

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Sri Lanka in Brief

1.1.1. Geography

The Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka (formerly Ceylon) comprises of one large island and several islets in the Indian Ocean, lying east of the southern tip of the Indian subcontinent between Northern latitudes $5^{\circ} 55'$ and $9^{\circ} 50'$ and Eastern longitudes $79^{\circ} 42'$ and $81^{\circ} 52'$. The maximum North-South length of the island is 435 km and its greatest width is 225 km. The island (including adjacent small islands) covers the land area of 65,610 sq.km. The Bay of Bengal lies to its north and east and the Arabian Sea to its west. Sri Lanka is separated from India by the Gulf of Mannar and the Palk Strait. The country has a tropical climate, with seasonal monsoons. The island comprises mainly low or rolling plains and a mountainous zone in the south-central interior. There are no marked climatic seasons, but the temperature of the hill country varies between $17^{\circ} - 26^{\circ}\text{C}$ and in low country it varies between $24^{\circ} - 32^{\circ}\text{C}$ during the year. The annual average rainfall varies between 130 cm - 350 cm throughout the country.

1.1.2. The People

The estimated population in Sri Lanka was 19,886 million in 2006. This population is dispersed through most of the country with the greatest population density in South – Western wet zone where the agricultural and living conditions are most favourable. 76.4% of the population is rural; 1.7 million people live in the Greater Colombo area. The average population density throughout the country in 2006 is 317 inhabitants/km² while the highest being Western Province with about 466 inhabitants.

The current average population growth rate, 1.1% (2006), shows a significant decline



compared with the rate of 1.8% in 1978. The crude birth rate and the crude death rate in 2006 were 18.7 and 5.8 per 1000 respectively and thereby the rate of natural increase is 12.9 per 1000.

According to the Census Report in 2001, ethnically 82.0% of the population is Sinhalese, 9.4% is Tamils and the rest is mostly Moors and others (7.9%). Most of the Tamils live in Northern and Eastern Provinces. Religion wise, the majority (76.7%) are Buddhists, 7.8% Hindus, 8.5% Islam, 7.0% Christians and 0.0% others. It is important to recognise that these figures are based on the survey returns of only 18 districts - 16,929,689 population. As the districts where the data are missing have a majority Tamil population, both Tamil population ratio, and Hindu religious ratio may be higher than indicated here, approximately 20% and 15% respectively.

1.1.3 Historical Overview

The ancient culture, language, art and architecture, technology and social customs of Sri Lanka were of Indian origin. However, being a separate island helped to develop a culture of its own, with a distinct identity. Buddhism, which originated in India, remains the principal religion in this country. Similarly, the languages, social customs and other cultural aspects, though originating in India, have developed with their own distinguishing characteristics.

1.1.4 The Political System

Historically, Western powers aimed to obtain a strong hold on the island, in order to control the trade of raw materials and consolidate their power in neighbouring India. When India gained independence in 1947, Sri Lanka, too, becomes independent from the British who ruled the country for 133 years, without any bloodshed in 1948. After independence the country was governed by a democratically elected Westminster model type of government. In 1972, Sri Lanka became a republic. The current structure of the political system was formed in 1978, when an executive presidency model was adopted. Since then, there have been the Legislature, the Parliament, and the Executive President elected separately by the people through universal adult franchise.

In present Sri Lanka, the government authority is substantially devolved to the elected provincial councils. The country is divided into 9 provinces, which are subdivided into 24 districts. Each province is entitled to have its provincial council, with exceptions in Northern and Eastern Provinces, where elections have not been held, owing to the on-going internal conflict. Hence the Governors of these two provinces are responsible for conducting the

government affairs, though elections for the Eastern province will be held shortly. The local Government institutions, designated as Divisional Councils in rural areas and Urban and Municipal Councils in the urban areas, are elected by the people and ensure the people's participation in managing their local affairs.

1.1.5. Socio-Economic Background

From ancient times, subsistence farming has traditionally been the main occupation of Sri Lankan people. With the British occupation in the 19th century, plantation crops were introduced, firstly coffee and later tea and rubber. The export oriented plantation economy was based on the latter two crops and coconuts.

