary activities.

DONORS AND PRIMARY EDUCATION

Foreign donor assistance to primary education may be traced back to the 1980s when UNICEF supported the small schools project, and SIDA supported primary education in the Badulla district through the Integrated Rural Development Project (IRDP). However, it was in the 1990s that other foreign donors began to focus their attention on primary education. The main contribution came from SIDA through the two projects, PSDP and PSEDP. Other projects supported by SIDA such as distance education and the supply of paper for printing school textbooks also served the primary level through training of primary school teachers and providing textbooks for primary classes.

A major part of the GTZ-SPCoE project was focused on the primary level. The Sri Pada College of Education catered mainly for training primary teachers, and the resource centres and in-service programmes were also designed mainly to serve the needs of primary teachers. The more recent GTZ-TSDP project is aimed at quality improvement of primary level pre-service teacher education. The GTZ-TIP will improve the quality of primary teachers as well as secondary teachers through in-service education programmes. The three DFID projects, PELP, PEPP and PMP are all focused solely on the primary level. UNICEF has always concentrated its support in primary and pre-school education, both through formal and non-formal channels. It should be noted that with the exception of a few NGOs, UNICEF is the only donor to have recognised the importance of the non-formal and non-conventional approaches to primary education in order to achieve the goals of universal primary education and education for all.

Even though the ADB-funded SEDP is focused on secondary school education, its teacher education and school management components contribute indirectly to the primary level. This is achieved through capacity building of the colleges of education and the professional development of personnel engaged in primary education. The IDA/World Bank projects, GEP-1, TETD and GEP-2, all have significant components that contribute to the quality of primary education by way of physical inputs for infrastructure development, capacity building, teacher training (both pre-service and in-service) and measures to ensure equity in resource allocations. It may be noted that GEP-2 has given special emphasis to the primary level and strongly advocated certain structural changes in the school system in order to strengthen the independence of the management of the primary school. The norm-based unit cost system advocated in the financial component of GEP-2 is expected to improve the level of equity in allocation of resources to primary education. The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) project, initiated in 1998 to improve selected primary schools, is expected to continue to cover more districts islandwide in support of the primary school development programme of the government of Sri Lanka.

The recent interest shown by several donors in primary education has motivated the MEHE to strengthen the primary sections of the line ministry, as well as those in the field offices. The recently revised draft organisational structure of the MEHE provides for a well-staffed unit for primary education. The provincial and zonal offices will also have special units headed by specialist officers for primary education.

RECENT AND CURRENT PROJECTS/PROGRAMMES

DEPARTMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (DFID) PROJECTS

The earlier initiatives of DFID, formerly the Overseas Development Administration, UK (ODA), were relatively small and were focused on English teacher education. The English Teacher Education Project (ETEP) consisted of Regional English Support Centres (RESCs) established to provide resources and advice to teachers. Under the 1988–91 Regional Support Project, funds were used to equip the centres, to train local RESC staff

in-country and in the UK, and to facilitate the work of volunteers working under the auspices of Voluntary Service Overseas. The total project expenditure was £ 970,000.

The ODA has also funded a distance education project based at the Open University of Sri Lanka (OUSL) aimed at strengthening its research capability, developing a more appropriate and flexible approach to student needs and increasing the efficiency of the production and administrative systems. The project budget was £ 770,000.

More recently, DFID commissioned three new projects specifically for the primary level, viz.,
- Primary English Language Project (PELP)
- Primary Education Planning Project (PEPP)
- Primary Mathematics Project (PMP)

Primary English Language Project (PELP)

The *goal* of PELP, is to increase within a timeframe of five years from September 1996 to August 2001, the proportion of children with good foundation skills in English in primary schools. Its more specific *purpose* is to improve the quality of teaching of basic English language skills in primary schools in Sri Lanka. This will be realised through a change in the attitudes and skills of teachers of English in primary schools, manifested in participation in teacher development activities; local sharing of good classroom practices; application of new ideas in the classroom based on RESC courses and teacher´s guides; receptivity towards the new curriculum for Grades 3-5 and the ability to use the new materials with confidence and skill.

There are five principal *outputs* of the PELP. They are: (i) teacher´s guides for activity-based oral English in Grades 1 and 2; (ii) new syllabuses for Grades 3 - 5 English prepared in conformity with the National Education Commission (NEC) / National Institute of Education (NIE) guidelines; (iii) new textbooks, workbooks and teachers' guides for Grades 3 - 5 English; (iv) a sustainable system for in-service teacher training for English teachers at the primary level through RESCs; and, (v) the enhanced capacity within MEHE/NIE to manage curriculum renewal for primary English.

