

**Table 3.8: Net Enrolment Rates in Secondary Education Progress between 2001 to 2005 (National Level)**

Year	Male	Female	Total	GPI
2001	88	91	89	103
2002	88	92	90	104
2003	89	93	91	104
2004	87	90	89	104
2005	88	91	90	104

Source: Calculated with school census data from MoE and estimated midyear population data from DCS

The Gross Intake Rate to grade 1 of the primary cycle was 102% for both males and females in 2001. The GER in respect of individual districts ranged from 90% to 104 for males and from 86% to 105% for females. By

2005, the national rate has dropped down to 91% for males and 90% for females. The variation among the districts ranged from 77% to 104% for males and from 73% to 93% for females.

### Gross Intake Rates

**Table 3.9: Gross Intake Rates in Primary Education Progress between 2001 to 2005 (National Level)**

Year	Male	Female	Total	GPI
2001	102	102	102	1.00
2003	97	95	96	0.98
2005	95	93	94	0.99

Source: Calculated with school census data from MoE and estimated midyear population data from DCS

Table 3.9 shows that the GIR for both genders continued to drop from 2001 to 2005. The same trend can be observed in the GER and NIR for the primary cycle but not in the NER. The Net Intake Rate steadily increased from 2001 to 2003 and dropped sharply in 2005. The national NIR in 2001 was 95% and 96% respectively for males and females. The rate varies between 87% and 100% among the districts for both males and females. These rates were 91% and 90% respectively for males and females in 2005. The District wise rates ranged from 75% to 100% for males and 71% to 96% for females.\*

\* population data are computed as on the 1<sup>st</sup> of July of the year. Hence the five year olds of a given year consist of those who were born between 1<sup>st</sup> of July of the previous year and the 30<sup>th</sup> of June of the present year. But for school admissions a child is considered to be a five year old only if he/she has completed five years of age on or before 31<sup>st</sup> of January of the given year. This difference in calculations creates an error in the NIR and does not show the actual value of the rate.

**Table 3.10: Net Intake Rates in Primary Education progress between 2001 to 2005 (National Level)**

Year	Male	Female	Total	GPI
2001	95	96	96	1.01
2003	97	95	96	0.98
2005	91	90	91	1.00

Source: Calculated with school census data from MoE and estimated midyear population data from DCS

**Table 3.11: Net Intake Rates in Primary Cycle by District and Gender 2001 and 2005**

District	NIR in 2001		NIR in 2005	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
National	95	96	91	90
Colombo	93	95	92	92
Gampaha	87	89	87	92
Kalutara	94	94	97	96
Kandy	92	91	84	82
Matale	100	91	90	88
Nuwara Eliya	90	90	89	82
Galle	95	97	95	94
Matara	94	92	92	89
Hambantota	96	99	97	92
Ampara	82	84	86	83
Kurunegala	99	98	91	90
Puttalam	87	87	100	82
Anuradhapura	96	95	83	81
Polonnaruwa	90	94	75	74
Badulla	93	93	91	86
Monaragala	101	98	75	71
Ratnapura	93	94	80	87
Kegalle	97	100	92	88

Source: Calculated with school census data from MoE and estimated mid year population data from DCS.

### Non-participation and Dropping out

Research studies have revealed that about 8% of the children of the 5 to 14 age group do not participate in education. Non-participation is twofold, i.e. non-enrolment and dropping out. A third dimension is the high rate of absenteeism among the children. A research study conducted by Gunawardana et. al. among 971 households

selected from 22 districts involving 1014 children and 944 parents bring to light useful facts about non-participation. According to the findings of the research the highest incidence of non-attendance is found among the children living in rural villages and slum areas.

**Table 3.12: Classification of Children by Attendance at School and Community**

Community	High Absentees		Non Schoolers *		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Urban Lower middle class	51	71.8	20	28.2	71	7.0
Village	198	47.0	223	53.0	421	41.6
Slum	73	26.7	200	73.3	273	26.9
Plantation	54	34.2	104	65.8	158	15.6
Fishing	15	31.3	33	68.7	48	04.7
Other	6	15.0	34	85.0	40	03.9
Total	397	39.2	614	60.8	1011*	100.0

- No response for 3 children

Source: Non-participation and Dropping out by C. Gunawardana

The main reasons for non-enrolment as stated by parents are, (i) not having the birth certificate of the child, (ii) inability to support the children through school, (iii) ill health of children and (iv) distance to school. Strangely, the reason given by the highest percentage of respondents is the

non-availability of the child's birth certificate. But the authorities have given specific instruction to the school heads that no child should be kept away from school due to the absence of the birth certificate

**Table 3.13: No. of Parents and Reasons Given for Children Never Attending School**

Reasons*	Total	
	No.	%
No birth certificate	30	18.4
Distance	22	13.5
Lack of transport facilities	3	4.9
Cannot afford educational costs	26	16.0
Ill health	27	16.6
Disability	11	6.7
Learning difficulties	23	14.1
Dislike to go to school	3	3.1
Other	8	4.9
Total	163	100.0

\*Multiple reasons have been given

Source: Source: *Non-participation and Dropping out* by C. Gunawardana

A small percentage of children in the compulsory school-going age are still not in schools. They are concentrated in certain disadvantaged locations such as the conflict affected areas, plantations, remote rural villages, fishing communities, deprived urban settlements and migrant population groups. A recent phenomenon has been the neglect of children of mothers who go out to work in the middle-eastern countries by the guardians to whom they are entrusted.