In 1931 a substantial measure of autonomy was granted with the right to elected members to the State Council by universal franchise. Some of the series of enlightened measures were adopted and implemented were the introduction of free education, free health services, restoration of irrigation facilities for colonisation and labour legislation to protect worker's rights. These measures have greatly contributed to the social development of the country.

After independence in 1948, Sri Lanka adapted an open economic policy in 1977. The open economic policies transformed the traditional agro-based economy to one dependant on services and manufacture. The agricultural sector which contributed 44% to the GDP in 1963, had been halved by 1998, to 21%. Furthermore, by 2004, the contribution of the agricultural sector declined to 18%, while the services contributed 56% and the industrial sector 26%. Tourism has been a significant contributor in the services though its growth had been erratic during periods of insecurity due to the conflict. Over the years the structural transformation in the economy has taken place.

Thus, Sri Lanka has recorded a steady growth during the last half of the century, with the approximate GDP growth rate of 5.5%. The per capita income has risen from US\$ 150 in 1960 to US\$ 1355 in 2006. Sri Lanka has graduated from a low income country to a middle income country. Although, compared to the South-East Asian countries which were on par with Sri Lanka in the 1960s, the growth rate has been far lower. This is considered mainly due to the closed economic policies followed by the successive governments, the liberal social subsidies granted without targeting the recipient population and the ethnic conflict. The policy of granting social subsidies has had its beneficial results as well, reflected in the physical quality of life of the population indicate this fact. Sri Lanka's social indicators such as life expectancy, literacy, infant mortality are more favourable than those of the developing countries and are on par with many developed countries. In terms of the

Human Development Index (HDI) Sri Lanka ranked 99th with an index of 0.743 among 177 countries (2007). It is placed 55th in adult literacy rate category, and 126th in the combined Gross Enrolment Ratio category of the below Index.

However, apart from GDP growth, there are other serious problems that the country is faced with. The incidence of poverty is one such issue. According to government estimates 22% of the population live below the poverty line i.e. earning less than one dollar a day. Further it has to be noted that 45% of the population earns less than two dollars a day. This large component of the population forms a vulnerable group who may fall back to poverty due to an unexpected disaster or even vagaries of weather or world economic down turn.

It is necessary to note that the above statistics derived from household surveys do not reflect the situation in the conflict-affected Northern and Eastern provinces, as the census survey has not been conducted in the region since 1981.

Table 1.1: Quality of Life Indicators

Indicator	1991	1996	1998	2001	2002	2003	2004
Infant Mortality Rate (per 1000 live births)	17.71	17.26	14.35	12.63	11.49	11.17	...
Adult Literacy Rate (10 years and above)	86.6	...	...	91.1	...	...	92.5
Youth Literacy Rate				96.9	97.0	95.6	95.6
Unemployment Rate	14.7	11.4	9.2	7.9	8.8	9.0	8.9
Human Development Index	0.721	...	...	0.73	0.74	0.751	0.755
GDP per capita US\$	518	796	879	841	872	954	1010
Life Expectancy at Birth	...	...	...	72.3	72.5	74	74.3
Net Enrolment Rate in Primary education	...	96.6	97.3	92	95	92	91
Net Enrolment Rate in Secondary education	...	94	95.4	89	90	91	89
Survival Rate in Primary Education	...	...	94.5	...	96.6	96.8	98.6

Source: EFA Database of Ministry of Education; Reports of Department of Census and Statistics; Annual Reports of Central Bank of Sri Lanka; Human Development Reports of UNDP

It can safely be assumed that the poverty count in these provinces is very much higher than the average of the seven provinces where data is available.

Another relevant factor to note is the wide disparities in the poverty levels among the different provinces and the districts in the country. The more urbanised Western Province and parts of the Southern Province have lower levels of poverty than the predominantly rural provinces such as Uva, North-western, North-central and Sabaragamuwa. The aggregated national figure does not reflect the pockets of deprivation prevalent in the outlying areas. These inequities are noticeable even among the different income groups of the population. From 1990-91 to 2002, the gross income of the poorest 20% as well as 40% has increased by about 36% and the 33%, respectively, while the income of the richest 20% increased by 49%. The consumption inequality as measured by the Gini coefficient has grown sharply from a level of 34% in 1995 to 41% in 2002. These statistics show that the fruits of development are not equitably distributed to reach the poor. At this rate reaching the targets for the achievement of the first Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of “*Eradicating extreme poverty and hunger*” is unlikely. Recognising this drawback, Government has developed a ten-year plan to intensify the poverty alleviation programme. As for the other MDGs, Sri Lanka is well on its way to achieving the targets.

