Wilfred Perera

Improving school functioning
- the inschool and out of school blend -
the Sri Lankan effort
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Wilfred Perera. *Improving school functioning - the inschool and out of school blend - the Sri Lankan effort.*

**DISSERTATION**

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ABSTRACT

This research focuses on Sri Lanka’s past, present and future efforts to improve the provision of education. Being one of the first countries in the world to introduce free education from primary education to university education, Sri Lanka subsequently introduced many other welfare measures to increase educational access to its population. The results were noteworthy and Sri Lanka’s achievements in human development (i.e. high literacy; high gender parity; increased preventive health care; high life expectancy; low infant, child and maternal mortality) are in par with the developed world. The performance of the Sri Lankan education system in terms of equity of access to general education and the quality of education is noteworthy in several dimensions. The education attainment levels of girls, and of children from poor families, are impressive when compared to other middle-income countries.

In this study the issue of decentralisation of education in the country, has been both intensively and extensively reviewed. There is a widespread feeling that the devolution has not brought about any improvement in the management of the education system, that in fact things have got much worse. Sri Lanka is accustomed to a top down style of management. Schools are controlled by the upper layers of management through a complex chain of command that include the provincial ministry, provincial department, zonal office and the division. Decentralisation in education management, though, has been initiated in mid 1960s, schools have been subjected to multiple control by the above layers. The researcher argues that the schools and the other layers need to reflect their roles and functions in order to reduce role ambiguity, improve collaboration and highlights the need for them to be associates of a common cause.

The historical and recent reasons that hinder decentralisation and school autonomy is reviewed in this study. Structural and cultural changes that facilitate the democratisation of school management are proposed. The newest trend in educational decentralisation in the country, the Programme on School Improvement (PSI), is the Sri Lankan version of school based management. In PSI, schools are given a degree of autonomy in the areas of planning, teaching-learning process, co-curricular activities, staff development and the maintenance and development of the school plant. The emphasis of PSI will be on
flexibility in the internal functions of the school, increase efficiency in the school's use of resources and make the schools more responsive to the potential of each child so that they will become useful citizens. PSI envisages the increase of school autonomy through, relieving the school from constraining rules and regulations emanating from the centre, and empowering principals, middle managers and teachers. PSI enables schools to forge links with local communities through the establishment of a School Development Committees (SDC) to improve resource mobilization and public accountability, thus creating better learning cultures in schools. By decreasing the power of administrative layers it is expected the sharing the authority to make decisions will more rest with the principal, teachers, old pupils, parents and the community. Since decision making rests with the SDC, the administrative power will evenly be distributed among the principal, the teachers and the members of the local community. PSI will improve the relevance and the speed of decision making.

The layers above the school are far removed from the school scene to make their presence felt in so far as the teaching-learning process is concerned. The research examines the role and functions of the zonal education office (the administrative layer above the school). It is proposed that the role of the zone is to provide strategic guidance to the schools and effectively monitor overall performance. The zones have to work with schools and not on schools. The role and the main challenges of the school leaders in the proposed decentralized set-up are also examined and the need for more collaborative partnerships within the school is also emphasized. The research further examines the factors that contribute to the institutionalisation of the new organizational innovation and as to how the capacity building institutes can help in transforming the roles of the zonal staff and school leaders.

The researcher argues that the school system does not prepare pupils for the future and questions the purpose of education. The research highlights the need to reorient school curricula to promote personality attributes such as critical thinking, problem solving, decision making, team work, responsibility and human values that are essential to ensure effective performance in the work place as well as for a multifaceted quality of life. The researcher states education/educational institutes can, no more be neutral and indifferent. Education/educational institutes have to be aware of the cultural values, political
forces and even religious beliefs that create injustice, sustain and promote them. The researcher is of the view that PSI will enhance schools’ performance and make them more ‘sensitive’ to the needs of pupils. The research concludes with a set of recommendations to improve the present.

The main recommendations are to delegate more power to schools by removing some layers of authority and supervision and, by doing so; release the consummate energies of principals and teachers, so that they can be innovative, flexible and responsive. It is proposed to issue schools, a school based learning improvement grant, a school based teacher development grant with sets of guidelines on the use of the grants. It is also proposed to issue a set of guidelines as to how parents can participate with the school in improving the learning outcomes of pupils.
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Sri Lanka can boast a sustained long-term commitment to invest in human capital, by successive governments. The creation of the conditions needed for the successful development of the education system has been noteworthy. There is a comprehensive network of primary and secondary schools in the country. A primary school is available within two kilometres of habitations, meaning that every village has a primary school. A secondary school is available within five kilometres of all households. This enables all children aged 5-18 years to attend school within reasonable travelling distance of their homes. Education plays a major role in improving living standards, enhancing human development, advancing equity and social mobility, and strengthening democracy and political decision making. It is heartening to note that benefits such as gender parity in education, the empowerment of women has resulted in the demographic transition, preventive health care, fertility control, high life expectancy; low infant, child and maternal mortality. The performance of the Sri Lankan education system in terms of equity to access and quality in dimensions such as education attainment levels of girls, and of children from poor families, are impressive when compared to other middle-income countries.

Though Sri Lanka has achieved progress in basic human development, it has been unable to translate these achievements into broad-based, sustainable economic growth. Unleashing the creativity of its people becomes a powerful tool for human development and this has to be nurtured at school level. The continuous changes in society and environment demand new skills. Young people have to develop competencies such as creativity, readiness to work cooperatively, take individual re-
sponsibility. The Report of the National Education Commission (NEC) states several attributes that schools must develop in pupils.

“The promotion of personality attributes such as critical thinking, problem solving, decision making, team work, responsibility and human values are essential to ensure effective performance in the work place as well as a multifaceted quality of life.” (NEC, 2003:15).

Some of the criticisms raised on the country’s general education system are,

- the widened disparities between ever expanding urban schools and rural schools that cater to disadvantaged communities
- teacher and resource deficits and the marginalization of the small schools
- the highly structured school system that is not sensitive to local realities
- the centrally designed curriculum based on text book knowledge that does not cater to the emerging needs
- The centralised administration with many layers between the centre and the periphery that minimises innovation at school level.

There is also a general dissatisfaction about the way the schools and the layers above the schools do function. The global phenomena of decentralizing the decision-making and empowerment of layers where action takes place has caused policymakers to focus on devolution. The increased responsibility at ground level, on the other hand, requires assuring procedures of accountability at the periphery.

This thesis is based upon the researcher’s reflections on the above issues and on his active involvement as a facilitator, trainer, change agent and policy maker in the general education system in Sri Lanka. The researcher has worked closely with schools to understand and influence the be-
haviour of school principals and teachers in order to improve the learning outcomes of children. The focus of this research, is, school improvement in a changing environment brought about by several initiatives where the researcher himself has played a vital role.

Having joined the National Institute of Education (NIE) of Sri Lanka as a Project Officer in 1989, the researcher presently works as its Deputy Director General and as the Head, Centre for Education Leadership Development. The NIE is the premier institute in the country responsible for curriculum development, professional development, research and development in the general education system. One of the objectives of the National Institute of Education according to its Act being: “to provide for the development of professional and managerial competence of personnel in the education system”. The Centre for Education Leadership Development (CELD) which the researcher heads is charged with the task of developing well managed educational institutes by enhancing the management and leadership of its personnel. The vision of the centre is “to have well managed educational institutions in Sri Lanka by enhancing the management and leadership of its personnel”. The mission of the centre is “to develop management competencies in personnel who have shown the potential within the education system by grooming/coaching them to spearhead development in the field of education management”.

CELD has an impressive portfolio of education management programmes. The centre runs six certificated courses namely; Post graduate Diploma in Education Management (PGDEM), Master of Science in Education Management (MSc), Diploma in School Management (DSM), Diploma in Primary School Management (DPSM), the Advanced Diploma in Education Management (ADEM) and the Bachelor of Education Management (BEdM). The centre also conducts short term thematic courses mainly designed to provide an in-depth knowledge on selected themes in education management. The thematic courses are open to educational managers at all levels and are of three days duration. The twenty day principals training programme is one of the continuing edu-
cation programmes. The Centre also provides training to School Development Committees, School Management Teams in schools where Programme on School Improvement (PSI) has been introduced. PSI is the Sri Lankan initiative of school based management. CELD has developed guidebooks to promote PSI and is currently producing material to promote the same.

The CELD conducts studies related with school leadership on a regular basis. It collaborates with sister institutes in the region to examine similarities in the profession. In order to determine the training needs of education leaders the centre carries out studies regularly. The centre has developed mechanisms for the appraisal and evaluation of management personnel and management systems. CELD is currently designing instruments for strategic and operational functions within education management institutes. Much of the information which forms the basis of this development comes from school leaders themselves with whom CELD is in constant dialogue and deliberation. The building up of appropriate organizational and support mechanisms/material is of immediate help and support to schools, and other layers such as divisional, zonal and provincial offices.

During the last fifteen years the researcher designed and coordinated several courses for school leaders, designed and led the implementation of the teacher appraisal system, contributed at a number of regional and international seminars on decentralization, teacher development and school improvement. In the process the researcher contributed several articles to regional and international publications on the same themes so that they could be disseminated to the education community at large.

The researcher being the leader of the CELD is constantly working with education leaders, both formally and informally, and has been able to acquire an in-depth understanding of the politics and other influences exerted upon educational leadership in Sri Lanka. The foreign exposure also provided an opportunity for the researcher to engage in similar
work elsewhere and to investigate the issues further. The researcher worked as the project coordinator of a SIDA supported project in improving 500 selected schools in ten districts in Sri Lanka. This gave the researcher, the opportunity to closely work with the Swedish consultant to the project who guided the researcher in subsequent research that was undertaken. The story of the above mentioned school improvement project won international attention and the author published a monograph on the same for IIIEP/UNESCO titled, “Changing Schools from Within: A Management Intervention for Improving School Functioning” in 1997.

The researcher studied the effects of some selected education interventions that were introduced in Sri Lanka from the 1990s, while playing a central role in those interventions. The researcher was able to influence and make adjustments to the strategies that were used. At the same time the researcher played an active role in the system maintaining a research perspective on the course of events. In this dissertation, the main research focus is to examine the role and functions of the zonal education office in an environment that has committed to school autonomy. The following questions are also in focus.

- How important are the structural changes and how can they be made effective?
- What would be the main challenges of the school leaders in the proposed decentralized set-up?
- How long would it take for an organizational innovation such as the Programme on School Improvement (the Sri Lankan version of school based management) to take roots?
- How can capacity building institutes transform the role of the zonal staff and school leaders when the education system is moving from a bureaucratic set-up to a decentralized set-up?

To illuminate these questions, four texts have been selected and included as Chapters 3, 4, 5 and 6 of this dissertation from among several studies written and published by the researcher, at international level. The study in Chapter 3 contextualizes the Sri Lankan case of educational de-
centralization and comprehends the rationales and constraints that educational decentralization has faced. The literature on pre and post-colonial history and the political, financial, cultural and administrative decentralization and devolution forming the socio-political framework for educational decentralization for the current period is examined in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 looks in detail, into strategies that could transform schools to become more responsible and autonomous. Chapter 5 examines the role and perceptions of teachers in innovations and Chapter 6 the role and status of principals. In chapter 2 an account of the methodologies and the samples that were employed in the studies is given. Chapter 7 further examines the concept of decentralization and the new paradigm shift in school management in Sri Lanka with initiatives that facilitate the devolution of power to the school level. Chapter 8 examines the present layers in the education system elaborating the present role of the zone. Chapter 8 also explores the international experiences that may help answer the research questions. In chapter 9 the research questions are answered and the main issues to be addressed are identified. Chapter 9 is concluded with a set of recommendations.

An overview of the studies that are presented is shown below related to some milestones in the development of the Sri Lankan educational system.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Innovation/Movement</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Study/Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School clusters are introduced</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>Management Reforms of 1981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate layers established</td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>Management Reforms of 1984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School management becomes a distinct discipline in Sri Lanka</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Establishment of NIE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provincial Councils are introduced</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>Provincial Council Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Development Boards are introduced</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>School Development Board Act</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
School Development Boards are abolished 1995 Review on the Functions of School Development Boards

Movement on School Based Management 1996-2006 MOE/ NEC documents Survey on School Autonomy (Ch. 4) The role of school principals in school improvement highlighted. (Ch.6)

Programme on School Improvement introduced to schools in selected zones 2006 Basic documents (Ch. 3) Survey on Teacher reactions (Ch. 3 & Ch. 5)

School moving towards greater autonomy in a legal -setting 2006-2009 Regular small scale studies on PSI and Circulars on PSI issued

The Importance of the Role of the Teacher 2008 The Study on ‘The Accomplished Teacher’ (Ch. 7)

The specific role of the zone in school improvement studied 2009 Study of 21 Zones; activities, roles and functions of the zonal officers (Ch. 8)

Programme on School Improvement introduced to all the schools in all the zones 2010 New school-zone partnership in a decentralized set-up and emerging roles established

The articles in Chapters 3, 4, 5 and 6 are not only pieces of academic work, but also a personal journey of the author. The four articles are complementary to one another and the synthesis and analysis enabled to revisit them and review them in greater depth. The four articles have a fair degree of literature review and document analyses and are diachronic accounts. Since they were carried out using a multi-faceted approach, the researcher was able to examine the related phenomena from different angles rather than from a single perspective. This work represents fifteen years of excitement, challenge, personal and professional development. It has resulted in a steep personal learning curve relating to research skills, leadership skills and associated academic activities.
CHAPTER 2: THE METHODOLOGY

The four studies included in chapters 3, 4, 5, 6 and the subsequent studies that helped to arrive at the conclusions and recommendations were carried out as qualitative research. Qualitative methods were preferred as the studies were concerned with exploring people’s behaviour, capacity building and organizational development. The methodologies used in the studies are an in-depth ethnographic research and case study research. The methods used were interviews, observations, case studies and stimulations (Cohen et al 2007:48). All four chapters examine official documents on education policies, appraisal reports and research reports and documents on the historical development of the education system. The four chapters helped in identifying critical sectorial issues for further investigation and cross-check factual events that did emerge.

2.1 The Approaches

The approaches employed in the study helped to obtain information that could not have been collected through measurable data. The researcher was influenced by Karl Popper (1959:16) in his approach.

“I do not care what methods a philosopher (or somebody else) may use so long as he has an interesting problem, and so long as he is sincerely trying to solve it.” (Popper, 1959:16)

The research aims to discover something and hence contains ‘an irrational element’ and ‘a creative intuition’ (Popper, 1959:32). Our observational experiences are never beyond being tested; and are ‘impregnated with theories’ (Popper, 1959:111). All researches are to some extent contaminated by the values of the researcher. Weber (1949) stresses that the conclu-
sions drawn from research are largely grounded in the moral and political belief of the researcher. Weber was of the view that only through those values and beliefs that certain problems are identified.

The roles and responsibilities of the researcher too influence the questions and answers. Since the writer of this dissertation held/holds responsibility, in (i) introducing innovations, (ii) enabling people and (iii) transforming institutes, these three roles may have influenced the writings. Hammersley and Atkinson write,

“Ethnographic research has a characteristic ‘funnel’ structure, being progressively focused over its course. Progressive focusing has two analytically distinct components. First, over time the research problem is developed or transformed, and eventually its scope is clarified and delimited and its internal structure explored. In this sense, it is frequently only over the course of the research that one discovers what the research is really ‘about’, and it is not uncommon for it to turn out to be about something quite remote from the initially foreshadowed problems.” (1983:175)

One of the first conditions of acceptable ethnographic work is that it should deal with the totality of all social, cultural and psychological aspects of the community, for they are so interwoven that not one can be understood without taking into consideration the others. Justification offered for ethnographic studies often involves the argument that it enables us to capture social reality more accurately than the other approaches. Cases represent slices of a life, ‘a photograph’ of a particular event fixed in time and space. Cases expose social, political or managerial dynamics of a particular institution, event etc. Cases help to uncover organizational problems, decision situations.
2.2 The Methods

2.2.1 Observations

Cohen et al thus presents the unique strength of observation as a research method.

“The distinctive feature of observation as a research process is that it offers an investigator the opportunity to gather ‘live’ data from naturally occurring social institutions. In this way, the researcher can look directly at what is taking place in situ rather than relying on second-hand accounts. The use of immediate awareness, or direct cognition, as a principal mode of research thus has the potential to yield more valid and authentic data than would otherwise be the case with mediated or inferential methods. And this is observation’s unique strength.” (2007:396)

Some argue that all research is some form of participant observation (Cohen et al 2007:397). Gold (1958) has previously provided a well-known classification of the researcher’s role in observation. Gold puts it in a continuum. At one end is the complete participant, moving to the participant-as-observer, and then to the observer-as-participant and finally to the complete observer.

The investigation of behaviour in natural settings is not easy. Explanations to people’s behaviour lie at the skills of the observer. Under the surface of the observed facts and obtainable data one can find hidden factors and issues. While engaged in this research the need arose to read between the lines and fill the gaps. In this work the researcher was able to get distinctive insights through the analysis of social episodes. Social reality cannot be fully observed and therefore cannot be fully understood.

The researcher at all times was concerned with the following in the observation process.

- What is being observed?
- How is it being observed?
• When is it being observed?
• Where is it being observed?
• Who is observing it?
• Why is it being observed?

We look at things in certain ways because we have adopted, certain ways of seeing. According to Silverman (2000:143),

“….. Observational research, - data collection, hypothesis construction and theory building - are not three separate things but are interwoven with one another.”

The researcher tried as much as possible to present what was said (heard) and what was observed (seen). As suggested by Loftland (1971:104-6) to maintain reliability the researcher kept notes while observing or/and immediately after observations. As suggested by Spradley (1979) during observational visits the researcher kept four separate sets of notes as stated below which helped in systematizing the notes and improve their reliability.

- short notes made at the time;
- expanded notes made as soon as possible after each field session;
- a fieldwork journal to record problems, issues and ideas that arose during observations and interviews;
- a provisional running record of analysis and interpretation.

The researcher was aware that first impressions are impressive, but are often misleading, incomplete and distorted, therefore need further investigations. Attention was paid for action details, step-wise details, accountability procedures, allocated responsibilities, team work, how problems are analysed and solved. Sometimes problems were well understood, but, understanding alone is not enough. The researcher discussed with the observers as to how problems could be solved. The researcher was well aware that, when observed people tend to be anxious and self-conscious. When observed, they will behave differently. The
researcher/ or research assistants therefore stayed longer times with those who were observed to reduce their anxieties. The observers looked for physical clues too. Observations helped in understanding complexities of situations. Once a particular place was selected it was observed in its natural habitat.

2.2.2 The Interviews

The researcher himself was the main interviewer and was well prepared to conduct the interviews. That does not mean there were well-maintained schedules or pre-organised plans, in fact there were not. The interviews were semi-structured or minimally structured and varied in duration. However, the researcher maintained control throughout the process. In other words it was the interviewer’s issues that mattered.

The researcher had some guiding questions. According to interviewees’ responses, the sequence of the questions changed, so that the free flow was not disturbed. But there were interventions. Intervening at the right time really helped both the interviewer and the interviewees. It can be said that the interviewer guided rather than directed the interviews. When and where others were involved in interviews they were guided to do the same.

It was considered very important that the interviewees trust the interviewer. In most cases this trust was built with no effort, but in few cases the researcher through his approach and initiation of the discussion was able to build confidence. It must be strongly stated that the researcher did the research because of ‘a felt desire’, ‘a push from within’. This was probably reflected in the researcher’s behaviour and the interviewees too came out of their ‘shelves’ to respond.

Interviews helped to seek in depth knowledge and probe further when needed. The interviewees also had the opportunity to elaborate on points they wished to. The selection of interview method helped to understand and know not only what was done, but also what was not done.
and why it was not done. The interviewer followed up with points made by the interviewees.

Interview questions were always unbiased and the interviewees always had the freedom to choose either to answer or not. There was interaction between the interviewer and the interviewees. Hughes (1996:169-70) gives the following as the strengths of interviewing:

- “face-to face encounter with informants,
- obtains large amounts of expansive and contextual data quickly,
- facilitates cooperation from research subject,
- facilitates access for immediate follow-up data collection for clarification and omissions,
- useful for discovering complex interconnections in social relationships,
- data are collected in natural settings,
- good for obtaining data on non-verbal behaviour and communication,
- facilitates analysis, validity checks and triangulation,
- facilitates discovery of nuances in culture,
- provide for flexibility in the formulation of hypotheses,
- provide background context for more focus on activities, behaviour and events,
- great utility for uncovering the subjective side, the native’s perspective of organizational processes.”

Kvale (1996:11) thus highlights the use of interviews.

“The use of interview in research marks a move away from seeing human subjects as simply maniputable and data as somehow external to individuals, and towards regarding knowledge as generated between humans, often through conversations.”
Cohen et al (2007: 349) are of the view that interviews as research tools are so convincing.

“The interview is a flexible tool for data collection, enabling multisensory channels to be used; verbal, non-verbal, spoken and heard.”

The interviews helped to explore complex and deep issues. As given by Kvale (1996:30), throughout this work the researcher was concerned that interviews/discussions had the following characteristics.

- Engage, understand and interpret the key features of the participants’ work lives.
- Use natural language.
- Reveal and explore detailed descriptions of the life worlds of participants.
- Elicit descriptions of specific situations and actions.
- Deliberate with openness new data and phenomena.
- Focus on specific ideas and themes.
- Accept the ambiguity and contradictions of situations.
- Accept that interviews may provoke new insights and changes in the interviewers and interviewees.
- Regard interviews as interpersonal encounters.
- Be a positive and enriching experience for both interviewers and interviewees.

Group interviews and focus-group interviews were used. Group interviews were important because it enabled to listen together to a group of people who have worked together. Those working together could listen to what each other said. Group interviews generated a wide range of responses. The insights gained were useful to follow up with individual interviews. According to Fontana and Frey (2006: 251),

“The group interview is essentially a qualitative data gathering technique.”
During group interviews the researcher observed as to how participants supported, complemented, influenced agreed and disagreed with each other. There were times that some dominated. Those who held superior positions were naturally trying to dominate and in some occasions males did dominate. However the interventions of the researcher minimised such domination. The researcher tried to give voice to those who were passive without making anyone uncomfortable.

Focus group discussions yielded collective views rather than yielding individual views. Interviewees, though answering the researcher who led the discussions, freely interacted in the process enabling new knowledge, insights and outcomes to emerge. Researcher’s agenda was pushed backward during several focus group discussions, but the researcher wholeheartedly welcomed such instances, as knowledge, insights and outcomes, thus surfaced, may not have emerged in straightforward individual interviews.

2.2.3 Questionnaires

Questionnaires were administered by the researcher in person in groups and that led to a number of advantages. At the outset a rapport was established. The purpose of the study/research was explained and where needed the items that were less understood by participants were explained. As the questionnaires were administered to groups there was economical use of time and human hours. As the questionnaires were personally administered there was a high proportion of usable responses. Best and Kahn (2001: 230) write that,

"Questionnaire has unique advantages, and properly constructed and administered, it may serve as a most appropriate and useful data-gathering device in a research project."

The respondents were never coerced to complete the questionnaires, but, they were encouraged. As the sample was not large and as the questionnaires were administered in person the questions were less structured.
There was a clear structure, sequence and focus in the questionnaires. The questions were open ended enabling respondents to answer them in their own words.

2.2.4 Documents and Reports

Records and documents served as a rich source of information. Research reports and documents provided information that could not be heard or observed. Historical facts, scenarios could be traced by the study of circulars, reports and books. Historical analysis based on documents, textual analysis of documents and use of visual images have been used by the researcher.

Study of documents, interviews, observations and questionnaires became an integrated approach for the researcher. Even in interviewing, the right questions have to be asked and face-to-face interviews required concerted observations. Non-verbal clues on many occasions revealed more than what was verbally said. The study though ethnographic also used measurement and quantification. The methods employed by the researcher in the studies given in the different chapters are given in the tabular statement below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Methods</th>
<th>Chapters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 4 5 6 7 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>x x x x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focused Group Interviews</td>
<td>x x x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questionnaires</td>
<td>x x x</td>
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<tr>
<td>Focused Group Questionnaires</td>
<td>x x</td>
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<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>x x x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study and Analysis of Documents</td>
<td>x x x x x x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.3 The Sample

The researcher in all the studies was concerned on the selection of the appropriate samples. The selection of the sample strategy was governed by the criterion of suitability. The samples were either purposive samples, probability (representative) samples or convenience samples, or a combination of two or three. As all the studies were mainly qualitative, many samples were purposive (Cohen et al, 2007:114). It was necessary to handpick the persons to be included in the sample. As the term suggests the sample had to be chosen for a specific purpose such as a group of zonal directors of a zone or lectures of a college of education.

On a few occasions researcher had to choose a convenience sample (Cohen et al, 2007:113) or in other words an opportunity sample (Wragg, 1984:179). The selection of a convenience sample was necessary because the researcher himself was a very busy person. The other reason was that as the researcher worked at CELD many persons working in different parts of the country came to the institute and that opportunity was ‘grabbed’ as and when possible. This gave access even for hard to reach populations.

Therefore using convenient or opportunity samples could be justified because the samples were also probability samples (Cohen et al, 2007:110). Here the samples were drawn from the wider population, because the researcher was determined to have the wider population represented. When principals were selected to the sample they were chosen based on school types, location such as urban, semi-urban and rural. When teachers were selected they were also chosen to represent school types and location. When the zones were chosen, provincial representation was considered.

The sample size, sample type of the different studies of this research and the methods used are given in Table 2.1.
### Table 2.1: The Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Sample Size</th>
<th>Sample Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 4</td>
<td>Questionnaires</td>
<td>144 principals</td>
<td>Probability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Questionnaires</td>
<td>243 deputy principals</td>
<td>Probability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Focus Group discussions</td>
<td>165 principals</td>
<td>Probability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Focus Group discussions</td>
<td>108 deputy principals</td>
<td>Probability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Focus Group discussions</td>
<td>126 teachers</td>
<td>Probability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>32 trainers</td>
<td>Purposive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>24 zonal directors</td>
<td>Purposive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 5</td>
<td>Focus Group discussions</td>
<td>122 teachers</td>
<td>Purposive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Focus Group discussions</td>
<td>140 teachers</td>
<td>Purposive/Convenience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 6</td>
<td>Questionnaires/Survey</td>
<td>150 principals and deputy principals</td>
<td>Probability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 7</td>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>18 Zonal officers</td>
<td>Convenience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>62 Principals</td>
<td>Convenience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>48 Teachers</td>
<td>Convenience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Focus Group discussions</td>
<td>67 Students</td>
<td>Convenience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Questionnaires</td>
<td>336 Teacher Trainees</td>
<td>Purposive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>16 Teacher Educators</td>
<td>Purposive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 8</td>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>Officers in 21 zones</td>
<td>Probability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Focus Group discussions</td>
<td>Officers in 21 zones</td>
<td>Probability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>Officers in 4 zones</td>
<td>Purposive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 3: EFFORTS TOWARDS DECENTRALIZATION: IDEOLOGY vs. THE REALITY - THE SRI LANKAN CASE

3.1. Introduction

Over the last four decades, the democratic socialist republic of Sri Lanka has shown a keen interest in decentralizing its educational administration. On a number of occasions the government restructured and reorganized its educational administrative machinery. Through the creation of intermediate layers between the central ministry and the schools, the country attempted to maximize efficiency, but the effects were marginal. The government’s stated intention to improve the education system through greater participation by local communities has rarely been met. The multiplication of bureaucratic layers resulted in more complex procedures and confusion about administrative responsibilities. The lack of a strong “work ethic” in newly established layers hindered rather than supported school improvement. Though administrative authority was transferred from the centre to the periphery, practice in schools remained almost largely unchanged.

The Sri Lankan government made some key moves in attempt to decentralize authority over the schools: establishing regional and provincial offices of education; diversifying the curriculum by adding pre-vocational subjects; introducing cluster schools; and introducing school development boards. These efforts were noteworthy, but they did not produce their desired outcomes. Ambiguity in objectives, frequent changes in policies and programmes, cultural and social constraints, and a lack of resources have all impeded reform. The present period marks a new era in the Sri Lankan education system, as a comprehensive pack-

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age of both organizational and curricular reforms are being implemented. The concept currently attracting the most attention from advocates of educational decentralization is how more autonomy can be transferred to the schools. Although attempts to decentralize the school system have not been impressive thus far, if the government can learn from its past failures and take steps to address the issues that have hindered the shift toward local autonomy, Sri Lanka may eventually succeed in implementing functional decentralization.

3.2 The beginnings

Sri Lanka has a recorded history that stretches from 600 B.C. to the present day. Archaeological evidence suggests that there were large centres of learning associated with the Buddhist monasteries from 3rd century B.C. (Harris, 1983, p. 70). The political structures in early Sri Lanka were not highly centralized. The school system was more or less “consumer oriented” during that period. Education was primarily imparted in village or temple schools. The teachers (or “Guru”), guided by the needs of the community, determined the curriculum. External support for education came only through royal patronage.

A succession of outside powers ruled Sri Lanka, beginning in the 16th century. The Portuguese arrived in 1505, and were replaced by the Dutch in 1656. The British conquered the island in 1796 and ruled until the country gained independence in 1948. With the commencement of western rule in 1505 until independence, education policies were geared to meet the political, economic, and social needs of the colonial rulers. During the Portuguese era the church controlled the education system, with the state playing an indirect role. Centralizing trends in administration began during the Dutch period. The “scholrachal commission” specified that schools should be governed centrally, with teachers and pupils strictly following curricula determined by central authorities. When the British took over from the Dutch, they were initially hesitant
to get involved in educational pursuits, as their primary concerns were economic. But they played a more active role in educational affairs after seeing the advantages of controlling the schools. Under the British, educational administration became highly centralized, with the colonial rulers making all decisions regarding the schools.

Legislation adopted in 1906 and 1907 discouraged local citizens from participating in government; local authorities were prevented from actively participating in educational affairs. The introduction of educational ordinance no.1 of 1920, which gave legal status to the department of education (Jayasuriya, 1971:417), heightened the central government’s influence over the school system.

The most revolutionary educational reforms in Sri Lanka’s history were introduced in 1945. That year a system of free education (from kindergarten through university) was introduced, and the mother tongue was established as the medium of instruction in all primary classrooms. Dr. C.W.W. Kannangara, Sri Lanka’s first minister of education, was the driving force behind those policies. Kannangara wanted to remove the privileges and prejudices of education through equalization of educational opportunities for all children. This resulted in a large expansion of the school-going population. The local elite, who took over power from the British in 1948, did not introduce radical changes that would encourage local participation. Thus, the centralized tradition continued for some time.

### 3.3 Further Moves towards Decentralization

As the volume of work increased and the problems facing education officials became more complex, the administrative machinery that was in place proved inadequate. In the late 1950s, several attempts were made to formulate a decentralized administrative structure that better suited society at the time, but these efforts were not very successful. The first
significant recommendation for decentralization occurred in April 1961, when the following recommendation was delivered at a national education conference:

"Decentralization is one of the important means of securing efficiency and speed in handling the day-to-day work of administration. Decentralization connotes delegation of authority to the regional office and lessening of concentration of power at the head office... inadequate delegation of authority and its unnecessary concentration in the head office have been mainly responsible for administrative decisions being considerably delayed and work unnecessarily duplicated. Technically qualified personnel have been tied down to routine work in the head office and to some extent in the provincial offices." (Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs, 1961: report of the education conference held at Bandarawela, 1961:1-2)

This report provoked a swift response. In October 1961, the government created 10 educational regions and 13 educational districts. The head office retained the power to deal with questions of policy in all administrative matters. The district and regional offices were made responsible for accounting, finance and administration. As a result of those changes, the education system did a better job of satisfying local needs than had been the case in the past. However, these reforms represented a delegation of tasks rather than a genuine effort to devolve power. In 1966, when educational planners realized that the impact of the above decentralization was limited, a deliberate effort was made to implement a more comprehensive decentralization scheme:

"A strong and well-organized administrative set-up, with well-defined lines of authorities as well as checks and balances among different authorities, reinforced by adequate provision of the consultation of public opinion, is of vital importance to an efficient system of administration." (Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs, 1966: The Proposal for Reforms in General and Technical Education, 1966:5)
The number of education regions was increased to 15 and each region was placed under a regional director of education with full autonomy. This individual was responsible for training and promoting teachers and for the general administration of the region - without input from the centre. Changes were made at the national level as well. The director of education, who headed the department of education, was designated director-general of education, and his post was combined with that of the permanent secretary to the ministry of education (Ariyadasa, 1976:4). The decentralization of the administration carried out in 1961 and in 1966 and the changes that followed, gave the ministry a new organizational infrastructure.

