Study on Distribution of Resources in Schools in Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka Association for the Advancement of Education

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Forward

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Extended Abstract

This study aimed at investigating the reasons for the persistence of disparities among schools Sri Lanka despite certain measures having been taken to reduce disparities. The literature review clearly indicated that in most countries as well as Sri Lanka, disparities in school resources, both material and human, impacts on schooling of children, especially of those in disadvantaged and low socio-economic backgrounds. The study employed a document perusal to identify the sample and quantitative and qualitative research methods to analyse collected data. A questionnaire was administered to the principals, interviews with the Divisional Educational Officers of the four selected Zones, class observations and Focus Group Discussions were used to collect data. Four 1C schools, one Type 2 school and two Type 3 schools in the sample had stated that they did not have sufficient teachers at primary level while six 1AB schools, six 1C schools, and two Type 2 schools had stated they did not have sufficient teachers at Junior Secondary level. At senior secondary level, principals of six 1AB schools and three 1C schools said they did not have sufficient teachers. Thirty-two principals had affirmed that they had requested for resources within the last ten years. Among the resources requested were furniture, classrooms and buildings, computers, other teaching equipment, materials for co- curricular activities, teachers, essential facilities such as electricity and water. Only around half of the requests had been provided. The gap is more in the case of Type 1C, and Type 2 schools, which probably need resources more than 1AB schools. This is noteworthy in the case of Primary Learning Resource Centres and Teachers' Quarters in Type2 and 3 schools. Fourteen schools had obtained assistance from SDCs, parents, Past Pupils' Associations and two schools from politicians. Overall, assistance did not appear to be much.

Among the difficulties faced due to lack of resources were, Difficulty of implementing teaching-learning process (9), Disruption of educational activities due to lack of seating facilities (4), Difficulty of performing Mathematics promotion programmes (2), and Student performance lowered (1). Students were not able to reach the required proficiency level, a disruption of educational activities was taking place and students' achievement going down. Other impacts were effects on practical education due to lack of laboratory facilities, and difficulty in covering the syllabus.

Focus Group Discussions with members of Parent-Teacher Associations in some schools stated that the number of students in their schools has decreased due to lack of facilities over the past few years. Classroom observations revealed that the above tables indicate that overall, most of the time was taken up by listening to the teacher.

The authors recommend that it is necessary to plan measures to reduce disparities should be planned realistically and their implementation should be monitored to find out how effectively the measures are implemented. It is essential to evaluate the requested resources taking into consideration, the opportunities in different locations, number of students at different school levels, their needs including curricular and co-curricular requirements, such as teacher expertise, continuous in-service training of teachers, facilities for teaching-learning, facilities for sports and aesthetic studies, opportunities for interaction and cooperation with other schools and the need for improving technical and communication skills. Affirmative action is necessary giving more consideration to disadvantaged areas and schools. Availability of adequate resources should be ensured to bring out the best in each and every student. In all curricular and co-curricular activities availability of resources (human and material) should be guaranteed to motivate students to engage in different activities. It is necessary to seriously consider how multi-grade teaching can be introduced to primary schools which lack sufficient teachers and to develop teachers' capacity in this area. Special emphasis should be given to improve children's competencies, taking into consideration their family backgrounds, and disadvantages in their communities.

Content Page No

Chapter One – Introduction 01

Chapter Two - Review of Literature 03

Chapter Three – Methodology 16

Chapter Four - Analysis of Data and Discussion 18

Chapter Five – Conclusions & Recommendations 52

List of Figures

Figure 1

Figure 2

List of Tables

Table 1 Distribution of National and Provincial Schools by Zone

Table 2 Admission of Students to Grade 1

Table 3 Teacher Qualifications by School

Table 5 Students' Educational Achievement in Year 2017 and 2018

Table 5.1 Colombo Zone

Table 5.2 Piliyandala Zone

Table 5.3 Homagama Zone

Table 5.4 Galle Zone

Table 5.5 Elpitiya Zone

Table 5.6 Ambalangoda Zone

Table 5.7 Nuwara Eliya Zone

Table 5.8 Hatton Zone

Table 5.9 Hanguranketha Zone

Table 6 Inclusion of the school in the 'Nearest School is the Best School programme'

Table 7	Resources requested for the school during the last 10 years by School Type
Table 8	Why these resources were requested
Table 9	Comparison of the resources requested and received
Table 10	Need to request assistance from any person, (official or non-official), parents/past students/PTA, to get support from educational authorities to obtain these resources
Table 11	If yes, how they tried to help
Table 12	Educational authorities about the resource requirements for school
Table 13	Difficulties faced in conducting the school programmes – curricular and co-curricular, effectively
Table 14	Impact of non-provision of required resources on student numbers and student achievement over the last ten years
Table 15	Presence of schools, of the same type within 2 miles from you school
Table 16	No. of students who left the school during the last five years to join another school, except on getting Grade 5 scholarships
Table 17	Student drop out from school during the last 10 years
Table 18	Table 18 - The family background of these students: E.g. parents with low education, low income and aspirations, family disruption
Table 19	Appointment as Zonal Directors
Table 20	Number of Schools by Zone and Type
Table 21	Resources requested by schools in your Zone during the past 10 years
Table 22	Resources provided out of those requested
Table 23	Persons who facilitated supply of the above resources
Table 24	How fair is the distribution of resources in Zones
Table 25.1	Time spent on activities by Zone and School
Table 25.2	Time spent on activities

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Sri Lanka Association for the Advancement of Education

Chapter One

Introduction

The school structure of a country has a decisive impact on the access to good quality education in a country. The school structure depends on several factors such as the distribution of population, the physical and human resources available to support schools and political commitment of government authorities to fund schools. Schools in any country would differ in size, the grade levels at which education is provided (primary, junior secondary or senior secondary) and the quality of facilities and teachers.

Sri Lanka has over a long period of time committed itself to providing equal opportunities for education. Public schools in Sri Lanka are categorized under four types:

1AB - Schools with classes from Grade 1 or 6 up to Grade 13 in all curricular streams including Science,

1C - Schools with classes from Grade 1 or 6 up to Grade 13 in curricular streams excluding Science,

Type 2 - Schools with classes from Grade 1 or 6 up to Grade 11 and

Type 3 - Schools with classes from Grade 1 to 5

Sri Lankan state schools are also categorized as National Schools and Provincial schools. The National Schools (353) are under the authority of the Ministry of Education and Provincial schools (9,841) are administered by the Provincial authorities. There are 105 private schools, of which 36 are fee-levying, 44 are non-fee-levying and 25 are Special schools. There are also 754 Pirivenas with a student enrolment of 35,025. In addition, there is a large number of International Schools registered under the Board of Investment, preparing students through foreign curricula for international examinations which do not come under the purview of the Ministry of Education.

According to the School Census of 2017, the total number of schools in the country was 10,194. Only 10.0% of the total number of schools is 1AB schools. The percentage varies

from 19.5% in Western Province to 14.5% in Southern Province, 10.1% in Northern Province,0 9.6% to 10.3% in Eastern and North-Western provinces, 11.1 in Central Province and to 06.2% in North Central Province. The number of schools by size of student population and Province indicates that in 2016, of the 206 schools with more than 2,500 students, 74 schools had between 3,001-4,000 students and 47 schools more than 4,000 students. Seventeen schools had more than 5,000 students. The highest number of schools with more than 2,500 students was in the Western Province (73), while Northern, Eastern, North-Central and Uva provinces each have less than ten such schools. Here what is pertinent to question is the quality of education in large schools, which have huge classes, leading to difficulties in student movement within classes, less opportunities for activities and less student-teacher interaction. At the same time, there are 5,161 schools which have less than 200 students. Percentage-wise this amounts to 50.6 % of all schools. There is a possibility that in smaller schools, with less than 200 students, teachers and facilities may not be sufficient to provide a motivated environment for education.

By 2014, 1,004 schools were equipped with GCE (AL) Laboratories. 73% of 1AB and 1C schools had IT laboratories, the percentage of Type 2 and Type 3 schools with IT laboratories was only 21. By 2017, 55% of schools were reported to have computer laboratories. The School Census of 2017 points out that the percentage of schools with computer laboratories varied from 69 in the Western Province to 47 in the North-Western Province. In 2017, there were 57 one-teacher schools, and 97 two-teacher schools.

The above information clearly indicates that if Sri Lanka is to achieve social equity, there is an urgent need to address the above disparities.

The aim of the proposed study is to investigate the reasons why the above disparities continue to persist despite pronunciations by relevant authorities on the need to reduce disparities to ensure equity regionally as well as socially.

Objectives of the Research

The specific objectives of the study are:

1. Identify the measures taken by the authorities to reduce disparities in distribution of resources in schools,

2. Identify the schools in the selected sample that have not been provided sufficient physical and human resources in the last ten years,
3. Investigate whether relevant school authorities had communicated with the authorities about provision of additional resources,
4. Examine the impact of lack of resources in the affected schools on student numbers and student achievement.

Chapter Two

Review of Literature

International Studies

The study of Freidkin and Necochea (1988) based on California data concluded that smaller school size benefitted school performance in impoverished communities, but that larger size benefitted school performance in affluent communities. Howley (1994) focusing on influences related to achievement and attainment noted that smaller size seemed to improve the performance of schools serving impoverished communities. He also pointed out that studies based on "outcomes" (e.g. achievement, completion rates, attendance) recommend smaller size than those based on "inputs"(e.g. teacher salaries, instructional materials, specialized staffing). The Maththew Project investigated the possible academic "excellence" and "equity effects of school size in Montana, Georgia, Ohio and Texas at different levels of school socio-economic status (Howley and Bickel, 1999). It found that the excellence effects of school size varied by the level of socio-economic status (SES), with size exerting a negative influence on achievement in impoverished schools but a positive influence in affluent schools. It showed that the relationship between achievement and SES is substantially weaker in the smaller schools than in larger schools. Maththew Project findings showed that it would be important to focus on creating new small schools in impoverished communities. A wide consensus seems to have emerged that schools larger than 1000 students are unwise for any community.

Public schools in USA (Corsi-Bunker (undated)) get financing from local, state and federal government funds. In most cases, they must admit all children within the borders of their district. Charter schools started in 1990s are independently operated public schools which receive tax dollars in addition to funding by the sponsors. They do not charge tuition and must adhere to the curricular requirements laid down by the state. Magnet schools are free public schools that are highly selective. They are renowned for their special programs and high academic standards. Students who apply need to go through a rigorous testing (US. Dept. of Education, Undated).

PISA (2000) identified four resource input variables- pupil-teacher ratio, teacher training, teacher experience and teacher salaries as the school factors that are important to school

effectiveness. PISA allows a classification of policy-amenable school characteristics into three main categories:

School resources include material and physical resources such as the quality of a school's physical infrastructure and school size, as well as human resources such as the proportion of teaching staff with a tertiary qualification and the number of teachers within the school compared to the number of students. PISA found that five of the school resources variables have a statistically significant impact on student performance. School size (16 score points), proportion of teachers with a third level qualification in the language of assessment, the index of the quality of the school's educational resources and the index of teacher shortage were all positively associated with student performance. The index of the quality of a school's physical infrastructure had a statistically significant negative association with student performance.

The study of Willims et. al (2002) in Brazil found that some of the key school resources that affect learning, such as infrastructure, teachers with higher salaries, well-equipped libraries, access to computers and internet or safe schools, are unequally distributed, particularly affecting children from families with parents who have a low education level, families in poverty or from an Afro-descendant or Asian background. This paper shows that school supply-side factors matter: school resources are related to student achievement and are inequitably distributed.

Chapman and Harris (2004) point out that around 600 schools face challenging circumstances in UK and that a high percentage of them serve low socio-economic urban populations. They explored the strategies used to raise and sustain achievement in eight schools that had demonstrated steady improvement over a five-year period. The key strategies that these schools considered as important in contributing to their success, were

1) Improve the environment in which students and staff work,
2) Generate positive relationships between teachers, parents and students,
3) Focus on teaching and learning,
4) Build community by building bridges with the outside community, forming relationships with families and linking local businesses with the schools,
5) Offer continuous professional development,
6) Provide leadership,
7) Create an information-rich environment and
8) Provide external support.

OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) in its study conducted in 2005 show that the school the students attend is strongly predictive of their performance. Furthermore, the socio-economic composition of schools explains far more of the differences in student performance between schools than do other school factors. There is some evidence of an inequitable distribution of inputs-that schools with a more advantaged intake often have better educational resources.

Heshmati et al (2008) peruse the UNICEF (2007) report on children's well- being in six dimensions containing 18 components based on 40 indicators. The six dimensions are: material well-being, health and safety, education, peer and family relationships, subjective well-being, and behaviour and risk. They note that all dimensions focus mainly on the children's microsystem, i.e. on the children themselves and the different subsystems that directly impact on their life. They point out that Educational Well-being (EW) is composed of three sub-components: achievement, participation and aspirations. Achievement is represented by three indicators namely reading literacy achievement (EW11), mathematics literacy, achievement (EW12), and science literacy achievement all measured at age 15 (EW13). The correlation matrix shows that child well-being is highest correlated with educational and material well-being. The computation results showed that countries differ significantly in their well- being performance. They observed some degree of heterogeneity by regional location or economic region. The low rank of the countries was to some extent linked to their economic conditions and inability to address these issues effectively. However, they found exceptions where low performance of countries like USA and UK has the highest GDP per capita, which suggests the existence of weak relationships between the level of development and children's well-being.

