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**THE FIRST REPORT OF THE  
NATIONAL EDUCATION COMMISSION**

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**May 1992**

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**THE FIRST REPORT OF THE  
NATIONAL EDUCATION COMMISSION**

**May 1992**

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25th May 1992

His Excellency Ranasinghe Premadasa,  
The President of Sri Lanka,  
Presidential Secretariat,  
Colombo 1,

Your Excellency,

Your Excellency was pleased to appoint us as the National Education Commission on 15th July 1991, in terms of the provisions of the National Education Commission Act, No. 19 of 1991.

The functions of the Commission were primarily to make recommendations to Your Excellency on educational policy in all its aspects with a view to ensuring continuity in educational policy and enabling the education system to respond to the changing needs of society. We were also expected to review and analyse periodically the national education policy and plans in operation, and where necessary to recommend changes.

Your Excellency took the opportunity of briefing us on 2nd August 1991 regarding the tasks that lay ahead. Special mention was made by Your Excellency on Character Building, Nation Building, Development of General Competencies and Development of Specific Capabilities. We commenced with a study of the structure and workings of the education system, conducted public hearings in the provinces as well as in the metropolis, consulted specialists and paid visits to specific institutions.

Your Excellency in your briefing, suggested that we submit an initial report on some of our findings with possible recommendations. Accordingly we are glad to submit this report.

We wish to place on record our appreciation of the assistance and cooperation received from various institutions and organizations. We also thank the members of the public who made oral and written submissions.

Thank you.

Yours respectfully,

*Sgd/* C. L. V. Jayatilleke (Chairman)

*Sgd/* Vincent Pandita (Vice Chairman, Policy)

*Sgd/* B. J. P. Alles (Vice Chairman, Planning)

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*Sgd./ D. S. Wijeyesekera*

Secretary to the Commission

**L. U. C. Kuruppu**

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## CHAPTER ONE

### THE COMMISSION AND ITS INITIAL PHASE

#### **Legislative Basis, Establishment and the Presidential Directive**

The Parliament passed the National Education Commission Act, No. 19 of 1991 in early 1991, and it was certified on 19th April, 1991. This legislation, in effect, gave life to one of the major recommendations of the Youth Commission appointed in 1989, to inquire into the causes of youth unrest and insurrection, and to propose reforms for the eradication of causes for their grievances. The Youth Commission had observed the mismatch between education and employment, leading to large scale joblessness and frustration among the school-leavers either before or after their examinations, irrespective of whether they had passed or failed their examinations. It had also noted the moral vacuum, which the curriculum and the teaching methods or indifferent teachers had created. There were, of course, other major factors which had also caused much of the youth discontent, but defects in the educational system, inclusive of tertiary education, had been perceived as one of the roots of the problem.

The composition of the National Education Commission reflects a vast wealth of experience and maturity in a wide variety of fields directly relevant to the Commission's work.

The Commission set up its office on 22nd July, 1991, in the B.M.I.C.H. but on 29th August, 1991 moved into its present premises at No. 24, Horton Place, Colombo 7, a well-equipped building. The first meeting of the Commission was held on the 2nd August 1991, soon after being addressed by His Excellency the President, in his office. The President stressed the main areas of development, which should be considered by the Commission, namely –

- (a) Character building,
- (b) Nation building,
- (c) Development of general competencies, and
- (d) Development of specific capabilities.

#### **Sequence of Activities**

The Commission has held sixteen meetings and a number of working sessions from its inception up to April 1992. At these meetings, the discussions focused on the current educational system and the preparation of the future work plans and programmes of the Commission.

One of the most significant activities of the Commission was its public hearings in Colombo and the outstations, principally the provincial capitals, except those on the North and East for security reasons. Representatives of political parties and other organizations were invited to these hearings and many responded by giving evidence

before the Commission. About 400 witnesses, who made their oral submissions were representative of a wide spectra of opinions, ranging from : school-children to Vice-Chancellors and Chancellors ; private citizens to Cabinet Ministers and Chief Ministers; political parties from extreme left to right ; laymen to professionals ; orthodox clergy to free thinkers.

The Commission also initiated a programme of field studies, consisting of visits to selected schools in the Central Province and in the Uva, as well as Colombo, where teams led by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman (Planning) conducted interviews with principals, teachers and students and also collected information, according to specified formats. These studies were focused on school management, the class-room and extra-mural activities.

Visits were made to the Universities of Peradeniya, Ruhuna and Moratuwa, and the Open University, where the Commission heard the views of the Vice-Chancellors, University teachers and students.

Views of specialists and experts, specially in the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, National Institute of Education, the Marga Institute, the Human Resources Division of the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, the Department of Census and Statistics, Research Division of the Central Bank, the Private Sector, the Survey Department, the University Grants Commission, and the Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission have been obtained.

The Commission has set up its Information Data Bank which now contains a nucleus of information and data. The Commission is training a small team of programme and research assistants. It also keeps the written representations of the public and various organizations, duly classified, analyzed and summarized for quick and easy reference.

#### **Amendment of the National Education Commission Act**

The National Education Commission originally listed under the Presidential Secretariat, has now been allocated funds by the Treasury on the basis of a "B" Class Department, under Head 216 in the Estimate of Expenditure Government of Sri Lanka 1992.

In consequence, the Commission works on an imprest of Rs. 3 lakhs which is replenished on the basis of monthly statements furnished to the Treasury.

Nevertheless, in terms of the law passed by Parliament as contained in the Act No. 19 of 1991, the Commission is -

- (i) **Vested with the legal status of a "Body Corporate"** with perpetual succession and common seal and may sue and be sued in such name", vide Section 3 (2) of the Act.
- (ii) **Empowered to carry out surveys, investigations, studies, research, arrange public and private hearings, prepare long term plans, arrange educational research, establish an information bank, etc.,** vide Section 10(1) of the Act.



- (iii) Empowered to open and maintain current, savings and deposit accounts with any bank ; to enter into and perform contracts and agreements as may be necessary to discharge its functions ; to accept and receive grants, donations, both movable and immovable (vide Section 19) ; appoint such officers and servants necessary to perform tasks ; and to fix rates at which its officers and servants shall be remunerated (vide section 12).

However, owing to the absence of a specific section on **Finance** which, as a rule, is included in all legislation in respect of Statutory Bodies, the National Education Commission is prevented from enjoying fully its position as a "Body Corporate", and from exercising some of its powers mentioned in para 2 above effectively. Therefore, the Commission has resolved to seek an amendment to the National Education Commission Act, No. 19 of 1991, by including a section to be termed **Part IV - Finance**.

#### **The way ahead**

The Commission has initiated studies and in some cases set up special sub-committees to look into specific aspects of the quality of education, the content of education and the educational structure itself. One special study will be on the revision of Education Law with a view to formulating a new Education Act embracing all aspects of education. This proposed Act is expected to codify and consolidate provision available at present in various ordinances while making improvements to meet the needs of the immediate future.

Meanwhile, a subcommittee has already commenced reviewing the entire Teacher's service with a view to rationalizing it and giving the teaching community a sense of security and some prospects for career development. The need to up-grade teachers who have received entry with pre-university qualification is an important aspect that will be considered. The co-ordination and optimum utilization of existing facilities for up-grading the qualifications of existing teachers is another vital aspect. The current policy trend to move towards an all graduate cadre of teachers within about 15 years time would fit well into the scheme of upgrading teachers already in the system.

Another aspect that deserves careful attention is Tertiary and Vocational Education which will be reviewed in consultation with the Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission. The total review of Tertiary Education will also be undertaken in order to streamline it to meet the country's needs. The economic development of the country rests to a large extent on the success of the agricultural and industrial sectors and their efficient management. In the field of management, there is a dearth of competent personnel, particularly at middle levels and this has to be overcome by upgrading Management Education in this country. Along with this will be considered strategies for promoting language competence.

Nations are today preparing themselves to move into the twenty-first century. Development, in all aspects will be essential to meet the demands of the next decade or two and one of the most effective conduits through which this could take place is education. Education encompasses all aspects since it has a linkage with almost every human activity. However, technological and other advancements should not make us

lose the very foundations on which the traditions of this country have been built. The great religions we practice today have nurtured noble ideals which are the hallmarks of a great culture, and therefore these noble ideals which should form the national goals have to be constantly kept in view.

These national goals though they may look idealistic are nevertheless great principles that must stand out in any cultured society or individual. For this very reason, we have considered it appropriate to set out a comprehensive set of national goals which are basically extra-educational in that they subsume educational goals. We have also attempted to derive educationally relevant goals which are in direct alignment with these national goals. Education is the most effective instrument by which such great ideals can be nurtured and therefore the ensuing chapter deals with these national goals and their linkage with the educational goals which are our prime concern.

## CHAPTER TWO

### NATIONAL GOALS

The education of the nation's children is a task of the highest importance. In regard to this significant task, attitudes and values have changed over the years.

Meanwhile, provision of educational opportunities from childhood to old age so that they could participate responsibly in society is a significant national effort in human development.

Society today is highly organized, interdependent and complex. Society makes a variety of demands on the individual. The individual needs to acquire a minimum of knowledge, skills and values to become competent to attend to one's own needs, to adequately meet the needs of the immediate family and satisfy the demands of the wider society.

A basic education and initiation into a variety of selected skills should enable the individual to contribute culturally, socially, politically and economically. This basic education and the skills should fit an individual to participate in productive activities, resulting in the development of health, wealth and contentment and the achievement of a sense of stability and security for oneself, one's family and the wider society.

The fundamental goal of education has been described as : "a physical, intellectual, emotional and ethical integration into a complete man".

This description is appropriate to the complex demands of society – today and tomorrow. Therefore, the emphasis should be on integrated development ; and not on compartmentalised and isolated growth.

A national system of education should bring into focus the need to orient education in the context of national development. Since no man is an island unto himself and nations are today more interdependent than ever before, a national system of education should generate an awareness of the interdependence and evolve a sensitivity towards a shared national, regional and international outlook.

The United Nations Charter stresses that education should provide a general culture, individual judgement and a sense of moral and social responsibility. More often than not, today there are tendencies to relegate social responsibility to the background. Young children, from a tender age itself, are thrust into the arena of blind and unrelenting competition. Such children cannot be expected to view education as helping them to achieve "emancipation from the tyranny of the here and the now".

Education should equip individuals to stand back and view the overall structures with objectivity and detachment without being obsessed with immediate and highly personalized issues such as racial identity, religious bias and economic self advancement. Broad perspectives making for harmony and equilibrium are a corollary of a rich and broad based education.

Sri Lanka has evolved, over the centuries, nurtured by significant traditions and a deep-rooted culture. The question has been raised as to whether we are seeing the evening of that culture and civilization. Education, instead of deepening wisdom and widening vision, appears to be narrowing the outlook.

"Nothing is more advantageous and more creditable than a rich heritage; but nothing is more dangerous for a nation than to sit back and live on that heritage". Education must be imaginative and future oriented. It must play a lead role in societal development. Education must be imparted to the younger generation, in particular, to enable them to cope with the unfolding life-situations.

A National System of Education should function as the motive power impelling individuals and groups towards achieving major **NATIONAL GOALS**. These should be relevant to the **INDIVIDUAL** and significant to **THE NATIONAL COMMUNITY**. The Commission has identified the set of National Goals given below :

- (i) The achievement of **National Cohesion, National Integrity and National Unity**.
- (ii) The establishment of a pervasive pattern of **Social Justice**.
- (iii) The evolution of a **Sustainable Pattern of Living – A Sustainable Life Style** which is vital for the year 2000 and beyond, when, for the first time in the history of Mankind even air and water cannot be taken for granted.
- (iv) The generation of **Work Opportunities**, that are, at one and the same time, **dignified, satisfying and self-fulfilling**.
- (v) In the above framework, the institution of a variety of possibilities for **ALL to Participate in Human Resources Development**, leading to cumulative **structures of growth for the nation**.
- (vi) The active partnership in Nation Building Activities should ensure the nurturing of a **continuous sense of Deep and Abiding Concern for One Another**.
- (vii) In a rapidly changing world, such as we live in today, it is imperative to **cultivate and evolve elements of adaptability to change – Learn to Adapt to Changing Situations**. This must be coupled with the competencies to guide change for the betterment of oneself and of others.
- (viii) The cultivation of a **Capacity to cope with the Complex and the Unforeseen**, achieving a sense of security and stability.
- (ix) The development of those competencies linked to **Securing an Honourable Place in the international community**.

At the end of this chapter there is grouped together a set of further annotations which indicate the linkages of these National Goals with educational activities. These are referred to as **Educationally Relevant Goals** and are themselves totally consistent with the National Goals. Sometimes they are directly derivable from the National Goals.

In the Sections that follow the National Goals are commented on and a series of annotations are made.

### **I. The achievement of National Cohesion, National Integrity and National Unity.**

In recent times there has been a great deal of strife and tension within Sri Lankan society. This has brought about many traumatic conditions.

In this context many divisive tendencies have appeared within society. Hence in the present critically important phase of national growth when there should be a re-awakening of a functioning sense of National Cohesion, National Integrity and reinforcement of the sense of National Unity.

The development of such a sense of National Unity must draw on the traditional, culture, in general, and, in particular, from the values and attitudes that derive from the major religious faiths in the country.

### **II. The establishment of pervasive patterns of Social Justice.**

The emergence of a stable and enduring sense of National Integrity demands that pervasive patterns of Social Justice should be progressively and effectively put in place. Part of this will relate to formal laws and the judiciary. But a large component of Social Justice will only emerge from a recognition of the duties and the rights by all responsible informed citizens. This informal pattern of pervasive Social Justice must depend on genuine good will and harmony among all groups.

Here again cultural traditions that we are heir to will be an asset. The long and stable religious faiths coupled with a variety of practices will contribute to the achievement of continuing Social Justice.

### **III. The evolution of a Sustainable Pattern of Living – A Sustainable Life Style which is vital for the year 2000 and beyond when for the first time in the history of Mankind even air and water cannot be taken for granted.**

The significance of a simple life style is entrenched in the philosophical and ethical traditions of the people of Sri Lanka. The value of a simple life with contentment is highly esteemed.

There is a need for the inculcation and promotion of sustainable life styles ensuring social justice and cohesion. Moral and spiritual values must primarily be derived from one's own religion and culture, taught in terms of a commitment to social behaviour as well. There is value content in each of the "disciplines" in the curriculum at all levels. A subject in the classroom becomes a discipline in view of the value it adds to the total development of the human being. A curriculum is a totality of exposures and consequent experiences, widening one's outlook and broadening one's vision.

The question of values has been of deep concern in Asia over centuries. It has had its roots in religion and culture. The great civilisations that flourished displayed these values in diverse forms. Love and compassion towards fellow human beings, truth and fairplay, justice and virtue, morality and munificence pervaded all actions and all activities. Man's greatest enemy was found to be within him and not outside. An inward

looking orientation helped to dispel greed and self-aggrandisement. Living within one's means and finding satisfaction in it was extolled as a great virtue. These values must be enriched and deepened to serve the future.

Economic development which is generally considered one of the main goals of modern day society and which has established its own economic values must not be permitted to overshadow human values which have been the essence of our cultures. Every individual has a right to be afforded with opportunities for the attainment to full human stature. The principle of educational opportunity is today regarded as a moral right. However, if equal access is not available uniformly to all levels of education, the cause of social justice would not be adequately served. Therefore, providing equal opportunities of access to education could well be an effective instrument for social equality and social justice.

**IV. The generation of Work Opportunities, that are, at one and the same time, dignified, satisfying and self-fulfilling.**

Education is bound to have an effect on attitudes, job expectations and job preferences, sometimes quite independent of income prospects. While every individual must have a livelihood and work opportunity, they also must acquire an understanding of the socio-economic framework within which they live. Education does not exist in a vacuum but is determined by the economy, the political and cultural milieu, social mentality and many other factors. In societies characterised by a large subsistence sector, the rate of growth in full time employment opportunities has seldom been commensurate with the increase in the supply of educated manpower. This has led to an escalation in the minimum levels of education required for jobs which in turn generated further demands for higher levels of schooling. Merely increasing the output of educated youth who could not fit into a job absorbs the scarce resources of the country. Further, it could lead to frustration among the educated youth resulting in the erosion of further resources in implementing remedial programmes.

**V. In the above framework, the institution of a variety of possibilities for ALL to Participate in Human Resources Development, leading to cumulative Structures of Socio-economic Growth for the Nation.**

Expenditure in human resource development has to be considered as an investment in the development process itself. While readying people for employment may be the basic responsibility of the education system, the optimum utilisation of an individual through appropriate employment is also a matter of national concern. Education assumes a wide meaning when placed against the background of economic development. Economic growth is best buttressed by locally developed human resources.

**VI. The active partnership in Nation Building Activities should ensure the nurturing of a continuous sense of Deep and Abiding Concern for One Another.**

Education is the heart of humanistic development and in that process, it has to break through artificial barriers of race, caste and creed. Religious and cultural values inculcate concern and consideration for others in society. Selfishness and self

aggrandisement have no place in an educated and enlightened society. Education must bring about the consciousness that no-one or no one group can be an island unto himself and that all will have to live as a single nation. People must be able to appreciate cultural heterogeneity and see the diversities in pluralism.

**VII. Cultivating and evolving elements of adaptability to change – Learn to Learn and Adapt to Changing Situations. This must be coupled with the competencies to guide change for the betterment of oneself and of others.**

Cultivating an element of resilience and adaptability to change is essential. The world is changing so fast that one's survival could depend on adaptability to such change. It is this adaptability that will prevent one from being left behind. It is change that will ensure continuity. What is static cannot provide much inspiration. Adaptability to change based on sound reasoning and informed insight will also promote harmony. Intransigence is not always a sign of strength. It can only leave one behind in a fast moving world. Meanwhile, one must also develop the capacity to bring about changes for the better. History records enough about those towering personalities who have changed the course of society for the greater good of mankind.

The world is changing rapidly. Survival will depend on the capacity of individuals and groups to constructively adapt to such change. It will be futile to attempt to "stand still". Change is a relentless process. Adaptability based on informed insights and sound reasoning alone will help. Such informed insight could promote harmony. One must also simultaneously develop the capacity to "control events and changes". The competence to understand the nature of change will enable an extent of control. The rate of change, such as is seen today, will, almost certainly increase in the decades ahead.

**VIII. The cultivation of a Capacity to cope with the Complex and the Unforeseen, achieving a sense of security and stability.**

A sense of security and stability is an essential prerequisite for internal peace and harmony. Though everyone desires and yearns for these essentials, they somehow keep eluding us in consequence of day to day activities. The path to security and stability is affected by both internal and external forces. Internal forces can be described as those generated by one's own mind, depending on the level of development, while external conditions are the empirical ones resulting from other mundane activity. In order to strike a balance and achieve security and stability, both internal and external beneficial forces have to be harnessed to the full. This requires a dynamic approach on the part of the individual. This dynamism should be reflected firstly by sound mental and physical health. One should have the ability to resist externalities which can put one off balance. On the mental side, the capacity to think clearly, think analytically as well as holistically, and to arrive at viable conclusions is a key factor. Meanwhile, on the physical side, one must develop a healthy body with the necessary strength to resist not only disease and ill health, but also stress, strain and trauma.

External happenings are, in many instances, not within our control. Where they are within control, the ability to act promptly and correctly without fear or favour will give a person the feeling of stability. Man being a member of human society, is bound by

laws and conventions. Social conventions have to be respected in a cultured society. Meanwhile, an individual must abide by the laws of the country. Laws regulate behaviour for the benefit of the individual as well as for the welfare of society. Effective law enforcement procedures are essential for a democratic environment. Equally important is a knowledge of the law, possible legal remedies, and the accessibility, availability and affordability of such means of redress of grievances. Nevertheless, the best option is to conduct oneself in a manner that does not violate any moral or man made laws. A feeling of nonculpability would then dawn upon one and nothing else could give one a greater sense of tranquility and peace of mind.

Another disturbing factor could be the ineffective fulfilment of one's needs. One must have enough for one's own sustenance, as well as that of the family. However, the greater the desire and needs, the greater are the likelihoods for frustration due to failure in achieving them. But, on the other hand, this gives a significant opportunity to the individual for regulatory control. If the needs and desires are kept to a minimum, then the opportunities for failure will be naturally reduced. This in turn will make the individual less prone to discontent and dissatisfaction. Inability to reach or acquire what one aspires to or desires has within it an inbuilt element of frustration, undermining the possibilities for security and stability.

#### **IX. The development of those competencies linked to securing an honourable place in the international community.**

Society acting as a nation with a high sense of maturity would enable any country to secure an esteemed place in the international community. Melodramatic attitudes do not contribute to such positions. Though the world is still materialistic, it is nevertheless shifting away from judging development on purely economic criteria. Human development brings strength and stature to a nation. Meanwhile, sustainable development will not only meet the needs of the present generation but will also take account of the needs of generations to come. The nation must have the capacity and the strength to come to grips with her own problems. Independent thinking, consistency of thought, an integrated outlook consistent with domestic and foreign policy are all key factors in giving stature to a nation. We must have the ability to align ourselves with that mighty purpose and not get entangled in petty squabbles of which life is so full.

#### **Towards Educational Attainment**

The National Goals, as outlined in the preceding pages, are in a sense, "extra-educational." These subsume the educational goals and objectives ; and pertain to the child and the adult as they grow and develop in the school and other institutions as well as through various life and work situations. These National Goals are also relevant to life and work beyond these institutions, as the individual functions as a member of society, the national and international community.

The initiation and the late maturation in Human Development, as envisaged in these goals, of individuals and groups takes place, and is facilitated in actual contexts – within the work place and in society, in general. These could be seen as finding expression in **individual personal competencies and group organisational competencies**, which have associated with them **attitude and value orientations**, and operating in institutional and social settings.



In the sequel, in the pages immediately following, are listed a series of Educationally Relevant Goals. This relatively extensive list takes the form of annotations and comments on the National Goals. For convenience, these comments are linked to a particular National Goal, but such comments may relate to more than one such wider goal. As a point of departure for reflection, these comments are grouped under the wider goal to which it refers mainly.

At appropriate stages in the design and planning of educational structures, evolution of curriculum materials and a multiplicity of analogous activities, consistent with these educationally relevant goals, detailed general and specific competencies could be specified and elaborated to enable their attainment. It will be necessary to deliberately evolve such elaborations of more specific goals, more focused general and specific competencies in each case. Such action alone ensures a coherence within the total educational enterprise.

These comments could be used as point of departure for identifying dimensions of General and Specific Competencies. These notes are consistently concerned with Character and Nation Building. These have an underlying assumption that a democracy requires that a people are able to deal with common issues and more specific problems in a well informed, intelligent and purposeful manner. There is also the pervasive requirement that individuals should nurture a deep and abiding concern for one another.

#### I. The achievement of a functioning sense of National Cohesion, National Integrity and National Unity.

- Understanding and valuing the concept of the Sri Lankan nation, in the context of the global community.
- Inculcation of a deep feeling of patriotism and commitment to the service of the nation and its upliftment.
- Appreciation of the contribution made by the cultural traditions of every ethnic group and religion to the enrichment of the Sri Lankan nation.
- Sensitivity to the role of language use and cultural appreciation in sustaining national cohesion.
- Understanding and practice of one's own religion.

#### II. The establishment of a pervasive pattern of Social Justice.

- Awareness of and sensitivity to the significance of social justice and active elimination of inequities.
- Sense of personal responsibility and accountability.
- Ability to negotiate honestly and honourably.
- Sense of rights and duties of self and others ; and a sense of fair-play.

#### III. The evolution of a Sustainable Pattern of living – A Sustainable Life Style.

- Awareness of and sensitivity to the assimilation of wholesome values in life and work.
- Awareness of and sensitivity to the importance of the evolution of a sustainable life style for the future.

- Having an attitude of continuous improvement with the interests of both self and others in view.
- Use of leisure, relaxation, recreation and rest which are conducive to mental and physical health.
- Awareness and appreciation of ecological balances.
- Willingness and ability to contribute constructively to environmental conservation.

IV. Seeking a livelihood and work opportunities that are, at one and the same time, productive and give avenues of self-fulfilment.

- Awareness of patterns of livelihood and work opportunities that are productive and self-fulfilling.
- Ability to create wealth for self and family through honest and productive efforts.
- Establishment of satisfying and mutually supportive relationships.
- Conduct in life and work that does not induce undue physical and mental stress.
- Ability to match needs and wants to available resources with contentment in a sustainable life style.
- Ability to save and invest wisely.
- Ability to map out a feasible strategy for personal development.
- Sense of quality in living and working.

V. Participation in human resource development that will support socio-economic growth of the country.

- Awareness of salient aspects of national development and the modes of participation in them.
- Role of a motivated, competent and adaptable workforce in national enterprises.
- Significance of effective management through the identification of managerial, supervisory and specialist personnel in diverse contexts of work.
- Ability to select and use guidelines and self-study schemes in national and other languages, as circumstances demand.
- Awareness of and ability to use formal and informal channels and modes for up-grading personnel.

VI. Involvement in Nation Building activities: learning to care.

- The evolution of a deep and abiding sense of concern for one another.
- Understanding and appreciation of one's culture and those of others.
- Awareness and informed respect for all religions and belief systems.
- Awareness of others viewpoints and needs.
- Ability to function in a spirit of cooperation, tolerance and informed sensitive compromise.

- Awareness and appreciation of interests – self and others – and function while recognizing human limitations.
- Awareness of modes of realizing consensus and mutual agreement, avoiding arbitrary and unilateral actions.
- Awareness of the role of consultation, expression of opinion and constructive criticism with responsibility and ability to promote such participatory action.
- Capacity to work intensively, with perseverance and with attention to relevant detail, as situations demand.
- Ability to nurture among all participants a deep and abiding commitment and concern for one another.

VII. Cultivation of an element of adaptability to change – learn to learn and adapt, developing competence to guide change.

- Awareness of and sensitivity to rapid change, with the ability to anticipate several alternatives strategies.
- Appreciation of the critical need to be prepared for disasters – natural and man-made –, the unforeseen events likely to be faced by individuals, groups and national institutions ; and the institution of anticipatory and participatory actions.
- Resourcefulness to initiate fresh constructive action, desisting from fruitless brooding over losses and calamities.
- Exploration of new possibilities, alternatives and opportunities, taking initiatives to learn anew, discarding the obsolete and fruitless activities.
- Capacity to evolve and put in place survival and life support systems.

VIII. Coping with the complex and the unforeseen ; and achieve a sense of security and stability.

- Awareness of and the appreciation of a complex, uncertain and crowded world, likely to be even more so in the foreseeable future.
- Evolution of a dynamic approach to security and stability, putting in place precautions, safeguards anticipating risks, hazards, failures, errors in planning, programming and judgement.
- Awareness of the need for information in the above contexts, sensitive to the critical elements of information that requires to be up-dated and at hand.
- Awareness of the relevance of mental and physical health, especially in relation to the young, maintaining good health, developing resistance to diseases, infections, stresses and trauma.
- Awareness of and the capacity to manage waste – of diverse types – and other unwanted but inevitable outcomes.
- Awareness that malpractices and grievances will appear ; capacity to take prompt corrective action or action to redress, as appropriate.
- Awareness of laws, due processes, legal safeguards, etc., coupled with a competence to institute efficient and effective action.
- Accessibility, availability and affordability of means of prompt and impartial judicial action and, as needed, appeals procedures.

### IX. Securing an honourable place in the international community.

- Awareness of and an appreciation of the community of nations and place of one's country in the international domain, as seen from diverse points of view – power", economy, trade and commerce, etc.
- Sensitivity to human life and human rights.
- The appreciation of viability and vibrancy of institutions of democracy.
- Awareness and appreciation of the variety and richness of social and cultural lives of diverse groups.
- Recognition of the significance of international cooperation and also competition.
- Achievement of a high quality of life – as seen from multiple points of view.
- Awareness and appreciation of national policies ; their relevance and limitations.
- Awareness and appreciation of the quality of materials and services that originate in Sri Lanka.
- Maintenance of a high level of integrity, competence and intellectual stature of international participants from the country – managers, technocrats, operators, diplomats, politicians, other representatives, leaders from diverse fields of religion, literature, the arts, science, education, industry, trade and commerce.

The operational realisation of these educationally relevant goals will be, for some purposes, wide and intensive ; for other purposes, the realisation may need to be relatively narrow and of low intensity. Some situations demand on understanding, others only an awareness and a sensitivity.

The realisation of these goals in actual situations in life and the world of work demand a certain set of **basic competencies** – selected knowledge elements of a type, some value aspects and a set of skills. These elements of knowledge, the value aspects, the set of skills are an integrated totality and constitute a **COMPETENCE**. A certain threshold of selected General and Specific Competencies are a necessary foundation on the basis of which the goal achievement is approached. The set of basic competencies are outlined in the remainder of this chapter.

#### A Set of Basic Competencies :

##### An essential foundation for approaching the NATIONAL GOALS

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

These basic competencies are outlined below in five sets :

#### A. COMPETENCIES IN COMMUNICATION

This first set of competencies is made up of three subsets – Literacy, Numeracy and Graphics :

**Literacy** includes : Listen attentively, Speak clearly, Read for meaning, and Write accurately and lucidly.

**Numeracy includes :** Use Numbers for Things, Space and Time, Count, Calculate and Measure systematically.

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

#### B. COMPETENCIES RELATING TO THE ENVIRONMENT

This second set of competencies relates to the Environments – Social, Biological and Physical Environments :

**Social Environment :** Awareness, sensitivity and skills linked to being a member of society, social relationships, personal conduct, general and legal conventions, rights, responsibilities, duties, and obligations.

**Biological Environment :** Awareness, sensitivity and skills linked to the Living World, Man and the Ecosystem, the Trees, Forests, Seas, Water, Air and Life – Plant, Animal and Human Life.

**Physical Environment :** Awareness, sensitivity and skills relating to Space, Energy, Fuels, Matter, Materials and their links with Human Living, Food, Clothing, Shelter, Health, Comfort, Respiration, Sleep, Relaxation, Rest, Wastes and Excretion.

Included here are the skills in using tools to shape and form materials for living and learning.

#### C. COMPETENCIES RELATING TO ETHICS AND RELIGION

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

#### D. COMPETENCIES IN PLAY AND THE USE OF LEISURE

This fourth set of competencies links up with pleasure, joy and such human motivations. These find expression in play, sports, athletics and leisure pursuits of many types. These are essential for realising mental and physical well being. These also link up with such values as cooperation, team work, healthy competition in life and work. Here are included such activities as are involved in aesthetics, arts, drama, literature, exploratory research and other creative modes in human living.

#### E. COMPETENCIES RELATING TO "LEARN TO LEARN"

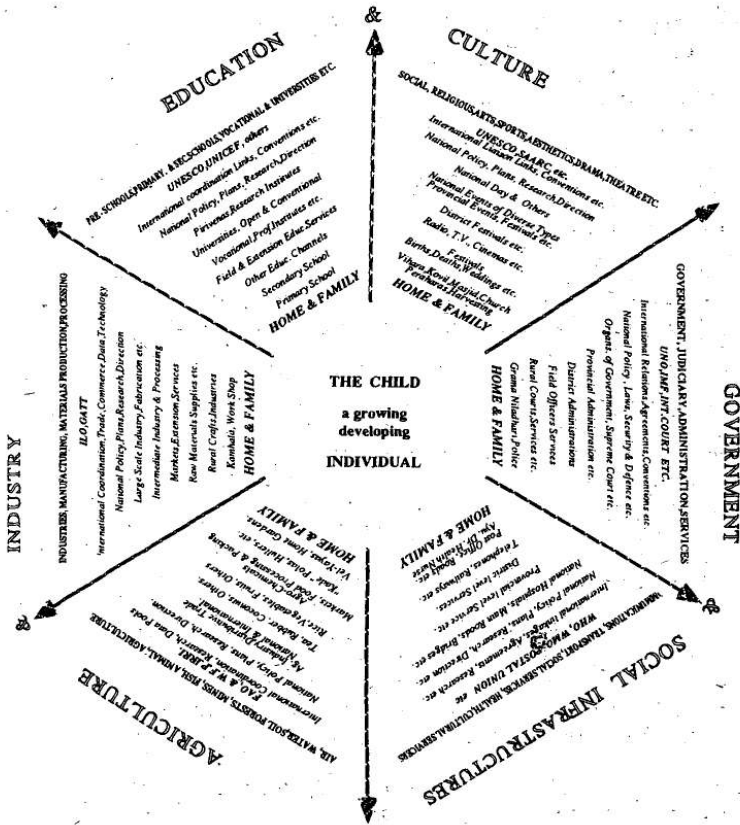
This fifth set of competencies flows directly from the nature of a rapidly changing, complex and crowded world. Whatever one learns, that learning will need updating and review. This requires that one should be aware of, sensitive and skillful in sustained attention, and be willing to persevere and attend to details that matter in a given situation. These are the basics in the competence "Learn to Learn" throughout life. Further, the information revolution makes this an imperative.