3.3.1. The 1972 curriculum reforms

In 1972 curriculum reforms that capitalized on local expertise were enacted. Subjects such as cultural heritage and pre-vocational studies were introduced to encourage schools to become more closely connected to local communities. Education officials believed that subjects such as these would transform both the structure of learning and the attitude of teachers. This provided an opportunity to diversify the curriculum in a predominantly rural country with great geographical variation. Though these changes represented landmarks in curricular reform, they eventually had to be abandoned due to resource constraints, environmental constrains and public opinion (Diyasena, 1976; Jayaweera, 1989). The public believed that pre-vocational courses reinforced existing socio-economic disparities.

3.3.2. Reforms of 1981 and School Clusters

Another set of ambitious reforms was adopted in 1981. At that time, the regional departments of education and the district offices were reorganized and restructured to reduce “system overload” at the regional level. These changes allowed the regional director to concentrate on development orientation. Another initiative proposed that the existing circuit system be replaced by the cluster system. A group of schools within
a defined geographical area would be grouped into a “cluster” for the purpose of better organization, management, and development. Policy planners believed greater efficiency; local management would enable better utilization of both community and state resources. The leader of each cluster, the principal of the core-school, was given the power to set goals for and manage the unit. School clusters were vested with great authority regarding the management of local education activities:

“Each cluster will function as an administrative entity to meet the educational needs of the entire area it serves. Pupil admissions, requisitions of supplies, capital expenditure and allocation of teachers will be on the basis that each cluster is one organizational unit. Thus, the smallest unit for planning the development and organization of the school system will henceforth be the school cluster.” (Ministry of Education, 1981)

It was envisioned that a school cluster would be comprised of a number of primary and secondary schools. The total enrolment of a cluster would be between 3,000 and 5,000 students (Samaranayake, 1985: 26).

The objectives of the cluster system can be summarized as follows:

- To achieve qualitative development in education through intensive and systematic supervision, evaluation, and follow-up action of the schools within the cluster;
- To up-grade the neglected, underdeveloped, and remote schools by making them participate in cluster activities;
- To enable schools to be managed by a body of more competent personnel;
- To minimize/eliminate duplication in the provision and use of facilities and to achieve optimum utilization of scarce resources, both human and physical, within school clusters;
- To obtain the maximum participation of the community and ensure the maximum contribution of the public to the upgrading of the educational facilities of their school complex area.
Though there were several clusters that achieved the expected objectives, most did not. Many administrative problems arose when the circuits were replaced by the clusters. The core-school heads were often unable to fulfil their responsibilities, which were previously carried out by the circuit education officers. Some core schools lacked adequate facilities. The basic aim of the cluster – sharing resources and supporting weaker schools – was not often realized. Studies of the cluster system pointed out several other weaknesses:

- Unqualified or inexperienced personnel working as cluster principals
- A decrease in the frequency of school supervision visits
- Lack of improvement in supervising techniques
- Distances between schools in a single cluster were often so great that they could not be administered as a single unit.
- Concentration of resources in the core schools
- An imbalance in the distribution of schools among clusters (i.e., some clusters had more than 12 or even 16 schools whereas some had less than 4 schools; see Table 3.1)
- Great disparities in the number of pupils assigned to different clusters (i.e., the number of pupils per cluster was expected to be between 3,000 to 5,000, but some clusters had more than 7,000 or even 8,000 while some others had less than 1,000) (see Table 3.2).

Table 3.1: variation in the number of schools among clusters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of schools in the cluster</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>12</th>
<th>13</th>
<th>14</th>
<th>15</th>
<th>16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of clusters with that number of schools</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.2: variation in the number of pupils among clusters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of pupils</th>
<th>8,000</th>
<th>7001-8,000</th>
<th>6,001-7,000</th>
<th>5,001-6,000</th>
<th>4,001-5,000</th>
<th>3,001-4,000</th>
<th>2,001-3,000</th>
<th>1,001-2,000</th>
<th>0-1,000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of clusters</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.3.3. Reforms of 1984

As the 1981 reforms were not matched by appropriate organizational structures and management implementation strategies, government officials indicated that further decentralization was necessary. The centre was expected to establish an effective and efficient management system that would provide the necessary support for implementing a meaningful programme for educational development by the year 1984. A report published by the ministry of education offered a long list of improvements in education management that needed to be implemented (Ministry of Education, 1984). An intermediate, multi-cluster layer operating between the office of the regional director of education (RDE) and school clusters was established. The name of the new layer was the division education office (DEO). The DEO was established to deconcentrate development work that had been taxing the RDE office, coordinate and supervise work in the RDE office, and improve the services provided to schools located outside the clusters, and reduce financial and time demands placed on school supervisors.

The 1984 reforms encouraged a shift in the role of the principal from a first line manager of the ministry to an educational manager accountable for educational development activities in the school. Principals were given authority over school finances, and held responsible for the preparation, implementation, and management of the annual school plan. In addition, they were expected to oversee the curriculum, supervise and evaluate teachers, and serve as liaisons to parents and students. Newly adopted policy went so far as to specify that principals should spend a minimum of 12 hours each week supervising teachers (Ministry of Education, 1984:8-9).

The management reforms of 1984, attempted to build a planning and management culture at the school level. However, due to multifarious factors, the proposed structural changes did not always improve administrative efficiency. In many instances, work efforts were duplicated at different levels of the hierarchy; schools were sometimes provided in-
consistent direction by the layers above (Cabral, 1989; Manoharan, 1988; Perera, 1987). The new decentralization package required additional administrators with expertise in management areas such as planning, finance, and curriculum supervision. Extra supporting staff, buildings, furniture, and vehicles were also needed (Kulasena, 1989; Perera, 1989). If the reforms were to meet their goals, relevant documents needed to reach personnel at different administrative levels on time and in an easily comprehensible form (Staff College, 1986; Perera, 1989). The boundaries between the ministry, districts, and divisions had to be defined more explicitly. Conflict and confusion could have been minimized if the government had more clearly articulated what responsibilities needed to be decentralized, to what degree, and how.

Most reforms remained at the suggestion level, as the proposals were not followed up with relevant circulars:

“Though the reforms proposed a fair amount of responsibilities to be handed over to the principal, it did not happen (Perera, 1989:9). Even in the case of teacher transfers, they were consulted only in some cases. The authority and responsibility that the management reforms proposed were not vested with the principals. On the one level the ministry had not followed up its policy by amending the necessary circulars, regulations etc., while on the other, principals have not risen to the occasion to exercise power and authority that should be their due.” (Perera and Palihakkara 1997:267)

Principals often failed to adequately delegate functions and responsibilities to their deputies. Individuals holding middle management positions, who were not formally appointed to those posts, lacked authority; many felt they were being called to perform additional tasks without additional remuneration. This scenario indicates that it is essential under a scheme of decentralization to promote teachers based on a proper scheme of evaluation.
3.3.4. Devolution of Power to the Provincial Councils in 1987

In 1987, provincial councils and ministries were established to give more autonomy to the provinces in managing their affairs. The positions of provincial director of education and provincial secretary of education were created. The provincial directors were given the responsibility of planning, implementing, managing, and directing the education programmes in the provinces. Oversight of school facilities became a provincial function. The national ministry managed most affairs in the national schools, including the construction and maintenance of education buildings, libraries, playgrounds, furniture, teaching aids, and audiovisual materials; in other schools, the same functions were handled by the provincial ministries. Divisional education offices were created to facilitate the process of devolving authority to the periphery (Perera, 1997:12). The authorities realized that the divisional offices were located too far from the provincial offices. They were also of the view that the divisional offices could not cope with the multiplicity of their functions. Hence, a number of divisions were grouped together to create a “zone”. The zonal director became responsible for the implementation of quality improvement programmes.

The above moves created several difficulties for education administrators. The zonal director was subject to dual control by the provincial education ministry and the provincial education department. Failure to clearly define the roles of key administrators, such as the provincial secretary and the provincial director (National Education Commission Reports, 1992:108), also caused complications. Silva et al. (1993) note that the provincial ministry and provincial department simultaneously initiated transfers of the same teachers. Power struggles between the central ministry and provincial ministries also occurred. For example, central officials began to give many of the larger schools “national school” status to bring them under control.
“……in fact one province filed a case against the central ministry for establishing national schools in their province…. The provincial ministries sometimes complained that the national minister/ministry interfered in their work.” (Perera and Palihakkara, 1997:270)

3.3.5. School Development Boards

School development boards were established in February 1992 by gazette extraordinary. The main purpose of the boards was to enlist community and parental support so as to improve the operational efficiency of schools. According to official guidelines, the boards were supposed to carry out the following tasks:

- Assess the current needs of the school and recommend relevant improvements to the academic curricula and modes of teaching;
- Promote cultural, religious and moral activities in the school;
- Assist in the development and maintenance of school infrastructure;
- Foster and strengthen the welfare activities of the school community and preserve its identity and traditions;
- Interact productively with the media so as to engender a cohesive relationship between the school, the community and religious institutions;
- Assist in the development of the personalities of the pupils in the school.

In actuality, most school boards focused their efforts on generating resources - in most cases they acted as fund raising bodies. The boards were criticized for using undemocratic methods to select members, being dominated by elites who did not represent the communities they were supposed to serve, failing to facilitate a shift in power to the local people, and failing to provide information to stakeholders. As a result of such harsh criticism, the school development boards were abolished in 1995, only 3 years after they were created.
3.4 Drawbacks and Limitations in Decentralization Efforts from 1960 To 2000

Though the government of Sri Lanka took several noteworthy steps toward the decentralization of educational administration with a view of upgrading operational efficiency, the effects were marginal. The process of decentralization was mainly concerned with establishing layers between the central ministry and the school with the view of bringing management closer to the schools. Though the geographical units of administration shifted from central to middle levels, practices in the schools remained virtually unchanged. One major drawback was that ambiguities in objectives existed at different levels, such as the recommendation level, policy level, and the operational level. This seems to have occurred due to misconceptions about the goals of decentralization. Educational decentralization can succeed only if there is systematic and careful preparation. “decentralization is not a decision. It is a process over years” (Dalin et al., 1994:260). In Sri Lanka, stakeholders were not adequately prepared for the programmes introduced to encourage local control of the schools.

Another impediment to change was that the objectives behind decentralization policies also changed from time to time. One could argue that some reforms were based on the concepts of devolution, participatory democracy, and the empowerment of local levels. Other reforms arose from the liberal democratic notion that the education system should function as a market economy, with the government and the local people sharing the costs of schooling. The latter vision of decentralization was supported by two arguments. First, expansion of the education system resulted in increased demand for resources. The government, already relying on an inadequate pool of resources, could not meet that demand on its own. Second, because the private sector also benefits from the provision of public education, it should help cover the costs of schooling.
During the reigns of Sri Lankan kings the ordinary people were merely doers and not decision-makers. This tradition was strengthened by colonialism, and continued even after independence. Even when the government attempts to delegate power to the people, they often reject those opportunities. This social and cultural phenomenon has slowed the process of decentralization in Sri Lanka. Another factor that hindered reform efforts was lack of resources. Though new roles and functions were introduced, personnel were not prepared to take on new responsibilities. Physical resources - buildings, furniture, materials and vehicles - were also scarce. Frequent changes in decentralization programmes may also have prevented them from evolving and standing the test of time. The decentralization process carried out in the last four decades has not increased participation in the decision-making process by principals, teachers, parents, or members of the community. Decentralization has been viewed from a structural perspective rather than a functional one. Government officials need to ensure that people working at all levels of the system are prepared more thoroughly before schools can accept more autonomy. Only under those conditions could more of the functions carried out at upper levels of the bureaucracy be transferred to the school level.

3.5 The Present Move toward School Autonomy: Programme on School Improvement

One can see many arguments for a decentralized form of educational government. Sri Lanka’s rigid bureaucracy has often led to frustration, hostility, lack of enthusiasm, and suppression of creativity. Overseeing an education system is not a mechanical activity. The Sri Lankan government recently acknowledged the value of providing schools with greater autonomy. In 1996, the ministry of education and higher education (MEHE) stated the “process of decentralization must go right down to the level of the school.” (MEHE, 1996:14). It stressed the need to give great-
er responsibility to the schools and communities. A key mechanism the
Sri Lankan government has been relying on to achieve this goal has been
a new initiative called the Programme on School Improvement (PSI).
The following excerpt from a report published by the national education
commission outlines the government’s vision of the way in which
schools be given more autonomy:

“School based management has been accepted as an effective tool in the
management of schools. It should specifically state the power, authority
and responsibilities of the principal and the senior management group of
the school. There shall be a council of management for each school com-
prising the principal, representatives of the staff, parents, past pupils and
well-wishers and a departmental nominee to assist the principal in the
formulation of policy and preparation of development plans and moni-
toring the implementation thereof.” (National Education Commission
Report, 1997:25)

The emergence of this initiative in Sri Lanka has to be viewed: firstly,
within the overall package of reforms that have been introduced into the
Sri Lankan education system; secondly, within the broader context of
socio-economic and political changes that are taking place in the coun-
try: and thirdly, within the context of the international SBM movement.
As I mention above, efficiency and productivity have become overriding
priorities for many Sri Lankan institutions, and schools are no exception.
Restructuring the education system to improve public spending by moni-
toring outputs against inputs has become vital. Government officials
believe that the authority to make decisions has to be devolved so that
services can be made more responsive to those who use them. Until re-
cently, the centralized national curriculum and national assessment sys-
tem prevented the education system from responding to individual and
local needs. Government leaders are convinced that planning needs to
take place at the organizational level will improve the quality of instruc-
tion.
Several arguments have been used to promote school autonomy in Sri Lanka. First, the schools are submerged in a sea of macro programs and tend to blindly follow the script sent from the centre. Although housed on school campuses, principals remain representatives of upper layers of the hierarchy. Secondly, the majority of schools have not identified the reservoir of potential energy, both human and physical, and hence these resources go underutilized. They hardly attempt to develop their infrastructure or generate new resources. Thirdly, only a handful of schools attempt to link themselves with outside institutions to improve the quality of curricula. Schools need to take the initiative to provide more interesting and relevant curricula. Fourthly, there is a need to involve the school in school planning and resource management. Lastly, teacher development programmes currently focus on the skills of individual teachers rather than school-wide programmes and practices. Through school-based staff development programs, congruence between staff development and school needs can be achieved.

The main objective of PSI is to improve the performance of schools. The underlying assumption is that autonomous schools can offer a clear vision for the future and release the energies of their employees by empowering them to take professional responsibility for raising educational standards. Characteristics of this initiative include the following:

- Allowing schools to determine their own approach to the teaching/learning process;
- Allocating schools the resources and capacities to plan, in partnership with their local communities, for the future;
- Creating representative school councils that work with the principal to establish school development plans that reflect local priorities;
- Formally including the members of a school staff in the management process;
- Recognizing that schools have the capacity to effectively deliver the curriculum according to local needs, within the national curriculum framework;

- Linking school-based performance appraisal systems with school-based staff development programmes.

One aspect of PSI that has raised questions in Sri Lanka concerns the expanded authority of the principal. “SBM has presented principals and senior management teams with enormous challenges” (Evans and Hood, 1997:14). Individuals appointed to these positions may be either unfit for the new role or may misuse their increased powers. Such doubts have been raised even two decades ago. The report towards relevance in education acknowledged that,

“It will no doubt be pointed out that some principals do not have the professional or personal qualities for the exercise of such liberty. If so, we are entitled to ask how they came to be appointed to their posts. The obvious (solution) is to replace such heads, to give them appropriate training, and in the future to appoint as principals only those who are qualified for the job.” (Ministry of Education, 1984 : 40)

As PSI provides principals with greater responsibility and authority, the selection of principals is crucial. The continuity of school administrators also needs to be guaranteed. A principal must be given at least 5 – 8 years to facilitate school’s long-term development. With more power devolved to the school, the principal’s capacity to handle the newly acquired authority becomes critical. Procedures relied on to recruit principals need to be improved. The guidelines currently used to select new principals need to be improved. The guidelines currently used to select new principals require revision. Some administrators accustomed to top-down management feel more comfortable when they do not bear responsibility for decisions made at their schools.
In order to successfully implement PSI in Sri Lanka, significant changes need to be instituted in other locations as well. The mass media needs to effectively disseminate information on the benefits of PSI so that stakeholders will respond positively to proposed changes. Parents have to be made aware that under PSI, schools will make decisions based on the preferences of students and parents.

3.6. Conclusion

After committing to decentralize the education system, the Sri Lankan government decided to introduce the Programme in School Improvement. Efficiency and productivity became overriding priorities for Sri Lankan institutions, and schools were no exception. Restructuring the education system to improve public spending by monitoring inputs and outputs has become vital. Devolving decision-making authority was regarded as a means of improving the quality of services provided in schools. The centralized system that was in place in Sri Lanka for decades prevented the education system from responding to individual and local needs. Only if authority is delegated to the school level, will the quality of decisions related to curriculum development, in-school supervision, student counselling, staff development, and assessment improve.

Though several noteworthy steps toward the decentralization of educational administration with a view of upgrading operational efficiency were taken, the effects have been marginal. The geographic units of administration may have shifted from central to middle levels, but patterns of activity in the schools have remained virtually unchanged. The decentralization process has not increased the participation of principals, teachers, parents, or members of the community in decision-making processes. The rigid government bureaucracy has often led to frustration, hostility, decline in enthusiasm, and suppression of creativity. The provision and administration of education are not mechanical activities. Genuine renewal cannot be achieved unless those in the school
make a conscious effort to diagnose their organization and initiate essential organizational changes.

In the past, the Sri Lankan public has often vehemently opposed educational reforms upon introduction, but later come to appreciate these same programmes. Much work needs to be done to gain public acceptance of the new paradigm shift in school management currently being promoted, and to ensure that educational reforms lead to a devolution of authority, rather than mere deconcentration or delegation.
CHAPTER 4: SCHOOL AUTONOMY THROUGH 
SCHOOL BASED MANAGEMENT: THE CASE OF SRI 
LANKA

4.1. Introduction

The school system in Sri Lanka is a vast enterprise which, cater to the needs of 4.2 million students and 190,000 teachers. The teachers account for nearly one-fourth of the entire civil service. Sri Lanka’s Education system is unique in its efforts to introduce new innovations. In 1945, a free education scheme from the kindergarten to the university was introduced. This was followed by the adoption of mother tongue as the medium of instruction. In the 1940s a special category of schools, known as ‘central schools’, was established in distant cities to provide students from villages with equally good education as the privileged. In the late 1950s and 1960s, the teaching of science was extended to secondary grades of better schools in the rural areas, until then limited exclusively to a few privileged urban schools. In the early 1960s, practically all private schools were brought under the control of the state. To move away from the academic curriculum, wide reforms were introduced in 1972, life skills in 1984 and continuous assessment in 1986. The Cluster school system was introduced in 1981 and School Development Boards in 1993. The country also introduced several welfare measures at regular intervals, e.g. scholarships to children from low-income families, free text books and midday meals to all, a free uniform scheme and subsidised

2 This article written by the author is based on a speech he made at the Meeting of the Asian Network of Training Institutions in Educational Planning (ANTRIEP), Colombo, Sri Lanka, 15th to 17th December 1998 and then appeared in the ANTRIEP Report “Improving school efficiency: the Asian experience” (pp. 33-74), published by International Institute for Educational Planning: UNESCO, Paris in 2000.
bus fares. Although some of the innovations were short-lived, the efforts made were exceptional.

4.2. Two Decades of Efforts to Strengthen School Autonomy

4.2.1. The 1979 Report 'Towards Relevance in Education'

The 1979 Report ‘Towards Relevance in Education’ recognized for the first time that reform measures had not succeeded in achieving the goals and hence large numbers of children left school long before they had learned anything worthwhile.

The educational authorities had realized, even as far back as 1979, that schools can do better when they do not feel imprisoned by national directives. The 1979 report of the Education Reform Committee (published in 1982) stated;

“There is no denying that some of our schools possess wide variety of talents and excellence. The uniform application of policy in all schools alike, however has tended to heighten rather than heal the imbalances between the developed and under-developed sections of the system, while national standards in management, discipline and quality of education have remained stagnant…..The prescribing of uniform curricula, text books and examination standards on all-island scale has had adverse effects. It has succeeded not in educating all the children of the nation but in driving large numbers of children out of school long before they could achieve anything worthwhile from their education. Teachers, however sympathetic and understanding of the individual differences and capabilities of their pupils, have little freedom to deviate from the official examination requirements which at best will benefit only about 10% of the candidate population.” (Ministry of Education, 1982:27 and 30)

This committee’s report recommended a three-point strategy in order to improve school functioning. These strategies were:

- (1) recognition of the key-role of heads of schools;
- (2) reduction of the very wide gap between the smallest and poor-
est equipped remote school with perhaps 20-30 pupils at the one end and the fully equipped very large “Royal College” category, at the other;
- (3) the need to foster greater community participation in the management of schools.

The report goes on, stating:

“In regard to this, it is necessary to evolve a plan whereby schools or school complexes are encouraged to move in the direction of managing their own affairs to an increasingly greater extent, as they show their willingness and capacity to shoulder such responsibilities.” (ibid., p.35).

The committee recommended decentralization as a strategy to improve school functioning.

“Decentralization must mean not only the devolution of the responsibility but also the devolution of the necessary authority and this right down to the head of the school.” (ibid., p.38).

The role of the principal was envisaged even in selection and transfer of teachers.

4.2.2. The Cluster System

Following these recommendations, ‘Education Proposals for Reform’ (Ministry of Education, 1981), widely known as the white paper, proposed the introduction of school clusters. A group of schools within a defined geographical area were grouped together for better organization, management and development. The cluster was a fully-fledged administrative unit, having a leader of its own (principal of the core school) with powers to administer the unit organized in order to achieve certain identified goals.

The core school and the cluster principal had power and authority over many aspects of school management. Samaranayake (1985) notes that:
“The Cluster Principal will function as head of the school cluster with the core school as his administrative centre. He will be responsible to the District Director of Education (DDE) for the administration and supervision of education in the schools in the cluster. The Cluster Principal will plan the development of the whole cluster and will identify the strength and functions of the schools vis-à-vis the cluster. The teachers will be deployed by him in the cluster school. He will supervise and organize the curricula programmes, the co-curricula programmes, the sharing facilities and equipment within the cluster. The District Director of Education will consult the Cluster Principal in the transfer of teachers to and from the cluster. The Cluster Principal will have the authority to recommend increments of teachers and recommend minor punishments. He will also be given the authority as regards use of facilities fees” (1985:27-28).

Several studies (Staff College, 1986; Perera, 1987; Cabral, 1989; Kulasena, 1989) revealed that in many cases the leadership of the cluster principals was inadequate. This was partly due to the fact there were less qualified persons who lacked administrative experience. Hence the ministry recommended that the cluster principal come from the Sri Lanka Education Administrative Service (SLEAS) or hold at least a Grade 1 post of the Sri Lanka Principals Service (SLPS). But some cluster principals did not have these grades, while some, though qualified had no appropriate training.

4.2.3. The 1984 Report on Management Reforms in the Ministry of Education

In 1984 recommendations were made in order to give substantive delegation of power to the school level. The report on management reforms in the Ministry of Education (1984) very strongly viewed principals as first line managers of the ministry and recommended that adequate authority be delegated to them. It recommended that,
“Principals should be given the delegated authority necessary to punish any teacher, supervisor, or other school employee, up to a reprimand or a fine up to one week’s pay, also the authority to suspend any student for misconduct or misbehaviour up to one month. He should be given the financial authority necessary to repair any equipment or furniture in the school and also take action on the Annual School Board of Survey accordingly. This delegation should be spelt out in detail and also in relation both to the substantive position of the Principal and also the grade category of the school. …Each school should have a development fund to mobilise external resources. Large schools should have a school budget with three component parts; (1) Government funds, (2) Facilities fees, (3) Community contributions.” (Ministry of Education, 1984:9)

However, as Perera (1989) had pointed out, that the 1984 management reforms had not been systematically implemented and responsibilities were not transferred to the principal as envisaged. The proposals remained at the suggestion level.

“On the one level the Ministry had not followed up its policy by amending the necessary circulars, regulations etc., while on the other, principals, have not risen to the occasion to exercise the power and authority that should be their due". (Ibid., p.9)

Similarly at the school level, principals had not adequately delegated and assigned functions and responsibilities to his deputy or sectional heads.

4.2.4. The Provincial Councils

The Provincial Council Act 1987, devolved many political and administrative functions by introducing a totally new administrative structure in the country. The provinces received more autonomy to manage their affairs. Provincial ministries were established and the posts of Education Minister and Education Secretary were created. The provision of facilities to schools other than specified schools, appointment of principals to type 2 and 3 schools, the implementation of non-formal education pro-
grammes, construction and maintenance of buildings, libraries, play
grounds, procurement and distribution of educational aids fell under the
responsibility of the province.

With the establishment of the provincial ministries, the responsibilities
of the role of the provincial education office and the provincial director
were reduced. The provincial director was made accountable to the pro-
vincial secretary while the schools and the divisional office were con-
trolled by both the provincial Ministry and the provincial Education De-
partment. The roles of the provincial secretary and provincial director
could have been better defined. In any case this was a reform which wit-
nessed transfer of responsibility and authority to a lower level.

4.2.5. The School Development Boards

With the establishment of school development boards (SDB) in 1993, the
decentralization effort became more consultative and participatory. School development boards consisted of twelve members, namely, the
principal (Chairperson); the deputy principal; three teachers; three par-
ents; three former students and a person elected by the Board members
to represent the well-wishers. It was expected that SDB would meet once
every two months.

The members of parliament and of provincial councils, local authorities
and contractors registered in the MEHE or in the provincial education
ministries as possible contractors for buildings or supply of equipment,
were disqualified from these Boards. Even their parents, spouses, broth-
ers and sisters of such contractors were disqualified.

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3 Type 1 AB - Schools with Grades 1 to 13 and include G.C.E (A.L) Science, Arts and Commerce
streams.
Type 1 C - Schools with Grades 1 to 13 and include G.C.E. (A.L) Arts and Commerce Streams.
Type 2 - Schools with classes up to Grade 11.
Type 3 (i) - Schools with classes up to Grade 8.
Type 3 (ii) - Schools with classes up to Grade 5.
National schools - The ‘promoted’, 1AB schools. The National schools are administered and financed by
the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE).
It was expected that the Boards would meet at least once in two months with a quorum seven. The duties of the Board were to assist the principal in areas such as: assessing the current needs and performance of the school; promoting sports as well as recreational and cultural activities; developing and maintaining school infrastructures and facilities, utilizing effectively state allocations and community contributions, etc. The school boards were abolished in February 1995. Little assessment had been done to measure their impact before their abolition. However, several studies Perera and Palihakkara (1997) reveal that they did not exist in most primary schools and, where they did exist, the major emphasis was on generating resources. People took the boards to be fund-raising bodies. Though the Act had suggested democratic election procedures, the nomination of members was done by the principals. In certain schools, most members hardly attended meetings. The teachers were not involved in the decision making process.

4.2.6. A Summing up of the Main Problems Encountered

A close scrutiny of these efforts indicates that, although the country had taken several noteworthy steps towards the decentralization of educational administration with a view of upgrading operational efficiency, the effects were marginal. The process of decentralization was mainly concerned with establishing layers between the central ministry and the school with the view of bringing management closer to the school. Though the geographical units of administration have shifted from the central to the middle levels, the pattern in which schools function did almost remained unchanged. By 1994 there were four layers between the central ministry and the school, namely, the provincial ministry, the provincial department, the zonal office and the divisional office. In some places there was the district education office as well. This often created problems for the school, as it had to serve many masters. Several studies (Staff College, 1986; Manoharan, 1988; Cabral, 1989; Kulasena, 1989; Perera, 1989; Silva et al, 1993; Perera and Palihakkara, 1997) have identified several issues:
1. There were instances where the schools were subjected to multiple control by the different layers. Different offices had issued different instructions on the same subject. Principals were called for meetings by two or three layers (district and division) on the same day.

2. These offices were responsible for helping schools to function better. But in fact they themselves did not have a work ethic. Some of the offices could not initiate or facilitate any development. The number of layers had multiplied but some did not have good officers to man them. The word ‘misfits’ has been used to refer to some.

3. The coordination between the different layers was minimal. The closest office to the school, the division, was not given much authority. Schools generally preferred to be controlled by the higher layer, thus ignoring one closest to them.

4. The layers were established to break lengthy procedures. But there was evidence that administrative procedures had become longer. Divisional offices prepared the pay sheets, but for approval, they had to be submitted to the district office. Divisional offices kept teachers’ files. The director of the district office gave the approval for extensions of service. For this he had to refer to the teachers’ files and this had caused unnecessary delays. Cabral in his study on the 1984 management reforms in the Kegalle district had quoted a officer as saying:

   “Management reforms have really reduced efficiency. Everywhere it is mere duplication.” (Cabral, 1989:7)

5. The multiplication of work at the different layers often increased the work of the principals. Manoharan identified many functions been duplicated at the district and divisional offices. One example quoted is as follows:

   “One of the functions of the divisional education office is the assessment of divisional cadre requirements, obtaining and maintaining the cadre and inter-divisional transfers. The divisional education office used to call
for necessary statistics from the cluster principal to assess the teacher cadres of the division. ….. The district office too calls for the same particulars separately and assess teacher cadres of schools. This double exercise is a waste of time, material and energy.” (Manoharan, 1988:4)

This reveals that a more comprehensive and carefully prepared package needs to be introduced if schools are to work with more autonomy. Most functions carried out by the above layers could be delegated to the school level. Although the above offices are headed by the SLEAS personnel, teacher establishment matters are mostly carried out by the clerical staff. It has become a common practice that many of the clerical staff cause delays due to their lethargy. Some of them even disrespect the principals and teachers by their indifference. Several studies (Wijesundera et al, 1997) reveal that teachers have negative impressions, the way they are treated at the educational offices, the speed with which their matters are attended and on the lack of professional support from the officers.

4.3. Introducing School-Based Management: Proposal and Rationale

4.3.1. The Reform Proposals

The MEHE (1996) in a draft proposal of the reforms named “National Education Policy: A framework for Action on General Education” states that the ‘process of decentralization must go right down to the level of the school’. It stresses the need to give greater responsibility to the school and the community.

The ‘Reforms in General Education’ (1997) stresses the need to adopt School-Based Management to make schools function more effectively.

'School-Based Management has been accepted as an effective tool in the management of schools. …It should specifically state the power, authority and responsibilities of the principal and the Senior Management group of the school. There shall be a Council of Management for each school
comprising the Principal, representatives of the staff, parents, past pupils and well-wishers and a departmental nominee to assist the Principal in the formulation of policy and preparation of development plans and monitoring the implementation thereof." (NEC, 1997: 25)

The same document also suggests that giving a grant to schools based on the unit costs should ensure equitable allocation of resources. In order to alleviate disparities in the allocation of resources, a grant would be calculated at a student rate. The transfers of teachers will be effected only at the beginning of the year and the consent of the principal of the school would have to be obtained before the transfer letters were issued.

4.3.2. The Rationale for Introducing School-Based Management (SBM)

The Budget Speech of November 1998 noted that in 1999 the school reorganization would be done in two ways: ‘Firstly, by the establishment of an effective management system taking school as the base and Secondly, by the introduction of a Performance Appraisal System for teachers’.