1.1.6 Current Challenges

Three decades of armed conflict between the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), and the Government of Sri Lanka has caused tremendous damages in Sri Lanka. More than 65,000 lives have been lost, and around one

million people have constantly been displaced. Sri Lanka suffered its worst natural disaster in recorded history in December 2004. A Tsunami swept across the North, Eastern, Southern and South-Western shoreline, devastating two thirds of the coastal belt of Sri Lanka. This catastrophe caused more than 31,000 deaths, over 15,000 injured, more than 5,000 reported missing and nearly a million people displaced. At least 100,000 people lost their jobs. The total damage to assets is estimated as approximately US\$ 1,000 million. In the education sector, 178 schools were totally damaged, and 465 schools partly damaged while 100,000 pupils were displaced.

1.1.7 Development Framework 2006-2016

‘Mahinda Chintana’ or ‘Thoughts of Mahinda’ the guiding ten-year (2006-2016) policy document of the current government, sets an economic growth targets of 8% in the first few years and 10% thereafter. However, in 2006, the economy only managed to achieve a growth rate (real GDP) of 7.4%. The growth was mainly propelled by the services sector, which grew at 8.3% compared to a modest 4.7% growth rate in the agriculture sector. The industry sector grew at 7.2% during the same period. With rising fuel prices and domestic interest rates one cannot be very optimistic about the growth rate achievable in 2007. A fast track reconstruction and development programme for the newly liberated areas in the East under the slogan of ‘Nagenahira Navodaya’ or ‘New Dawn for the East’ was launched in July 2007 by the Government. The aim of this programme is to develop infrastructure and attract investment to the region in order to uplift the socio-economic status of its inhabitants.

1.2. The History of the National Education System

(a) Pre-colonial Era

From ancient times, education occupied a prominent place in the cultural tradition of Sri Lanka. Following on the Eastern traditions, learning was considered as a valued treasure. The main purpose of education was to impart religious knowledge and practices. It was carried out in Buddhist temples or monastic colleges known as Pirivenas by Buddhist clergy.

(b) Colonial Era

With the advent of the Western colonial powers, however, the Portuguese in 1505 and the Dutch subsequently, the traditional educational structures were undermined. Under Portuguese rule Roman Catholic missionaries established schools mainly to propagate the Roman Catholic religion. The curriculum was mainly reading, writing and scriptures. The Dutch who captured the maritime provinces driving away the Portuguese followed a much more vigorous policy on education. They established the Scholarchal Commission to supervise the schools. They also followed a policy of propagating religion through education, converting people to the Dutch Reformed Church.

The British who succeeded the Dutch laid the foundation for a mass education system in the 19th century. Although in the beginning, education was left in the hands of the clergy, soon the Government started its support, influenced by the Humanitarian movement in the home country and also realising the need to educate the natives to man the lower level positions in the public service and the emerging commercial sector. A dual system of schools, those run by the denominational bodies with the government assistance, of which some were

following the English medium and others using the mother tongue as the medium of instruction emerged. In order to manage the government schools and to regulate the assisted schools the Department of Public Instruction was established in 1869. By the dawn of the 20th century there was a national revival among the Buddhists and the Hindus, which resulted in the growth of a nationalist movement. While demanding self-government, Buddhist and Hindu organisations also established their schools. With the inauguration of the Donoughmore Constitution in 1931 the representatives of the people were entrusted with a fair degree of autonomy in running the country affairs. One of the elected representatives became the minister in charge of education.