PELP is linked with the NIE and zonal education offices, and is managed by the British Council. It is operated on a budget of £ 2.7 million (PELP 1998).

Primary Education Planning Project (PEPP)

This project which is linked with the MEHE, provincial and zonal education offices, has a timeframe of four years from 1997-2000. The *goal* of PEPP is "the strengthened capacity of MEHE and provincial authorities of education to plan, manage, monitor and evaluate primary education programmes within the framework of the National Education Reforms" (PEPP 1998). Its more specific *purpose* is the production of a five-year National Plan for Primary Education (2000-2004) and a parallel set of six-year Provincial Plans (1999-2004). All plans will be in their initial stages of implementation by the end of the

project in 2000. These plans are intended to support and sustain the process of implementing the education reforms in primary education.

The *outputs* of the PEPP include training in planning for staff at the national, provincial and zonal levels; the establishment of planning teams at the national and provincial levels; the production and dissemination of long-range national and provincial plans; and, the creation of public awareness of the issues of primary education.

The project is managed by Cambridge Education Consultants and has a budget of £2,201,000 of which £1,066,000 is a grant provided by DFID and £1,135,000 is funded by the government of Sri Lanka (PEPP 1998).

Primary Mathematics Project (PMP)

The stated *goal* of PMP, whose timeframe is five years from March 1998 to March 2003, is "increased mathematical skills among junior school children in Sri Lanka". The *purpose* is stated to be "improved quality of teaching and learning in mathematics in primary schools in Sri Lanka".

The *outputs* are expected to be improvements in the quality of pre-service and in-service training of primary mathematics teachers; a new mathematics curriculum and materials along with a sustainable process of curriculum development; a system for monitoring the performance of pupils and teachers in primary mathematics; and, raising public and professional awareness of issues in primary mathematics.

The project which is managed by the Cambridge Education Consultants has a total budget of £4,915,600 of which £3,102,450 is provided as a grant by DFID (PMP 1998).

SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (SIDA) PROJECTS

Support to education by the SIDA began in 1978/80. Since 1986, SIDA has supported five types of projects; (i) the Plantation Schools Education Development Project (PSEDP); (ii) the Primary Schools Development Project (PSDP); (iii) distance education for training untrained teachers; (iv) special education; and (v) institutional development for disadvantaged schools.

Although Sweden intended to phase out support for the education programme in 1998, co-operation was extended by one more year to the end of 1999. This was to cover a few activities of high strategic value for the enhancement of sustainability and Sri Lankan ownership of achievements made during the twelve year programme period. The total SIDA commitment for the period (1994-1999) amounted to SEK 158.2 million (SIDA 1999).

Plantation Schools Education Development Project (PSEDP)

The *goal* of the PSEDP, which ran from July 1986 to December 1998, was the

development of education in schools in the plantation areas and their integration into the national system of education. The *purpose* was stated as "enhancing the learning environment in the plantation primary schools and thereby helping the children to achieve the national level goal of primary education".

The expected *outputs* were an increased enrolment ratio, reduced dropout rate, reduced repetition rate, increased promotion rate, increased transition from primary to secondary for students, and improved pedagogical skills of primary teachers. Over the period, a total of 663 schools were included in the quality development programme, and 422 schools were rehabilitated or constructed. The project was managed by the PSEDP unit based in the Plantations Unit of the MEHE. Its total grant from SIDA was SEK 143.56 million.

Primary Schools Development Project (PSDP)

The *goal* of PSDP, which ran from June 1986 to December 1998, was the development of primary schools in disadvantaged areas. The 'objectives' were to increase achievement levels in the two main skill building subjects, namely mother tongue and mathematics; to increase the participation rate in the 5-14 age group including those who have not entered the primary stage and who have dropped out prematurely; to bridge inter-school disparities in the supply of facilities by the provision of infrastructure and basic physical needs.

Over the period a total of 458 schools were included in the quality development programme and 504 in the infrastructure programme. The project was managed by the PSDP unit of the MEHE, with a total grant from SIDA of SEK 44.58 million.

Distance Teacher Education

The distance teacher education programme implemented through the NIE provided support for a 3-year initial teacher training course developed in 24 subject areas. Over 50,000 teachers in service were trained by this distance education programme from 1982-1997, the largest number being in primary education. This programme disbursed SEK 60.23 million from July 1986 to June 1999.

Special Education

The Special Education Project ran from July 1986 to December 1999. Its *goal* was the improvement of special education provisions to ensure the acceptance of the disabled into society. The objectives included "increasing the enrolment of children with special needs in ordinary schools, increasing the competencies of teachers in ordinary schools to cope with the children with special needs and increasing awareness in the total school system of educational provisions for children with special needs".