American Psychological Task Force on Educational Disparities. (2012) points out that ethnic and racial disparities in education are evident prior to children's entry into K-12 schooling. Access to ECE programmes, especially access to high quality programmes is limited. In many states, only children whose family incomes are below the poverty line have access to ECE programmes. The ECE programmes that working poor or working class families attend are typically of lower quality. There is an over-representation of ethnic and minority children in the lower levels of academic achievement which results in their under-representation in gifted and talented programmes.

Samuels (2016) points out that in Connecticut, one of the wealthiest states in USA, students in high-income towns have easy access to guidance counsellors, school psychologists, personal laptops and up-to-date textbooks, while those in high-poverty areas tend to have more students in need of extra help, yet have fewer guidance counsellors, tutors and psychologists, lower paid teachers, more dilapidated facilities, and bigger classes than wealthier districts. She points out that the Equity and Excellence Commission of USA in its 2013 report, stated "Our system does not distribute opportunities equitably. The Commission recommended that the nation change its school finance system. New federal funding could be directed towards high poverty areas and the country could decide what resources are needed to make sure every student gets a good education regardless of what money is available.

PISA (2015) shows that in high-performing educational systems, resources tend to be distributed more equitably between socio-economically advantaged and disadvantaged schools. What matters for student achievement and other educational outcomes is not necessarily the amount of resources, but the quality of resources, how effectively they are used and how equitably they are distributed across schools. In 29 PISA participating educational systems, the capacity to provide instruction in socio-economically disadvantaged schools is hindered by a lack of inadequacy of educational material and physical infrastructure than in advantaged schools. On average across OECD countries(2016), student learning in rural schools s hindered to a greater extent than in urban schools by a lack or an inadequacy of material resources. In countries and economies where more resources are allocated to disadvantaged schools than advantaged schools, overall performance in science is higher.

In Australia, the major costs of government schools are met by relevant state or territory government (Hanrahan, 2017). Within government schools, there are two types: open and selective. Open schools accept all students from the government-defined catchment areas. Many open schools have selective classes in which better performing students are offered extended or accelerated work. Selective schools are considered more prestigious and entrance to them is highly competitive.

UNICEF (2018) report focuses on educational inequalities inn 41 of the world's richest countries and explores in depth the relationships between educational inequality and factors such as parents' occupations, migration background, child's gender and school

characteristics. It found that large inequalities in children's educational progress is linked to family background. Everything being equal, children aged 15 with parents in high-status jobs are much more likely to continue into higher education than those with parents in low status jobs.

Owens (2018) explains that large achievement gaps that exist between high-income and low-income students and between black and white students are due to income segregation between school districts, which create inequality in the economic and social resources available in advantaged and disadvantaged students' school contexts. She argues that the spatial inequalities created by income segregation between school districts contribute to achievement gaps between advantaged and disadvantaged students, with implications for future research and policy.

Sahlberg (2020) states that Australia has some of the best schools in the world — but they are not for all children. International reviews have proved that the Australian school system is one of the most unequal and socially segregated among the rich countries of the world. An ABC investigation has revealed how 8,500 schools rank on the income ladder. Four elite private schools spent more on new facilities than the poorest 1,800 schools combined. Today Australia is not anymore among those progressive and future-looking education systems that lead the way and provide good learning for all children. Instead, it is seen as having a conservative, ineffective and outdated school system moving backwards in time. The reason for Australian education to drop from the world class to the second league in international outlook is not because of declined student achievement in reading, mathematics and science in PISA and other comparative studies. A more important reason is a steady decline in social equality and growing inequity in school education. Evidence from the OECD that regularly compares the world's education systems shows that successful education systems invest much more in equity of education outcomes than we do. Strengthening equity in education has become a common strategy in most successful education systems today.

These measures include high-quality early childhood education as a basic right for all children, preventive support for children and families in their health and wellbeing, allocating money to schools to offer individualized help to all children, and investing in teacher collaboration and professionalism to advance school improvement.

It is clear, that the school system in the above selected countries is heterogeneous, in terms of funding, authority, fee-levying status and the selection criteria. Among the issues identified are

(1) Most popular schools are criticized for covertly selecting children
(2) Parents often move, rent or even cheat to get their children into one of the higher rated schools
(3) Children get into schools on the basis of: the house their parents can afford to buy, the frequency with which they have been taken to church, or their performance in an entrance test

All of these criteria can involve elements of unfairness.

Research on school effects has generally shown a modest relationship between educational resources and student learning (Fuller, 1987; Greenwald, Hedges and Laine, 1996; Buchmann and Hannum, 2001; Rivkin, Hanushek and Kain, 2005; Murillo and Roman, 2011; Hageland, Raaum and Salvanes, 2012; Nicoletti and Rabe, 2012), but a basic set of resources is crucial for providing students with the opportunity to learn. Some research shows that allocating additional financial resources to disadvantaged schools reduces the achievement gap between disadvantaged and other schools (Lamb, Teese and Helme, 2005; Henry, Fortner and Thompson, 2010), resource allocation has implications for equity in a school system and, as such, is an important consideration for policy makers.

OECD (2013) argues that a basic set of resources is crucial for providing students with the opportunity to learn and that resource allocation has implications for equity in a school system. The overall trend among OECD countries, that a lack of educational resources hinders the school's capacity to provide instruction to a lower extent in 2012 than in 2003, was observed across all school types (advantaged and disadvantaged students, advantaged and disadvantaged schools, private and public schools, lower and upper secondary programmes, and urban and rural schools.

Sri Lankan Studies

The disparity between large schools and small schools had persisted over the years in Sri Lanka. From 1989 to 1994, a universal mid-day meal programme was operational and in 2000, a targeted nutrition programme was introduced to provide a morning meal for students in Grade 1 classes in selected schools. By 2004, this programme was extended to

cover 35,000 students in 1,320 schools. Priority is given to schools in areas that were identified by the Department of Health as having high levels of malnutrition and schools attended by the children of low-income groups.

In 1996, a programme on "Rationalization of schools" was incorporated in the World Bank funded General Education Project 2. Under this Project, from 1997 around 500 schools with low enrolment were said to have been closed or amalgamated without a review of the situation of the schools, reasons for the decline in enrolment and the role of these schools in disadvantaged communities. National Education Commission's study on the rationalization of schools showed that around 400 schools had been closed down through these moves. At the same time, cutbacks on public expenditure and privatization initiatives had weakened public and school transport systems. In this way, the children who formerly attended these small schools were now having to travel long distances to the larger schools have become doubly disadvantaged (NEC, 2002). Through the intervention of the National Education Commission, the closure of these schools was suspended and the relevant circular was withdrawn in March 2003.

The Navodaya school development programme was initiated in 1997 and aimed at providing at least one school in each administrative division in the country with funding for buildings, classrooms, laboratories, computer facilities and so on. The programme by 2004 had identified 388 schools for development, with funding from national budget resources, World Bank, Asian Development Bank and the private sector. In 2004, under the GEP II project, the World Bank provided financial assistance to develop fully-equipped school libraries in these schools and the Asian Development Bank to set up computer learning centres under the Secondary Modernization Project. The majority of the schools had been chosen from 1AB and Type 1C categories.

Another initiative related to small schools was the DSD Project which identified 347 schools and allocated funds for the upgrading of infrastructure facilities. In 1998, 134 of the 347 schools were selected for 'fast track' development. Kularatne's (2002) study on the DSD project pointed out that even though considerable investment had been made on construction and rehabilitation of physical facilities, many schools still lacked adequate classroom space, electricity, water supply, laboratories, libraries, principal quarters, basic furniture, teaching aids, equipment, computers and playgrounds and that the physical facilities provided were often reported to be of lower quality.

Data from the Department of Census and Statistics indicates that the disadvantaged in education are found not only in the remote and difficult districts but are also in pockets of disadvantage even in so-called privileged districts, for example, Colombo, Kalutara and Galle districts. (Department of Census and Statistics, 2006).

World Bank (2005) pointed out that there has been a sharply increasing demand for popular, prestigious urban schools and a decreasing demand for rural and less prestigious semi-urban schools. This shift in demand has led to the existence of a large number of very small schools. About 5,900 schools (60% of schools) have less than 300 students. Further, about 2,700 schools (27% of schools) have less than 100 students, and 1,360 schools (14% of schools) have less than 50 students. This network of small schools is expensive to maintain and operate. In particular, student-teacher ratios in small schools tend to be low, resulting in high unit recurrent costs.

About 1,000 schools (10% of schools) have student-teacher ratios as low as 07:1 or less. World Bank also pointed out there still exists a considerable challenge to meet the target of providing all children between ages 6-14 with 9 years of schooling. Further, an important equity issue exists, as the 18% of children who fail to complete grade 9 are drawn from poorer homes, economically disadvantaged geographical regions such as the rural hinterland, conflict affected areas and the estate sector, or are disabled and handicapped children. Strong policy action is needed to reach these vulnerable socioeconomic groups, and achieve the target of universal enrolment and completion in the compulsory education cycle.

Tilakaratna (2006) looked at the educational opportunities for the poor in Sri Lanka. She pointed out that Sri Lanka has achieved remarkable levels of literacy and school enrolment rates, compared to many other developing countries, but concerns remain about the quality of education, the existence of regional disparities and a slowing down of further increases in literacy and enrollment rates at the national level. She comments that the expansion of the Navodaya school programme has been limited by budgetary constraints. She also claims that this programme has been adversely affected by political interference. For example, some DS divisions have more than one Navodaya school and some more than three. By contrast, there are about 30 divisions, a large number of which are from relatively disadvantaged areas where as yet no school has been selected for development under this programme. Tilakaratna argues that passing direct control of the programme

and decision-making to the Ministry of Education and Provincial Departments of Education would help to further improve the positive impact of the programme.

Classification of schools according to the level of difficulty in Sri Lanka (MOE, 2008) shows that the highest percentage of 'more congenial' and 'congenial' schools are in Western Province (55.5% and 28%). At the other end of the spectrum, the highest percentages of difficult schools were in the North-Western Province (27%) and Sabaragamuwa Province (25%), and North-Western Province (23%). The percentages of 'very difficult' schools were highest in North-Eastern (38%), North-Central (24%) and North-Western (13%) provinces. These statistics clearly reveal how the quality of schools is closely related to regional disparities.

Analysis of Grade 5 Scholarship examination results in Sri Lanka, by the level of difficulty of schools shows a clear relationship with students from more congenial and congenial schools performing better while those from difficult and very difficult schools perform poorly (MOE, 2008).

A study conducted in 2008 on school participation in selected districts of Sri Lanka (Jayaweera and Gunawardena) found that some of the essential amenities such as safe water, separate toilets and electricity were not available in 28 of the 80 schools in the sample. Almost one-third of the schools lacked science laboratories, workshops, computer centres, playgrounds, school gardens and telephones. Principals' quarters and teachers' quarters were not available in a majority of the schools. Principals' quarters and teachers' quarters were not available in a majority of the schools. There were evident disparities between the schools in Colombo district and more disadvantaged districts such as Nuwara Eliya, Jaffna, Moneragala, Ampara and Vavuniya in the provision of buildings, computer centres, libraries, amenities, again, separate toilets and playgrounds. The quality of infrastructure also differed between more privileged schools (1AB and 1C) and Type 2 and 3 schools, with the latter being of poor quality and needing improvement. Fifty per cent of the schools in the war-affected communities and tsunami and war-affected communities needed improvement. A shortage of teachers at primary level was experienced in Matara and Vavuniya districts and at secondary level, mainly in rural and urban schools and in Batticaloa, Moneragala, and Nuwara Eliya districts. Batticaloa district seems to be the worst off in deployment of teachers. With regard to classroom settings, the highest percentage of classrooms with highly conducive settings was found in

Type 1C schools closely followed by 1AB, Type 2 and Type 3 schools. More schools in war-affected communities had classrooms in highly conducive settings in stark contrast to estate schools.

The Out-of-School Study of 2013 (Jayaweera et al (2013) found that out-of-children at pre-primary level and primary levels were more likely to be from the estate sector than rural and urban areas, and from poorer families than richer families. At lower secondary school level, the out of school children most likely to belong to households in the poorest wealth quintiles but there was no disparity among sectors. The study pointed out that inequitable distribution of schools and teachers, wide disparities in the quality of educational infrastructure and other facilities have led to children dropping out of school early. A cumulative result of poor facilities, shortage of teachers and lethargic teaching is the low performance of students which, in turn, has been, a reason for dropping out from school. The principals of the schools selected for the study were most concerned by the fact that they did not receive the funds expected for the implementation of The Annual School Development Programme and that funds they received were often delayed. There was also a perception that expenditure was estimated according to official circulars and not according to the needs of schools.