From 1931 to 1947 a number of significant achievements were made in the sphere of education. Some of these are:

- Enactment of a comprehensive law on education: The Education Ordinance No.31 of 1939,
- Provision of free English medium education in government schools and the establishment of Central schools to implement this proposal,
- Grant of financial assistance to denominational schools which entered the free education scheme,
- Promotion of mother tongue for instruction starting from the primary grades,
- Curriculum changes aimed at “head, heart and hands” concentrating on academic knowledge, aesthetic sensibilities and practical skills,
- A widespread scheme of student welfare measures such as free health services, mid-day meal and scholarships for deserving, and promising students.

(c) Post independent era

The impressive results that the country has achieved in literacy and educational provision during the mid-twentieth century are mainly due to the impact of above initiatives. These also formed the basis and guide to action for policy makers in the post- independent era.

After the independence in 1948, the successive governments continuously followed these enlightened policies in education, health and social services. The use of mother tongue as the medium of instruction was extended to the secondary grades as well. Although English was taught as a second language, deterioration in standards shows that the neglect of English had mixed results.

In the 1960s, of the Government took over the assisted schools, thereby creating a more consolidated national education system.

The Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) was established in the 1960s mainly to develop curricula in science and mathematics. Later, it also took over the development of curricula in other subjects also. In 1985, the National Institute of Education (NIE) was established by an Act of Parliament with wide powers to develop education in the country.

The reforms of 1972 attempted to carry out this through a major curricular revision. It introduced a common general curriculum of nine years duration including science, mathematics, social studies, languages, aesthetics and pre-vocational studies. These reforms introduced immediately after the first youth revolt were aimed at imparting the skills necessary for the world of work under general education as unemployment was considered to be the main factor responsible for the youth uprising.

However, due to political changes, this attempt was not continued to a successful conclusion.

The Reform of 1981 also tried to improve the quality of education and diversify the curriculum for the development of skills, but suffered the same fate as the previous attempt.

(d) Post – Jomthien EFA Era

Recognising the need for stability and continuity of educational reforms, in 1991, the Government established the National Education Commission (NEC) by an act of Parliament vesting the authority to formulate the National Education Policy. After wide public consultations and debate, the NEC formulated the national education policy, which the Government undertook to implement from 1997. The reforms in general education comprised four main areas.

- Promoting access and equity in education
- Improving the quality of education
- Teacher development
- Management development

Implemented from 1998 to 2003, these reforms brought about certain changes in the instructional process in the classroom by making the curriculum more child-centred and activity-based, as opposed to traditional teacher-centred and textbook-oriented teaching methods.

After studying the implementation of the reforms, the NEC made certain recommendations in 2003. These recommendations were incorporated into the Education Sector Development Framework and Program (ESDEP) of the Ministry of Education to be implemented from 2006 to 2010.

(e) The major policy themes of the ESDFP

- (a) Increasing equitable access to basic and secondary education;
- (b) Improving the quality of basic and secondary education;
- (c) Enhancing the economic efficiency and equity of resource allocation;
- (d) Strengthening education governance and service delivery

1.3 The Legal Framework

The constitution of Sri Lanka states that “*the complete eradication of illiteracy and the assurance to all persons of the right to universal and equal access to education at all levels*”. (Constitution of Sri Lanka, Article 27).

The Education Ordinance No.31 of 1939, provide the principal legal basis for the system of education. This ordinance was ammended in 1947 to address the needs that surfaced subsequently. It advocates compulsory school attendance, regulated under Regulation No. 1 of 1997 which requires schooling for all children between the ages of five to fourteen years.