An island wide survey was conducted jointly by the NFE Branch of the MoE and Provincial Departments of Education, through attendance committee to identify children who are within the age of compulsory education but not

attending schools. Approximately 67000 children and the reasons for not attending school were identified. By 2005 approximately 97% of these children were enrolled in grade 1. Education is provided to them through formal schools and Non Formal Education centres (ESDFP, 2006). However, the ESDFP admits there may be shortcomings in the collected data, leading to limitation of reliability. Over the years no effective action has been taken so far It is important to identify students with difficulties for a proper plan to address these issues It should be participatory and intergraded work with relevant government agencies, NGOs and INGOs.

### 3.4.3 Quality of Basic Education

The quality of education depends on many factors, the quality of teachers, the curriculum, material inputs and teaching learning aids, facilities such as science laboratories, ICT facilities, libraries, the health of children and their home environment. Most schools are

lacking in these facilities. Even though there are enough teachers in the system the deployment is faulty and the popular schools are overstaffed while the remote schools do not have enough teachers.

**Table 3.14: Survival Rates to Grade 5 by medium, ethnicity and sector - 2004**

		Male	Female	Total	GPI
<b>National</b>		98.20	98.90	98.60	1.01
<b>Medium</b>	Sinhala	98.40	98.50	98.50	1.00
	Tamil	98.20	99.20	98.90	1.01
<b>Ethnicity</b>	Sinhala	98.6	98.9	98.8	1.00
	Tamil	97.8	100.3	99.1	1.03
	Muslim	97.2	96.7	97.0	0.99
<b>Location</b>	Urban	100.5	101.1	100.8	1.01
	Rural	97.8	98.4	98.0	1.01
<b>Plantation</b>	Plantation schools	90.2	93.1	91.6	1.03
	Non plantation schools	98.9	99.2	99.0	1.00

Source: Calculated with school census data from MoE

#### a) Survival Rates

As can be seen from Table, the gender-aggregated total survival rate to Grade 5 is 98.6%.the remaining 1.4% of the total dropped out of the schooling system before Grade 5. However, the girls' survival rate to Grade 5 is better than that of the boys.

#### b) Transition Rates

A child who enters grade 1 of the primary cycle is expected to proceed through the primary and secondary levels up to grade 11 without any pause or break in order to achieve 100% internal efficiency in the general education system. One indicator that reflects on internal efficiency is the transition rate from one level to the next across the grade span. Low transition rates from primary to the lower secondary cycle and dropping out of students affect the achievement of UBE. The transition rates from

primary cycle to lower secondary cycle were 96% for males and 98% for females in 2001. These rates have improved to 98% and 99% respectively for males and females by 2005 which show that dropping out has decreased. An examination of the rates across the different groups/sectors revealed that the transition rate for both male and female children in plantation schools (95% and 96%) are lower than the rates for students in other schools (97% and 99%). Also, the rates in Tamil and Muslim schools are lower than those in Sinhala schools. The transition rates for males and females in urban schools are 106% and 111% respectively whereas the same rates for males and females in rural schools are 95% and 96% respectively. The increase of the transition rates over 100 in urban schools is due to the migration of students from rural schools to urban schools at grade 6 especially on the results of the grade 5 scholarships and placement examination.

**Table 3.15: Transition Rates from Primary Cycle to Lower Secondary Cycle by Urban/Rural Area, Social Sector/Group and Gender 2005**

Category	Male	Female
National rates	98	99
Urban schools	108	111
Rural schools	95	96
Sinhala schools	99	99
Tamil schools	92	94
Muslim schools	97	99
Plantation sector schools	95	96

Source: Calculated with school census data from MoE and estimated midyear population data from DCS.