National Educational Research and Evaluation Centre (NEREC, 2016) conducted a study on students' performance in Mathematics in 2012.and found that the performance was low, with an all-island mean of 23.16. The comparison in performance between 2014 and 2016 reveals a decline Provincial wise. This has resulted in a decline in all island performance. study in the above study tested the learning competencies of Grade 8 students in mathematics, science and English. It found that there was a disparity in achievement in all three subjects in relation to provincial performance, school type, gender and medium of instruction. However, the comparison between the achievements in 2014 - 2016 revealed that in science and English achievement male performance, in rural area and Tamil medium schools and 1C and Type 2 schools has improved. However, the areas that were very weak continues to be weak and in some competency levels the achievement has decreased. Achievement of writing skills in English continued to be weak.

Centre for Poverty Analysis conducted a study in 2018 on educational inequality in Sri Lanka in terms of access, quality and learning outcomes and investigates which factors contribute to educational inequality on a macro and micro level. The main findings

indicate that poverty and rurality are key contributors to educational inequalities. Differences in the types of schools and their congeniality especially limit poor and rural children's learning and educational outcomes and potentially restrain later life opportunities. Data on the quality of in-school learning, like teacher quality, relevant resource input, and effective school management are very rare. However, even with limited data availability, the educational quality gaps are distinct, especially between rural and urban areas and school types. This inequality of learning opportunities for the rural and poor translates into disparities in learning outcomes for these groups, visible in performance rates at national examinations.

The disparities in the numbers of students in schools are noteworthy. According to the student population some schools are found to be in diametrically opposed extremes. In 2017, there were 262 schools with 1-15 students, 510 schools with 16-30 students, 714 schools with 31-50 students, At the other end there were, 425 schools with 1000-1500 students, 215 schools with 1501-2000 students, 122 schools with 2001-2500 students,72 schools with 2501-3000 students,88 schools with 3001-4000 students, 32 schools with 4001- 5000 students and14 schools with more than 5000 students.

Although school places have been provided throughout the island to satisfy the circular requirements, the provision of physical facilities and human resources to implement the school curriculum effectively show a wide disparity among the districts and even among schools in the same district. By circular No.1 of 2005, the Ministry of Education (2015) classified the government schools in the country into five categories as:

- more congenial schools
- congenial schools
- not difficult schools
- difficult schools and
- very difficult schools

This classification was based upon seven groups of criteria regarding available facilities in schools. The criteria included:

1. Availability of basic facilities (drinking water, electricity, telephone, library)
2. Availability of usable equipment (duplicator, radio, TV, type writer, photocopier, OHP, computers)
3. Availability of basic usable sanitary facilities (latrines and urinals)
4. Availability of building spaces (classrooms, labs etc.)

5. Availability of minimum spaces (principal's office, teachers' room, Store room)
6. Availability of teachers (adequacy, professional qualifications)
7. Location (distance to bus route and railway station)

Different weightings were given to each of these criteria to compute a difficulty index for each school.

According to circular instructions, schools with 45 or less students are entitled to three teachers. If circular instructions are strictly enforced there cannot be any school, however small the enrolment is, with less than three teachers. However, there were 440 schools with less than three teachers in 2006. These are mostly remote difficult stations where it is extremely difficult to persuade the teachers to go. The teachers who serve in schools identified as difficult and very difficult stations are paid an incentive of 10% and 15% of their salary. Yet teacher shortages in these schools persist.

Chandrakumara (2015) found that there is a high variation in student-teacher ratios with the ratio being best in the Southern Province and worst in Eastern Province. The quality of buildings and complementary resources was higher in government schools in Western Province. In relative resource availability, Western Province was the richest, while Southern, Central and North-Western Provinces came next, while Sabaragamuwa, Uva and North-Central followed. Northern and Eastern Provinces were the poorest in resource availability.

In 2017(MoE) 33.3 per cent of the teachers were in 1029 1AB schools,25.7 per cent were in 18.8 1C schools,25.5 per cent were in 32.8 Type 2 schools and 15.5 per cent in 4,059 Type 3 schools. While the number of students in these types of schools can vary, overall, these figures differences in teacher distribution. With regard to provision of essential resources, the situation with regard to electricity was satisfactory with 97 per cent of the schools having electricity but only 16 per cent of the schools did not have drinking water provision. Out of the 10,194 schools, only 1577 (15.5%) had access to computers.

Hannan (2020) point out that there are a few schools situated in non-congenial environments in Colombo, where the buildings have not been maintained and the number of students attending the schools keeps dwindling each year. Citing an official, she claims that many developmental projects initiated by the Education Ministry had come to a halt due to lack of funds

The above review clearly indicates that in most countries as well as Sri Lanka, disparities in school resources, both material and human, impacts on schooling of children, especially of those in disadvantaged and low socio-economic backgrounds.

Chapter Three

Methodology

The study employed a relevant document perusal as well as quantitative and qualitative research methods. The perusal of relevant documents such as the Annual reports of the Ministry of Education and the Department of Census and Statistics were conducted to identify the sample for the study.

A short questionnaire was administered to the principals of the selected schools and interviews with the Divisional Educational Officers of the four selected Zones were conducted to achieve the first three objectives. At least one class in a selected school was observed to find out whether teaching-learning process is affected by the level of school physical resources and teachers. Focus Group Discussions with Parent-Teacher Associations were conducted to achieve the fourth objective.

Sample and the sampling procedure

The sampling procedure selected three districts which offer education in both Sinhala and Tamil media (Colombo, Galle,and Nuwara Eliya) and three educational zones from each of these districts (Colombo, Piliyandala, Homagama, Galle, Elpitiya, Ambalangoda, , Nuwara Eliya, Hatton, and Hangururanketha). Thirty –six schools were selected from the above educational zones, one each from each type - 1AB, 1C, Type 2 and Type 3. From each school, only one class was selected for observation and to obtain student background characteristics and performance.

Data collection Instruments

To collect data on distribution of resources, a survey questionnaire was administered to principals of selected schools on admission to Grade 1, the provision of resources such as teachers by qualifications, availability of computers, availability of electricity, drinking water, sanitary facilities and gross pupil teacher ratios, and location within the Zone, during the last ten years. A short questionnaire w used to find out from a random sample of five students in the selected classes about their background (parents' occupation, income and educational background). Mark lists of the above students in the closest term test to explore whether any relationship exists between variables will be perused.

An observation tool was developed to find out whether teaching-learning process is affected by the level of school resources, physical resources and teachers.

In addition, interviews of the Zonal Educational Officers were conducted to find out whether the school authorities, the principals, had requested for improved resources during the above period and the extent to which these requests had been responded to.

Focus Group Discussions with Parent-Teacher Associations were conducted to explore the extent to which the action by the PTAs had been effective to ensure better provision of resources to the selected schools.

Data Analysis

Data collected through the questionnaires were analysed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages, cross-tabulations by family background, ethnicity and gender and information collected through qualitative methods such as interviews and FGDs were analysed through content analysis.

Ethical considerations

The study attempted to ensure that it will comply with ethical considerations regarding confidentiality of data collection and the persons from whom data was collected. The research assistants were trained at a half-day Training Workshop to familiarize them with research instruments and to ensure that research ethics will be ensured.

Chapter Four

Analysis of Data and Discussion

The analysis of data collected through selected instruments will be presented and discussed in this chapter.

4.1 Analysis of responses of principals

Table 1 indicates the distribution of schools in the sample by Zone and school type.

Table 1- Distribution of National and Provincial Schools by Zone

District	Zone	National				Provincial			
		1AB	1C	2	3	1AB	1C	2	3
Colombo	Colombo	School No. 1	--	--	--	--	School No. 2	School No. 3	School No. 4
	Piliyandala	School No. 5	--	--	--	--	No. 6	No.7	No.8
	Homagama	School No. 9	--	--	--	--	School No. 10	School No. 11	School No. 12
	Total	3					3	3	3
Galle	Galle	School No. 13	--	--	--	--	School No. 14	School No. 15	School No. 16
	Elpitiya	School No. 17	--	--	--	--	School No. 18	School No. 19	School No. 20
	Ambalangoda	School No. 21	--	--	--	--	School No. 22	School No. 23	School No. 24
	Total	3				--	3	3	3
Nuwara Eliya	Nuwara Eliya	--	--	--	--	School No. 25	School No. 26	School No. 27	School No. 28
	Hatton	--	--	--	--	School No. 29	School No. 30	School No. 31	School No. 32
	Hangurukanketha	School No. 33	--	--	--	--	School No. 34	School No. 35	School No. 36
	Total	1	--	--	--	2	3	3	3
Total		07	--	--	--	02	09	09	09

Seven schools in the sample of 36 were National schools, which included one from the Hanguranketha Zone in the Nuwara Eliya district.

Table 2 – Admission of Students to Grade 1

Zone	Total No. of students admitted to Grade 1						
	School No	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Colombo	No. 1	No Grade 1 classes					
	No. 2	NR	NR	NR	NR	24	39
	No.3	41	54	49	39	38	37
	No.4	280	280	273	266	259	262
Piliyandala	No.5	No Grade 1 classes					
	No.6	23	21	27	22	28	25
	No.7	77	90	92	108	133	147
	No.8	139	135	120	117	114	148
Homagama	No.9	No Grade 1 classes					
	No.10	17	7	8	13	11	09
	No.11	26	19	14	18	20	27
	No.12	43	40	30	33	35	38
Galle	No.13	160	161	160	155	152	146
	No.14	No Grade 1 classes					
	No.15	18	20	14	16	13	12
	No.16	123	141	131	147	142	140
Elpitiya	No.17	No Grade 1 classes					
	No.18	90	92	90	91	92	99
	No.19						
	No.20	120	120	112	109	110	106
Ambalangoda	No.21	No Grade 1 classes					
	No.22	17	7	8	13	11	09
	No.23	26	19	14	18	20	27
	No.24	43	40	30	33	35	38
Nuwara Eliya	No.25	No Grade 1 classes					
	No.26	17	15	18	16	14	17
	No.27	30	30	28	19	22	23
	No.28	79	110	81	87	107	111
Hatton	No.29	No Grade 1 classes					
	No.30	180	180	179	160	169	152
	No.31	41	46	43	42	61	62
	No.32	136	127	124	121	118	119
Hanguranketha	No.33	No Grade 1 classes					
	No.34	17	22	24	25	18	23
	No.35	16	20	14	15	18	19
	No.36	04	06	02	03	09	03

Nine of the schools did not have primary classes and had not admitted any children to Grade 1 from 2014 to 2019. The number admitted had exceeded 200 in all the six years in one school in the Colombo Zone. One school each in the Piliyandala and Elpitiya Zones, two schools in the Galle and Hatton Zones had admitted more than 100 children to Grade 1 in each of the six years. In Nuwara Eliya Zone, the number admitted had varied during the period from 79 in 2014 to 111 in 2019.

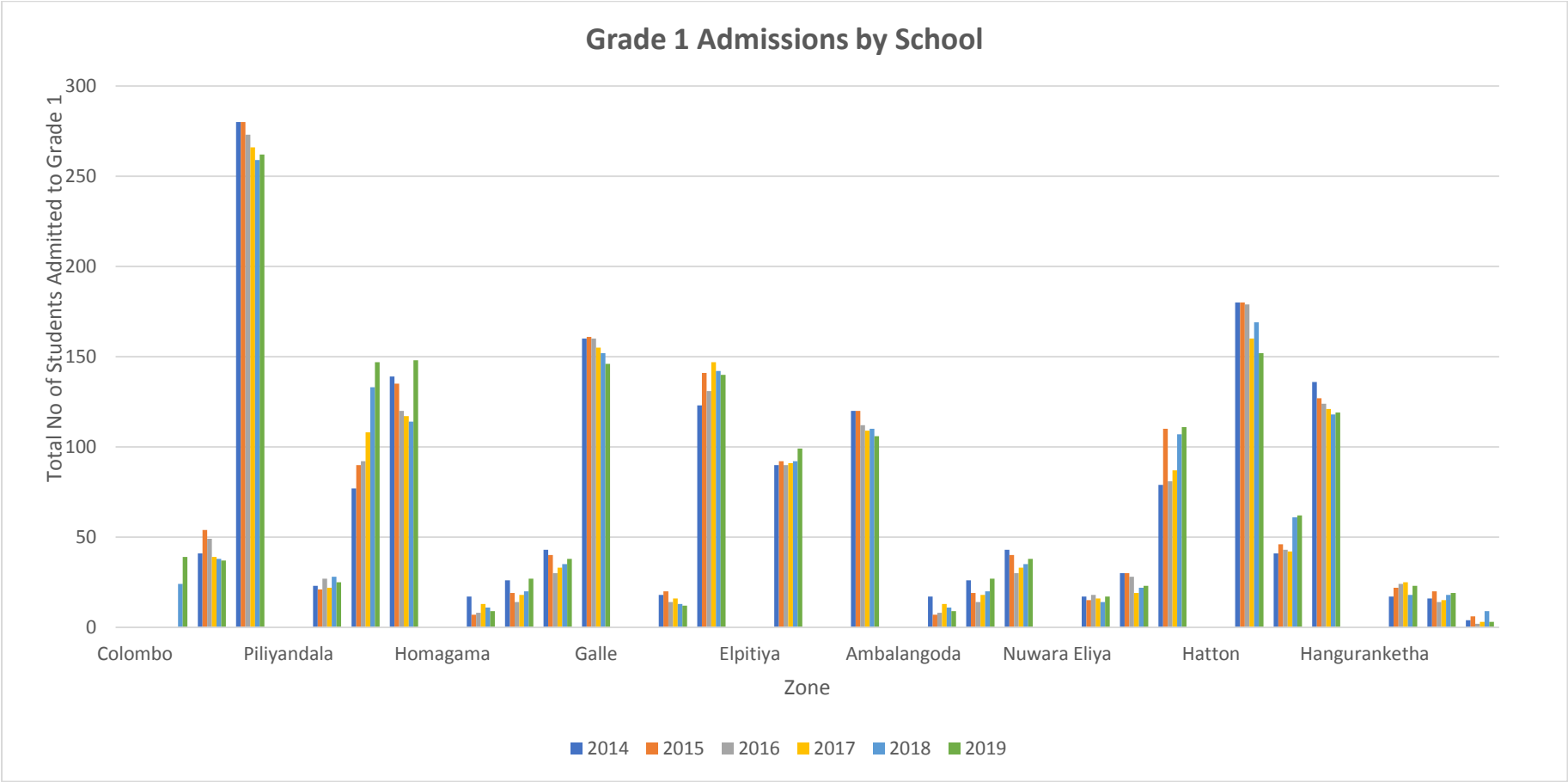
Grade 1 Admissions by School
Total No of Students Admitted to Grade 1
300
250
200
150
100
50
0
Colombo
Piliyandala
Homagama
Galle
Elpitiya
Ambalangoda
Nuwara Eliya
Hatton
Hanguranketha
Zone
2014
2015
2016
2017
2018
2019