The emergence of SBM in Sri Lanka has to be viewed within the overall package of reforms that is introduced to the Sri Lankan education system, but also within the broader context of socio-economic and political changes taking place in the country; and finally within the context of the international SBM movement. Sri Lanka is one of the first countries in the Asian region that has decided to introduce SBM. It is also one of the first developing countries to brave it.

The need for School Based Management in Sri Lanka springs from several factors:

Firstly, the individual school is submerged in an all-island set of general macro programmes, which are not sufficiently adapted to the specific needs and characteristics of the school. The principal and the staff do not seem to make a conscious effort to diagnose their needs and initiate essential organizational changes. In spite of the decentralization measures, most schools still blindly follow the script sent from the cen-
The principal remains a representative of the zonal or divisional office. There is a need to take the school design and develop its short-and long-term plans in order to achieve its objectives.

Secondly, schools have not identified the reservoir of both human and physical potential energy, and hence these resources are left unutilized. They do not endeavour to solve at their own initiative their problems regarding infrastructure development or resource generation; these are passed on to the hierarchy. Schools in Sri Lanka function from 8.00 hours until 14.00 hours and with the exception of some, the buildings are not used outside these hours. There are a number of schools which have underutilized land which could be used for educational purposes, resource generation or for the welfare of students. Schools need to have more autonomy with regard to determining the generation, allocation and utilization of resources.

Thirdly, the country has a predominant rural sector, although relatively small, varied climatic conditions and geographical variations enrich it, thus providing various employment opportunities. In addition to the plantation settlements there is a vast fishing sector. Lack of curricula diversification at junior and senior secondary levels has created a widening mismatch between education and the world of work. Only a handful of schools in the urban and in the semi-urban sector try to link up with the expanding private sector in order to provide their pupils with wider curricular initiatives. There is need to ensure more academic freedom and initiatives which offer more interesting and relevant curricula.

Fourthly, there is enough research evidence to show that school improvement is related to the community factor. The in-school staff often come from outside and the local community, thus the support and encouragement of the parents and community leaders motivate them. In fact, most initiatives need to come from the community. SBM guarantees the involvement of the community in school planning and resource management.
Fifthly, during the last two decades both short- and long-term teacher training courses have mushroomed in the country. But this has had only a marginal impact on school development. The programmes focus more on individual teacher development than on school development. Under SBM, each school will have a budget for staff development and congruence between staff training and school needs will be more conceivable.

4.3.3. The Implementation Process

Initially SBM will be introduced in a selected group of schools. The lessons learned at the implementation stage should be applied when SBM is introduced to the next cohort of schools. The selection of the first cohort of schools is not without debate. One proposal is to introduce SBM to national schools as they have more resources than others. Hence, they can manage their affairs with less material and professional support from the state. Furthermore, as they are managed by the MEHE, the decision to give them more autonomy can be taken by the MEHE without referring to the provincial authorities. The second proposal is to introduce SBM to about an equal number of 1AB schools representing the different provinces in addition to the national schools. The third proposal is to introduce SBM to 500 schools representing all categories (1AB, 1C, type 2, type 3), locations (urban/rural), gender and media. It is argued that the less advantaged schools will have more freedom to run their affairs with less political or other interference.

The different steps taken so far to introduce SBM will be briefly presented and discussed hereafter.

4.3.4.1. Training

First of all several workshops have been organized which allowed education officers to clarify the concept of SBM and to examine its implications. At an initial workshop held in the National Institute of Education (July 1997) on SBM, the participants identified several weaknesses in the present Sri Lankan education system. They also identified possible char-
acteristics of a School-Based Management system in Sri Lanka as follows:

- a level of autonomy which allows the school to determine its own approach to the teaching/learning process;
- the internal allocation of the school resources and the capacity to plan for the future in partnership with their local communities;
- a system of demonstrating the school’s accountability to its clients and governmental constituencies;
- a close relationship between the school and the community through representative membership of the school board, with whom the principal and the school undertakes school development plans that reflect local educational priorities;
- a school culture that empowers staff through open participation in the management of the school where delegation is a normal management feature;
- a recognition by the external authorities that the school has the capability to organize effective network/system to deliver the curriculum according to local needs within the national curriculum framework;
- the existence of a school-based performance appraisal system linked to a school-based staff development programme.

The participants endorsed the introduction of school-based management as a practical solution to many of the presumed shortcomings in the existing education system. They emphasized the need to grant autonomy to schools in areas such as whole-school development planning, increased expenditure approval and minor staffing matters.

Subsequently several sessions were held during which principals were briefly made aware of the underlying assumptions of SBM and implications of SBM and asked to share their views. These sessions have paved the way for a forum of stakeholders to share their enthusiasm, express their fears while assimilating the concept of SBM. It is part of an important strategy in order not to be taken by surprise later.
The National Institute of Education (NIE) together with a group of principals, deputy principals and officials from the Ministry and from the provinces also prepared a ‘Handbook for Principals’ so that they could assimilate the concept of SBM, its implications and effect within the school.

Further, a ‘Training Manual’ was developed by NIE covering the themes of planning School development, curriculum delivery and assessment, managing resources and setting and achieving standards. The training will be organized by the provincial departments/ministries and coordinated by the MEHE. NIE will provide the required consultancy services. The initial training of four days will be delivered by a two-by-two day programme with about a four week interval between the first and the second training programmes. The principals will have to adapt concepts of training and the training material to their schools and work with their own staff.

The implementation of SBM will be monitored by the responsible authorities and the trainers in order to identify the best practices in the management of schools for replication. If SBM is introduced to a school in January, formative reports will be prepared in April and August and a summative report in December. The schools will continue to assess their growth while external monitoring would complement it. If SBM is to succeed, it would become not only an on going activity, but part of schools’ culture.

NIE, in collaboration with MEHE has trained four trainers in each province in order to conduct principals’ training programmes as required. The trainers attended a four-day training programme and once the date of implementation of SBM and the first cohort of schools are made known, the trainers will receive one day’s orientation as well as training materials.
4.3.4.2. Revision of Circulars

The revision of some of the existing circulars is seen as central to the implementation of SBM. These circulars have been identified by a group that represents various stakeholders. After two days of deliberation, this group suggested that the following be revised.

- circulars pertaining to the utilization of school buildings and land;
- circulars pertaining to repairs to school buildings;
- circulars pertaining to repairing of equipment without delay;
- circulars pertaining to the revision of fees and petty cash.

The first draft of the revised versions of these circulars is now available.

4.3.4.3. Establishment of School Management Council and Senior Management Team

The establishment of the School Management Council (SMC) and the Senior Management Team (SMT) (SMT has also been referred to as SMG -School Management Group-) needed further guidance. The SMC is related to development planning and educational imperatives, the SMT is about translating the development plan into operational management activities to ensure school improvement. Both mechanisms, while complementary, need a clear line of demarcation which separates their roles and functions. The views of principals and education officers have been obtained concerning the composition and functions of SMCs and SMTs.

Consequently, SMC is composed of the principal (chairperson), deputy principal, two teachers, two Parents, two ex-students, two well-wishers, and a representative of the Education Authority. Some other suggestions included having one or two student representatives. Some schools prefer professionals instead of well-wishers. The Committee is expected to: (i) develop a school policy and plan; (ii) provide and develop physical resources; (iii) maintain and develop school plant; (iv) co-ordinate school-
community relations with the SMT; (v) co-ordinate of student welfare activities with the SMT; and (vi) ensure security.

The SMT is composed of the principal (chairperson), deputy principals and sectional heads. Some have mentioned that the school senior prefect or the two senior prefects (in case of mixed schools) should be in the SMT. Schools which have assistant principals have suggested that they also be included. However, in case of small schools with few teachers and generally without deputy principals or sectional heads, the whole staff could constitute the SMT. The SMT’s role is to: (i) make an implement educational decisions; (ii) oversee the teaching/learning process; (iii) carry out student evaluation; (iv) co-ordinate co-curricular activities; (v) ensure student discipline welfare and counselling; and (vi) carry out school supervision.

4.3.4.4. Formula Funding

Under SBM, schools are given greater financial flexibility and autonomy. The government has worked out a new financing mechanism on a rational as well as an equitable basis: Norm-based unit cost resource allocation mechanism (NBUCRAM). Two variables are used here, the number of grades in a school and the number of students. Two norm sets are used, one for recurrent expenditure and the other for capital expenditure. Using two variables and the norm sets, schools are given their allocations. A 10 percent additional grant is given to the deprived schools. Resource allocation needs to be subjected to intensive monitoring and evaluation, by which quality assurance and probity are ensured.

4.3.4.5. The Performance Appraisal of Teachers

It is expected that performance of every teacher will be appraised annually at school level. Every teacher will be assessed in five specific areas, namely responsibilities in the teaching/learning process, student welfare and student guidance, co-curricular activities, school-community
relations, and special services rendered to the school. At the beginning of the year, the teachers will list the tasks they hope to achieve in each specific area, after discussions with the principal or a senior teacher (e.g. deputy principal, sectional head, grade coordinator etc.) designated by the principal. The principal or this senior teacher will serve as the appraiser. The teachers will then write out what support or resources they would expect to receive from the school in order achieve those targets on time. At the end of the year the teachers will record the extent to which the targets have been achieved. The appraisers will then write their observations in the fourth column, in which they will mention the progress made or degree to which the targets have been achieved and the reasons why the targets were not achieved as expected. The appraisee and the appraiser will also discuss the progress made at the end of each school term. At the end of the year the principal will make recommendations for the annual increment of the teacher.

4.3.4.6. Re-structuring of Schools

At the same time, plans are under way to reorganize schools on a two-tier basis, namely junior schools from Grades 1 to 9 and senior schools from Grades 10 to 13, in place of the present system where there are several categories of schools (see footnote 3). The preliminary exercise towards this end is undertaken and completed by the Policy Planning and Monitoring Division (PPMD) of the MEHE, together with the respective provincial education authorities.

4.4. Two Important Conditions for Success

The main objective of SBM is to improve the performance of schools. It is based on the underlying assumption that autonomous schools offer a clear vision for the future and are prepared to release the energies of their staff by empowering them to take professional responsibility for
raising educational standards. Several doubts have been expressed over the successful implementation of SBM unless certain conditions are met.

4.4.1. The Selection of Principals

One of the main issues raised is the suitability of the principals for their post; they may be either unfit for the new role or may misuse their power. SBM accords great responsibility to the principals and their selection is therefore crucial. The recruitment procedures of principals have to be adapted. A national-level examination was introduced in late 1980’s for this purpose. The question is: is that the best way to recruit principals? A competency-based examination can be useful, but needs to be complemented with other selection criteria. SBM presupposes that schools differ and if so, the right choice has to be made as people also differ and do better in some institutions than in others. Before implementing SBM in a school, the authorities have to find an appropriate method to see that a suitable person is occupying the job. Under the SBM system, the selection of principals has to be taken seriously.

The permanency of the principal also needs to be guaranteed. An assertive principal can become a victim of circumstances in the current system. If a long-term development of schools is to be assured, a principal has to serve in a school for at least five to eight years.

4.4.2. The Preparation of Principals

Both the MEHE (1996) and the NEC (1997) reports have stated the need to train principals to discharge their functions successfully under the new dispensation. Training principals and their senior staff for the new roles envisaged under SBM and developing a team management approach to work are important. As mentioned earlier, an initial training programme has been designed to stimulate awareness about SBM among education officers. SBM means that there is a clear move from ‘class-room teaching level’ to ‘school organisation level’. Fortunately, future training will be able to draw from the experiences accumulated
during previous training programmes. Sri Lanka has already moved away from the traditional approach in management training to a site-based and group-based approach through the ‘Institutional Development Capacity of disadvantaged schools project 1993-98’ and the ‘Secondary School Development Project’, 1996-98. Both projects were based on the assumption that the internal capacity of the schools for self-renewal can only be achieved with the conscious effort of the members of the schools. Their approach is no doubt an extremely valuable source of inspiration for educational management training in the country.

4.5. Some Views from Below

One major occurrence in school based management is the autonomy given to the school or in other words to the principal and the Senior Management Group. A questionnaire was administered to 144 principals and 243 deputy principals of national schools to find out what functions and tasks should be delegated to the school. In addition 165 principals and 108 deputy principals of other category schools were also brought together in four separate focus groups and were requested to write down the functions and tasks that should be delegated to the school level when SBM is in operation. A group of 126 teachers in different types of schools were met in two separate groups, and the concept of SBM was briefly explained to them. Then they were asked to write down the tasks and functions that should be delegated to the school level. A group of 32 trainers involved in principals’ training both at national and provincial levels and a group of 24 zonal directors were also interviewed to find out the functions and responsibilities that should be delegated to the principals when SBM is in operation.

The responses of different groups were clustered into three areas: personnel, curriculum and budget, the assumption being that SBM will be put into practice by giving the school the authority over these three key decision areas. The detailed results with the replies of different catego-
eries of respondents are given in Appendix 2. Since the principals/deputy principals and the teachers were a large sample the number of responses received under each response is also given in Appendix 2.

The main conclusions coming out of this exercise are briefly summarized hereafter.

For principals and deputy principals irrespective of school category, the most important preoccupation is to be involved in the selection and management of teachers. They had mentioned that they need to be consulted when teachers are given or removed. A large number of principals and deputies specifically mentioned that they wish to be involved in the selection process in some form. Even zonal directors and the management trainers considered this necessary. Many principals also mentioned that they need to be consulted when teachers are posted or removed. There was a recurring demand that principals could request the removal of ineffective teachers, a point frequently mentioned by the principals of type 2 and type 3 schools of the Uva province, where most such schools are disadvantaged. The principals of type 1C, type 2 and type 3 schools wanted to be given more powers to deal with latecomers and to decide on teacher incentives. School principals in remote areas mentioned that teachers should not be removed without replacement. A request made by all categories of school principals, but especially so by those of rural schools, was for the principals to have the authority to obtain the services of appropriate persons when specific subject teachers were not available. Several principals from national schools requested for the maintenance of school files and the selection and deployment of minor employees, though the principals and deputies of the other school categories had not so requested. There were more requests from national schools for increased autonomy in school admissions than from other schools. School-based staff development and the strengthening of in-school supervision had been mentioned across all categories of schools.
Principals and deputies of all the categories of schools also showed a keen interest in having a stronger say to make curricular variations. Type 2 and type 3 school principals specifically mentioned that they be allowed to take vocational initiatives. Principals and deputies of several schools of all categories wanted freedom to purchase educational equipment. This was the issue most frequently mentioned by teachers from whatever type of school. The need to have funds, and flexible procedures to use them for student welfare, was mentioned by several rural school principals, though this was not mentioned by those of national schools. Freedom to organise educational trips with parental consent, more flexibility in organising co-curricular activities, the authority to decide on the school calendar, to organise school examinations were mentioned by staff from across all school categories. The autonomy in developing the school plant and the infrastructure, and the autonomy in the management of physical resources were mentioned across school categories. Several type 1C, type 2 and type 3 school principals requested that they need to have more freedom in the generation of resources.

It may be interesting to note that what the different groups have suggested to be delegated to the school, were already suggested in the 1979 Report ‘Relevance in Education’ by an eminent group of educationists. It is frustrating to realize that at least some of those functions and responsibilities had not been yet been handed over. Even in 1984, though some progressive proposals were made they had remained at the level of suggestion.

4.6. In Conclusion: Lessons to Be Learnt From the International Scene

Sri Lanka can draw from success and failure stories on SBM highlighted in literature worldwide. Bezznia (1997:197-98) provides a useful realization that school-site management (SSM) is ‘not about money’ but ‘one of ownership’; SSM should not see school as a ‘target of change’ but as a ‘centre of critical inquiry’. Calvert (1989: 40) is of the view that under SBM,
reliance on fund-raising, donations and free use of community and parent volunteers may give rise to several problems. Fund-raising in wealthy communities is more successful than in poor communities, therefore equity problems will emerge. Sackney and Dibski go on to say that,

"Perhaps the greatest single worry of educators and parents in a decentralised school system is the problem of equity.” (1994: 110)

However it must be stated that in Sri Lanka the existing system too has perpetuated imbalances and the gap keeps widening. Cheng (1993: 17) sees that in, “a complicated, changing and a challenging context school based management as a promising model”, but warns (1996: 182) that “the traditional conception of school-based management is simplistic and narrow and usually ignores the multiplicity of self-management in school”. According to Gamage (1996a: 213), the realisation of set goals of SBM, is a, “time consuming, laborious process which needs pro-active, professional leadership and careful planning”.

Evans and Hood (1997: 14) are of the view that, “SBM has presented principals and senior management teams with enormous challenges”, but “its advent has also offered many opportunities and the ones who have seized these opportunities have been able to raise the standards in their schools”.

SBM envisages increasing autonomy and making school self managing. But autonomy itself offers constraints. Fidler, Russel and Simkins provide a useful reference.

“Self-management offers many opportunities to schools. What it cannot do, however, is free them and those who manage and work in them, from the constraints associated with working in an economic and political climate which presents major challenges for public sector organisations of all kinds.” (1997: 245)
A number of issues and concerns that emerge through self-management of schools have been highlighted by Caldwell and Spinks. One main concern they raise the need for a framework for accountability.

“The school must be managed within a framework of national, state and local guidelines. These guidelines may be in the form of legislation, policies, priorities, and conditions in collective agreements and funding arrangements. The school must be able to demonstrate that these guidelines have been honoured. Three patterns of accountability are suggested in the self-management of schools: accountability to a central authority, accountability to the local community, and accountability to the governing body or appropriate policy group within the school.” (1988: 19 - 21)

Murphy and Beck (1995) have intensively explored the reasons for the failure of SBM in the western context and conclude that this occurred where the emphasis had been more on structural reform rather than on an ‘organic’ change. The latter would provide and create a better ‘educational community’ to students. They suggest that ‘SBM needs to undergo a transformation from a structural form to an organic one’ (pp. 174-79). This provides a valuable challenge to Sri Lankan policy makers, administrators within and outside the school and, more specifically, to capacity builders (trainers) who will have an uphill task ahead of them.

Leithwood and Menzies (1998) reviewing seventy-seven case studies identified a number of obstacles that could be encountered in the implementation of SBM in the early and middle stages. They categorized their findings for different stakeholders. i.e. teachers, principals, district administrators, parents and the wider community.

A country that aspires to introduce SBM could well learn from these findings and examine the possibility of using the strategies suggested by Leithwood and Menzies (1998, pp.265-275), according to whom, the obstacles for SBM implementation could be summarised as follows:

- Lack of shared vision (principals, teachers, administrators, parents, community);
- Lack of experience (principals and teachers);
- Insufficient training (principals);
- Excessive demands for paperwork (principals);
- Adherence to traditional roles (principals, teachers, administrators);
- Lack of sense of belonging or ownership (teachers);
- Unwillingness to accept that their practice need change (principals and teachers);
- Incompetence (teachers);
- Lack of teacher solidarity (teachers);
- Lack of leadership (principals);
- No faith in the advantages of SBM (principals, teachers, administrators);
- Doubts about parental commitment (principals and teachers);
- Increased stress (principals, teachers, administrators, parents, community);
- Uncertainty about the legal status of SBM (principals);
- Financial constraints (principals and teachers);
- Lack of resources to make changes (principals and teachers);
- Lack of authority to make changes (principals);
- Excessive time demands/work load (principals, teachers, parents, community);
- Lack of interest in broader issues (parents, community);
- Hesitancy to speak out at meetings (parents, community);
- Perceive that principals and teachers dominate councils (parents and community);
- Low percentage of parents are interested and involved (parents and community);
- Lack of trust and respect for teachers (parents and community);
- Perceive that principals, parents and community do not regard them (teachers);
- Perceive council meetings as time wasters (principals and teachers);

- Power struggle among individuals, groups (principals, teachers, parents, community);

- Lack of role definition (principals, teachers, administrators, parents, community).

For the successful implementation and sustenance of SBM, significant changes in both role and orientation at every level of the existing education system need to be introduced. The preparation of the key players, i.e. principals and middle managers in schools, is vital to ensure successful introduction of SBM. They have to convince the other staff members and parents. The mass media has to be used effectively to disseminate information on new ideas and concepts, in order to lessen the resistance that could be encountered and also obtain support since the stakeholders will be aware of the advantages of SBM.

SBM calls for a greater and active participation of the community in the planning, administration and financing of the schools. It needs to enable students and parents to exercise choice in the type and quality and education they receive. Under SBM, schools will be flexible enough to take into account expectations of students and parents. The community and in-school staff will be involved in curricular and budgeting decisions. SBM is not an end in itself, but a means to reach greater human aspirations and achievements, which will only be possible with a change in our values and attitudes.
CHAPTER 5: TEACHER PERCEPTIONS ON NATIONAL POLICY ON PRIMARY EDUCATION

5.1. 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 focused 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 teachers 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. One hundred and twenty two teachers participated in the first phase of the study.

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4 This article was co-authored with Ms. S. Wijesundera based on a research study carried out on the perceptions of teachers on national policy on primary education reforms in Sri Lanka. The findings of the study appeared as chapter 6 (pp. 97-141) in the book Primary Education Reforms in Sri Lanka published by the Education Publications Department, Ministry of Education, Sri Lanka in 2006. The book was edited by Angela Little.
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 implement the policies successfully. The composition of teachers who participated in the second phase of data collection was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of school</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Rural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type 1AB</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type 1C</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type 2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type 3</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>140</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

School Types: Type 1AB-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 Grades 1 to 11.
Type 3-Schools with classes from Grades 1 to 5 or 1 to 8.
5.2. Teacher Perceptions on 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. Each proposal is presented in italics prior to the responses of the teachers.

The proposals are as follows:

- 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 relationship and 'counseling'
- Teacher education
- Management of education
- Computation of teacher cadre/transfers and handling grievances.
5.2.1 Compulsory Education

According to school census data enrolment rate at Grade 1 class is 92 percent, and the participation rate of the 5–14 age group is 86 percent. This means 14 percent in the compulsory school going age are out of school. To ensure total participation of children in the 5–14 age group, 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 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 5.1: Teacher Perceptions of the Proposals on Compulsory Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of teachers by school type</th>
<th>Strongly agree No.</th>
<th>No. %</th>
<th>Agree No.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Disagree No.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>No Response No.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Schools</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Schools</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Schools</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plantation Schools</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>09</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 emphasized 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 centred 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.”

5.2.2 Restructuring of Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>There will be two types of schools as follows:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Junior schools with classes from Grades 1 to 9 (or 1 to 11 in exceptional circumstances).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Senior schools with classes from Grades 10 to 13.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The structure of each school will be determined on the results of a school mapping exercise considering access as well as efficient utilization of resources.
Table 5.2: Teacher Perceptions of the Restructuring of the School System

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of teachers by school type</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>No Response</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Schools</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Schools</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Schools</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plantation Schools</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Here the opinion of teachers was divided. While 63 percent agreed, 37 percent either disagreed or did not respond. None of the teachers from the rural schools disagreed with the proposal but 24 percent 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 (Schools with 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. School 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 utilization 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-utilized.”

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 Grade 1 to 9 from a school now having Grades 1 to 13? Will it be nine long years?”

Teacher 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 the last suggestion was made by teachers from schools other than the national schools.)

5.2.3. School Size

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of teachers by school type</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>No Response</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Schools</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Schools</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Schools</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plantation Schools</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 delinking of the junior section from the senior section will also help to reduce the numbers.
Seventy six percent of the teachers either agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal. Few from national and urban schools disagreed with the proposal. About 20 percent 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.

### 5.2.4. 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of teachers by school type</th>
<th>Strongly agree No.</th>
<th>Strongly agree %</th>
<th>Agree No.</th>
<th>Agree %</th>
<th>Disagree No.</th>
<th>Disagree %</th>
<th>No Response No.</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Schools</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>01</td>
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<td>02</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Schools</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Schools</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>24</td>
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<td>Plantation Schools</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.4: Teacher Perceptions of Proposed Policy on Admissions to Grade 1 in Popular Schools
Twenty five percent of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed with the proposal. Another 10 to 15 percent did not respond. More than 60 percent of teachers from national, urban and rural schools disagreed with the proposal, while only 27 percent 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 dispensed all over the country.”

Some teachers thought 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 bright students who wish to enter popular schools.”

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 in schools closer to their home.”

5.2.5. Upgrading Disadvantaged Schools

Table 5.5: Teacher Perceptions on Upgrading Disadvantaged Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of teachers by school type</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>No Response</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Schools</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Schools</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Schools</td>
<td>09</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plantation Schools</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.”

5.2.6. Curriculum Revision

**Primary stage of education:** Grade 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 a joyful experience.

**Curriculum revision:** The primary curriculum will be subdivided 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 time will be spent on 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 adapt the curriculum to meet the needs and interests of children who differ from others and 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 5.6: Teacher Perceptions of Curriculum Revision

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of teachers by school type</th>
<th>Strongly agree No.</th>
<th>Agree No.</th>
<th>Disagree No.</th>
<th>No. of Responses No.</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Schools</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>19</td>
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<tr>
<td>Urban School</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural School</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plantation Schools</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

More than 90 percent 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 practiced 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 the curriculum effectively to the needs of children and to suit the environment. They also unani-
mously 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.”

5.2.7. Class-Based Assessment (CBA)

Table 5.7: Teacher Perceptions of Class-Based Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of teachers by school type</th>
<th>Strongly agree No.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Agree No.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Disagree No.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>No Response</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>21</td>
<td>09</td>
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<tr>
<td>Urban Schools</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>57</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>42</td>
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<td>Rural Schools</td>
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<td>72</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plantation Schools</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 percent 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 observations of student behaviour during activities and class work help teachers to make sound judgments on student development. Teachers have to organize field trips, workshops and activities to have more contact with 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 said that teachers will be biased towards some students.

“I know personally that some teachers give high marks to children who give them gifts. This is very common 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 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 is difficult to compare achievement.”

Teachers indicate that they need more clarification about the purpose and procedures of SBA.

5.2.8. 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 5.8: Teacher Perceptions on the Policy Proposals on Grade 5 Scholarship Examination

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of teachers by school type</th>
<th>Strongly agree No.</th>
<th>Agree No.</th>
<th>Disagree No.</th>
<th>No Response No.</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Schools</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>68</td>
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<tr>
<td>Urban Schools</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Schools</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plantation Schools</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teachers from national schools unanimously agreed with the proposal. But 12 to 15 percent from other urban rural and plantation schools disagreed. 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 the needy children. They pointed out the needs of high achievers who want to attend a good school. The teachers in national schools were highly supportive of the proposal.
5.2.9. Provision of Textbooks and Supplementary Readers

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. Adequate number of books will be supplied to schools.

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>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of teachers by school type</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>No. Response</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National schools</td>
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<td>63</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban schools</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural schools</td>
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<td>45</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All teachers from plantation schools agreed with 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 had 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.”

5.2.10. 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: 5.10: Teacher Perceptions of Teaching of First Language

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of teachers by school type</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>No Response</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>08  42</td>
<td>11  58</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
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<td>Urban schools</td>
<td>02  4</td>
<td>36  80</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>07  16</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural schools</td>
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<td>12  48</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plantation schools</td>
<td>15  45</td>
<td>18  55</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>38  31</td>
<td>77  63</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>07  6</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.”

5.2.11 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: 5.11: Teacher Perceptions of the use of English for Communication in Activity Classes from Grade 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of teachers by school types</th>
<th>Strongly Agree No.</th>
<th>Strongly Agree %</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree No.</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree %</th>
<th>No Response No.</th>
<th>No Response %</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National schools</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>42</td>
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<td>47</td>
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<td>19</td>
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<tr>
<td>Urban schools</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>18</td>
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<td>55</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural schools</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plantation schools</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.”

5.2.12 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: 5.12: Teacher Perceptions on Special Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of teachers by school type</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>No Response</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National schools</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>09</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban schools</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural schools</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plantation schools</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>33</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

97
Possibilities, Pitfalls and Suggestions

Teachers welcomed the proposal and no comments were made.

5.2.13. 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. Multi-media schools will be encouraged. Children of different communities will be provided with opportunities to meet each other and interact through co-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 5.13: Teacher Perceptions on National Integration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of teachers by school type</th>
<th>Strongly Agree No.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Agree No.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Disagree No.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>No Response No.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National schools</td>
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<td>09</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban schools</td>
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<td>39</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>04</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rural schools</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plantation schools</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teachers agreed with the proposal. They were of the view that its successful implementation would help to inculcate ethnic harmony, tolerance and mutual respect.
5.2.14 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 5.14: Perceptions of Teacher-Pupil Relationships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of teachers by school type</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>No Response</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National schools</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban schools</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural schools</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plantation schools</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All teachers agreed with the proposal. They mentioned that counselling is essential and highlighted the need to provide training to the teachers.
### 5.2.15 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 within 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 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’s 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 5.15: Teacher Perceptions on Teacher Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of teachers by school type</th>
<th>Strongly Agree No.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Agree No.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Disagree No.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>No Response No.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National schools</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>52</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>03</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban schools</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>06</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural schools</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>52</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plantation schools</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>49</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>09</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.”
5.2.16 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 5.16: Teacher Perceptions of Proposals for the Management of Education and Provision of Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of teachers by school type</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>No Response</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National schools</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban schools</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural schools</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plantation schools</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nearly 40 percent 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 constraints such as lack of time, lack of training, etc. A teacher who had been a grade co-ordinator thus explained the problem of lack of time.

“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. They must give us guidance to overcome weaknesses.”
5.2.17. Computation of Teacher-Cadre, Teacher Transfers and Handling of Grievances

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Computation of teacher-cadre</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher transfers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The present scheme of transferring teachers has caused many problems and affected the efficient functioning of schools. In order to minimize the need for transfers, a scheme will be devised to have a more stable school-based staff.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Handling of grievances of teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.”
5.3. Teacher Perceptions of Policy Reforms in Different Categories of Schools

A total of 17 reform proposals relating to primary education were 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 percent and 35 percent respectively disagreed. However, none of the teachers in rural schools disagreed with the proposal. Nine percent of teachers in plantation schools disagreed.

(c) Less than 75 percent of teachers in national and urban schools agreed with the proposal to reduce school size while 4 to 11 percent respectively disagreed. None of the teachers in rural and plantation schools disagreed and 76 and 81 percent respectively agreed. Others did not respond.
(d) Sixty to 80 percent 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 percent 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 percent 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 percent 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.

5.4. Teacher Perceptions on 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.

- Train all teachers on proposed teaching methodologies for lower and upper primary grades.
- Train Sinhala-medium teachers to teach the Tamil language and Tamil-medium teachers to teach the Sinhala language.
- Provide necessary training and resource material for teachers to use English in activity classes.
- Provide training on guidance and counselling of pupils.
- Make parents aware of all the changes that are to be implemented, through the mass media.
- Systematise the teacher transfer system.
- Provide at least one extra teacher to take over the classes of absent teachers.

All the 140 teachers who participated in the second phase of the data collection were Grade 1 teachers. They were from the same district, repre-
senting 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 categorized 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

5.4.1. Physical Environment of the Classroom and the School

The responses in respect of the requirements under this category are as follows (actual members of teachers for each category under 5.4.1 - 5.4.8):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Separate and enclosed classrooms</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequate space in the classroom</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sufficient play area within the classroom and outdoors</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilities for storing materials and equipment for aesthetics and sports activities</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orderly and clean school premises</td>
<td>08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water and sanitary facilities</td>
<td>06</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reforms in the primary school curriculum clearly emphasize the need to have an orderly and clean school environment and activity-based learn-
ing. Teachers grasped the idea clearly and seemed to be visualizing 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 un-partitioned 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.

5.4.2. Teaching Materials, Furniture and Equipment

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Require materials for activities</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide adequate classroom furniture</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide equipment for aesthetic and sports activities</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide radio cassette-recorders</td>
<td>08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide supplementary readers, storybooks and newspapers</td>
<td>07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide equipment and facilities for preparation of mid-day meals</td>
<td>07</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

“Provide pastel, clay and other stationery.”