The anticipated *outputs* were the enhanced competencies of educational professionals in special education, improved quality in the provision of special education, and the importance of special education popularized. The project disbursed SEK 15.14 million and was managed by the Special Education Unit of NIE.

Institutional Development of Disadvantaged Schools

The *goal* of this project which ran from July 1992 to December 1998 was to develop the culture of institutional development in the schools phased out by PSEDP and PSDP (above). The *purpose* was to develop the capacity of principals and teachers to undertake self-assessment and to plan for self-renewing activities with a view to the institutional development of the schools. This work was undertaken using a participatory approach.

The project sought the *outputs* of principals and teachers competent in making schools self-improving organizations and published documents to disseminate new information on institutional development of schools. The project was managed by the Department of Educational Management Development in the NIE.

GERMAN AGENCY FOR TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION (GTZ) PROJECTS

The GTZ began its support for education in Sri Lanka with the Sri Pada College of Education (SPCoE) project in 1986. Since then, the GTZ has continued to support primary education, through the TSDP and TIP projects, in collaboration with other donors.

Sri Pada College of Education (SPCoE)

The overall *goal* of the project was the improvement of basic education in the plantation districts through improved pre-service and in-service education of teachers. Its main components were the construction and equipment of the SPCoE; infrastructure development in a number of selected schools in the vicinity of the college; the development of learning/teaching materials; professional development of college staff; conducting in-service training programmes for primary teachers through the 'Field Unit´ attached to the college; and, development of a teachers´ centre to serve each of the school clusters identified by the project. The timeframe for the project was twelve years, from 1986-1998.

The SPCoE is now functioning at nearly full capacity (about 500 trainees), 75 percent Tamil-medium and 25 percent Sinhala-medium, all of whom are from the plantation districts. The project is funded by a grant totalling DM 28.38 million from the German government (IKO–CONSULT 1996).

Teacher Training and Staff Development Project (TSDP)

The TSDP with a timeframe of five years from 1998-2002, is designed to cover the pre-service training component for primary teachers in the national colleges of education. It is part of the major Teacher Education and Teacher Development Project (TETDP) launched by the MEHE in 1996 with IDA/World Bank support, within the framework of the National Authority on Teacher Education (NATE). The *goal* of TSDP is to improve the quality of teaching/learning in primary schools in Sri Lanka. The *purpose* is to improve the quality of primary level pre-service training of teachers in national colleges of education.

The *outputs* will be a new primary pre-service teacher training curriculum and teaching/learning materials for the National Colleges of Education, guidelines for teaching practice and internship, and orientation programmes for professional development of college staff to upgrade and update their professional competencies.

The project has links with NATE, NIE, NCoEs and the Chief Commissioner for Teacher Education and is funded by a grant amounting to DM 3.1 million from the German government (TSDP 1997).

Teacher In-service Training Project (TIP)

The TIP, with a timespan of 5 years from 1999 - 2003, is designed to cover the in-service and continuing education of teachers in the major teacher education programme of MEHE. The *goal* of the project is to improve the quality of in-service training through capacity building for learner-centred teaching approaches, and upgrading and updating the knowledge and competencies of teachers. The main *outputs* will be the development of a *concept* for in-service and continuing education at the central/provincial levels, improvement of the management capacity of in-service training staff, the development of training programmes, the development of a system for monitoring and impact evaluation, development of teaching/learning materials and support for the effective functioning of teachers´ centres and In-service Advisors (ISA's). The project has a budget of DM 3 million provided as a grant by the German government (TIP 1997).

ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK PROJECTS (ADB)

As a result of a loan agreement signed between the government of Sri Lanka and the ADB, the Secondary Education Development Project (SEDP) became operative from 1994. The *goal* of the SEDP is the quality improvement of secondary education i.e. from Grades 6-13 through curriculum development, teacher education, improvement of examinations and evaluation practices, and development of selected schools.

Although the project focuses mainly on the secondary level, the teacher education and improvement of evaluation practices components have a significant bearing on the quality improvement of primary education (ADB 1997).

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION (WORLD BANK) PROJECTS

IDA/World Bank support for education began in 1990 with the implementation of the first General Education Project (GEP-1), 1990-1995. The *purpose* of this project was the development of infrastructure, planning and management, and capacity building at the provincial level. Some of the inputs of this project directly benefited primary education, e.g. strengthening infrastructure of Type 2 and 3 schools in rural areas and management training for principals.