**In Retrospect**

**In the statement of National Goals, Educationally Relevant Goals, there are overlaps, interactions and repetitions. These basic competencies are the foundations for the pursuit of the National Goals. The overlaps, interactions and repetitions signify the specially important dimensions of Human Living and Productive Work.**

EDUCATION AND ITS LINKAGES  
WITH  
THE SOCIO-CULTURAL-ECONOMIC-POLITICAL SYSTEM

Note:



This is an initial "mapping" and this set of linkages will be expanded, detailed or reduced and made more general as the working situations demand. These linkages are significant because, ultimately, the assessment of learning should be in this total context.

## CHAPTER THREE

### LINKAGES BETWEEN THE EDUCATION SYSTEM AND THE OTHER MAJOR SECTORS

The linkages between the Education System and Other Sectors of National Life are determined by:

- (a) the Overall National Goals, and
- (b) the Goals of National Education and derivative programmes.

The Overall National Goals being the “inculcation of values and sustainable life styles, ensuring social justice and national cohesion; livelihood and work opportunities providing self-fulfilment; human resource development to support national economic development needs; nation building and learning to care; cultivating an element of resilience and adaptability to change; a sense of security and stability in society; and securing an honourable place in the international community”—would indicate the **nature and scope of the linkages** between education and the other sectors of national life.

A very important linkage of Education is with the economy. Because of the acute and lingering problem of unemployment, poverty and possibilities of rising social discontent, there is a major effort in terms of planning, investment and multi-sectoral performance to achieve higher rates of economic growth, whilst ensuring optimum utilization of both human and natural resources in Sri Lanka. Specifically, agricultural, technological, technical and vocational education have an important role in the national plans for economic development. This sector could provide the greatest degree of **human resource development**, both in the form of an educated work-force and in the form of productive **skilled labour**. This would mean a greater output of doctors, para-medical personnel, agriculturists, engineers, technologists, scientists, technicians and a wide variety of professional and skilled personnel, required by agriculture, industry, transport, communications, trade, commerce, banking, finance, insurance and other service-sectors of the economy. The planned supply of such personnel should at no time be grossly unequal to the demand, because such a mismatch will be socially disruptive.

The changes that have taken place are perhaps the result of greater planning for economic development. With more pressures on the economy to meet the growing demands of an increasing population and a complex society there was no other alternative but to resort to greater planning which resulted in what came to be termed ‘**perspective planning**’. In perspective planning which has the capacity to identify sectors and subsectors of importance and priority, they became entitled to priority for resource allocations. This process of economic development ultimately resulted in **investment in key sectors** which were considered vital for socio-economic development. The allocation of resources in these sectors was expected to give an optimum return. It was also necessary to remove the distortions in the economy to achieve such returns.



**Development of Science and Technology** also became an integral part of this effort to achieve rapid economic development. Pressures on the education sector mounted as a result of expectations on the part of other sectors to provide them with the **required human resources** (personnel). In consequence education has now become not only an instrument for economic development but also a key determinant of development.

If national education is unable to provide the educated, trained and skilled work-force required to achieve the targets of economic growth, as quickly as possible, the other sectors of national life could face critical shortages. The importation of professional persons and skilled labour from abroad, may be an immediate short-term remedy. In the long-run our education system should train the required numbers of such personnel. The main economic problem of **unemployment** and **under-employment** of our human and other resources must be resolved, avoiding a major source of social disequilibrium.

During colonial times, the need to train youth in scientific and technological pursuits was either ignored or absent. Agriculture was restricted to **peasant holdings and plantations**, whilst natural resources were transferred for processing and value addition elsewhere. A **white collar work-force** was considered sufficient. The situation is different today.

In addition to Agriculture and Industry, almost every other sector has also benefitted by developments in the field of education. Education has influenced every other sector in the country. The significant response to public health programmes and population issues have been primarily influenced by the improved education and literary levels of the population. Improvement in the education level of females has had far reaching consequences in the fields of nutrition, hygiene and child care. **Preventive health programmes** which have yet to be given their rightful place have found a degree of acceptance, particularly in the rural areas, due to improved levels of education. Campaigns such as anti-malaria and anti-filaria projects cannot succeed unless people respond to them through awareness and some conviction.

**Protecting the environment** has become a key issue in the modern world. Ignorance of damage caused by the discharge of untreated effluents, the wanton destruction of forests, the non-restoration of gem pits which turn out to be the breeding grounds of malaria, etc., has to be eliminated by educational programmes. The impact of such educational programmes on the development of the economy cannot be over emphasised.

In the **political sphere**, a "vibrant democracy" which assures freedom and security for all classes, creeds, races and other social minorities including the disadvantaged, would suffer irreparable damage if the education system failed to support the plans for economic development by providing the necessary skilled personnel. Besides this, the education system would be expected to produce a **body of responsible, law-abiding citizens**, who will defend national unity and sovereignty, democracy and social justice, even at the cost of their lives. The linkage between education and democracy, as a national way of life, is the best guarantee of the future peace and progress of the nation. Social Studies, Civics and Government are subjects which will cultivate this relationship.

Education is also required to promote the **physical, moral, spiritual and cultural** life of the people through physical, moral, religious, cultural and aesthetic education. All these may be part of general education or specialised education, but in whatever form it is education which improves the quality of human life. "Mens sana in corpore sano", is a vital principle of life and education, at all times.

The education system by its inculcation of **moral and spiritual values** would naturally have close links with the different religious bodies which wield a significant influence in the life of people. In one way or another, religious clergy of the different faiths have close connections with the schools in which the growing generations of their followers are being educated.

Even independently of the clergy, religion is being taught by lay teachers in the State Schools, but in the light of representations at public hearings, it is clear that none of the religious bodies are entirely satisfied with the **teaching of religion** in State Schools at present.

**Education and cultural life** are linked, both through general education in the schools; where literature, art, music, drama and dancing are taught to the students according to the school time-table and at a post-secondary or tertiary level where there are the institutes of aesthetic education for those who are seeking to be professional artistes or professional teachers of the arts.

Evidence placed before the Commission at its public and private hearings indicated deep dissatisfaction with the method and content of aesthetic education in general, and fine arts in particular.

Directly, the education system has two linkages which are often lost sight of. Firstly, the education system provides employment to about 187,000 educated persons. They are required to have not only a general education to GCE Advanced Level and beyond, but also specialised knowledge and skills needed to guide children in learning, transmit culture to them, and also enable them to find understanding, meaning and insight. Secondly, the educational system has a custodial function in that it confines, guides, regulates and conditions children's behavior so that they are kept out of harm's way during a very vulnerable part of their lives, and also provides them a wholesome and safe environment for their growth into adulthood.

If as stated in the overall National Goals and specific goals of Education, the education system is to serve the needs of the body politic, democracy, the economy, public health public morality, the national religions and multi-ethnic culture of the Sri Lankan Society and, above all, the needs of the individual citizen, it will certainly require both structural and qualitative changes; and the task of this Commission will be to identify and formulate these reforms.

Irrespective of how the economy is moulded and how the country is governed, the focus of Education is the **CHILD AS A GROWING INDIVIDUAL**. The individual is the ultimate link between education of all types and the other Sectors of national life and the outside world. This linkage is shown in Figure 1. The individual is connected to and is influenced by the multitude of "institutions" that surround him, either directly

or indirectly. The individual in turn influences virtually all the interlinkages between the institutions. In the Figure the institutions are arranged into sectors to correspond with hierarchical orders and directness of interconnections. The distance from the centre are indicative of relative largeness of scope and spatial distribution. The Figure is intended to remind us of the linkages vital to the individual.

What we usually lose sight of is that the "institutions" are created for the benefit and to meet the needs of the individual, in a fair and just manner. It is essential not to lose sight of this ultimate aim, and also to realize that not only the direct linkages with the family and home, but also that the regional, international and global linkages are equally significant. Without this realization and the active interaction based on it with the community outside the narrow national confines, the Sri Lankan citizen will continue to be at the mercy of the larger systems. The current lack of this realization is perhaps the reason for the belief, particularly among the younger generations, that we are helpless against the forces of evil manipulated by financial interests both within and outside the country, and the other belief that some organizations and powers outside the country have to be depended on for satisfying our peoples' needs on a large scale. There are other corollaries to these beliefs, which are equally damaging to our nation.

Whilst free education in combination with traditional values and philosophies helped us in the past to maintain a high quality of life in the midst of "material-poverty", today additional adaptive changes in education are needed to serve the masses and to strengthen us against a multitude of disintegrative pressures from within the individual and without. If we do not so adapt and develop this strength we cannot realize the vision of a free nation. Hence it is imperative that the national education system be refashioned.

This is all the more necessary because free education, contrary to our belief, is not the great social leveller. In actual operation, it tends to aggravate the differences and inequalities in stratified societies. It confers further advantages and controls to those who already possess them. Hence widespread free education without deliberate attempts to equalize access and opportunities will only result in greater social tensions and greater propensities for mutual destruction. These tensions and propensities will only be to the greater advantage of those who wish to exploit them for short-term gain. Conflicts and clashes among people will lead to their being diverted away from wholesome and productive activities, thus worsening their own condition.

Reform of education has to be done as an aspect of broader reform in our thinking, legislation and execution. Hence it has been found necessary by the Commission to look at education in the broadest possible context. It is only this perspective which has enabled the Commission to make proposals which are most likely to make an impact on human development and, in turn, on national progress.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### METHODOLOGY FOR ATTAINING THE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The National Education Policy has to have a relatively long term effect and has to be in force over a defined period despite changes of administrations and governments. If such a policy is to bear fruit as intended, we must be mindful of the limitations of centralized top-down planning that is usually practised in our country. In the past there have been many instances when national policies and plans have not produced the intended benefits due to the limitations imposed during the implementation and monitoring phases. This cannot be simply dismissed as an inevitable aspect of such policymaking and planning. Those engaged in any planning exercise must necessarily take into account the reality of our country in their work.

Any plan, however brilliant the planners, has its effectiveness determined by the capabilities and attitudes of those who prepare the groundwork for the planning and those who implement it. Therefore the state of development of those who implement the plans out in the field should be taken into account and not left to chance. The feedback loop through which the shortcomings of the implementing system and the non-attainment of expected performance are identified for the purpose of taking appropriate corrective action, should be built into plans. There should also be continuous learning about the system and its environment both by the planners and the implementors, which leads to the improvement of both the planning and executive capabilities. This would most certainly lead to modification and improvement of the plan itself and to better planning in the future.

In the management and direction of the Education System and its structures – primary and secondary schools, vocational institutes, teacher education institutes and higher educational organizations, etc. – there is a key underlying assumption, often unstated, which has an important bearing, especially when the issue is one of quality improvement and effectiveness. The assumption is that an Education Situation is fully describable, the factors linked to quality are specifiable and in short 'understood'.

In actual fact, the education situations and their processes are only incompletely specifiable and partly understood. The boundary conditions are manifold and variable in time and place ; and essentially unique to each one. As subjects and participants, sensitive human beings – pupils, students, teachers and parents – are involved. They will be not only responding in a predictable manner to various stimuli, but also continuously making decisions and initiating actions of their own. They could be highly sensitive to interventional modes however sympathetic. The unknowns are many ; and in such situations and processes **predictability is, at best, limited.**

A large data field remains unknown and that which is known is partly digested. Furthermore, the findings in one specific situation have **very limited transferability.** A comprehensive and consistent conceptual knowledge will always remain to be

realized. The practitioners have to venture out always with the understanding that they do not have complete knowledge of the situation at hand. Often the practitioners do not see the implications of theory; the theoreticians have only limited direct feel for actual classrooms, workshops, lecture theatres, laboratories and the field. Hence the attempts to plan and direct Education on essentially theoretical and paper-based exercises have been mostly disappointing. The theoreticians assert that their findings are ignored; the practitioners say that the outputs of educational research are only suitable for 'academic' discussions of specifics.

**Education Systems – qualitatively – are not reducible to simple cause-effect relationships, and forecasting presents a veritable TRAP.**

Human interactions – learning and teaching in particular – are not identical with the behaviour of seeds and plants – field for which much of the statistical models have been made. Impressive and sophisticated statistical analyses do not transform such specific findings into respectable formulae and credible bases for action. **This nature of actuality has to be better understood.**

The future – year 2000 and beyond – demands some refreshingly modified, or even novel, approaches to Educational Research, Educational Theory and Educational Practice. It is appropriate that a developing country should initiate such approaches. **Sri Lanka need not tread the much trodden by-ways.** Even with our own limited resources it is feasible for our investigators to set out some **more fruitful paths.**

This aspect is one which **should engage the attention of our professional investigators.** Only an introspective, multi-disciplinary and coordinated strategy is likely to yield results of value. The essence for ensuring worthwhile results and the credibility of any investigation is the direct and personal involvement of the investigator in the **situation that is unfolding in actual operation.**

Research work of the traditional form could be a historical record of the situations which have been studied. Apart from this, a planner of education or a designer of learning experiences, needs a methodology or a theoretical basis for the application of findings of educational research to educational practices. Until this is available, the more fruitful approach is that of **educational technology** in which practitioners become skilful in working out and highly conversant with the details of techniques and processes of education. Such specialists could make a significant contribution by providing expertise on the application of techniques to specific field situations.

Planning also requires that those who plan and those who implement have a shared vision and also have a commitment to the success of the plan. Not only should they be equally praised for the success but they also **should share the responsibilities** arising from the plan going away. Consequently, it would be prudent to have the implementors involved in the planning process itself.

The findings of the National Education Commission and the recorded experience of other ventures here and abroad point to the inadequacy of the conventional centralized planning and of bureaucratic controls. Closer scrutiny shows that the

assumptions underlying such planning and control are unrealistic. The outward directed communication without feedback ensures that the planners and top administrators are insulated from the rest of the system and thereby **do not improve themselves and their methodology** from the experience generated during implementation.

If education policymaking and planning are to be effective an indispensable assumption is that **the education system and its environment comprises human beings contributing voluntarily of their knowledge, skill and dedication to a joint venture**. Another thing that characterizes the system, as much as any other genuine system, is that the whole of it is not necessarily improved if one particular function or part of it is improved or made more efficient. In effect, the system may well be damaged thereby, or even destroyed. In some situations either shedding or modifying a particular function may strengthen the system as a whole. This is because what matters in any system is the performance of the whole, which is the result of growth and of dynamic balance, adjustment, and integration rather than of mere technical efficiency.

The education system cannot depend on supermen or gifted individuals to staff its managerial, administrative and executive positions. There are far too many institutions to be staffed. If the units, divisions, schools, etc. cannot be run and managed by persons of normal and fairly low endowment, in other words each task cannot be organized so that it will be done adequately by persons who only try hard, it cannot be done at all.

The education system must be controlled by policy. But it needs more than programmes, promises, good intentions and hard work, and the whole underwritten by a budget. It needs a system and a structure that directs it towards performance wherever possible. It also needs the discipline of planned revision, planned obsolescence and planned abandonment of its policies. A given policy would be effective for a time but not for ever. This must be an essential premise in any worthwhile policymaking.

The educational programmes, projects, etc. have to be derived from or be consonant with overall NATIONAL GOALS. These overall national goals refer to desired states of the nation and its people. In framing them we should take into account not only the purely national factors but also consider the individual, his habitat and workplace, and the nation's relationship with the region and the rest of the world. These goals are stated in terms of 'intangibles' such as **human qualities, values, opportunities for growth**, etc.

Starting from the Overall National Goals it is possible to derive EDUCATIONAL POLICIES which link up 'educational goals' with specifics of life and the world of work. Achievements are only possible against specific, limited and clearly defined targets set in the context of the educational goals. Only if targets are so defined can resources be allocated to their attainment, priorities and deadlines set, and somebody be held accountable for results. But the starting point for effective work in the education system is the clear identification of overall national goals.

The Educational Policies are translated into action through a variety of formal, informal and nonformal arrangements. Whilst the informal arrangements cannot, by definition, be structured and systematized, the formal and nonformal arrangements could be integrated into a National Educational System.

Each component of the System should be structured and operated so as to implement a specific curriculum. In some instances, the curriculum exists in an explicit form, whereas in others the activities are guided by rules and regulations, syllabii, conventions, examination schemes, and other devices. Whilst an explicitly stated curriculum exists, it is also possible for there to be an unstated or implied scheme by which activities are guided. The 'tutory system' which caters to those preparing for public examinations is a manifestation of such a scheme. The actual outcomes of the workings of the System could be at variance from both the curriculum and the unstated scheme imposed on it. This variability arises from the fact that at the implementation levels the availability of resources and the constraints are not uniform. Also, each teacher and learner brings to bear his limitations and strengths on the interpretation of the curriculum.

The individual variations in the implementation of the curriculum are desirable because they make available a vast variety and richness of capabilities in the society. It is not sufficient to have a docile workforce with very homogeneous knowledge and skills for meeting the demands of complex organizations. On the other hand what should be viewed with concern are the arbitrary and capricious variations, and those which are motivated by narrow personal gain.

The CURRICULUM prescribes and determines the methods and practices adopted in a given course. It serves as the PLAN for the teaching and learning activities not only for the teachers and learners but also guides the supervisors, managers and others having monitoring and executive functions in relation to it. During implementation specific methods and practices need modifications and fine-tuning in the light of observed outcomes. Such adjustments are likely to be localized ones and intended to improve the implementation of the curriculum in particular contexts. The persons who implement a plan should be given the freedom and the resources for making any necessary adjustments.

Any plan loses its relevance after some time. It has to be either modified significantly or even jettisoned. All those who are involved in planning and implementation should work with the clear idea that a plan has a limited duration. Hence while a plan is being implemented there should be concomitant analysis of its shortcomings, a study of charges that are taking place both as result of implementation of the plan and other causes, and exploration of alternate strategies that are better suited to meet future needs in addition to ongoing monitoring and mid-course corrections. These tasks should be pursued actively.

The plans themselves should preferably have their duration determined and fixed at the outset so that the time-frame of the ongoing new planning exercises are known to both those who are involved in planning as well as those who are implementing the current plans. Although these ideas may sound theoretical in the context of abstract planning and the uncoordinated activities as found in the present time, they are both feasible and necessary in a context where participatory ACTION-PLANNING is practised. Such planning is a must in EDUCATION.

In the planning and policymaking exercise which the National Education Commission is engaged in at present, we envisage five kinds of proposals. Firstly, there are proposals that are to be considered for immediate implementation, in view of the urgency of the



connected issues. Some of these proposals may not require any significant additional expenditure. **Secondly**, there are proposals which need the deployment of some additional funds, but could create significant beneficial effects. **Thirdly**, there are proposals which, although they are acceptable, need further study, consultation and consolidation before they could be formulated in workable terms. **Fourthly**, there are proposals regarding which differences of opinion exist and therefore require further public debate before they could be accepted. The **fifth** and last category are initiatives for investigations, studies and analyses which would eventually lead to new policies and plans.

Education has been traditionally viewed by policymakers and planners as a social overhead or a cost centre, perhaps one that is inevitable, but one that has no immediate benefit to the nation. Its products are in a sense intangible and quantifiable only in terms of qualified and educated people who will themselves make various demands from society on account of their educational attainments. It is also pointed out that a larger fraction of the expenditure on education is used up in paying personal emoluments. Deliberate attempts should be made to change these perceptions by making our education system depend more and more on local resources and on locally developed educational technology. As mentioned earlier a national pool of talent and expertise in educational technology should be built up.

**EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY** does not simply refer to the use of gadgetry such as computers and videos. It encompasses the application of all methods and devices which help the teacher and learner to enhance and extend their capabilities so that learning becomes more effective and efficient, and teaching reaches a larger number and is wider in scope. Furthermore, by the use of appropriate devices and techniques the learner and teacher are both enabled to transcend to some extent the limitations of their location and their senses; for example, colour slides and realia could make a geography lesson more meaningful, whilst the availability of good quality microphotographs could offset the shortage of microscopes to some extent. The familiar **chalkboard** and the methodology of its use is an example of Educational Technology. It enables teacher to make a persistent record of characters and diagrams which is visible to a large group of learners.

It is clear that both teachers and learners have to be practitioners of Educational Technology. There should be a national effort to develop an Educational Technology of our own, which is not only the result of buying and learning to use gadgetry from developed countries, but also continually improving on methods and devices used in the classroom, in the light of our own experience. Both teachers and learners must actively take part in this improvement. Learning involves the building up and expansion of a person's capabilities from a given state in this own environmental context. It does not happen in isolation; and is cumulative and progressive. It does not happen out of chance events of a trivial nature; and cannot be applied on like a coat of paint.

The classroom is where the Educational Technology should be practised in the widest sense of the term. Teacher education, design of the learning environment and the formation of the resource base for learning have to be done with full awareness of



this fact. This would make it possible, and perhaps inevitable, that certain developments do take place. Most importantly, the resulting technological orientation of the classroom situation will mean that the learning and teaching are treated as goal-directed activities. As a result goals will be identified and agreed upon, outcomes will be checked against the goals, and corrective action taken at the most appropriate level. This will be in marked contrast to treating the classroom simply as an administrative unit where rules and regulations are to be enforced, and routine tasks are carried out. The objectives of administrative exercises in such a unit is to ensure that certain appearances are kept and the paperwork is up to date and in order.

Another desirable outcome of the technological orientation of the classroom is the scope it offers to the teachers and learners to improvise and to improve upon their resources, specifically the materials, equipment and situations for education. The development of such items will go a long way in not only enriching the school environment, but also in developing in the learner attitudes of **self-reliance** and **confidence**. Learners, teachers and principals should even be rewarded for making significant contributions to the development of the resources of their school. The schools and the education system of the future will have to depend more and more on getting the best possible performance from the people within it for such development. This will result not only in the derivation of the greater benefits from the limited funds available, but also in a better educational strategy in the context of national development.

Any system irrespective of size needs a means of monitoring and corrective action to ensure that it performs as expected. In technical parlance this is referred to as **control**. Such controls must be economical, simple, meaningful and timely. In the education system not only should the funds and other resources be used properly and accounted for as required by the auditors, but also the educational goals should be attained. The means of attaining the goals is the implementation of the curriculum through the participation of teachers and learners. Since the activities of the teachers and learners are expected to take place throughout the school year, it is unfair as well as insufficient to use the end of the year test as the sole indicator of educational attainment. It has been pointed out to the Commission that such tests can be passed by rote learning of answers provided by tutors. Also, the performance at the test does not indicate the contribution of the school and the teachers to a child's education and his ability.

Monitoring and correction of an educational situation cannot be done in the same way as one controls a machine. The participants are people who have their own perceptions of the control actions and will respond to them in individual specific ways depending on personal ambitions, ideas, and needs. In such situations the best manner of control is **self-control**, with feed-back and occasional monitoring by others from higher levels of the hierarchy. For this control to be really effective, the monitoring should be accompanied by institutionalized rewards, punishments, incentives and deterrents. These would be all the more effective if the monitoring and the responding are done **randomly**, since the system is a large one with many members.

The management of the education system has to ensure that the teachers, learners, heads of sections, principals and officers at all levels, discharge their responsibilities by attending to all activities connected with their positions. For instance, a Physical

Training teacher should not simply let the children under his charge stray about on the grounds or the gymnasium while he attends to his private work in the staff common room. Likewise, a director entrusted with the drafting of a circular should not solely rely on his memory and an incomplete set of information for the task, without doing essential research in repositories of information and in the field. It has also been brought to our attention that Education Officers who are expected to visit schools to check conditions directly, in actual practice do not do so but call up the principal to the education office to help in filling up the inspection forms. In all these and other situations, for the accomplishment of any task there is a **minimum** number of activities that must be carried out as a set, **without any options and questioning**, once they are stipulated and agreed upon.

Adequate monitoring demands that in the administrative areas there are sequences of activities which are **compulsory and unhesitatingly** followed. In executive areas the personnel should be able to account for their time and efforts made to achieve specific targets. For teachers, section heads, principals and learners, whose activities are more or less autonomous but interconnected, and the entirety driven by a curriculum, monitoring and correction are best effected by getting each one of them to review their own activities and to submit half-yearly reports to the person at the next higher level of the hierarchy. This is essentially a way of directing a person's attention towards himself with the intention of discovering the impact of one's actions on the progress of both oneself and of others. Having to make a personal statement even in summarized but open form has a different significance from submitting to a teacher or a superior a collection of items of work one has completed during a given period, in that one is forced to feel the changes that have taken place within oneself as a result of doing the work. The reporting should also **NOT** be done through the filling of a standard form.

It has been reported that the information as to whether a task has been carried out adequately or not does not reach higher levels of the education hierarchy or gets there too late to enable meaningful remedial action to be taken. There have been instances when children and parents have not pointed out lapses and shortcomings of the system due to their feeling vulnerable or being threatened with reprisals. This could be a strong inhibitor to the free flow of necessary control information. One way around this problem is to break up complex actions and responsibilities of teachers, heads of sections and principals, to elements which can be reported on and checked without exposing children and parents to reprisals. For instance, it could be stipulated that the Physical Training teacher **should always be with his charges during a class**. This is an element of activity that can be checked by a superior and corrective action, including punitive action if necessary, be taken **immediately**, if that element is not done correctly. Punitive action is absolutely essential if any advice given on an earlier occasion has not been heeded and the same lapse occurs again. For control to be effective in a large system with many human participants, checking must be done on a **random basis**, and appropriate rewarding, remedial or punitive action taken immediately, together with making a record of the event for future reference. Every person, **whatever his rank**, should be held accountable for his actions.

There is an idea that large systems such as the education system, cannot be directed and controlled effectively. It is also felt that any kind of fact finding for corrective action would lead to an avalanche of information. This is not a valid reason for letting the system drift and leaving each individual within it to his own devices. The two approaches of –

- \* checking and taking corrective action at purely randomly selected locations and activities while maintaining proper records of action taken, and
- \* sorting out routine problems from the exceptional ones so that the former could be disposed of rapidly and the latter could be gone into with due attention to details at an appropriate time so that the exceptions do not clog up the monitoring and correcting process itself

are applicable when dealing with large and complex systems.

Another important aspects of control is not to pin blame solely on the lowest possible level for things going wrong. Both praise as well as blame should be shared among the operational and monitoring levels. For example, it is much more effective to blame the principal and section heads also if the teachers are found, on a random checking, to be not conforming to the syllabus.

In the design of the education system the principles of equity and social justice are of prime consideration. In our country where there are not only current pressures and motivations, but also historical reasons for some of the glaring iniquities, policymakers have to be ever mindful of the possibility of perpetuating and aggravating them through ill-conceived policies. An example is the great emphasis placed on the ability to use English. It is also believed in some quarters that being cultured and socially skilled are also associated with proficiency in English. Such emphases and beliefs are clearly untenable in the present state of our country and its resource limitations. Problems such as these require a multi-pronged approach to allow those who are disadvantaged to be treated differently until they are enabled to overcome their condition.

Another very important aspect that is often lost sight of by centrally located planners and policymakers is that ours is largely a poor and underdeveloped country. It cannot simply afford to import all the necessary resources for a large education system, in order to bring it up to so-called world standards. What is necessary is to identify standards and norms which are realistic and appropriate for our country; and to see growth as a **gradual, incremental, organic and self-sustained operation.**

The system design should cater not only to the demands of the backward and undeveloped areas to get a fair share of the rewards and opportunities, but also for the country to have peaks of professional and academic excellence not second to those of any other country. Education should also fortify our people to withstand the pressures of unbalanced globalization and of foreign interests which may at time be detrimental to the interests of our nation.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

#### A Descriptive Outline of The Education System within the Island

##### INTRODUCTION

EDUCATION and LEARNING : These are life-long processes. These involve the continuous reconstruction and assimilation of experiences. The processes take place formally and informally, throughout the Island in ALL places, by ALL persons, — young and old — at all times.

This set of activities concerning the processes of EDUCATION and LEARNING is taking place within a complex and multi-faceted large social system. These processes occur informally and incidentally in the HOME and FAMILY : these take place more formally — organized and sequenced — in the SCHOOL. At higher levels, these take place in Vocational and University Institutions, some using the Mass Media, as well. These are seen in the “classical mode” in the PIRIVENAS, MADARASAS, KOVILS and CHURCHES.

Education and Learning is continuously taking place in diverse forms and modes in Vel-Yayas, Farms, Factories and in such places as the “Road”, as people get about their normal work.

A systematic description of these many and varied “Learning Opportunities” will be presented in outline in this chapter.

The principal institutionalised systems within the larger EDUCATION SYSTEM are listed below :

- The Pre-Schools
- The Schools— Primary and Secondary
- The Vocational — Professional Education System
- The Teacher Education System
- The Higher Education System
- The Out-of-School Education System
- The Special Education System
- The Pirivena System
- Others

It may be noted, in this context, that apart from the HOME, the PIRIVENAS have the deepest roots in the cultural setting in Sri Lanka. The Pirivena tradition of Learning reaches back two thousand years or more of recorded history. The Pirivenas have contributed to Education, in general; to Religious and Cultural Growth, and in the larger framework to National Regeneration.

There are other analogous traditions of learning. Some of these are the intonation and recitation of the Holy Koran in the Madarasas; recitation of sacred texts in the Kovils, the study of the Holy Bible in Sunday Church Schools and the study of the Buddha Dhamma in Daham Pasalas in the Viharas.

Some other traditional patterns exist: Students affiliated to Ayurvedic Medical Specialists (living with the Teacher); Apprentices associated with "Master Craftmen"; and more casually young assistants in workshops - 'Bicycle Shop', 'Machine Shop' etc. Some are more organized than others.

#### The Island, the Provinces and the Districts

The diverse types of Education Systems, referred to in the preceding pages, are geographically, socio-politically, economically and culturally located in the Island within its Provinces and Districts. These Provinces and Districts are not similarly endowed. These differ in material resources and cultural traditions. These differences have a direct and indirect bearing on how the Education System functions. These differences affect the background of the Learners – their potential and their achievement. These Learners live, learn and work in the Provinces and Districts, with these differences.

Hence an analysis of the Provinces and Districts - based on Socio-Economic infrastructures - is a necessary preliminary to an outline descriptions of Education Systems.

A simple classification using only three socio-economic infrastructural features - namely: Transport, Health & "Family Income" - is given in Table 1, below.

Table 1

#### A SOCIO-ECONOMIC CLASSIFICATION OF THE PROVINCES

<i>Name of the Province</i>	<i>A Composite Index Based, on Transport, Health &amp; Income</i>	<i>"Group"</i>
Western Province	72	I
Central Province	58	II
Southern Province	49	II
Northern Province	48	III
North Western Province	47	III
Sabaragamuwa Province	46	III
Uva Province	45	IV
North Central Province	43	IV
Eastern Province	42	IV

A more complete analysis, based on more data complexes, is presented, with "Bar Charts", in the next three pages.

The Pupils, Students and Trainees in the Education System live and work in the Provinces and the Districts, which have been described in the preceding pages, from several socio-economic points of view. These learners need the infrastructural facilities - Transport, housing, water, sanitation, health and family income - to function effectively and make use of the learning opportunities that have been made available. How well these pupils, students and trainees effectively use these will depend, to an extent, on the background in the areas, where they live and work.