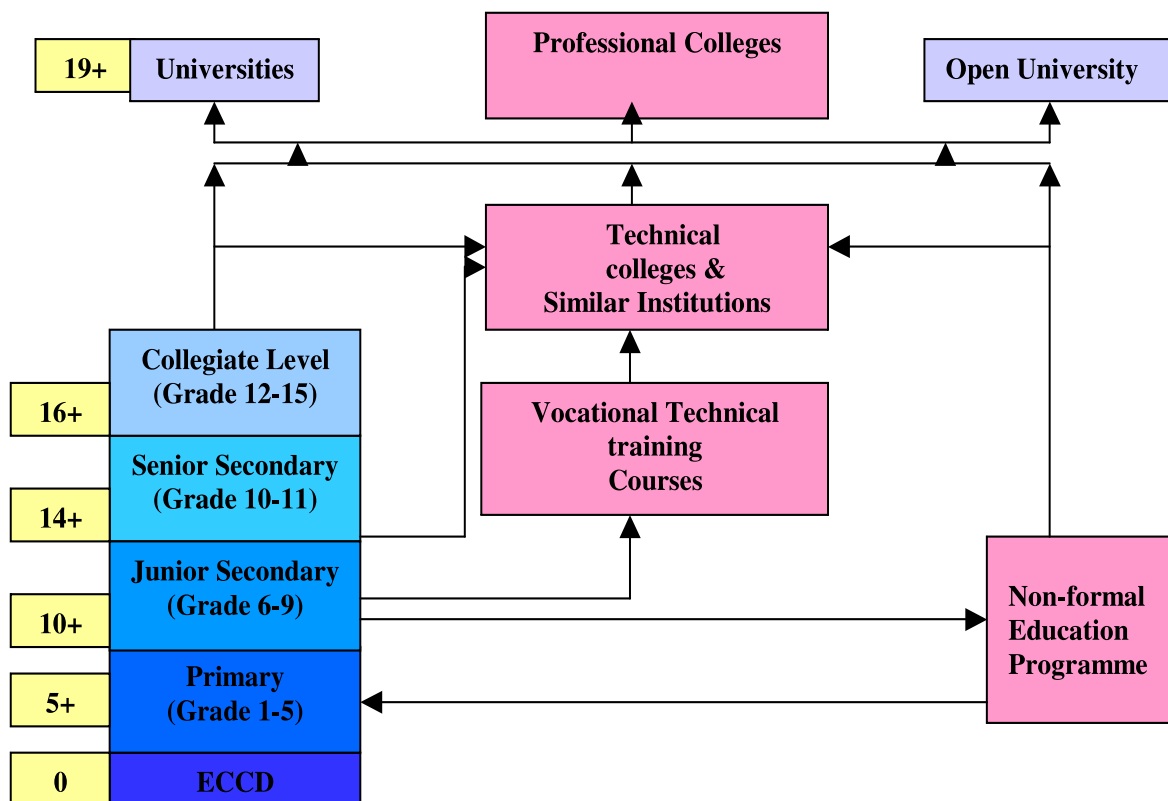
Sri Lanka also is a signatory to the following international conventions:

- UN- Declaration of Human Rights and Convention on the Rights of the Child - education as a fundamental human right
- “World Declaration on Education” and “Education for All” Jomthien in 1990 and Dakar 2000
- Millennium Development Goals (MDG)

Sri Lanka is not only committed to the cause of education but also has demonstrated by its actions that education is a priority item in its agenda for development.

1.4 The Structure of the Education System

Figure 1.1: The Education System of Sri Lanka



The government policy, though not enshrined in the constitution, is to provide free education from primary stage to the first-degree level of university education. Preschool education is a subject devolved

to the provincial authorities while local government bodies and the private sector are expected to establish and run these schools. Accordingly, the stages of education can be classified as follows:

<p>a) Pre-school Education</p>	<p>from 3 to 5 years is provided by the local authorities, religious bodies, voluntary organisations and the private sector.</p>
<p>b) General Education <i>Primary Education</i> <i>Junior Secondary Education</i> <i>Senior Secondary Education</i></p> <p><i>Grades 10-11</i></p> <p><i>Grades 12-13</i></p>	<p>from 5 to 18 years is sub divided into three levels as: 5 to 9 years covering grades 1 to 5; 10 to 13 years covering grades 6 to 9; <i>Covering two years leading to the GCE O/L Examination.</i> The primary stage and secondary stage each has a common curriculum sitting for 9 subjects with 6 being compulsory. Covering two years leading to the GCE A/L Examination. This stage consists of three curricular streams namely Science, Arts and Commerce streams Sitting for 3 compulsory subjects</p>
<p>c) Tertiary and University Education</p>	<p>mainly provided at post - secondary technical and professional institutes and universities;</p>
<p>d) Vocational Training</p>	<p>for school leavers provided in various types of training institutes run by the Government institutions, the private sector and Non-governmental organisations (NGOs).</p>

1.5 Medium of instruction

The country has two main languages, namely Sinhala and Tamil. Tamil is the mother tongue of the Tamils and the large majority of the moors. Mainly Sinhala and Tamil are used as media of instruction in government schools. Normally, Sinhala children study in Sinhala medium and Tamil children study in Tamil medium. Muslim children study in either medium according to their choice. However, there are 437 schools

teaching two or more subjects at least in one grade in the English medium. According to 2006 School Census 72.8% of the total student population study in the Sinhala medium while 26.1% and 1.1% study in Tamil and English media respectively. The number of school is distributed evenly among the three media. Tertiary education is mainly imparted in English.