The successful completion of this project led to the development of two more major projects, linked to the MEHE educational reforms programme, on teacher education and general education, TETD and GEP-2.

Teacher Education and Teacher Deployment Project (TETD)

TETD has a timeframe of 5 years from 1996-2001, and is designed to implement the government´s teacher education and teacher deployment strategies. The project *goal* is to improve the quality, equity, cost effectiveness and coverage in education by:

- improving education attainment and equity by having better trained teachers
- making the system more efficient by rationalising teacher recruitment, deployment and training policies
- making more effective use of education expenditure through rationalising teacher members and their deployment
- improving the quality of teacher education by measures to improve the co-ordination, quality and certification policies
- making the teacher education system more effective through rationalising the number and geographical distribution of teacher training institutions.

The main outputs of the project include, among others; (i) establishing the National Authority on Teacher Education (NATE) to plan, upgrade and co-ordinate teacher education programmes, (ii) implementing a new pre-service teacher education curriculum for national colleges of education, and (iii) constructing and equipping five new national colleges of education. In relation to teacher education at primary level, this project works in close collaboration with other donors, DFID, GTZ and SIDA (World Bank 1996).

Second General Education Project (GEP-2)

The Second General Education Project (GEP-2), with a five year timeframe, 1998–2002, is a continuation of GEP-1 with wider objectives covering all components of the education system except teacher education (which is already covered by TETD). It has seven major components, namely, curriculum development; textbooks and education publications; school libraries and documentation services; school rationalisation and physical quality inputs; management and organisation structures of MEHE, NIE and UGC; financing education and research studies. The project *goal* is to improve the quality, equity, access, management, financing, internal and external efficiency of the education system in Sri Lanka.

It should be noted that through this project, for the first time in the history of education development in Sri Lanka, a comprehensive systems approach has been adopted, with activities and inputs covering all aspects of the general education system (World Bank 1997).

UNICEF PROJECTS

UNICEF supported education sector activities between 1991 and 1996 in non-formal education, primary education and early childhood development. The non-formal education project was aimed at providing educational opportunities for children and

youth who were left out or insufficiently served by the formal system. In primary education, UNICEF supported the development of "an experimental model of school based structures and procedures aimed at improvements of quality of education at the primary level to overcome disparities in the quality and relevance of curriculum implementation, the use of inappropriate teaching methods and learning materials" (Little et al 1995).

Currently, UNICEF is supporting the MEHE in its preparation for the implementation of the primary education reforms in the Gampaha District and in the preparation of teaching/learning materials and in-service training of teachers. The Home Based Early Childhood Development Project is carried out through the Children's Secretariat, and is aimed at pre-school aged children in very disadvantaged communities.

THE ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF DONOR SUPPORT

One of the most obvious advantages of donor support is the financial assistance which supplements the limited government budget, particularly in the form of scarce foreign exchange, enabling the government to undertake programmes that would not have been possible due to budgetary constraints. In addition to this monetary benefit, the technical assistance of consultants with a wide range of international experience is considered to be very valuable. This exposure of local education policy makers and planners to international trends and innovations can have a high catalytic effect on educational reforms and development activities in Sri Lanka. Linked to this is the capacity building that occurs through professional development of the local staff. They benefit from the experience and expertise of their international counterparts which helps prepare them to become future leaders with responsibilities in various specialised fields.

Another noteworthy feature of some foreign assisted programmes is the systematic manner in which the projects are developed, particularly the preliminary surveys, studies and analyses that are undertaken. These are of much diagnostic value to understand the problems and issues in the system, the actual needs to be met and the remedial action to be taken. This research-based systematic approach to educational development work serves as a good example for local authorities to note and adopt when they launch ambitious reform programmes themselves.

The primary education projects implemented in recent times have had a significant impact on an official policy shift giving more recognition to primary education. This has led to several policy decisions that were taken to meet a long felt need to give primary education its due place in the education system. Some of those decisions include providing senior level posts for primary education both in the MEHE and field offices, restructuring of schools, making the primary sections more autonomous and introducing more equitable resource allocation mechanisms to ensure provision of adequate resources to primary schools.

Some of the disadvantages encountered in foreign funded projects arise out of the

dichotomy that exists between the 'donors' and the 'recipients'; between the 'foreign expert' (usually from countries of the North) and the local counterparts. This may result in projects whose goals, aims, objectives and outputs are not relevant to or are out-of-step, or even in conflict, with the actual needs of the recipient. Hence a shift in the conception and functions of aid is needed. The dichotomous relations mentioned above could be replaced by 'partnerships' in which donors work very closely and with considerable understanding and empathy with their local counterparts on a common agenda geared to national goals and aspirations. Needless to say, if donors have their own agenda which the recipients are expected to accommodate, little is eventually achieved.