Table 2

A CLASSIFICATION OF THE PROVINCES AND DISTRICTS OF SRI LANKA  
RELEVANT TO  
ACCESS TO SCHOOLS, EFFECTIVE LEARNING AND PUPIL PERFORMANCE

*Indices : Available Socio-Economic Infrastructure.*

	Transport 1	Housing 2	Water 3	Sanitation 4	Health 5	Fam. Income 6	"Composite" 7*
1. <b>Western Province</b>	67	64	66	64	60	68	65
1. Colombo District	78	64	84	63	83	88	77
2. Gampaha District	72	61	65	62	49	58	61
3. Kalutara District	52	68	51	68	49	57	58
2. <b>Central Province</b>	54	43	51	48	49	52	50
4. Kandy District	58	46	57	51	50	52	52
5. Matale District	46	49	46	51	50	49	49
6. Nuwara Eliya District	57	36	49	42	48	54	48
3. <b>Southern Province</b>	52	57	47	52	44	48	50
7. Galle District	56	64	51	59	51	45	54
8. Matara District	55	62	49	55	44	54	53
9. Hambantota District	44	46	42	41	38	46	43
4. <b>Northern Province</b>	44	50	47	53	52	46	49
10. Jaffna District	48	65	56	68	54	43	56
11. Killinochchi District	48	46	43	50	54	57	53
12. Mannar District	48	46	41	42	50	39	44
13. Mulativu District	40	39	43	50	50	57	47
14. Vavuniya District	40	39	43	50	50	57	47
5. <b>North Western Province</b>	47	43	49	50	47	45	47
15. Kurunegala District	47	36	49	46	47	46	45
16. Puttalam District	46	49	49	53	47	44	48
6. <b>Sabaragamuwa Province</b>	52	49	45	45	45	45	47
17. Kegalla District	53	48	45	46	44	47	47
18. Ratnapura District	50	50	45	43	45	53	46
7. <b>North Central Province</b>	47	43	49	50	47	45	47
19. Anuradhapura District	42	34	42	39	49	44	42
20. Polonnaruwa District	39	44	40	44	73	55	49
8. <b>Eastern Province</b>	42	50	56	41	45	44	46
21. Batticaloa District	41	46	60	51	49	39	48
22. Ampara District	43	53	52	31	47	50	46
23. Trincomalee District	43	46	60	51	40	44	47
9. <b>Uva Province</b>	45	46	43	42	47	48	45
24. Badulla District	51	48	49	49	47	47	49
25. Moneragala District	39	44	37	34	46	48	41

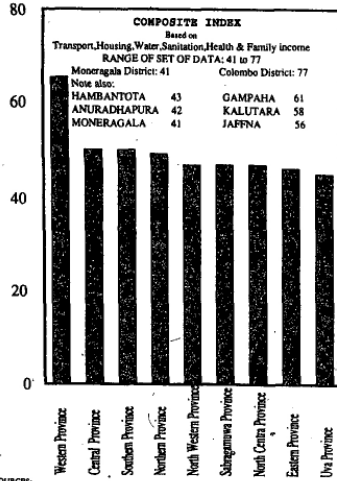
\* This (7) is the MEAN of 1,2,3,4,5 & 6. All the Indices are on a Scale : 1 to 100. They all have a Mean of 50 & Standard Deviation of 10. The original data have been converted to the same "Index Scale".

Note : Bar Charts corresponding to this data are on the next page.

*Analysis : National Education Commission, 1992.*

Figure - 02

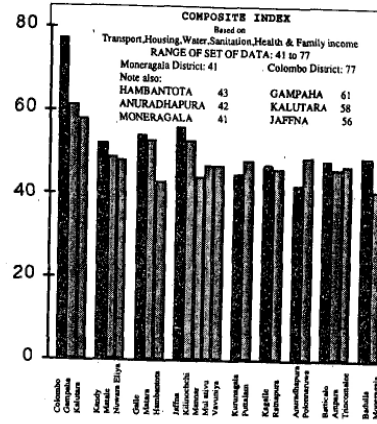
THE PROVINCES OF SRI LANKA  
A CLASSIFICATION,  
AVAILABLE SOCIO-ECONOMIC INFRASTRUCTURES  
related to  
ACCESS, EFFECTIVE LEARNING & PUPIL PERFORMANCE  
1985 TO 1990



SOURCES:  
SURVEY OF DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIAL ASPECTS, 1981  
DEPT. OF CENSUS & GEN. OF POLICY PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT, COLOMBO, 1981  
SOCIO-ECONOMIC ASSESSMENTS OF SRI LANKA (CENTRAL BANK OF SRI LANKA, COLOMBO, 1981)  
DEPT. DATA, C & B COMPUTER PRINT OUTS      NATIONAL EDUCATION COMMISSION 1992

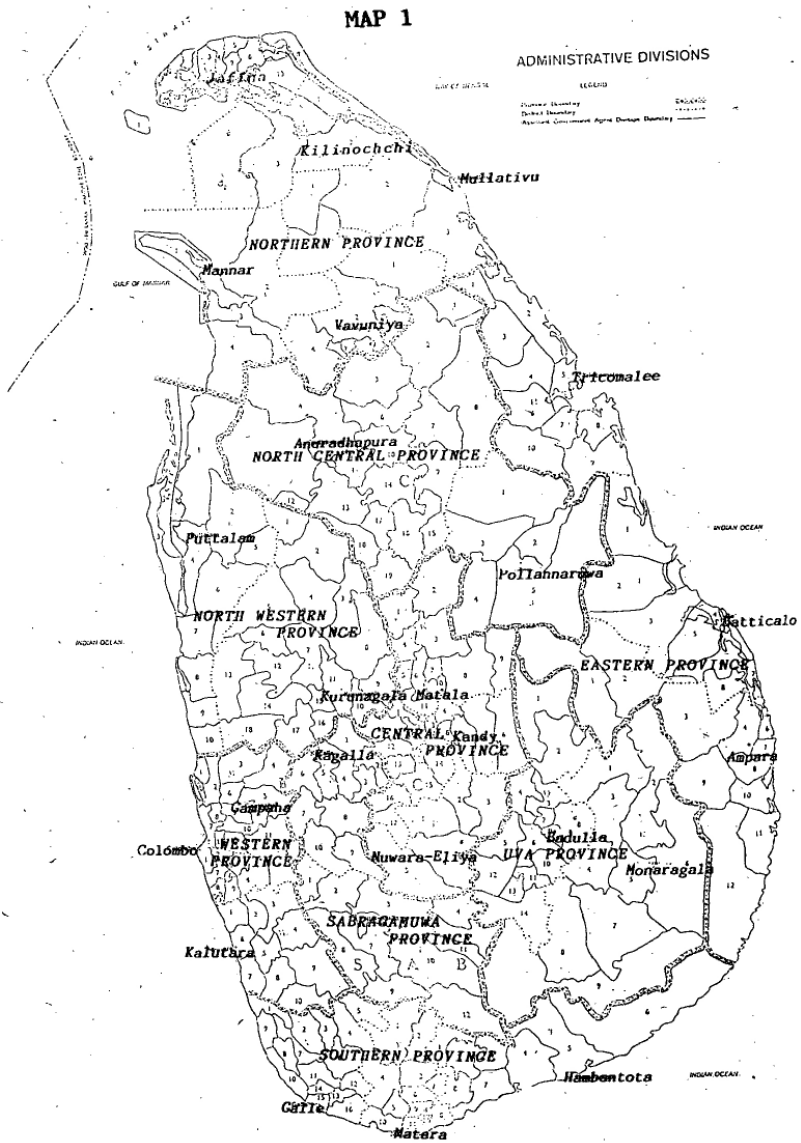
Figure - 02

THE PROVINCES OF SRI LANKA  
A CLASSIFICATION,  
AVAILABLE SOCIO-ECONOMIC INFRASTRUCTURES  
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ACCESS, EFFECTIVE LEARNING & PUPIL PERFORMANCE  
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SOURCES:  
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DEPT. DATA, C & B COMPUTER PRINT OUTS      NATIONAL EDUCATION COMMISSION 1992

MAP 1





The descriptions of the Provinces and Districts refer to the recent past—1985 to 1990—the period for which data is accessible. It is surmised that the situation was somewhat similar in the seventies. The description, now presented, is, almost definitively, applicable, with only minor modifications, to the five to ten years, that are immediately ahead - 1990 to 2000. It is to this period—and beyond—that the reflections in the report relate and the socio-political economic description is relevant.

With reference to these pupils, students and trainees, one dimension of development is the potential to adapt to rapid change, and function adequately. Another dimension of development is their actual achievements and performances—comprising a body of knowledge learned, set of skills executable and a complex of values and attitudes assimilated. These achievements must be assessed, to the extent feasible, in actual social contexts.

The Classroom, the Lecture Room, the Laboratory and the Workshop are, at least, once removed from the actual world of action and decision making. The domain of action and decision making are often more and more harsh demanding than “tests” of any kind.

The circumstances mapped for Provinces and Districts are relevant. These are indicative of the possibilities of productive and effective use of educational services offered. The actual impact of the Education System on the Learners is dependent on their natural endowments and also on the nurturing effects of the environmental conditions within which they live.

Access alone does not ensure the effective and fruitful use of the facilities offered by the Education System.

Sri Lanka has been through a period of severe strife and traumatic tension in the recent past. The “Education System” - at all levels - bears the scars of these tragic events. The scars are likely to remain for sometime; so will the memories of the events. All the various systems - the HOME, the SCHOOL, the Institutes of Higher Education, the Work Place, etc.—are seeking to chart fresh paths of development and adaptive growth. The reflections in the present, the projections for the future will need to take note of this disturbed national scene.

A critically important aspect of the management and directions of education, not unrelated to the foregoing consideration, is the very significant process of devolution of authority for decision making and resources allocation that is taking place in the Island. The process is taking place with a multiplicity of constraints. There is need for greater clarity.

Those concerned at ALL levels have still NOT adapted creatively and productively to the changed situations. The changes are “Systems Changes”. These brief comments are cogent to a “Systems Description”.

Educational Institutions and the INDIVIDUALS in them are affected significantly by these changes.

### EDUCATION - Selected perceptions of Society

The Socio-cultural background which relates to 'Education' is subtle. It is important. It has its roots in the cultural traditions of the people of Sri Lanka. The cultural perceptions are worded in different ways by the different groups within the culture. But there is a significant extent of overlap.

The words "Guru" and "Deguru" are the most widely used terms for the "Teacher" and "Parent". The usage has a long history.

The Parents are viewed as the "First Teachers". In the most impressionable first few years of the life of a young Child, the Parents are the intermediaries in learning. This sharing of responsibilities for teaching the young is a deep seated tradition. It is specially significant to the "Future". It needs to be conserved and reinforced.

In many HOMES and FAMILIES in the island, the CHILD is initiated into "Learning Letters", at about the age of three years. This simple event, usually conducted at a selected time and place, involves religious overtones. The episode is a memorable event. It is practised with varying rituals – some more elaborate than others. But all are simple, elegant and dignified.

#### SOCIETY sees several AGENCIES OF EDUCATION :

HOME & FAMILY – with the Parents, Brothers, Sisters, and others in the family.

SCHOOL – with the Teachers, Peer Pupils and others in the School.

COMMUNITY – with the Vihara, Kovil, Masjid, Church, Vel-Yaya, Farm, Factory, Market, Road, Bus, etc.

MASS MEDIA – with the "Printed Word", Books, Newspapers, Radio, Television, Electronic Devices, etc.

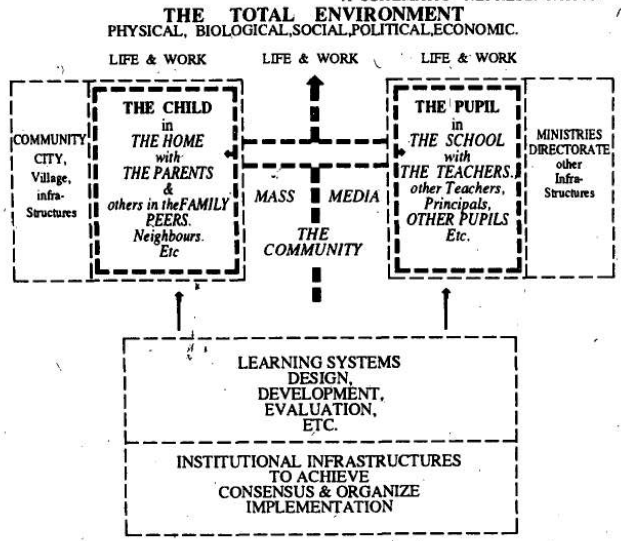
The ideas, perspectives and linkages as described above are depicted in lines, symbols and words in the Figures 3 and 4.

For "Education", four broad classes of priority goals are identified, namely : Nation Building, Character Building, General Competencies Development and Specific Competencies Development. The totality of processes in such educational development is, in Sri Lanka, intimately and intricately woven into the fabric of the culture of the People. The several cultural groups in the Island have assimilated the related concepts with varying overtones. The overlaps in the shared cultural perspectives are more substantive than the varying overtones.

Figure 3

# THE SETTING FOR LEARNING

A SCHEMATIC REPRESENTATION



**THE SCHEMATIC CHART**

on the left depicts  
**THE LEARNER**  
CHILD AT HOME, PUPIL, SCHOOL  
WITHIN  
**THE TOTAL ENVIRONMENT**  
Physical, Biological, Social, Political, Economic.

It is in this total setting that PUPILS live and work. They see the world in this perspective. They see, think, speak & act in this frame work. It is, hence essential to look at design, implementation, evaluation & research on learning with these dimensions in view. The present exercise is one such activity.

One could raise questions such as.....

Does the pupil learn competencies relevant in LIVING ?  
Could he be helped to LEARN MORE EFFECTIVELY ?  
Who are the mediators in this Learning ?

It is clear from this scheme that any investigation of these & related issues must look at.....

The CLASSROOM - PUPILS, TEACHERS, ETC.,  
AND ALSO would benefit if focusing on  
THE HOME & FAMILY, THE COMMUNITY &  
THE MASS MEDIA.\*

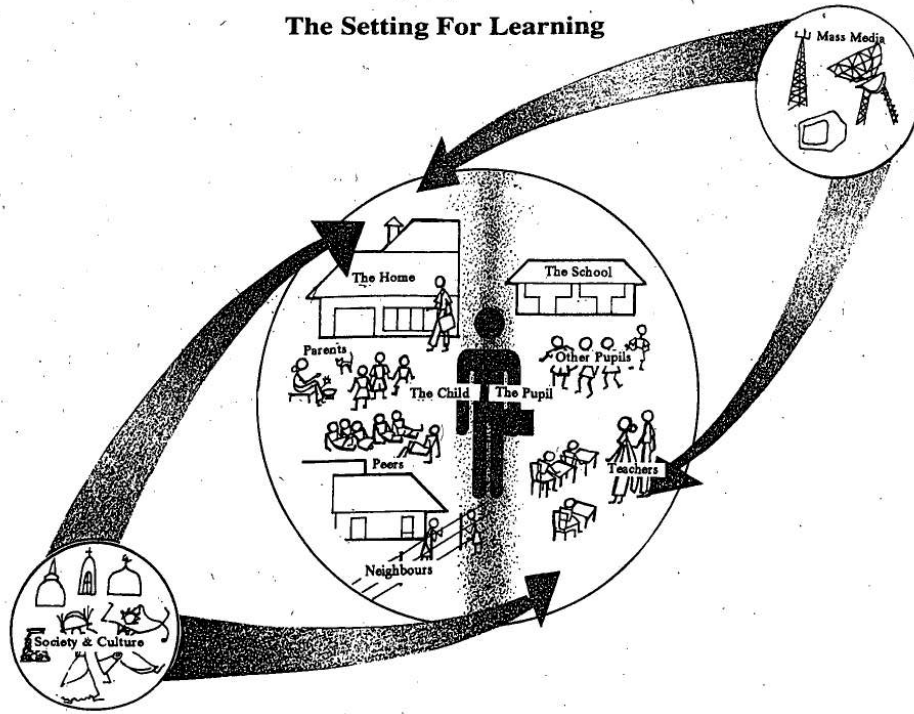
lines of strategy for seeking solutions, to the many problems that one sees all round, one must consider ALL the above Educational Agencies.

\*The COMMUNITY includes  
VISHARA, KOVIL, MASID & CHURCH and, of course the MARKET PLACE, ROAD,  
FARM, FACTORY WELLS or STAND TAP/TUBE WELLS, ETC

the MEDIA includes  
BOOKS, NEWS PAPERS, RADIO, TELEVISION, and other Electronic devices

Figure - 04

### The Setting For Learning



The shared VALUES, CULTURAL VIEW POINTS and CONCEPTS, as these apply to EDUCATION are summarised below :

**SHILPA - SHASTRA :: SKILLS - KNOWLEDGE**

A priceless gift, Parents could give

To their Sons and Daughters

To enable them to act skilfully ..... and with

Dignity and confidence, among the Competent and the Wise.

Out of the reach of robbers and enemies ;

Untouched by torrential rain and floods ;

Outside the grasp of irate rulers and despots ;

Well learnt SKILLS-KNOWLEDGE : the FUTURE secures.

VALUES : RIGHT and WRONG. And the proper use of TIME

Lazy and indolent, NEVER shall I be ;

Learning well and diligently : SKILLS - KNOWLEDGE.

Dignified and upright in all conduct ;

And above all, wasteful NEVER of unforgiving TIME.

Ensure duties be properly done—

Done in due time that which should be done ;

Desist from wrong, resist such resolutely,

If need be, unbendingly, risking LIFE itself.

These VALUES, SENSITIVITIES and PERCEPTIONS are already there in the cultural tradition. They are, today, dormant.

These cultural values need active RE-AWAKENING and imaginative ADAPTATION to fit them to serve the emerging functional needs of the future—2000 and beyond.

It is in such a socio-cultural setting that the System of Education in Sri Lanka exists and functions.

**THE SCHOOL SYSTEM**

**THE PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

A descriptive outline of the SCHOOL SYSTEM—The Primary and the Secondary Schools—will be presented in the sequel.

The description is divided into a series of sections and the relevant selected details are given under each of these sections :

1. Selected GENERAL FEATURES of the School System.
2. School STRUCTURES and TYPES.
3. QUANTITATIVE ASPECTS of SCHOOLS.
4. QUALITATIVE ASPECTS.
5. SCHOOL COSTS.
6. OTHER ASPECTS.

In treating each of these aspects the following general pattern will be followed :

A description in words is presented initially.

Selected data sets are placed in the text itself, as appropriate.

Provincial—District Data sets appear on a single page.

Specific deprived situations are noted in the text.

Graphical and schematic representations are given as needed.

As indicated in the Preface and introduction, the specific system aspects that are relevant to this initial report are given.

The presentation seeks to stress those particulars which are relevant to the priorities that are being indicated.

### **Selected GENERAL FEATURES of the School System**

The School System, along with Pre-Schools, forms, more or less, the BASE of the Education System.

It is the largest structure within education and consumes the bulk of the resources—Human, Materials and Time.

There are about 4.2 million Pupils. These Pupils are in the Age Range 5+ to 18+ years. They are sub-divided into the following sets of School Years :

Years 1 to 5 : Primary Years

Years 6 to 8 : Junior Secondary Years

Years 9 to 11 : Senior Secondary, ending in G.C.E., O.L.

Years 12 to 13 : Senior Secondary—G.C.E., A.L. Classes

The Pupils are in about 9900 schools, distributed throughout the island. The Primary Schools reach out to remote villages, town-lets, towns and large cities. The Schools serve ALL varying groups within Society.

About 187,000 Teachers help the pupils in their learning. These Teachers have varied backgrounds—socio-economically. Their level of readiness to teach is diverse—their qualifications range from G.C.E., O.L. and A.L., Teacher Education Certificate, Diplomas, University Degrees to Post-Graduate Degrees. In experience, the Teachers present a diversity in years of service and familiarity with the socio-cultural settings in the land.

Most Homes and Families have some link with the Schools. Some member has already studied in a school. Another may be a Pupil or a Teacher in a school today. Almost everyone has a linkage with the School System.

The Schools are a set of social institutions which have evolved over a period of time to provide a variety of services to society. Some of these services, the families, on their own could not provide in a manner that is adequate in a rapidly changing society.

The School System is a massive complex ; it is scattered, and diffused. Such systems respond to change of direction, but only slowly.

There is no recent legislative or analogous document that specifies functions in a clear, detailed and comprehensive manner. A systems description, such as is given in this Chapter, should include such statements relating to functions. An attempt is made below to sketch briefly how these functional aspects of Schools could be perceived, by Society, Parents and others. Some of these perceptions are not always articulated ; and these are often only tacitly recognized.

#### Functional aspects of Schools :

1. The Schools have a custodial function. The Schools are responsible for looking after the Children within school hours and when the Pupils are in and around the School—at work or at play. Basic services such as water for drinking, sanitation facilities, a place to eat and first aid, should be available. These functions should be overseen by the School Authorities.

There are omissions and shortcomings to be filled in. Even when facilities exist, concerned supervision does not always obtain.

2. The School should initiate the Pupil into the elements of the culture within the Community. This will include an enriching pattern of socialisation that the Family could not cope with on their own resources. This function, perhaps does take place ; but is often poorly directed and then with only little deliberate attention.
3. In addition to the custodial and socialisation functions, Schools address, more formally, through its Teaching and Learning Activities, another complex of functions, sketched below :

The Pupil is guided to.....

..... Learn to listen, to speak, to read, to write, to learn "Graphic Arts"—express and record directions and ideas in line, form and colour ; achieve a competence in one's Language and Literature. More than one language may be needed in today's world.

..... Learn to count, calculate, measure systematically.

..... Learn functional knowledge and skills in regard to Nutrition, Sanitation, etc. relevant to maintaining good health. This entails the proper use of air, water, food, awareness of simple health care, common diseases, and caring for oneself and others.

..... Learn the functional aspects of food, clothing and shelter. This entails a knowledge of 'Matter & Energy' and its application to food, clothing and shelter. The above also includes simple land use, farm skills, use of simple tools in and around the home.

..... Learn about one's country, its geography, history and cultural heritage. This is a prerequisite to 'Values Learning' and a basis for sensitively perceiving the 'Future'.

..... Learn about Nature and Natural Resources—their use with conservation. This leads to an awareness of the Living and Non-Living world—simple experimental sciences.

..... Learn about modes of transport and communication, and become able to use simple everyday appliances.

..... Learn the ethical, moral, religious codes and practices in everyday living, evolving a deep and abiding concerns for one another ; and learning significant “ Values ”.

..... Learn to derive joy through play, athletics, sports, team work, competitions, recreation, relaxation and rest. Engage in aesthetic and creative activities for pleasure and profit.

..... Learn to cope with complexities, uncertainties and rapid change—meet the unforeseen, natural and man-made disasters, discriminately select information, become self-confident, self-directed with the all-important competence : “ Learn to Learn ”.

A sketch of the functional services that schools should render to society have been given. It is most unlikely that any given individual or family will articulate these functional services comprehensively, consistently and in pragmatic terms. But interaction with individuals shows that many, among them, have such expectations from the School System.

The recognition of such a set of functions of the system may enable one to assess qualitatively how the School System fulfils these expectations. Such modes of assessment—formal and informal—should exist within an adequately functioning system. There is only little evidence of such assessments in the School System as it is now operating in Sri Lanka.

In the early years, many school activities involve direct or indirect simulated “Play”, of diverse forms and types. These activities provide opportunities for healthy enjoyment and fun. These experiences are essentials of childhood. Childhood is unique, short and intense. It is the most fruitful years for effective, enduring and imaginative learning.

Field observations do not show much evidence of such “ Play ”. One does see children playing ; but concerned participation with affection is seen only rarely. The infusion of some concerned affection and “ fun ” during learning—in the classroom and in the field—may ensure better and more durable learning. Such situations will contribute to greater emotional stability and a sense of security. Both these outcomes—stability and security are critical in the increasingly uncertain, complex and crowded world of tomorrow, in which these children in the classrooms will live and work.

Even more exacting will be the task of fitting the young, at the end of Schooling, to “ Life and the World of Work ”.



**Selected SCHOOL STRUCTURES and TYPES**

School Structures will be described as follows :

PRIMARY SCHOOL STRUCTURE	5 Years
JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STRUCTURE	3 Years
SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL—ending in G.C.E., O.L.	3 Years
SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL—G.C.E., A.L.	2-Years

Thus, the total structure will be 5 + 3 + 3 + 2

No uniformly accepted and legislatively sanctioned set of school structures operate in the country. A diversity of different structures obtain. Several "Types" of Schools are recognisable.

In fact, the functional aspect of the school is not primarily the "School Type" but the variety of "Course Combinations" that are available to the Pupils in the School.

The School Census classifies Schools as follows :

- Type 1AB : with G.C.E., A.L. Arts, Commerce and Science
- Type 1C : with G.C.E., A.L. Arts and Commerce only
- Type 2 : with G.C.E., O.L. only
- Type 3 : with Classes up to 6 or 8 Years only

In 1991, there were 523 1AB Schools. Of these 153 were in the W.P. ; 24 were in the N.C.P.. This corresponds to a distribution of 25% in the W.P. and 5% in the N.C.P.. In regard to 1AB Schools Polonnaruwa and Moneragala are the most deprived. For 1C the disparities are not as marked. The picture for the Island is presented on pages 44, 45 & 46, Tables 3, 4 & 5.

There are included in the above, a group of large schools managed directly by the Ministry of Education. These are the 'National Schools'. These invariably have the Structures 5 + 3 + 3 + 2 or 3 + 3 + 2 and are of the 1AB Type. These are located in or near urban areas. These are among the most sought after schools in the country.

From a functional point of view, the significant provision relates to the variety of courses available in a school. In the public eye, it is the G.C.E., Advanced Level Courses that appear most important. The patterns of provision of the Advanced Level Classes in the Island is presented in Table 6 and in map (Page 77 - 78).

The following characteristics could be noted :

The enrolment in the A.L. Classes varies from about 10,300 in the U.P. to 46,100 in the W.P.. District-wise the range is from about 600 in Vavuniya to 22,100 in Colombo. Some of the low enrolments are in Killinochchi, Manner, Mulativu, Moneragala, Trincomalee and Polonnaruwa.

Table 3

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION — SCHOOL CENSUS 1991  
CLASSIFICATION OF SCHOOLS — SRI LANKA

1AB, 1C, 2 &amp; 3

Each of above as a percentage of the type of Schools in the Island

	%1AB	%1C	%2	%3	Total
	1	2	3	4	5
1. Western Province	15	25	15	19	11
1. Colombo District	4	11	5	6	3
2. Gampaha District	6	8	5	7	5
3. Kalutara District	5	6	5	6	3
2. Central Province	15	11	15	13	17
4. Kandy District	7	7	8	7	7
5. Matale District	3	2	4	3	3
6. Nuwara Eliya District	5	2	3	3	7
3. Southern Province	12	12	15	13	10
7. Galle District	5	6	6	5	4
8. Matara District	4	4	5	4	4
9. Hambantota District	3	2	4	4	2
4. Northern Province	9	11	4	7	12
10. Jaffna District	5	8	2	4	6
11. Killinochchi District	1	1	4	5	1
12. Manner District	1	1	5	1	1
13. Mulativu District	1	7	3	5	1
14. Vavuniya District	1	5	7	1	3
5. North Western Province	13	12	17	15	10
15. Kurunegala District	10	8	15	11	7
16. Puttalam District	3	4	2	4	3
6. Sabaragamuwa Province	12	10	11	12	13
17. Kegalla District	6	4	6	6	7
18. Ratnapura District	6	6	5	6	6
7. North Central Province	8	5	8	8	8
19. Anuradhapura District	6	4	6	5	6
20. Polonnaruwa District	2	1	2	3	2
8. Eastern Province	8	8	7	5	11
21. Batticaloa District	3	2	1	1	4
22. Ampara District	3	4	3	2	5
23. Trincomalee District	2	2	3	2	3
9. Uva Province	8	6	8	8	8
22. Badulla District	6	5	6	5	6
23. Moneragala District	2	1	2	3	2
THE ISLAND	100	100	100	100	100

Table 4

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION — SCHOOL CENSUS 1991  
CLASSIFICATION OF SCHOOLS — SRI LANKA

IAB, IC, 2 &amp; 3

Each of above as a percentage of the Schools in the Districts/Provinces

	%IAB	%IC	%2	%3	Total
	1	2	3	4	5
1. Western Province	9	16	44	31	100
1. Colombo District	13	17	45	25	100
2. Gampaha District	8	15	41	36	100
3. Kalutara District	6	16	46	32	100
2. Central Province	4	16	30	50	100
4. Kandy District	6	18	34	42	100
5. Matale District	3	19	31	47	100
6. Nuwara Eliya District	3	11	24	62	100
3. Southern Province	5	19	39	37	100
7. Galle District	6	19	33	42	100
8. Matara District	5	22	39	34	100
9. Hambantota District	4	16	47	33	100
4. Northern Province	7	8	27	58	100
10. Jaffna District	9	8	30	53	100
11. Killinochchi District	8	9	24	59	100
12. Mannar District	5	9	29	57	100
13. Mulativu District	5	6	22	67	100
14. Vavuniya District	2	9	21	67	100
5. North Western Province	5	20	41	34	100
15. Kurunegala District	4	23	40	33	100
16. Puttalam District	6	11	43	40	100
6. Sabaragamuwa Province	4	14	35	47	100
17. Kegalla District	4	14	35	47	100
18. Ratnapura District	5	14	35	46	100
7. North Central Province	3	17	37	43	100
19. Anuradhapura District	3	16	34	47	100
20. Polonnaruwa District	3	18	43	36	100
8. Eastern Province	5	13	23	59	100
21. Batticaloa District	5	8	17	70	100
22. Ampara District	6	14	24	56	100
23. Trincomalee District	5	19	28	48	100
9. Uva Province	4	16	38	42	100
24. Badulla District	5	17	33	45	100
25. Moneragala District	2	15	50	33	100
THE ISLAND	5	16	36	43	100

Table 5

## PUPIL POPULATION IN SRI LANKA — 1990

in

Yrs. 1-5, 6-8, 9-11 &amp; 12-13

Each of above as a percentage of Enrolments of Districts/Provinces

	<i>Pr.</i> <i>1-5</i> <i>1</i>	<i>Ju. Se.</i> <i>6-8</i> <i>2</i>	<i>Se. Se.</i> <i>9-11</i> <i>3</i>	<i>A. L.</i> <i>12-13</i> <i>4</i>	<i>Total</i> <i>5</i>
1. Western Province	20	23	25	26	22
1. Colombo District	7	9	10	13	9
2. Gampaha District	8	9	9	8	8
3. Kalutara District	5	5	6	5	5
2. Central Province	14	13	13	12	12
4. Kandy District	7	7	7	8	6
5. Matale District	3	2	3	2	3
6. Nuwara Eliya District	4	3	3	2	4
3. Southern Province	13	13	14	16	13
7. Galle District	5	5	6	7	6
8. Matara District	4	4	5	5	4
9. Hambantota District	4	3	3	4	3
4. Northern Province	8	8	7	8	8
10. Jaffna District	5	5	5	7	5
11. Killinochchi District	1	6	5	4	7
12. Mannar District	1	7	4	5	7
13. Mulativu District	6	5	3	5	5
14. Vavuniya District	1	1	4	5	6
5. North Western Province	12	12	12	12	12
15. Kurunegala District	8	9	9	10	9
16. Puttalam District	4	3	3	2	3
6. Sabaragamuwa Province	10	10	10	10	10
17. Kegalla District	4	4	5	5	4
18. Ratnapura District	6	6	5	5	6
7. North Central Province	7	7	6	4	7
19. Anuradhapura District	5	5	5	3	5
20. Polonnaruwa District	2	2	1	1	2
8. Eastern Province	9	6	5	6	7
21. Batticaloa District	3	2	1	2	2
22. Ampara District	4	3	3	3	3
23. Trincomalee District	2	1	1	1	2
9. Uva Province	7	6	6	5	7
24. Badulla District	5	4	4	4	5
25. Moneragala District	2	2	2	1	2
THE ISLAND	50	24	21	4	100

**Table 6**  
**SCHOOL CENSUS — 1991**  
**Ministry of Education — Sri Lanka**  
**Analysis of Enrolments : Yrs. 12-13**  
**in Arts, Commerce & Science**

	Total	Arts	Arts %	Com.	Com. %	Sci.	Sci. %
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Western Province	461	112	24	192	42	157	34
1. Colombo District	221	36	16	99	45	68	39
2. Gampaha District	137	37	27	59	43	41	30
3. Kalutara District	103	40	38	34	33	30	29
2. Central Province	265	126	47	74	28	66	25
4. Kandy District	189	85	45	53	28	51	27
5. Matale District	42	26	61	8	19	8	20
6. Nuwara Eliya District	33	15	46	12	37	6	18
3. Southern Province	286	137	48	72	25	77	27
7. Galle District	126	53	42	37	29	36	29
8. Matara District	90	44	48	24	27	22	25
9. Hambantota District	70	40	57	11	16	19	27
4. Northern Province	155	55	35	50	32	50	32
10. Jaffna District	122	38	31	41	33	44	36
11. Killinochchi District	9	4	48	3	30	2	22
12. Mannar District	10	5	48	3	32	2	20
13. Mulativu District	8	4	57	2	24	1	19
14. Vavuniya District	6	3	53	1	23	1	24
5. North Western Province	225	133	59	46	20	46	21
15. Kurunegala District	176	110	62	31	18	35	20
16. Puttalam District	49	23	47	15	30	11	23
6. Sabaragamuwa Province	181	97	53	41	23	43	24
17. Kegalla District	94	52	54	20	22	22	24
18. Ratnapura District	86	45	52	21	24	21	24
7. North Central Province	82	46	57	19	23	17	20
19. Anuradhapura District	54	31	57	11	21	12	22
20. Polonnaruwa District	27	50	56	7	21	5	17
8. Eastern Province	121	63	52	29	24	29	24
21. Batticaloa District	36	20	54	8	23	8	23
22. Ampara District	65	33	51	15	23	17	26
23. Trincomalee District	20	11	53	6	30	3	17
9. Uva Province	103	54	53	27	26	22	22
24. Badulla District	84	42	50	23	27	19	23
25. Moneragala District	19	12	61	4	23	3	16
<b>THE ISLAND</b>	<b>1878</b>	<b>822</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>549</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>507</b>	<b>27</b>



The percentage of this enrolment pursuing Science varies from 15 to 17% in Moneragala, Polonnaruwa and Trincomalee to 39 and 36% in Colombo and Jaffna. In the Districts with low Science Enrolments, the Arts percentages are high — Moneragala is 61%.