“Provide cassette players, a TV and other equipment. These are required for singing, storytelling 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 subsidized 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”.
5.4.3. 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.

5.4.5. Teacher Guides and Syllabi

The responses regarding teacher guides could be categorized as follows:

- Provide detailed and simplified teacher guides on time: 17
- Provide a copies of 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: 13

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.

5.4.6. Guidance, Supervision and Follow-up

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

- Proper guidance from master teachers who are more competent: 36
- Supervision must be better organized: 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:

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

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

5.4.7 In-Service Training (INSET)

The requirements of in-service training are given below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Training sessions must be held more frequently</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training sessions must be properly planned to suit the needs of participants</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities must be provided to satisfy the requirements of</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Teachers also mentioned that they need training to teach pupils with special needs, using activities in classroom teaching and English language.

Teachers emphasized 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 characterize the INSET sessions.

5.4.8. Support from Parents

Teachers highlighted the following requirements.

Conduct awareness programmes for parents on the changes in the curriculum

Ensure that parents, politicians, officials and the public do not interfere with the work of the teachers

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.

5.4.9 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 advice teachers.”

“We don’t need a sectional head.”

“Sectional heads should be compassionate towards the teachers.”

Teachers from a Type 1 AB 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.

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

The last suggestion mentioned above, was made mostly by teachers from Type 1AB schools.

5.4.11. Support from the Education Office

Teachers expected a variety of support from the education office.

- 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.
- Guidance from the zonal education office is necessary. However, teachers expect the officers to be constructive in pointing out weaknesses.
- Implementation must be monitored.
- Adequate teachers must be provided.
- Common assessment forms to all schools must be provided.
- At least one officer must participate in the meetings organized 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.

“The 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.

5.5. Conclusions and Recommendations

5.5.1. 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 teach-
ers. 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.

5.5.2. 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.

5.5.3. 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:

- Assess physical resource needs of each school and prepare a three year investment plan to provide the necessary facilities.
- Find funds necessary, through the government and various other sources, to implement the above plan.
- Ensure an equitable supply of material and stationery to all schools in the province.
- 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.
- 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.
- Monitor implementation of reforms at the classroom level and provide necessary feedback to the teachers and principals.
- Monitor student achievement and attendance in schools to identify strengths and weaknesses in those aspects. Implement remedial programmes where necessary.
- Devise a reward system to motivate teachers and principals who excel in their work.
- 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.

- 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.
- Conduct studies to identify strengths and weaknesses in the curriculum, teachers' guides and textbooks in order to improve their quality.
- Devise and implement a programme to improve the professional quality of master teachers, principals and sectional heads.
- Implement parental education programmes on primary education using mass media.
- Implement distance education programmes to train primary teachers in teaching English, Sinhala and Tamil languages.

5.6. 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.
Towards the end of 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 island wide 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 6. BETTER SCHOOL MANAGEMENT: THE ROLE OF HEAD TEACHERS IN SRI LANKA

6.1 Basic Facts and background information on the education system in Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka’s education system (Figure 1) can be considered unique in its efforts to introduce innovation. In 1945, a free education scheme from kindergarten to university was introduced. This followed by the adoption of the local language medium as the instruction. In the 1940s special category of schools, known as ‘central schools’, was established in cities to provide students from villages with as good an education as the privileged. To move away from the narrow academic curriculum, wide reforms were introduced in 1972, life skills were added to the curriculum in 1984 and continuous assessment implemented in 1986. The cluster system was introduced in 1981 and School Development Boards in 1993.

The present period marks a new era in the Sri Lankan education system as a further comprehensive package of both organizational and curricular reforms has been introduced. This has necessitated school principals to not only manage change effectively but also to become agents of change. Reforms like school-based management will give school autonomy, thus making the principal’s role more central to school improvement.

The educational administration has, over the years, because of the expansion of education and the policy of decentralization, become more complex. There are five levels of decision-making above the school: na-

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6 This article written by the author appeared in pp. 333-383 in the book titled “School Principals: core actors in educational improvement”, edited by Kandasamy, M. And Blaton, L. The book published by IIEP: UNESCO in 2004 included seven country reports from Asia including this article on Sri Lanka.
tional, provincial, district, zonal and divisional. In addition, at the provincial level, three are two parallel bodies the provincial ministry, which forms part of the elected provincial government and the provincial department, which is an office of the national Ministry of Education.

Figure 6.1.: The structure of the general education system in Sri Lanka
6.1.1. The school system

In Sri Lanka state schools are categorized into school types which are defined as follows in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1: School types in Sri Lanka

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type 1 A</td>
<td>Schools with classes up to grade 13 including GCE (advance level) science, arts and business streams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type 1 C</td>
<td>Schools with classes up to grade 13 and including GCE arts and business streams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type 2</td>
<td>Schools with classes up to grade 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type 3 (I)</td>
<td>Elementary schools with classes up to grade 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type 3 (II)</td>
<td>Primary schools with classes up to grade 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen from Table 6.1, the way the school system is organized at present creates multifarious organizational patterns. There is no uniform school structure, which often creates confusion in school management. The National Education Commission (NEC) in its proposal for the reform of general education suggested reorganizing the school system on a two-tier basis, junior schools with grades 1 to 9 and senior schools with grades 10 to 13. This is a welcome proposal for the better management of schools and for a better delivery of the curriculum.

There is another category of state school called ‘National Schools’ to which mainly the Type 1AB schools are ‘promoted’. National Schools are administered and financed directly by the central Ministry of Education (MOE), while the other schools are under the management of the decentralized offices: provincial, district or zonal, depending on the type of school.

In 2000 there were 9,972 functioning government schools (Table 6. 2). The education system consists of nearly 4.2 million students with more or less equal number of female and male students (Table 6. 3) and
191,131 teachers (Table 6.4). Perhaps the most important statistic to note in Table 6.4 is that a relatively large proportion (8.9 percent) of the total number of teachers are uncertified, which means that they lack the necessary qualifications and training. There exist significant differences between provinces: those in the North have a share of uncertified teachers three times higher than, for example, the Western province. The total number of teachers amounts to almost one-quarter of the entire Sri Lankan public-sector workforce.

Table 6.2: Government schools, by type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Type 1AB</th>
<th>Type 1C</th>
<th>Type 2</th>
<th>Type 3 (I and II)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>657</td>
<td>378</td>
<td>1,446</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>520</td>
<td>636</td>
<td>1,504</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>488</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>1,177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>443</td>
<td>858</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>462</td>
<td>953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Western</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>571</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>1,268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Central</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>342</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uva</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>302</td>
<td>836</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sabaragamuwa</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>457</td>
<td>463</td>
<td>1,160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>586</td>
<td>1,863</td>
<td>3,910</td>
<td>3,613</td>
<td>9,972</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

% of total number of schools: 6 19 39 36 100

Source: School census 2000, provisional.
Table 6.3. Students, by gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Type</th>
<th>Total %</th>
<th>% of males</th>
<th>% of females</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1AB</td>
<td>27.7</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>1,163,068</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1C</td>
<td>33.1</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>1,386,281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type 2</td>
<td>27.7</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>1,160,401</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type 3</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>480,907</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>4,190,657</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: School census 2000, provincial

Table 6.4. Teachers, by province and appointment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Graduate teachers</th>
<th>Trained teachers</th>
<th>Certified teachers</th>
<th>Uncertified teachers</th>
<th>Non-govt teachers</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>13,013</td>
<td>21,976</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>(5.3%)</td>
<td>2,063</td>
<td>531</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>7,028</td>
<td>16,025</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>(9.2%)</td>
<td>2,641</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern</td>
<td>8,324</td>
<td>16,491</td>
<td>406</td>
<td>(8.3%)</td>
<td>2,321</td>
<td>458</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>2,678</td>
<td>4,763</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>(16.5%)</td>
<td>1,844</td>
<td>1,718</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>2,558</td>
<td>9,347</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>(11.6%)</td>
<td>1,651</td>
<td>450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Western</td>
<td>6,901</td>
<td>15,442</td>
<td>415</td>
<td>(17%)</td>
<td>1,438</td>
<td>439</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North central</td>
<td>2,291</td>
<td>8,395</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>(14%)</td>
<td>1,874</td>
<td>445</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uva</td>
<td>3,234</td>
<td>8,772</td>
<td>321</td>
<td>(12.7%)</td>
<td>1,888</td>
<td>667</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sabaragamuwa</td>
<td>4,748</td>
<td>12,969</td>
<td>359</td>
<td>(6.6%)</td>
<td>1,311</td>
<td>321</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50,775</td>
<td>114,180</td>
<td>3,516</td>
<td>17,031</td>
<td>5,629</td>
<td>191,131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>26.6</td>
<td>59.8</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: School census 2000, provisional.
Table 6.5. School size, by student population and approved grade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student population</th>
<th>1 AB schools</th>
<th>1 C schools</th>
<th>Type 2 schools</th>
<th>Type 3 schools</th>
<th>Total schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-30</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>408</td>
<td>436</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-50</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>612</td>
<td>684</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-75</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>588</td>
<td>735</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76-100</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>423</td>
<td>616</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101-150</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>1,163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>151-200</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>842</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>201-300</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>965</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>1,310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>301-500</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>427</td>
<td>915</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>1,520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>501-750</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>523</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>751-1000</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>329</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>507</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1001-1500</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>319</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>529</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1501-2000</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001-2500</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2501-3000</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3001-3500</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3501-4000</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4001-4500</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4501-5000</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 5000</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>586</td>
<td>1,863</td>
<td>3,910</td>
<td>3,613</td>
<td>9,972</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: School census 2000, provisional.
According to Table 6.2 nearly 36 percent of schools in the country are type 3 schools whilst 39 percent are type 2 schools. Both type 2 and 3 schools are predominately found in rural areas.

How students are distributed amongst the different types of schools is shown in table 6.5. Some 10 percent of schools have more than 1,000 pupils, while there are over 600 schools with less than 30 pupils. Graph 6.1 highlights this wide difference by looking at the number of teachers by school. About half of all schools count between 10 and 30 teachers, but large numbers are one- or two-teacher schools, whilst some others have over 100 teachers.

The pupil/teacher ratio of 22:1 stands favourably when taken as a whole, but must be analysed in detail. The pupil/teacher ratio is not
only an indicator that reveals how students learn, but also reveals issues on school management. Table 6.6 presents a detailed analysis of the pupil/teacher ratio in the country according to school type. A total of 10.5 percent of all schools have a pupil/teacher ratio of over 30.

Table 6.6. Pupil/teacher ratio according to school type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pupil/teacher ratio</th>
<th>Type 1AB</th>
<th>Type 1C</th>
<th>Type 2</th>
<th>Type 3</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1:1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-20 : 1</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>771</td>
<td>2,055</td>
<td>1,491</td>
<td>4,383</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-30 : 1</td>
<td>409</td>
<td>903</td>
<td>1,034</td>
<td>706</td>
<td>3,052</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40 : 1</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>748</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-60 : 1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-75 : 1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76-100 : 1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 586, 1,863, 3,910, 3,613, 9,972

Source: School census 2000, provisional.
6.1.2. Investment in education

When compared to international norms Sri Lanka spends less on education. In recent times the country has spent 3 percent of GDP and 10 percent of total public expenditure on education. A World Bank document (1996:4) estimates the international average is 5 percent GDP and 20 percent of the total public expenditure. The average for other Asian countries ranges from 4 to 8 percent of GDP and 11 to 18 percent of total expenditure.

Although the educational expenditure in Sri Lanka has increased with the expansion of the school system, it has remained between 8 to 10 percent of overall public spending since 1982. The actual expenditure on education from 1987 to 1996 is given in Table 6.7. Provincial spending as a percentage of the total expenditure has not increased since 1990.

Table 6.7. Education expenditure, 1987-1999 (in rupees)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>MoE And HE</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
<th>Provincial Expenditure</th>
<th>Total Expenditure</th>
<th>GNP</th>
<th>% of GNP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>4,319,101,076</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4,319,101,076</td>
<td>195,883,000,000</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>5,050,348,518</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5,050,348,518</td>
<td>221,435,000,000</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>6,781,064,314</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6,781,064,314</td>
<td>250,060,000,000</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>1,233,096,248</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>5,045,211,634</td>
<td>6,278,307,882</td>
<td>319,420,000,000</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>5,893,299,052</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>6,134,659,169</td>
<td>12,027,958,221</td>
<td>369,262,000,000</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>7,616,298,774</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>6,467,914,692</td>
<td>14,084,213,466</td>
<td>413,935,000,000</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>8,174,097,284</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>7,875,417,882</td>
<td>16,049,515,166</td>
<td>493,729,000,000</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>9,295,514,665</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>8,332,532,482</td>
<td>16,628,047,147</td>
<td>571,131,000,000</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>8,553,622,463</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>12,372,292,327</td>
<td>20,925,914,790</td>
<td>655,364,000,000</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>10,881,969,424</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>12,528,822,667</td>
<td>23,410,792,091</td>
<td>684,741,000,000</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.1.3. Statistical data on head teachers

Principals in Sri Lanka are expected to belong to either the Sri Lanka Education Administrative Service (SLEAS) (established in 1971 under the name SLES) or the Sri Lanka Principals Service (SLPS) (established in 1997). The SLEAS has a longer tradition and is considered to be a more prestigious service. The Salary structure of the SLEAS is more attractive than the SLPS (see Table, 6.13), and the principalships of bigger schools are often offered to those from the SLEAS.

Table 6.8. SLEAS, SLPS and other personnel holding principal or acting principal posts in schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class/Grade</th>
<th>Principals</th>
<th>Principal</th>
<th>Acting</th>
<th>Deputy Principal</th>
<th>Assistant Principals</th>
<th>Secondary Head</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Released from the school</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SLEAS I</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLEAS II</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLEAS III</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLPS I</td>
<td>1,291</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLPS II</td>
<td>2,640</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>637</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLPS III</td>
<td>2,611</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>683</td>
<td>594</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLTS I</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>1,66</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLTS 2-I</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>351</td>
<td>1,360</td>
<td>2,220</td>
<td>15,461</td>
<td>1,262</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLTS 3-II</td>
<td>319</td>
<td>469</td>
<td>1,029</td>
<td>2,135</td>
<td>24,158</td>
<td>1164</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLTS 3-I</td>
<td>615</td>
<td>906</td>
<td>1,625</td>
<td>4,499</td>
<td>83,197</td>
<td>1,257</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLTS 3-II</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>787</td>
<td>19,176</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Untrained</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>533</td>
<td>15,268</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8,103</td>
<td>1,869</td>
<td>6,020</td>
<td>11,321</td>
<td>159,397</td>
<td>4,421</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.8 indicates the status of those who hold principal positions in the 9,972 government schools. It is striking to note that there are 1,869 (almost 19 percent) who hold acting positions. Of this number 1,798 belong to the Teacher Service (SLTS). The likely explanation is that when a principal (who belongs to the Principal Service) of a school retires, the next in command takes over on an acting capacity and continues to do so. No conscious effort is made to quickly appoint a suitable SLPS person to that school.

Table 6.8 also reveals that at least 6 untrained teachers are holding principal posts and 21 untrained teachers hold acting principal posts in the
country. Since they are untrained they do not belong to the Teacher Service. However, one may assume these to be one-teacher schools. Table 6.8 further shows that there are 276 SLEAS principals and 3 acting SLEAS principals. They work in type 1AB (including National) schools. The issues that arise from these observations will be discussed in 6.4 on Main problems and major innovations.

There are 9,771 SLPS personnel working in schools. Of them the majority (79 percent) have over 20 years of service (Table 6.9). Many of those in the SLPS I are graduates. Those in the SLPS II and SLPS III are mostly trained teachers.

Table 6.9. Sri Lanka principal service personnel, by period of service in years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period of service (yrs)</th>
<th>0-9</th>
<th>10-14</th>
<th>15-19</th>
<th>20-24</th>
<th>25-29</th>
<th>30-34</th>
<th>over 35</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SLPS I</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>491</td>
<td>515</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>1,752</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLPS II</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>337</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>738</td>
<td>747</td>
<td>1,081</td>
<td>488</td>
<td>3,789</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLPS III</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>537</td>
<td>1,278</td>
<td>1,123</td>
<td>692</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>4,221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>717</td>
<td>994</td>
<td>2,386</td>
<td>2,361</td>
<td>2,288</td>
<td>931</td>
<td>9,771</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>24.2</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: School census 2000, provisional

It is interesting to note in Table 6.10 that only 5.9 percent of Sri Lanka principal service personnel are between the ages of 31 and 40, whether they be in the lowest or highest salary bracket. Table 6.11 gives the Principal Service personnel by qualification.
Table 6.10. Sri Lanka principal service personnel, by age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>31-40</th>
<th>41-50</th>
<th>Over 50</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SLPS I</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>610</td>
<td>1,098</td>
<td>1,752</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLPS II</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>1,439</td>
<td>2,180</td>
<td>3,798</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLPS III</td>
<td>362</td>
<td>2,315</td>
<td>1,644</td>
<td>4,221</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentage 5.9 44.8 50.5

Source: School census 2000, provisional

Table 6.11. Sri Lanka principal service personnel, by qualification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th>Graduates</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Trained</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SLPS I</td>
<td>1,057</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>695</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>1,752</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLPS II</td>
<td>1,794</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>2,004</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>3,798</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLPS III</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3,750</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>4,221</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: School census 2000, provisional

Table 6.12. Number in teacher and principal service, by gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Male %</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Female%</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher service</td>
<td>48,048</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>117,632</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>165,680</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principals service</td>
<td>7,133</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>2,638</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>9,771</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: School census 2000, provisional

One notable factor is the low number of females in management positions in schools (Table 6.12). One can argue that this is common to all
professions in the country. But the striking feature is that there is a high percentage of women (71 percent) serving as teachers.

6.2 Roles and functions of head teachers

6.2.1 Internal management of schools

6.2.1.1. Role of the principal

Given the diversity of schools one can see that the role of the principal will differ depending on school size, location, teacher availability, etc. Nevertheless a typical Sri Lankan principal is involved in administration and, to some degree, in planning, personnel, logistics and financial management. Administration includes attending to school admissions, maintenance of office documents such as attendance and leave registers, personnel files and managing students and teacher discipline.

Planning involves development of the annual school plan, planning the formal curriculum including the preparation of the annual school calendar and timetable, planning co-curricular activities and activities related to school development societies etc. Personnel management includes obtaining the required cadre of teachers and supporting staff, motivating them, delegating work, supervision, welfare, maintaining links with external institutes and agencies.

Physical resource management involves activities such as having a fair knowledge of existing resources, the provision of resources to teachers so that the curricula can be properly implemented and the removal of superfluous resources and waste. The functions that are entailed in financial management and control are the collection of facilities fees, school development, society fees, donations, maintenance of financial records, inventories, etc.
6.2.1.2 Role of deputy principals

In large schools (with more than 2,000 pupils) there are three deputies, in medium-sized schools (500 to 2,000 pupils) there are two deputies and in the smaller schools (between 200-500 pupils) there is one deputy. When there are three they are named Academic Deputy, Co-curricular Deputy and Administration and Finance Deputy: When there are only two deputy principals, the co-curricular activities are generally taken over by the deputy who is in charge of Administration and Finance.

The deputy principal (Administration and Finance) manages leave, facilities fees and other funds, school inventories and other records, circulars, discipline, welfare and external relations. In larger schools in Sri Lanka co-curricular activities hold a very prominent place and all matters pertaining to the management and development of co-curricular activities is the responsibility of the deputy principal (Co-curricular). The deputy principal (Academic) prepares the school timetable, implements it, maintains coherence between the formal and co-curriculum, designs and manages in-school supervision, maintains appropriate documents, helps children with special needs etc.

6.2.1.3. Role of sectional heads

The sectional heads are responsible for the proper functioning of their sections, teacher guidance and assessment of their grade level. They serve as the link between the section and senior management. In larger schools there are Assistant Principals who lead divisions that consist of approximately three different grades.

6.2.1.4 Supporting bodies

Old pupils’ associations, parent-teacher associations (PTA) and school development societies are three bodies that help with school manage-
ment. Old pupils’ associations consist of those who had received their education in these schools and are involved in the welfare and well-being of their alma mater. They are very active in urban schools. Parent-teacher associations are important for community support for education and are strong in most of the well-established semi-urban and rural schools. The school development societies (SDS) are the more central bodies and consist of school staff, old pupils, parents and well wishers.

Figures 6.2 to 6.6 show the organizational structures of schools of five different sizes. Many schools follow these structures although the functioning may not always reflect that shown. The term ‘principal,’ is used even for those who manage very small schools (in one-teacher schools, that teacher is called principal).

**Figure 6.2: An organizational chart of a school with less than 200 students**

![Organizational Chart](image)

This is a simple structure and the number of students on roll as well as staff do not permit sectional heads or supervisors. The structure is more circular than hierarchical. SDS is often not functional.
There is a principal and a deputy. In some of these schools, a senior teacher may be in charge of academic and co-curricular activities.
Figure 6.4. An organizational chart of a school with 501-1000 students
Figure 6.5. An organizational chart of a school with 1,001 – 2,000 students
6.3 Management of head Teachers

6.3.1. The Sri Lanka Principals Service (SLPS)

The Sri Lanka Principals Service consists of Public Officers appointed to Class 1, Class 2 (including grades I and II) and Class 3 (also including grades I and II). (see Table 6.13 p. 149).

The total number of official posts in the SLPS is 16,512. The way the cadres are filled is discussed under recruitment in section 6.3.2. At present there are several vacancies in the cadre. They will be filled in 2001 based on examination results. It has been estimated that 9,771 people belong
to the SLPS are serving in schools in managerial posts, either as principals, deputy principals, assistant principals, sectional heads or grade coordinators.

As shown in Table 6.8, 368 SLEAS personnel are working in managerial posts in schools as principals, deputy principals or assistant principals.

There are 248 SLPS personnel released from schools. Some of them are attached to Provincial/Zonal/Divisional offices. More are to be found working in remote areas as there is a dearth of SLEAS personnel in such areas. In such areas the management posts in schools are also held by those in the SLTS Service. Table 6.8 shows that there are 932 SLEAS or SLPS members serving as sectional heads, with 473 of them serving as teachers. This is ironic as 1,279 SLTS members are serving as principals and another 1,798 SLTS as acting principals.

6.3.2. Recruitment to the Sri Lanka Principals Service

The creation of the SLPS has enabled teachers to choose the position of principalships as specific career path in school management relatively early.

*Appointments to Class 3*

Appointments to vacancies in Class 3 of the Service will be made on the results of a limited competitive examination followed by an interview. Trained teachers with not less than five years of satisfactory service after training are eligible to sit this examination. The examination consists of two written papers, Comprehension and General knowledge. The Comprehension paper tries to assess the candidate’s ability to grasp the meaning of a given passage or passages. The General knowledge question paper is designed to test the candidates’ awareness of the environment in which they live and work, including the political, social and technical environment.
Appointments to grade II of Class 2

Appointments to not more than 60 percent of vacancies in grade II of Class 2 will be made on the results of a limited competitive examination followed by an interview. Trained teachers with not less than 10 years of satisfactory service after training, or graduate teachers with not less than five years of satisfactory service as graduate teachers are eligible to sit this examination. Appointments to not more than 40 percent of the vacancies in grade II of Class 2 of the Service will be made from those in Class 3 of the Service on basis of seniority and merit and on the results of an interview. Those with three years of satisfactory service in Class 3 of the Service will be eligible to be considered for promotion to grade II of Class 2 on the basis of seniority and merit.

Appointment to grade 1 of Class 2

Appointments to not more than 60 percent of the vacancies in grade 1 Class 2 of the Service will be made on the results of the limited competitive examination and an interview. Appointments to not more than 40 percent of the vacancies in grade 1 of the Service will be made by promotion of those in grade II of Class 2 of the Service, on the basis of seniority and merit based on the results of an interview.

The examinations for the grade 1 of Class 2 and grade II of Class 2 consist of three written papers in the following subjects: comprehension, general knowledge, education policy and administration. The paper on educational policy and administration is expected to test the familiarity of the candidate on the following: uses and aims in education, access and equality: relevance and efficiency, organization and management of the Ministry of Education including provincial departments and the school system; educational planning with special emphasis on school-level planning.
Appointments to Class I

Appointments to not more than 60 percent of the vacancies in Class 1 of the Service will be made by the Committee on the results of a limited competitive examination and an interview. Teachers with not less than 15 years of satisfactory service after training or graduate teachers with not less than 10 years of satisfactory service are eligible to apply. Appointments to not more than 40 percent of the vacancies in Class 1 will be made by promotion on the basis of merit and seniority and those eligible should have not less than five years of satisfactory service in grade 1 of Class 2 in the Service.

The examinations for Class 1 consist of four written papers in the following: comprehension, general knowledge, education policy and administration, applied educational psychology and student counselling. The question paper on applied educational psychology and student counselling will test the ability of the candidate to apply fundamentals of educational psychology in finding solutions to problems relating to the process of education which covers learning, teaching and evaluation, problems relating to management, administration and educational and students’ personal problems.

6.3.3 Financial conditions

The government of Sri Lanka established the Sri Lanka Teacher Service in 1994 and the Sri Lanka Principals Service in 1997. Including these two categories within the all-encompassing Island Services was certainly a move in the right direction, which meant that principals and teachers were accepted as ‘professionals’. Initially there was a proposal that the salaries of the Teachers’ Service and the Principals’ service be parallel to the salaries of the Sri Lanka Education Administrative Service. This was to encourage teachers to remain in the service and principals to remain in the principal service without applying to be principals and or/or
SLEAS officers. But this was not to be. The government implemented the recommendations of the Salary Anomalies Committee with effect from 1 January 1997. Compared with other professions at entry point principals obtain a favourable salary (Table 6.13). However, as one looks at the higher grades the principal service salaries show a clear decline. The highest salary point in Class 1 of the principal service in less than even the entry point of Class 1 in the SLEAS, SLAS (Sri Lanka Administrators’ Service), accountants’ and engineers’ salary scales. The salaries of principals at all grades stand favourably against those of nurses and those in the clerical service. More to the point, their salaries are significantly higher than the teacher service salaries.

Table 6.13. Principals’ salary scales compared

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class/grade</th>
<th>Principals</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Education Administrators</th>
<th>Clerks</th>
<th>Nurses</th>
<th>Doctors</th>
<th>Engineers</th>
<th>Accountants</th>
<th>Surveyors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Super grade</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specials</td>
<td>90,140</td>
<td>127,280</td>
<td>224,480</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-178,680</td>
<td>103,600</td>
<td>-129,480</td>
<td>-160,320</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class-I</td>
<td>107,960</td>
<td>80,400</td>
<td>138,040</td>
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6.3.4. Evaluation of principals

A new evaluation system is being developed to evaluate principals based on the model already in use to evaluate teachers. The National Institute of Education is currently working on this scheme. In the development of the proposed scheme careful consideration will be given to linking the evaluation to career development. The appraisal would focus on the main areas of work and the appraiser is likely to be the Divisional/Zonal Education Officer.

Sri Lanka adopts three schemes to evaluate teachers. First is the annual performance appraisal system for teachers throughout the island. All teachers are annually assessed by the principal or a middle manager.
The assessment mainly covers the teaching-learning process. Those engaged in student welfare and guidance, co-curricular activities, community relations and other special services are also assessed. The special feature of this appraisal is that the appraiser and appraisee will agree on targets to be attained at the beginning of the year and will together evaluate the extent to which the targets have been achieved at the end of the year.

Second is the Teacher Record Book issued to all teachers. It can be used by the teacher unit he/she retires from service. The principal will enter records annually in the teacher record book based on performance appraisal. Other achievements and comments by the external supervisors can also be entered in the teacher record book. This book is instrumental in the continuous maintenance of records.

Thirdly, those who are promoted to grade 1 of Class 2 and to Class 1 in the SLTS have to go through professional review. Entries in the teacher record book will be examined during this process. In addition to this, an observation of classroom teaching by a supervisor will be considered during the professional review.

6.3.5. Training of Principals

Growing importance is being placed on management development, in its widest sense, as a means of improving the quality of institutional performance in schools. School management has emerged as a distinct field of study within Sri Lanka. From 1984 there is a clear national responsibility to provide management development opportunities for school leaders. The recently introduced island-wide, comprehensive reform movement coupled with more autonomy for schools has necessitated the design and implementation of effective programmes for principals.
The Centre for Professional Development of the National Institute of Education

The Centre for Professional Development in Education Management (CPDEM) of the National Institute of Education is the national centre set up exclusively for educational management development. The centre’s mission is to develop management knowledge and competences by offering consultancy services and spearheading change through research. The CPDEM conducts seven different courses and a number of one-off programmes. The following paragraphs briefly present each programme, with more detailed attention given to the most recent one, the ‘Diploma in Principalship’.

1. Post Graduate Diploma in Education Management (PGDEM)
This is a one-year course. Candidates should be graduates with a post-graduate diploma in Education or an equivalent qualification. They should be educational administrators at national, provincial, divisional, zonal or school level.

2. M.Sc. in Education Management
The M.Sc. course is linked to the PGDEM. It is specially designed for candidates who obtain distinction or merit passes in the PGDEM.

3. Diploma in School Management
This course is designed to provide specialized knowledge and skills in managing schools. The duration of the course is 18 months and its is conducted by distance learning, with 12 three-day contact sessions.

4. Short courses for officers in Sri Lanka Education Administrative Service (SLEAS) These include:
   - Six-day workshops for directors working in provincial, zonal and divisional education offices;
   - Specially designed courses for new recruits to the SLEAS.
5. Thematic courses in Educational management
The thematic courses are designed to provide in-depth knowledge on selected themes in educational management. They are open to educational managers at all levels and are of three days duration. The themes include:
- School-based management;
- Deputy principalship;
- Supervision for school improvement;
- Education law;
- Change management;
- Financial management and control;
- Counselling and guidance;
- Managing of co-curricular activities;
- In-school supervision and appraisal;
- School-based staff development.

6. 10,000 Principals training programme
A programme is under way to train all principals in the years 2001 and 2002. This is popularly known as the ‘Training of 10,000 Principals programme’. The 1 AB and 1C school principals are trained at the CPDEM, while the others are trained at provincial centres. The programme is of nine days’ duration. Every province has at least one centre. These centres provide residential facilities and training rooms. The trainers who conduct management courses for principals in the provinces are trained to carry out their tasks at intervals by the CPDEM.

The general themes covered during training are:
- Managerial behaviour
  Effective communication, conducting meetings, interpersonal relations, barriers to communication, managing as leader, characteristics of an effective manager, how to motivate people and develop people for better performance and creatively in managerial work.
- Management process and functions
Educational planning, EMIS, physical resource management, infrastructure development, problem-solving skills, decision-making skills, financial management and information technology.

- Managing the curriculum
The implementation and management of the curricula along with the contextualization of the curriculum, school improvement strategies, effective school/in-school supervision and in-school staff appraisal.

- Reforms and new trends in education
The implementation of education reforms, issues arising out of implementation and more recent trends in school development.

Methodology. The training methods used are lectures, group discussions, case studies, role plays, simulation exercises, critical-incident analysis, coaching techniques, structural exercises, panel discussions, school visits etc. The differences among participants is a crucial factor. In the same course group one can find ‘beginners’ sitting together with ‘veterans’. This provides an interesting environment, yet trainers must be effective in targeting every participant.

7. Diploma in principalship
The CPDEM has planned a special programme for 2002 that would help create a pool of prospective principals.

Method of selection. A selection examination will be advertised in the press to call for SLEAS and SLPS applicants. The examination would consist of three written papers.

Paper I : Aptitude 1 hour
Paper II : Education management 2 hours
Paper III : Study skills and English language 1½ hours

The candidates can sit for Papers I and II in the language of their choice. From the examination 200 people would be selected in order of merit to appear at one of the ‘Live-in week’ sessions (50 participants per week).
During this week, an initial screening will be carried out by five people. Since good management skills are acquired through experience rather than through learning and since schools are unique and complex organizations, it will be observed whether the candidates possess the ‘necessary competencies’ to become principals. During each week their behaviour, competencies and disposition will be closely monitored and 50 in total will be chosen to follow a one-year course specially designed to make them effective Principals. After training they will make up a pool of prospective principals. This will become an annual programme.