**Table 3.16: Transition Rates by District and Gender 2001 and 2005**

District	Transition Rates from Primary Cycle to Lower Secondary Cycle				Transition Rates from Lower Secondary Cycle to Senior Secondary Cycle			
	2001		2005		2001		2005	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
National	96	98	92	95	94	96	98	99
Colombo	103	102	95	97	96	96	103	102
Gampaha	97	98	93	95	94	97	94	98
Kalutara	96	99	93	95	94	95	97	98
Kandy	99	101	94	96	95	97	101	102
Matale	97	98	93	95	96	96	98	98
Nuwara Eliya	92	93	88	92	87	93	97	97
Galle	97	102	93	97	94	97	98	99
Matara	96	98	93	96	94	97	97	98
Hambantota	95	99	93	96	95	97	98	101
Jaffna	94	112	94	96	91	96	96	98
Kilinochchi	93	94	83	92	95	104	98	101
Mannar	87	88	88	96	93	102	98	102
Vavuniya	88	94	91	91	91	95	87	90
Mullativu	92	94	89	92	95	98	96	98
Batticaloa	87	89	86	89	90	92	90	94
Ampara	90	92	87	89	92	93	95	98
Trincomalee	91	93	89	88	92	90	98	97
Kurunegala	98	98	92	96	95	97	100	101
Puttalama	94	109	86	89	90	92	97	99
Anuradhapura	98	98	90	94	93	94	98	100
Polonnaruwa	94	97	93	95	92	95	96	99
Badulla	95	95	91	94	91	94	98	99
Monaragala	94	96	91	93	93	97	97	99
Rathnapura	95	97	92	96	94	97	96	99
Kegalle	96	098	95	96	96	97	96	97

Source: Calculated with school census data from MoE

Transition rates from lower secondary level to upper secondary level are slightly lower than those from primary level to lower secondary level. However, a slight improvement in the rates can be observed from 2001 to 2005. It is significant that rates for all districts are below 100 for both sexes in 2001. This shows that there had been no significant inter district student migration within the secondary cycle. However, female transition rates in 2005 show an increase over 100 in respect of Kilinochchi and Mannar districts. This may be the result of student migration to areas perceived as safer places in the context of the present conflict situation. Male transition rates in Nuwara Eliya district are much lower when compared with other districts. This may be due to the male children joining the labour force after grade 9 in the plantation sector. Male transition rates for Kilinochchi, Mannar, Mullativu, Batticaloa,

Ampara, Trincomalee and Puttalama are low probably due to the ongoing conflict in the country.

### c) Completion Rates

The completion rates given in the following table are calculated as a percentage of the relevant school-going-age population and therefore are naturally a little lower than the completion rates calculated by using a cohort analysis. However, they are not so low to be a cause for very high concern. This phenomenon is due to the fact that dropping out is rather low in the primary cycle.

**Table 3.17: Percentage of Students Completing the Primary Cycle – 2001-2005**

Year	Primary Completion Rate			GPI
	Male	Female	Total	
2001	88	91	89	103
2002	88	92	90	104
2003	89	93	91	104
2004	87	90	89	104
2005	88	91	90	104

Source: Annual School Census, MoE

### d) Repetition Rates

**Table 3.18: Repetition Rates by Grade, Gender and Medium 2003-2005 (Primary Cycle)**

Medium	Year	Grade 1		Grade 2		Grade 3		Grade 4		Grade 5	
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Sinhala	2003	0.26	0.20	0.49	0.27	0.42	0.27	0.53	0.29	0.74	0.41
	2004	0.17	0.13	0.46	0.29	0.36	0.20	0.53	0.28	0.64	0.34
	2005	0.17	0.12	0.39	0.25	0.39	0.25	0.57	0.27	0.77	0.37
Tamil	2003	1.16	0.89	1.79	1.53	2.14	1.76	2.46	2.03	2.57	1.82
	2004	0.98	0.76	1.87	1.35	2.20	1.69	2.53	2.02	3.14	2.14
	2005	0.87	0.68	1.74	1.33	2.14	1.65	2.62	1.98	3.08	2.12

Source: Calculated with school census data from MoE

Repetition rates are rather low in all grades especially in the primary cycle and show a generally declining trend over the years. Repetition among males seems to be higher than that of females. The rates in the Tamil medium are higher for males as well as females than in the Sinhala medium.

Tables 3.18 and 3.19 below gives the total figures for the whole country by grade, medium and gender for 2003, 2004 and 2005.

Disaggregated figures by district and province are given in Appendix 2 Tables 7, 8, 9, 10.

**Table 3.19: Repetition Rates by Grade, Gender and Medium 2003-2005 (Secondary Cycle)**

Province	Year	Grade 6		Grade 7		Grade 8		Grade 9		Grade 10	
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Sinhala	2003	1.07	0.43	0.88	0.42	0.61	0.32	0.47	0.27	0.28	0.14
	2004	1.12	0.50	0.79	0.37	0.60	0.28	0.33	0.17	0.19	0.08
	2005	1.03	0.40	0.93	0.38	0.67	0.28	0.40	0.21	0.22	0.11
Tamil	2003	2.71	1.90	2.65	1.87	2.25	1.59	1.71	1.30	1.52	1.23
	2004	3.04	2.05	2.38	1.59	1.85	1.29	1.60	1.14	1.62	1.15
	2005	3.35	2.34	3.18	2.06	2.79	1.75	2.06	1.48	2.08	1.41

Source: Calculated with school census data from MoE

### Input Indicators

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

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

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

- i. Availability of basic facilities (drinking water, electricity, telephone, library)
- ii. Availability of usable equipment (duplicator, radio, TV, type writer, photocopier, OHP, computers)

- iii. Availability of basic usable sanitary facilities (latrines and urinals)
- iv. Availability of building spaces (classrooms, labs etc.)
- v. Availability of minimum spaces (principal's office, teachers' room, Store room)
- vi. Availability of teachers (adequacy, professional qualifications)
- vii. Location (distance to bus route and railway station)

Different weightings were given to each of these criteria to compute a difficulty index for each school. The Classification of Schools According to Level of Difficulty is used to differentiate and group schools for the following analysis in this chapter.