For the Island as a whole, the pattern of participation is —

Arts: 44% ; Commerce: 29% ; Science: 27%.

All of the above data should also be looked at in relation to the feeder classes at the G.C.E., O.L. in the particular Districts. This will indicate relative shortfalls which occur in provision in the short term, i.e. the five years ahead.

The data should be compared with the “mother populations” in the corresponding age groups in the Districts. This will be done as soon as the 1991 Census provides Single-Year Age Groups.

### Quantitative Aspects of Schools

—Pupils, Teachers, and the Distribution Patterns

#### Participation Patterns

In 1991, “A Profile of Child Development in Sri Lanka” has been Published by the Human Resources Development Division, National Planning Department and Ministry of Policy Planning and Implementation. Relevant extracts from this profile are presented in Tables and Figures (pages 50, 51, 52 & 53).

The following features are significant :

The data covers the period 1900 to 1988, for the Island.

The age Specific Participation Rates are given for 1971 and 1981. No Census data are available for 1991.

The general pattern indicates a relatively rapid increase in the middle of the century followed by a reduction in the rates of change.

The following are illustrative :

The School Participation Rates have reached the mid-eighties and remains with little change.

Literacy Rate for the Population 10 and over has also reached the mid-eighties and tends to remain more or less static.

These are the most general features of the main quantitative changes that have taken place in the past five or six decades.

It is significant to note how the participation patterns linked to poverty have changed with time. A special tabulation sheds some light on this important feature. Table 8 on page 52 refers to this aspect. The participation of the “poor” in the Education Services has increased substantially between 1970 and 1987.

TABLE 7  
Growth of Educational Facilities, 1900 — 1988

Category	1900	1910	1920	1931	1935	1945	1950	1955	1960	1965	1970	1975	1980	1984	1988
School Total	3917	4215	4391	4202	4268	5726	5487	7011	8046	9550	9931	9675	9794	9914	10231
Government	500	759	919	1341	1560	2391	3200	3686	4394	8361	8748	8622	9117	9556	9741
Assisted	1328	1910	2122	2861	2708	3335	3225	3261	3652	1086	1097	1098	640	321	431
Unaided	2089	1546	1350	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	62	64	n.a.	103	86	44	37	37	59
Students Total	204234	336374	397950	557250	670564	867191	1366742	1665796	2301568	2556191	2716187	2560479	3389776	3625897	4083773
Government	48642	96600	131270	216067	274518	378861	690750	863849	1332941	2383968	2550151	2431626	3280787	3539096	3962992
Assisted	120751	203020	238974	341183	396046	488330	669252	785659	968627	111712	109170	84117	54011	28143	
Unaided	34841	36754	27706	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	6740	16288	n.a.	60511	56866	44736	54978	58658	120781
Teachers Total	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	18242	19243	25581	39256	50151	69658	91981	96426	104043	141186	140192	147578
Government	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	10320	18561	24095	38926	85953	90672	99067	136714	13514	141202
Assisted	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	15261	20378	25270	30772	3116	3146	2152	2193	2363	
Unaided	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	317	786	n.a.	2912	2608	2024	2279	2315	6376
Literacy Rate	1091	1911	1921	1931	1935	1946		1953	1963		1971		1981		
Both Sexes	26.4	31.0	39.9	n.a.	n.a.	57.8		65.4	71.6		78.5		91.1		
Male	42.0	47.2	56.4	n.a.	n.a.	70.1		75.9	79.3		85.6		91.1		
Female	8.5	12.5	21.2	n.a.	n.a.	43.8		53.6	63.2		70.9		83.2		
Participation Rate															
5-9 Both Sexes									74.0		60.9		84.3		
Male									74.3		60.9		84.3		
Female									73.6		60.2		84.1		
10-14 Both Sexes									75.2		69.9		82.3		
Male									79.4		72.1		82.9		
Female									70.8		67.6		81.7		
15-19 Both Sexes									40.2		34.5		42.0		
Male									44.2		36.5		41.1		
Female									36.0		32.4		42.9		
5-19 Both Sexes	16.5	24.0	30.8	34.6	38.3	54.1	57.1	65.4	68.0	62.6	56.3	56.6	70.0	70.0	70.0
Male								68.0	68.0	62.6	57.9	56.6	70.0	70.0	70.0
Female								62.6	62.6	62.6	56.6	56.6	70.0	70.0	70.0

Note : n.a. = Not available.

(1) from 1961 this category only estate and priverna schools.

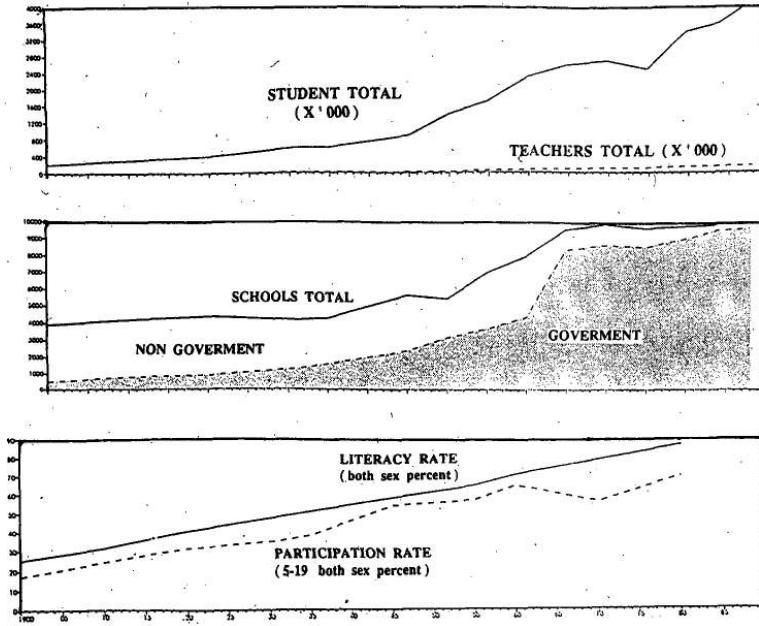
(2) from 1961 onwards this category includes private fee levying and non-fee levying schools.

Sources : Data on schools, students, and teachers up to 1955 was obtained from the Administrative Reports, and thereafter, from the Statistical Abstracts of the Department of Census and Statistics. Literacy and participation rates from 1963 onwards were obtained from the Population Census (Department of Census and Statistics, 1965).



Figure - 5

### Educational Development : Sri Lanka 1900 - 1989



**Table 8**

Participation Rates\* of the Poor\*\* and Non-poor in Education by Age, 1969/70, 1980/81, 1986/87 (%)

Age Group	1969/70			1980/81			1986/87		
	Poor	Non-Poor	All	Poor	Non-Poor	All	Poor	Non-Poor	All
05-09	68	78	74	71	77	74	79	86	83
10-14	73	83	79	80	85	83	88	93	91
15-19	29	43	39	40	50	46	43	59	54
20-24	3	9	7	5	11	8	4	10	8

Notes: \* The number declared as "students" taken as a percentage of the total population in that age and income group. The age of entry into school was 5 years in all years. Disaggregated data by sector is not available.

\*\* The poor are defined as the population living in the poorest 35% of households classified according to total household income.

Sources: Department of Census & Statistics (1974) Special Tabulations.  
Department of Census & Statistics (1983) Special Tabulations.  
Central Bank of Ceylon (1970).

**Table 9**

School Drop-Out Ratios\* by Grade, Selected Years, 1986-90

Grade	1966/67	1970/71	1973/74	1977/78	1980/81	1986/87	1989/90
I	19	5	4	1	1	2	2
II	8	2	4	2	1	3	3
III	11	7	10	4	4	4	4
IV	14	8	11	4	5	6	5
V	14	8	13	5	6	6	6
VI	14	11	11	3	6	7	6
VII	13	9	12	2	6	7	7
VIII	12	11	14	2	7	8	8

Notes: \* For example, the Drop-out ratio for 1982/83 for Grade 4 is calculated as the number of students who left school between March 1982 in Grade 4 and March 1983 in Grade 5 : number in Grade 4 as of March 1982. Since the School Census is taken in March of each year, the calculation is not done for the calendar year.

Source: Ministry of Education, School Census.

**Table 10**

Percentage of Repeaters\* by Grade, Selected Years 1986 - 90

Grade	1966/67	1970/71	1975/76	1977/78	1980/81	1986/87	1989/90
L.K.G	7	8	7				
I	21	28	15	16	12	9	9
II	20	20	14	13	12	9	9
III	18	18	20	12	12	9	9
IV	16	16	15	11	11	8	7
V	13	14	13	12	9	6	7
VI	13	10	9	6	7	5	5
VII	13	7	7	5	6	3	4
VIII	13	4	7	5	6	3	3

Notes : \* Repeaters in Grade 10 are the number in Grade 10 in year 2 who were in Grade 10 in year 1 : No. in Grade 10 in year 1.

Source : Ministry of Education. School Censuses.

The participation rates for the poor for the Age Group 5-9, Age Group 10-14 and Age Group 15-19 increased faster than the participation rates for the 'non-poor'. This narrowed the disparities that existed in 1970. (Table 8, Page 52).

Two additional quantitative descriptors of a School System are the following :

School Drop-out Ratios by Grade,  
Percentage of Repeaters by Grade

These are given for a series of years 1966/67 to 1989/90. This is tabulated in Table 9 & 10, Page 52 & 53.

The principal characteristics are the following :

Drop-out Ratios were high in 1966/67. These have become lower in 1970/71.

Drop-out Ratios have reached a very low value in 1977/78 and then increased.

At present, these ratios show little improvement.

Repeater patterns have changed, progressively becoming less and less. At present, there is little change.

Both drop-outs and repeaters entail additional direct costs for a school system. Moreover, such drop-out and repetition affect the Pupils psychologically and sociologically, leading to other social costs. Such pupils could end with deviant behaviours and a sense of social rejection, arising from the experiences.

**Table 11**  
**Participation Rates in Education by Age, Sex and District 1971, 1981**  
**(Percentages)**

District	Sex	1971				1981			
		05-19	05-09	10-14	15-19	05-19	05-09	10-14	15-19
Kegalle	T	60.0	63.7	74.3	38.8	77.3	89.6	88.6	52.2
	M	60.3	64.4	75.6	38.7	77.0	89.7	88.7	50.2
	F	59.1	63.0	72.9	38.9	77.6	89.6	88.5	54.2
Matara	T	61.5	65.4	74.9	40.9	76.1	88.1	87.4	50.2
	M	62.6	65.5	76.7	41.4	76.1	88.4	87.2	48.5
	F	60.4	65.3	73.1	40.4	76.2	87.9	87.5	51.8
Gampaha	T					75.5	91.1	88.8	46.0
	M					75.5	91.2	89.0	45.2
	F					75.5	91.0	88.5	46.8
Galle	T	61.7	65.5	75.3	41.1	75.1	88.8	86.3	47.8
	M	63.4	65.5	77.3	20.1	75.0	88.6	86.2	46.7
	F	60.0	65.5	73.3	38.3	75.2	88.9	86.4	48.9
Kalutara	T	61.7	66.0	77.5	38.7	74.6	88.9	86.3	46.1
	M	63.2	66.5	78.7	41.1	74.5	89.0	86.6	44.2
	F	60.3	65.5	76.2	36.4	74.8	88.8	86.0	48.0
Kandy	T	56.8	60.1	70.3	36.6	73.6	87.3	84.7	47.4
	M	59.3	61.3	73.4	39.6	74.3	87.6	85.5	47.1
	F	54.2	59.0	67.0	33.6	73.0	86.9	83.8	47.6
Jaffna	T	64.7	67.4	78.5	44.9	73.5	84.4	85.1	50.0
	M	67.1	67.7	79.9	50.9	74.0	84.3	85.3	51.3
	F	62.2	67.0	77.1	39.0	73.0	84.5	84.8	48.8
Kurunegala	T	56.9	63.7	70.6	32.8	72.9	89.4	85.3	42.7
	M	57.6	63.9	71.8	33.0	71.9	89.2	84.4	40.5
	F	56.2	63.4	69.2	32.6	73.8	89.7	86.2	44.9
Hambantota	T	52.8	60.4	66.6	27.1	72.4	89.1	84.8	41.0
	M	53.2	61.0	67.4	26.2	71.0	89.1	83.8	37.4
	F	52.4	59.8	65.7	28.0	73.9	89.1	85.8	44.7
Colombo	T	61.4	64.9	77.0	40.3	72.0	88.6	86.5	43.1
	M	62.3	65.1	78.4	42.1	71.4	88.8	87.2	41.7
	F	60.4	64.8	75.6	38.3	72.7	88.4	85.8	44.6
Ratnapura	T	50.8	56.2	63.8	29.4	69.2	85.1	81.2	38.7
	M	51.9	57.1	65.9	29.5	68.4	85.4	81.3	36.0
	F	49.8	55.3	61.7	29.3	70.1	84.7	81.1	41.6
Matale	T	52.4	58.4	64.7	29.4	69.1	84.6	81.5	39.6
	M	53.7	58.9	67.0	30.1	68.6	84.3	81.2	37.9
	F	51.1	57.8	62.3	28.7	69.6	84.3	81.8	41.2
Sri Lanka	T	56.3	60.9	69.9	34.5	70.2	85.6	82.5	40.9
	M	57.9	61.6	72.1	36.5	70.3	85.9	82.9	40.1
	F	54.6	60.2	67.6	32.4	70.2	85.4	82.0	41.8

Table 11 (Contd.)

Participation Rates in Education by Age, Sex and District 1971, 1981  
(Percentages)

District	Sex	1971				1981			
		05-19	05-09	10-14	15-19	05-19	05-09	10-14	15-19
Anuradhapura	T	49.9	57.2	62.4	24.7	68.6	86.7	81.8	34.2
	M	50.7	58.1	64.3	24.7	67.9	86.7	82.0	32.9
	F	49.1	56.4	60.2	24.6	69.3	86.7	81.6	35.6
Badulla	T	51.1	54.2	64.0	30.3	67.8	82.4	80.2	39.5
	M	55.1	56.3	69.6	34.7	69.6	83.4	82.8	40.9
	F	47.1	52.2	53.4	25.8	65.9	81.5	77.4	38.2
Puttalam	T	49.8	58.2	62.9	24.3	65.6	84.3	77.4	31.2
	M	52.1	58.2	66.3	27.6	66.2	84.3	78.1	32.1
	F	47.5	58.1	59.4	21.0	65.0	84.3	76.6	30.2
Moneragala	T	43.4	49.1	54.4	20.4	64.2	79.5	78.8	32.3
	M	44.9	50.7	57.3	20.8	63.1	79.7	78.6	30.6
	F	41.9	47.4	51.5	20.0	65.4	79.3	79.0	34.3
Polonnaruwa	T	51.2	60.3	64.5	22.5	63.6	86.7	77.5	27.6
	M	47.1	60.6	55.8	20.3	59.7	86.5	75.1	23.0
	F	55.7	60.0	73.8	25.2	68.1	87.1	80.1	33.8
Vavuniya	T	51.9	59.1	64.6	26.2	60.9	75.8	73.2	29.4
	M	52.8	60.0	66.4	28.0	61.8	76.6	74.6	30.1
	F	50.9	58.3	62.6	23.9	60.0	75.1	71.8	28.7
Amparai	T	44.6	53.7	52.7	18.5	60.7	78.3	71.9	29.8
	M	48.0	55.0	57.8	22.7	63.3	80.1	74.5	32.3
	F	41.1	52.4	47.4	14.3	57.9	76.2	69.2	27.1
Nuwara Eliya	T	48.7	53.8	61.0	27.2	60.3	74.8	73.7	30.4
	M	53.8	56.4	67.8	33.2	63.9	76.4	78.5	33.4
	F	43.5	51.2	54.2	21.3	56.7	73.2	68.7	27.3
Trincomalee	T	45.3	49.8	56.6	23.4	60.2	76.6	71.0	28.6
	M	47.7	51.0	60.5	26.0	61.5	71.2	73.4	30.0
	F	42.9	48.6	52.3	20.5	58.8	76.1	68.5	26.9
Mullaitivu	T					58.2	77.5	68.3	24.8
	M					56.5	77.5	66.3	24.4
	F					60.1	77.6	70.5	25.3
Mannar	T	49.2	59.9	62.6	16.6	56.4	74.5	67.5	25.3
	M	52.9	61.3	68.8	20.6	56.5	74.7	68.3	25.6
	F	45.6	58.5	56.5	12.4	56.3	74.3	66.7	24.9
Batticaloa	T	40.5	47.2	47.3	20.8	56.6	73.8	62.1	24.9
	M	43.1	48.1	50.4	25.1	56.6	73.8	62.7	27.0
	F	37.8	46.3	44.1	16.6	54.6	73.8	61.5	23.0

Source : Department of Census & Statistics (1976).  
Department of Census & Statistics (1985).

Both the drop-outs and repeaters are linked, at least partially, to the socio-economic development level that obtains in the District. Indicators of such levels are presented in Table 2 and Bar Charts given on Pages 33.

At the sametime, these features are known to be functionally associated with the needs of the labour of the child in the farm or in the home. This raises the issue of School Days and Farm Practices - such as harvesting, field preparation.

The General Education System of Primary or Secondary Schools is highly accessible. A third of the Pupils travel about 3 km; of the other two thirds, the majority appear to travel less than 8 km. The pattern of travel to the prestigious schools may be somewhat different.

Financial constraints have been reduced by subsidies for bus and train travel. A significant number of the larger schools have residential hostels. A scheme of scholarships gives support to the very needy children.

The participation rates — District-wise — is in Table 11 on Page 54 & 55. These have a correspondence to the Socio-economic Indices given in Table 2 Page 32. The picture for 1991 is likely to be analogous. The low participation in 1991 are most likely to be in Puttalam, Moneragala, Polonnaruwa, Vavuniya, Ampara, Nuwara Eliya, Trincomalee, Mulativu, Mannar and Batticaloa. Apart from transport, housing, water, sanitation, health and family income, parental education would be expected to play a part. Other cultural factors operate in a few special cases.

For males and females the participation is not disparate; in the later years; female participation is higher. Again, in special cases cultural determinants play a part.

Special "pockets of deprivation", arising from specifics of demography, terrain, socio-economic isolation, and historical antecedents are seen. Three such namely the "Small Schools" "Plantation Sector Schools" and "Another Aspect of Deprivation" are described in the pages immediately following.

These are over-lapping groups of schools. These have problems in common. The "Small Schools" number about 2000; the "Plantation Sector Schools" number about 800. Some specific details are in the several pages following this one. (Pages 57 - 60).

The School Census for 1990 and 1991 (provisional) are available. And selected data from these are placed in an Annexe for ready reference.

The complete analyses of this data sets will require demographic information, specially the single year age-group corresponding to the School Years. The deferment of the Population Census 1991 places a constraint on such analyses.

As soon as this gap is filled or more consistent projections are developed, the further analyses will be pursued and the findings included in a subsequent report.

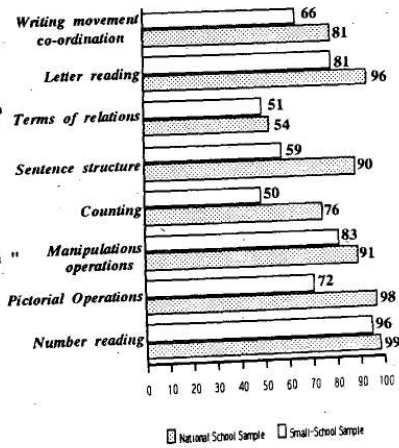
However, a tentative set of School Enrolment Projections have been developed.....

District by District ;  
By School Years (1-5, 6-8, 9-11, 12-13).

## SMALL SCHOOLS IN SRI LANKA and Initial Strategies Towards Their Development

Tucked away in remote rural pockets of Sri Lanka, among the hills, in the plantations, in new settlement areas, along the coast and in the midst of overcrowded urban dwellings, sometimes in the shadow of popular schools are the schools with a student population around 150 - 100 or less, which has earned them the commonly used title " Small Schools of Sri Lanka "

The small schools add up to about 2000 or 22% of the total number of schools catering to Primary School children in Sri Lanka.

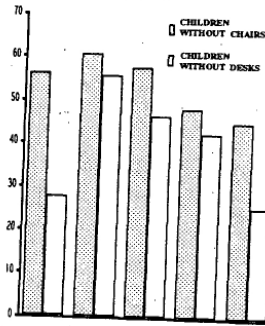


Behaviour profile at entry to Year 1

THE SMALL SCHOOL HAS TO BE VIEWED IN THE CONTEXT OF ITS SETTING AND THE TOTALITY OF ITS PROBLEMS.

THE MULTI-FACETTED NATURE OF THE PROBLEM URGENTLY CALLS FOR A MULTI-PRONGED APPROACH.

Availability of Desk & Chairs  
Baseline Data



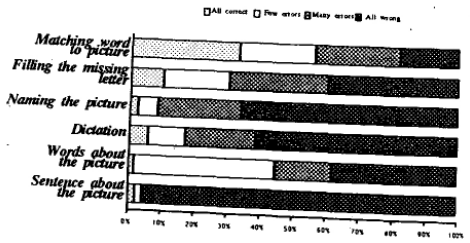
... These schools cater mainly to children of... the poorest of the poor.

... These schools have been neglected and forgotten ... parents of these schools have been less demanding, less competitive and prone to accept their lot ...

... Inadequate school furniture portrays the neglect and lack of concern for these schools ...

... The isolated nature of the small school, inadequate appreciation of any good work done and lack of supervisory and advisory help, are constraints in developing the school. ...

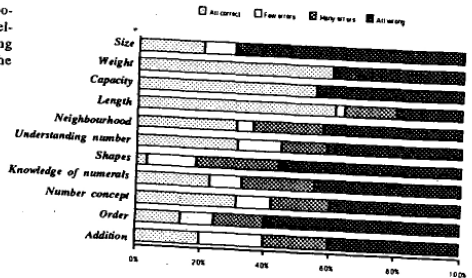
Year 1 Language & Mathematics  
LANGUAGE  
(baseline data)



... These are children whose attainment levels in Mathematics and Language are below the expected grade level... yet whose deepseated urge to learn is not lost ...

... Harnessing of the potential of parents in developing the school ... a lasting source of strength to the community ...

Mathematics baseline data





## PLANTATION SECTOR SCHOOLS ---

---Deprivation recognized...  
...Charting Progress.

**THE PLANTATION SECTOR SCHOOL** -- a set of deprived schools, like the "Small Schools" described earlier. A considerable number of these schools are a sub-set of the large set of small deprived schools.

The pattern of deprivation, educationally, is essentially such as described for the "Small Schools".

These schools also have remained, more or less forgotten for a considerable period of time. They have been untouched by many earlier development efforts. But, today, a concerted programme of upgrading is being implemented, resources are being systematically channeled and development is underway.

These are small and medium size schools that have major deficits in physical plant. But more critically these had poorly qualified teaching staff.

Three are about 800 small schools in Badulla, Homagama, Kandy, Kalutara, Kegalle, Matale, Nuwara Eliya and Ratnapura.

Development has been initiated in some Districts such as Nuwara Eliya; others are being taken up for development progressively.

A principal problem that confronted this development effort was the unavailability of qualified teachers. This issue has been addressed by the evolution of a Teacher Education College with specific commitments to resolving this need.

The special deficit, as elsewhere, was in the field of English, Mathematics and Science Teaching.

The Sri Pada College of Education in particular, keeps this problem in focus.

Already progress is seen. A specific case is that, at the Year 5 Scholarship Test. The Project Schools in the Nuwara Eliya District have performed better than the Non-Project Schools in the same District.

Number of Project Schools	— 133 : No. passed	— 118
Number of Non-Project Schools	— 105 : No. passed	— 39

## ACHIEVEMENT IN MATHEMATICS AND LANGUAGE

1987 Project Schools	No. of Pupils		Mean	
	Baseline	Impact	Baseline	Impact
Year 2 — Mathematics	517	567	56	61
— Language	509	567	39	47
Control Schools				
— Mathematics	186	244	54	55
— language	186	244	47	42

## ANOTHER ASPECT OF DEPRIVATION

Progressive social and educational development since the 1940s such as free primary, secondary and tertiary education and ancillary welfare services led to the rapid expansion of educational opportunities in the 1950s and 1960s with the establishment of a network of schools and equal participation of boys and girls in education. In the 1980s there has been a slowing down in progress toward universalizing primary education, despite relatively high economic growth rates in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

- (i) The consumer Finances and Socio-economic Survey Report (1981/82) of the Central Bank drew attention to a 'mild reversal' in increasing participation and literacy rates of school age children in the age group 5-19 years between 1978/79 and 1981/82. The labour Force and Socio-economic Survey of 1985/86 found that 21.1% of boys and 22.0% of girls of the 5-9 age group had never been to school. Child labour too appears to have increased. The economic activity rate of the 10-14 age group which has declined steadily over the years to 5.6% of boys and 3/4% of girls in 1981, has increased to 6.8% of boys and 4.2% of girls by 1985/86.

A study by the Ministry of Education in the slums and shanties in Colombo city 1984 showed that 20% of 0-8 years olds had been never been to school and 22% had dropped out of school. A survey of villages in Anuradhapura found that 20% of the 9-14 year olds were out of school. There are seasonal variations in attendance reported in small schools. Attendance in agricultural areas are 50% - 70%.

- (ii) The districtwise Data in tables presented indicate disparities at senior secondary education level. The district index of performance at the G. C. E.,(O. L.) examination (1987) of the Department of Examinations point to disparities between the highest and lowest performance :

	<i>Colombo</i>	<i>Moneragala</i>
Overall index	57.3	42.5
Mathematics	55	41
Science	57	41
English	62	39

No candidate from Moneragala and Mannar districts has qualified for university admission on the merit quota in the 1980s and only one in each district has reached this level in the Nuwara Eliya and Polonnaruwa districts.

- (iii) Resource allocation for education has declined from 4.7% of the GNP and 16% of the national budget in the early 1960s to the lowest point of just over 2% of the GNP and 6%-8% of the national budget in the mid 1980s, with the implementation of structural adjustment and stabilization policies and the consequent reduction of public expenditure on 'welfare related programmes'. The allocation for education has just begun to increase slowly. Earlier positive policies prevented the major erosion of educational opportunity in quantitative terms, but reduction in public expenditure on education has resulted in the deterioration of the quality of education provided in schools.

These provisional projections are not being reported in detail. Nevertheless, as an element of information a tentative Projection for the Island is presented.

These School Enrolment Projections are on Pages 62 & 63.

The Projections have the following features :

**Primary Years : 1 to 5**

The enrolments have increased but appear to show a tendency to decrease from 1995 to 2000.

Junior Secondary Years and the higher Levels in School will increase progressively to the year 2000.

But in these years also the rates of increase are seen to be decreasing, relatively slowly.

These trend lines will have implications :

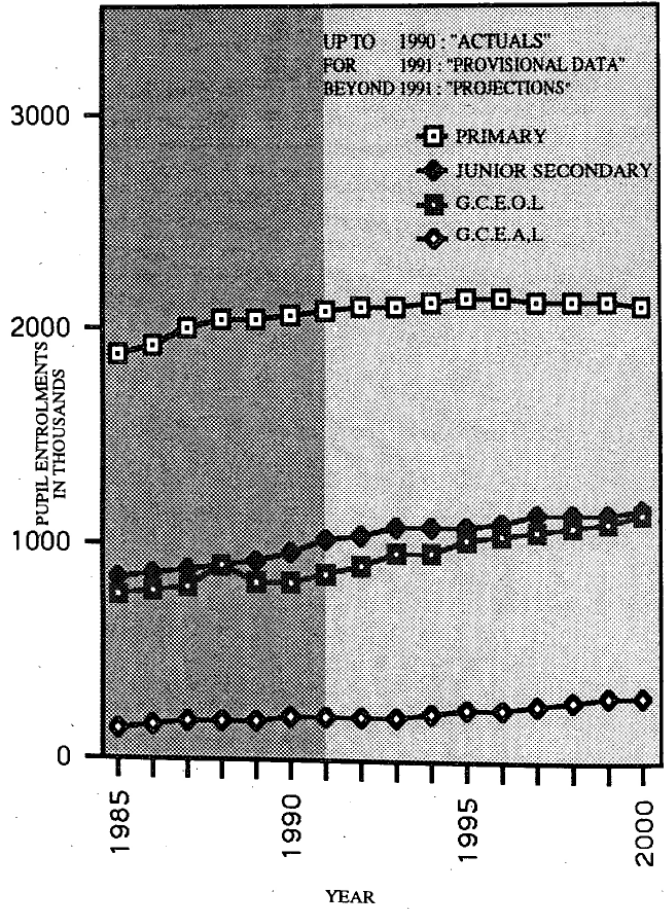
For the planning of quality improvements to match the decrease in costs with lower enrolments.

for anticipating the needed "Teacher Cadres" for the time periods indicated.

It is clear that the School System will not need large extensions. But improvements in quality in performance needs to be planned systematically.