Aims of the course. The Diploma is a full-time programme of one academic year. Its content takes into account the different training needs of principalship at different school levels. In line with the effort of the Ministry of Education to give school principals greater autonomy in school management, the Diploma programme aims to prepare principals to become effective, efficient, professional and creative leaders.

The course will enable participants to:

- Create the conditions for their schools to become learning and self-renewing organizations;
- Manage time, human and material resources;
- Encourage all members of the school to work collectively to achieve organizational goals;
- Respond effectively to the demands made on the school by both the internal and external environment;
- Strive to improve themselves to achieve a higher level of excellence especially in the line with national policies;
- Be conversant with financial and cost management;
- Understand and utilize information technology for school management and learning.
The course structure

Residential training at the Centre or Professional Development in Education Management
The first phase of four months will be residential. The participants will be exposed to theories of management, organizational behaviour and analysis. Personnel management, management, school development planning, school-based management, change management, financial management, human resource management, study skills, curriculum and assessment, teacher education and management, sociological issues in education, research methods, Information technology, teacher professional development, school development etc.

School attachment
In the second phase the participants will be based in schools. The school attachment is intended to provide participants with the opportunity to learn from a mentor who is a practicing school principal and gain the conceptual and technical skills and knowledge – as well as learn the importance of human relations – needed to manage a dynamic institute in a rapidly changing environment. Activities will include shadowing the principal, observing and analysing school activities such as assemblies, staff meetings, PTA meetings, office management, human resource management and development and school community links. The school principal will act as mentor. The principal mentors will be carefully selected, chosen from schools that are considered to be effective. There will be sessions at CPDEM for principals before trainers are attached to schools. The mentor principals also will be called to the centre once a month during a weekend when the trainees are on attachment.

Reflection and internalization stage
The final phase includes sessions where the trainees will reflect both individually and as a group on what they have experienced. During this time they will be given the competencies that have been identified as
necessary to run schools effectively. This phase of the course will also include a course in computing and English language and study skills.

Programme for Types 1AB and 1C principals during the period 1994 to 1996. The first was specially designed to meet the challenges faced by the principals of small schools. The second programme was carried out in two phases: 10 days initially and a further 5 days after 3-6 months.

The man contents of the two programmes were as follows: leadership, organization, EMIS, planning, curriculum management, supervision, administrative practices and education law, financial management, communication, guidance and counselling, resource management, school and the community, staff development and evaluation. The methods used were lectures, discussions, debates, brainstorming, role plays, video/audio presentations, group work and individual assignments.

Homogeneous and heterogeneous groups
The Diploma in Principalship and the Training of 10,000 Principals programme is exclusively for principals, whereas the Diploma in School management is mainly for principals and deputies. The PGDEM and the thematic programmes are for mixed-role sets. Programmes involving both homogeneous and heterogeneous groups have their specific advantages and disadvantages. When homogeneous groups are taken, there is more concentration on the specific role and when heterogeneous groups are taken, sharing among different role sets helps to avoid negative perceptions and also to understand each other’s difficulties. It helps to internalize the fact that they are partners of a common cause and develops positive collaboration. This is important as there is a general trend for one group (i.e. principals) to blame the other (i.e. officers) for being overly bureaucratic and officers blaming principals for lacking energy.
6.3.6. Support

A handbook for principals

The NIE, together with a group of principals, deputy principals and officials from the MEHE and the provinces have prepared a handbook for principals to increase their knowledge of the concept of SBM, what it involves and how the introduction of SBM will affect schools.

Training manual for principals on SBM

A training manual was developed by the NIE. It covers the following themes: planning school development, curriculum delivery and assessment, managing resources and setting and achieving standards.

Revision of circulars

The revision of some of the existing circulars is seen as central to better school management. The following actions will be taken:

- The relaxation of circulars pertaining to the utilization of school buildings and land;
- The relaxation of circulars pertaining to repairs of school buildings;
- The relaxation of circulars enabling the SMC/SMT to make decisions on curricular deviations and take appropriate vocational initiatives;
- The relaxation of circulars pertaining to the repair of equipment;
- The revision of the circular on facilities fees, increasing the fees and the amount of petty cash;
- The revision of the circulars on School Development Societies (SDS): increasing the SDS membership fee and the amount of petty cash.
6.4 Main problems and major innovations

6.4.1 Shortcomings of the present system

- There is a considerable number of principals who hold acting positions.
- There is a considerable number of principals who do not belong to the SLEAS or SLPS.
- When a principal retires, there is no formal replacement made since there is no proper procedure.
- It is not compulsory for a principal to be prepared to principalship even though teachers have to be trained before they are placed in schools.
- There is no clear policy in the placement of principals, since the role of the principal is crucial for the efficient and effective running of a school, it is important to place the right person in the right post.
- There is no formal procedure in the system of appointment to middle-management positions in schools. Deputy principals, assistant principals, sectional heads, grade co-ordinators and subject co-ordinators are not formally appointed.
- The present organization of the school system, which does not distinguish clearly between primary and secondary schools, creates confusion in school management.
- There is a misconception that small schools are easier to manage than larger ones.
- Those who have taken the postgraduate diploma in education management, the diploma in school management or have other formal qualifications in education management are underutilized.

The selection and training of heads and others in senior management positions needs to be carefully planned and systematically structured. Therefore there are proposals to:
- intensify the commitment to restructure the school system into
two tiers as proposed by the National Education Commission;
- limit principals appointments to those with a formal qualification
accepted by the Ministry of Education;
- make it compulsory for principals to follow a refresher course on
education management at least once every five years, since the
concept of continuing education is as much relevant to education-
al managers as it is to teachers;
- make formal appointments for those in middle-management posi-
tions;
- establish a ‘pool’ of principals so that they could be appointed as
vacancies arise;
- absorb into this pool those SLEAS and SLPS officers who have
undergone a one-year specially designed course on principalship;
- fill principal vacancies with already practicing principals or from
the principals pool, subject to an interview conducted by a panel:
this is to guarantee that most suitable person is chosen for that
particular school;
- give special preference to those who have obtained formal qualifi-
cations in education management, until such time as the pool has
been established;
- limit the period of service of a principal in a particular school to
eight years and to implement an inter-school transfer scheme.

The Diploma in Principalship programme to be conducted by CPDEM
will take care of some of the above issues mentioned. There is a con-
scious and deliberate effort being made by the authorities to rectify these
issues developing a policy on the recruitment and deployment of principals.

6.4.2. The case of small schools

The country has a dominant rural sector and there are over 2,600 schools
with less than 100 students (Table 6.5). Being the head of a small school
is clearly a different matter from being head of a school with well over
1,000 students, where both human expertise and physical resources are rapidly available. A 1996 Ministry of Education document has proposed limiting school size to 2,000 pupils to prevent the uncontrolled growth of popular schools.

The document has suggested upgrading small schools in disadvantaged locations, remote villages, plantations, deprived urban centres and the coastal belt by providing these schools with adequate facilities. The principals of small schools in rural areas and in the plantations sector express the following concerns: lack of facilities, lack of parental interest in children’s education, economic backwardness of parents and teacher shortages. The MOE through the Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA) and UNICEF have implemented several educational programmes to develop small schools during the past decade.

6.4.3 Recent innovations

The following innovations should improve school management.

6.4.3.1. Performance appraisal scheme for teachers and principals

As stated earlier, the performance appraisal scheme will be introduced island-wide in 2001. This will transform school functions mainly because it will promote a better working relationship between the teachers and school management. Their work would be more focused on student achievement and development with more deliberation and teamwork. Evaluating principals will take them more accountable and will promote contractual, moral, professional and financial accountability. This will also pave the way to identifying suitable candidates for principalship among deputies and other promoted staff. As these persons are involved as appraisers they will be put to the test, with those doing better being singled out.
6.4.3.2. The move towards school autonomy

The Reforms in General Education (1997) stress the need to adopt school-based management to make school functioning more effective.

“School Based Management has been accepted as an effective tool in the management of schools. It should specifically state the power, authority and responsibilities of the principal and the senior management group of the school. There shall be a Council of Management for each school comprising the Principal, representatives of the staff, parents, past pupils and well-wishers and a departmental nominee to assist the principal in the formulation of policy and preparation of development plans and monitoring the implementation thereof.”

The main objective of SBM is to improve the performance of schools. It is based on the underlying assumption that autonomous schools offer a clear vision for the future and should be prepared to energize their staff by empowering them to take up professional responsibilities for raising educational standards.

The Reforms also suggest that equitable allocation of resources should be assured by giving a grant to schools based on unit costs. In order to alleviate disparities in the allocation of resources, a grant would be calculated as a per-student rate.

6.4.3.3. Restructuring of schools

In accordance with a suggestion of the National Education Commission, the Policy Planning and Monitoring Division (PPMD) of the MOE together with the respective provincial education authorities have completed the school-mapping exercise in all the provinces, except the North-East province.
6.4.3.4. The Establishment of SMC and SMT

The establishment of the SMC and the SMT (SMT has also been referred to as SMG – School Management Group), the clarification of their roles, the delegation of these roles through an appropriate legal framework and procedures adopted to ensure that the roles, functions and responsibilities are carried out to a set plan are to be ensured. The SMC is about development planning and educational imperatives; the SMT is about translating the development plan into operational management activities to ensure school improvement.

6.4.3.5. The steps that need to be taken to improve school management

There is the need to grant autonomy to schools with regard to whole-school development planning, increased expenditure approvals and minor staffing matters. The external controls that override the legitimate managerial responsibilities of principals, which are detrimental to school development, need to be phased out. This will necessitate the removal of bureaucratic procedures applied to the school from above.

Teacher transfers should only be effected at the beginning of the year and the agreement of the school principal should be obtained before the transfer letter are issued.

A survey was carried out to obtain the views of 150 secondary-school principals and deputy principals. They were of the view that more autonomy should be given to schools in the following tasks and functions: selection of teachers, personnel management, school supervision (to make this an in-school function), curricular variations, implementation of annual plans, implementation of appropriate co-curricular activities, school-based staff development, student admissions, teacher transfers, selection and development of minor employees, student discipline, maintenance of teacher files, parental participation in school improvement and the purchase of education equipment.
Principals are keen that they be consulted when teachers are appointed to their school and likewise when they are transferred from it. Some principals and deputies mentioned that they wish to be involved in some form, to some degree, in the selection process. Principals of remote schools had mentioned that teachers should not be removed without the nomination of a replacement. The larger schools wish to maintain school files and to have more autonomy in school admissions.

It is encouraging to note that a teacher deployment policy and a principal recruitment and appointment policy is to be brought into effect shortly.

If principals are to be respected and the profession to be considered dignified, the principals themselves need to recognize, understand and emphasize the needs of students, parents and teachers. They need to adhere to a code of ethical behaviour which guides their decisions in dealing with students, parents, teachers and the public. They should be able to appreciate changes (reforms) in education and respond constructively and positively to these changes. They need to collaborate with different role sets, agencies and institutions to achieve expected outcomes. They should seek and be involved in the continuous professional development of themselves and other staff. They must display the highest standards of dedication and commitment in serving others.

It is the responsibility of the principals’ professional bodies and the training and development institutes to work towards the achievement of the aforementioned standards within the profession. Sri Lanka, as well as countries in the region, lack professional principal bodies, therefore those at the forefront should initiate the creation of such bodies. Training and Development institutes on the other hand have to focus their training towards this.
7.1 The Concept of Decentralization

Efforts to make schools more effective by giving them more autonomy is common in many countries. Countries offer a range of rationales for doing so. Various factors, historical, cultural, political, socio-economic, influence the policies and the execution of these rationales. Decentralization in education management became a preferred paradigm in Sri Lanka in the mid-sixties though school autonomy movement in the country is relatively novel.

Review of literature on decentralization (Adamolekun et al, 1990; Lauglo, 1990; Rondinelli et al, 1984; Weiler, 1989) refers to multiple connotations of the term and three trends stand out; namely deconcentration, delegation and devolution. Deconcentration refers to a spatial location in decision making. It is an effort made by central governments to increase the effectiveness of its operational machinery by placing administrators at local positions. Deconcentration refers to the shift of authority for implementation but not enabling decision-making or policy formulation. The central governments may transfer responsibilities to lower levels but maintains overall control. This means there is the transfer of tasks and work, but not authority. In delegation the central authority imparts responsibilities to lower levels but the authority can be withdrawn and extracted, if necessary. Here some of the central government powers are transferred to the local bodies where these local bodies are invited to participate in the management process. Devolution is a genuine effort, where powers are given to local governments. Devolution is the total transfer of authority over finance and administration, through
legal enactments. It enables autonomous bodies at local levels to work independently. Devolution is not free from criticism. Smyth (1993) suggests that devolution in education is an abdication of responsibility by the state.

In actual operation, decentralization is rather complex. To agree upon a universally acceptable definition on decentralization is rather impossible and may not be desirable. Bray (1984) writes that, “the first obstacle to the analysis of decentralization is that the term is vague, and embraces a multitude of processes and structures”. The meaning of the term is perceived differently in political science and management theory. In ancient Greek states decentralization refers to efforts that aim to ensure grass root level democracy. In management, it is the “discretion and authority to make important decisions delegated by top management to lower levels of executive authority” (Simon: 1954). Similar to the concept of democracy, decentralization is a matter of degree. Any form of decentralization involves some elements of centralization. Centralizing or decentralizing a particular domain of educational administration brings about a good deal of debate among policy makers and managers. It is evident that decentralization aims at spreading the central administration to the peripheral units in order to provide better services to the masses. Some of the predominant reasons for decentralizing educational management is to: increase efficiency, democratize management, increase stakeholder involvement, increase accountability, improve resource mobilization and improve educational governance.

Decentralization features prominently in contemporary discourses in educational administration and management in almost all the countries. Policy makers have at one time or another dealt with the issue of balancing central control and local autonomy. Rationales for decentralization in education have been ideological, political, economic and administrative (Lauglo & McClean, 1985:9). One significant policy issue in current education reforms is the balance of centralization/decentralization in educational provisions. Operations aimed to achieve educational decen-
Centralization depend not only on the administrative structures and mechanisms but also on political will and political overtones. The success of decentralization depends on the ability of a given country to establish a decentralized system of political administration and synchronize it with institutional arrangements for better management. The policy decisions and the actual implementation depends on country specific factors and conditions such as country size, population, geographical variations and environmental conditions, historical traditions, presence of multilingual, multi-cultural and multi-ethnic societies, political systems and the capacities of central and local administrations.

"Decentralization can be viewed either as a fundamental value to be internalized into the system of educational management, or as a technocratic solution for the problems that are encountered by any educational system." (Govinda, 1997:18)

The capacities and willingness of local stakeholders to receive decentralized authority and responsibility are important. It is difficult to assess the potential capacities of each decentralized unit when they are given various responsibilities without the appropriate financial and human resources. Focused support from the above layers is important in a society that had been hierarchically managed for centuries, though there are exceptions, i.e. Walasbedda School: Appendix 3.

Many schools are less likely to make substantial initiatives themselves to improve the quality of educational service delivery unless they are guided from above. Hence, it is critical that the central Ministry, provincial, Zonal and Divisional Offices understand clearly their role in assisting schools. Sri Lanka, for the last decade has a concerted policy focus on school-based management (SBM) as a panacea for school development.

\footnote{An article on Walasbedda school written by the researcher appeared in in Sangseng, No. 26, pp.28-31, published by APCEIU, UNESCO, Seoul in 2009. Name of the article is “Walasbedda School: One Individual Makes a Difference”. This is reproduced in Appendix 3.}
assuming that if given the opportunity and if the appropriate structures are established it will improve the quality of education provision at school level.

The concept currently attracting the most attention from advocates of educational decentralization is the Program on School Improvement (PSI) which aims at giving schools more autonomy. SBM movement in Sri Lanka has been conceived through PSI. The PSI initiative is in a sense linked to the educational decentralization-centralization debate. It is about determining what the right blend is. It reflects the power structure of the school and the layers above.

7.2. Programme on School Improvement (PSI)

In the Programme for School Improvement (PSI), schools are given a degree of autonomy in the areas of planning, teaching-learning process, co-curricular activities, staff development and the maintenance and development of the school plant. The emphasis of PSI will be on flexibility in the internal functions of the school, increase efficiency in the school’s use of resources and make the school more responsive to the potential of each child so that they will become useful citizens. PSI envisages the increase of school autonomy through, relieving the school from constraining rules and regulations emanating from the centre, sharing the authority to make decisions with teachers, parents, students and community and increasing site budgetary control. The PSI promotes,

- involving community representatives in school planning and encourage schools to respond effectively to the needs of parents and the demands of the community, thus strengthening the partnership between teachers and the school community;
- schools, to use resources efficiently to design development plans to achieve school objectives with more focused attention on the aims of education;
- a coherent and coordinate approach to all aspects of planning and to deliver school development programmes more effectively;
- academic independence of schools;
- congruence between staff training and school needs thus improving staff development which leads to higher student achievement;
- innovation and change.

SBM is to be introduced to the schools through the creation of a School Development Committee (SDC) and a School Management Team (SMT). The constitution of SDC, SMT and their tasks are given in Appendix 3.

7.2.1. Expected Outcomes of PSI

Schools will be required to prepare a 5-year school development plan and an annual operational plan. Planning offers schools the opportunity to take initiatives, to develop an identity and to ensure a more secure future. Development of the 5-year school development plan and an annual operational plan is implemented from 2006. The schools were given a booklet, “Instructions for School Level Planning”, by the Ministry of Education (MoE). The plans are submitted to the zonal Office by the provincial schools and to the central ministry by the national schools. A zonal team/central ministry team will review the plans (in the case of provincial schools the zonal team to which the schools belong will review the school plans and in the case of national schools the national ministry team will review the school plans) and resources will then be allocated to each school, based upon a needs analysis against previously identified criteria.

Schools will carry out a wide range of curricular and co-curricular activities and specific programs for personality development of children. It is clearly anticipated that standards of education in schools will rise as a result of the introduction of PSI as it enables them to implement the curriculum through approaches best suited to their resources and students. The schools have to develop mechanisms to better utilize the quality in-
put grants. PSI schools are encouraged to engage in a wide range of curricular and co-curricular activities. Increasing the range and quality of co-curricular activities will improve performance of students. Improved interaction with the wider community could result in the inclusion of field trips, guest speakers and work visits. Former pupils and current parents may have the expertise and knowledge which could contribute to the co-curriculum. Careful planning of the time table is essential to the learning process when each day provides a balanced and varied experience of academic, aesthetic, practical and physical activities. In the preparation of the school time-table national standards have to be maintained, for example the total number of teaching hours in each subject and the minimum number of teaching hours per teacher, whilst ensuring sufficient flexibility to accommodate the particular needs of students and reflect local needs and employment opportunities.

There will be more congruence between school needs and teacher development. Staff appraisal will enable the school to identify the strengths to be developed and weaknesses to be addressed and to negotiate personal and professional development needs. Since schools will identify areas for development, both individual and collective staff training needs, the congruence between staff professional needs and those of the school will improve, to the benefit of student achievement.

Schools will proactively involve in the maintenance and development of the School Plant. The schools may initiate construction work and repairs as deemed necessary for the development and effective functioning of the school. The significance here is that schools will move the emphasis from crisis management to planned management of the school plant. Medium and long term developments to the infrastructure will be reflected in the 5-year school development plan.

The introduction of PSI in Sri Lanka was influenced by the performance of Sri Lankan schools that already demonstrate self improvement characteristics and by the international movement of school autonomy.
Competition is rather prevalent in the Sri Lankan education system. It was in way back in 1981 that the Education Proposals for Reform, (MoE), stated the following as one of the four major weaknesses in the Sri Lankan education system.

“Schools have become more a medium for competition than institutions imparting sound education. Excessive emphasis on examinations has led to an impoverishment of the content of learning inside the class room and diminution of the importance of the most valuable outcomes that accrue from co-curricular activities. In serving primarily the scramble to reach the top, the needs of the majority who cannot get there are neglected.” (1981:2)

In the long term PSI will result in greater transparency of what is going on in schools and there will be more equity in the distribution of resources. It is clearly anticipated that standards of education in schools will rise as a result of PSI as it enables them to implement the curriculum through approaches best suited to their contexts and students. Schools are given the autonomy in the procurement and delivery of educational quality inputs and for disbursement of funds for higher-order processes. A strong feature in the PSI is the move towards school based staff development. Staff appraisal will enable the school to identify the strengths to be developed and weaknesses to be addressed and to negotiate personal and professional development needs. Positive, committed parent-school relations are likely to play a significant role in student outcomes. Under PSI procedures are being established and practiced to involve parents actively.

The ministry on education issued a circular on the implementation of PSI on 15th September 2008 (Circular No. 2008/35). Decentralization cannot be enforced by ordinance alone, it requires, willingness, commitment, readiness and accountability at all levels. The educational progress can be quickened to the extent that problems are identified and solved at the operational level and this is possible only by decentralizing the decision making process. To achieve this, those in the centre must
have the willingness and make conscious efforts to hand over power while those in the periphery must have the willingness and make conscious efforts to exercise power. The level of accountability of stakeholders depends on their moral and professional responsibility. Education is about empowerment; about development. Educationists have to recognize and be convinced that masses have an interest in their own development and are capable of generating rational solutions to their problems, if they are given the opportunity and the resources. It is only then the genuine empowerment of schools can be realized.

7.3. Achievements and System Changes that support PSI

Considerable progress has been made by Sri Lanka in its efforts to support school autonomy movement in the recent times. In order to achieve equity and improve quality the Ministry of Education introduced a policy framework (the ‘Education Sector Development Framework & Program (ESDFP) 2006-2010’) through which the quality in the teaching-learning process will be raised. Special programmes, projects, and activities for ‘higher-order processes aiming improvement of the quality of primary and secondary education have indeed revitalized the teaching learning process. Schools also receive funds for school-based staff development. Networking among schools are stimulated so that child-friendly schools can influence other primary schools. Secondary schools that have better achievements in Science and Mathematics can influence other secondary schools. Special attention is given to the ways schools are treating pupils with special education needs and inclusive education is promoted. Emphasis is given non-formal education so that 50,000 out-of-school children can be stimulated to attend schools in line with the compulsory education regulations within next five years.

The quality of education will be enriched by transforming the curriculum and by improvement of teaching methodologies like use of Activity Based Oral English and ICT. Conversational Sinhala for Tamil & Tamil
for Sinhala students will be introduced. Peace, value education and social cohesion will be strengthened. Comprehensive teacher development frameworks and school-based professional development programmes are promoted and high quality teacher system is established. The examination and assessment system will be modernized in order to assess high-order transferable skills (i.e. analysis, creativity, problem solving) of students.

In PSI education development will be supported by multiple partnerships. Partners of education development will share responsibility for a wide array of tasks including financial provision, pedagogical development, human resource development, service delivery, infrastructure, facilities management among others.

7.4. Variations among Schools

Some argue (Kataoka, 2005; Sackney and Dibski, 1994:110) that decentralization inevitably creates inequity between schools. But it can be argued decentralization is needed because there is inequity among schools. The notion that ‘schools are schools’, is rather a misconception in the Sri Lankan context. Schools differ according to the size, location, traditions, parental characteristics, leadership, the staff and the student characteristics. There are 9,662 functioning government schools (School Census-2009, published in 2010 by MoE) in the country. The way that the school system is organized creates multifarious organizational patterns. There is no uniform system of school structure which often creates confusion in school management. Though the National Education Commission (1997) in its proposals for Reforms in General Education suggested to re-organize the school system on a two tier basis, junior schools having classes from Grade 1 to 9 and senior schools from Grade 10 to 13 the proposal stays defeated up to date.
Sri Lanka has a fair number of large schools; over 10 percent of schools have well over 1000 students. On the other end there are nearly 30 percent of schools with less than 100 students. There are five or less teachers in 15 percent of the schools. These schools have multi-grade classes. In the small schools, in-school relations are flexible, procedures and structures are informal. The country has a dominant rural sector and most small schools are in rural or remote areas. At present there are 2,973 schools (30.7%) with less than 100 students and 4,933 schools (51%) with less than 200 students. With the variation among schools in mind it is important to deal with questions like What specific measures need to be taken to implement PSI in small schools? and How will PSI effect small schools? in future research.

The increase in the number of small schools in Sri Lanka can be attributed to,

- decline in birth rate
- infra-structure development making access to urban schools easier
- migration to urban areas
- parental and political beliefs that large urban schools offer better education than small rural schools.

The fourth seems very strong in the Sri Lankan society and there is very limited research in the country that has compared instructional effectiveness in the large and small schools. Studies elsewhere (Smylie and Perry, 1998) do not support the Sri Lankan parental and political perceptions. It is important to do more research on instructional effectiveness on the large and small schools and disseminate the findings and use them in policy formulation. However the MEHE document (1996) and NEC (2003) have proposed to limit school size to 2000, to prevent uncontrolled growth of schools. This has not been implemented so far. Such a move will have a positive impact on the pupils of large schools as it has been noted that students in large schools get less attention in classrooms.
One possibility to adopt for small schools would be to group several of them together. ‘The report Relevance in Education, 1979’ (1982:35) had suggested to introduce the concept of ‘school complexes’ whereby a number of small schools are identified as one institution for purposes of both administration and management. The Primary School Development Programme (PSDP) has successfully implemented ‘school families’ and the Staff College intervention, ‘Institutional Development Capacity of disadvantaged schools’ (Perera, 1997) has proven that neighbouring small schools can collaborate with each other in numerous ways towards school improvement.

7.5. Teacher Role and Teacher Development

A vital factor for the success of any school reform is the teacher. The excessive layers above the school both administrative and academic can restrain teachers from active participation as knowledge constructors and reform leaders. Many teachers are cynical about innovations initiated from the centre and this is understandable. Cochran-Smith (1998:939) writes,

“The most powerful teacher education experiences for social change are voluntary. They are based on prospective and experienced teachers' choices to participate and, particularly at the in-service level, to exercise to a considerable extent their autonomy and/or significant voice in constructing the issues that are important.”

This brings up the importance of the teacher being fully involved; digesting the objectives, the content, the strategies and the methodologies of the innovation. Teachers need the support of a friendly guide who would provide necessary reinforcement for their good work. Teachers need to come together to discuss educational problems and to share experiences with each other on a regular basis. The education office has to develop mechanisms to facilitate such meetings. Parent participation in
the education of their children is rather high in Sri Lanka and the study in chapter 5 reveals that the parents were actively involved in student learning. Reforms entrust teachers with new responsibilities. Are the teachers given sufficient guidance to cope up with their new responsibilities? Teacher preparation needs to be carried out more intensively and extensively. Are the teachers’ values and beliefs in congruence with the objectives of the reform? Are the teachers fully convinced of the reform?

Teacher development in the country is generally marked by control and transfer of knowledge by subjecting teachers to ‘dozes’ by the ‘upper’ layers/agencies. This prevents transforming schools to be better learning organizations. Staff development today is becoming more a school based affair. It is considered successful to the extent; it is embedded in real action followed by reflection. PSI would benefit more by promoting the total staff coming together and providing them a platform for reflection, to ask questions from each other, renew their own assumptions and behaviour. By sharing their classroom/school experiences teachers will be better equipped to face new situations and challenges. Peer sharing can be encouraged. Staff meetings and parental meetings can be used for dissemination.

Maintaining and improving the quality of teachers and teaching cannot be attributed to teachers alone. The education establishment at all levels need to have the right policies and strategies in recruitment, development and deployment of teachers. When decisions are made on teacher issues one must avoid superficial, stereotypical and one-dimensional views on teacher role/work. A teacher’s day is marked by complex, multi-faceted aspects of teaching, working, organizing and caring. The policy makers and administrators must recognize and acknowledge that, what goes on inside the classroom is closely related to what goes on outside it. This is to say that quality and range of teachers’ classroom work depend on how they are recognized, opportunities for professional growth and transparency in promotions and transfers. The quality of teachers and the quality of their work in schools/classrooms is affected
by teachers’ relations with their colleagues, the working conditions, the status, the rewards, leadership under which they work and in the range of opportunities provided for their development. In Sri Lanka several factors prevent the establishment of a coherent system of teacher education. They are,

- Insufficient and loose collaboration, coordination and communication among different agencies involved in teacher recruitment, teacher education and teacher management
- Ad hoc recruitment
- Absence of a Licensing or Certification procedure
- The deterioration in the quality teacher management
- Poor teacher deployment
- Inadequate research to inform matters pertaining to teacher ‘matters’
- Lack of a viable framework for professional ethics of teachers and teacher educators.

7.6 The Accomplished Teacher. The Sri Lankan Viewpoint: Findings of a Study

It is evident that quality of education is directly related to the quality of teachers. There is a growing consensus worldwide in what a teacher should know and be able to do (Hattie, 2009). This includes knowledge of the subjects to be taught and how to teach these subjects to the students of different levels of ability and learning, how to monitor student's learning and knowledge, how to adjust programs to suit different learning needs of students, how to work collaboratively with other teachers in the school, how to develop teaching learning strategies to achieve school goals across grade levels and for shared reflection on the practice of teaching. With this in view a study (Perera, 2003) was conducted in 2003, as to how the ‘Sri Lankan Education Community’, perceive, ‘what an accomplished teacher should know and be able to do’. In carrying out
the above study a research team led by the researcher met with students, teachers, teacher trainees, principals, teacher educators and zonal staff and had interviews, focus group discussions and obtained written submissions. The study after careful deliberation developed five statements to express, “An Accomplished Teacher” with indicators of evidence for each statement. They are given below. These findings are disseminated and integrated into the teacher preparation curricula.

“An Accomplished Teacher

Statement 1
- has a sound knowledge in the subject matter and constantly updates it and relates teaching/learning to social and environmental contexts.
  • Is fully aware of syllabus changes and curricula reforms.
  • Has sound knowledge on subject matter.
  • Successfully answers the questions from students.
  • Gives good/appropriate examples and explanations.
  • Gives new information to the students, updates oneself.
  • Keep close relationship with professional bodies and educational institutes.
  • Regularly discusses with teacher educators/In-service Advisors.
  • Participates in educational tours, seminars and external activities.

Statement 2
- is able to use a wide range and variety of techniques which enable students at different ability levels to learn.
  • Focuses on aims and keeps the congruence between aims and subject matter.
  • Prepares lesson plans with clear and appropriate objectives.
  • Learning activities are initiated by the teacher.
  • Teacher has prepared evaluation plan/assessments.
  • Actively uses learning teaching materials/visual aids.
  • Uses electronic media where necessary.
  • Practices/experiments various methodologies.
  • Creates a stimulating learning environment.
Statement 3
- has multiple qualities of a leader and is approachable, accommodates the students, peers, parents super-ordinates and is understanding.
  • Shows emotional balance at all times.
  • Praises students according to their responses.
  • Demonstrates collective responsibility.
  • Changes one’s opinion when necessary.
  • Is impartial in decision making and gives reasons for decisions.
  • Understands and respects others.
  • Listens attentively when students speak.
  • Appreciates and accepts ideas of stakeholders.

Statement 4
- is an extended professional reaches beyond oneself and has a high degree of commitment to make students successful in their lives.
  • Becomes a learner along with the students.
  • Is aware of duties and attends to duties without fail.
  • Commits towards the total development of students.
  • Encourages students/others to achieve targets.
  • Has a teachable heart.
  • Attends to intellectual growth of students.
  • Demonstrates willingness to implement changes as appropriate.
  • Recognizes student diversity and guides them at all times.