Table 3 - Teacher Qualifications by School

Zone	School No.	Teacher Qualifications					Total
		Untrained	Trainee	Trained	Graduate	Other	
Colombo	1	--	--	60	36	--	96
	2	--	--	12	28	--	0
	3	--	--	07	08	--	15
	4	--	--	19	28	--	47
Piliyandala	5	--	--	62	114	03	179
	6	01	01	11	10	--	23
	7	--	--	04	04	--	08
	8	--	--	07	13	--	20
Homagama	9	--	--	130	137	--	267
	10	--	--				
	11	--	--	06	12		18
	12	--	--	03	02		05
Galle	13	--	--	56	44	--	100
	14	--	02	46	60	--	108
	15	--	--	07	11	--	18
	16	--	--	17	08	--	25
Elpitiya	17	--	--	74	50	--	124
	18	--	15	10	40	--	65
	19						
	20	--	--	22	10	--	32
Ambalangoda	21	--	--	44	40	--	84
	22	--	--	19	10	--	29
	23	--	--	08	10		18
	24	06	--	--	--	--	06
Nuwara Eliya	25	--	--	22	28	01	51
	26	01	--	11	10	01	23
	27	02	--	10	07	--	19
	28	--	02	13	05	--	20
Hatton	29	16	--	12	18	--	46
	30	--	02	47	38	01	88
	31	--	01	21	08	04	34
	32	--	--	17	03	--	20
Hanguranketha	33	--	--	75	45	--	120
	34	--	01	12	17	--	30
	35	01	--	16	06	--	33
	36	--	06	--	--	--	06
Total		27	30	880	860	10	1807
%		1.4	1.6	48.7	47.6	0.1	

NA- not Relevant

NS- Not sufficient

S – Sufficient

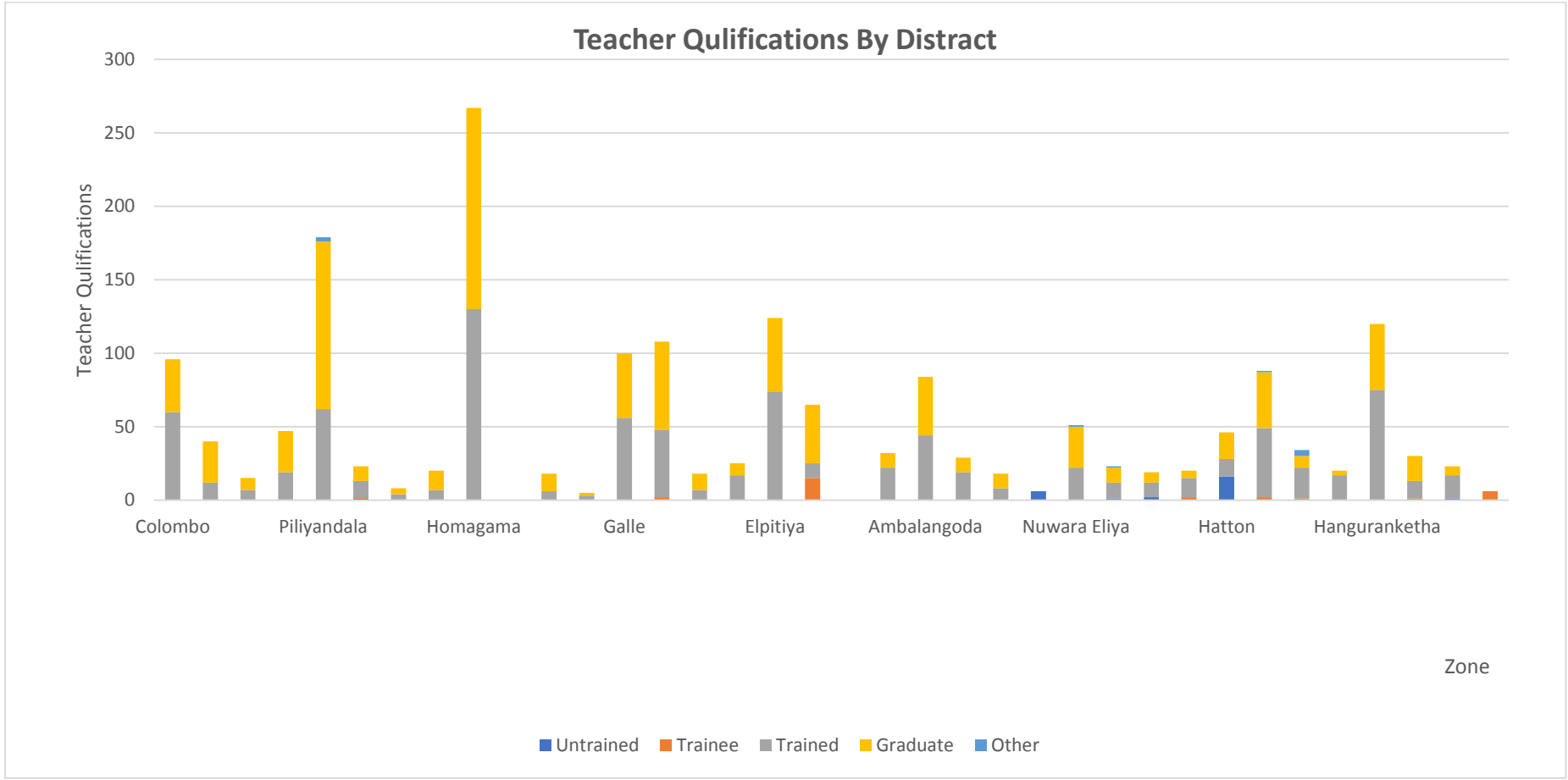
Teacher Qulifications By Distract
300
250
200
150
100
50
0
Teacher Qulifications
Colombo
Piliyandala
Homagama
Galle
Elpitiya
Ambalangoda
Nuwara Eliya
Hatton
Hanguranketha
Zone
Untrained
Trainee
Trained
Graduate
Other

Table 3 shows that out of the 36 schools, six had untrained teachers and eight had trainee teachers. School No.18 in Elpitiya Zone had 15 trainee teachers and School No.36 in Hanguranketha Zone had six trainee teachers. The number of graduate teachers varied from 137 in School No.9 in Homgama Zone and 114 in School No.5 in Piliyandala Zone to 18 in School No.29 in Hatton Zone.

It was noted that four 1C schools, one Type 2 school and two Type 3 schools had stated that they did not have sufficient teachers at primary level while six 1AB schools, six 1C schools, and two Type 2 schools had stated they did not have sufficient teachers at Junior Secondary level. At senior secondary level, principals of six 1AB schools and three 1C schools said they did not have sufficient teachers.

Principals' responses on how teaching-learning is conducted if the teachers are not sufficient are given below.

1. Referring teaching to volunteer teachers and other teachers
2. Identifying teachers with different talents and cover the subject
3. Completing the schedule of teachers who teach the relevant subjects, by adding classes, by the trained teachers of the NCOEs
4. Providing libraries, Shramadana and assignments
5. Combining parallel classes and the teaching process takes place.
6 Recruitment of eight teachers have been paid by the School Development Society
7. Directing excess teachers in English and Science to teach deficient subjects
7. Using a temporary solution by dividing the number of students in the class without a teacher into other parallel classes
8. Employing excess teachers for certain subjects to teach subjects which lack teachers.
9. Conduct of teaching and learning process by trained teachers of other subjects in the school
10. Volunteer teachers used to help in teaching and allowing other subject teachers to work on the relief timetable
11. Get the maximum out of existing teachers.
12. Covering those subjects from the teachers currently in service. Including the principal.
13. Use assignments prepared by the teacher in charge of the class, linking them to the nearest class
14. Operate a free time class coverage program daily, for example, the role of the dance teacher played by the teacher in charge of the library.

15. There are no teachers for math, art and dance and Grades 10 and 11 are taught by the principal. Tamil is taught by an Advanced Level alumnus.
16. The relief schedule is in effect. Teachers try to cover maximum periods efficiently. On days when teachers are absent, one teacher teaches two classes at the same time.
17. Provide relief periods for existing teachers and use assignments.
18. Carryout teaching and learning activities using another teacher who is capable to teach the subject
19. Implementing with the assistance of existing teachers and parents.
20. Using teachers related to other subjects
21. Using group teaching methodology, enlisting the help of appropriate resources
22. Assignments are made possible by teachers in parallel grades as much as possible, and by College of Education and trainees who come for training.
23. Operating the multi-grade system.

A total of 23 responses was given by the principals on actions taken when a sufficient number of teachers is not available. Most of the principals had responded that other teachers, including volunteer teachers, trainee teachers, excess teachers, alumnus, parents and the principal, would be requested to conduct teaching. In addition, novel strategies such as multi-grade teaching, combining classes and assignments are also used.

Table 5: Students' Educational Achievement in Year 2017 and 2018

Table 5.1 – Colombo Zone

Zone	School No.1	**Examination**	**2017**			**2018**		
Colombo			**No. sat**	**No. passed**	**%passed**	**No. sat**	**No. passed**	**%passed**
		Grade 5 Scholarship	--	--	--	--	--	--
		GCE (O.L.)	86	10	11.6	92	37	40.3
		GCE (A.L)	42	09	21.4	50	19	38.0
	School No.2	Grade 5 Scholarship	64	02	0.31	NR	NR	--
		GCE (O.L.)	66	14	21.2	70	70	100.0
		GCE (A.L)	13	02	11.8	18	10	55.6
	School No.3	Grade 5 Scholarship	26	--	00.0	27	--	00.0
		GCE (O.L.)	15	02	13.3	16	3	18.8
		GCE (A.L)	NA	NA	--	NA	NA	--
	School No.4	Grade 5 Scholarship	318	43	13.5	315	32	10.2
		GCE (O.L.)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
		GCE (A.L)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

Table 5.2 – Piliyandala Zone

Zone	School No.5	**Examination**	**2017**			**2018**		
Piliyandala			**No. sat**	**No. passed**	**% passed**	**No. sat**	**No. passed**	**% passed**
		Grade 5 Scholarship	--	--	--	--	--	--
		GCE (O.L.)	402	394	98.0	399	397	99.5
		GCE (A.L)	372	244	65.6	435	276	63.4
	School No.6	Grade 5 Scholarship	19	01	11.1	15	--	00.0
		GCE (O.L.)	15	09	60.0	21	14	66.7
		GCE (A.L)	10	08	80.0	05	01	20.0
	School No.7	Grade 5 Scholarship	19	01	5.3	15	00	00.0
		GCE (O.L.)	15	09	60.0	21	14	66.7
		GCE (A.L)	10	08	80.0	05	01	20.0
	School No.8	Grade 5 Scholarship	133	27	20.3	133	28	21.1
		GCE (O.L.)	--	--	--	--	--	--
		GCE (A.L)	--	--	--	--	--	--