Figure 6

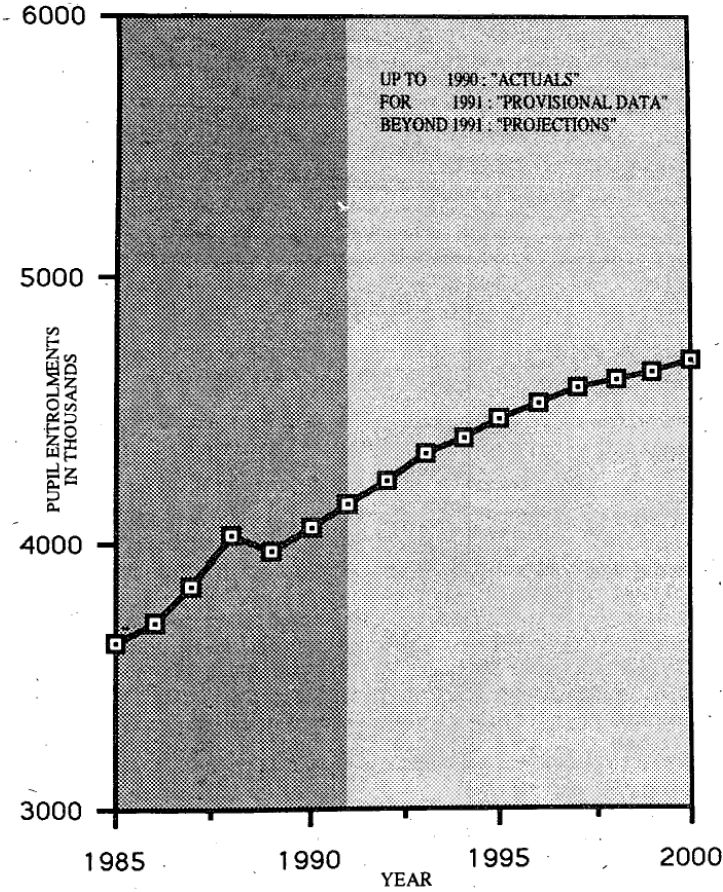
## PUPIL ENROLMENTS: 1985 TO 2000



NATIONAL EDUCATION COMMISSION  
JAN. 1992 (RESTRICTED DISTRIBUTION)

Figure 7

PUPIL ENTROLMENTS: 1985 TO 2000



### QUALITATIVE ASPECTS — Learning, Teaching and Evaluation

A systems analysis of the quality of learning in Schools should recognize that the School functions in an active partnership with the HOME, the COMMUNITY and the MASS MEDIA.

The Community educating agencies include the Farm, the Field, the Factory, the Market Place, the Vihara, Kovil, Masjid and the Church. The Mass Media include Books, Newspapers, Radio, Television and a variety of Electronic Devices. In spite of the recent technologies, the PRINTED Word and the BOOK play a major significant role. The Printed Word will continue to play such a major role in the foreseeable future.

Apart from the School, all the other agencies indicated above, select the experiences informally and more or less, incidentally. Furthermore, these experiences are, in the main, spontaneous and presented in a natural context. The School, in marked contrast, is essentially formal. It selects experiences, sequences these and structures them within a limited space — the Classroom — and within a limited time frame — The Class Period. Basically, the Classroom uses and presents to the Pupils a more or less contrived set of learning experiences. With the resource base available to the School, in particular, "Time", this mode of Teaching-Learning is not only unavoidable, but may well be, for the functions given to the School, "one of the better options".

The School addresses tasks that the Home alone could not carry out with its own resources. The Teacher in the Classroom functions in this total context.

Quality in Learning should be understood in this frame of reference; its assessment should be carried out recognizing these sets of boundary conditions linked with the Classroom.

The Pupil is exposed to a multiplicity of experiences at any given point in time. This could range from a bird call, a flower, an attractive friend and the Teacher's voice. The Pupil may also be hungry, thirsty, weary or sleepy. There is not one Pupil, but many: 20, 30 or more. It is to this group — in the CLASSROOM — that the Teacher presents selected experiences. These could range from 'talking' to doing a simple demonstration. Whatever the particular selected experience be, the primary problem for the Teacher is to win the attention of the Pupils and hold the attention during the lesson. If the Pupils are involved in doing something with the Teacher, then the task of winning attention and holding it becomes rather more feasible.

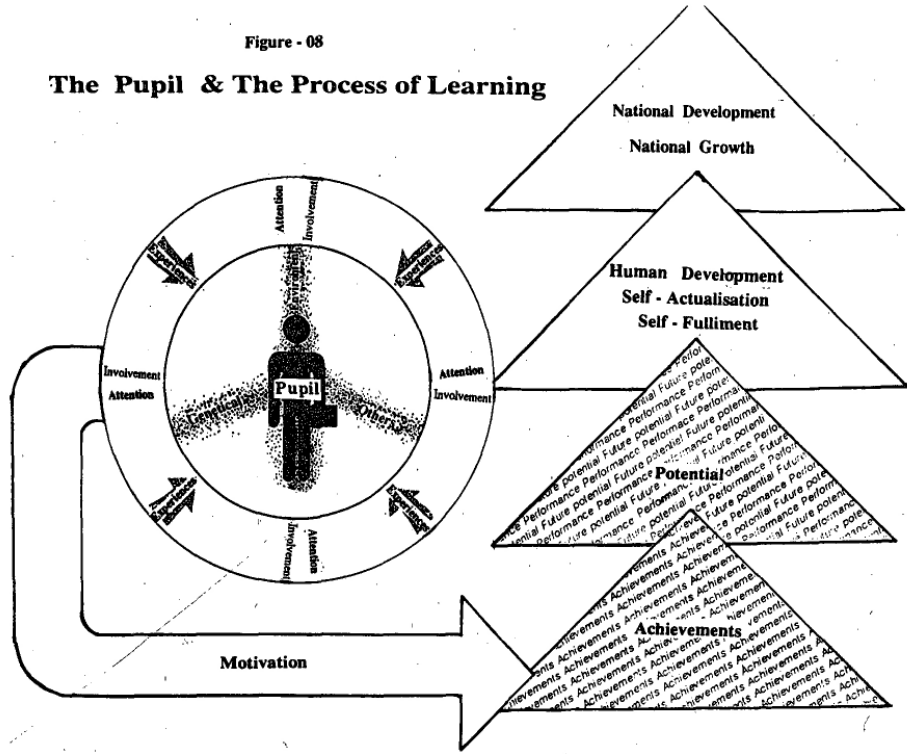
This situation described in words above is depicted in line and form in the Figure 8 on the next page. (Page 65).

This series of actions — selecting appropriate experiences, sequencing them, presenting them to the Pupils, holding their attention, whenever feasible winning participation from the Pupils — needs to be executed competently and imaginatively. Most Pupils are alive and active, even if some are 'asleep'.

Effective teaching leads to durable learning. Progressively specific and general competencies are developed. This process is also linked to the development of the Child.

Figure - 08

### The Pupil & The Process of Learning



Pupils develop and perform tasks which they have practised, — they behave as 'drilled' in predictable situation. But 'Education' entails something more. The Pupils should develop a potential for meeting unexpected situations and reacting constructively with some imagination — a response with an element of novelty. The Pupils must also develop the capacity to act and react in actual social contexts. Any meaningful tests must link up with the actual situations.

It is in this wide-angled frame of reference that "Classroom Dynamics" must be viewed. It is within this frame that the oral and written observations made by the public were looked at. In addition, Commission members have observed 'Classrooms', themselves, in a number of Schools — small, large, ill-endowed, well-endowed, and in other ways representative of the School System within the Island.

The following observations of the Classroom were made :

1. Classroom interaction is highly stereotyped and monotonous.
2. The Classroom is dominated by "rather dull talk sessions". Over 70% of the Class Period was of this nature. Little activity was seen. The blackboard itself was used infrequently.
3. The Teacher relied almost exclusively on the Pupil Text.
4. There were occasional attempts to win the attention of Pupils. There was little evidence of involving the Pupils in Learning.
5. A few Pupil Activities and some Teacher Demonstrations were seen. But even in the best endowed Schools, these episodes were relatively infrequent and isolated. This was not on account of the lack of materials. The materials were available in the larger schools.
6. There is almost a complete absence of **concerned supervision of Classroom activities** by Senior Teachers, Principals and visiting management staff.  
The Classrooms appeared to be forgotten by the 'system'.
7. Various activities do take place. But these are the ones with 'Socio-political Visibility'. These could be educative; but even this aspect seemed to be not seen in perspective.

The CLASSROOM is the central location in a School. The pattern of activity in the Classroom leaves a great deal to be desired and the situation is a matter for deep concern.

Any intervention within the School System should be coupled with an orchestrated set of actions having direct relevance to the Classroom.

While the Classroom Dynamics left one deeply unhappy, the actual meetings with Teachers suggest that .....

...The majority among them, seek to carry out the demanding task of Teaching as best as they perceive.

...The Teachers are, undoubtedly, working under difficult conditions. Apart from the Classroom itself, the Teachers have only limited facilities for rest. Sanitation is often very poor.



- ...Notwithstanding, the large majority — over 70% — come to the assigned School and try to do their work. They need help; and this is what they do not get.
- ...Often, the bare needs — chalk, pencils, paper etc. — are not readily available. Management appears insensitive to these elementary functional requirements.
- ...Unlike other tasks, e.g. clerical work, the Teacher works with sensitive children, who are easily pleased and who are easily hurt. The Teacher has to help the Pupil develop subtle skills and complex concepts. And this difficult task is done with a group of Pupils, whose readiness to learn varies widely. Some of the Pupils “carry a burden of poverty” as well. The teacher needs to be sensitive to this as well.

The critical aspect of “Quality in Education” is linked to making the Classroom active and alive.

It is not something that the Teacher alone could do. Some few deeply committed Teachers will try to do this all by themselves and to some extent succeed. But this is unusual and exceptional.

Orchestrated and concerned supervision carried within the school with support from external supervisory colleagues alone will allow Islandwide quality improvement.

Linked with Classroom Supervision, there are three related activities that need to be pursued.

These are the following :

- i. The review of the CONTENT OF LEARNING — The review of the Curriculum.
- ii. Inquiry into the strategies and modes of the ASSESSMENT OF THE OUTCOMES OF LEARNING

This will include...

- ...Study of Entry Behaviours at various stages ;
- ...Evolution of School-based ASSESSMENT MODES ;
- ...Review of PUBLIC EXAMINATIONS ;
  - ...Some designed to assess potential ;  
(Year 5 Test)
  - ...Some designed to assess Achievement.  
(G.C.E., O.L. Examination)

- iii. Considerations of Pupils' Time

This necessarily entails Teacher's Time

The issues linked with this are as follows :

- ...The School calendar —
  - Specified in Days of School Work Harmonized with Life & Work  
(Harvest times, Festivals) ;
  - Number of hours of scheduled work per day ;
  - Number of hours of “Extra Classroom” work as appropriate to age & level.

Exploratory studies need to be initiated to establish the needed dialogue to achieve the best balance among these conditions. The concerned participation of Pupils, Teachers, Parents and Community Leaders and Management Staff will have to be invoked.

**SCHOOL COSTS — Selected Data****Expenditure on Education and Gross National Product G.N.P.(G)**

The Total Education Expenditure (E), Total Government Expenditure (T.G.E.) and G.N.P. are related as indicated in the Table 12 given below :

**Table 12**

<i>Year</i>	<i>E/G %</i>	<i>T.G.E./G %</i>	<i>E/T.G.E. %</i>
1960	4.8		
1965	4.9		
1970	4.6		
1975	2.8		
1980	3.0		
1984	2.3	33	7.1
1986	3.2	38	8.4
1988	3.0	37	7.9
1990	3.2	35	9.1

It is clearly evident that for a variety of reasons, the allocation for Education as a percentage of G.N.P. has dropped markedly from the allocations that were made available in the sixties. A reversal of this trend is imperative if educational development is to be effectively managed in the next decade.

Some figures, relating to a few other countries in the world are given for comparison. (E as a % of G.N.P 1986)

**Table 13**

Developed Countries	5.8
Developing Countries	4.0
Asia	4.4
Arab States	6.7
India	3.4
Malaysia	7.9
Sri Lanka	3.2

Costs of Schooling borne by the government :

The Salary Unit i.e. for Teachers' salary only are given below :

1985 Rs. 770 Per Pupil Per Year

1990 Rs. 1,200 Per Pupil Per Year

In 1990, the Salary Unit Costs by Level in the School were :

Years	1	to	5	Rs.	840
Years	6	to	8	Rs.	1,480
Years	12	to	13	Rs.	2,820

The ratios are 1 : 1.6 : 3.2

The Overall Unit Cost for 1990 is estimated as Rs. 1,900

This is a first approximation and it is estimated to be made up as follows :

Teacher's Salary Unit Cost	Rs. 1,200
Administration Unit Cost	Rs. 13
Supervision Unit Cost	Rs. 228
Teacher Education Unit Cost	Rs. 37
Examination Unit Cost	Rs. 52
Pupil Text Books Unit Cost	Rs. 113
Other Unit Cost	Rs. 50
Supplies & Materials Unit Cost	Rs. 200
Total	Rs. 1,900 (Approximately)

To this should be added the costs incurred in subsidies for Travel, Mid Day Meal, Scholarships, and Pupil Welfare.

The allocation for the Mid Day Meal is about Rs. 1,500 Million.

There are other costs borne by the Family to maintain a child in School. This is about Rs. 3,500 to 4,000 per Child per year. For two children this would be about Rs. 7,000.

The average income per family in 1986/87 was about Rs. 25,000/=. This must provide for food, clothing and shelter for about five persons — the average size of a family.

Thus it will be seen that with two children in school the resources of a family are stretched to the limit. This statement is in regard to an average family. Hence families with incomes below this average — and there would be many such — would be in real difficulties in managing their affairs.

The three aspects...

... Content of Learning — Curriculum Specifications

... Assessments of the Outcomes of Learning

... The Pupil's Time

are important parameters of a School System.

In the Sri Lanka scene, these could be seen in a specific functional context, by reflecting on some issues that emerge when one considers the following :

The G.C.E., O.L Classes — Human Resources, Materials and Time

The G.C.E., O.L Examination and its "Outcomes", including the absence of "Value Learning Assessments";

the absence of "Skills Assessment" in Social Contexts;

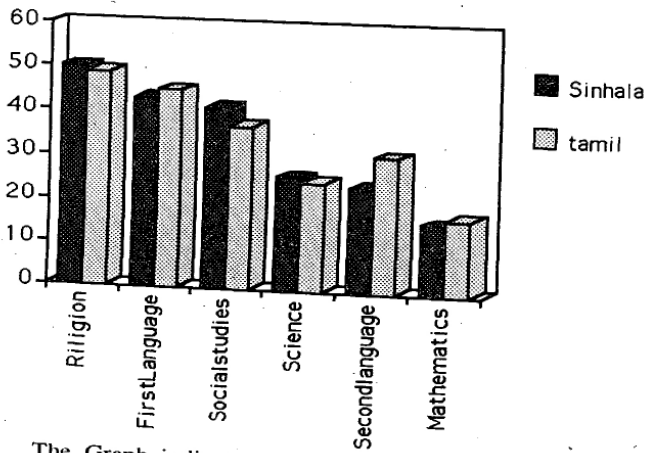
the "Participation" of Parents and Teachers in the total processes of Evaluation of Pupil Achievement.

Table 14

**THE GENERAL CERTIFICATE OF EDUCATION  
ORDINARY LEVEL EXAMINATION  
1990**

**Pupil Achievement levels in Sinhala and Tamil**

<b>SINHALA</b>	Religion	First Lan.	Soc. Studies	Science	Sec. Lan.	Mathematics
Mean	50	43	41	26	24	16
Standard Deviation	20	18	18	14	16	17
<b>TAMIL</b>						
Mean	49	45	37	25	31	17
Standard Deviation	16	17	14	12	18	16



The Graph indicates the All Island position

The G. C. E., O. L Examination Results for the most recent year appear in Table 14 of page 70.

Several Systems Problems are evident :

1. The "Mean Score" for First Language and Mathematics differ – and the latter is very low.
2. How are these outcomes – and others, including Science, Social Studies, Aesthetics etc. – related to
  - .... Curriculum Specifications ?
  - .... Time available to Pupils & Teachers ?
  - .... Examination Structure and Design, including the absence of a systematic and uniform "Schoolbased Assessment" procedure ?
3. Are these "Learning Outcomes" and " Achievement Levels" actively linked up with ...
  - ... EVERYDAY LIFE TASKS ;
  - ... ACTUAL SOCIAL CONTEXTS ;
  - ... THE WORLD OF WORK ?

These and other matters require the initiation of intensive exploratory study by selected "Task Forces" with the participation of Parents and of others concerned with the schools. Such studies need to be initiated with the least possible delay.

#### OTHER RELEVANT ASPECTS

Most "Education Programmes" rely, more or less, on a variety of "Community Services" of special types. The Schools do depend on these services.

The following need to be noted :

- Public Library Services
- Museums of Diverse Types
- Forest Reserves, Parks and Botanical Gardens
- The Public Radio Broadcasting Services
- The Public Television Transmissions

It will be relevant to assess these services and obtain the perspectives that the related organisations have in regard to "Education".

In the "FUTURE", there will be a proliferation of communication techniques and equipment and these will become cheaper progressively. These will play an increasingly significant role – for better or for worse.

It would be unwise to ignore these aspects.

#### Pre-school Projects

A multitude of Pre-school projects have come into being to serve a relatively wide range of families. This range extends from simple families in semi-rural settings to the most fastidious socio-economically well off groups, including the diplomatic community in the Island.

The types of pre-schools range from the simplest daycare centres through simple daycare centres with an educational input to elaborately organized pre-schools based on international conventions and practices. Some of these are essentially self-employment activities evolved by enterprising persons. A significant number have also initiated these programmes dedicated to the idea of providing exceptionally competent services and also with the intention of initiating other persons into the principles and methodology of pre-school activities.

It is probably true that these institutions are serving populations which are socio-economically well-off. They perceive a value of such services for the very young child. How far these institutions are in fact meeting the needs of the relatively less affluent is problematic. Nevertheless some nongovernmental organizations are attempting to meet the needs of the poor and rural folk as well.

## TEACHER EDUCATION STRUCTURES

### Initial Comments

Teacher Education Institutions or Teacher Education Courses have been functioning in Sri Lanka for over a hundred years. Their purpose has been the initiation of Primary and Secondary Teachers to the professional field. Teacher Education Structures are, at present under the direction and management of three educational agencies.

The three agencies responsible for Teacher Education are :

- The Ministry of Education,
- The University System,
- The National Institute of Education.

The Ministry of Education is responsible for the Colleges of Education and the Teacher Training Colleges. These institutions offer pre-service and in-service programmes for Primary and Secondary School Teachers.

The Universities of Colombo, Peradeniya and Jaffna, along with the Open University, provide primarily postgraduate teacher education courses, mainly for secondary school teachers.

The National Institute of Education has initiated a postgraduate in-service Teacher Education Courses and a special course for English. The N.I.E. now manages the Distance Education Course for Teachers. This was formerly managed by the Ministry of Education.

The field of Teacher Education needs review. A carefully articulated set of programmes, harmonizing with Teacher Supply and Demand should be carried out.

### Colleges of Teacher Education

These Colleges have been organized since 1985. There are 8 Colleges of Education with an intake of 1,905 Students in 1991. The Colleges have different areas of specialisation - Primary Education, Teaching of English, Science, Mathematics, Buddhism, Physical Education and Home Science.

The total enrolment in 1991 was about 2,740.

The students spend two years in the Colleges and serve a period of internship in the third year.

Thereafter they gain appropriate accreditation to teach in the Schools.

### Teacher Training Colleges

There are 16 Teacher Training Colleges and these have about 5,800 Students enrolled in the courses.

Many of these Teacher Training Colleges have a long history and some are large institutions.

The enrolment exceeds residential facilities.

### University based Teacher Education Courses

The University Structures focus on postgraduate study courses, primarily.

Until recently these were the only study courses at this level in the Island.

The University also offer courses of study leading up to the M.A., M.Phil. and Ph.D. in the special field of Education.

Approximately 500 Graduates from the Teaching Profession are pursuing studies in the Universities of Colombo, Peradeniya and Jaffna, enrolled for Diploma in Education Course of One Year Duration (471 in 1991/92).

The three Universities also offer part time weekend study programmes for the Postgraduate Diploma in Education. These courses utilize the facilities in these Universities : Colombo - 1,100 ; Peradeniya - 411 ; and Jaffna - 200.

At present 187 Teachers are registered in the three Universities for the M. A., M. Phil. and the Ph. D.

The Open University, using the "Distance Mode" is providing a Postgraduate Diploma in Education Course. This involves actual teaching under supervision and "contact" sessions of study. The annual intake to this course is about 750 ; and the total enrolment in 1992 is 1,834.

The Open University is formulating proposals for the Postgraduate Degree Studies.

It is anticipated that the Affiliated University Colleges will co-ordinate their work programmes to lead to professional studies in education.

The National Institute of Education initiated in 1985, instituted a two-year part time Postgraduate Certificate Course in Education in 1988. This is now titled: Post-graduate Diploma in Education Course.

The Department of Teacher Education of the Institute prepares Self-study Modules and conducts weekend contact sessions at 25 Regional Centres in selected Schools. The participation in the course in 1991 was about 8,000 Sinhala Medium Graduate Teachers and 1,500 Tamil Medium Graduate Teachers. The Institute conducts a course for English Teachers, to enhance their professional competence.

The N. I. E. has also initiated action in 1991 for a Three Year part time B. Ed. Study Programme. It will focus on Primary Education, English Education and Aesthetics Education for 393 Non-graduate Teachers.

N. I. E. has also the primary responsibility for Curriculum Development in the System.

N.I.E. manages the Distance Teacher Education Courses for Primary and Secondary Teachers. Five types of Programmes are available : For Primary Teachers, Secondary Mathematics Teachers, Secondary Science Teachers, English Teachers. These include a Teacher Education Area.

32,000 Teachers participated in these programmes. Self-learning Modules, Booklets and "Face-to-face" Sessions of Learning are used. About 250 Regional Centres are used for this purposes.

Enrolment in these have fluctuated - 4,660 in 1984 to about 1,313 in 1991.

Output has also declined from 3,828 in 1984 to 1,428 in 1988.

The totality of Teacher Education Programmes are critical for upgrading the Teaching Service. Even if quantitative provision appears to have increased in recent years, the quality of Teacher Education, as relevant to 2000 and beyond—may be a major issue which needs investigation and appropriate corrective action.

## HIGHER EDUCATION STRUCTURES

The Higher Education System comprises the University Grants Commission, the University Services Appeals Board and the Institutional Complex titled Higher Education Institutions.

The Higher Educational establishments have always seen themselves as Centres of Excellence in Academic Scholarship and this service they continue to provide.

There are indispensable academic functions which are best discharged by National Universities and similar Institutions. The study of literature, history and cultural heritage of Sri Lanka and the region, archaeology, fine arts, music, dancing and drama need to be given pride of place. The development of the national languages through systematic study and use in writing books and scholarly works, and building up and



maintaining a coherent record of our national cultures through scholarship and research are high priority functions. Not only should there be an accumulation of books and journals, but also the funds and means for conglomerating and sustaining groups of scholars and exponents, so that there is a live and vibrant community which can adequately fulfil this institutional-cultural custodial-function. The Pirivenas, Archives and Museums should be brought into a national net work together with the Universities for these purposes.

At one end of the education spectrum is the conservation and addition to knowledge through intensive study and exploratory investigation. In some fields there is the continuous exploration guided by observation and experimentation, the recognition of fresh insights, the discovery of simpler explanations and laws of more general validity, and the formulation of improved theories and models. The academics in the universities are expected to engage in these activities and also to initiate their colleagues and students in the methodologies of such study and investigation.

The universities have also to be the repositories of knowledge and the locations where specialized arrangements for observation, measurement, data gathering and information processing are available. Our own universities have developed in these areas. We have both universities and postgraduate institute which afford opportunities to postgraduate students to read for higher degrees under the guidance of academics who have themselves acquired reputations here and abroad through their outstanding research and publications. Every university and institute has developed specialities which are nationally relevant, and have the capacity to offer expertise, specialized services and guidance in national development activities.

The universities are locations where academic discourse, flow of ideas across boundaries of academic disciplines and cross fertilization of the knowledge structures should take place. It is the best meeting ground for experts and students of diverse disciplines, exponents of arts and literature, teachers, professionals, legislators, etc. to interact in their search for fresh insights, directions, developments and also for the sheer pleasure of stimulating interaction.

From the national strategic perspective, the universities should sustain a group of scholars who have deep knowledge of languages of nations with whom Sri Lanka has cultural, technological and commercial links. Another very vital function of the universities that should be supported is the analysis by academics of national policies and the policies of other countries which have a bearing on the security and development patterns of our country.

While accepting this time sanctioned roles, the Higher Education Institutions have to adapt to changing needs and expectations of society.

The Universities have accepted the principle that students may leave the degree programmes after two years with a diploma and return to the university after a break to complete the degree programme. The faculties of Agriculture at Peradeniya and Science at Kelaniya are implementing this scheme. It would not only enable the undergraduate to find funds for supporting himself or herself while in the university, but also enable the inclusion of a significant component of work experience into a degree programme.

The Open University and Institutes attached to other universities offer Certificate and Diploma courses at degree level and postgraduate level. To be admitted to these courses, it is not necessary to have the same entry qualifications as for admission to the degree courses in the conventional universities. Some of the areas of specialization available are—

Entrepreneurship  
 Management  
 Labour Education  
 Pre-school Education  
 Teacher Education  
 Professional English  
 Engineering  
 Technology  
 Natural Science  
 Textile Technology  
 Construction Management  
 Agricultural Engineering  
 Wild Life Conservation and Management

In the Open University instruction is given through the 'distance mode'. It also maintains a number of regional and study centres to enable students to do practical work, use the library and to interact with teachers.

The Postgraduate Institutes and the Universities are empowered to award post-graduate degrees and diplomas. The postgraduate work undertaken by students may be either research or coursework or a combination of both. The postgraduate degree and diploma programmes are available in the following areas of specialization :

Accountancy  
 Agriculture  
 Applied Science  
 Archaeology  
 Architecture  
 Arts  
 Business Administration  
 Dental Practice  
 Dental Science  
 Dental Surgery  
 Education  
 Engineering  
 Humanities and Social Sciences  
 Law  
 Management Studies  
 Medicine and Surgery  
 Pali and Buddhist Studies  
 Public Administration  
 Science  
 Veterinary Medicine and Animal Science

The Buddhist and Pali Universities of Sri Lanka was established under a separate Act of Parliament "To promote both in Sri Lanka and abroad, Pali and Buddhist Studies and provide facilities for research in relevant fields". One of the specific objects of the University is;

- \* the training of bhikkhus for teaching Buddhism and Pali in Pirivenas, Schools and similar institutions.

Another object is;

- \* the provision of necessary facilities for the maintenance and improvement of ethical conduct and mental discipline of bhikkhus.

The recently established Affiliated University Colleges have flexible course arrangements with five core courses combined with elective courses to award undergraduate level certificates and diplomas in:

Home Science and Nutrition  
 Mathematical Sciences  
 Entrepreneurship and Small Business Management  
 Agriculture  
 English  
 Commerce and Management  
 Tourism and Culture  
 Accountancy and Finance  
 Science with Biology/Physics  
 Travel and Tourism

Every student will take core courses in the following subjects :-

Computing  
 English  
 Commerce and Management  
 Sri Lankan Studies  
 Environmental Studies

The courses at the Affiliated University Colleges are described as being professionally and vocationally oriented, and targeted to specific areas of employment. The option would be given to students to leave at the end of the first year with a certificate or to continue studies for another year and obtain a diploma. The affiliation with the National Universities is to "Guarantee the Maintenance of Academic Standards". There is no decision yet whether the students can proceed with their studies up to degree level.

The admissions policy for the first batch of students admitted to the Affiliated University Colleges is different from that of the National Universities in that: admissions are open to those who sat the Advanced Level in 1989, 1988 and 1987, such that 50% of the places are for the 1989 batch; and 25% of the places each for the 1988 and 1987 batches. In the Home Science Course, 40% of the places are for students from the Science stream, selected on an all-island merit basis; whilst 60% are for students from the Arts stream also selected on merit basis. The Arts stream students will be given a basic knowledge in Science through a "Fundamental Course in Science". The minimum grades for admissions are the same as for the entry to the National Universities.

A certain number of places will be reserved for students of the province where the Affiliated University College is located whilst the balance places will be filled on a merit basis on the aggregate marks.

In a statement on Affiliated University Colleges issued by the University Grants Commission, mention has been made that these Colleges will eventually grow to be National Technological Universities. It is correct that they are conceptualized as the initial stage of Technological Universities. The country should have a meaningful alternative to the National Universities which are centres of academic excellence. The present National Universities are expected to produce graduates with quality 'academic education'. They would have an academic orientation which places the emphasis on 'theory'. The academic courses they offer tend to be 'theory-focussed' even in the professional areas such as Medicine, Engineering and Law. In Medicine a deliberate 'technology-bias' is introduced to offset this tendency by having a heavy emphasis on practical and clinical assignments to cover about 40% of the course duration. In Engineering 'in-plant' apprenticeship or training is made an integral part of the course for the same purpose.

**Experimental Sciences** are a part of Human Culture. So are the **Technologies**. Hence the promotions and pursuit of these are an integral function of Universities. The Technologies should be developed with a specific national relevance and functional limits within socio-economic and cultural activities.

Technologies and **technology-based** courses have a standing on their own right. They need not play a subordinate role to the traditional academic courses in the Universities. Technology has its own set of criteria and measures of performance. The standards of technological courses must be judged against these criteria and not those pertaining to academic activity.

It has been pointed out to the Commission that the role played by the products of the National Universities which stress academic competencies has not been conducive to industrial growth and has not resulted in generating employment through productive ventures. They have, in general been content with administrative roles and not developed the managerial capabilities needed by business, manufacturing and service organisations.

Technological Universities with their emphasis on 'skill', technique and the 'urge to do' (in contrast to 'the urge to know' of the academic) can be expected to produce the graduates who will not only fit 'mid-level' positions as envisaged by the U.G.C., but also fill top management positions. There is no necessity to limit them to mid-level positions. Management positions are effectively manned by engineers and technologists in countries which are successful industrially. Admission to the National Technological Universities should be open to the best of students who desire entry.

The National Technological Universities (NTUs) should be allowed to grow into their full stature without being shackled from their inception by so-called academic standards which would be imposed on them by the existing traditional and academic National Universities. Already existing arrangements could be restructured and organised into NTUs in order to give leadership and guidance to the upcoming NTUs.

The University system as a whole is chronically short of qualified and experienced teachers. Universities must recruit the best of graduates in order to ensure the quality of instruction. On the other hand the salaries and conditions available to those who prefer to stay in developed countries after they have had their postgraduate education appears to be a strong incentive for them not to return to Sri Lanka. The number of permanent staff actually in position falls short of the approved cadre by 27% in the entire system. The most affected are the faculties of Medicine and Engineering in Peradeniya, Medicine in Jaffna, Science and Medicine in Ruhuna, Law in Colombo and Architecture in Moratuwa which have short-falls of more than 40%; the worst being 52% for Engineering in Peradeniya. The faculties of Arts, Humanities, Commerce and Management are also having deficits which are larger than the average.

In all such situations the deficits are made up by recruiting temporary staff and getting the services of visiting staff. These arrangements have mixed effects on the courses. The deployment of visiting staff who have professional experience and high professional standing brings in a dimension of teaching which could highly motivate the students as well as facilitate valuable insights. This is truly beneficial. Where visiting lecturers of high quality cannot be found, it is necessary to deploy temporary staff without much experience. Then the effects are largely detrimental.

The average annual recurrent expenditure per student for the entire system is approximately Rs. 22,000. Approximately 50% of students receive financial assistance either on the basis of academic merit or inadequate parental income. The assistance varies from Rs. 750 to Rs. 50 per month. The universities and other higher educational institutions have procedures for subsidizing the cost of meals provided to students.

The total number of students **enrolled** in the conventional national universities during the academic year 1989/90 was 28,260 in all the undergraduate programmes. There was a total of 1,835 students enrolled for undergraduate level courses at the institutes. The Open University had a total of 17,000 students enrolled for all its courses. The total postgraduate student enrolment in the universities was 663, and the postgraduate institutes had a total enrolment of 179.