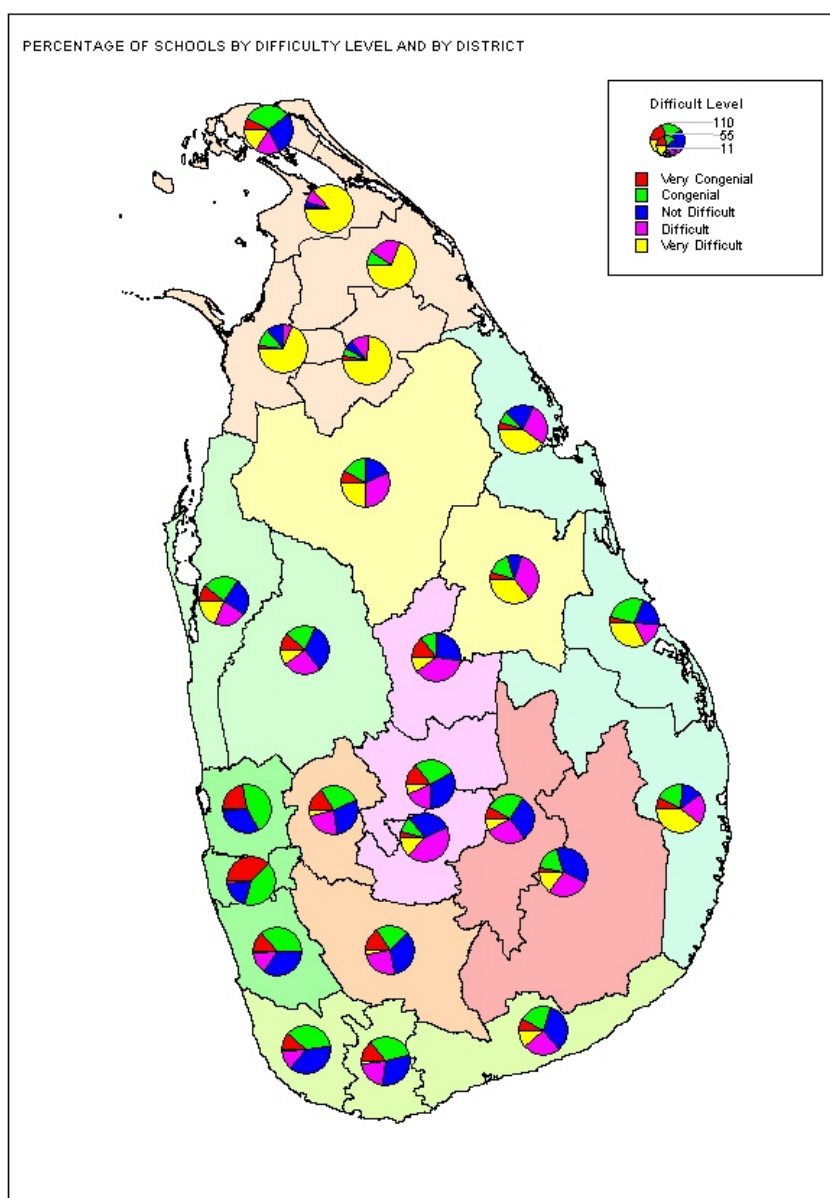
Table 3.20 shows the results of the classification. It shows that Western Province has received the lion's share of the facilities whereas the North and East Provinces are worst affected. The MoE also has ranked the districts according to the facilities index

**Table 3.20: Classification of Schools According to Level of Difficulty by Province**

Province	Percentage of Schools According to Classification				
	Very Difficult	Difficult	Not Difficult	Congenial	More Congenial
Western	0.5	04	12	28	55.5
Central	07	17	30	20	26
Southern	05	14	17	26	38
North and East	38	14	13	19	16
North Western	13	23	21	22	21
North Central	24	27	13	19	17
Uva	08	15	37	22	18
Sabaragamuwa	04	25	22	25	24

Source: DMR Branch, MoE

**Figure 3.1: Percentage of Schools by difficulty level by district, 2005**





**Table 3.21: District Ranking According to Facilities Index**

District Number	District	District Rank
14	Mullativu	1
12	Mannar	2
16	Ampara	3
13	Vavuniya	4
22	Badulla	5
15	Batticaloa	6
6	N'eliya	7
11	Kilinochchi	8
23	Monaragala	9
20	Anuradhapura	10
21	Polonnaruwa	11
5	Matale	12
18	Kurunegala	13
9	Hambantota	14
25	Kegalle	15
4	Kandy	16
17	Trincomalee	16
19	Puttalama	18
24	Ratnapura	19
8	Matara	20
3	Kalutara	21
7	Galle	22
10	Jaffna	23
2	Gampaha	24
1	Colombo	25