Table 5.3 – Homagama Zone

Zone	**School**	**Examination**	**2017**			**2018**		
Homagama	School No. 9	No. sat		No. passed	% passed	No. sat	No. passed	% passed
		Grade 5 Scholarship	131	36	27.5	171	32	18.7
		GCE (O.L.)	223	216	96.9	220	210	95.5
		GCE (A.L)	321	233	72.6	303	224	73.9
	School No.10	Grade 5 Scholarship						
		GCE (O.L.)						
		GCE (A.L)						
	School No.11	Grade 5 Scholarship	110	07	6.3	101	08	07.9
		GCE (O.L.)	--	--	--	--	--	--
		GCE (A.L)	--	--	--	--	--	--
	School No.12	Grade 5 Scholarship	20	00	00.0	13	00	00.0
		GCE (O.L.)	--	--	--	--	--	--
		GCE (A.L)	--	--	--	--	--	--

Table 5.4 – Galle Zone

Zone	School	Examination	2017			2018		
			No. sat	No. passed	%passed	No. sat	No. passed	% passed
Galle	No.13	Grade 5 Scholarship	131	36	27.5	171	32	18.7
		GCE (O.L.)	223	216	96.9	220	210	95.5
		GCE (A.L)	321	233	72.6	303	224	73.9
	School No.14	Grade 5 Scholarship	--	--		--	--	--
		GCE (O.L.)	176	133	75.6	162	111	68.5
		GCE (A.L)	65	32	46.2	56	31	55.4
	School No.15	Grade 5 Scholarship	12	0	00.0	18	0	00.0
		GCE (O.L.)	08	04	50.0	05	05	100.0
		GCE (A.L)	--	--	--	--	--	--
	School No.16	Grade 5 Scholarship	101	03	02.9	123	01	08.1
		GCE (O.L.)	--	--	--	--	--	--
		GCE (A.L)	--	--	--	--	--	--

Table 5.5 – Elpitiya Zone

Zone	School	Examination	2017			2018		
			No. sat	No. passed	% passed	No. sat	No. passed	%passed
Elpitiya	No.17	Grade 5 Scholarship	--	--	--	--	--	
		GCE (O.L.)	381	347	91.1	376	323	85.9
		GCE (A.L)	410	248	60.5	427	294	68.9
	School No.18	Grade 5 Scholarship	125	14	11.2	135	15	11.1
		GCE (O.L.)	120	110	91.7	125	115	90.2
		GCE (A.L)	410	248	60.5	427	294	68.9
	School No.19	Grade 5 Scholarship						
		GCE (O.L.)						
		GCE (A.L)						
	School No.20	Grade 5 Scholarship	120	5	41.7	120	8	06.7
		GCE (O.L.)	--	--	--	--	--	--
		GCE (A.L)	--	--	--	--	--	--

Table 5.6 – Ambalangoda Zone

Zone	School No.21	Examination	2017			2018		
Ambalangoda			No. sat	No. passed	%passed	No. sat	No. passed	% passed
		Grade 5 Scholarship	--	--	--	--	--	--
		GCE (O.L.)	181	36	19.9	171	37	21.6
		GCE (A.L)	223	216	96.9	220	210	95.5
	School No.22	Grade 5 Scholarship	11	01	9.0	15	01	06.7
		GCE (O.L.)	10	09	90.0	13	13	100.0
		GCE (A.L)	03	01	33.3	01	01	100.0
	School No.23	Grade 5 Scholarship	35	01	28.6	31	01	32.3
		GCE (O.L.)	25	10	40.0	20	07	35.0
		GCE (A.L)	--	--	--	--	--	
	School No.24	Grade 5 Scholarship	38	04	10.5	40	04	10.0
		GCE (O.L.)	--	--	--	--	--	--
		GCE (A.L)	--	--	--	--	--	--

Table 5.7 – Nuwara Eliya Zone

Zone	School No.25	Examination	2017			2018		
Nuwara Eliya			No. sat	No. passed	%passed	No. sat	No. passed	% passed
		Grade 5 Scholarship	--	--	--	--	--	--
		GCE (O.L.)	72	72	100.0	61	61	100.0
		GCE (A.L)	167	47	28.1	130	65	50.0
	School No.26	Grade 5 Scholarship	14	00	00.0	19	00	00.0
		GCE (O.L.)	09	02	22.2	12	09	75.0
		GCE (A.L)	03	00	00.0	03	02	66.7
	School No.27	Grade 5 Scholarship	28	02	07.4	30	02	06.6
		GCE (O.L.)	18	08	44.4	19	14	73.7
		GCE (A.L)	04	01	25.0	03	01	33,3
	School No.28	Grade 5 Scholarship	135	02	1.5	70	03	04.3
		GCE (O.L.)	--	--	--	--	--	--
		GCE (A.L)	--	--	--	--	--	--

Table 5.8 – Hatton Zone

Zone	School	Examination	2017			2018		
			No. sat	No. passed	%passed	No. sat	No. passed	% passed
Hatton	No.29	Grade 5 Scholarship						
		GCE (O.L.)						
		GCE (A.L)						
	School No.30	Grade 5 Scholarship	175	16	19.1	193	25	12.9
		GCE (O.L.)	141	119	84.4	156	132	84.6
		GCE (A.L)	203	158	71.7	175	137	78.3
	School No.31	Grade 5 Scholarship	49	03	61.2	36	00	00.0
		GCE (O.L.)	30	16	53.3	22	17	77.3
		GCE (A.L)	--	--	--	--	--	--
	School No.32	Grade 5 Scholarship	145	21	14.5	143	27	18.9
		GCE (O.L.)	--	--	--	--	--	--
		GCE (A.L)	--	--	--	--	--	--

Table 5.9 – Hanguranketha Zone

Zone	School	Examination	2017			2018		
			No. sat	No. passed	%passed	No. sat	No. passed	% passed
Hanguuranketha	No.33	Grade 5 Scholarship	--	--	--	--	--	--
		GCE (O.L.)	375	358	95.5	378	370	97.9
		GCE (A.L)	450	401	89.1	450	410	91.1
	School No.34	Grade 5 Scholarship	12	00	00.0	17	01	05.9
		GCE (O.L.)	04	04	100.0	11	07	63.6
		GCE (A.L)						
	School No.35	Grade 5 Scholarship	10	01	10.0	06	00	00.0
		GCE (O.L.)	11	05	45.5	11	05	45.5
		GCE (A.L)						
	School No.36	Grade 5 Scholarship	01	00	00	04	00	00
		GCE (O.L.)	--	--	--	--	--	--
		GCE (A.L)	--	--	--	--	--	--

Only thirty-three principals had responded to the question on student performance at public examinations. Seven of these schools had no students sitting for the Grade 5 Scholarship Examination. At GCE O.L examination, four schools had achieved a 100 % pass rate. These schools were from Ambalangoda and Colombo Zones (Type 1C), Galle Zone (Type 2), Nuwara Eliya Zone (Type 1AB), both in 2017 and 2018. The Type 1C school from Ambalangoda Zone had secured a 100 % pass rate at GCE A.L examination, though only one student had appeared for the examination in 2018. The other schools with high performance at GCE A.L examination are three Type 1AB schools in Piliyandala , Nuwara Eliya and Galle Zones, a Type 1AB and two 1C schools in Elpitiya and Hatton Zones. At the Grade 5 Scholarship Examination, Type 2 and 3 schools from all Zones had performed poorly.

Table 6: Inclusion of the school in the 'Nearest School is the Best School programme'

Zone	School No.	Yes	No	NR
Colombo	1	X	--	
	2	X	--	
	3	--	X	
	4	--	X	
Piliyandala	5	X	--	
	6	--	X	
	7	X	--	
	8	--	--	X
Homagama	9	X	--	
	10		--	X
	11	X	--	
	12	X	--	
Galle	13	--	--	X
	14	X	--	
	15	X	--	
	16	X	--	
Elpitiya	17	X	--	
	18	X	--	
	19	--	--	X
	20	X	--	
Ambalangoda	21	--	--	X
	22	--	X	
	23	--	X	
	24	--	--	X
Nuwara Eliya	25	--	--	X
	26	--	X	
	27	--	X	
	28	X	--	
Hatton	29	--	--	X
	30	--	--	X
	31	--	X	
	32	--		X
Hangurukanketha	33	--	X	
	34	X		
	35	--	X	
	36	X	--	
Total		16	10	10

Out of the 36 school principals, ten had not responded to this question while 16 had stated that their schools are considered under the 'Nearest School is the Best School programme'.

Thirty-two principals had affirmed that they had requested for resources. The requests made are given below by school type.

Table 7: Resources requested for the school during the last 10 years by School Type

Resources Requested	School Type				Total
	1AB	1C	2	3	
1. Classrooms and other Buildings	07	07	06	08	28
2. Furniture	08	07	08	08	35
3. Computers	06	07	08	06	27
4. Other teaching equipment-IT, Chemistry	05	07	09	05	26
5. Materials for co-curricular activities	06	06	07	08	27
6. Sports complex/playground	05	05	06	05	21
7. Essential facilities (electricity, water, sanitary facilities)	05	07	07	04	23
8. Teachers	07	09	05	05	26
9. Teachers' Quarters	05	05	04	04	18
10. Principals' Quarters	04	04	03	04	15
11. Aesthetic Units	05	05	01	03	14
12. Junior secondary laboratory	04	05	01	03	13
13. Cafeteria	06	04	02	02	14
14. Primary Learning Resource Centre	03	03	03	04	13
15. Activity Room/Workshop for JSS	07	03	03	01	14
Total	83	84	73	70	320

Table 8: Why these resources were requested

District	Zone	Yes			
		School Type			
		1AB	1C	2	3
Colombo	Colombo	8,10,14,	1,	8,9	10
	Piliyandala	1,2,3,4,5,6	9,	9,	9,12,
	Homagama	1,8,9,		8,	
Galle	Galle				
	Elpitiya	7,	8	NR	9
	Ambalangoda	13,14	9	8	9
Nuwara Eliya	Nuwara Eliya	8,9,	9,15,	10,15	8,10,15
	Hatton	NR	8,9	8	8,9
	Hangurukanketha	8	9	8	8,9

1. Increase of student number – 3 principals
2. Introduction of new subjects- 1 principal
3. Introduction of group subjects which need more teachers- 1 principal
4. Non availability of a teacher for certain subjects -2 principals
5. Need for cafeteria-1 principal
6. Resources for everyday use, e.g. chemicals-1 principal
7. All resources required were requested -14 principals
8. Available resources are not sufficient. =3 principal
9. To ensure teaching-learning goes well -13 principals
10. The available resources are dilapidated and obsolete -4 principals
11. To protect school's identity and reputation - 4 principals
12. Lack of sports equipment -1 principal
13. Facilities such as toilets not good -1 principal
14. Lack of a playground -2 principals
15. Many of the teachers are from remote areas and lack proper residential facilities -3 principals

The above table shows that 14 out of the 36 principals had stated that they had requested for whatever resources were required. Thirteen principals had stated that they wanted to ensure teaching-learning goes well. It is relevant to note that three principals from the Nuwara Eliya Zone had pointed out that there was a need to provide residential facilities to their teachers.

Table 9: Comparison of the resources requested and received

Resources	School Type								Total	
	1AB		1C		2		3			
	Requested	Provided	Requested	Provided	Requested	Provided	Requested	Provided	Requested	Provided
1. Classrooms and other Buildings	07	06	07	04	06	04	08	04	28	18
2. Furniture	08	06	07	04	08	05	08	04	35	19
3. Computers	06	04	07	04	08	05	06	06	27	19
4. Other teaching equipment-IT, Chemistry	05	04	07	04	09	04	05	04	26	16
5. Materials for co-curricular activities	06	04	06	03	07	01	08	03	27	10
6. Sports complex/playground	05	04	05	01	06	02	05	03	21	10
7. Essential facilities (electricity, water, sanitary facilities)	05	04	07	03	07	04	04	04	23	15
8. Teachers	07	05	09	04	05	04	05	02	26	15
9. Teachers' Quarters	05	02	05	01	04	00	04	01	18	04
10. Principals' Quarters	04	03	04	01	03	00	04	01	15	05
11. Aesthetic Units	05	04	05	01	01	01	03	01	14	07
12. Junior secondary laboratory	04	04	05	01	01	00	03	00	13	05
13. Cafeteria	06	01	04	00	02	01	02	00	14	02
14. Primary Learning Resource Centre	03	02	03	01	03	01	04	02	13	05
15. Activity Room/Workshop for JSS	07	03	03	01	03	01	01	02	14	10

Nineteen out of the 36 principals had received furniture and computers, and 18 schools had received classrooms and other buildings. Other teaching equipment such as IT, Chemistry were received by 16 schools, materials for co-curricular activities and Sports complex/playground, materials, by 10 schools. Essential facilities such as electricity, water, sanitary facilities and teachers had been provided to only 15 schools. However, out of the nine Type 2 schools in the sample, only four had been provided with teachers, one with teachers' quarters and principals' quarters. Primary Learning Resource Centres had been provided to only five schools and Activity Room/Workshop for JSS. Aesthetic Units. Junior secondary laboratory had been provided to only ten schools.