The total number of undergraduates **admitted** to all the conventional universities for the academic year 1989/90 was 6,463 which is 18% of the total number eligible for admission according to the accepted criteria and approximately 33% of those who applied for admission. In the latest round of admissions the number of applications was up by 25%, in spite of which the system admitted 25% of those who were eligible and 36% of those who applied for admission.

Within the university system the only 'residential university' is the University of Peradeniya. It has residential facilities on-campus for a percentage of personnel and students. However, it cannot give full accommodation to all of them without a very large capital outlay. The students of other universities are also demanding that accommodation should be provided for those who are compelled to stay away from their homes.

The University Grants Commission has made available a quota of funds to each university to invest in residential facilities for students, but not enough to meet the entire need. The Vice-Chancellors have identified the inability to satisfy this demand as the most pressing issue, and one that could lead to unrest among students.

It is important to note that, according to current statistics, about one-third of the undergraduates are children of teachers, and of the rest about 85% of them have parents who are not in other professional, technical, administrative and management categories. It is very likely that many children whose parents are not in the mentioned categories see university education as a means of attaining a social status which is better than that of their parents. In this regard the financial help given to university students through scholarships and bursaries on the bases of merit and of need are most appropriate. There should also be ways of assisting students who need guidance and non-monetary help.

The response of students to informal inquiry shows that students would also like to have opportunities of rendering services for which they could be remunerated. It is known that some students are employed while they are registered as internal students. If the place of work is far from the university such an arrangement could prevent the student from benefiting from the facilities at the University.

The majority of the students at the time of entry are weak in English. Therefore, most faculties have intensive English courses at the commencement of degree programmes to bring up their standard. Where the medium of instruction is English, the students are compelled to use the language frequently. Those who are adequately motivated, overcome the language problem and do well in their studies. Where the courses are conducted in the mother tongue, there is a tendency for the students not to make an effort to improve their English and to depend solely on notes and translated material.

It has been pointed out that irrespective of the medium of instruction, the large majority of students rely mostly on their notes. This undue reliance is further reinforced by the syllabi being of wide coverage with large information components. Students are also drawn away from the reading habit by their having to adjust to the life in an academic community after having passed through two contrasting life styles: that of high pressure 'cramming' while in school, followed by one of aimless idling in the intervening period between school and university. The students who seem to do well under these circumstances are those who can identify a coherent set of personal goals (or 'ultimate' task), are self-reliant, and are not simply 'critical' of others and the system.

The 'academic' emphasis in the universities also results in the use of certain measures of performance of the teachers which could inhibit their contribution to the growth of students, support staff and of the institution they are associated with. Such measures of performance which are considered inappropriate even in developed countries, are not sustainable and not conducive to growth in a poor and undeveloped country like ours. Unless the academics can demonstrate through application that their 'wares' can be factors of production, and can contribute to the effective and improved operation of industry, commerce and other nationally important endeavours at all levels, it is difficult to find a justification for supporting an exercise which produces qualifications for their own sake.

There is no validity in the argument that there should be a 'critical mass' of scientific equipment and manpower of a certain high level before a country can take off on a trajectory of growth. Such arguments or theories can only lead to the separation of certification from its legitimate source which is the **real labour that is put into mental and physical tasks** by a person. The manifestation of such theories can be seen in the reluctance of academics to get involved in ground-level and small-scale problems, in

taking a serious look at and learning from indigenous techniques and practices, and to value attempts to communicate with common working folk who cannot use the English medium.

On the contrary, what is needed in the science and technology fronts is the development of a wide spectrum of human resources starting from skilled workers and technicians to trained researchers who would engage themselves in a relevant, consistent, sustained and comprehensive efforts towards national development.

Universities have not developed strong linkages with industries and activities going on in the community at large. At present the links are through consultancies and projects undertaken by the academics. Whenever such links exist the effects are not totally beneficial to the students and the institutions. However, they do help to widen the experience base of the teacher, and this has a good effect on the students.

Our universities have a small number of foreign students who have enrolled either to follow degree courses or to do specific programmes connected with courses in their home countries. Such students can be accommodated in faculties where courses are conducted in the English medium. It is known that some countries make serious efforts to attract foreign students as a way of increasing the national income. Our higher education institutions also have a potential for attracting a large number of foreign students.

It has been demonstrated that privately owned higher education institutions for conducting degree level courses in professional areas such as Medicine and Technology can generate a demand. The linkages such institutions have with established universities and their having curricula which are in keeping with employers' needs are factors which will determine their acceptability to the potential students and employers of graduates. Considering the highly competitive nature of the passage through school of the students who enter the national universities and that the parents of most of them cannot afford the fees levied by the private institutions, question of social justice and equity loom large. These perceptions will be worsened if the employment opportunities in the public sector were to shrink, and the private sector prefers to employ graduates produced by private institutions, particularly for the better positions.

It must be stated that the present university system does not wholly meet the needs of the country and the aspirations of the youth who need higher education, both qualitatively and quantitatively. With the new economic policies a third driving force has to be brought in, namely, the expectations of the private sector. The demands arising from the three directions are not likely to be always congruent. There could be instances in which they could be in direct conflict. Even if solutions were to be identified, resource constraints may prevent the free play of all the actors which could bring about variety of strategies to satisfy the diverse demands. State intervention and investment to ensure that principles of social justice and equity are upheld cannot be avoided.

What is clear now is that it needs a combination of personal discipline and untiring effort on the part of the students, state guidance and funding, and private sector interest and co-operation, which have to be put together in a new synthesis to produce the development-oriented, concerned and employable Sri Lankan graduate of the future. Teachers and authorities in Higher Education therefore face the challenge of designing and operating courses for this purpose.

## PIRIVENA EDUCATION

Pirivena education is a totally indigenous system, the history of which goes back to the days of the Mahavihara. It fostered knowledge of the Tripitake, Oriental Languages and the Threefold Sasana particularly among bhikkhus. These pirivenas or seats of learning were originally located within temple premises and the term indicates that monks were residents in the pirivena itself. However, as time passed monks from the vicinity too started attending the pirivena. It is in more recent times that lay pupils too started attending pirivenas.

The more recent phase of pirivena education commenced with the advent of Ven. Sri Saranankara Sangharaja in the 18th century who set up a seat of learning at "Niyamakanda". Thereafter, similar seats of learning were set up at Pelmadulla and the Paramadhamma Chetiya Pirivena at Ratmalana. Two other outstanding institutions which have to be mentioned are the Vidyodaya and Vidyalankara Pirivenas set up in 1873 and 1875 respectively. The first Director of Education Mr. H. W. Green in his administration report made special mention of the unique contribution that pirivena education had made to the cultural heritage of this country.

Thereafter, during the period of his successor Mr. S. M. Burrows, a "Pirivena Sabhawa" consisting 23 scholars was set up and this ultimately became the "Sri Lankas Pracheena Bhasopakara Samagama". With the introduction of free education in 1943, the need to set up a statutory base for pirivena education was felt and the then Minister of Education Dr. C. W. W. Kannangara submitted to the State Council a Code of Regulations under the Assisted Schools Act of 1931, which was approved. There have been revisions to this code from time to time. Subsequently a statute that governs pirivena education was passed in Parliament in 1979. This was the "Pirivena Education Act, No. 64 of 1979". The aims of pirivena education according to this act are -

- (a) to foster an interest among bhikkus in the protection and progress of the Threefold Sasana, namely, Pariyatti, Patipatti and Pativedha;
- (b) to foster discipline, knowledge in the Tripitake and devotion to Dhamma among bhikkus in order to maintain the order of bhikkus descending from the lineage of Sariputra and Moggallana Maha Theras;
- (c) to give a training in practical knowledge, necessary for the Dhammaduta activities in Sri Lanka and abroad and in other services appropriate to bhikkus; and
- (d) to provide facilities to bhikkus to acquire a thorough knowledge in various subjects and languages including Buddhist Philosophy, Buddhist Culture, Buddhist History, Sinhala, Pali and Sanskrit.

A Pirivena Education Board has been set up in terms of Section 4(1) of the Act and has been entrusted with the function of advising the Minister on all aspects of Pirivena Education, promoting the study of and research into Pirivena Education and reporting on any matters referred to it.



There are 476 registered pirivenas in the country today. The number of students is around 45,000 and teacher number approximately 4,200. The largest number of pirivenas are in the Kandy and Galle Districts with about 50 in each. Next comes Matara and Kurunegala with about 10 less in each of these two districts. Statistics show that the number of pirivenas, pupils and teachers have been increasing progressively over the past decade.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Number of Pirivenas</i>	<i>Students</i>	<i>Teachers</i>
1982	309	24,712	2,183
1985	380	34,682	2,662
1988	432	3,749	3,267
1992	476	45,000 (approx)	4,200 (approx)

Financial assistance to pirivenas in 1992 will be approximately Rs.140 M.

Pirivenas are generally classified into 3 groups.

**(a) Mulika Pirivenas**

Classes from Pirivena Grade I to Grade V are conducted here. Though these pirivenas are meant for bhikkhus, lay pupils over 14 years of age who have passed Grade V in government schools could also attend.

**(b) Maha Pirivena**

Classes for examinations held by the Oriental Studies Society and for any other examination with a similar curriculum approved by the board are conducted in these pirivenas. Bhikkhus who have completed studies at the Mulika Pirivena are eligible to join. Lay pupils who are similarly qualified could also attend Maha Pirivena.

**(c) Pirivena Vidyayataka**

Classes for higher examinations held by the Oriental Studies Society or by the Department of Examinations or by any University recognised by the Board can be conducted in this category of pirivena. Generally, classes from Grade 8 upto University level are held in them.

In view of the fact that the general education of bhikkhus is the responsibility of the pirivena system of education, special emphasis is placed on the teaching of Sinhala, Pali, Sanskrit, the Tripitaka, Arithmetic, English and Social Studies. In fact these subjects have been made compulsory for bhikkhus.

Though registered pirivenas receive a grant from government for the payment of salaries of teachers, upkeep of the library and the maintenance of the institution, they are considered private institutions for all purposes. Teachers are therefore not deemed to be public servants. Every pirivena has a Manager appointed by the Director General of Education who manages the institution and he is very often the Viharadhipathi of the temple where the pirivena is located. Bhikkhus, who are appointed as teachers are paid a monthly stipend. This is not a salary. A layman could be appointed as a teacher where a bhikkhus is not available to teach any particular subject.

## CHAPTER SIX

### ISSUES AND PROBLEMS

The Commission's task of identifying issues and problems concerning the education system was facilitated by the oral and written submissions made by the public, including various organisations. Some made written submissions while others gave oral evidence. Based on the oral evidence, some respondents were requested to furnish in writing further details and elaborations needed by the Commission. Meanwhile, specialists in various disciplines and sectors were invited to contribute to the Commission's deliberations. The Commission received over 820 submissions, both oral and written. All these materials helped to identify issues and problems of a priority nature which have to be addressed with a sense of urgency.

There will naturally be still other issues that will be recognized as study, analysis and deliberations proceed and these will be taken up progressively for discussion and comment. Some of the issues are central to the entire system, while others are more limited in scope. Some of these are localised issues that will require to be addressed at their respective levels.

The addressing of these issues and the approach to solutions to the problems, however, should not be piecemeal, although some of the underlying causes do demand attention. Furthermore, the system as it exists cannot be dismantled and rebuilt again. In a sense, it is an organic entity. In addition, the education system is undergoing significant changes at this very moment in response to pressures and emerging needs.

However, the system cannot be allowed to drift and to grow amorphously, and hence policies need to be formulated and significant changes should be brought about in a systematic manner. **The national leadership has to set the sights on achievable targets which are consistent with the overall national goals.** In sharing their vision with the larger population it should be made clear that there must be continuing sensitivity to these needs and that the channels of communication are always open.

#### *EDUCATION - AN OVERVIEW*

##### **Pre-schools and Primary Classes**

The availability of facilities for early childhood care and education is minimal. The pre-schools that operate are hardly regulated and there is little or no supervision. The patterns of work and achieved standards vary widely. Only a relatively limited number of children attend the pre-schools.

As a result of the above and other factors, the readiness of children who enter the primary schools show a wide variability in the basic skills such as reading, writing and counting. The numbers of pupils per class in the early years is large, over 40 pupils in

some of the larger schools. It is recognized that the disparities that exist at "entry" become even more acute as the years go by. The extent of individual attention that young children receive is often inadequate.

These features have a serious impact on the poor and the deprived.

Parents get little or no guidance on how they could help in enhancing the readiness of their children. The absence of such a dialogue with parents is a serious omission.

#### **Children — Non-Starters and Drop-outs**

The participation of children in the Primary Years is relatively high, both in rural areas and in urban situations. Nevertheless, there is a significant number of children who have never been to a school or have dropped out of school in the early years. Such children tend to be those from the low income groups. These children get little guidance from their homes. And being non-school-going children they lose any guidance that they may have got from their teachers. The numbers in the 5 - 14 age group in such a condition are large.

These children are a vulnerable group. Many among them end up as street children, child labourers, child prostitutes, drug addicts, AIDS victims and abandoned children. They spend a totally deprived childhood.

It is estimated that around 8% of the 5-9 age group, 30% of the 10 - 14 age group and 50% of the 15 - 19 age group are not participating in schooling or in other education programmes. They get little or no guidance from any one. Their mental and physical growth is distorted in many ways.

These children need attention including part-time education facilities.

#### **Vocational, Tertiary and Higher Education**

The Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission (TVEC) has estimated that over 3000 institutions and agencies now provide tertiary and vocational education. These operate under 21 Ministries, NGO's and private organizations. At the same time, the Technical Colleges which could play a role in this field tend to be neglected. This has constrained the proper development of human resources through education as the standards, methods and the certification are variable.

The TVEC has informed the Commission that it is currently in the process of registering the institutions/organizations with a view to establishing a system of training standards, and corresponding rules and procedures for certification which will be nationally and even internationally recognizable.

The TVEC is of the view that the number of places available for educating and training may be inadequate to meet the needs of about 600,000 persons who are presently unemployed. The first Development Plan which is under way is to address this issue through the coordination of the principal stakeholders, viz. the education and training institutes, the employees, the chambers, the trainees.

### University Admission

According to recent figures, the number of applicants for admission to Universities has increased by about 20% over preceding year's figures, and now stands at 25577. Of these only 37% gained admission to the Universities in the academic year 1991/92. The number of applicants is about 68% of those who are entitled to apply on accepted criteria. 23000 applied for admission to the Affiliated University Colleges and of these 7.3% have been admitted.

### PUPILS AND STUDENTS

#### Admissions to Year One

The admissions to the initial year in schools, particularly to the larger schools, which are much sought after, have given rise to many irregularities and malpractices. It has been pointed out that one of the main reasons is the requirement to establish proximity of a child's residence to the school. This leads to the "creation" of documents, the use of false addresses and making of irregular entries in documents such as the birth certificates. These are some of the malpractices which the school authorities find difficult, if not impossible to check. This has placed a heavy burden on these school authorities and there is a feeling of helplessness and sometimes of despair among them.

#### Scholarships — Year Five

This is a long standing practice of identifying children who have special abilities and aptitudes and who are in need, and making arrangements for their placement in schools to enable them to develop to the highest.

In recent years, this test has also developed an additional function of identifying able children - poor and rich - and using this test for placement purposes, the needy getting the relevant financial assistance on the specified criteria.

The identification of a "pool of ability" within the national population, in the circumstances in the Island, may be a valid exercise, in itself. But whether this identification which is done through a **competitive examination** is being conducted **at the most appropriate age** of young children is a **matter of doubt**. Another issue that arises is whether the test used is the most valid one that can be evolved.

Furthermore, there are the associated **problems of translocation of a young child** from one location to another. When the movement is from a wholly rural setting to an urban one, the psychological and sociological issues that emerge are many. Have all these aspects been studied systematically and intensively?

Today the situation is such that from the earliest years the **children are more or less compelled to take tuition** and their **childhood is distorted** in many ways. Then there is the strain on the parents, especially the poor. These persons are the ones who must be benefitted from this scheme. But if they themselves get even poorer in preparing the child for such an examination, then it would appear that some changes are needed.

There is also the impact on the child of coming from one setting where the child is recognized as the 'best' to a setting where the new pupil is only one among many in a class of high ability children.

An intensive study is called for.

### **Migration to Urban Schools**

With the changes in socio-economic conditions especially in the rural areas, the enhanced educational levels of the parents, the improvement in roads and bus transport, with subsidies for pupils, and still other factors, there are progressive increases in the enrolments in the large urban schools. There is a migration to these schools. The rural schools not only lose their 'good' children, they also lose their concerned parents. These are the parents who are motivated to make such shifts to facilitate the children's education. It has been asserted that some rural schools are tending to 'disappear' in this process. In fact, some of the Madhya Maha Viydalayas in the urban periphery are also affected adversely. These and other related issues demand close inquiry.

In the case of both the Scholarship Test and this pattern of pupil movements, more than 'educational' analysis is needed. A socio - economic analysis is bound to throw greater light on this issue.

### **Drinking Water and Sanitation Facilities**

The Pupils in our schools are in our care. While they are in and around the school, at work in the classroom, at play — formally or informally or at a function/ festival — their basic needs must be our concern. And two of these are the provision of water for drinking and sanitation facilities. The latter must of necessity include suitable water for washing up. After playing and getting dust all over them, young children need some facilities for washing. In some schools, these are available but they are in varying degrees of dis-repair, in others usable facilities are almost non-existent.

The provision of these for the Pupils must be accompanied by similar facilities for the Teacher. They too spend the day at work with children.

### **The Mid-day Meal**

There is specific provision by government for this nutritional supplement in the form of a mid-day meal. To many malnourished children this is significantly beneficial. But the content and standard of preparation of the meal in respective homes of the children could vary. Inspection of the meal by the teacher could be an embarrassment to some children whose meal is not of high quality. Such children would try to avoid this embarrassment by keeping away from school. Teachers are also at times forced to avoid enforcing the rules due to fearing reprisals from parents, particularly in the rural areas.

### **Residential Facilities — Pupils / Students**

There is a limited number of schools where residential facilities are available. Often these are particularly significant to the Year Five Scholars. The condition of these, even in some of the affluent cases is a matter for concern. In some of the less well endowed

Madhya Maha Vidyalayas the situation is characterized by lack of supervision and even indifference. The schools must prepare these children to live and work. Therefore the pattern of living in hostels should be a lesson in living. At the moment, this lesson, in most instances is deplorably poor.

The limitations in accommodation in hostels and elsewhere for students in higher education is an issue of major concern to the higher education institutions. The hardships that students undergo are real. Such an issue is also linked to equity and social justice. The sense of dissatisfaction is bound to compound other issues as well.

### **Physical and Mental Health**

A well balanced programme of learning cannot be imparted through merely the transfer of verbal information and the drilling in skills connected with 'paper work'. These have their place. But developing specific interests and special aptitudes of pupils, stimulating activities which promote physical growth, regular and systematic exercise, the nurturing of a variety of bodily skills are catered for, but only marginally in many schools.

In addition, extra-curricular activities such as study visits to botanical gardens, museums etc. do take place, but the incidence of these activities do not sufficiently touch the lives of the great majority of our pupils.

### **Number of School Days**

The reduction of the number of days of effective pupil-teacher interaction in the classroom due to absence of teachers from school and the use of school days for various other activities, has been commented on by many as negative features. Parents have expressed concern about the enforced participation of children in numerous public functions on the instructions of Ministers and officials.

It has been pointed out very emphatically that the number of school days available per year for classroom work gets reduced from the usual average of about 185 days due to a number of reasons. The more significant of these are : children being taken away for attending various functions; practising for displays; teachers using working days for drawing up work schedules for classes etc; teachers taking their quota of leave without making satisfactory arrangements to cover their work; teachers being called off for staff development and teacher education activities.

## **TEACHERS AND THE TEACHING PROFESSION**

### **Teachers — An Overview**

The Teachers, after the Pupils, form the most significant human resource pool in the School system. The central scene in a school is the Classroom. Here the principal actors are the Pupil and the Teacher. The Pupil-Teacher Interaction constitutes the main activities in Learning and Teaching.

There are about 187,000 Teachers serving in our Schools in 1992. This is, perhaps, the largest group of public servants in the island. Of the total school expenditures, 80% or more is spent on the salaries of Teachers.

In such a large Human Resource Pool, there are highly disciplined persons and gifted people. There are bound to be significant number of persons who are 'average' in competence and many of them will function adequately when guided and supervised. A few will need more control.

One must recognize that the effectiveness of a Classroom is dependent on the perceptions of Pupils regarding the Teachers. To the extent that Pupils hold Teachers in high esteem, to that extent the outcomes are fruitful and enduring. This fact demands that one has to ensure that this esteem is conserved in any session of supervision. The ideal is, of course, self-supervision. But this could be attempted but not wholly realisable. Some external guidance is needed. This characteristic of the classroom poses a problem.

A general survey suggests that over 70% to 80% of Teachers act responsibly, attend school in spite of difficulties, and seek to carry out their assigned tasks as best as they perceive. This finding is in one sense a redeeming feature of the school situation.

#### **Qualifications, Selections and Recruitment**

The patterns of selection and recruitment viewed over the years, appears to be based on a high degree of expediency ; procedures have been modified — sometimes, perhaps, warped — from time to time to meet varying situations.

This is, in itself, not a surprise. The process of selection of thousands of people to a public service cadre does not take place everyday. When it does, as in the case of Teachers, the episode has major socio-political-economic significance.

On account of these variations, the heterogeneity of the cadre of Teachers is very high. Manning schools is therefore a problem; evolving salary structures is difficult; professional up-grading programmes have to be diverse, when organized to match the variety of backgrounds.

#### **Placements and Transfers**

There are over 9000 schools scattered throughout the length and breadth of the island. The condition in remote villages and in crowded towns vary very widely. Finding accommodation to live poses one set of problems in the village; it poses another set of problems in the towns. These issues become complex when one has to place a teacher who is married and has children. It is only in a few locations that housing is available; in most cases, housing does not exist. This is only one aspect. There are others when one considers the home of the Teacher.

A series of similar problems emerge when transfers are considered. The issues are more than in the initial placement. This is because the person is older, married, has children, they are schooling and so on. If one adds to this ill-health — of the teacher, his family, the parents etc. — then there is a real puzzle.

But the entire situation is compounded when interference — of diverse types and forms — comes into the scene. This leads to injustice and frustration for all concerned.

### **Initial Orientation, Professional Development**

A young non-graduate teacher needs an orientation before the assigned tasks in the school can be executed satisfactorily. The graduate teacher recruit needs a different adaptation to work in a school. Both need opportunities to gain professional qualifications in the school system. Fortunately there are several programmes already in place which could address these situations. Some of these sessions are of short duration; others are longer. Selected programmes are 'face-to-face' with and without residential arrangements. Others use a 'Distance Mode'.

The main issue is that posed by sheer numbers. There are thousands in the 'back-log'. And there are thousands recruited, who need a professional initiation.

A second group of problems arises from the need to match the orientation, initiation and professional programmes to the variety of study domains in the school curriculum. In the Primary Years, this issue arises in the form of evolving an integrated professional able to cope with the very young, taking care of all their needs. In the later years, the issue is one of increasing specialisation by groups of subjects in the school programme.

Teacher Education Programmes need intensive analysis and review. Some are distinctly obsolete in parts; others have been reviewed but with a limited vision of the future. In most cases, if one describes "Education" as a capacity and a potential for coping with relatively unpredictable situations in imaginative ways, then the programmes are seen to be weak. Most programmes of Teacher Education and orientation focus on more or less predictable situations and how to act and react in such situations using prescribed routines.

The actual working situation of the teacher is unlikely to be characterized by such predictable situations where routines will suffice.

Many Teacher Education Schemes — of all types and durations — rarely recognize that 'knowledge', in actual use in life and work, is not compartmentalized in the same way that the 'Time-table' of a school is conventionally written. With accumulation of information, very few schemes seek to equip the Teacher to select with discrimination and continue to develop in self-confidence and vision. A similar assertion would apply to values and skills, in the world of today, and even more so in the world of tomorrow.

Moreover, some of the actual problems of the day — air and water pollution, use of chemicals in agriculture and food preparation, informed use of chemotherapeutic agents in health and disease, global change phenomena — such as the 'green house effect' and link with trees — are all problems that demand an integrated view. Are we educating our Teachers — and our Pupils — to grasp the essentials of these situations?

Pupils will require to be taught to link the separate areas of the knowledge that they have learnt and apply the knowledge in actual life and work in often unfamiliar situations. Teachers and Teacher Education will need to address this issue.



### Assessment of Classroom Work and Recognition

At present, one could assert that there is no systematic mode of assessment of the Teacher's professional work in the classroom. The absence, functionally, of such an evaluation means that explicit recognition for classroom activities is not given to Teachers. This makes the Teacher and the Classroom a forgotten domain. Nominally, most Teachers remain an 'Assistant Teacher' for nearly all their lives.

A systematic assessment scheme is a necessity ; appropriate professional up-grading, denoted by a suitable title, should be put in place.

### Facilities for Teachers in Schools

Teaching is an onerous task. A Teacher has to have some books and papers to support his work. There are also the duties of overseeing and 'marking' pupil exercises. For these purposes, there is the need for a 'Room for Teachers' with at least some lockable cupboards. This would be a place where a teacher could wait before school sessions, between classes and after. He may, in fact, be waiting for a bus to come. It seems strange that such facilities exist only in a minority of schools. Many rural schools do not have such facilities. This need must to be met with the least possible delay.

Like for pupils, teachers too need water for drinking and sanitation facilities. In many locations the supplies are either non-existent or dysfunctional. These are services that should be established and maintained. It is unreasonable to expect human beings to work for about five to six hours a day in the absence of such amenities.

These issues are linked to improvement of quality in teaching.

Another major problem, less easy to resolve, is the provision of some infrastructures for living accomodation for teachers.

### SELECTED ASPECTS OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

Management of Schools is wide in scope and could include all aspects of human resources management, materials management and the management of time. Some issues and problems outlined also come within this rubric. In this section only certain selected issues will be referred to.

#### School Size

At one end, the small schools have certain problems of management on account of their small size. Problems of multi-grade teaching, severe resource limits set by budgetary allocations and the scarcity of supplementary resources in the socio-economic setting are some of these. It would appear that positive constructive action has already been initiated in this regard. A description of the small school project is given elsewhere.

At the other end of the spectrum are the "Large Schools". Most of the National Schools have this feature, some much larger than other. In addition, there are a number of other popular schools mostly of type 1 AB, that have this pathology of "largeness". All these schools have assumed these sizes on account of the impact of a variety of social and political forces and also as a result of the historical evolution of schools in Sri Lanka.

Whatever the origins be, there is little doubt that these monolithic structures have lost many human dimensions, even though it may be argued that many desirable features exist. The close contact necessary between teachers and the principal has all but disappeared. Personal contacts among teachers is minimal ; the close relationships among pupils and teachers, a critical feature to support quality schooling, is almost conspicuously absent.

### **Principals and Deputy Principals**

The effective management of the school on location is the responsibility of the principal of the school. In small schools, on account of their size, there are problems. In larger schools there are other problems. Both have links with the absence today of a definitive and designated Deputy Principal, who is recognized as such and who is appropriately compensated for extra work.

In some of the largest schools and the well endowed, various arrangements operate and have recognition of a type. The small and the not so well endowed schools need such provision, both to look after the duties of the principal, in his absence owing to ill-health or other duties. In both cases, effective supervision of classroom work demands such provision. Where such arrangements do exist, there is no uniformity in procedure adopted and the administration does not, in general, issue any letter of appointment, indicating appropriate allowances. Where provision of a type exists, there is little sense of security and stability ; and the senior teacher who is performing such duties has little assurances of continuation in the school itself, and none whatsoever in another school, should there be a transfer. The net result is, on the whole, a sense of frustration on account of the 'temporary nature' of the task and the resulting ineffectiveness in function.

Notwithstanding, there are some principals with character and stature, who manage their schools, winning the co-operation of the pupils and the teachers ; few have won the respect and esteem of the majority of parents. This gives one hope. The programmes of orientation of principals, as organized by the Staff College of the National Institute of Education, while meeting some needs, fail to take care of the numbers involved. Thus large numbers of principals are left to their own devices to operate the schools.

Thus a set of key operations in the school system does not function and the pupils suffer.

### **Specifics of Direction and Administration of Schools**

The School System is massive, scattered and complex. Even those who have lived with it and grown with it find it hard to keep track of events, precedents and circular directions on specifics of administration and financial control. Even routine letters to the principals present a problem in logistics. The management of the selection, placement, transfer, salary adjustment and related matters present a veritable maze of circulars, letters, personal files and the like. To make matters *confounded* there are few, if any, 'consolidations and clarifications' giving supporting references, to guide the administrators. The experienced find it difficult ; the novice is more or less lost.

There is an almost total lack of reliable and comprehensive detailed structure, cross referencing and synthesis.

The situation is also made more difficult by the 'legislative vacuum' in the field of general school administration.

#### **A related 'Office Administration' issue**

In this context, information — its ready availability or its suppression — becomes an important matter.

The specifics of most issues are often familiar to the most senior staff members. They have their own 'memories' to guide them. The details of a particular subject - e.g. salary adjustment of a particular group of teachers is often known to the 'subject clerk'. Even when he is not certain, he claims to know and if only other person who knows the specifics is the Director himself then the claim is rarely challenged.

This places teachers who come for various purposes in great difficulties. And moreover, they are treated with scant attention. This situation not only leads to frustration but inefficiency and corruption. Such a situation could be said to exist in most offices in the education administration.

This is further complicated by the clerks belonging to a combined service outside education.

#### **The Teaching Service and Salary Structures**

Within the framework of management, this may be, if not the largest and most crucial issue, one among two/three such issues.

It is very complex. But this is not a sufficient reason for leaving things as they are. A special study is urgently needed. It is of such magnitude and complexity that limited comment is not appropriate.

#### **Ministries, Directorate in Education and Devolution**

The division of authority, modes of functioning and the sharing of responsibilities between the Central Government and the Provincial Councils is an involved matter.

For the operation of the national schools, and supervision of the management of schools, the Provincial Directors have been linked directly to the Ministry of Education. The deployment, transfer and related matters concerning teachers within the Province, physical plant erection and maintenance are matters that directly concern the Provincial Council. The Provincial Director has to implement policies and plans of the Provincial Council. In this respect, the exercise of authority by the Provincial Secretary, who handles 'Education' along with other subjects gives rise to problems.

Two factors that complicate the picture are the following :

- i. The Provincial Secretary, who has 'Education' as one of his subjects, is from the Administrative Service, and at present is not, generally, in the highest Grade in the Administrative Service.
- ii. The Provincial Director of Education, who had the detailed awareness of the professional aspects, specifics of the administration of schools, teachers and related matters, is from the Educational Administrative Service and is usually in the highest Grade in the Educational Administrative Service.

### *LEARNING AND TEACHING — THE PROCESSES AND THE INPUTS*

#### **Pupil's and Teacher's Time**

The issue that has many constraints which require careful analysis and dialogue with the Community is the School Calendar. This must, to the extent feasible, be harmonized with harvest times, religious festivals, other national events of significance. In addition, allowing for a variety of factors, the number of hours of scheduled work per day needs to be determined. This entails the consideration of transport infrastructures, facilities for meals and above all, the age and maturity of the pupil.

There is significant dissatisfaction with the current allocations. This varies between 185 to 190 days of above 5 to 6 hours a day. This is often interrupted by the children being taken out of the school for a variety of functions of diverse kinds — some partially educative, some hardly defensible as valid activities.

Associated with this problem is the identification of time for the professional development of Teachers.

And today this is compounded by the participation of many Pupils in supplementary learning programmes including private tuition. Some of these may well be aspects of validity and may be fulfilling a felt need. Others may amount to the exploitation of parental concern and pupil anxiety by relatively unconcerned 'tutors'.

This issue brings to the surface the need to plan and design learning materials so that these inform parents, guide pupils, assist teachers and above all promote self-study habits.

#### **Pupil Text Books and Teacher Guidelines**

The field observations show that Teachers are almost wholly dependent on the Pupil Text Books. Other informed persons indicated that this, in fact is the case. In itself it may not be a matter for concern. But some of the Text Books are far from being "very good lines for teaching" when taken in isolation.