Statement 5
- provides an exemplary image; is a model to all; his/her mere presence makes a difference.
  • Is a change agent and acts as a transformer where necessary.
  • Recognizes others talents.
  • Engages in creative activities.
  • Cares and shares.
  • Helps the needy.
  • Positively responds to new ideas.
  • Shares Resources.
  • Has a high degree of integrity.” (Perera, 2003:11-12)
CHAPTER 8: THE CHANGING ROLES AND STRUCTURES IN THE NEW PARADIGM SHIFT AND THE ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS BASED ON EXPERT VIEWS

8.1 Given Functions of the Layers above the School

8.1.1 The Central Ministry

The responsibility for education in Sri Lanka is shared by the central government and the provincial councils. The Ministry of Education (MoE) is the central government agency vested with the executive authority for implementation of policy in education. The Central Ministry supported by the national agencies such as the National institute of Education (NIE), Department of Examinations, Department of Educational Publications and the National Library Services Board, is responsible for:

- Laying down of national policy in education;
- Monitoring the maintenance of standards in educational institutions;
- Formulating the national curriculum and training of provincial/zonal trainers;
- Managing of specified schools designated as national schools;
- Teacher Education;
- Public Examinations;
- Development and delivery of educational material;
- Development of libraries.

The secretary to the ministry is the chief executive officer and is accountable to the Minister of Education. The secretary is closely support-
ed by the additional secretaries, the directors and the heads of departments.

8.1.2 The Provincial Ministry

The provincial council act of 1987, enacted on the thirteenth amendment to the constitution, led to an island wide devolution of political and administrative functions. There are nine provincial councils co-terminus with the provinces and each has a provincial ministry of education with a minister in charge of the subject of education. The provincial secretary is the chief executive officer. The provision of facilities to all schools other than specified schools, appointment of principals to the provincial schools, implementation of non-formal education programmes, construction and maintenance of buildings, libraries, play grounds, procurement and distribution of educational aids, furniture are provincial functions.

8.1.3 The Provincial Department

The schools in the province other than the national schools are managed by the provincial departments of education which is headed by the Provincial Director of Education (PDE). The provincial education office constitutes the apex of the provincial educational development structure. With the establishment of the provincial ministry, the role of the provincial education department and the provincial director were automatically reduced. The provincial director was made accountable to the provincial secretary.

8.1.4 Zonal Education Office

Considering the largeness and its multiplicity of functions, the provinces were divided into zones. The zones were established for the purpose of better administration and quality development. The zonal director of education (ZDE) is the chief executive officer of the zone and is supposed to strengthen the vital linkages and play a pivotal role in coordinating educational development. The ZDE has to directly liaise with the
PDE, Divisional Directors of Education (DDEE) and the schools and through the PDE with the NIE, MoE and other related agencies. He/she is assisted by a specialist team of Sri Lanka Education Administrative service (SLEAS) officers. The zonal office is responsible for general administration of the schools in the zone. A zone generally consists of about 100 schools though there are exceptions. For instance the Dehovita zone, the zone with the largest number of schools has 220 schools and the Mahaoya zone has only 33 schools. The main function of the zonal organization is to:

- maintain, supervise and enhance the quality of teaching/learning process at school level;
- coordinate and the implementation of in-service teacher training programmes in collaboration with the MoE, NIE, Department of Examinations, provincial departments of education and universities;
- utilize effectively limited specialized personnel involved in Science, Mathematics, Technical subjects, English and Inclusive Education;
- coordinate activities of foreign funded projects;
- coordinate teacher establishment activities;
- coordinate co-curricular, cultural and library activities;
- collect and disseminate information.

8.1.5 The Divisional Education Office

The Divisional education office established under the zone has to control about 40 schools. Supervision of schools is entrusted to the officer in charge of the divisional education office. He/she is primarily a field officer and is required to carry out school supervision, collect and disseminate information and guide the master teachers in quality improvement activities. He/she will have a group of master teachers (also called In-Service Advisors).
8.2 The Present Scenario

The Sri Lankan education system is quite different from what it was 20 to 30 years before when the zones were established. Firstly, the gap of professionalism between the school personnel (teachers and principals) and officers in the above layers have reduced remarkably. Teachers are more qualified than 20 years before, a fair number even having obtained Masters Qualifications. Secondly, the revolution in communications has made the traditional flow of communication from upper layers to the school less meaningful as access to information is possible through websites etc. In a world that rapidly moves towards technology the urban-rural distance is narrowing down. Thirdly, specific projects that focus on the development of selected schools have become less effective and ethically questionable. There is a growing belief that all schools need attention; all children be given fair chances. Fourthly, the local people/officers have less passion with the nationally driven programmes.

A closer analysis of the Sri Lankan education system reveals:

- the closed nature of the system which made it unresponsive to local needs;
- that the administrative and management procedures are outdated;
- that there is over emphasis on schools to comply with minor administrative matters without developing strategies to improve the quality of learning and pupil performance;
- an inability to accept, or to encourage, innovation in curriculum practice;
- that there is over-consideration of examination results as the primary -or the only- indicator of the worth of a school and the collective efforts of its staff;
- the inefficient use of manpower throughout the education system which results due to under utilization of professional expertise at all levels;
the undervaluing of the classroom teacher who deliver learning to students.

It was in this background that the PSI was introduced.

8.3 Analysis of the Role of the Zones

The zonal education office is at the front line of management of public schools. They are responsible for ensuring that the school meets the minimum service standards. They have a role in identifying schools’ strengths and areas to be improved including teacher development and teacher establishment. They are supposed to supervise and advice schools. This implies that all the zones need to have the capacity to identify school standards and performance. The zones need to have the staff with necessary skills to provide technical support and the management capacity to organize and support teacher establishment and development. Capacity of the zones to support school quality improvement differs from zone to zone depending on the leadership, available cadre, and professional skills of the officers. All zones do not have the equal capacities in doing so. Especially those in remote and difficult areas do not have the sufficient cadre. Several studies on the role and functions of the zonal officers have been carried out (CELD, 2001; Piyadasa et al, 1984; Bandara 1992; Wijesundara et al, 1997) and more recently by (Perera, 2009).

8.3.1 A Recent Study on Twenty One zones

Two hundred and twenty research assistants were sent to 21 zones to study the zonal activities under the guidance of the researcher. They were also asked to examine the role, functions and the capacity of the zones. Before they were sent to the zones they were given a thorough understanding of the envisaged role and the functions of the zonal officers and ISAs. They also developed their observation and analytical skills
before been sent. Each research assistant had to spend ten days in the zone. The research assistants provided the researcher with a written report. A focused discussion was held by the researcher with the research assistants after the visits. Prior to the discussions 21 groups made their presentations on the 21 zones they visited. One hundred and twenty six (57.3 percent) were positive of the capacity of the zone, while seventy one (32.2 percent) were negative and twenty three (10.5 percent) gave no opinion. These were some of the observations made by the officers of the zones that were not well functioning. Some observations however are common to all.

8.3.1.1. Role in School Improvement

Zones do not consider school improvement as a priority and do not use its capacity in doing so. The zones do not have the connections that enable them to link schools with the right persons or agencies that could help the schools. Some offices have their own problems to be solved and mainly work for their survival and have no time or energy to improve schools. They are involved in daily routine activities and carry out orders from the above and have no time to reflect.

8.3.1.2. School Supervision

One of the main functions of the Zone is to supervise schools. A closer analysis reveals that supervision is successful in several zones. However in many zones the following weaknesses are common in the supervision process. The supervision visits to schools are loosely planned, ad hoc and on some occasions planning is done only after the team arrives in the schools. The methods adopted are traditional. The approaches/methods adopted are similar irrespective of school differences. School visits generally have no link with previous visits. The visits are not well documented. At the conclusion of the visit, though a common discussion is held, the comments given are general and do not help teachers to improve their classroom practices.
In most zones, the zone is less involved in educational development and their attention to classroom activities/teaching learning process is marginal. The zone has two cadres of officers in the Sri Lanka Education Administrative Service, the general cadre and the special cadre. The special cadre are the subject specialists and are supposed to involve more in quality improvement in their subject areas with subject specific ISAs. Majority of the officers lack mentoring, facilitation or intervention skills to guide schools. The necessary direction or feedback is often not given. Sri Lanka was the first country to introduce the Master Teacher Scheme. The system, however seems not working well at present. The study also reveals that some subject specialists are not able to help teachers, as the teachers have more experience in classroom work. Classroom interventions need experience. The teachers are less attentive to ISAs, mainly because the recruitment to ISA positions is rather unacceptable to them. In number of offices the special cadre officers are drawn to do administrative activities. Supervision visits have to give schools specific lines of direction. School supervision with no commitment serves little or no purpose. Supervision has to motivate, give hope to teachers, but some teachers are alienated with the process of supervision.

8.3.1.3. Skills Needed

Zonal offices use ICT comparatively less as opposed to other sectors. In most offices it is limited to the planning division. This is also due to lack of IT skills. Decision making skills at all levels in the zone is weak. Though data is obtained and stored, the weakest area is the use of data. The officers fail to use the research findings. Even if they had good knowledge in education, they need more analytical skills. The officers need analytical skills in political, social and economic dimensions. The collegiality among officers, the need to work as a team was raised by the observers. The officers need to have the ability to examine strategic and operational plans that the schools produce. They need to identify specif-
ic needs and development strategies unique to each school. Some officers were not updating themselves with reforms and circulars. The skills in second language, listening skills, the need for flexibility and creativity were also noted as areas that need improvement. Punctuality and time management skills have to be improved.

8.3.1.4. Leadership

The leadership was a crucial factor for the effectiveness of the Zones. Where the head had a vision the office had a sense of direction. Good leadership has always made a difference. The head was not respected in some offices. The ZDEs in certain zones are not accepted by their subordinates and is a cause for concern.

8.3.1.5 Specific Issues

Remote schools are less visited. Frequency of supervision is affected by the number of schools and the geographical area that they are dispersed. Some officers have to cover many subjects and this affects the quality of their work. Though data is available there was less effort in deploying teachers on a rational basis. Teacher establishment matters are poorly attended to. Even if some problems are immediately solvable immediate solutions are not given. Problem solving approaches have not changed. Even if problems are correctly identified solutions do not follow. Within the zone, the allocation of work was not rational. In zones the opportunities given for young officers to develop is less. There is hardly any institutional based training.

8.3.2. CELD Study in Four Zones in 2001

The above findings further strengthen a study carried out by CELD (the researcher was the leader of the three member research team) in four zones in four different provinces in 2001. This study revealed that the
four zones have similar problems though the degree to which the problems effect the services they provide differ. The zones do not have sufficient space. There are no separate rooms/cubicles for the education directors. There is not enough space to house officers, to conduct meetings. When parents, teachers or visitors come to the office, there is no space to meet the officers in convenience. There are no store rooms and the equipment are stored in officers’ rooms. The communication facilities are out-dated or scarce. Zonal offices do not have enough sanitary facilities.

In certain zones, the catchment area is very large and some schools are situated in isolated and difficult areas. The zones do not have sufficient vehicles. Therefore the schools in the catchment areas cannot be visited. The limited fuel quota further aggravates the problem. According to Zonal Directors’, it is difficult to conduct team supervision programmes in the schools due to lack of vehicles and fuel. Most of Education Officers do individual school visits by using public transport or private motor cycles. The study states that the zonal officers need skills in the following:

- conducting need surveys;
- analytical, high-order thinking and problem solving skills;
- planning and implementation skills;
- school improvement skills;
- supervision, monitoring and evaluation skills;
- human relation skills in dealing with teachers, students and the community.

8.4. Role of the Zonal Officers in an environment where School Autonomy is promoted

Central to the agenda of PSI as a reform are the new roles of the stakeholders, mainly the principals, the parents, the teachers and the adminis-
trators. Good deal of conceptual work and empirical analysis has preceded the design of the PSI. PSI requires the stakeholders to behave differently. Tasks and functions will be different from what they were. It is important to know not only what they should be doing, but also what they should not be doing.

Several writers have highlighted the complexities that arise in the role of the officers in a move towards decentralization. The decentralized reforms alter the roles of all stakeholders. It is important to assess the potential changes that are needed in the role and functions of the personnel working in the zone for the success of the PSI initiative. The initiative is an decentralization effort where the knowledge, skills and attitudes of officers need to be transformed. In a policy agenda that reduces the responsibilities of the actors above the school several issues may arise. Some of these have been thus presented: “the role of local districts arguably becomes more problematic, …. there is a absence of a clearly defined role” (Murphy, 1994:351); “there is considerable ambiguity and ambivalence” (Fullan,1993:145).

The researcher who led the CELD initiative, “Improving Institutional Development Capacity of Disadvantaged Schools” has this to say about the role of the trainer, who went from outside to the school once in two months on a regular basis over a period of two and a half years and helped in school improvement by being a facilitator.

“A key factor for the success of this programme is the role played by the trainer. The task of the trainer is by no means an easy one. It is a delicate role. How the trainees perceive the trainer is very important. He/She must have the ability to cope with difficult situations and moments. He/She must provide the atmosphere for professional interaction and enable participants to make the best use of their potential. One can compare the task of the trainer to that of a coach of a team game, for example that of basketball or soccer. Coaches do not really play the game but play it in their mind. They are always alert, deliberative and feel responsible. Their role is one of facilitation and of a process guide. In the same way,
the trainer is expected not to provide solutions or ready-made answers, but to help in the deliberation process of the school staff.

...... The trainer has to decide on the type and extent of support needed by each school depending on specific situations. ...... The right type of person, who will intervene at the right time, to the right degree, for the right purpose, is rarely found. The trainer must have the instinct and be able to change ‘gears’ and settle to the right disposition that will suit a given situation.” (Perera 1997:44-45)

Perera (1997:32) had identified six objectives that schools wanted to achieve with the help of the facilitator in the above initiative.

“ 1. To have developed the capacity of each of the participating schools to conduct continuous self-assessment of the total organization, including the goals, objectives, functions, strategies, structures and values.

2. To have developed among the participating schools the awareness that each school possesses distinct organizational features which make them respond to a unique development strategy.

3. To have developed in each of the participating schools the capacity to conduct self-renewing activities based on school and community needs.

4. To have developed among each of the participating schools the ability to draw resources from the community and to generate its own resources.

5. To have developed among each of the participating schools the capacity to conduct studies related to school development and use the findings for their own organizational improvement.

6. To have developed in each of the participating schools the capability to raise its standard of academic performance.”

At present whatever proclaimed by the layers above, have to be absorbed and implemented by schools. Innovations, changes, are created
and nurtured outside the school and then introduced to schools. School effectiveness seemed to have a narrow approach without penetrating to the point of impact. Very often teachers are told and not heard. They are seen as a part of the problem but they are in fact the solution.

On the other hand, the need for improvement does not always arise spontaneously from the schools. Non authoritative facilitation (in PSI the representative of the education authority has to be a facilitator) will help create an atmosphere where the SDC members will feel free to express their views, and arrive at consensus when diverse ideas and views emerge. If members of the staff do deliberate as a team, (i) Where is our school now? (ii) Where do we want to go? (iii) How can we get there? a school is likely to achieve a remarkable change. For this to happen the in-school staff has to feel a sense of ownership. In a system where there is a hierarchy and a strong bureaucracy the schools need to be more empowered. Collective diagnosis of problems and issues, planning and progress review in teams will increase the morale, generate knowledge, inculcate positive attitudes and develop skills among the in-school staff. Knowledge is constructed when people express their views.

8.4.1. Changes in the Structures When Schools Are Autonomous

In examining as to how the zonal officers support and guide the schools in improving themselves in an environment where schools are given a fair degree of autonomy also calls for the consideration of changes in organizational structures at different levels, the cultural values and strategic imperatives. Any major reform needs to build in appropriate structures. As identified by the studies the layers above the schools were not providing the kind of support that was needed. This raised the need for the policy makers to look at the issue more closely and suggest the necessary structural changes as appropriate. Allen and Glickman (1998) write,
“Successful school change efforts recognize that simply changing the organization or structure of schools isn't sufficient to bring about meaningful change. The hearts and minds of the people in schools ultimately dictate what happens in classrooms, not changes in policies or procedures” (1998:505)

The SDCs in almost all the cases consist of heterogeneous groups. The committee has conceptual thinkers, practitioners, young and old, men and women, rich and poor. This heterogeneity may be advantageous for improved performance as highlighted by Kakabadse et al.

“Heterogeneous groups have members whose backgrounds, experiences, values, and beliefs are diverse. Those groups are likely to be able to make higher quality decisions which have greater acceptance among those affected by them. They are likely to display greater creativity and innovation and possess, inherently in their composition, the characteristics necessary to produce enhanced group performance. Whether or not creativity materializes is a function of the members’ commitment, willingness to manage internal conflict, the application of their technical and interpersonal skills and ability - in fact, the group dynamics which occur as a result of members, interactions.” (1988:158)

Talking together, deliberating together and working together create constructive networks and commitments grow. Lieberman and Grolnick (1998) are of the view that networks of people build commitment.

"Networks build commitment in direct proportion to the extent to which members feel they have a voice in creating and sustaining a group in which their professional identity and interests are valued. The ways in which people are brought together affects the interplay between participants’ developing relationships with each other and with the ideas that will form the basis of their work. Collaborative relationships build trust, essential to the development of ideas, and ideas build network interest and participation as they themselves are transformed by the participants." (1998:715)
Literature from UK, North America, Southeast Asia and Australasia provide some interesting notions. Since 1993, English and Welsh schools have budgets fully devolved to them, thereby introducing financial accountability to schools, producing market forces. Similar incremental changes have taken place in Sri Lanka. Notions of successful leadership in any country are contingent upon consideration of cultural norms and Sri Lanka is no exception. Notions of conflict and need will necessarily impact upon management structures and development. When conflict and change are used as a means of arriving at shared understanding development takes place. Responsibility for such development lies with everybody in the school with the principal leading the way. As Hopkins puts it shift of power from the centre to the schools requires new roles, strategies, approaches and adaptations.

“The decentralization of decision making as part of school improvement establishes new roles and responsibilities for senior education officials at the centre and for school leaders, teachers and parents at the school level. As new roles are assumed, tensions inevitably develop. Approaches need to be put in place to respond to these tensions. .......The management of change, whether at the centre or at the school level, requires a strategy which considers change as a dynamic and evolutionary process. Following from a clear vision of the expected results of change, the strategy should anticipate tensions and difficulties but also allow for adaptations and adjustments as the change proceeds.” (Hopkins, 1998:1041)

8.4.2 The main challenges of the school leaders in the proposed decentralized set-up

The world is changing rapidly with the advancement in the technological field. Education must keep pace with that change. The daily routine of a school head today is very much different from his predecessors a decade ago, and this change will accelerate in future. Over the years many writers have highlighted that the head’s role is crucial to the success of an organization, be it a school or other educational institution (DES, 1975; Brookover et al, 1979; Pareek & Rao, 1981; Morphet et al, 1982; Everard, 1986; Leithwood & Montgomery, 1986; Duignan, 1987;
Griffin, 1987). School heads need to have the knowledge and skills in the use of modern methods of management. Effective management at the school-site has become more focused today as schools are to be given more autonomy. In Sri Lanka decentralization of educational administration has become a strong feature which is now executed by PSI which constitutes a paradigm shift in the relationship between schools and the state system. Norm Based Unit Cost Resource Allocation Mechanism (NBUCRAM) is introduced to give schools greater financial flexibility. To improve the quality of education ‘school organization level’ is equally important as the ‘classroom teaching level’. The aforementioned facts clearly demonstrate that the ‘Role of the Principal’ as a key factor for autonomous, efficient schools.

Though the empowerment of schools through PSI is in progress, the centre still demonstrates a ‘lack of trust’ at school level or on headship especially with regard to personnel management. Though the Report Relevance in Education the need to let principals exercise discretion it is not yet evident in the system.

“We are aware of instances where Heads have suffered untold distress because administrative expediency has taken precedence over educational demands. We strongly disapprove of any coercion of principals into situations, which are inconsistent with the ethos of the schools they represent. We recommend an attitude whereby the school Heads personality is given full rein. He must be free to appoint his departmental heads, to devise techniques of consultation and supervision within the school, to build up his own relationship with the community and evolve with his staff ways of turning out industrious and disciplined pupils.” (1982:39)

The Report recommends that the principals be authorized with the following;

“(1) He must have a say in the selection of staff;
(2) He must be consulted before a teacher is removed from the school;
(3) He must have the right to reprimand and report a teacher and also to approve or disapprove his annual increment;
(4) He must have the discretion in regard to the levying and utilization of facilities fees;
(5) He must be able to reorient curricula to suit his staff, learners and neighbourhood;
(6) School discipline must be vested in him within the framework of general policy;
(7) He should have complete freedom to plan his own programme subject to the approval of the Regional DE.” (1982: 39-40)

The Report however was conscious of the criticisms that may be raised on the suitability of principals to delegate such responsibility and had this to say.

“It will no doubt be pointed that some principals do not have the professional or personal qualities for the exercise of such liberty. If so we are entitled to ask how they came to be appointed to their posts, the obvious is to replace such Heads, to give them appropriate training and in future to appoint as principals only those who are qualified for the job.” (1982:40)

The 1984 reforms also proposed a fair amount of responsibilities to be handed over to the principal. The school in paper may need a particular subject teacher but in reality this teacher may need additional skills that needs to fit into some specific requirements of the school. For instance a school may want to have a teacher who may have skills and knowledge in a particular sport or aesthetic field in addition to his or her subject specialization. However even in the case of teacher transfers, the principals are not consulted.

There is another view too. The proponents of this view argue that, though the role of principal is important, the principal’s role is given too much importance. School effectiveness has been attributed too much as the result of the performance of one person, the principal. The perceived importance of principal as the leader and the heavy dependence on the principal’s role, side-lines team leadership. Because the role of the principal as the leader of the school has been given such a prominence, team
leadership, distributed leadership and informal leadership are considered secondary. Today change and innovation cannot be accomplished by one person. The importance of collaboration and relationship both personal and professional are positive factors towards renewal/change. Careful analysis of successful schools reveals that these schools have distributed leadership, informal leaders playing a key role. Today no one person can accomplish change and renewal on his/her own in an institution. It is only through collaboration and shared leadership characterized by positive personal and professional relationships that renewal/change is enabled. Dinham (2007) states that,

“School leadership traditionally focused on the principal but today it is recognized that there can be many leaders in a school, including deputy principals, heads of department, programmes and committee chairs and teachers, it is agreed and seen as desirable that leadership is distributed. Student and community leadership also need to be recognized.” (2007:265)

He further goes on to say,

"Various phases of school effectiveness research from the mid 1960s to the present revealed, the inputs, variables and processes resulting in some schools being seemingly more effective and successful than others. One of the phenomena so identified was leadership, initially of the principal but more recently perceived as the influence exercised by other formal and informal leaders within and outside the school." (Dinham, 2007:264)

Issues as to how school principals’ function can be addressed by examining as to (i) how they are recruited (ii) how they are prepared and (iii) how they are supported. The first relates to the identification of characteristics associated with principals which appear to contribute to successful schools and, second, the identification of the skills and competences for which principals need to be trained and the third, identification of what functions and roles the layers above the schools do perform.
8.4.3 The Sustainability of the Programme on School Improvement (PSI)

Innovations bring not only improvements but also challenges. If you want to accept change you got to accept challenge too. One of the concerns worth considering is how long would it take for an organizational innovation such as the Programme on School Improvement (the Sri Lankan version of school autonomy), to take roots? Joyner (1998:885), have identified several factors that hinder the initiation, and sustenance of meaningful large scale reforms in schools. They are,

“1. inadequate preparation of teachers and administrators for service in schools, particularly those that serve low-income students;...
2. inability of school districts to make informed choices regarding the selection of reform initiatives and purposeful staff development;
3. failure by school districts to create structures and processes to assess, plan, implement, and evaluate education programs;
4. ineffective policy making;
5. school unions that can be part of the solution to school reform, or part of the problem;
6. frequent turnover of leadership and school staff;
7. a deficit rather than developmental orientation with respect to student potential.”

The reform involves a shift in purpose, structure and the nature of work – functions – of the zonal office/officers. Studies by the author and others (Perera, 2009; Nedungamuva, 2009) reveal that, SDC members (mainly the teachers, parents and past pupil members) lack understanding of the concept, the authority and the functions of the SDCs. Though the architects of PSI expect the principal and zonal members to educate the other members, the cascade model has not been effective. Participation rate of members at SDC meetings were not satisfactory. Joyner (1998), based on the American context, identifies several principles that needs to be followed in our efforts to change schools.
“1. Successful large scale change begins with shared assessment of the problem by power groups and stakeholders and the identification of the specific challenges associated with the change effort.
2. The proposed change strategy should be selected on the basis of its demonstrated effectiveness.
3. The change strategy should be morally defensible and governed by ethical principles.
5. Three major stages characterize the challenge process; these stages are not discrete, and each stage presents specific challenges.
6. Change efforts should be initiated from top down and bottom up.
7. Change must be supported by leadership, structure, organization, resources and policy.
8. School change initiatives should focus on support for learning, teaching and development.

The need for multiple involvements and specially of families, in school reform is thus presented by Nieto.

"It is becoming increasingly clear that substantive changes in education will occur only through reformation of the entire learning environment. This includes not only curriculum and materials, but also institutional norms, attitudes and behaviours of staff, counselling services, and the extent to which families are welcomed in schools." (Nieto 1998:431)

Schools should bring together the community, educationists, professionals, service-recipients and administrators to engage with the discourse of education and school improvement. There has to be constructive dialogue in which all parties are free to voice their fears concerns and hopes.

If the school is to be viewed as an asset to the community and to gain cooperation and support from the community as a whole, there is a need to facilitate the home-school partnership, with parents perceiving the school positively, sharing with teachers the education of their children
on a regular basis. Parents are often the driving force to motivate school staff. Welcoming parents into a classroom and school is vital to having them to be part of the team for school improvement. In Sri Lankan schools there are instances where parents are ignored. This decreases the confidence of parents to engage in dialogue or to offer contributions to schools through working parties for school maintenance or social functions. Thus, there is potential for cultural change within the school to address imbalances which result in the inhibition of parent-school alliances through the implementation of PSI. As Cuttance writes team work will improve sustainability.

"Organizations that effectively manage change, invest in their capacity to reflect, build on team learning, develop shared visions and shared understandings of complex issues. But it is imperative that this involves both looking-outward as well as looking-inward if the school's future is to be the result of coordinated development." (Cuttance 1998 : 1139)

Both planning and plan implementation is equally important in order to sustain the reform. Planning is not nearly discussing and developing a written document, it has to lead to action. West (1998) puts it this way.

"The quality of school level planning has been identified as a major factor in many studies of school effectiveness. Such studies have also identified the nature and quality of school goals as important, and collaborative planning and clear goals as key process dimensions. Our own experiences also lead us to see links between the way planning is carried forward in the school and the school's capacity to engage in development work. However, we have also noted that there is rather more to successful planning than simply producing a development plan – indeed often the quality of the 'plan' as a written document is a very misleading guide to its influence on the course of events – it is the link between planning and action which in the end justifies the effort we put into planning activities." (1998:773)

Wallace (1998) provides a useful analysis.
"Paradoxically perhaps, a constant feature of our professional lives as teachers, politicians, government officials, trainers and researchers these days is change: not only in the pressures on us and in our day to day work, but also in our understanding of the nature of the change process. Experience of changing, attempting to influence others' practice, or researching change efforts affects our perceptions about educational change which, in turn, impact on our actions as educators, change agents, and commentators. One common reason why an innovation (a planned change in practice) may produce implementation problems and fail to realize the potential envisaged by its advocates is that their limited understanding of what changing practice entails for users leads to poor design or an inadequate implementation strategy. Where the innovation is evaluated and lessons are learned, our revised understanding of the change process should enable us to do better next time.” (1998:1181)

Miles (1998) has emphasized the need to learn from the past. He also cautions us that school reforms are not easy.

"In school changes as in life, there is ground for pessimism. On the dark side, we can note that schools are faced with 'wicked' problems without known solutions; that there are truly terrible, astounding inequities across schools and districts (Kozel, 1991); that educational change is a "soft technology" hard to transfer; that resources are extraordinarily thin just when (and where) the demands for changes are most fervent; and that many of the changes being currently proposed for schools have to work against the historically pervasive, conforming belief that reaching is trying, often vainly, to transmit objective knowledge to passive, intractable receivers (Cohen, 1988)." (Miles 1998:62)

Educators around the world have promoted the need for school based efforts.

"As the limitations of large-scale curriculum innovations became apparent, educators began to treat the individual school as the centre or focal point of educational change efforts. School-based staff development initiatives proliferated in many places, instead of development being imposed or initiated from faraway.” (Hargreaves et al 1998:3)
“In reflecting on my own participation over several decades in curricu-
ulum development and analysis, in policy advice, review and evaluation,
in several countries and in different institutional settings, I am drawn to
the conclusion that schools should not be seen or see themselves as mere-
ly places for the delivery of decisions taken elsewhere; schools have a
wide and complex set of curriculum roles to perform.” (Skilbeck 1998b :
129 and 1985 and 1990)

The impact of culture upon school success cannot be ignored. Conscious
or unconscious beliefs, assumptions and values are harder to control
than specific behaviour. It is clear that principals and SDC members un-
derstand the significance of culture on school success. The premise upon
which PSI is based, namely the devolution of autonomy and accounta-
bility to the school, also depends upon cultural accommodation. Hand-
ing over power to other individuals and teams through the delegation of
tasks demands a paradigm shift in cultural attitudes. What happen in
schools and classrooms vary from school to school, from classroom to
classroom. This varies on the context/location and also over time. Due
consideration of the context is equally important as the cul-
ture. Fink and Stoll (1998) have this to say on the relationship between context and
school improvement.

“How to address contextual differences between schools is one of the
greatest challenges for school improvement. Currently there is insuffi-
cient detail about variations in improvement conditions and strategies as
they apply to different types of schools, and yet one size clearly does not
fit all (Stoll & Fink, 1996). Different change strategies, leadership styles
and communication networks may be required to effect change in a
school that is struggling from one that is already relatively effective but
wants to become even more so (Hopkins, 1996), and even in two ostensi-
ibly ‘similar’ schools in terms of their effectiveness. This is seen only too
clearly when a principal moves to a new school, tries what worked well
for her in her previous school and finds because of different culture,
community, and micro politics, the same strategy is ineffective. It has al-
so become clear that attempts to improve schools using the characteristics
of effective schools have usually proven unsuccessful (Reynolds, 1991).  
(Fink and Stoll 1998:307)

Angus and Louden (1998) emphasizes the need for indigenous knowledge.

“Conventional wisdom pinpoints ownership as a key ingredient of successful school reform.” (1998:831)

Morgan (1986) highlights, how mechanistic approaches can limit organizational well-being and improvement. Morgan is of the view that the mechanistic approaches can,

“(i) create organizational forms that have great difficulty in adapting to changing circumstances;
(ii) result in mindless and unquestioning bureaucracy;
(iii) have unanticipated and undesirable consequences as the interests of those working in the organization take precedence over the goals the organization was designed to achieve;
(iv) have dehumanizing effects upon employees, especially those at the lower levels of the organization hierarchy.” (1986:35)

The effort PSI is all about transforming schools for the betterment of children. Joyner’s words are pushing us from within.

“The work is admittedly complex and demanding, but we recognize that it is a sacrifice that we must take. We are reminded of this every time we walk into a school and see children whose destinies are directly linked to the education and development that they receive there; children who count on adults – parents, teachers, support staff, administrators, and school board members – to validate their worth and to ensure there they receive safe passage to a bright future.”  (Joyner, 1998:875)

8.4.4 The Role of Capacity Building Institutes to Transform the Role of the Zonal Staff and School Leaders in a Decentralised set-up

Sri Lanka presents a wide spectrum in terms of natural resources as well as socio-cultural characteristics. Multi-lingual, multi-cultural and multi-
ethnic nature of the country necessitates having a blend of centralization and decentralization in order to meet diversity and maintain unity. In Sri Lanka it has been generally perceived by the central authorities that decentralization efforts are hindered by the lack of human expertise at local levels. They argue though new roles and functions are introduced, if personnel at local levels are not prepared to take on new responsibilities, decentralization will not succeed. It has to be accepted that staffing is a critical issue in decentralization and an important aspect of staffing is manpower development. Building human capacities is important for creating what some have called a new professionalism in education that is research-based, data-oriented, team-focused and outcomes-driven (Caldwell, 2004: 5-6).