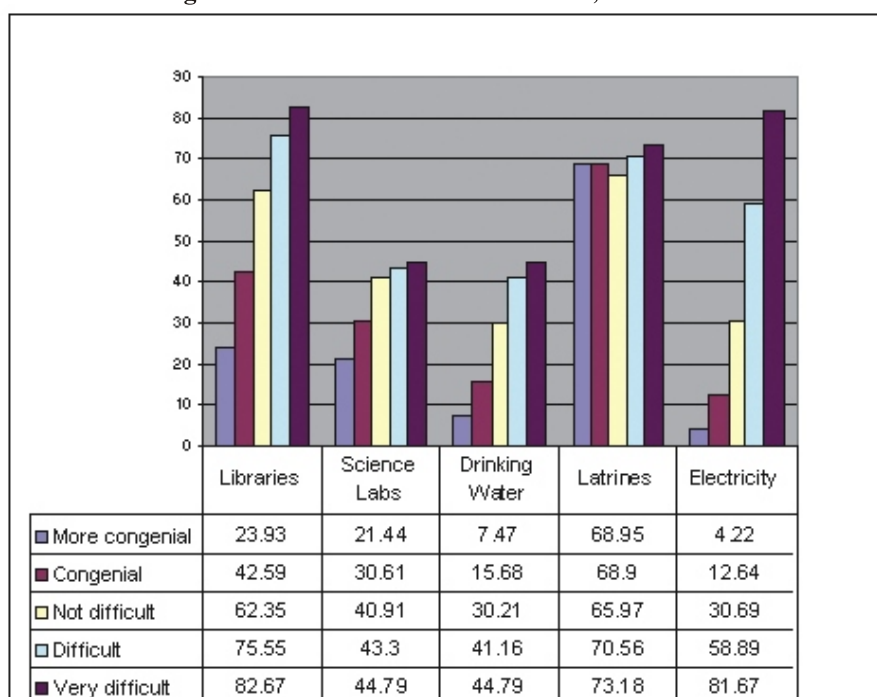
Source: Data Management & Research Branch, MoE

### a) Provision of Resources to Implement the Curriculum

Establishment of schools alone does not satisfy the requirements to maintain an efficient system of education for the benefit of the student population. The government has the responsibility of providing infrastructure including buildings, furniture and equipment, teachers and other human resources, quality inputs such as learning/teaching materials and other support services.

### b) Provision of Physical Facilities

The Ministry of Education has prepared a set of norms for the provision of all physical facilities to schools. The requirements of schools are identified on the basis of these norms. The MoE, in the process of conducting the Annual School Census, collects data on facilities available in schools in order to compute the additional requirements. However, deficits in physical resources persist as all requirements are normally not satisfied due to financial constrains. A physical facilities survey conducted recently by the MoE reveals the variations that exist in the provision of facilities to schools.

**Figure 3.2: Percentages of schools without basic facilities, 2005**

Source: School Facilities Survey, MoE

**Table 3.22: Number and Percentage of One Teacher and Two Teacher Schools 2006**

Number of Teachers	Number of Schools	Percentage of the Total
One teacher schools	124	1.3
Two teacher schools	316	3.3

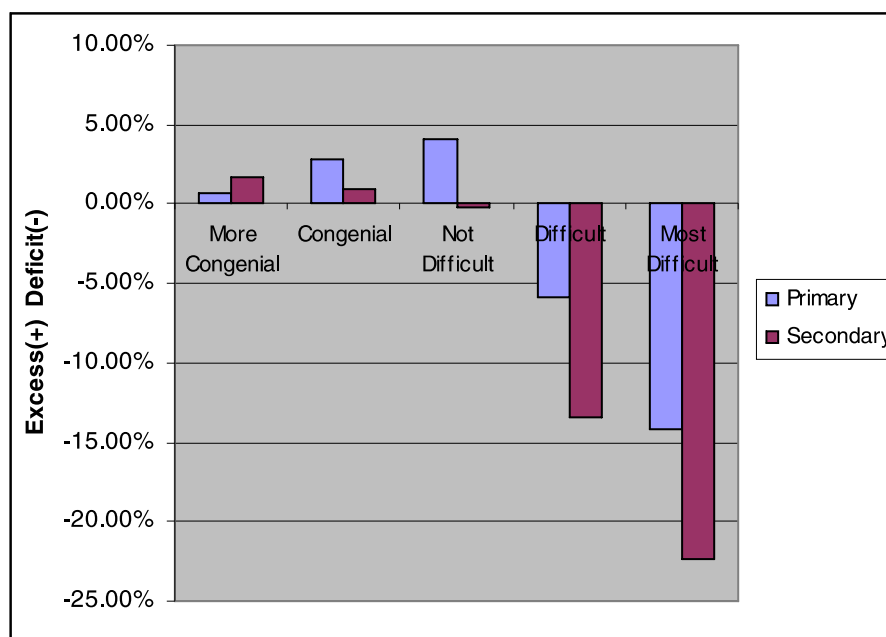
Source: Annual School Census, Ministry of Education