Table 1.2 : Number and Percentage of Schools and Students by Medium of Instruction

Medium	Number of Schools	Percentage of Total	Number of Students	Percentage of Total
Sinhala	6,435	66.2	2,794,959	72.8
Tamil	2,804	28.9	999,615	26.1
Sinhala and Tamil	38	0.4		
Sinhala and English	298	3.1		
Tamil and English	110	1.1		
Sinhala, Tamil and English	29	0.3		
English	-		41,976	1.1
Total	9,714	100	3,835,330	100

Source: Annual School Census, 2006 MoE

1.6 The School System

At present, there are 9,714 government schools and 93 private schools. There are also 653 Buddhist centres of learning called Pirivenas and 200 international schools teaching in the English medium.

The schools are categorised by type as indicated below depending on the terminal grade of the school:

- **1AB Schools:** those schools which have classes up to GCE A/L in all subject streams, namely, Science, Commerce and Arts
- **1C Schools:** those schools which have classes up to GCE A/L Arts and Commerce streams

- **Type 2 Schools:** those schools which have classes up to GCE O/L
- **Type 3 Schools:** those schools which have classes up to grade 5 only

Most schools have classes from grade 1 upwards, while a few schools commence at grade 6.

The overall teacher pupil ratio is 1:19, which is one of the most favourable teacher pupil ratios among the developing countries.

Table 1.3: Schools, Teachers and Pupils - 2006

Province	1AB Schools	1C Schools	Type 2 Schools	Type 3 Schools	Total Schools	No. of Teachers	No. of Pupils
Western	160	256	634	303	1,353	40,965	857,466
Central	93	308	520	546	1,467	29,421	503,535
Southern	91	238	548	216	1,073	28,184	494,906
Northern	62	118	313	399	892	13,481	264,849
Eastern	55	160	362	394	971	17,627	372,452
North Western	74	260	643	244	1,221	26,247	456,502
North Central	31	147	339	265	782	125,841	248,637
Sabaragamuwa	43	169	376	243	831	15,567	276,851
Uva	50	198	490	366	1,104	20,875	361,352
Total	659	1,854	4,225	2,976	9,714	204,908	3,836,550

Source : School Census, 2006, MoE

Table 1.4: Numbers of Alternate Schools by Category and Number of Students by Gender 2006

Category	Number of Schools	Number of Students		
		Male	Female	Total
Non-fee levying private schools	40			
Fee levying private schools	29			
Special Schools	24			
Pirivenas	653	54899	-----	54899
Non-Formal Education Centres	461	3987	4752	8739

Source: Annual School Census, 2006 MoE

1.7 Non-governmental Schools

There are other categories of government approved institutions providing basic education to children. They are private schools, specified schools and religious institutions. Most of the private schools are managed by Roman Catholic and Christian organisations except for a few Muslim schools. There are two types of private schools, fee levying and non-fee levying. The non-fee levying private schools which are 40 in number receive a grant to pay teacher salaries from the MoE. Specified schools are twofold, government run institutions for delinquent children and special schools for handicapped children managed by non-governmental organisations. These schools receive a grant from the MoE. There are 24 such institutions in the country. Buddhist religious institutions are monastic schools called “Pirivenas” conducted mainly for the Buddhist clergy. Pirivenas are 653 in number and cater to 54,899 students. All Pirivenas receive a grant from the MoE. Another category of institutions is “international schools”. These schools are not affiliated to or approved by the MoE but are institutions registered with the Registrar of Companies as business enterprises. Therefore, the MoE has no connection with, or control over them. The medium of instruction of all international schools is English. The majority of them prepare children for British Examinations.