In some fields, especially the Primary Years, there are Teachers' Guides that have had much attention paid to their design. In other cases the guides are quite limited themselves.

Supplementary reading material is conspicuous by its scarcity and cost. The habits of reading and self-study are becoming atrophied by this shortage of resource materials. Another aspect, which requires an independent inquiry, is the gradual disappearance of 'reading' on account of the impact of the Media, more particularly the television. How a balance could be achieved is a problem not only for the children but also for the parents. Their commitments to television may have a major bearing on the study habits of children in the homes.

#### **Lack of use of " Practical Work " and actual life contexts**

This issue has been highlighted in the context of Science Learning, especially in the G.C.E., A.L. Classes. Also, this problem applies to the study of Geography and History. In fact one could recognize such a practical work requirement in regard to spoken Sinhala and Tamil. The text books also are " distant " from real life and the assessment methods also distance themselves from actual social contexts.

This is a major issue which needs investigation.

#### **Devaluation of Practical Skills**

There is a general assertion that everyone should develop usable practical skills. But some who are most " loud " do not seem to develop skills and use them in actual life. And some who advocate practical skills limit themselves to the confines of workshops and laboratories. Outside these precincts, these same persons seem to be helpless.

This situation is symptomatic of the actual practice of psychomotor skills with pride, profit and pleasure.

#### **" Captives " of written tests**

Some of the problem situations outlined, and also the greater convenience and lower cost of written tests, has led to a domination of the educational scene by written tests.

There is a need to evolve usable tests of other forms, both for educational institutions and actual life situations, for assessing persons for assignments.

#### **Achievement in Mathematics**

While the levels of achievements in all domains of study require close investigation, the one area to which reference has been made most frequently is that in the field of Mathematics. The evidence for limitations in achievements is most clearly seen in the Public Examinations — G.C.E., O.L. and A.L., there is a considerable body of information that this is a more pervasive feature in the entire educational scene.

The uniform insistence on Mathematics was seen as a burden to pupils who do not need it for later education. Arithmetic and Geometry were considered sufficient for satisfactory conduct of affairs connected with later life and work situations of such pupils.

### **The Content of Learning — Curriculum Specifications**

This is a vast field. It is one of the most significant aspects of Learning Systems Design.

The approaches to the analysis of content must suit the age and maturity of the learner ; the level of study in the school the Primary Level or the Secondary Level ; and the resource base that is available, most notably, "Time".

One area that has been the focus of concern is the G.C.E. Ordinary Level Content ; the other is G.C.E., Advanced Level Content.

The first is, essentially the terminal years of a General Education to equip a person for Life and Work. The second is the period of study preceding the entry to Higher Education, in particular the Universities. It has been pointed out repeatedly that the extent and intensity of learning at the Ordinary Level is inadequate for meeting the needs of today and tomorrow. Specifically, the limited ability to use a second language — English — has been stressed. There is the felt need to provide for additional opportunities for the learning of English in rural and urban settings, to meet the special needs of those from the poor — average and below average income groups.

There is a set of parallel comments on the "gap" between the end of O.L. and the initial stages of the A.L. classes. This remark is specially stressed for the experimental sciences.

There is a general comment that "standards" are progressively dropping as the years go by. Whether this is a matter of content, methods of teaching and learning, and the availability of time, or a complex combination of one, two or all three of these factors remains to be identified.

It is a field for a comprehensive investigation and pilot study. It is also linked with Examination Styles and Procedures.

### **Methodology of Teaching and Materials for Teaching**

The methods used in "teaching" are, in the main, 'face-to-face' approaches, except in Teacher Education and Higher Education. The possibility of using the "distance mode" has been explored, for some sessions of teaching science and second language. In the recent past, supplementary materials are becoming available in the market — especially 'small papers'. There is in addition the all pervasive 'private tuition', more particularly for the affluent in more urban areas.

In the schools as such, there is little evidence that teachers take functional note of any of these systematically and seek to use such resources for teaching.

The principal issue in the schools — both rural and urban — is a lack of essential material needs — chalk, coloured chalk, paper, charts, maps and globes etc. In the more affluent schools, there is often a misdirection of priorities. One sees electrical and electronic gadgetry of diverse types, and again coloured chalk is not considered as important. Often, some of these gadgets are purchased for prestige than for use.

The possibility of using the materials in the natural setting is not considered "glamorous" enough. The idea that the whole world is a laboratory and everything in it is equipment and materials for education is regarded as only a slogan. Some field work is done ; but the incidence is small and the approach is casual.

The idea of using available materials and simple skills to fabricate teaching materials is taken seriously in the Primary Years. It is rarely used in the later years. The method used in the later years of secondary education now, sans appropriate teaching materials, could be caricatured as "chalk-talk without even the chalk".

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

THE Education system, through its structures and processes can contribute to the development of people who would have the potential and orientation to work towards the attainment of the **educationally relevant goals** detailed in Chapter Two. Whether the people will so develop is conditional on other factors which will motivate them. Appropriate structures and processes may, however, increase the likelihood of such a development taking place.

The System has *formal*, *non-formal* and *informal* components which together provide the means of developing people. It is incumbent on the government not only to establish and strengthen the **formal** and **non-formal** means but also to reinforce the **informal** means.

Since the education system has been expanding for well over a hundred years and it is one that directly affects more than one-third of the population of the country, the entire structure and processes cannot be created anew to match the goals. Instead a pragmatic approach is to address the issues and solve the problems as and when they emerge. This should be done not as a matter of expediency but in a manner that is consistent with our **national goals**. Furthermore, not all issues and problems can be dealt with straightaway due to practical limitations. Hence a prioritization is necessary. The programme of action may be prioritized and implemented according to the following time-based categorization.

**Category I** : Proposals that should be given effect to immediately. This category also includes actions that are urgently needed but require some funds :

The proposals included in this Category are :

- Character building
- Nation building
- Monitoring of performance
- Co-curricular activities
- Post of Deputy Principal
- Number of school days
- Provincial Administration and Management
- Education clerical service
- Higher, Tertiary and Vocational Education
- Special provision for Plantation Sector Schools

There is also a comment on :

- Primary education in places of religious worship



**Category II :** Proposals which should be considered for early implementation.

The proposals included in this category are :

- Guide/Senior teachers
- National Testing and Counselling Service
- Mental and physical health
- Activity schools

**Category III :** Proposals that are acceptable but need detailed study and trials before plans could be formulated for nationwide implementation.

The proposals included in this category are :

- Curricular reform
- Reorganization of Pre-schools
- Introduction of Basic law
- Improvement of Pupil-texts

**Category IV :** Proposals which need further public debate and study before acceptance.

Proposals included in this category are :

- Professional body for teachers

**Category V :** Initiatives that should be taken now with future policymaking in view.

Proposals included in this category are :

- Revision of Education Law
- Teacher's Service

### **Character Building**

In today's society people tend to lose their importance as separate individuals. The pressure applied through the media and other devices is for him to conform to group norms, often those from outside the country. He is one of a crowd, a unit in a statistical calculation, a name in a register, an index number at an examination, and just another candidate who submits an answer script impersonally for marking, or at best an ID number. Assessing a person's performance becomes a de-personalized exercise done at a group marking session, and sometimes through a computer peripheral. The marks are almost invariably processed using a computer. The certificates are produced by a computer and handed out through an impersonal procedure. All these processes contribute to the **de-personalization of society.**

The family and relations do not have much significance in a person's life except during ceremonies and festivals, since workplaces are mostly away from home. Performance at work, personal life and social life get dissociated, and these aspects lose their integration and meaning. The individual reacts by preferring to preserve the

anonymity, not care about quality in one's work and to hunt in a pack. At the same time there is a tendency to become very self-centered, insensitive to others, not caring, and not sharing. What prevails is a "herd instinct" rather than teamwork and responsibility to oneself and the group.

The school, the examination system and some social mechanisms tend to reinforce the growing child's anonymity and fragmentation which results in a dissociation between private life and public conduct. The enforced wearing of an uniform, lack of interest and concern for children as individuals, large classes, stress on public examinations and the devaluation of individual work, all reinforce the child's herd instinct.

On the other hand, a sense of **pseudo-autonomy** is inculcated, which confers the person the freedom to compromise on standards, not conform to instructions, take liberties with other people's property, and to impose one's will on others. This false sense of autonomy coupled with the lack of congruence between precept and practice in the life of elders, and the conflicting life styles presented through the mass media which also tend to give special emphasis to mis-deeds of people, confuses the child as to what is really expected of him by way of personal conduct.

The growing child needs a balanced view of himself, which reinforces the idea that he is **both** a member of a group and also a unique individual; a follower as well as an initiator; a receiver and also a giver; a team member as well as a potential leader. He has to realize that there are things about him which are:

- \* known both to others as well as to himself;
- \* known to others but not known to himself;
- \* known to himself but not known to others;
- \* not known to both himself and to others.

Hence, **self-development** and **self-improvement** which are essential parts of character building are possible, if there are:

- a. an interest shown in the growing child as an individual;
- b. opportunities to perform with due recognition both as an individual and as a member of a group;
- c. timely, constructive and appropriate feed-back about his actions.

A structure should be devised within the school to inculcate in the child the idea that there is a genuine interest in him irrespective of his family background and his position in the class.

The schools, taken overall, have on the average one teacher for about 30 pupils. Each teacher can reasonably be expected to take a direct interest in that number of pupils. This interest should be institutionalized by having each teacher being entrusted a group of pupils for each one of whom he maintains a **personal file** which would be a permanent record of the pupil's progress. Every pupil as he joins a school would be assigned to a teacher who will keep track of the pupil's progress. There is an advantage in having

the same teacher follow his entire progress through the school irrespective of the particular class a pupil is in during a given year. Since children leave school every year, a teacher on the average will have about 3 or 4 pupils leaving his charge and an equal number joining.

It would be incumbent on the teacher, pupil and the pupil's parents to build up the file with information regarding the pupil's growth and attainments. Each pupil should meet his assigned teacher regularly. On the average a teacher would be meeting about two pupils per day individually to discuss their work and ideas, to comment on them, and to give any necessary guidance. This closeness will not only develop the pupil but also have a beneficial effect on the teacher and help to improve him.

The maintenance of the pupils' records should **not** degenerate into a **dull bureaucratic-clerical exercise**. It should always be motivated by a deeply genuine care and concern for the welfare of the child, and should therefore be based on the teacher's and principal's insights pertaining to child psychology and education. As such, this practice would be converted in time to one of the **noblest traditions of our education system**. Educational authorities should also be constantly vigilant, and counter any degenerative tendency.

The pupil's record should be normally accessible **only** to the child's parents and the principal. Any relevant information in it may be made available confidentially to subsequent educational institutions and to prospective employers.

If the pupil is transferred to another school the record should be sent to his new school to be in the custody of a teacher there. At the time of leaving the school the record should be given to the pupil for future reference. If the teacher leaves the school the pupil records in his charge should be handed over to his successor.

Considering that a child lives and grows in a particular community and a locality, his abilities to relate to his community and to explore and understand his environment are essential. These abilities are aspects of **INDUCTION SKILLS**. They cannot be acquired through books and lectures, but largely through experience. A portion of a child's working time should be devoted to their development under the direction and guidance of the teachers and, wherever possible, of the parents. He should be encouraged to spend a minimum of 150 hours per year on **projects and activities** related to his community and the environment. The child's own report of the activities should be filed into his progress record after being checked by the teacher.

Another segment of the pupil's time should be compulsorily spent on activities concerning **the self, the family and the home**. The schools should have **resource centres** which can support such independent activities of the pupil through the provision of information, special tools and equipment, advice, etc. His involvement in the larger community should be a natural extension of his interest in himself and in his family. The health services, utilities such as waste disposal, water sources, electrical power and communications, the production and supply of goods, care for the helpless, aged and the infirm, and numerous other services and facilities should become foci of his interest on this basis. **Scouting, exploration and going on expeditions** are activities that should be undertaken by all schoolgoing children. During these activities, particular attention must be paid to the identification of locations of resources necessary to support life such as food materials, water and medicinal plants.

### **Nation Building**

In the face of a multitude of pressures from the world outside our nationhood and our links with other nations in the Region assume a deep significance. Such links and transactions have to be established, maintained and conducted from a position of strength, equality and dignity. Moreover, the wellbeing of our citizens depends on the state of the nation. Therefore, it has to be built and strengthened. In the formulation of educational policy we need to identify how education could contribute to nation building. We see **national integrity and coherence** as aspects of nation building that can be fostered through an appropriate education.

In the task of nation building, **value education** should receive proper emphasis. One of the most crucial considerations in this regard is the inculcation of attitudes connected with tolerance. Bigotry and self-righteousness are at the root of the aggravation of many of our national problems at the present time. The educational process should seek to engender in impressionable minds the conviction that no ideology or approach constitutes the sole repository of truth. In a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural society there must be recognition of the inherent value of diversity. The clash of ideas and the conflict of opinions represent the life-blood of the democratic process. The framework of the education system suited to the fulfilment of current aspirations in our country must make provision for the harmonious juxtaposition of disparate attitudes and value systems within the frame of reference of mature nationhood.

Just as in any other nation, we too have groups and subgroups among our people. Such divisions and groupings, per se, need not be divisive. In fact their differences could be used creatively in nation building to achieve a cultural richness and variety. On the other hand, it is also possible to create divisions and aggravate them to the extent that they generate divisive tendencies and cleavage. Education should sensitize the children to enable them to identify and to resist such divisive tendencies.

When individuals and groups live in close proximity to each other, sharing a common environment and resources, it is referred to as **coexistence**. Although coexistence implied 'mutual tolerance' in earlier usage of the word, with the availability of modern weaponry, transport and communications, three variations of coexistence are possible, as our experience shows. These three are: coexistence with harmony; coexistence with indifference and coexistence with conflict.

**Coexistence with harmony** obtains when individuals or groups reinforce each other and interact in a manner that is conducive to the satisfaction of all. It is clearly not a passive state like **coexistence with indifference** when they do coexist but without any significant interactions. When in the latter state, they will strictly mind their own individual businesses. A state of **coexistence with conflict** is when there is either actual violence or an implied or imminent threat in the postures and interactions. None of these states are permanent or static.

Instability of these states arises because people can harbour a variety of thoughts without being known to others. They can create detrimental concepts and mental structures, and also affect others' thinking through symbolic acts and communications. Hence with the passage of time one state of coexistence can change to another. An

appearance of peace and harmony can be deceptive, and cannot be taken for granted. Therefore it is incumbent on the Government to study and analyse systematically the current state of the nation in depth and great detail in order to detect divisive trends and tendencies, and to identify what aspects of the nation should be strengthened so as to preserve national integrity.

In the present context of our country the primary concern in nation building is the movement towards a state of **coexistence with harmony**, and the engendering of a mutual desire among all groups to maintain that state. A national weakness in this regard, which is perhaps developed and reinforced through the academic education that is largely imparted in our schools and universities, is the propensity to be **intensely critical of the defects and weaknesses of others, while being blind to their strengths and mutually complementary positive qualities.**

Nations and groups which are desirous of enjoying a durable peace both externally and internally, must understand the nature of coexistence and its aspects. This will enable them to fashion the education system, and to have beliefs, practices, rituals, festivals, traditions etc. which are conducive to the removal of negative aspects and enhancing the positive aspects of the **PEACEFUL** state which could be very fragile indeed.

Groups of all kinds have as members at least a few individuals who are either capable of or are predisposed to misunderstanding and misinterpreting of information, and to take disruptive initiatives vis-a-vis other members or other groups. Such capabilities and predispositions may not be their inherent qualities but created by situational factors such as gossip, propaganda and biased information. The actions of those affected individuals may sometimes tip the balance towards division and violence. Then it may be impossible to recover the earlier peaceful or neutral state through rational negotiations. Hence it is better to take precautions to avoid the preconditions which affect individuals adversely rather than to recover the balance after it has been lost. This is in no way an advocacy of censorship, but rather of **openness to scrutiny of procedures and processes that affect the livelihood and wellbeing of citizens.**

Nation building also requires every citizen to feel freely and positively that he is a member of the **SRI LANKAN NATION**, and that this membership is essentially beneficial to himself and those whom he cares for. He should not feel rejected, but feel comfortable in being with fellow citizens. These are, of course, personal feelings and are shaped by memories, thinking patterns, attitudes and values that are in turn conditioned by many factors including the influences of parents, peers, fellow citizens and mass media and by **education**. However, there are no theories and formulae to predict to what extent each factor can influence a person's feelings. Hence it is incumbent on the educators to take every possible step to promote peace and harmony between children of various groups because the formation of durable attitudes and values is likely to be most effective when the children are very young and impressionable.

Ours is an ageing society. In the future the proportion of older citizens will progressively increase. The social transformations which place a premium on profitability and economic performance may compel the younger people to consider the care of the

aged as a mere distraction or even as a burden. Furthermore, the spirit of competitiveness and the emphasis on de-personalized competence that has been inculcated in us by the education system over the years can easily bring about an indifferent attitude towards those who need our humane concern and attention, particularly the sick, disabled, infirm and the weak. The attention we pay to them can degenerate to being symbolic and institutionalized. The sustained, dedicated, goal-directed effort that every citizen should bring into nation building are not viable in a society that is not genuinely concerned with the weaker and less fortunate members. Hence nation building requires that our children develop attitudes which are conducive to caring for and helping them. In addition to the home and family, formal education also should have structures aimed at such attitude formation.

**Measures that could be introduced into the education system to promote nation building are –**

- (a) organization of sports, cultural events, festivals, entertainment events, exhibitions, etc. in which all communities and groups could participate on equal terms;
- (b) giving meaningful incentives to teachers and pupils who become fluent in both national languages;
- (c) making available at a reasonable price, language learning packages with audiotapes and printed materials;
- (d) promoting the translation of books so that they are published in both national languages;
- (e) ensuring that the material in school texts do not create misunderstandings and divisions among groups, both religious and ethnic;
- (f) organizing multi-ethnic "brigades" of school children for engaging in humanitarian service and rehabilitation work among the people in "stricken areas";
- (g) as far as possible, not segregating children into schools established on ethnic or religious basis, and having all children attending schools where they share common facilities.

**Nation Building should be viewed as an aspect of development which is complementary to Character Building**, because a person lives and works in relation to social groups of his choice and in relationship with the nation. Hence we cannot consider nation building as being divorced from character building and from the conduct that is expected of the individual. In other words, a nation and its institutions must be organized and shaped so as to be consistent with the desirable character, role and aspirations of the individual citizen.

We have witnessed a series of changes in the economic and social fabric of our country since independence. Over the past two decades alone, the economy has seen a total change from a highly regulated and controlled system to a highly liberalized system where controls have been extensively dismantled. During the period of restrictions, a series of regulatory controls by way of import and export licensing, stringent exchange control laws, price controls and rationing resulted in monopolistic situations both in the public and private sectors. Industrial monopolies were stronger

in the public sector operating under the protection of high tariff walls and licence cover. While the pendulum has now swung to the other extreme with the liberalization of the economy, private and foreign investment has had an opportunity of making inroads into a large area of economic activity.

Bilateral and multilateral assistance generally subjects the economy to conditionalities which could narrow the options in decision making. Meanwhile liberalization could also provide opportunities for foreign interests and local economic giants to exercise greater influence on the social fabric which could result in the weaker sections of society being disadvantaged. Interests, both local and foreign, which have a role to play in the economy of our country must appreciate responsibilities cast on them. There is no freedom divorced from responsibility. They must understand the social fabric within which they have been permitted to operate and therefore temper their profit motive with the discharge of social responsibility covering a wide range from respecting the rights of employees to preventing the degradation of the environment. This undoubtedly would be the best form of defence against the charge of economic tyranny which has not been new to the third world.

There is, however, the possibility that a monopoly of the government could be replaced by a monopoly of local and foreign private interests. It could also happen that these interests are not sensitive to medium and long term side-effects of industrial and commercial activities, and hence are not willing to carry essential but indirect overheads arising from waste accumulation, environmental pollution, ecological degradation, and deterioration of the health of workers and possibly of the general population.

A demanding, self-seeking, short-term-goal-oriented and monopolizing private sector could be worse than a government monopoly which mismanages and bungles along. Such a private sector can harbour mediocre performers, and force the rest of the country to carry unnecessary overheads accruing from unproductive operations introduced by laziness, arrogance, pomposity, phobias and mental blocks of individuals and groups who dominate the business, commercial and banking scene. The tragedy is that the burden of these overheads would be passed on to captive and unwitting customers. These overheads would also result in exorbitantly high cost of finance to an incipient entrepreneur who is struggling to come up.

The social pathologies of the day ranging from youth unrest, of violence inflicted on defenseless persons, secret organizational activities of students, proliferation of political divisions and rhetoric, journalism which concentrates on the negative aspects of public and private affairs, all point to the underlying threat to the individual, and the pressure that comes on him from the choices that are imposed on him for which he is ill-prepared to face.

The Government which clearly has a hand in shaping socio-cultural development, has certain unavoidable responsibilities in the sphere of nation building. It has to ensure the survival of the individual through policy making which should have the following effects :

- (a) confining each institution and organization to its specific task and mission — not allowing and not expecting any organization to claim responsibility beyond its specific sphere of activity, as it amounts to usurpation, and should be prevented ;

- (b) not giving state sector organizations and government agencies which have security functions, welfare functions and developmental functions any special privileges and powers which are prerogatives of the "sovereign", but only those which are necessary for the discharge of their specific missions; and judging them solely on their performance and attainment of predetermined goals ;
- (c) clear demarcation of "sovereign functions" which pertain to the judiciary, legislature, upholding of the Constitution and national security; so that state sector organizations and government agencies know where they stand ;
- (d) making **public interest** the focus of **all** organizations through clear legislation, treating organizations as autonomous and strictly limited to making them perform, and also safeguarding the freedom of the individual worker against arbitrary cancellation of the employment contract by the employer (the government has a duty to protect by law the weaker in a contractual relationship, and to see that the law is enforced) ;
- (e) safeguarding, administratively against oppressive rule, against abuse of power by "small men" in organizations, and against administrative sloth, arrogance and tyranny ;
- (f) ensuring the freedom of the individual to make responsible decisions.

When the individual is given the freedom and responsibility to decide his own being and becoming, it also imposes on him a certain responsibility towards organizations. In turn the organization must be demanded to provide **status and function to the individual**; organization must not look upon the individual as a "tool".

The individual must be educated to be able to face up to the questions : "**How can I help the organization to legitimately satisfy my needs?**" and "**How can I make the organization enable me to perform, to achieve and to contribute?**" In this process of education, not only the state but also the **leaders of business and industry** have a role. They should not only demand that the education system provide educated and trainable workers; but also accept the role, responsibility, freedom of aspiration, and the need for protection against arbitrary infringements on the **fundamental rights of the latter**. Without such an acceptance, concepts such as **patriotism and service to the nation** on the part of an oppressed workforce have no meaning.

#### **Monitoring of Performance**

The monitoring of the performance of a school should be centered on the classroom. The main process of monitoring will be self-observation and peer observation of the teacher activities, and half yearly reporting by the teacher himself to the principal. These reports will be received by the principal who will in turn report to a review committee composed of parents and also to the Divisional Education Office. The teachers' reports will be kept in the schools for the purpose of verification on a **strictly random** basis by officers from the Ministry, Provincial Education Office and Divisional Education Office.



For any lapses and faults, the persons responsible and their immediate superiors should be asked for explanation, and suitable action taken. If the same lapse or fault occurs twice or more, then the person at the next higher level should also be held answerable. This principle should operate at all levels of the education hierarchy. Even the Minister, Chief Minister and Provincial Minister should not be beyond reproach if necessary. Those at operational levels find it easy not to discharge their duties properly, and fail to observe standards and norms mostly due to the indifference and lack of support from those at the higher levels of organization.

There should be targets set in advance for monitoring activities by officials at all levels. Those falling short of targets and not doing inspections and reporting properly (e. g. an education officer who calls a principal to the education office to fill in a report regarding a school when he is expected to actually visit the school for this purpose) should be punished whenever they are detected, as a deterrent.

#### **Co-curricular Activities**

A common period of two hours per week should be set apart for co-curricular activities of the entire school. It should be made compulsory for teachers to guide and assist in the organization of the activities. The activities in which a teacher has taken active interest should be an aspect included in the teacher's half-yearly report, and on which he should be evaluated.

Every child should be encouraged to take an active, consistent and steady interest in at least one co-curricular activity throughout his school career. A statement of his development through such an activity should be treated as an integral part of his school record.

#### **Post of Deputy Principal**

In order to ensure regularity and effectiveness of the supervision of the classroom and the school, it is essential to have an identified teacher specifically appointed as Deputy Principal. In the larger schools there should be more than one Deputy Principal. The schools have had an arrangement of detailing a person who was selected by the Principal as the Deputy Principal. This arrangement had arisen out of a felt need. This post should be identified in the cadre with an appropriate allowance and functions listed.

The selection of the Deputy Principal should be done through a formal process, based on uniform criteria. Whilst seniority appears to be a good basis for appointment, the service record is equally or more important. When the function is officially recognized, and the person appointed is given the responsibilities and is held accountable, then the question of not being selected solely on the wishes of the incumbent principal will not be significant.

#### **The Number of School Days**

The number of school days during the year should be increased to a minimum of 190. The present number is inadequate because of the number of days that are required for educationally important activities such as excursions and projects.

The practice of getting school children to participate in public functions, sometimes solely to stand, wave flags and to cheer, or to attend public meetings of questionable educational value should be discouraged. Considering that Provincial Councils have a direct jurisdiction over schools and that there could be an increasing demand for such participation, a code regarding the participation of pupils in functions outside school should be drawn up immediately in consultation with parents. This code should be implemented **unwaveringly**. The Principal and the Deputy Principal should be held solely accountable for the effective use of the time spent by children in school.

Each school should determine in advance its Schedule of Terms and School Calendar in keeping with local needs such as for agriculture, and within overall constraints imposed by public examinations.

### **Provincial Administration and Management**

An educational policy sets out to correlate objectives, structures, institutions and practices introduced into the system at different points of time in its development. Any conflict in these or any dislocation will only impede the functioning of the system. During the course of evidence before the Commission, many persons who are in the system themselves expressed concern over the very fragile relationship that exists between the Provincial Secretary of Education and the Provincial Director of Education.

The Provincial Secretary who will naturally be in overall charge of educational matters in the Province will function under the directions of his Minister, i.e. the Minister of Education of the Provincial Council. He is invariably a member of the S. L. A. S. Meanwhile, the Provincial Director of Education is the specialist belonging to the Sri Lanka Educational Administrative Service and works directly under the Director-General of Education (who is the Secretary, Ministry of Education and Higher Education). These two officers in the Province must work in unison for the effective implementation of programmes and policies. But, considering the fact that the specialist is himself the senior in service and age, he cannot be expected to feel happy about his being subordinated to an officer whom he considers junior in service and a non-specialist.

The devolution of functions has been specified in the 13th Amendment to the Constitution. Appendix III which is the devolved list, as far as education is concerned covers a very wide area including provision of facilities to all state schools other than specified schools, appointment, transfer of Principals, preparation of plans in respect of educational development and its implementation, appraisal of performance of principals, teachers, education officers, etc. In carrying out these devolved functions, the Provincial Director will have a vital role to play. His input will be crucial to the effectiveness and efficiency of the development plans. He also maintains all records and establishment particulars of staff in the province. He should therefore be brought into the Provincial Council Educational set up in an effective manner. The Commission considers that unless some effective steps are taken in this regard, relationships could be strained resulting in a dislocation of the administration at Provincial Council level.

The Commission feels that a possible solution would be to find a way of appointing the Provincial Director of Education as an Additional Secretary of the Provincial Council restricting his functions to education only so that he will derive authority from both his Ministry and the Provincial Council, and function as an effective co-ordinator of educational activities in the Province. This arrangement will make it possible for actions to be prompt, and make it unnecessary to duplicate the personnel record keeping functions.

The maintenance of physical plant, inspection and monitoring of schools, distribution of supplies to schools, and pupil and staff welfare matters should be the responsibility of the Divisional Education Offices.

The appointment, transfer, promotion and disciplinary control of teachers should be under the purview of the Provincial Education Service Committee of the Provincial Public Service Commission.

### **Education Clerical Service**

The Education Sector should have a separate closed clerical service. Its clerical staff serve a particular group, namely, the teachers, pupils and themselves ; not the general public. Their work is guided not only by the codes that pertain to Public Administration but also by the rules and regulations that are special to the Education System which is by itself a very large one. The establishment of a separate clerical service and bringing it under the direct supervision and control of the Education Administrators will ease much of the confusion that prevails in the Education System.

The System as a whole and the clerical service in particular will be better attuned to "learn from experience" and to retain what has been "learnt". The tendency to lose track of files and delay the movement of information could be minimized. The principals and other officers at various levels of the system will feel a greater sense of readiness and responsibility to ensure that the information base is well maintained so that actions could be taken promptly.

The separation of the educational clerical service will enable whatever rewards and disciplinary action concerning clerks to be effected without delay, so that such action would be relevant and meaningful. In the existing clerical service which is outside the Education System, the clerks tend to take a lot of liberties since whatever disciplinary action is dilatory and operates through remote control.

The separation of the education clerical service can be done without delay. It would become a service that is actually managed by Educational Administrators. Those who are already in service should be given the option of joining the service or remaining with the general clerical service.

It has been suggested that even the teachers should be given a period of service in education offices in appropriate positions so that the formation of a better set of attitudes and traditions in the service is facilitated. This is acceptable since it is in keeping with principles of good management.

### Higher, Tertiary and Vocational Education

The Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission (TVEC) should be a body corporate under His Excellency the President.

The TVEC should have an advisory group which includes representation from all the Provincial Councils and from Trade Unions.

The University Grants Commission (UGC) should have under its purview programmes for conferring—

Associate Degrees,  
Bachelor's Degrees,  
Undergraduate-level Diplomas,  
Postgraduate Diplomas,  
Postgraduate Degrees.

at Universities and Institutes. When the TVEC takes initiatives regarding Associate Degree programmes it should do so with joint consultative agreement with the UGC.

Before any Ministry or other public sector organization starts a human resource development programme, it should consult the TVEC and the UGC. This is necessary to avoid duplication and to enable the maintenance of standards. It will also make the TVEC and UGC aware of emerging needs for education and training programmes.

There should be a fixed time channel once a week on radio and television for news and publicity regarding educational and human resource development programmes.

The existing infrastructure of schools, technical colleges, affiliated university colleges should be made available for community programmes and educational programmes conducted by other institutions. The arrangements should be made through mutual consultation. There should be provision for security, safety, maintenance, etc. to make such use possible. A fee should be charged by the owners of the facility to meet overheads and for further improvement of facilities.

Opportunities should be made available both in the private and public sectors for unemployed students of all higher educational institutions to familiarize themselves with the world of work. The organizations which are able to offer such opportunities should inform either the UGC or the universities.

Definitions of "tertiary education" and "vocational education" which are acceptable to the University Grants Commission, the Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission and the National Education Commission need to be standardized so that a common usage may prevail among all concerned including the employers. The definitions currently used by the Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission is in Annex. These definitions, it should be noted, take into account that those who have reached lower levels than Advanced-Level are also eligible to enter specific Tertiary Education Programmes. Tertiary Education also includes Higher Education which is usually available for those who have passed the Advanced Level and have obtained a sufficiently high aggregate of marks.

In comparison with Higher Education, Tertiary Education is a larger category and would also be admitting persons with less than Advanced-Level qualifications. Tertiary Education would therefore include preparatory/remedial programmes to enable such entrants to make them eligible for admission to Higher Education courses subsequently.