The above table shows that all the resources requested by the schools had not been provided, especially in respect of furniture, Classrooms and other Buildings, Computers, Materials for co-curricular activities, Sports complex/playground, Essential facilities (electricity, water, sanitary facilities) and Teachers, that had been requested by more than 20 out of the 36 principals. When all requests are considered, it is seen that only around half of the requests had been provided. The gap is more in the case of Type 1C,2 and Type 2 schools, which could be needing requested resources than 1AB schools. This is

noteworthy in the case of Primary Learning Resource Centres and Teachers' Quarters in Type2 and 3 schools.

Table 10: Need to request assistance from any person, (official or non-official), parents/past students/PTA, to get support from educational authorities to obtain these resources

District	Zone	Yes (Indicate from whom)			
		School Type			
		1AB	1C	2	3
Colombo	Colombo	9	10	9	10
	Piliyandala	1,2,3	1	2	5
	Homagama	7		8	8
	Total				
Galle	Galle	4	10	1	1
	Elpitiya	5	5		1
	Ambalangoda	5	5	6	1
	Total				
Nuwara Eliya	Nuwara Eliya	1	1,8	1	8
	Hatton	5	3	1	7
	Hangurukanketha	1	7	5	7
	Total				
Total					

1. Much support from SDC, parents
2. Some politicians have supported from the funds given to them.
3. PPA has supported
4. They cannot influence the line Ministry
5. No Response
6. Support is needed
7. No support
8. Some private companies/patrons
9. Not indicated
10. Not requested

Table 10 shows that the principals had requested for assistance from various stakeholders, in addition to the requests made to the government. One of the Type 3 schools, three Type 1AB schools, two Type 1C schools and one Type 3 school had not made such requests. At

the same time, fourteen schools had obtained assistance from SDC, parents, Past Pupils' Associations and two schools from politicians. Among the schools supported by SDCs and parents were four 1AB schools, two 1C schools, three Type 2 schools and three Type 3 schools. One 1AB school and one Type 2 school had been supported by politicians. One principal stated that no requests had been made and four others that no support has been given. Seven schools had not either responded or not indicated what assistance has been obtained.

Table 11: Whether relevant officials had communicated with Provincial or National Educational authorities about the resource requirements for school

District	Zone	Response			
		School Type			
		1AB	1C	2	3
Colombo	Colombo	1	1	1	1
	Piliyandala	1	1	1	1
	Homagama	1		1	3
	Total				
Galle	Galle	1	3	1	1
	Elpitiya	1	1		2
	Ambalangoda	1	1	1	4
	Total				
Nuwara Eliya	Nuwara Eliya	1	1	1	1
	Hatton	4	4	2	3
	Hangurukanketha	4	2	2	4
	Total				
Total					

1. Yes
2. No
3. Cannot say
4. Not stated

All schools except four stated that they had not communicated with Provincial or National educational authorities about their requirements.

Table 12 : If yes, how they tried to help

District	Zone	Yes			
		School Type			
		1AB	1C	2	3
Colombo	Colombo	6,	5	7	2
	Piliyandala	1,3,	14	15	2,3,11,16
	Homagama	2,		4	5
	Total				
Galle	Galle	12		12	13
	Elpitiya	6	2		5
	Ambalangoda	14		17	8
	Total				
Nuwara Eliya	Nuwara Eliya	1,4.12	8	9	10
	Hatton	3,4	5		6
	Hangurukanketha	3,4	5	8	5
	Total				
Total					

1. Provided principal's quarters
2. By providing relevant facilities
3. Furniture
4. Building renovations
5. No Response
6. By conforming the requests and notifying the relevant officers
7. Assistance obtained from education officers and Provincial Council members
8. A few renovations but not much support
9. Playground improved
10. Officers have visited the school and inspected facilities.
11. Provided laptop/computers
12. Officers have to comply with provisions for procurement of goods
13. Discussed with political leaders
14. Providing teachers
15. Providing financial allocations
16. Toilet facilities
17. Necessary facilities

Sixteen responses were given by the principals on how stakeholders tried to help. Seven principals had not responded. Some respondents merely said that the officers had considered the requests, visited the school and ensured that a few renovations were done. Overall, assistance did not appear to be much.

Table 13 - Difficulties faced in conducting the school programmes – curricular and co-curricular, effectively

District	Zone	Yes			
		School Type			
		1AB	1C	2	3
Colombo	Colombo				
	Piliyandala	1	2	2	8
	Homagama				
	Total				
Galle	Galle	12	9	6	13
	Elpitiya	2,3,4	5,6		7
	Ambalangoda	8	9	10	11
	Total				
Nuwara Eliya	Nuwara Eliya	1,7,	11,10,15	11,16	11
	Hatton	8	11	9	8
	Hangurukanketha	7	7	11	14
	Total				

1. Difficulty of implementing teaching-learning process
2. Lack of Desks and chairs
3. Change of existing policies
4. Change of governments
5. Lack of laboratory facilities
6. Difficulty of performing Mathematics promotion programmes
7. Disruption of educational activities due to lack of seating facilities
8. No response/Response not relevant
9. Students participation in practical activities decrease
10. Necessity to limit student admission
11. Difficulties for students and teachers to conduct teaching-learning effectively
12. Not much of an issue
13. Conferences, concerts, sports activities and environmental camps disrupted
14. Conduct activities with whatever resources available

15. Thefts due to lack of security
16. Student performance lowered

Among the difficulties faced due to lack of resources were, Difficulty of implementing teaching-learning process (9), Disruption of educational activities due to lack of seating facilities(4), Difficulty of performing Mathematics promotion programmes (2), and Student performance lowered (1) and Change of governments (1).

Table 14 - Impact of non-provision of required resources on student numbers and student achievement over the last ten years

District	Zone	School Type			
		1AB	1C	2	3
Colombo	Colombo	5	3	3,4	8
	Piliyandala	1,2.	3		4
	Homagama	8		3,	9
	Total				
Galle	Galle	5	6	6	
	Elpitiya	7	3		4
	Ambalangoda	8	3,	10,	11
	Total				
Nuwara Eliya	Nuwara Eliya	3,11,	11	3	5, 6,
	Hatton	8	11	1,10,11,12	
	Hanguranketha	10,	6	7,	11
	Total				
Total		12	8	11	8

1. Managed to obtain resources to minimize issues in student achievement
2. Lack of a teacher for Business Studies is a big issue
3. Some students cannot reach the required proficiency level.
4. Disruption of educational activities.
5. Some students from distant areas left the school.
6. Lack of resources has hampered the enhancement of students' potential.
7. Inability to enable students to perform well at the Scholarship Examination and in co-curricular activities
8. No response
9. Popularity of the school has gone down.
10. Lack of resources has affected students' achievement.

11. Lack of laboratory facilities affects practical education and teaching-learning
12. Deficiency of resources affect covering of the syllabus.

The main difficulties due to non-provision of resources were noted by principals were students not being able to reach the required proficiency level, a disruption of educational activities and students' achievement going down. Other impacts were effects on practical education due to lack of laboratory facilities, and difficulty in covering the syllabus. It is noteworthy that 12 1AB schools,11 1C schools, eight Type 2 and Type 3 schools each had given these difficulties.

Table 15 : Presence of schools, of the same type within 2 miles from you school

District	**Zone**	**Yes**				**No**			
		School Type				**School Type**			
		1AB	**1C**	**2**	**3**	**1AB**	**1C**	**2**	3
Colombo	Colombo	x		x	x		x		
	Piliyandala			x	x	x	x		
	Homagama			x		x			x
	Total								
Galle	Galle	x		x	x		x		
	Elpitiya				x	x	x		
	Ambalangoda			x	3	x	x		
	Total								
Nuwara Eliya	Nuwara Eliya					x	x	x	x
	Hatton	3		x	x		x		
	Hangurukanketha					x	x	X	x
	Total								
Total		02		06	05	06	08	02	3

1. Yes
2. No

Two schools, one 1AB and one 1C had not responded while six Type 2 schools and two Type2 and three Type 3 schools had no schools which were of the same type of school within two miles.

Table 16 – No. of students who left the school during the last five years to join another school, except on getting Grade 5 scholarships

District	Zone	Yes (Indicate the number			
		School Type			
		1AB	1C	2	3
Colombo	Colombo	1	3	1	2
	Piliyandala	5,	6	7	8
	Homagama	2		1	1
	Total				
Galle	Galle	3	3	4	1
	Elpitiya	1	15	1	2
	Ambalangoda	8	6	4	6
	Total				
Nuwara Eliya	Nuwara Eliya	1	6	1	1
	Hatton	1	9	9	2
	Hangurukanketha	1	3	6	2
	Total				
Total					

1. No Response /response not relevant
2. None
3. Some students leave to join Science, Mathematics and IT streams
4. Best students leave due to lack of facilities.
5. 100 students with high performance leave to join prestigious schools in Colombo
6. Less than 05 students
7. About 6 who change residence
8. About 20- 25
9. Around 5-20 students at Grades 2 and 3

The above table indicates that 11 principals had not given required response to the question. Principal of one 1AB school in Homagama Zone, and three Type 3 schools in Elpitiya, Hatton and Hanguranketha Zones had stated that no students leave their schools, except through Grade 5 Scholarship Examination performance. Five principals had stated that some students leave to join Science, Mathematics and IT streams. Two Type 2 school principals indicate that these students who leave are the best students.

Table 17 : Student drop out from school during the last 10 years

District	Zone	School Type			
		1AB	1C	2	3
Colombo	Colombo	4	4	4	2
	Piliyandala	1			
	Homagama	1		1	4
	Total				
Galle	Galle	5	2	4	4
	Elpitiya	4	2		2
	Ambalangoda	2	2	4	1
	Total				
Nuwara Eliya	Nuwara Eliya	2	4	2	2
	Hatton	1	4	2	4
	Hangurukanketha	4	1	2	2
	Total				
Total		24	19	19	21

1. No response/Not relevant
2. No
3. Yes
4. Not due to lack of facilities but due to other factors

Six principals had not responded to the question as to whether any students had dropped out of their schools in the last ten years. Principals of three 1AB schools, three 1C schools and three Type 2 schools and four Type 3 schools stated that no students had dropped out of their schools. One principal stated that students drop out for various reasons but not due to lack of facilities.

Table 18 : The family background of these students: E.g. parents with low education, low income and aspirations, family disruption

District	Zone	School Type			
		1AB	**1C**	**2**	**3**
Colombo	Colombo	1,5	1,3	3	2
	Piliyandala	1	2	2	2
	Homagama	2		1	1,3
	Total				
Galle	Galle	2	2	1,3,4	1
	Elpitiya	1	2		2
	Ambalangoda	1,3,	2	1,3,5	2
	Total				
Nuwara Eliya	Nuwara Eliya	2	1,4,5,	1,5,	1,5
	Hatton	2	1,3	6	2
	Hangurukanketha	1,5	2	2	2
	Total				
Total					

1. Low income
2. No response/Not relevant
3. Family disruption
4. Children left in the care of grandparents
5. Low education of parents

6. Boys interested in employment

Overall, the principals felt that children drop out due to parents' low income, low level of education, family disruption. Two also mentioned about children left in the care of grandparents and one principal that boys leave school to get into employment.

4.2. Analysis of Responses of Zonal Directors to Interviews

Table 19 - Appointment as Zonal Directors

District	Zone	Date
	Colombo	07 /05/2017
	Piliyandala	23/03/2009
	Homagama	19/03/2007
Galle	Galle	2015
	Elpitiya	NA
	Ambalangoda	11/3/2007
Nuwara Eliya	Nuwara Eliya	01/03/2017
	Hatton	2019
	Hangurukanketha	17/11/2016

Of the Zonal Directors in the sample, one had not responded. Those who responded, two had been appointed in 2007, one in 2009, one in 2015, another in 2016and the others in 2017.

Table 20 : Number of Schools by Zone and Type

District	**Zone**	**No. of Schools by Type**				
		1AB	**1C**	**2**	**3**	
Colombo	Colombo	30	40	41	13	124
	Piliyandala	16	16	34	21	87
	Homagama	09	12	41	37	99
	Total	55	68	116	71	310
Galle	Galle	33	31	28	54	146
	Elpitiya	14	16	32	61	123
	Ambalangoda	12	13	20	37	82
	Total	59	60	80	152	351
Nuwara Eliya	Nuwara Eliya	03	07	20	04	34
	Hatton	01	05	13	16	35
	Hangurukanketha	06	08	27	28	69
	Total	10	20	60	48	138
Total		124	148	256	271	799

The largest number of schools found in the Education Zones in the sample is in the Galle (146) followed by Colombo (124). The largest number of 1AB schools (33) is also in the Galle Zone followed by Colombo (30). The largest number of Type 3 schools are in the Elpitiya Zone. Hatton has only one 1AB school.