**c) Provision of Teachers**

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

incentive of 10% and 15% of their salary. Yet teacher shortages in these schools persist. The education system managed by the MoE has a more than adequate stock of teachers. Yet severe teacher shortages exist especially in remote rural schools. The shortages are particularly severe in Science, Mathematics and English subjects. At the same time there are large surpluses of teachers in some urban schools. This situation is the result of inefficient teacher deployment. Figures 3.3 below shows the extent of this problem.

**Figure 3.3: Excess or Deficit of Teachers by School Category, 2005**

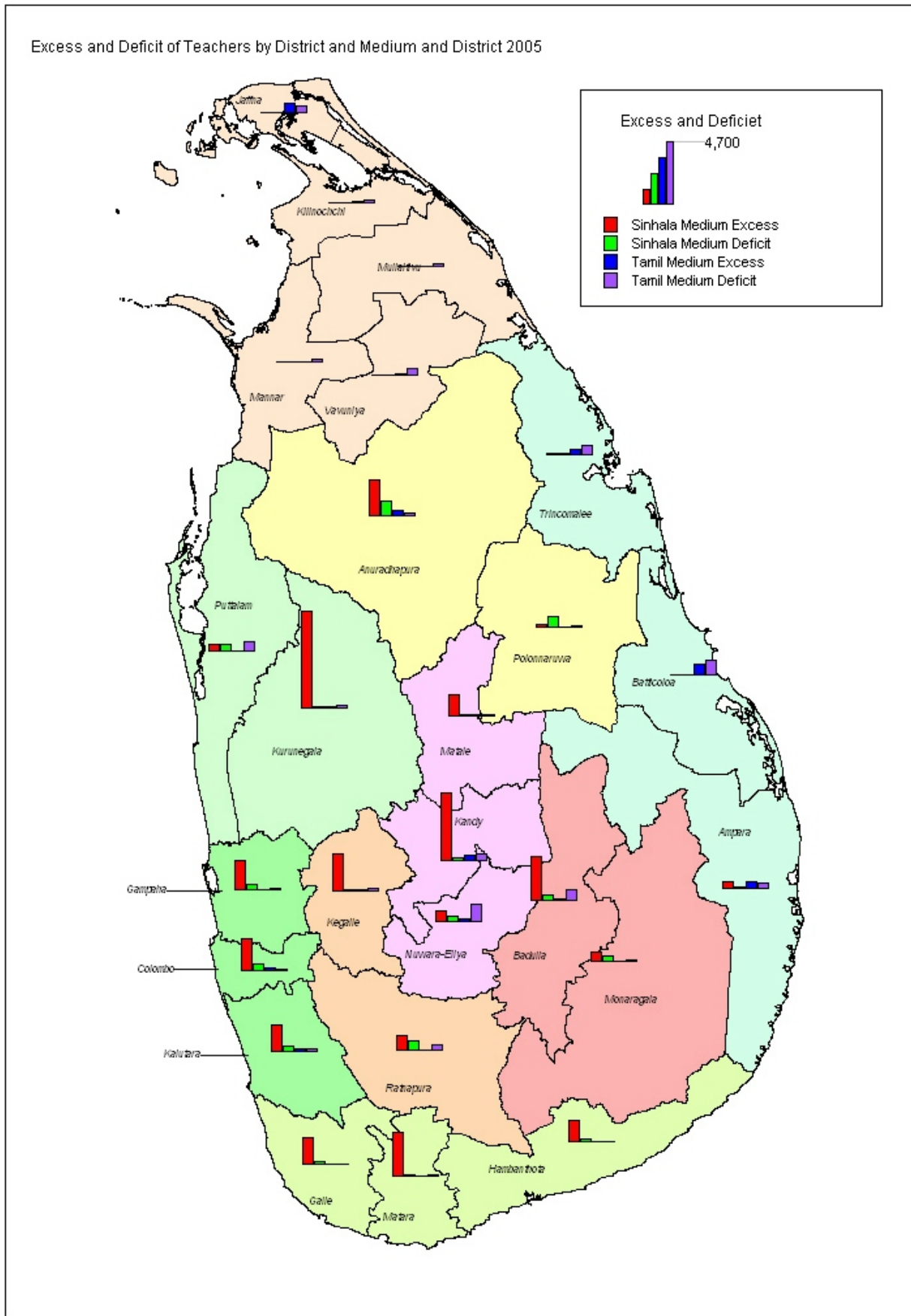


Source: Annual School Census, Ministry of Education

Tamil medium schools are the worst affected in this respect. In early '90s a policy decision was taken by the government to effect all recruitments to the government service according to the ethnic proportion of the country. This decision was taken to prevent any discrimination against the minority communities. However, this practice aggravated the problem as more vacancies were in the Tamil schools.