Lack of such common understanding may cause problems such as the issue of sustainability both in terms of budgetary constraints and availability of competent manpower; difficulties governments face in meeting the conditions and demands attached to aid agreement (donors dictating terms to the government); and the failure of donors to provide the high quality expertise and technical assistance expected. Instances of foreign experts trying to sell their 'packages' developed during some previous assignment, irrespective of their validity and relevance for another situation, are not uncommon.

Problems may also arise when a large number of projects run concurrently. There can be overlap and duplication as, for example, with the teacher education component of various ongoing projects of the World Bank, ADB, DFID and GTZ. This causes a wastage of resources. The government may not have the capacity to provide the expected local counterpart support and the necessary co-ordination. Certain problems can also arise as a result of a difference in salaries and allowances paid to the project staff funded by donor aid, and local payment rates which are usually much lower. This can have the counterproductive effect by demotivating local personnel.

THE PRIMARY EDUCATION REFORMS AND DONORS: WAYS FORWARD

This is, perhaps, the first time that a major national level education reform programme in Sri Lanka is being supported by so many donor funded projects simultaneously. This has, no doubt, fortified government's funding by supplementing the budget and providing much needed technical assistance. In addition to the advantages gained from the donor funded projects mentioned earlier, the donors may consider further contributions in order to support the government's efforts for an improved system of education.

In this regard, it will be very productive if donors can use their influence to convince the government, especially the political leadership, of the need for policy analysis and research-based decision making as opposed to political expediency in the planning and management of education reforms. It should be emphasised that short-term political advantages gained through, for example, recruitment of large numbers of untrained teachers and the indiscriminate construction of school buildings should give way to

long-term educational advantages, through, for example, a rational scheme for recruitment and the deployment of teachers and the rationalisation of the school system. Quality inputs that are pedagogically sound and most cost effective, but not necessarily politically 'glamourous', should be identified.

Attention should also be paid to the importance of active community participation in primary education. A well planned professional campaign to educate the people, especially parents, on the philosophy and vision of the primary education reforms should receive the attention of donors.

The strengthening of the monitoring and evaluation of the reforms programme is another area that needs more attention. It will also be necessary, at appropriate stages, to conduct impact evaluation studies of the reforms programme to determine its effectiveness. Based on the feedback from the monitoring and evaluation actions, a viable, cyclical curriculum development programme could be supported. There should also be a parallel in-service teacher education programme which, as far as possible, should adopt classroom-based training strategies to meet individual needs as opposed to mass scale in-service workshops.

Donors and the government should agree on a common agenda to ensure that the aid provided is utilised to the maximum to support the education reforms goals. Hence, a policy dialogue with all the relevant government stakeholders, (MEHE, NEC, NIE, UGC, Provincial Ministries of Education, Ministry of Finance, Department of National Planning and External Resources) becomes an important prerequisite for planning donor assistance to education. It is also necessary to ensure donor co-ordination through frequent meetings as those sponsored by the IDA/World Bank in 1997 and 1998. The policy dialogue should be initiated by the NEC in collaboration with the Presidential Task Force for Education Reforms (both directly responsible to the President), rather than by a single ministry or department, in order to give it sufficient 'clout' to enforce the decisions once agreement has been reached. There should also be a high level committee with responsibilities from the relevant ministries, departments and authorities to co-ordinate and monitor the smooth translation of policy objectives of all foreign funded projects in the education sector into action. This becomes important particularly when there is a large influx of projects all running concurrently.

There is an urgent need to educate the political decision makers both at the national and provincial levels, especially with regard to recent trends in education and their relevance to long-term educational reforms and programmes in Sri Lanka.

In addition to the policy dialogue mentioned above, the need to involve the local authorities in planning the projects and in the selection of consultants should be recognised. A participatory planning mechanism with the stakeholders (for example, the ZOPP method used by the GTZ) may be useful in this regard. Such mechanisms should enable the donors and the government to consider several options and select the best.

Donors should review co-operation and assistance offered to examine non-traditional

forms. For example, sending experts to developing countries and sponsoring students from such countries for training abroad is no longer the best or only way of providing assistance. New forms of co-operation of mutual benefit based on the principle of 'partnership' should be explored. These may involve, among others, building a long-term capacity for research and development, promoting diffusion of information on innovative practices and experiences, promoting co-operation and exchanges within regional groups having common interests and stressing the international dimensions of education.

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* Editor's note: We are especially grateful to colleagues in the MEHE and NIE who provided project information for this chapter.