Table 21 - Resources requested by schools in your Zone during the past 10 years

District	Zone	Resources requested
Colombo	Colombo	Buildings, (Classrooms , Computer Labs ,Pavilions, Auditoriums) Equipment- (Smart boards, Lab equipment, chemicals, sports goods) -Furniture (Desks and chairs, cupboards, special chairs) Water and Sanitary (Toilets, tap sets, water system, storage tanks) Services (Coaches for different sports, teachers)
	Piliyandala	New buildings, Repair of buildings, Office equipment, Furniture, Desks and chairs for students, Equipment for school subjects, Desks and chairs for students
	Homagama	New buildings, Furniture, Sports items
Galle	Galle	Teachers, Buildings, Furniture, Computers, Toilet Facilities
	Elpitiya	New buildings, Furniture, Drinking water, Sanitary facilities, Library goods
	Ambalangoda	New buildings, Desks and chairs for students, Drinking water, Electricity
Nuwara Eliya	Nuwara Eliya	New buildings, Office Equipment, Furniture, Computers, Teachers
	Hatton	New buildings, Furniture, Desks and chairs for students, Human resources (teachers, junior staff), Sports items, IT Units
	Hanguranketha	Drinking water, Library goods, IT Units, Special units (aesthetic room, science lab, activity room), Teacher Guides, School uniforms and footwear

The resources requested by schools in the selected Ed Zones have much in common. All the schools had requested for new buildings, classrooms, computer laboratories, furniture (desks and chairs, cupboards) equipment (photocopiers, computers) water and sanitary facilities. Colombo, Galle. N'Eliiya and Hanguranketha had requested for teachers and Colombo has specifically asked for coaches for different sports. However, the provision of Computer laboratories, and assigning coaches for different sports does not come within the powers of ZDE offices.

Table 22 : Resources provided out of those requested

District	Zone	Resources supplied out of those requested
	Colombo	Classrooms, labs, auditoriums, pavilions, computers, smart boards. (Computer labs, coaches cannot be provided by Zonal Office) National Schools are provided resources directly by the MOE
	Piliyandala	Repair of buildings, Office equipment-photocopiers, duplo machines, Furniture, Musical instruments
	Homagama	Requested resources will be provided.
Galle	Galle	Teacher transfers are carried out to match the teachers according to the requirements of each school
	Elpitiya	Human resources, Sanitary facilities, Buildings, Drinking water
	Ambalangoda	Requested resources are listed and submitted to the Provincial Ed Ministry to facilitate inclusion in the future Annual Plan. Once these are received by the ZDE's office these are made available to schools
Nuwara Eliya	Nuwara Eliya	Teachers, Furniture (desks and chairs) New Buildings, Computers
	Hatton	Buildings and Computers for a small number of schools
	Hangurukanketha	Teacher guides, School textbooks, Special units (aesthetic room, science lab), activity room, IT Units, coupons for shoes.

Among the resources provided of those requested were classrooms (1), labs (2), auditoriums(1), pavilions (1), computers(3), smart boards (1), Office equipment such as photocopiers, duplo machines (1), furniture(2), musical instruments (1), buildings (3), sanitary facilities (1), Drinking water (1),human resources (1), teachers (1), teacher guides (1), aesthetic room(1), activity room (1) and IT units (1).The Zonal Director, Colombo stated that National Schools are provided resources directly by the MOE while Zonal Director, Homagama said that teacher transfers are carried out to match the teachers according to the requirements of each school. Ambalangoda Zonal Directors said that once the requests are received by the ZDE's office these are made available to schools.

Table 23 : Persons who facilitated supply of the above resources

District	**Zone**	**Who facilitated the supply of resources**
Colombo	Colombo	Higher Officers in education, Political leaders, Private Organizations in the area
	Piliyandala	Higher officers in education, Political leaders in the area, Private organizations in the area
	Homagama	No Response
Galle	Galle	Higher Officers in education, Political Leaders
	Elpitiya	Higher officers
	Ambalangoda	Political leaders
Nuwara Eliya	Nuwara Eliya	Higher Officers in education
	Hatton	Political leaders in the area
	Hangurukanketha	Higher Officers in education

Directors of Colombo and Piliyandala Zones mentioned that higher officers in the education system, political leaders and also a third category, namely, private organisations have helped schools to obtain whatever resources they require. Elpitiya, N'Eliya and Hanguranketha Zones seem to depend more on higher officers in education while Ambalangoda and Hatton Zones seem to depend on support of political leaders for their resource requirements.

Table 24 : How fair is the distribution of resources in Zones

District	Zone	Yes	Explain	No	Explain	NA
Colombo	Colombo	X	What is received by the Zone is distributed in a fair manner			
	Piliyandala	X	1.The political leaders of the area were interested in the development of education in the division. 2.By private institutions in the area	X	Insufficient funding allocated	
	Homagama		Divisional Engineer and his officials gave good support			X
	Total	02		01		01
Galle	Galle	X	Yes, Although the resources received are not sufficient to meet all requirements, the Zonal Office feels that the resources are distributed in a fair manner			
	Elpitiya	X	Higher authorities in education were keen to support the division's education.			
	Ambalangoda	X	Member allocations are made directly to schools			X
	Total	3				01
Nuwara Eliya	Nuwara Eliya	X	Yes, Based on requests made by the school and also based on the specific nature of the school			
	Hatton	X	Political leaders of this area help to get some school resources			01
	Hangurukanketha					X
	Total	02				01

Many consequences are faced by schools due to shortages in resources. It affects the learning – teaching process and makes the process uninteresting for the students, while failing to produce the "whole child" with the expected knowledge, attitudes and skills. Lack of sufficient classrooms and furniture encourage holding double sessions. Lack of facilities in specific areas such as sports, aesthetics will prevent students with outstanding abilities in those areas to lose interest in the school. In remote and rural areas where residential facilities are not available it will be difficult to retain teachers and such teachers will divert their attention to finding ways of getting transferred out.

ZDEs seemed satisfied about the distribution of resources among the schools within their zones as they feel it is carried out in a fair manner. 1AB and 1C schools seem to have received high priority and more resources because the number of students in those are higher and where senior secondary grades are concerned, very often these schools have more than one subject stream. Type 2 schools have their own problems because the communities they serve are more economically deprived

Zonal Directors of Colombo, Nuwara Eliya and Hanguranketha named a few schools that have benefitted from additional resources; but even these Directors had commented that resources were not the only factor that contributed to their success

The concentration of students in already large schools in urban and semi urban areas has left some schools with very few students resulting in receiving less resources.

Many consequences are faced by schools due to shortages in resources. It affects the learning – teaching process and makes the process uninteresting for the students, while failing to produce the "whole child" with the expected knowledge, attitudes and skills. Lack of sufficient classrooms and furniture encourage holding double sessions. Lack of facilities in specific areas such as sports, aesthetics will prevent students with outstanding abilities in those areas to lose interest in the school. In remote and rural areas where residential facilities are not available it will be difficult to retain teachers and such teachers will divert their attention to finding ways of getting transferred out

4.2.3 Views of Members of Parent-Teacher Associations

The study planned to conduct Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with Parent-Teacher Associations of the schools in the sample. The FGDs inquired about the student enrolment, student performance, available resources, sufficiency of teachers, their qualifications, their commitment and any issues faced by them, support of educational authorities, the role of PTAs in providing support to the school and the recommendations to improve the status of the school. The Research Assistants had conducted the above discussions in only 22 schools out of the 36 schools in the sample.

A significant number of parents and teachers from two schools of Elpitiya Education Zone responded that the number of students in their school has increased over the past few years. However, parents and teachers from the other two schools of the same Zone responded that the number of students in their schools has decreased due

to lack of facilities over the past few years. This was supported by the following excerpts.

"We are very happy that the numbers of students in our schools have increased annually. However, our concern is that the achievement level of the students is very low…."

(Teachers and parents of schools 1 and 2- Elpitiya Education Zone)

There were nearly about 1000 applications for grade 1 however, we could admit only 150 students due to lack of buildings and other necessary facilities

(Teachers and parents of schools 3 and 4- Elpitiya Education Zone)

4.2.4 Classroom Observations

As explained above, it was expected that classroom observations would throw light on the time spent on identified activities, whether the students spend most of the time to listen to the teacher and answer questions or whether they engage in activities that would stimulate thinking and creative skills, communication and peer collaboration. The ten activities looked at were, Listening to the teacher, Reading quietly, Reading aloud, Writing/drawing – copying, Writing/drawing – creating own text, Answering questions, Inter-pupil discussion, Drama, Oral presentations and Any other Activity.

It was also expected that the Research Assistants who were trained on using the data collection instruments at a Training Workshop would note down the time spent on each activity, especially focusing on two low performing students in the selected class. However, the data provided by the Research Assistants revealed that some of them had not noted the time spent on the activities or had not indicated how two low performing students had participated in these activities. Due to the prolonged period of school closure, data verification or monitoring could not be done on time. As a result, the Research Team decided to include only the schools, for which data had been adequately collected in the analysis.

Table 25.1 : Time spent on activities by Zone and School

Zone	School No.	Activities (% of 40 mts)									
		No. 1	**No. 2**	**No. 3**	**No.4**	**No. 5**	**No. 6**	**No. 7**	**No.8**	**No.9**	**No. 10**
Colombo	1	40	--	--	20	--	--	10	--	--	--
	2										
	3										
	4	40	--	01	16	--	--	01	--	--	--
Piliyandala	5	13	04	--	--	--	14	02			05
	6										
	7	14	--	--	22	--	03	--	--	--	02
	8	20	--	--	09	--	--	--	--	--	15
	10										
Galle	13	05			15						
	14	05			05	10					
	15	04									
	16	05	--	03	10	--	15	10	--	--	--
Elpitiya	17	40	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
	18	40									
	19										
	20	40	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Ambalangoda	21	40	--	--	--	--	05	--	--	10	--
	22	35	--	--	--	--	05	00	--	--	05
	23	40	13	--	10	--	10	--	--	--	--
	24	08			04						02
Nuwara Eliya	25										
	26										
	27										
	28										
Hatton	29										
	30	40									
	31										
	32	05		10		03	02		08	02	
Hanguranketha	33	40	05	05	05			05		10	
	34	05	05	--	10	06			--	10	04
	35	10	05	10	--	--	--	10	--	05	--
	36	30		08	10		30			05	

Table 25.2 : Time spent on activities

No	Activity	% of time	No. of schools
1.	Listening to the teacher	40	9
		30-35	2
		20-30	1
		Below 20	10
2	Reading quietly	Below 10	04
		10-20	01
3	Reading aloud	Below 10	04
		10	02
4	Writing/drawing – copying	Below 10	03
		10-20	06
		20-25	01
5	Writing/drawing – creating own text	Below 10	02
		10	01
6	Answering questions	Below 10	04
		10-20	03
		30	01
7	Inter-pupil discussion	Below 10	03
		10	03
8	Drama	Below 10	01
9	Oral presentations	Below 10	03
		10	03
10	Any other Activity	Below 10	05
		10	01

The above tables indicate that overall, most of the time was taken up by listening to the teacher.

Observations of twenty-three of the Research Assistants on students' participation given in the Appendix revealed that 23 of the Research Assistants had noted specific observations of the classrooms of the schools.

The observations indicated that in five schools, teaching-learning was mainly teacher directed, while in four schools, children had engaged well in some activities. In 11 schools, children had engaged in various activities. In three schools, however, no involvement of children was noted.

Chapter Five

Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

The study was conducted in a sample of 36 schools consisting of seven National schools and 29 provincial schools. There were nine schools of each school type. There were no National schools in the sample from Nuwara Eliya and Hatton Zones.

Data was collected through questionnaires administered to principals on the availability of physical and human resources, questionnaires to a limited sample of students on family background, their mark lists, observation classrooms of teaching-learning, interviews with Zonal Education Officers and Focus Group Discussions with PTAs. The conclusions are given in accordance to the objectives of the study.

5.2 Conclusions

5.2.1 Measures taken by the authorities to reduce disparities in distribution of resources in schools,

In Sri Lanka, various measures were taken to improve the nutritional levels of children such as a universal mid-day meal programme, and a targeted nutrition programme was introduced to provide a morning meal for students in Grade 1 classes in selected schools. By 2004, this programme was extended to cover 35,000 students in 1,320 schools. Priority was given to schools in areas that were identified by the Department of Health as having high levels of malnutrition and schools attended by the children of low-income groups.

The Navodaya school development programme initiated in 1997 aimed at providing at least one school in each administrative division in the country with funding for buildings, classrooms, laboratories, computer facilities and so on. The programme by 2004 had identified 388 schools for development, with funding from national budget resources, World Bank, Asian Development Bank and the private sector. In 2004, under the GEP II project, the World Bank provided financial assistance to develop fully-equipped school libraries in these schools and the Asian Development Bank to set up computer learning

centres under the Secondary Modernization Project. The majority of the schools, however, were chosen from 1AB and 1C types, not exactly the disadvantaged schools.

In 1998, 134 of the 347 schools were selected for 'fast track' development but Kularatne's (2002) study pointed out that even though considerable investment had been made on construction and rehabilitation of physical facilities, many schools still lacked adequate classroom space, electricity, water supply, laboratories, libraries, principal quarters, basic furniture, teaching aids, equipment, computers and playgrounds and that the physical facilities provided were often reported to be of lower quality.