Although the government has stopped this practice after realising its adverse effects recruitment of teachers on political reasons has caused the problem to persist. It also can be seen that some district are badly handicapped because of teacher shortages while some others continue to enjoy a surplus of teachers. Further, it is evidenced that excesses and deficits exist within the same district.

Figure 3.4: Excess and Deficit of Teachers by district and medium 2005



**Table 3.23: Student Teacher Ratios by Teacher Category and Difficulty Level of Schools**

Type of School	Student Graduate Teacher Ratio	Student Trained Teacher Ratio	Student Untrained Teacher Ratio	Overall Student Teacher Ratio
More Congenial Schools	65	37	2122	23
Congenial Schools	73	29	1108	20
Not Difficult Schools	78	24	614	18
Difficult Schools	109	25	445	19
Very Difficult Schools	132	27	238	20

*Source: DMR Branch, MoE*

Another concern is the quality of the teachers particularly in schools categorized as difficult and very difficult. For example more congenial schools have one graduate teacher for every 65 students while very difficult schools have one graduate teacher for every 109 students. At the other end, more congenial schools have one

untrained teacher for 2122 students while very difficult schools have one untrained teacher for every 238 students. Table 3.23 gives details about student teacher ratios by teacher category and difficulty level of schools .

### 3.4.5. Efficiency of the System

#### a) Student Performance

Achievement level of students is an efficient indicator of the quality of education provided. Sri Lanka does not have much to show as her performance in this field. It seems that the country has sacrificed quality for quantity in maintaining education facilities. As budgetary allocations did not increase to match the increase in enrolments over the past few decades, quality has been marginalized to cater to the expansion of education facilities. The government was concerned about this phenomenon during the recent past and therefore quality improvement in education has been a top priority of the authorities. These efforts have not yielded justifiable results. A research study report published by the National

Education Research and Evaluation Centre (NEREC) reveals serious discrepancies in achieving mastery of grade 4 pupils in key subjects. According to this report Gampaha, Colombo, Matara, Kalutara, Kurunegala and Kegalle districts show better achievement levels while Mannar, Trincomalee, Nuwara Eliya, Batticaloa, Mullativu and Kilinochchi districts have achieved very poor levels. All three districts of the Western Province are in the group of six districts with better achievement levels. Out of the six districts with lowest achievement levels five districts belong to the North and East Provinces. It has to be noted that five of the six districts with least achievement levels are those with least facilities.

**Table 3.24: Composite Index for Districts – Based on Percentage Achieving Mastery**

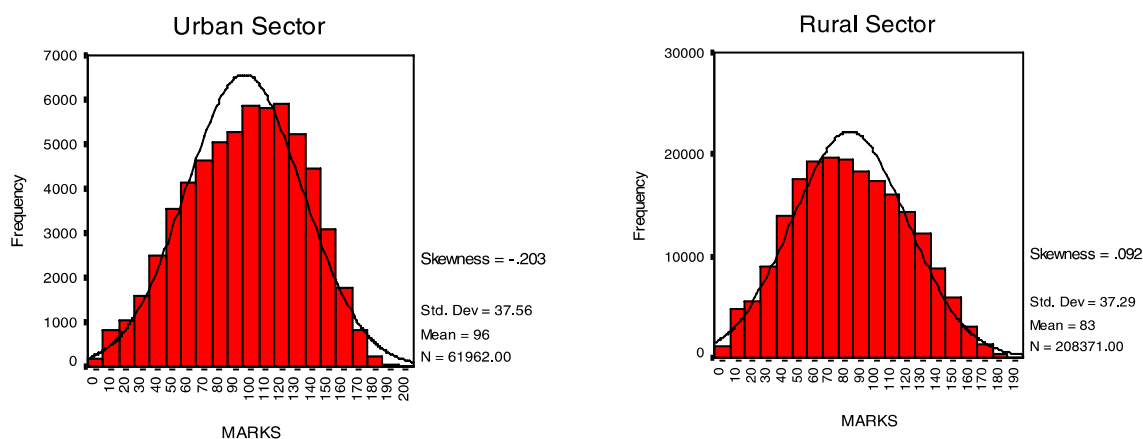
Group	District	First Language			Mathematics			English Language			Total Score	All Island Rank
		Achieving Mastery	Rank	Score	Achieving Mastery	Rank	Score	Achieving Mastery	Rank	Score		
Upper Group	1. Gampaha	59.4	01	25	54.1	1	25	20.3	2	24	74	1
	2. Colombo	51.4	02	24	53.7	2	24	23.7	1	25	73	2
	3. Matara	47.6	04	22	47.5	3	23	16.1	3	23	68	3
	4. Kalutara	47.6	04	22	46.7	4	22	14.0	4	22	66	4
	5. Kurunegala	47.6	03	23	46.3	5	21	9.8	8	18	62	5
	6. Kegalle	45.1	06	20	45.2	7	19	12.7	5	21	60	6
Middle Group	7. Galle	43.0	08	18	46.0	6	20	12.2	6	20	58	7
	8. Kandy	43.6	07	19	41.0	9	17	11.3	7	19	55	8
	9. Anuradhapura	36.4	10	16	40.3	11	15	9.0	11	15	46	9
	10. Ratnapura	37.0	09	17	41.0	9	17	8.5	14	12	46	9
	11. Hambantota	36.0	11	15	37.5	12	14	9.3	10	16	45	11
	12. Polonnaruwa	33.8	13	13	41.5	8	18	6.1	17	09	40	12
	13. Badulla	35.8	12	14	36.0	15	11	8.8	12	14	39	13
	14. Puttalam	32.8	14	12	37.5	12	14	6.4	16	10	36	14
	15. Vavuniya	26.9	17	09	36.9	14	12	8.7	13	13	34	15
	16. Matale	24.5	21	05	29.4	18	08	9.4	9	17	30	16
	17. Monaragala	30.4	15	11	33.9	16	10	5.5	18	08	29	17
	18. Ampara	26.0	19	07	30.1	17	09	6.5	15	11	27	18
	19. Jaffna	26.1	18	08	28.1	19	07	5.4	19	07	22	19
Lower Group	20. Mannar	27.0	16	10	25.3	20	06	2.9	24	02	18	20
	21. Trincomalee	25.5	20	06	21.7	22	04	4.9	21	05	15	21
	22. N'Eliya	23.4	22	04	22.3	21	05	3.3	23	03	12	22
	23. Batticaloa	19.1	23	03	21.5	23	03	5.0	20	06	12	22
	24. Mullativu	17.5	24	02	18.8	24	02	4.8	22	04	8	24
	25. Kilinochchi	11.2	25	01	09.7	25	01	0.7	25	01	3	25