A staff development process that addresses both organizational needs and individual professional needs have to be institutionalized. This will increase motivation and the better utilization of human resources. Growing importance is being placed on management development, in its widest sense, as a means of improving the quality of institutional performance in schools. School management has emerged as a distinct field of study within Sri Lanka.

The Centre for Education Leadership Development of the National Institute of Education provides leadership and management training to educational administrators and school leaders such as principals, deputies and sectional heads. CELD has made a significant contribution in raising the profile of management development across the island, particularly in respect of school leadership programmes.

The centre has been engaged in developing trainers in each province so that training can be carried out in the provinces. In so doing, economies of scale has been achieved and coverage guaranteed with a comprehensive range of programmes ensured which are accessible to all principals. While moving in the same direction and imbued with the same values the provincial trainers deliver training and development across the is-
land under the aegis of the CELD. This has provided coherence to the way training is designed and delivered, and ensured quality assurance, offering principals and teachers, wherever they are trained, similar to the comprehensive programme of development, which emanates from CELD.

This has been important in supporting the many initiatives inherent in the recent education reform. If these changes are to be successful they will rely heavily upon the effective management performance of school principals. With this in mind, CELD is presently concerned about, developing procedures and expertise for, the recruitment and appointment of principals and senior managers of schools in the future. Administrative processes must be in place if those appointments are to be made fairly and equitably. There needs to be a uniform pattern with a set of clear criteria and guidelines for recruitment.

For effective management and implementation school leaders may need individual or specific consultation. It is also part CELD’s role to anticipate future changes and to create ways in which such changes can be managed. With these in view CELD responds to requests from principals and other professionals involved in education management about all matters affecting education and management development in general, but on issues arising from PSI in particular.
CHAPTER 9: SUMMARY OF RESPONSES TO THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND THE MAIN ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED FOLLOWED WITH RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 Summary of Responses to the Research Questions

The main research focus in this study was to examine the role and functions of the zonal education office in an environment that has committed to school autonomy. The school autonomy is now presented in the form of Programme on School Improvement (PSI). PSI was introduced (a) to provide quality education for all students (b) to meet diverse needs of each and every child in an unified education system (c) to increase flexibility of internal activities in the school (d) to create a sense of belonging among the principals and the teachers; (e) to respond to the aspirations of parents and the wider school community (f) to make the community more involved in the affairs of the school (g) to improve transparency of school decisions and make schools more accountable (h) to optimize the use of resources. PSI was introduced to schools of eight zones in 2006, to schools of another nine zones in 2007, schools of further eighteen zones in 2008, schools of ten more zones in 2009 and schools of another seventeen zones in 2010. It is to be expanded to schools of the rest of the zones in the country in 2011. PSI probably is the most ambitious and wide-spread organizational reform in educational administration in the recent times in the country.

The research also examined,

- the structural changes that are needed to make PSI effective,
- the main challenges of the school leaders when PSI is introduced and implemented,
- the institutionalisation and sustainability of PSI,
- the role of capacity building institutes in preparing the newer roles, when transforming a bureaucratic set-up to a decentralized set-up.

The research questions were examined with lessons from international experiences in the previous chapter and answers are provided in brief below. It must also be said that even if the research questions are considered separate they are so interconnected.

9.1.1 The Newer Role of the zone

What constructive role the zone/zonal officers can play if and when functions are devolved to the school level is being well examined. The new role has to evolve through reflections of officers themselves. Their role will become clear through engagement, keeping with the norm ‘one learn by doing’. The CELD has experience in similar work in the past. CELD is now involved in the process of determining the new role and coming into consensus with the officers themselves. The zonal officers and school staff are expected to become associates and join together to transform the school to provide quality education. For schools to improve their quality, the zonal officers have to play an active and creative role. They have to trust, empower, support, encourage and enable the school to realize its optimum potential. While doing so they also have to make demands on the school. Support without pressure might let the schools float while pressure without support will alienate the schools from the zone.

The school and the office have to engage in the growth of mutuality. The quality of dialogue has to mark the genuine empowerment of teachers. The zonal officers have to work with schools and not on them. In the new initiative every school is assigned one officer from the zone. The zonal officer is a member of the SDC. The SDC is not simply a group that reflects but who systematically review, evaluate and improve. The development of whole-school policies is necessary for wider development. The Zonal Director of Education meets all the officers once a month to review the findings of the visits. PSI has added a new dimension to the
lives of the zonal staff. Above all through their involvement in schools the officers of the zone will now engage more deeply in their fundamental mission.

The support and supervision services provided by zones to the schools have been continuously investigated in detail using multiple approaches. Exactly how zonal offices provide services to their clients, primarily teachers and principals is a key concern. A collaborative partnership between the zonal authorities and the school community will enable school improvement efforts sustain.

Monitoring and evaluation is essential under PSI as it is by adequate monitoring and evaluation that school activities can be effectively planned and managed. Internal monitoring and evaluation will take place through the use of target setting, staff appraisal and the effective use of data. Zonal offices will have the responsibility for compiling and publishing school profiles to monitor efficiency and effectiveness based upon published criteria such as student:staff ratio, success in student achievement etc. The zone will be responsible for quality assurance and the publication of reports identifying areas of strengths and weaknesses. The steps have now been initiated to transform the role of the zone.

9.1.2 The Proposed Structural Change

Evidence elsewhere shows that where structures are simple, responsibility and accountability become clearer and there is less confusion. Complexity of structures disables effective communication. Therefore in PSI, we have tried to keep simple structures. School autonomy, here, is to be introduced through the creation of a School Development Committee (SDC), consisting of teachers, parents, past pupils and a representative of the education authority. The approaches of SDCs are expected to be anagological. It builds on using already acquired knowledge and experience. It is self-motivated and self-directed. It is based on applying learning to real life situations, thus finding solutions to issues and problems. It is based on team work, mutual understanding and as such con-
sistency and coherence to development work. The members while working together in implementing changes may learn and identify further insights and better ways of doing things.

In the PSI the SDC members will meet once a month, the zonal representative in addition to her/his participation at the SDC meeting will spend a day or more in a given month in the school. In a time of planned reform, continuity and effective implementation can only be ensured by regular communication within the members of the SDC, among the SDC and SMT. The SDC and all school staff need to have a shared understanding and acceptance of both autonomy and accountability. Though the structures are simple the change it will bring about in the culture of the schools is radical as it will bring about a sense of ownership within the school community.

9.1.3 The Envisaged Role of the Principal

Principal as the chairperson of the SDC has an important role to play in the new initiative. The importance of high quality school leadership is appreciated by Sri Lankan education policy makers and the general public. In recognition of the central role of school principals, the leadership skills and managerial competencies of school leaders, will be strengthened. Rapid changes have necessitated the introduction of new curricular changes, and change has become endemic in the system. Important leadership and management skills required in the future include the abilities to:

- clearly articulate the vision of the school and educational outcomes of students;
- organize the school to implement the curriculum effectively to achieve those outcomes;
- appraise teachers and motivate them progressively to improve their competencies to achieve high performance among students;
- deploy and utilize physical resources to promote student outcomes;
- develop close ties with parents and community organizations to achieve student outcomes;
- maintain transparency and accessibility to pupils, teachers, parents and other community members.

Schools are now developing a five-year strategic and a one-year operational plan and as these plans in most cases are developed by the principal himself/herself they will now be required to do it with the members of the SDC after consulting the stakeholders. To encourage the process a school-based learning improvement grant will be provided in support of the school development plan. It is also noted that programmes at school level do not involve a wide range of individuals from the school itself. Delegation within the school is weak where middle managers are less involved. This is a matter for concern and capacity has to be built in schools, more so in the principal, for team work.

9.1.4 Sustainability of PSI

The move towards school autonomy in Sri Lanka was influenced by four factors. First by the performance of Sri Lankan schools that were already demonstrating the above characteristics, especially in the rural sector. They were making changes from within. Second was the government’s commitment to empower grassroots, the third was the conviction of professionals and the fourth the influence of the international SBM movement. The first factor stands out and there is a common realisation that PSI is not something ‘imported’ from outside, but a response to the needs of Sri Lankan schools. There is continuous dialogue as to how we could achieve this desirable educational change. We are aware that this organizational change has to be viewed in the broader context of societal change. The school based team has to reconceptualise what is meant by a successful school. Sustainability of PSI depends on a number of factors. Whether the external funding reach the schools on time, how the officers in the above layers ‘let go’ the power they hold on to, the readiness of the in-school staff to take over and commit themselves and how individual schools make the intervention unique are all important. If we are
to sustain the new ‘paradigm shift’, - that is the creation of autonomous schools, and schools taking over more responsibility for school improvement -, all the stakeholders need to understand not only what we intend to change but also the change process.

The researcher has been 'the key figure' in developing the concept of PSI, bringing in consensus in the mode and pace of implementation. One key issue of concern at all times has been the sustainability of PSI at zonal and school level. Once zones are selected by the provincial authorities to introduce PSI, the researcher and two others (from the central ministry of education) visit the zone and spend three days. The principals in all the schools are met as a group for one full day and all the officers of the zone for one full day. We are very much aware and conscious that schools have varied characteristics. While interviewing and sharing with principals and local educational administrators it was evident that the success of the reform or lack of it, heavily depend on the attitudes of the personnel. The school leaders will need the confidence to let go of power and enable the cadre of middle managers to take more responsibility for the operational management of schools, so that principals can take a more strategic overview of school development planning.

The Sri Lankan teachers were hesitant to accept the involvement of community and to give them ownership. This attitudinal and cultural aspect may take time to change. It is also difficult to change this from outside and change has to come from within. School based concepts have not yet been well perceived and understood. The participation of the stakeholders in the school improvement process enables development projects to be tailor-made to the specific context of the school. A critical perspective on change demands that knowledge of all types - results of research, newly developed professional practices, participants own experiences- are brought to the discussion table. Change both democratic and authentic is best possible when people negotiate with each other, act collectively and when they are accountable to each other.
The Ministry of Education is now taking steps to issue school level grants based on school plans to strengthen school level activities in student development and teacher development.

9.1.5 Capacity Building

Capacity building at the local level is a key theme if educational decentralization is to succeed. It is counterproductive to postpone the commitment to decentralize on the pretext of the absence of limitations of management capacities at the grass root level. Capacity building and the introduction of decentralization can go hand in hand. Neither of the two has to wait for the other. In the country the process has begun.

Offering a clear direction to the desired destination to enable the vision to be realized will be an essential leadership quality and management skill. Such skills are already part of the armory of many principals who have been exposed to training at the Centre for Education Leadership Development (CELD) training and development programmes. Those who have taken the postgraduate diploma in education management, the diploma in school management or have other formal qualifications in education management are doing well. The CELD has developed programmes for capacity building of the zonal officers, the principals, the total school staff, and the members of the SDC. The main approach would be institutional based training.

The training needs and areas have been prioritized in terms of job requirements of the different categories of officials. Some common areas for training include supervision, team building, leadership, communication, facilitation, monitoring, financial procedures, ICT and data management. Planning officers need to develop skills in system analysis, strategic planning, project procurement procedures and budgeting skills. Subject directors need skills in research methods, quality assurance and teaching-learning methodologies. Officers who have more to do with administration need to cover themes such as human resource management, logistics and disaster risk management.
School based Teacher Development (SBTD) has taken roots in some schools. It is usually associated with training programmes arranged by schools for the total staff within the school compound or at a training institute after school hours on non-school working days. However SBTD goes beyond and may include (a) staff meeting or parental meetings as teacher development forums; (b) school events as teacher development opportunities; (c) mentoring by senior teachers or peers; (d) school level planning exercise where broad school development priorities are discussed.

9.2 The Main Issues to be addressed

9.2.1 The Governance Framework in the Education System

The Sri Lanka education sector has a complex governance framework that combines elements of deconcentration, delegation and devolution of functions and powers between the central government and the nine provincial councils. The central government is responsible for education policy in pre-school education, primary and basic education, secondary education, university education, vocational training and technical education. Compared with other sectors education is one of the most decentralized sectors in the country, with education budgets typically accounting for over half of all provincial expenditures. The provincial councils play an important role in the flow of public education finances and in the administration of the school system. 97 percent of schools are administered by the nine provincial councils through the zonal education offices and divisional education offices that are intermediary agencies of the provincial councils.

The decentralization of education that was carried out over the last five decades has resulted in five levels of decision-making above the school, national, provincial, district, zonal and divisional. In addition, at the provincial level, there are two parallel bodies: the provincial ministry,
which forms part of the elected provincial government and the provincial department which is strongly linked to the central ministry. The process of decentralization has resulted in subjecting schools to multiple control.

9.2.2 Empowering Schools

Having realized the need to give more autonomy to schools, the ministry of education is in the process of empowering schools by devolving considerable managerial power to School Development Committees. Enhancing school improvement through community participation creates a sense of ownership among the beneficiaries which will lead to a greater commitment to achieve educational outcomes. Participation of people in governance at school level will strengthen transparency and accountability. Parents and teachers are the people who have the greatest interest in the welfare of their children. They should be given the discretion to take decisions, as far as possible, with regard to the running of the school. Each school has its unique environment and decisions need to be taken by people who are connected to the school.

The Programme for School Improvement (PSI) which the MoE has initiated is a synergetic approach by which the in-school staff and all other related stakeholders of the school would participate and contribute towards school improvement. Establishing School Development Committees (SDCs) and school Management Committees (SMCs) in all schools with a mandate for total school improvement is a progressive move. These structures need to be established within a legal framework as they mature for smoother functioning and accountability.

9.2.3 Dual control of Schools and School Types

The dual school system created by administering schools both by the central Ministry and the provincial councils and the categorization of schools into types cannot be rationally accepted. The way that the school system is organized leads to unacceptable polarization with regard to
student numbers, teacher numbers and resource provision. The absence of an uniform school structure creates confusion in school management. The existing system perpetuates imbalances and the gap among schools keeps widening.

9.2.4 The Status of SLEAS and SLPS

At present there are four all-island services, the Sri Lanka Education administrative Service (SLEAS), the Sri Lanka principals Service (SLPS), the Sri Lanka Teacher Service (SLTS) and the Sri Lanka Teacher Educators Service (SLTES). Recruitment to these services are carried out according to the minutes based on competitive examinations and on merit. The cadre positions in the SLEAS (established in 1991) and the SLPS (established in 1997) at present is as follows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SLEAS</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class I</td>
<td>200</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class II</td>
<td>300</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class III</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>2283</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SLPS</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class I</td>
<td>2485</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class 2-I</td>
<td>5555</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class 2-II</td>
<td>4998</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class 3</td>
<td>3474</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>16512</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The members of these services are also appointed as Deputy Principals and Assistant Principals of large schools. There is a lack of consistency and coherence between the various education services, the SLEAS, SLPS, SLTS and SLTES in terms of entry criteria, training opportunities, career prospects, salaries, benefits, performance standards and mobility across each other. In the past a large number of persons have been appointed to education offices, as directors on acting basis and to schools as acting principals outside accepted schemes of recruitment and later confirmed in their posts due to political patronage. This has resulted in a large number of unsuitable persons getting into the two services. There is a
considerable number of officers working in educational offices who do not belong to SLEAS. There is a considerable number of principals who hold acting positions and who neither belong to the SLEAS or SLPS. There is no clear policy in the placement of officers and principals for their posts. When an officer/principal retires, there is no formal replacement made since there is no proper procedure. The above mentioned factors have created frustration among others who aspire to enter these services through established schemes/criteria.

9.2.5 The Role of SLEAS Officers

While few SLEAS officers are serving as principals and deputies of large schools, the majority of the SLEAS officers work in the central ministry/provincial offices/zonal offices and the divisions. They remain in the bureaucracy rather than facilitating school development. Most offices still engage in out-dated and inappropriate establishment matters which need to be done away with. In PSI the officers and school staff are expected to become associates of a common cause; that is to transform each and every school to centres that provide quality education. The officers at the ministry and the provincial offices have to deal with policy, while those in the zones and divisions have to engage in regular monitoring of schools for quality assurance. At the zonal level the officers have to provide schools with relevant data that help schools to increase learning outcomes of pupils. The roles of officers as mentors and facilitators have to be strengthened.

9.2.6 Role of the Principal

Since the role of the principal is crucial for the efficient and effective running of a school, it is important to place the right person in the right post. Given the diversity of schools one can see that the role of the principal differs on school size, location, teacher availability, etc. Nevertheless a typical Sri Lankan school principal is involved in administration, planning, managing personnel, logistics and finances. Administration includes attending to school admissions, maintenance of office docu-
ments such as attendance and leave registers, personnel files and managing student and teacher discipline. Planning involves development of the five-year strategic plan, annual operational plan, and their implementation and monitoring.

Personnel management includes obtaining the required cadre of teachers, supporting and motivating them, delegating work, supervision, welfare, maintaining links with external institutes and agencies. Physical resource management involves provision of quality inputs to teachers so that the curricula can be properly implemented and the removal of superfluous resources and waste. The functions that are entailed in financial management and control are the collection of facilities fees, school development committee/school development society fees, donations, maintenance of financial records, inventories etc.

At present teachers to schools are sent from the central or provincial ministries. Until Principals are engaged in the selection of their own staff, based upon an analysis of needs related to the school development plan, they will simply administer a school staffed by others, rather than lead a team of their own.

When demands are made on principals such as the implementation of PSI they become anxious. Principals’ lack of understanding or vision of the new order, and fear of being unable to perform the unknown tasks, increase their anxiety. Following the introduction of PSI schools are involved in further changes and the degree of success with which they manage and survive the new paradigm, depends upon their confidence in their own abilities to adapt. Prior to the introduction of PSI there had been several orientation programmes. Preparation of the principals through education and training, has given many of them the necessary confidence in their own abilities to perform as leaders. There are still a considerable number who do not meet the expectations of the new paradigm. In no uncertain terms the role of the principal has to be transformed into a role that meets the expectations of the PSI.
9.2.7 Role of Other Middle Managers in Schools

Leadership in schools is not confined to principals only, but occurs at many points such as deputy principal, assistant principal, sectional head etc. In large schools and in medium sized schools the deputies manage leave, facilities fees and other funds, school inventories, implementation of circulars, welfare, co-curricular activities, preparation of time tables, school supervision etc. The sectional heads are responsible for the proper functioning of their sections, teacher guidance, school based assessment etc.

In Sri Lanka traditionally middle managers are not utilized sufficiently to have any significant bearing on the management development of the schools. The Principal is too much involved with operational management and deny middle managers their ‘rightful’ roles and responsibilities. These principals will need the confidence to let go of power and enable the cadre of middle managers to take more responsibility for the operational management of schools, so that principals can take a more strategic overview of school development planning. Middle managers too will not assume empowerment until they are motivated to do so by an appropriate reward system. There is no formal procedure in the system to appoint personnel to middle-management positions in schools. Deputy principals, assistant principals, sectional heads, grade coordinators and subject coordinators are not formally appointed.

9.2.8 Human Resource Management

The selection and training of educational administrators, heads of schools and others in senior management positions needs to be carefully planned and systematically structured. It is not compulsory for a newly recruited SLEAS officer to be prepared for his role before placement or a principal to be prepared for principalship before placement. The selection, training and deployment of principals should be carried out on the basis of a carefully designed scheme which motivates them to manage schools at optimum efficiency level. It is necessary to fill up all existing
vacancies of heads of schools and other middle managers on a regular basis. In doing so a well institutionalized and transparent procedures have to be adopted. There has to be a clear policy and strategy to provide high quality human resources for the education system, at central, provincial, zonal, divisional and school levels. If principals and teachers are to feel valued, there is a need for a well developed human resource management policy.

9.3 The Need for a New Vision in the Purpose of Education

The mismatch in the relationship between education and national economic development in the country has been a popular debate among politicians, professionals, academics, parents and even students. The school curriculum has not been responsive enough to the emerging demands in the society and the world of work. Even the university graduates find it difficult to gain employment in the labour market, resulting in high unemployment among the educated youth. The mismatch between education that was provided and the needs of the youth created a demand to link the curriculum with youth aspirations and other economic and social needs of the country. In 1991 the National Education Commission (NEC) Act No.19 was passed in the parliament and the NEC was mandated to make recommendations on educational policy. The NEC was expected to review and analyse the national policy periodically and propose changes as necessary. The major areas that were to be considered by the NEC were:

(a). Character Building
(b). Nation Building
(c). Development of General Competencies
(d). Development of Specific Capabilities
The national goals identified by the NEC provide a basis for a plan to match the curricula with national needs. The NEC in 2003 declared the realization of the following eight goals as its vision for the education system. (NEC, 2003:71-72).

“National Goals

• Nation building and the establishment of a Sri Lankan identity through the promotion of national Cohesion, national integrity, national unity, harmony and peace, and recognizing cultural diversity in Sri Lanka.
• Recognizing and conserving the best elements of the nation’s heritage while responding to the challenges of a changing world.
• Creating & supporting an environment imbued with the norms of social justice & a democratic way of life that promotes respect for human rights, awareness of duties & obligations, and a deep and abiding concern for one another.
• Promoting the mental & physical well-being of individuals & a sustainable life style based on respect for human values.
• Developing creativity, initiative, critical thinking, responsibility, accountability, & other positive elements of a well integrated and balanced personality.
• Human resource development by educating for productive work that enhances the quality of life of the individual and the nation and contributes to the economic development of Sri Lanka.
• Preparing individuals to adapt to and manage change, and to develop capacity to cope with complex and unforeseen situations in a rapidly changing world.
• Fostering attitudes & skills that will contribute to securing an honourable place in the international community, based on justice, equality and mutual respect.”

The report further states that the following basic competencies will contribute to achieving the above national goals (NEC, 2003:72-75).

“Basic Competencies

(i) Competencies in Communication

Competencies in Communication are based on four subsets; Literacy, Numeracy and Graphics and IT proficiency.
Literacy: Listen attentively, speak clearly, read for meaning, write accurately & lucidly and communicate ideas effectively.

Numeracy: Use numbers for things, space & time, count, calculate & measure systematically.

Graphics: Make sense of line & form, express & record details, instructions & ideas with line form & colour.

IT Proficiency: Computer literacy & the use of information & communication technologies (ICT) in learning, in the work environment & in personal life.

(ii) Competencies relating to personality development

Generic skills such as creativity, divergent thinking, initiative, decision making, problem solving, critical & analytical thinking, team work, interpersonal relations, discovering & exploring; Values such as integrity, tolerance & respect for human dignity; Emotional intelligence.

(iii) Competencies relating to the environment

These competencies relate to the environment: social, biological & physical.

Social Environment: Awareness of the national heritage, sensitivity & skills linked to being members of a plural society, concern for distributive justice, social relationships, personal conduct, general & legal conventions, rights, responsibilities, duties & obligations.

Biological Environment: Awareness, sensitivity & skills linked to the living world, people & the eco system, the trees, forests, seas, water, air & life-plant, animal & human life.

Physical Environment: Awareness, sensitivity & skills linked to space, energy, fuels, matter, materials & their links with human livings, food, clothing, shelter, health, comfort, respiration, sleep, relaxation, rest, wastes & excretions.

Included here are skills in using tools & technologies for learning, working & living.

(iv). Competencies relating to Preparation for the world of work.

Employment skills related to maximize their potential & to enhance their capacity,

to contribute to economic development
to discover their vocational interests & aptitudes,
to choose a job that suits their abilities, and

to engage in a rewarding & sustainable livelihood.

(v). Competencies relating to religion & ethics
Assimilating & internalizing values, so that individuals may function in a manner consistent with the ethical, moral & religious modes of conduct in every-day living, selecting that which is most appropriate.

(vi). Competencies in play and the use of Leisure
Pleasure, Joy, emotions & such human experiences as expressed through aesthetics, literature, play, sports & athletics, leisure pursuits & other creative modes of living.

(vii). Competencies related to ‘Learning to Learn’
Empowering individuals to learn independently & to be sensitive & successful in responding to and managing change through a transformative process, in a rapidly changing, complex & inter-dependent world.”

The curriculum needs to perceive and complement students’ to future employment, in addition to providing access to higher education. Pupils need to be provided with an education which enables them to reach their potential and to become independent in the future. Such independence depends upon their being able to find employment. This indicates the provision of education and vocational training to match future opportunities. The co-curricular programme must supplement the prescribed national curriculum. Udugama (2001) identified that the school system in Sri Lanka is highly structured and its curriculum is designed to cater to the 2% who enter the universities.

"Our text book knowledge at the school level is geared only to higher education in a limited number of subjects in isolated divisions as arts, science, humanities. etc. is out dated, limited and sterile." (Udugama, 2001 : 324)
The NEC (2003) argues how narrow the educational thinking and implementation had been.

"From a human development perspective, quality has facets other than academic excellence. The curriculum development process from the 1960s focused on what was perceived to be a democratic process of providing a minimum knowledge base and basic competencies for all students, through uniform curriculum materials presented in 'pre-packaged' courses and the state monopoly of textbooks distributed to all schools. Regrettably this well intentioned policy has resulted in the bureaucratization of curriculum development, the reinforcement of a traditional weakness in the education system of rote learning and lack of space for the expression of teacher and student initiative and creativity."

(2003:14)

In spite of the work of NEC, NIE, and other agencies the curriculum is not responsive enough. The imposition of conformity to a centralized view of how a school should operate, and an insistence upon restrictive and time-consuming administrative and bureaucratic processes, does not allow schools to develop and change, in a flexible and dynamic way. Until schools are given autonomy there is a danger that schools will only demonstrate compliance to demands made upon them. Without flexibility and freedom principals and teachers are likely to be unwilling, or unable, to translate and interpret the demands of the external environment into an appropriate response, demonstrated by school activities which meet the needs of students and the wider community. This freedom is two fold: freedom from the constraints of external bureaucracy, the zonal and provincial offices, and the freedom to develop and change according to the particular needs of individual schools and their communities. This freedom will enable them to develop the relationship with the external environment, for example as a centre for community education and social activity.

It is impossible for education to be neutral and indifferent. One has to be aware of the cultural values, political forces and even religious be-
lies that create injustice, sustain and promote them. The over emphasis on the examinations and the way that schools are monitored and evaluated, do create competition within and between institutions. Such competition is increasingly becoming a significant characteristic of the present educational system. The PSI is believed to both enhance schools’ performance and make them more accountable. Parents will be given more choices and be better informed; and that the overly bureaucratic and levelling-down tendencies of the former system will be removed and the value for money will be established. But within such a system too, there can be both winners and losers. This perspective raises a long-standing concern in which many sociologists of education have been interested, that of the relationship between education and social/economic inequalities.

The Special Committee on Education in its proposals made in 1943 envisaged the role of education as an instrument to reduce socio-economic inequalities. The Report emphasised the need to “weld the heterogeneous elements of the population into a nation” and to develop individual personality and character for effective living. The idea of social relevance thus declared by the then leaders of education, we have failed to hold on to. We got to stress the need for committing to equality of educational opportunities. There is a continuing need for the policy makers and implementers to target extra attention for schools with concentrations of low socio-economic students as part of their responsibility. The government has declared its commitment to do so. On the other hand too much academic emphasis and examination biased education does not help to create a natural environment. Goleman’s book Emotional Intelligence, a bestseller in recent times uses Science to confirm what common sense has long observed. Emotional intelligence, Goleman (1996) explains, is the ability to read another’s innermost feelings; to handle relationships smoothly. Yunus (2007), the Nobel Laureate states,

“A human being is born to this world fully equipped not only to take care of him or herself, but also to contribute to enlarging the well being of
the world as a whole. Some get the chance to explore their potential to some degree, but many others never get any opportunity, during their lifetime, to unwrap the wonderful gift they were born with. They die unexplored and the world remains deprived of their capacity and their contribution.” (2006:4)

The above does not result only from poverty but also by education, the way it is planned and delivered. The heavy bias on ‘performance’ which only takes the ‘mental intelligence’ into account not only undermine the value of education but also deprive a majority of students to be treated as equals. Schools are run on a factory model. In such a model you exclude many because they don’t fit that model. Under the factory model, schools set standards for grade levels; this emphasizes producing a standard product. If students are not up to the standards, then you have to put them aside. If education cannot shape or mould the future then it is of less value. One cannot accept the reality as it is but needs to alter it. In his book, the “8th Habit”, Covey identifies four types of intelligences (2004:50-54). The schools/education need to focus on these intelligences and make a paradigm shift if quality is to be achieved in its total sense.

“Mental Intelligence (IQ)
Our ability to analyse, reason, think abstractly, use language, visualize and comprehend.

Physical Intelligence (PQ)
Body is constantly scanning its environment, destroying diseased cells and fighting for survival. Body heals itself. Medicine simply facilitates healing and mainly remove obstacles, but it can also create obstacles if it works contrary to body intelligence. Body balances and harmonizes the functioning of the brain, which contains the mind, with the functioning of the heart. Our body is a brilliant piece of machinery that outperforms even the most advanced computer. Our capacity to act on our thoughts and feelings, and to make things happen, is unmatched by any other species in the world.
Emotional Intelligence (EQ)
Emotional Intelligence (EQ) is one’s self-knowledge, self-awareness, social sensitivity, empathy and ability to communicate successfully with others, courage to acknowledge weaknesses and express and respect differences. Emotional intelligence is a more accurate determinate of successful communications, relationships and leadership than is mental intelligence.

Spiritual Intelligence (SQ)
SQ is becoming more mainstream in scientific inquiry and philosophical psychological discussion. Spiritual Intelligence is the central and most fundamental of all the intelligences because it becomes the source of guidance of the other three. SQ is uniquely human and is linked to humanity’s need for meaning. SQ is what we use to develop our longing and capacity for meaning, vision, and value. It allows us to dream and to strive. It underlies the things we believe in and the role our beliefs and values play in the actions we take. It is, in essence, what makes us human.”

One of the main priorities in the country is to learn to live in peace. That is to learn to live with one another. This raises the question what schools are for. Neill (1967) founder of one of the earliest ‘progressive’ or ‘free discipline’ schools has stated that,

"In all countries, schools are built to educate the young. All the wonderful labs and workshops do nothing to help John or Peter or Ivan surmount the emotional damage and the social evils bred by the pressure on him from his parents, his schoolteachers, and the pressure of the coercive quality of education.” (1967:139)

The policies may be developed and strategies planned at national or provincial levels. The best of curricula and methodologies may spring in ‘elite’ educational establishments, but the intentions and plans are implemented and practiced in the schools. It is the behaviour and commitment of the in-school staff and the parents that affect the learning of children. Classroom is the place where children make friends and seek
teachers’ shoulders to lean on. School is the place that students find models and images in their teachers to emulate. All these invites us to a serious commitment to the task of deliberating, identifying, challenging and contributing to the renewal of what schools do. We have to involve ourselves in self-critical analysis so that we identify the role schools play in the production and reproduction of injustices. There need to be continuous dialogue and debate between staff, learning to listen and respect one another. Schools should have the right climate and adequate opportunities to talk issues through.

The bottom up approach has been rather conducive to large scale dissemination, but, top-down pressure and support is a key factor for success. Change needs to be monitored and better documented. The PSI is offering the structural change that is required to transform the school-zone relationship from the present bureaucratic approach to a collegial and professional approach. In the new paradigm the officers are intellectual stimulators and emotional regulators.

The fundamental task of education is: to bring intelligence to our emotions, caring in our families, sharing in our communities, civility to our streets, and harmony in our societies. This offers a big challenge to the policy makers, architects of curricula, school heads, teachers and parents.

9.4 Recommendations

The work that the researcher was involved in the last fifteen years has now resulted the ministry of education to commit to the PSI programme which is the Sri Lankan version of SBM. Through a supplement to the initial circular on PSI, the ministry of education issued a circular on 7th September 2010 (circular No. 2010/28) extending the PSI programme to all the schools in the country from 2011. The researcher has presented some answers to the research questions of this study. In order to success-
fully achieve the proposals made in the answers, a set of main recommendations and a set supplementary are given below.