Circular No.1 of 2005, the Ministry of Education (2015) classified the government schools in the country into five categories. According to circular instructions, schools with 45 or less students were entitled to three teachers. If circular instructions are strictly enforced there cannot be any school, however small the enrolment is, with less than three teachers. However, there were 440 schools with less than three teachers in 2006. Hannan (2020) claims that many developmental projects initiated by the Education Ministry had come to a halt due to lack of funds.

The Ministry of Education, Sri Lanka, with support from the Commonwealth of Learning, Canada focused on initiatives of Child-Friendly Schools and Multi-Grade Teaching from 2010 to 2013. At present the Faculty of Education of the Open University of Sri Lanka, is offering a course on Multi-grade Teaching.

In 2020-21, the Government commenced an initiative to use discarded buses with library books to students, which would benefit children who do not have access to library facilities in their schools. The Department of Census and Statistics (2019) estimated that at least one computer was available in one out of every five households in the country. In the urban sector, around 38 per cent of households had computers while the percentage was 20 per cent in the rural sector and 05 per cent in the estate sector. Similarly, while in Western Province the percentage was 34, in Uva Province it was only 19. Recently the Government launched a programme to provide laptops on a concessionary payment scheme to students selected to universities through a loan scheme which is extremely relevant in the aftermath of the current pandemic situation.

5.2.2 Provision of sufficient physical and human resources in the last ten years

With regard to teachers, four 1C schools, one Type 2 school and two Type 3 schools in the sample had stated that they did not have sufficient teachers at primary level while six 1AB schools, six 1C schools, and two Type 2 schools had stated they did not have sufficient teachers at Junior Secondary level. At senior secondary level, principals of six 1AB schools and three 1C schools said they did not have sufficient teachers

Thirty-two principals had affirmed that they had requested for resources within the last ten years. Among the resources requested were furniture, classrooms and buildings, computers, other teaching equipment, materials for co- curricular activities, teachers, essential facilities such as electricity and water. The Zonal Education Officers interviewed also gave similar responses.

The resources requested by the schools had not been provided, especially in respect of furniture, Classrooms and other Buildings, Computers, Materials for co-curricular activities, Sports complex/playground, Essential facilities (electricity, water, sanitary facilities) and teachers, that had been requested by more than 20 out of the 36 principals. When all requests are considered, it is seen that only around half of the requests had been provided. The gap is more in the case of Type 1C, and Type 2 schools, which probably need resources more than 1AB schools. This is noteworthy in the case of Primary Learning Resource Centres and Teachers' Quarters in Type2 and 3 schools. Fourteen schools had obtained assistance from SDC, parents, Past Pupils' Associations and two schools from politicians. Some principals said that the officers had considered the requests, visited the school and ensured that a few renovations were done. Overall, assistance did not appear to be much.

The Zonal Education Officers interviewed also responded that among the resources provided of those requested were classrooms (1), labs (2), auditoriums(1), pavilions (1), computers(3), smart boards (1), Office equipment such as photocopiers, duplo machines (1), furniture(2), musical instruments (1), buildings (3), sanitary facilities (1), Drinking water (1),human resources (1), teachers (1), teacher guides (1), aesthetic room(1), activity room (1) and IT units (1).The Zonal Director, Colombo stated that National Schools are provided resources directly by the MOE while Zonal Director, Homagama said that teacher transfers are carried out to match the teachers according to the requirements of each school. Ambalangoda Zonal Director said that once the requests are received by the ZDE's office these are made available to schools. Directors of Colombo and Piliyandala

Zones mentioned that higher officers in the education system, political leaders and also a third category, namely, private organizations have helped schools to obtain whatever resources they require

5.2.3 Impact of lack of resources in the affected schools on student numbers and student achievement

Among the difficulties faced due to lack of resources were, Difficulty of implementing teaching-learning process (9), Disruption of educational activities due to lack of seating facilities (4), Difficulty of performing Mathematics promotion programmes (2), and Student performance lowered (1) and Change of governments (1).

The main difficulties noted by 14 principals were, students not being able to reach the required proficiency level, a disruption of educational activities and students' achievement going down. Other impacts were effects on practical education due to lack of laboratory facilities, and difficulty in covering the syllabus. It is noteworthy that 12 1AB schools,11 1C schools, eight Type 2 and Type 3 schools each had given these difficulties. Thus it indicated that the difficulties were faced by all types of schools, which could be due to the larger number of students in Type 1AB and 1C schools.

Principal of one 1AB school in Homagama Zone, and three Type 3 schools in Elpitiya, Hatton and Hanguranketha Zones had stated that no students had left their schools, except through Grade 5 Scholarship Examination performance. Five principals had stated that some students leave to join Science, Mathematics and IT streams. Two Type 2 school principals indicated that these students who leave are the best students.

Principals of three 1AB schools, three 1C schools and three Type 2 schools and four Type 3 schools stated that no students had dropped out of their schools. One principal stated that students drop out for various reasons but not due to lack of facilities. Overall, the principals felt that children drop out due to parents' low income, low level of education, family disruption. Two also mentioned about children left in the care of grandparents and one principal that boys leave school to get into employment.

ZDEs seemed satisfied about the distribution of resources among the schools within their zones as they feel it is carried out in a fair manner. 1AB and 1C schools seem to have received high priority and more resources because the number of students in those are

higher and where senior secondary grades are concerned, very often these schools have more than one subject stream. Type 2 schools have their own problems because the communities they serve are more economically deprived. The concentration of students in already large schools in urban and semi urban areas has left some schools with very few students resulting in receiving less resources

Many consequences are faced by schools due to shortages in resources. It affects the learning – teaching process and makes the process uninteresting for the students, while failing to produce the "whole child" with the expected knowledge, attitudes and skills. Lack of sufficient classrooms and furniture encourage holding double sessions. Lack of facilities in specific areas such as sports, aesthetics will prevent students with outstanding abilities in those areas to lose interest in the school. In remote and rural areas where residential facilities are not available it will be difficult to retain teachers and such teachers will divert their attention to finding ways of getting transferred out.

Focus Group Discussions with members of Parent-Teacher Associations in some schools stated that the number of students in their schools has decreased due to lack of facilities over the past few years

Classroom observations revealed that the above tables indicate that overall, most of the time was taken up by listening to the teacher. Observations of twenty-three of the Research Assistants on students' participation given in the Appendix revealed that 23 of the Research Assistants had noted specific observations of the classrooms of the schools.

The observations indicated that in five schools, teaching-learning was mainly teacher directed, while in four schools, children had engaged well in some activities. In 11 schools, children had engaged in various activities. In three schools, however, no involvement of children was noted.

5.3 Recommendations

1. It is seen that while measures were initiated by successive governments in Sri Lanka to reduce inequities in the distribution of resources among schools to ensure a fair chance to all children, these measures had not been sufficiently monitored to achieve expected goals. As such it is necessary to plan such measures realistically and monitor their implementation to find out how effectively the measures are implemented

2. The authorities need to understand that the possibility of requesting needed resources would not be sufficient unless the requested resources are provided. It is essential to evaluate the requested resources taking into consideration, the opportunities in different locations, number of students at different school levels, their needs including curricular and co-curricular requirements, such as teacher expertise, continuous in-service training of teachers, facilities for teaching-learning, facilities for sports and aesthetic studies, opportunities for interaction and cooperation with other schools and the need for improving technical and communication skills. Affirmative action is necessary giving more consideration to disadvantaged areas and schools. Availability of adequate resources should be ensured to bring out the best in each and every student. In all curricular and co-curricular activities availability of resources (human and material) should be guaranteed to motivate students to engage in different activities. It is necessary to seriously consider how multi-grade teaching can be introduced to primary schools which lack sufficient teachers and to develop teachers' capacity in this area.

3. It is necessary to recognize that the aim of Education for All can be achieved only if students' achievement in all areas are improved. Therefore, special emphasis should be given to improve children's competencies, taking into consideration their family backgrounds, and disadvantages in their communities. Availability of resources (human and material) should be guaranteed to motivate students to engage in different activities. Special attention should be given to teacher development to ensure that teaching-learning is not limited to students passively listening to the teachers but that they actively participate in classroom activities

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Appendix

Specific observations of the classrooms of the schools

School No.4 – Sanghamiththa Vidyalaya

Speaking and practicing.

The teacher shows the book.

The book shown again.

Listens to the teacher and writes. Looking at the board writes.

Discusses with other students.

School No. 5 – Piliyandala Madhya Maha Vidyalaya

The girl raises her hand to answer the question and the boy is thinking.

School No. 7 – Piliyandala Sri Dharmarama Maha Vidyalaya

Copied what is noted on the blackboard.

The oral answers were based on a textbook obtained from a friend.

Textbooks are not brought to class.

Did the exercise and showed it to the teacher

School No. 8 – Piliyandala Mampe Primary Vidyalaya

Copied the number of long divisions given by the teacher and answers.

The leaves on the ground are taken to a garbage can.

The two children were showing the book to the teacher.

School No. 9 – Mahinda Rajapaksha Vidyalaya

Children in this school engage in learning activities very well.

School No. 11 Puwakpitiya North MV-

Spends time looking around during the observed period. Though he seems to work, do so.

School No. 12 -Homagama Niripola PV

Not involved in any activities during the relevant period.

School No. 13- Kristudeva Balika Vidyalaya

Question Activity - Making a speech

Provide group activity - Prepare for a presentation

Sharing in Evaluation

Discussion at presentations

Team presentation

School No. 14- Gintota MV

Students listen well.

A student reads.

Engaging in group activities and individual activities

Answering teacher's questions from time to time

Students contribute to role plays

School No. 15- Kiribathwila Vidyalaya

Students listen well

Teacher provides activities to students and they engage in them.

Teacher asks questions from time to time and the students answer.

Students make presentations.

School No.16 – Al Aqsa Vidyalaya

Not indicated whether a boy and or a girl

Drink water. Looking around. Go to the teacher and ask about the lesson. Thinks.

Waiting.

School No.17: Elpitiya Ananda Vidyalaya

Both listened well. The questions related to the lesson were well answered.

The exercise related to the lesson was written down.

The table related to the exercise was completed but there was no design.

Students answered the questions.

Student discussions were satisfactory.

The oral presentations were successful.

School No. 18- Elpitiya Ethkandura Seevali Maha Vidyalaya

Answering questions- The boy's answer is good. The girl's answer is normal.

School No. 20 Elpitiya Ampegama Vidyalaya

Both are good listeners.

Both are good in silent reading

Both were reading aloud

The students did a good job of writing down the exercises and writing the answers.

The answers to the questions were done well by the two students.

As the lesson was a drama, the two students were involved in performing parts.

Both oral presentations were good.

School No.21 -Dewapathiraja MV

Boy came to class just after the lesson started. He attempted to walk during lesson time.

At the teacher's command, he sat back in his chair.

He was drawing lines on the desk but did not write notes.

He was also instructed to sit properly in the chair during the lesson.

Girl was in the last row of the class and looked at the book of the student next to her while taking notes. Sometimes she kept her head on the desk.

School No.22 -Dheerananda MV

Male bit the pen. Leans against the wall. Knocks on the desk.

Female tried to write something in the notebook. But it was not a completed.

Both started writing in the notebooks and writing answers to the questions given.

Male answered the questions.

School No. 23 – Kiribathwiala Vidyalaya

Teacher provided activities to students and engaged students in them.

Students answered questions from time to time.

Students made presentations.

School No. 26- Lindula MV

The teacher's lesson plans were very helpful in highlighting the abilities of these students.

Building learning outcomes gave students the opportunity to learn.

General information about the five selected students is given below.

The economic status of the family of these students is low.

It is observed that they have reached the level of proficiency even though they do not show high proficiency.

They demonstrate creative abilities.

Due to the mixed Sinhala-Tamil families, there are deficiencies in the medium language i.e. Sinhala language. It affects thinking. Interactions are well maintained.

Intervenes on a given occasion and conducts learning activities.

School No. 32- Ginigathhena Primary Vidyalaya

The play was read aloud.

Students answered the questions well.

Discussed each of the activities that needed to be done.

The character was played well

The teacher applauded the students, the students became enlightened, and were informed to bring a drama opportunity.

School No. 33- Poramadulla National College

The teacher assigned homework, students understood, and the students gladly accepted explanations.

School No. 34 – Gangapalatha Vidyalaya

The students listened well.

Read the assignment.

The assignment was completed according to the teacher's instructions. Students were interested.

Questions were asked about the assignment. The children also asked questions.

Students discussed and did the assignment.

Group Assignment Report was presented.

The lesson was reviewed and students were evaluated. Gave homework. Students were interested. Teacher’s advice was good. She inquired about weak children.

School No. 35 – Udawatta Vidyalaya

The lesson was explained. Questions were asked and good inputs were made.

Difficult to read clearly

Summarized the passage and wrote.

Not all students had the opportunity.

The team discussed and answered an assignment.

Written answers were presented orally.

School No. 36 – Bambaragama Vidyalaya

Attention throughout the lesson

Read correctly

Draw Creatively.

The students answered verbally correctly

At the end of the lesson, different creative ideas were presented.