#### **Special Provision for Plantation Sector Schools**

1. The National Education Commission considered the information presented regarding teacher availability, pupil enrolment, and pupil performance in the Plantation Sector Schools.
2. The Commission noted that the shortage of teachers is a critical problem which has a direct bearing on pupil performance.
3. It is also noted that similar conditions obtained in some areas outside the Plantation Sector, such as many parts of Uva, North Central and Eastern Province and limited parts in the Northern, North Western and Sabaragamuwa Province.
4. The above mentioned indicators which have revealed a situation which was considerably below the national averages in these under developed areas, as such would justifiably require special attention and extra ordinary measures to bridge the gap between them and the more developed areas.
5. It appreciates the urgency of the problem created by the teacher shortage and prefers to recommend policies which would help **all disadvantaged schools**, without any discrimination on ethnic and area basis, as it would tend to perpetuate disadvantaged status and also cause resentment in the minds of those who are unfavourable to such special provisions.

Therefore the Commission recommends the following :

- (a) Identification of disadvantaged schools.
- (b) Allocation of a cadre, designated "Teaching Assistants", who will require only G. C. E. (O/L) qualifications with passess in a total of 6 subjects and credit passess in 2 of them ; these passses should be obtained in not more than 2 sittings.
- (c) This programme will be in force only for a limited period of 5 years.
- (d) The appointees of this cadre will be required to obtain the necessary higher qualifications to join the cadre of "Assistant Teachers" within the stipulated period.
- (e) The Minister of Education and Higher Education should put out a gazette notification inviting applications from the Principals of schools which need to be classified as disadvantaged schools.

The criteria for being so classified would be –

- (i) The total number of pupils.
- (ii) Pupil/teacher ratio.
- (iii) Grade of the school.
- (iv) List and description of the teachers.
- (v) Physical plant and basic equipment and facilities.
  - (a) drinking water
  - (b) toilet facilities
  - (c) classroom space per child
  - (d) area of compound (hectarage)
- (vi) Access to school and distance from closest public road.

Upon receipt of the application the Ministry will arrange for inspection and on the basis of the report of such inspection, the classification may be granted.

***A comment on Primary education in places of religious worship***

The Commission has received numerous representations regarding the proposal for the establishment of primary schools in places of religious worship from various denominational groups, organizations, political parties and individuals at its public hearings.

All except one denominational group were not in agreement with the proposal. This particular group was prepared to implement the proposal at short notice provided the return of school buildings taken over by the State in 1961-62 was effected. The other denominations adduced various reasons for not being in favour such as religious strictures against the use of places of worship for any other purpose, the ill-equipped nature of places of worship for this purpose and the likelihood of the common ruin of both the school and the place of worship. The possibility of using state funds for building up the infrastructure of places of worship was seen as an attraction by some. This could, on the other hand, have negative results.

The Commission wishes to make the following observations regarding this proposal :

- (a) Primary education includes a very large component of activities such as games, sports, play, group work and exploratory tasks which should be ideally done within the confines of a school, and preferably under the guidance of a lay teacher.
- (b) Majority of teachers in primary schools are females and this could be a complicating factor.
- (c) Children should be preferably in mixed classes vis-a-vis gender, ethnicity and creed ; segregation on such grounds, in the formative stage of a child's life is not advisable.

- (d) Monastic life of clergy, which must be distanced from the playfulness of children, would be seriously disrupted by having schools within the premises of temples.
- (e) A place of worship by its very nature and arrangement should inspire quietude, piety, devotion, spirituality, transcendence and peace, and a person's disposition or propensity to make use of the place for such a purpose should not be impaired through habituation in his childhood by direct association with learning primarily through play.
- (f) The spontaneity and depth of religious feeling cannot be obtained through the formalized atmosphere of the classroom, wherever it is located. This does not imply, however, that the inculcation of values based on religious teachings has no place in the education of children. Religious teaching for this purpose is best given by religious personages.
- (g) It is also possible that the substantial secularization of education, with the implicit dichotomy between religious experience and everyday life and work, and the separation of worldly knowledge from deep insights regarding human nature has led to the deterioration of values and the debasement of conduct that is common place today.
- (h) The redeeming feature of having monks, swamis, clergymen, and mullahs on hand to impart religious instruction and to conduct religious observances will be offset by the possible inconvenience to devotees and adherents at the various places of worship, were they to function on a regular basis as primary schools.
- (i) The continued working of religious personages with growing children, specially girls, is inconsistent with religious and cultural traditions.
- (j) **The best alternative will therefore be for primary schools, whilst being in their own locations, to be linked with places of worship which are in close proximity, so that facilities in the latter could be used frequently for meditation, prayer and other religious observances, in a genuinely religious atmosphere. The religious teacher could also frequent the school.**

#### National Testing and Counselling Service

In a country that is being developed, it is necessary to maximise both capital formation and the formation of human capabilities for productive work. While our education system is on the one hand intended to increase the educational level of the entire population, it also produces a large number of 'failures' out of them by dropping out and screening out many from the 'academic track' which they uniformly follow in school. Those who succeed in excelling in the academic track have the greater probability of success in finding employment and also the avenues of climbing to the levels of employment in which higher incomes and better conditions of service obtain.

The career path of a person who either drops out or does not enter an institution of tertiary education or of higher education or does not join a profession after obtaining the necessary qualifications, is either a tortuous one or one that does not lead to well paying employment.

Except for the higher educational paths which lead to the professions such as medicine, law, engineering, accountancy, technical work, teaching and nursing, the education is not related by way of imparted knowledge and skills to the actual performance on the job. Those who enter are fitted to the job through a variety of processes after they have left the formal educational track. They have to depend on feelevying courses, apprenticeship, non-formal programmes and on-the-job training to become eligible for jobs. While some jobs require knowledge, others may require psychomotor skills, experience, physical strength and stamina, trainability, and other mental and physical capabilities, as qualifications. The development of the necessary capabilities of the majority being left to their own devices is an **erratic** way of maximising the human capabilities for development.

Typically, we have the case of a young person channeling all his resources and energies to sit the G. C. E., Advanced-Level examination, then being unsuccessful at entering the university, not having developed any interpersonal skills and induction skills due to a variety of reasons including parental coercion and pressure of studies, and not knowing what other options are available to him. He is then forced to embark on a technical or physically demanding education and training programme at about 19 or 20 years of age. It is doubtful whether such a person will develop, at say 21 years of age, a level of competence equal to what he would have acquired if he had started on that same career path earlier in life with better guidance and direction.

In addition to late starting, there is yet another circumstance in our country that retards the maximizing of human capabilities. The testing of 'merit' by means of 'pen-and-paper' tests at which candidates are made to write or to identify correct answers to verbal questions, by its very nature introduces **irrelevant** goals to the person's developmental and preparatory strategies for coping with the actual demands that would be made on him by his future employment. Even if such goals are necessary, along with others, for any particular employment, giving them pride of place to the exclusion of other more significant goals is indeed tragic. The choice of such tests reflects **absolute indifference** to the developmental needs of the country more than ignorance on the part of bureaucrats who make such choices. To **assume** that merit in the contexts of aptitude and trainability for a job that requires psychomotor skills could be assessed through a written test, is **inexcusable**.

Both the needs for testing of merit and for giving proper guidance to children and youth in their individual development could be satisfied simultaneously, by having **valid and reliable** tests designed by an organization dedicated to the preparation and conducting of such tests for the country. These tests should be appropriate in the Sri Lankan context. The present Department of Examinations could be the nucleus of the proposed testing organization. In this case the only danger to be safeguarded against would be the tendency of already available 'pen-and-paper' type test experts to dominate and to swamp out the development of new and more appropriate testing methods.



The defining of job specifications and criteria for performance in various employment opportunities would enable the derivation and clear identification of educational goals and objectives. Hence any person will be able to prepare himself better and be afforded opportunities to be tested in a fair manner. If the testing is clearly based on performance on the job, then it would not be necessary and also difficult to influence the choice. On the other hand such influencing becomes a virtual necessity if the testing procedure is not valid but done only according to the convenience of the selectors.

Furthermore, if the requirements for the job are specified more tightly and validly, then unfit but influential persons will not apply hoping that there may be a possibility of getting selected through unfair means. The use of valid tests based on performance specifications on a job will also increase the possibility of misfits not being recruited through undue influence. Hence the recruited person can be expected to perform better and his efforts ascribed a higher value in economic terms. This would also mean that the employing organization gets more productivity from the employee.

What our country really needs is the increase in productivity through the well focussed effort of better educated and oriented workers at all levels. A worker who is better educated and fitted for his job has the potential for progressively improving the quality of his output and of getting a greater satisfaction from it. He would be predisposed to working in a more responsible and cooperative manner. It should therefore not be necessary to use threats of dismissal as a means of getting adequate performance from him. Instead, the employing organization should have a policy of improving the working conditions and terms of service so as to induce a better worker to stay longer with it.

The 'mushroom type' of organizations which are not interested in the nation and its people — but solely in the short term monetary gains accruing from exploitation of the workers and consumers, indiscriminate dumping of waste, and benefits of extorted concessions and tax holidays which may not be conducive to the longer term build up of the country to be more self-reliant and politically stable — would not, perhaps, care for such testing and the resulting development of a better trained, competent and dedicated workforce. It is doubtful whether nation building to reach Newly Industrialized Country status would be possible if organizations work in a 'mushroom-mode'.

The Testing Authority that is envisaged would serve both private and public sectors. It would study the multitude of typical work situations which need specific knowledge and skills, systematically ; and identify performance criteria, testing procedures, and knowledge and skill components required for each situation. Those who are desirous of being recruited and those who need upgrading in their jobs will benefit from such a procedure. They will then be able to get clear directions as to how to prepare themselves for such employment. In addition, educators and counsellors will be enabled to design better curricula, teach effectively, and guide the pupils and students advantageously.

The Authority should develop the necessary expertise not by simply having its members trained in developed countries, and not by largely copying methods found in those countries. It should develop the expertise and methodologies by the analysis and study of knowledge and skill needs of local work situations, and of the performance of competent Sri Lankans in local contexts.

Whenever any employing organization needs to design a new competence testing procedure, it would be able to draw on the expertise available in the Authority which would have psychologists, physiologists, technologists and specialists in its service either as employees or as consultants. It should have access to laboratories and workshops so that research and development work could be carried out systematically, and standardized testing procedures could be established. It should be the legally empowered authority for testing and assessing human performance, and for advising on the technical and technological aspects of human resource development.

#### **Guide/Senior Teachers**

Every school should have a complement of Guide/Senior Teachers who are selected on the basis of experience, versatility, good character, contribution to school development and pupil development through extra activities, contribution to educational technology, age, maturity, reliability, and above all, integrity. Their functions should be to —

- (a) assist in the education of teachers in combination with the distance mode ;
- (b) be a guide and counsellor to teachers, particularly those who are newly appointed ;
- (c) assist the Principal in school management and supervision ;
- (d) be a change agent in implementing new policy and in improving the school ;
- (e) engage in and guide others in Action Research.

The guide/senior teachers should be selected through a formal process from among eligible applicants. They should be given additional remuneration corresponding to the post. The number should be determined on the basis of a cadre ratio.

The title should be selected as either Guide Teacher or Senior Teacher, based on general preference among teachers.

#### **Mental and Physical Health**

The separation of education from the development of mental and physical health is both artificial and undesirable. The confining of school activities to the mere learning of subject-matter and the development of a limited number of specific skills may be leaving a large part of a growing child's upbringing and education unattended. Considering the aspects of an adolescent life that have become problematic, it may be surmised that early schooling leaves out many significant aspects of a child's education.

There seems to be a mistaken notion that **Physical Education** is the same as coaching and getting children to take part in sports, games and competitions for the purpose of winning awards. In the process of promoting and organizing sports meets, inter-school matches, etc where only team members, winners, coaches and organizers get prominence and publicity, the routine activity of getting every child to systematically and regularly exercise his body and develop physical skills gets totally neglected. Children, parents and teachers do not seem to appreciate the need for regular exercise for the body and the need for children to learn how to take care of it.

Even if the aim of the school is to cultivate a group of high class sportspersons who will bring credit to the school and country, the process should start with all the school children of the tender age of around 10 to 12 years. They should all be developed physically by a regime of physical culture suited to their age, physique, climatic conditions and other relevant considerations. Subsequently, based on their interest, trainability and potential, children should be selected for specialized training and nurturing to become athletes, sportspersons, etc.

Irrespective of whether such aspects are a part of the curriculum in developed countries or not, our children will need guidance in and resources for physical education. As they grow older they should be also introduced systematically to health care and nutritional practices relevant to our country. In this regard the bodies of knowledge, and codes and practices of the indigenous system of health care and nutrition needs heavy emphasis. Disappearance of these practices would put the younger generation into a state where they could be easily manipulated and exploited by commercial interests in matters regarding health and medication. This will be clearly detrimental to nation building.

The local health and nutrition practices are valid and effective, and have an undeniable place in our life. On the other hand, we should not adopt wholesale the practices and prescriptions found in other environmental and social contexts without due regard to all the possible consequences. The impact of mass media, advertising, supremacy of commercial interests, are likely to put pressure to make the people less self-reliant and less inward-looking to their ultimate detriment. The western educated elite of the country also help, perhaps unknowingly, in this process by their denigrating the local practices. This is reflected in the use of such terminology as Home Remedies in the curricula. A concerted effort should be made to weave the local knowledge and practices into the school curriculum, both directly through content and indirectly through co-curricular activities.

School activities for promoting mental and physical health have to be done on the basis of research and development work done in our country in relation to our children. They should not be borrowed from other countries, particularly the developed countries, in which the physical characteristics of children, nutritional practices, cultural, social and economic conditions are significantly different from our own. Our universities and other relevant institutions, including those devoted to ayurveda and indigenous medicine, should be directed to engage in research and manpower development to incorporate better mental and physical health knowledge and practices, particularly those which are practicable in the context of our country, in the curriculum at all levels.

The mental health aspect of a child's development should start at home and stretch through schools to the highest levels of education. It is found that the pupils and the students who disrupt the smooth working of the classroom and the institutions, cause stress and harm to others through ragging and other delinquent behaviours are usually the mentally unstable and distressed ones. The majority who are better adjusted are not in favour of disruptive and harmful behaviours even though they do not feel strong enough to take a firm stand against them.

Due to peer influence, elders' example and pressure from commercial and other interests, children and adolescents may be tempted to smoke, consume liquor and to take harmful drugs. While such activities may not be rampant, children's resistance against them should be built up early in their lives, so that they do not fall easy prey to temptation.

With the looming threat of an AIDS epidemic, safeguards must be taken to prevent children of an impressionable age being exposed to media items which glorify licentious and irresponsible personal conduct. It is found that colourful tabloids aimed at the teenage market, films and even TV programmes provide examples of undesirable styles of life, corrupting imagery and ideas, information on 'resources' for deviant activities either explicitly or covertly, and diverts the children's attention from wholesome and constructive behaviours.

Educationists, parents, businesses and organizations in the community should cooperate to ensure that the schools, the media, playgrounds, parks and other places frequented by children provide a safe, wholesome and stimulating environment for children. The need to expand markets and make profits should be **subordinated** to the desire to have a mentally and physically healthy young generation.

The schools should be reinforced and supported in their efforts to fill the children's time with growth promoting and morally enhancing activities.

Tertiary and Higher educational Institutions should develop anti-ragging, anti-violence and anti-intoxicants programmes.

### **Activity Schools**

The children who drop out of school early may be doing so for a number of reasons. In a given population, we should also expect there to be a relatively small number of children who are not disposed to verbal learning and paper work, by their very nature. Such children should be given the opportunity to develop their physical skills and strength. They should also be offered an institutional framework in which they are offered appropriate instructions, made to conform to codes of conduct and standards, afforded opportunities to develop general and specific skills including functional literacy skills, provided role models, and given a safe and wholesome environment in which to spend the major part of the day. The children who have not entered schools at all also need such development.

An Activity School, should be provided for children who drop out either voluntarily or due to closure of non-viable normal schools. In an activity school, children will be required to arrive on time and spend a fixed number of hours every day. They would be placed in charge of persons who can guide them in physical development and in the development of social skills, and also help the children to discipline themselves. Persons who can instruct them in practice of useful trade skills, food preparation and preservation, aesthetic activities of their choice, and agriculture could be coopted from the vicinity. The children should be given nourishment so that they become physically strong, in addition to being disciplined.

The schools that have been closed down or are about to be closed for lack of pupils could be converted to activity schools so that they could start small and develop. It is also known that there are government owned buildings which are not being put to use, which can be used to house such a school. It is advantageous for the school to have about 2 or 3 acres of land. The schools could, as a next phase, admit children who wish to be in the activity school. Children of all ages should have one core programme, with separate projects to cater to different age groups. The enhancement of the children's knowledge and mental skills should not be ignored.

As the school develops it will generate most of the resources it needs if given a certain amount of basic materials and implements. At some stage it would be able to even generate an income by producing saleable commodities and taking contracts.

The most important ingredient in the success of an activity school is the quality of leadership that is given by the person in charge. He should be an energetic and kind person preferably with a good physical stature, with a predilection for outdoor activities, well disciplined and of sober habits. The primary role model for the children would be this person in charge. He should project an image of self-confidence, responsibility and proper conduct. He should be given the freedom to develop the school as its principal 'Architect', utilizing the funds and resources both generated by the school and granted by the government under the guidance of a Management Committee.

A child who is in an activity school should be allowed to leave at the age of about sixteen years. They may be preferred by employers on account of their discipline and training. Those who wish to specialize in a trade and show aptitude may be admitted to a trade school. Those who have developed a desire for further education while they are employed should have opportunities through evening or weekend classes which are based on normal schools.

A number of Activity Schools should be set up on a pilot basis. The Non-formal Division of the Ministry of Education may be entrusted with the operation, of the pilot schools. This would enable the development of the mode and the orienting of the staff for more schools which are to be established subsequently.

### **Curricular Reform**

The curriculum in all educational institutions including universities, should be subject to review and change on a planned basis. There should be curricular committees in each institution which meet on a regular basis to monitor and review the curriculum in action and to identify necessary knowledge bases and changing needs as influenced by other educational institutions and employers.

The school curriculum should be in three segments :

- (i) **core subjects** to satisfy public examinations and demands for general competence ;
- (ii) a segment aimed at **locally relevant knowledge and skills** ;
- (iii) a segment aimed at **developing competencies required to meet personal needs and goals.**

The mix of these three segments could change with the age of the child. At the beginning of schooling the personal and core segments could be in dominance. At a later stage when the child starts to explore and fashion his own world the local segment could grow larger at the expense of the other two segments. As he grows older the local segment may be again reduced with the core and personal segments being emphasized in that order.

One clear disparity between the child of an affluent family and one who is not, is the ability of the former to have a large local and personal segment often arranged non-formally. The non-affluent urban and rural child does not have the means and the resources to develop these segments. He even spends a good portion of the time that should be spent on them for improving the core competencies by attending tutorials. Even at the Advanced Level stage the effort is solely devoted to learning clusters of common academic subjects chosen in conformity with personal goals. Hence, at the end of the school career we find a young person who has not developed as an individual personality and who has not even started on a trajectory of personal growth.

The core segment of the curriculum comprises a large amount of material that has to be learnt by the pupil. This material is usually in a form that is highly standardized and can be communicated through the printed medium. Even the exercises and instructions for practical work can be given as prescriptions, so that a pupil only needs the time, the resources, some guidance and plenty of timely feed-back to do the learning effectively.

If better texts, clear instructions for practicals, guidance for study, worked examples, and problems with answers are provided, the pupil should be able to learn much of the core segment through **individual effort and self study**, far more efficiently than through tutorials.

The input of the teacher, i.e. **teaching** is necessary for **motivating, and creating meaning and insight**. Teaching has also to do with application of information, with **reaching out, with understanding and enjoyment**. Teaching has more to do with **perception** than it has to do, apparently, with intellect; and is done by the teacher's example. The teacher should be freed for this role, by the better organizing of the material for learning by the pupil. He should not be deployed to supervise the learning and to dispense material for learning, which can be best done through a text-book.

The teacher should also **guide** the pupil in his **personal segment and the local segment** by initiating him in a project, and experiential learning and exploratory exercises. Irrespective of what he would do in later life, **the personal and local segments are what enhances a person's value to society**. Even a factory worker of the modern times will do better if he is able to contribute to the improvement of the practice of his own job, the workplace and the community, and also be able to learn on his own initiative.

Crafts and technologies have their own identities and logics of growth quite apart from the sciences. While recognizable interconnections do exist between sciences and technologies, there are fundamental and significant differences in the attitude sets associated with these two areas. Crafts and technologies, and engineering which is

concerned with the application of knowledge (not only scientific knowledge) and skills to achieve practical ends, are all motivated by an urge to do ; whereas the practice of sciences is motivated by the urge to know. The potentials for performances resulting from these two differing motivations has to be taken serious note of when we are formulating curricula for school children in their formative years.

It would be advantageous to have a fourth stream of specialization in **TECHNOLOGY**, in addition to the existing Arts, Sciences and Commerce streams in secondary schools. The emphasis in this stream will not be the mere accumulation of knowledge, but its application, together with appropriate skills in dealing with **man-made devices, structures and systems**. This additional stream is very necessary and important because the sciences, per se, do not confer certain essential attitudes, values and skills to the workforce.

The sciences themselves have become so proliferated and specialised to the extent that it would not be both necessary, sufficient and efficient for a person whose intention is to be a technologist or an engineer to devote the limited time at his disposal in learning the sciences, even physics and chemistry. The pupil's time could be spent more profitably even during his school years to learn concepts, principles and skills which are basic to technology and engineering, together with necessary knowledge drawn from **all areas** relevant to human life. Pupils in this stream would be able to enter educational programmes in schools of agriculture and food technology, technical colleges, colleges of education, technological universities, and university courses other than those in the faculties of science, arts and commerce.

#### **Reorganizing of Pre-Schools**

Pre-schools should remain as private institutions. Not all children need to attend them since many mothers are able to give the necessary guidance and take care of them during daytime. The pre-schools as arranged now cannot be really helpful to a working mother since the children do not remain in them for the entire period the mother may be at work. They usually function for not more than 4 hours per day and also have the same number of working days as normal schools. If at all, they could be an additional burden to a working mother by way of having to arrange the safe transport of a child to and from a school, provide materials and supervision, and help in the child's homework.

The pre-schools need to be studied in detail to identify the needs of parents and children, the kind of interventions that are possible and desirable at the usual preschooling age, and the problems associated with **child-care** and **pre-schooling**. This would help to identify the goals of these two activities, and to prepare norms and curricula for pre-schools and child-care centres.

#### **Introduction of Basic Law**

In society law serves a number of purposes. Besides controlling wrong-doers, laws promote human dignity, encourage equity and fair-dealing in social relationships, regulate human conduct in almost all spheres of activity and govern relationships between states. It is therefore important that pupils in secondary schools are exposed to basic ideas about law, human rights, civics and international law. This will help to promote a respect for the Rule of Law, Human Rights and Civic Consciousness in Sri Lankan society.

The pupils must learn to appreciate the need to acquire some understanding of basic law, their application and importance in a democratic society. By the introduction of "basic law" into the Social Studies curriculum what is expected is to sensitize the teachers towards exposing pupils to some of the important concepts and principles, and not to teach the latter the content of the law.

It seems unrealistic to introduce Basic Law as a separate subject in years 6-11. However, the Social Studies syllabus could be amended to introduce Basic Law as an important component of this subject. A special committee consisting of legal experts and educationists could review the Social Studies syllabus to suggest changes and improvements. This committee could also prepare the relevant literature for the Basic Law component of the course.

A Committee has been appointed by the Commission to examine this proposal in greater detail and formulate a policy recommendation.

#### **Pupil-texts**

An action that will have immediate effect on the quality of education is the improvement of pupil texts. A pilot exercise should be embarked on with the view to making pupil texts more suitable for self-study by the pupils. These texts should also be useful to the teachers and parents in guiding children in their use. The exercise would have the following components. :

- \* Specification of learning objectives, topics and their sequencing in Language, Social Studies and Science; review and up-dating the specifications for learning ;
- \* Selection of Year 6 pupil text books for re-editing.

#### **Basic Principles :**

- \* The Text should appeal to the Pupil. It should have features to "win and hold the attention".
- \* The Text should actively facilitate SELF-STUDY BY THE PUPIL, and assist the teacher.

#### **Each Text should include :**

- \* A one page NOTE to the Pupil on how to use the Text book to guide his study. This should, of course, be adapted to the 11 year "Young Learner".
- \* A one page NOTE to the Parents giving them some relevant information on the Text.
- \* The Text should have implicit and explicit Guidelines for School based Assessment.



Consider ALL the following in some detail :

**LINKS WITH DAY-TO-DAY LIVING – BOTH LIFE AND-WORK.**

Systematics of the Study Domain - Scope, Nature and Structures.

Knowledge included and the Cognitive Readiness for the Learning.

Appeal of Text Material to "WIN AND HOLD THE ATTENTION" of the Pupil.

Lay-out, in the context of the above.

Resources Constraints operating in the Classroom.

General Sociological Acceptability.

**CONTRIBUTION OF TEXT TO VALUES LEARNING: ITS USE SHOULD PROMOTE THE CAPACITIES TO PERSEVERE AND WORK HARD WITH ATTENTION TO RELEVANT DETAIL.**

A suitable number of pupil texts - on the basis of the number of teachers in the pilot exercise - should have interleaved "Notes for Teachers" at the beginning of each lesson or chapter. These leaves could be in buff coloured paper. Two pages, in small type, suitably structured should suffice for each Chapter.

The pilot exercise should have harmonized with it a carefully organized pattern of CLASSROOM SUPERVISION.

This could include features such as the following:

**SELF-SUPERVISION BY THE TEACHER TO GUIDE ONESELF.**

Some notes should be provided for this purpose.

Supervision by PEER TEACHERS. This could be by teams of two teachers, working together and observing Classes with the CONSENT of the Teacher concerned and after giving due notice. The incidence of this supervision could be ONLY one Class Period a week. This mode of supervision is critical as fuel and other shortages, will limit the "external visits". However about one such external visit should be organized for the Pilot Locations per month.

The "internal supervision" notes could be used for interactive discussion with the guidance of the Head Teacher or a Senior Teacher. These and the external supervision notes could be filed as a part of the record of the Pilot Exercise.

Linked to the Pilot Exercise should be initiated an ASSESSMENT MODE, essentially School-based and addressing the LEARNING OF KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND VALUES. VALUE LEARNING SHOULD BE STRESSED. INITIALLY, THE FINDINGS OF THE ASSESSMENT will guide the Teacher more importantly and significantly; the RELEVANT assessment findings should be made known to the Pupil in a fitting and proper manner so that the pupil will be induced to improve the performance. The Parents should be invited to take note of the progress their child is making in his learning.

At least HALF-YEARLY, the findings of the assessment of each individual pupil should be selectively communicated to the PARENTS — at least one of them — if at all possible with some personal interaction.

This pattern of ASSESSMENT SHOULD EVENTUALLY LEAD TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF PATTERNS OF:

ACCOUNTABILITY TO THE PARENTS AND THE IMMEDIATE SOCIETY IN WHICH THE SCHOOL IS LOCATED;

ACCOUNTABILITY TO THE DIVISION AND THE PROVINCE;

ACCOUNTABILITY TO THE NATION.

These actions should be seen as an integrated whole. A suitable Time-frame for action should be initiated. This should be realistic, as short as possible and harmonized with the "life" of the schools.

This initial stage should be extended to other levels and study domains as appropriate.

The National Education Commission would welcome a continuing DIALOGUE in the "Design" and "Implementation Sequences". What is envisaged is NOT a "Research Project" ONLY. It is a NATIONAL PRIORITY FOR THE FUTURE OF EDUCATION.

#### **Formation of a Professional Body for Teachers**

The formation of a professional body for all teachers is essential. Such a body should be strictly a-political and different from a trade union in its mission. It will help to uplift the profession through many activities. Like other professional bodies it could also specify standards of professional attainment, and confer professional qualifications which are recognized by employers.

The Body can also safeguard the interests of the teachers, and make recommendations regarding the profession to the Government from time to time.

#### **Revision of Education Law**

The main legal basis of our present complex education system is an ordinance passed in the pre-independence era - viz., the Education Ordinance No. 31 of 1939. The vast changes that have taken place since then have been effected by means of amendments, special provisions, laws and regulations grafted on to this decaying stock.

The amendments, special provisions, laws, acts and regulations are also so numerous and scattered over a long period of over half a century that it is not easy to determine which provision or regulation is alive and which is dead. Even legal experts tend to get confused and lost in this trackless wilderness of laws and regulations. A case in point may be the omission of the two historic enactments - viz., Act No. 5 of 1960 and No. 8 of 1961 from the Legislative Enactments of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka - (Revised Edition - 1980 (unofficial)). No reasons are adduced for this grave omission.

In these circumstances, it is not surprising that even experienced educational administrators find it difficult to decide which particular law or regulation applies to a particular situation. The circumstances that necessitated the changes introduced into the education law in 1945, 1947, 1951 and 1960 have disappeared almost completely and the Minister is now in complete and direct control over the National System of Education which is fully financed and managed by the State.

For the few schools which have opted to remain private and others that have been established in the recent past outside the State system, there is no proper legal control or authority as the existing codes of regulations are inapplicable and outdated.

It should be noted that the Thirteenth amendment to the Constitution provides for devolution of certain powers and functions in relation to education and education services. A clear demarcation of the statutory functions of the Central Agency — the Ministry of Education — and the Provincial Councils is called for to avoid duplication of functions and overlapping of responsibilities.

There is therefore an obvious and urgent need for a new Education Act and a set of new regulations embracing all aspects of education so that the policies of the Government can be more-comprehensive. Such a legal measure is a sine-qua-non not only to ensure the continuity of any changes contemplated for reconstruction of the present system, but also to serve as a safe launching pad to introduce development programmes for the future.

In the preparation of an Education Act as envisaged while codifying and consolidating all relevant provisions that are scattered in the numerous Ordinances and Acts constituting the present law, particular attention should be paid to the following aspects :

1. Scope of the Provisions of the Act.
2. Principles of State Policy on Education.
3. Ministry of Education vis-a-vis, responsibilities, duties and functions of the Provincial Authorities.
4. Statutory Bodies.
5. Departments of Education.
6. Establishment, management and maintenance of State Schools, and their classifications.
7. Private Schools - their management and control so that they accord with National Policy.
8. Enrolment of pupils and compulsory attendance of children of school going age.
9. Education of handicapped children.
10. Education of pre-school children.
11. Ancillary services.
12. Educational Administrative Service and the Teaching Service.
13. Curricula and Text Books.
14. Educational finance.
15. General and Miscellaneous Matters including offences and penalties.



## Annexe

**OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS TO BE USED IN THE  
CATEGORISATION OF TRAINING INSTITUTES AS PROVIDING  
TERTIARY EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION**

- (a) **Vocational Education** is defined as education and training imparted to persons for the acquisition of knowledge, operative skill, or of experience needed for the pursuit of an occupation.

**Recommended Guidelines to be used :**

Initial training, further training or re-training can be regarded as vocational training provided to those entering upon a new occupation or for those who may already be in an occupation but need to supplement their job experience or else to learn new skills.

The duration of vocational education (including training) may be as prescribed for each approved course.

- (b) **Tertiary Education** is defined as post-secondary education and training imparted to persons to prepare and fit them for an occupation or for the purpose of further study in an University or similar institution.

**Recommended Guidelines to be used :**

Associate Degree Courses of Two Year full time duration.

**Professional Courses :**

Duration to be as prescribed in the Act or Regulation made thereunder, governing the conduct of the respective Courses of study.

**Other Courses :**

Minimum of two years of full time duration or of equivalent part time duration to be specified by the TVEC.

**CRITERIA FOR ELIGIBILITY OR ENTRY REQUIREMENTS TO  
FOLLOW COURSES IN TERTIARY EDUCATION AND IN  
VOCATIONAL EDUCATION**

- (i) **Vocational Education, (including training)**

The eligibility requirements and entry qualifications to follow a vocational education course shall be as prescribed for each course and approved by the TVEC.

However the criteria to be used in qualifying a student or person to be engaged as a trainee shall be as provided in section 63 of the TVEC Act No. 20 of 1990.

- (ii) **Tertiary Education (including training)**

The eligibility requirements and entry qualifications to follow a tertiary education course shall be as prescribed for each course and approved by the TVEC.