9.4.1 Main Recommendations

- Delegate more power to schools by removing some layers of authority and supervision and, by doing so; release the consummate energies of principals and teachers.

- Trust Principals to manage their schools and give them the autonomy to be innovative, flexible and responsive.

- Issue to schools a school based learning improvement grant and a set of guidelines on the use of the grant.

- Issue a School Based Teacher Development (SBTD) grant to schools and a set of guidelines on the use of the SBTD grant.

- Introduce a comprehensive financial accounting system to schools where timely and comprehensive financial information can be reported.

- Issue a set of guidelines how parents can participate with the school in improving the learning outcomes of pupils.

- Design and conduct orientation programme for SDC members.

- Strengthen regular monitoring of schools for quality assurance.

- The CELD’s role as an ‘Assessment Centre’ and a ‘Research base’, needs to be strengthened.

- The demands made on the teachers are high and complex. Changes introduced to the curriculum call for greater conceptual and pedagogical skills. There is a greater need for self-learning and peer-learning. Strengthen School Based Teacher Development (SBTD) by giving a direct grant to schools for SBTD.

- As teacher centres serve the teacher population of a particular education zone, the zone, functioning under the provincial education authority, should be the focal point in the control of teacher centres. The teacher centres should serve the teachers of the education zone in which it is located so that these teachers will gradually move towards becoming accomplished teachers as documented in teacher development literature. Provide a direct grant to the zone to strengthen Teacher Centres. The zone and the province should
follow the policy guidelines of the Ministry of Education and the constitutional requirements in matters related to teacher training.

9.4.2 Supplementary recommendations

- Recruitment to SLEAS and SLPS be carried out only in terms of the minutes on the SLEAS and the SLPS, through competitive examinations and structured Viva Voce tests.

- Once selected through accepted criteria the SLEAS recruits be given one year induction training (leading to an Advanced Certificate in Education Management) and the SLPS recruits be given three months induction training (leading to a certificate in School Management) at the Centre for Leadership Development (CELD) of the National Institute of Education.

- A competence-based qualification might be considered, with a view to replacing the current examination system of recruitment and promotion of Principals.

- Of those who have entered the SLEAS and SLPS but yet not received a long-term training be chosen to follow the Post Graduate Diploma in Education Management/Diploma in School Management/Certificate in Principalship at CELD. The order of selection be prioritized through live in sessions and by similar techniques.

- Make it compulsory for principals below the age 55 years; to follow a refresher course of three months duration on education management once in five years, since the concept of continuing education is relevant to educational leaders. These refresher programmes may be held at the CELD or in provincial settings under the guidance of CELD.

- The Course structure of all education management courses will include three phases: Residential training, School attachment and Reflection and Internalization. All training will include a period of internship in a school under a principal with a proven-track record.

- Marks have to be offered to the courses conducted by CELD at the interviews held for promotions in the SLEAS and SLPS.

- An evaluation scheme may be developed for middle managers, with the view of designing and identifying an effective develop-
ment programme to prepare middle managers both for positions of senior management and for their current role as operational managers.

- Limit school size and classroom size.
- Formulate an alternative model for small school development.
- Establish a National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE), its mandate being: the promotion of teacher development by establishing and maintaining an integrated national teacher education system.
- Ensure Quality in Teacher Education programmes and courses of study by setting standards.
- Promote teacher education as a distinct field in Sri Lanka by promoting studies and research on teacher education.
- Ensure the implementation of the Teacher Service Minute (SLTS) and Teacher Educators Service (SLTES) Minute.
- Take measures to distinguish between teacher supply (including teacher recruitment) and teacher deployment, knowing where the teachers are actually working in the country. Though the country has met its target in terms of absolute numbers the teachers must be deployed to schools where they are needed especially to remote areas.
- Follow the local and international trends in teacher education and maintain a coherent system of pre-service, in-service and on-service teacher education.
- Initiate and promote innovations, good practices, techniques and methods in the teacher education system of Sri Lanka by acknowledging, rewarding and disseminating them.
- Teacher centres should be perceived as resource centres that provide space and resources for teachers to meet and engage in fruitful professional activity on a regular basis.
- As knowledge and skills provided during initial training get outdated, the teacher centres should provide re-training programs in consultation with the National Institute of Education.
- Teacher centres should keep abreast with important national and international changes/innovations in the field of education and disseminate these among teachers and officers.
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### Appendix 1

#### ACRONYMS

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CEO</td>
<td>Circuit Education Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>EFA</td>
<td>Education for All</td>
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<tr>
<td>GCE A/L</td>
<td>General Certificate of Education Advanced Level</td>
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<tr>
<td>GCE O/L</td>
<td>General Certificate of Education Ordinary Level</td>
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<tr>
<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
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<tr>
<td>GEP2</td>
<td>General Education Project 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>DES</td>
<td>Department of Education and Science</td>
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<tr>
<td>ISA</td>
<td>In-Service Advisor</td>
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<td>MDGs</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goals</td>
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<td>MEHE</td>
<td>Ministry of Education and Higher Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>MHRDECA</td>
<td>Ministry of Human Resource Development, Education and Cultural Affairs</td>
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<td>MOE</td>
<td>Ministry of Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>NBUCRAM</td>
<td>Norm-Based Unit Cost Resource Allocation Mechanism</td>
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<td>NEC</td>
<td>National Education Commission</td>
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<td>NER</td>
<td>Net enrolment rate</td>
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<td>NEC</td>
<td>National Education Commission</td>
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<td>NIE</td>
<td>National Institute of Education</td>
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<td>OPA</td>
<td>Old Pupils Association</td>
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<td>PC</td>
<td>Provincial Council</td>
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<td>PDE</td>
<td>Provincial Department of Education</td>
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<td>PME</td>
<td>Provincial Ministry of Education</td>
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<td>PTA</td>
<td>Parent-Teacher Association</td>
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<td>RDE</td>
<td>Regional Department of Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>SBM</td>
<td>School-based Management</td>
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<td>SDB</td>
<td>School Development Board</td>
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<td>SDC</td>
<td>School Development Committee</td>
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<td>SDS</td>
<td>School Development Society</td>
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<td>SLAS</td>
<td>Sri Lanka Administrators’ Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>SLEAS</td>
<td>Sri Lanka Education Administrative Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>SLPS</td>
<td>Sri Lanka Principal Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLTS</td>
<td>Sri Lanka Teacher Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMC</td>
<td>School Management Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMT</td>
<td>School Management Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIDA</td>
<td>Swedish Agency for International Development Cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWAp</td>
<td>Sector Wide Approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 2

Results of Survey on School Autonomy

1. What principals and deputy principals of national schools want to be delegated to the school level.

Appendix 2 - Table 1: Principals and Deputy Principals of National Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>No. of schools</th>
<th>No. of Schools Responded</th>
<th>No. of Principals Responded</th>
<th>No. of Deputy Principals Responded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North East</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Western</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Central</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uva</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sabaragamuwa</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>243</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The number of principals and deputy principals of the national schools who responded are given in Appendix 2- Table 1, and the tasks and functions they wanted to be delegated to the school (or for which schools need to given more autonomy) to the school are listed below:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tasks and Functions</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personnel Selection of teachers</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personnel management</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervision to be a in-school function</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher performance appraisal to be carried out by the principal and increments to</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>be strictly based on the same</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School based staff development</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student admissions</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher transfers</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection and deployment of minor employees</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student discipline</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance of teacher files</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decide on teacher incentives</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To request the removal of ineffective teachers</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obtain services of others who are suitable when a particular subject teacher is</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not available</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher recruitment</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher discipline</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve community support</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve on parental participation in school improvement</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain EMIS</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase parental involvement on pupil decisions</td>
<td>08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve student involvement in management</td>
<td>03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish and maintain linkages with agencies, institutes</td>
<td>03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tasks and Functions</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curricular variations</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implement annual plans</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implement appropriate co-curricular activities</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To buy educational equipment</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implement specific projects on school improvement</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct examinations</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To decide school educational trips</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implement programmes in student personality development</td>
<td>07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decide on annual school calendar</td>
<td>06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To conduct counselling programmes</td>
<td>05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Financial                                                                         |                     |
| Financial management                                                               | 74                  |
| Physical resource management                                                        | 50                  |
| Physical plant development                                                         | 42                  |
Budget control to school
Freedom on payments of school electricity, water and telephone bills

They also mentioned that the following need to be guaranteed.
- The parental body should not interfere too much with school functioning.
- Political interference on school management should be prevented.
- Team management within the school have to be improved.
- The middle managers or promoted staff should be given formal appointments.
- The School management Council and School Management Groups and their members should be given job descriptions.
- The Principal and deputies should be given skills in management specially decision making skills.
- Office interference needs to be reduced.
- The need to provide a legal base/legal provision on school autonomy.

2. What principals and deputy principals of other schools (1AB, 1C, Type 2 and Type 3) want to be delegated to the school level.

Appendix 2 - Table 2: Principals and Deputy Principals of Other Schools (Non-National Schools)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>No of Principals</th>
<th>No of Deputy Principals</th>
<th>Type 1AB</th>
<th>Type 1C</th>
<th>Type 2</th>
<th>Type 3</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Semi Urban</th>
<th>Rural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>09</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>09</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North East</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>09</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Western</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>09</td>
<td>08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Central</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>09</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uva</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>09</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sabaragamuwa</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The details of principals and/or deputy principals of 203 other schools (non-national) who responded are given in Appendix 1- Table 2 and the tasks and functions they wanted to be delegated (or for which schools need to be given more autonomy) are as follows.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tasks and Functions</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personnel</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection of teachers</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To request the removal of ineffective teachers</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obtain services of others who are suitable when a particular subject teacher is not available</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School based staff development</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher transfers</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decide on teacher incentives</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student admissions</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student discipline</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervision to be a in-school function</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personnel management</td>
<td>09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher recruitment</td>
<td>08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To make decisions on teachers who come late</td>
<td>07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve community support</td>
<td>07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve on parental support</td>
<td>06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers should not be removed without replacement</td>
<td>05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish and maintain linkages with agencies, institutes</td>
<td>03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Curriculum</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curricular variations</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decide on School Time-Table</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School to take appropriate vocational initiatives</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student welfare</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implement annual plans</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decide on school starting and closing times</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To decide school educational trips</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implement appropriate co-curricular activities</td>
<td>09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To buy educational equipment</td>
<td>09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct examinations</td>
<td>06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decide on annual school calendar</td>
<td>06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Let schools offer curriculum choices of pupils</td>
<td>03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrange extra classes and make reasonable charges</td>
<td>02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Link with private sector to offer relevant curriculum</td>
<td>01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Financial</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation of resources</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial management</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical resource management</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical plant development</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget control to school</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom to pay school electricity, telephone, water bills</td>
<td>02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
They also mentioned that the following need to be guaranteed.
- Teacher training needs to be made more diversified and effective.
- The circulars need to be amended.
- Appoint a consultative body to the school.
- Authority must be given in writing.
- Principals and the other promoted staff must be given training on supervision.
- Outside interventions must be minimised.
- Stop the school been taken for granted where it has to serve many masters.
- Change the leave teacher scheme.
- The principal must be appointed by the School Board.

3. What teachers wanted to be delegated to the school level.

Appendix 2 - Table 3 : Teacher Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>School Total</th>
<th>Teacher Total</th>
<th>Type 1AB</th>
<th>Type 1C</th>
<th>Type 2</th>
<th>Type 3</th>
<th>TS 1</th>
<th>TS 2-1</th>
<th>TS 2-2</th>
<th>TS 3-1</th>
<th>TS 3-2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North East</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Western</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Central</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uva</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sabaragamuwa</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: TS = Sri Lanka Teacher Service

One hundred and thirty two teachers were briefed in two focus groups about the recommendation of the new reforms on SBM and were asked to write down the tasks and functions that should be delegated to the school. One hundred and twenty six answers were received. The details of the sample are given in Appendix 1- Table 3 and their responses do follow.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tasks and Functions</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personnel</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personnel management</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student welfare</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher recruitment</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain teacher files</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student admissions</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection of teachers</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher performance appraisal to be carried out by the principal</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and increments to be based on the same</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengthen in-school supervision</td>
<td>08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School based staff development</td>
<td>06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student discipline</td>
<td>06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve parental support</td>
<td>06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve student involvement in management</td>
<td>01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Curriculum</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curricular variations</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To buy educational equipment</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Conduct student evaluation</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To decide school educational trips</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To decide on annual calendar</td>
<td>05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implement appropriate co-curricular activities</td>
<td>05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Financial</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial management</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical plant development</td>
<td>05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infra-structure development</td>
<td>05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource management</td>
<td>04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The teachers of rural type 2 and 3 schools had mentioned that those schools must receive a special grant for student welfare. Some others have mentioned a grant should be given to buy cupboards, blackboards etc. Some had mentioned that politicians must not be allowed to use the school for their own interests.

4. What zonal directors want to be delegated to the school level.

The 24 zonal directors that were interviewed expressed the desire to delegate the following to the school level.
Personnel

- The principals’ consent/approval should be obtained/consulted when teachers are sent to the school or when teachers are removed from the school
- If principal requests a transfer of a teacher due to the teacher’s negligence that should be considered
- In-school supervision needs to be strengthened
- All teacher increments must be based on the recommendation of the principal
- Principals must be given more power to maintain school discipline
- Curriculum
- Principals have to approve their school time tables
- Principals should have the freedom to organise educational trips with the consent of the parents
- Principals must have more freedom to implement specific school development projects/co-curricular programmes
- The school must have more freedom to adapt the curriculum to suit the local needs
- Financial
- The purchase of educational items need to be entrusted to the school
- The principal and the SMT should be entrusted with the control of SDS funds and facility fee funds
- The school may be allowed to collect money/material from the community and NGOs
- Schools may be allowed to improve their infrastructure and given grants through the SMC for new buildings

5. What Trainers want to be delegated to the school level.

The 32 national and the provincial trainers wanted the following to be delegated to the school level and most of them emphasised the need to give them specific training.

Personnel

- In the selection of teachers and the non-teaching staff: the principal must be consulted when teachers are transferred out and the principal’s request to remove a teacher must be respected
- More authority to make people decisions
- Teacher performance appraisal by the principal must be considered in teacher promotions without undue external pressure.
- Freedom to communicate and develop linkages with institutes and agencies that help school improvement.
- To plan and conduct school-based staff development programmes.
- To have flexible procedures in obtaining teacher services such as the freedom to get teachers to conduct extra classes and remunerate them or to hire someone outside the cadre to meet specific needs.

Curriculum
- Develop and implement long-term school development plans.
- Implement special projects for school improvement.
- Freedom to design and implement appropriate co-curricular programmes.
- Freedom in making curricula decisions: to make amendments according the needs of the area.

Financial
- Financial freedom to carry out school development plans effectively.
- Fund raising for school activities and school projects.
- Preparation of school budget.
- Freedom in financial management in matters such as meeting electricity, telephone and water bills.
- Improvement and development school plant.
- Financial freedom in the maintenance of school plant.
- To express views in the design of buildings, furniture and to be consulted when buildings are put up and when furniture or equipment is purchased.
Appendix 3

*The Walasbedda School – One Individual can Make a Difference*8

-Through good practices initiated by the principal, a school is transformed -

Wilfred J Perera

As a trainer and mentor, I always derive inspiration from visiting schools. Sometimes I am invited, sometimes I choose where to go, and sometimes I am a part of a mission sent by the Ministry of Education of Sri Lanka (ancient Ceylon). On the latter occasions the schools we visit are those that observe good practices. The school I will discuss is one of that I visited with a team in 2007. Located in a very remote area, the school totally impressed me, I could not believe what I saw. The day I visited, I asked two questions myself: Can a school in such a remote setting offer such diverse experiences to the pupils? Can leadership be so committed and creative?

To reach the school you have to travel about 12 kilometres from Badulla, the capital of Uva province. On the Badulla – Bandarawela road you come across a narrow path that leads to the Uduwara tea estate: a steep climb through tea plantations start, making the journey difficult, but exciting. You become fearful and anxious, but you overcome these as you begin to see lush green fields and rock hills. After travelling eight Kilometres you finally reach the village of “Walasbedda”.

I was so impressed to see a school blessed with so much nature. I saw the children were enjoying the trees and the surroundings, but they did not disturb the environment. To me, much of what the students experience is a miracle of nature and manual engineering. Since my first visit I have encouraged my education management students to visit this

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school. This essay is based on my own observations and those of nine trainees I was supervising.

At The School Garden

School Started in the ‘50s

Located in Badulla district, town of Haliela, Uva province, the Walasbedda junior secondary school, has both junior and secondary levels. At the entrance leading to the school, a pandal, a kind of indigenous sculpture made of wood and steel, greets visitors. With words inscribed on it, it seeks not only to welcome visitors but also educate those who pass by it. The school’s water tank tells you that you are 13,000 feet above sea level. The school has 210 students from Grade 1 through 13, with 12 teachers. The school motto is: “Let us Overcome the Obstacles”. Another saying exhibited in the office reads, “Our exercise is to produce
Good Citizens”. Educationists of yesteryear have proclaimed that the aim of education is to produce “Good Citizens” and most teacher education courses still endorse the same; Walasbedda has lived up it’s goal of educating pupils to be useful social beings.

School Transforms the Village

When the school started in 1960, there were 110 students, but enrolment shrank to 14 in 1997. At that time, the school premises were used unscrupulous persons who had put up an illegal liquor distillery, hiding the liquor in several places in the schoolyard. Also in those times, the villagers used the school hall as a cattle shed. Things took a turning point when a new principal Mr. R. M. Ratnayake, a Science graduate, took over in 1998. A resident of the village, he was appointed at Walasbedda, at a time when authorities were contemplating on closing down the school. Mr. Ratnayake used peaceful interventions and negotiation skills to convince the community to rethink things and start a needed change. He visited homes, met parents, talked to them patiently, listened to them, and convinced them of the need to provide the best for their children.

The efforts of the school head was exemplary; a few months after he took charge, the school was liberated from unwanted activities and it practically underwent a rebirth. Today the school boasts of 82 projects with each responding to a specific problem. Some of them are extraordinary born out of the principal’s dedication, commitment, and sheer conviction. Research shows that 70 percent of child development takes place at home. If all the good work done by a school is undone at home, problems arise. In the village, fathers and mothers usually work in the tea plantations. When the new principal took over, he saw that many men took to excessive drinking, small-scale hunting was common. With widespread poverty and ignorance, many parents were failing their du-
ty towards their children. Lack of parental love and care made children anti-social.

In response to these concerns, the school decided to carry out programs for parents to create better homes for children and a better community. These programs sought to inculcate positive values among the parents. Today, family bonds have been restored, hunting has totally ceased, and forest fires have stopped. The whole community has become vegetarian. All children go to school daily, resulting in 100 percent enrolment and literacy. The school takes special care of pupils who are orphans or with single parents.

**Drama: Tool for Change**

The school tries to transmit values to the parents via the students through creative means. During lunch breaks the students sit together, eat together and have conversations. The school expects that they would bring this habit into their homes. Introducing street drama to respond to specific problems and issues that exist in the village. The dramas are created to respond to issues and help in transforming the village for example, a hunter in the village changed his behavior after watching a street drama performed by the pupils. He was not aware that the drama was created for him.

One day a student came to the principal crying, and complaining that another student has stolen his packet of rice. The principal immediately handed over his packet of rice to the student. He looked for the boy who had taken the packet and asked him why he did so. The answer was “Sir, I have not eaten any rice for one week.” The principal was shocked and realized he had to do something. In the evening, he went to the student’s house and found his grandmother was in bed, sick. The student had no parents and was living with the grandmother. The grandmother, who was a tea plucker, had not gone to work for days because of her ill-
ness. She had no way of feeding the grandson. The principal took the grandmother to the doctor, supplied the medicines, and provided food for the household.

Villagers Learn from an Incident

The principal used the incident to teach pupils to refrain from taking what belongs to others. The incident also inspired him to start a herbal garden in a half an acre land. Since then, students, have been drinking herbal teas during break time.

The incident was not taken as an isolated event. The child in question was not identified as a wrong-doer but a victim of the social system. The case has been pointed out to all the pupils and villagers the need to be more understanding and to cultivate empathy in dealing with others. For sure the “stolen rice” served as food for thought for everyone in the community. Today a give-and-take relationship has developed between the school and the community. For example, when visitors come, mothers bring milk and rice to the school. In the same manner, students who maintain a school garden bring home produce.
Respect for Different Faiths

In Sri Lanka regular school hours are from 7.30 in the morning to 1.30 in the afternoon. However for Walasbedda, it is from 6.30 in the morning to 4.30 in the afternoon. It conducts special classes for the needy and to those who sit for national examinations and holds medical clinic once every two months.

Formal lessons start at 7.30 in the morning, but all pupils are in school by 6.30 in the morning to start their morning meditation. A meditation session participated by all students takes place in the school garden, the view of which transports you to another world. Pupil carry an empty sack which they sit on for 30 minutes. Watching them, I believe they derive spiritual strength from this activity. Their peaceful and harmonious behaviour could be a result of the daily attainment of tranquillity. There
are Buddhists, Hindus, Christians in the school, and the integration starts during the admission’s day when the school conducts where multi-faith rites are performed.

In the school garden, each child is allocated a patch of land to tend, and he/she is responsible to keep that area clean. As soon as the children arrive in the morning, they clean the allocated area before the meditation starts. Because of this arrangement, every inch of the garden is a treat to the eye. Medicinal plants, vegetables and various kinds of fruits trees are grown in the garden.

**Ancient Knowledge is Reliable**

For a time, Walasbedda had no drinking water as the school sits on a hill. Authorities studied the site and allocated Sri Lankan rupees 50,000/- (USD 443) for a water project. Workers started digging 40 ft below the ground, but they soon hit a rock which eventually caused the engineers to abandon the project. One day Mr. Ratnayake saw a child drinking muddy water from a water puddle. He was determined to find drinking water, so and with the of a few parents, he started drilling the rock. There was more discouragement than encouragement, including teachers and parents, but the team did not give up. They continued to drill the rock, and weeks later, they found water about 60 ft from the mouth of the well. Today water is distributed to meet the needs of people and vegetation in the school premises. Sri Lanka has many irrigation schemes that have ‘shocked’ modern day scientists. The principal says that he had used the indigenous scientific knowledge used in “Sigiriya” an ancient rock fortress built in 477 AD. A pride of Sri Lanka, it is one of the seven world heritage sites.

For years, the school had no electricity. The problem prodded the principal to develop solar panels which used discarded coils and condensers of old vehicles. Today, electric power from the solar panels is used to
light the class rooms as well as run cassette recorders, the internal-communication system and microphones. The computer donated by a student has also benefited from the electric power. Impressed by the solar panel project, India’s TATA Company has donated a computer laboratory worth nine million Sri Lankan rupees (USD 79,000) to the school.

Resource Utilization - A New perspective

In Sri Lanka, all textbooks are given free to students. From its end Walasbedda has devised its own book saving/protecting project, employing creative strategies. The teachers and students use resources from their surroundings to produce learning materials and music instruments. They make eekle brooms from the fiber of pinus trees (pine) to sweep the floor. Students make file covers out of discarded paper and cloth; they make bookracks and desks out of discarded timber. The tubes that the water travels through underground are taken from apala trees and they are painted to prevent them from decaying. The pupils, principal and school staff use available optimally and wisely.

Making a Difference

In my opinion, education systems are transformed in two ways; by introducing changes to the structure and framework of the system and through the leadership of individuals who work within the system. Principal Ratnayake reminds me the slogan, “One person can make a difference”. Through his leadership and dedication, he has enabled the school to exert remarkable influence on the village. If anyone is going to evaluate his role as principal-based on the high standards achieved by students, Mr. Ratnayaka would stand out. He has transformed
the school to what it is today – active, thriving, and a laboratory for good citizenship. Today, he continues to be the head of Walasbedda junior and secondary school and I am sure that the whole community is happy and proud about it. In a world where family bonds are declining, violence against women and child abuse are common, and people are losing their roots, here is a man in a remote village who help schoolchildren, their parents and the whole community to envision a future, cultivate and nurture positive values and meaning in their lives.
Appendix 4

School Development Committees and School Management Teams with their Functions

Constitution of the SDC

The SDC would consist of teacher/parent/past pupil representatives and a representative of the education authority. The principal shall function as the chairperson of the SDC throughout his/her period of office in the school. The deputy principal (the person who heads the school in the absence of the principal) will be the deputy chairperson. In schools where there are three or less than three teachers, all staff shall constitute the SDC. In other schools the number in the SDC will be decided according to the criteria given below.

- Number of teachers 4 to 10: 3 teachers (including the head and the deputy)
- Number of teachers 11 to 80: 4 teachers (including the head and the deputy)
- Number of teachers above 80: 5 teachers (including the head and the deputy)

The SDC will have three to five parent representatives according to the student population.

- Number of students less than 500: 3 parents
- Number of students 501 to 1000: 4 parents
- Number of students more than 1000: 5 parents

In addition there are three past pupil representatives and a representative of the education authority in the SDC.
Selection or Appointment of members to the SDC

Teacher Category

The members of the SDC other than the principal and the deputy will be elected at a staff meeting held for this purpose. The principal shall convene and supervise the election process. The quorum of the above meeting shall not be less than two/third of the total number of teachers. A teacher member once transferred to another school ceases to be a member.

Parent Category

Three parents shall be elected to represent the parents in the SDC at the annual general meeting of the School Development Society (SDS). Members of the academic staff of the school shall not be eligible to be elected as parent representatives. The principal shall supervise the election process. A parent ceases to be a member when he/she is no longer a parent of a student of that school.

Past Pupil Category

Three past pupils shall be elected to represent the Past Pupils' Association (PPA) in the SDC. No members of the academic staff of the school shall be selected to represent the PPA. The principal shall supervise the election process. When there is no established Past Pupils Association (PPA) in the school the principal shall summon a meeting of the Past Pupils of the school, giving 14 days prior notice of such a meeting, and select the representatives.

The Representative of the Education Authority

The zonal director will identify and allocate one member of the zonal staff, to each of the provincial schools within the zone and the secretary,
central ministry of education, in consultation with the provincial directors of education will allocate one officer to the national schools, thus making strong links to improve communication, transparency and accountability. This officer will visit schools regularly, participate in the SDC meetings and in the school affairs, identify areas of strength and weakness and provide support to the school as required. He/she will be the link between the school and the educational authority. In allocating this representative to the school his/her authority, ability and acceptance will be considered. One officer may be made responsible to a number of schools depending on the availability of officers in the zone.

**Eligibility for Selection to the SDC**

The following persons will not be eligible or will disqualify from being selected, elected, nominated or continue to function if he/she,

- is a member of parliament/provincial council/local political authority;
- is less than 18 years of age;
- is declared to be of unsound mind, under any law;
- is declared insolvent or bankrupt;
- is a person on whom a sentence of imprisonment, including suspended sentence imposed by a court of law for a period of more than six months;
- is absent from three consecutive meetings of the SDC without a valid reason.

**The Term of Office of the members of the SDC**

The term of office of the members of the SDC other than the principal, the deputy and the representative of the education authority will be three years. They may be re-elected only twice. Members of the SDC other than the principal, the deputy and the representative of the educa-
tion authority may resign from his/her membership at any time giving 14 days prior notice. The principal shall function as the chairperson of the SDC throughout his/her period of office in the school. The deputy principal will be a member as long as he/she does so. The representative of the education authority will be a member as long as he/she is authorized to be so by the appointing authority. If a member of the teacher category or parent category or past pupil category disqualifies to be a member of the SDC the principal may get appropriate bodies to nominate a representative until those bodies formally select a member.

Meetings

The SDC shall meet at least once a month. In its first meeting the SDC will select a secretary. The secretary will maintain records and correspondence. When the occasion demands more frequent meetings may be held. One of the regular meetings may be held as the ‘Annual General Meeting’ to sanction plans, annual accounts, approve the annual budget and review progress. A special meeting may be summoned by the secretary of the SDC on the request of the principal or on a written request of the one/third of the members of the committee given one week notice. The quorum of the SDC meetings shall be two/third of the members of the committee.

The School Management Team (SMT)

This is a team established within the school. All the school-staff members of the SDC, the other deputy principals, assistant principals and sectional heads will constitute the SMT.

The Functions of the SDC and SMT

There will be delegation of authority to the SDC in identified areas now held by the zonal office. SMT will work very closely together with the SDC. The SDC in consultation with the SMT may appoint any other sub-committees for school improvement and decide upon tasks according to the requirements of the school. These sub-committees may consist of
Schools will be required to prepare a 5-year school development plan and an annual operational plan

Planning offers schools the opportunity to take initiatives, to develop an identity and to ensure a more secure future. Development of the 5-year school development plan and an annual operational plan is implemented from 2006. The schools were given a booklet, "Instructions for School Level Planning", by the Ministry of Education (MoE). The plans are submitted to the zonal Office by the provincial schools and to the central ministry by the national schools. A zonal team/central ministry team will review the plan and resources will then be allocated to each school, based upon a needs analysis against previously identified criteria.

Schools will carry out a wide range of curricular and co-curricular activities and specific programs for personality development of children

It is clearly anticipated that standards of education in schools will rise as a result of the introduction of PSI as it enables them to implement the curriculum through approaches best suited to their resources and students. The schools have to develop mechanisms to better utilize the quality input grants. PSI schools are encouraged to engage in a wide range of curricular and co-curricular activities. Increasing the range and quality of co-curricular activities will improve performance of students. Improved interaction with the wider community could result in the inclusion of field trips, guest speakers and work visits. Former pupils and current parents may have the expertise and knowledge which could contribute to the co-curriculum. Careful planning of the time table is essential to the learning process when each day provides a balanced and varied experience of academic, aesthetic, practical and physical activities. In the preparation of the school time-table national standards have to be maintained, for example the total number of teaching hours in each sub-
ject and the minimum number of teaching hours per teacher, whilst ensuring sufficient flexibility to accommodate the particular needs of students and reflect local needs and employment opportunities.

*There will be more congruence between school needs and teacher development*

Staff appraisal will enable the school to identify the strengths to be developed and weaknesses to be addressed and to negotiate personal and professional development needs. Since schools will identify areas for development, both individual and collective staff training needs, the congruence between staff professional needs and those of the school will improve, to the benefit of student achievement.

*Schools will proactively involve in the maintenance and development of the School Plant*

The schools may initiate construction work and repairs as deemed necessary for the development and effective functioning of the school. The significance here is that schools will move the emphasis from crisis management to planned management of the school plant. Medium and long term developments to the infrastructure will be reflected in the 5-year school development plan.
Sri Lanka’s past, present and future efforts to improve the provision of education are in focus. Decentralization of education is reviewed. Since 1960s when decentralization in education management was initiated schools have been subjected to multiple control by such layers of management as the provincial ministry, provincial department, zonal office and the division. To reduce role ambiguity clarity in division of roles and functions is needed as well as collaboration among the different layers. Historical and recent reasons that hinder decentralisation and school autonomy are reviewed. Structural and cultural changes that facilitate the democratisation of school management are proposed. The newest trend in educational decentralisation in the country the Programme on School Improvement (PSI) is a kind of school based management. In PSI, schools are given a degree of autonomy in the areas of planning, teaching-learning process, co-curricular activities, staff development and the maintenance and development of the school plant. PSI enables schools to forge links with local communities through the establishment of a School Development Committees to improve resource mobilization and public accountability, thus creating better learning cultures in schools. The role and functions of the zonal education office are examined. The role of the zone is proposed to provide strategic guidance to the schools and effectively monitor overall performance. The zones have to work with schools and not on schools. The role and the main challenges of the school leaders in the proposed decentralized set-up are also examined and the need for more collaborative partnerships within the school is emphasized. The research further examines the factors that contribute to the institutionalisation of the new organizational innovation and as to how the capacity building institutes can help in transforming the roles of the zonal staff and school leaders.