1.8 Curriculum Development

The national curriculum is developed by the National Institute of Education, a corporate body under the MoE. Syllabi and teachers guides are prepared by the NIE with the assistance of experts in the field and distributed to schools. Teachers have the freedom to adopt the curriculum to the local environment to make teaching and learning more meaningful and interesting. NIE carries a continuous dialogue with teacher groups in order to monitor and maintain the validity of the curriculum. NIE also trains In-Service Advisors (ISAs) who guide teacher in classrooms and conduct teacher training programmes in the province. There are also Teachers Centres in the provinces to conduct teacher training for upgrading the teacher skills.

1.9 Student Welfare

The Government provides a whole package of welfare services to pupils in schools. These welfare measures have contributed to better school attendance, higher participation and the high literacy rates in the country. (Pl. refer 3.2.VI)

1.10 Non-formal Education

Non-formal education programs of the MoE are conducted by the Non-formal Education (NFE) branch of the MoE to cater to the needs of out-of-school children and adult groups in the community. The main programmes are:

- **Functional Literacy Centres:** Located in areas where there are concentrations of non- school going children to impart functional literacy. Children who have not enrolled in school at all or have dropped out prematurely from school are admitted to these centres. Some young children who attend these classes are sent to a formal school.
- **Community Learning Centres:** provide continuing education programs for identified target groups. The programmes are of a diverse nature varying from simple literacy to life enrichment courses and skills training programs.
- **Vocational Training Centres:** Located in schools and classes are conducted in the afternoons about three days of the week, these centres provide vocational training facilities to youth who are desirous of improving their skills.
- **Inclusive Education** - disabled children are accommodated in normal classes, where teachers are given a training to take care of such children

The MoE also supplies special education equipment such as Braille writing materials, equipment required by hearing impaired children and teaching/ learning aids for mentally retarded children.

1.12 Management of Education

The responsibility for education in Sri Lanka is shared by the Government as well as the provincial councils, in terms of the constitutional arrangements carried out in 13th Amendment 1987 for the devolution of power to the provinces.

The Education Ministry of the central government is responsible for:

- Laying down national policy on education,
- Monitoring of the maintenance of standards in educational institutions,
- Formulating the national curriculum and training the provincial trainers through the National Institute of Education,
- Management of specified schools designated as National Schools,
- Teacher Education
- Public Examinations

The NFE branch also conducts a few special programmes such as centres for street children and literacy centres for adults, organised in places where there is a need.

1.11 Special Education

Special Education programmes serve the needs of disabled persons, such as visually handicapped, hearing impaired, physically disabled and mentally retarded. The general programmes are:

- **Special schools** - run by the private sector for those who are severely affected by disability. These schools are given financial assistance by the Government
- **Special Education Units in schools** - trained instructors with necessary facilities pay special attention at the early stage and later direct them to normal classes

The institutions functioning under the Ministry of Education are:

• **Department of Examinations**

The Department of Examinations provides the National Educational Evaluation and Testing Services, the National Agency Testing Services and the General Services.

The institution is responsible for conducting the grade 5 scholarship examination and the General Certificate Examination (Ordinary Level) which are the two important examinations pertaining to the compulsory education span.

• **The National Institute of Education**

The National Institute of Education is entrusted with the curriculum development and training of principals, education research and teacher education.

• **Department of Education Publications**

The Department of Education Publications is responsible for providing textbooks for all school children.

• **Teacher Education Institutions:**

Several institutions are responsible for teacher education:

- National Colleges of Education (NCOEs)
- Teachers' Colleges (TCs)
- National Institute of Education
- Teacher Centres and Regional English Support Centres (RESCs)

After the 13th Amendment, the government established a three tier structure for managing the provincial education system. These are:

- I. Provincial Ministry of Education:** In each of nine provinces, this ministry operates under the Provincial Minister of Education, who is assisted by the Provincial Secretary. The Provincial Ministry of Education is responsible for issuing policy within its purview.
- II. Provincial Department of Education:** Headed by the Provincial Director of Education, this department is responsible for planning, implementation, management and direction of all education programmes in the Province. It also manages provincial schools.
- III. Zonal Education Office:** For administration purpose, each province is divided in to several Educational Zones, headed by a Zonal Director of Education. Each zone has approximately 100 to 150 schools.
- IV. Divisional Education Office:** Headed by a Divisional officer, the functions of the Divisional Office are mainly general supervision of schools, collecting information and data from schools, distribution of textbooks and other equipment and materials to schools and assisting in school supervision.

1.13 Educational Financing

In the 1960s, the state set apart about 4.5% of the GDP and 14% of the annual budget on education. Over the last two decades, the share of education in the GDP has been about 2.8% and the share of the annual budget about 8 to 9%, owing to financial difficulties arising from high oil prices, greater investment on infrastructure development and the internal conflicts.

In addition to the allocations from the Consolidated Fund, external aid is an important source of funding for the education sector in Sri Lanka. These external resources are both multilateral and bilateral. The major donors in the education sector are the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank. UNESCO, UNICEF, JICA, DFID, GTZ and SIDA, Save the Children also have contributed, especially for uplifting of disadvantaged groups.

EFA Goals

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p><i>i. Expanding Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)</i> <i>Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children;</i></p> | <p><i>iv. Improving Adult Literacy</i> <i>Achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults;</i></p> |
| <p><i>ii. Providing Free And compulsory Basic Education (UBE)</i> <i>Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality;</i></p> | <p><i>v. Achieving Gender Parity and Equality</i> <i>Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality;</i></p> |
| <p><i>iii. Promoting Life Skills and Lifelong Learning</i> <i>Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes;</i></p> | <p><i>vi. Enhancing Educational Quality</i> <i>Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognised and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy numeracy and essential life skills.</i></p> |

1.14 Coordination and Monitoring of EFA Programs

The mandate for the planning, coordination, implementation and monitoring of the national EFA programme is entrusted to the MoE. The ministry has set up the EFA unit to be in charge of the task. However, it is recognised that, since the EFA programme covers a wide range of issues, all the components of EFA cannot be handled by one unit in the ministry or even the MoE alone. Active participation and coordination among several ministries of the government, the international community, non-governmental organisations and other community-based organisations are essential to achieve the EFA goals successfully.

The EFA Unit of the MoE is responsible for policy direction, co-ordination and monitoring of EFA programmes of the country. For this purpose it has formed a steering committee under the chairmanship of the Secretary to the MoE. The key organisations engaged in EFA activities are represented in this committee. The committee meet regularly, discuss issues and take policy decisions.

At the MoE several other branches deal with matters relating to the EFA goals. These are:

- **The Primary Education Branch** is responsible for the primary stage of education
- **The Non-formal Education Branch** deals with all non-formal education programs such as literacy, skills training and life enrichment programs for various target groups in the community
- **The Special Education Branch** is responsible for the education of children with special education needs
- **The School Health and Nutrition Branch** is responsible for promoting health and nutrition programs in schools
- **The Data-Management Branch** collects and processes data and maintains records of statistical information

A National Action Plan, submitted to UNESCO in 2001, has been reviewed and modified in the light of experience. Its last revision was carried out in 2004, which incorporates the work to be done during the period 2004 to 2008. The elements of this plan are integrated in to the plans of several agencies referred to earlier. For example, activities relating to primary education are found in the plan of the Primary Branch. In implementing the Action Plan, several ministries, departments and institutions are involved. They are:

- Ministry of Child Development and Women's Empowerment (MCDWE)
- Ministry of Higher Education
- Ministry of Vocational and Technical Training (MVTT)
- Ministry of Healthcare and Nutrition (MoH)

Besides, there are a number of other government ministries and agencies conducting programs relating to various aspects of EFA goals. Ministries of Labour, Youth Affairs, Agriculture, Fisheries, Housing and

Construction, Ports, Samurdhi and Poverty Alleviation, Science and Technology, Industries, Tourism and Social Welfare conduct various kinds of skills training programmes. A large number of private sector organisations and NGOs also conduct similar programmes. Funding for implementing programmes is provided mainly from the government budget.

Donor funding is also channelled through the annual budget and is reflected in the estimates of the respective agencies. The contribution of various INGOs and NGOs has been critical, although its magnitude cannot be determined as details are not available. The private sector also contributes substantially for skills training; albeit details also not available.