Source: National Assessment of Achievement of Grade 4 Pupils in Sri Lanka

Performance of students at national level examinations also gives an insight into the quality of education delivered to the children. They are the outputs of the composite factor of inputs to education such as physical facilities, human resources and quality inputs. The general education system in Sri Lanka has national level examinations at two levels (Grade 5 Scholarship and Placement Examination and

the GCE O/L Examination). A review of the grade 5 Scholarship and Placement Examination reveals that wide disparities exist in the performance of students among different schools of different levels of difficulty and between urban and rural sector schools and also between schools in the plantation sector and other schools.

**Figure 3.5: Performance of Students at Grade 5 Scholarship and Placement Examination 2005**



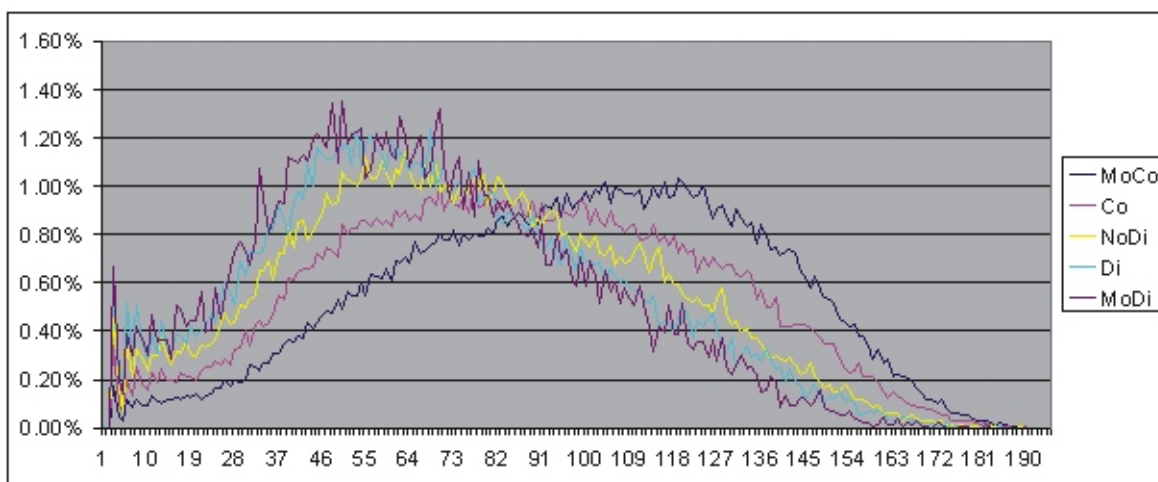
The distributions above show that children in urban schools fare better than children in rural schools. Performance of children of low income families is lower than that of higher income families. (Figures 5 & 6: Appendix 2)

The Figure 3.6 clearly highlights the wide disparity in performance of students of schools with different difficulty levels. Figure 3.7 shows the difference in performance between students of estate sector schools and students of other schools. Figure 3.8 depicts the performance of

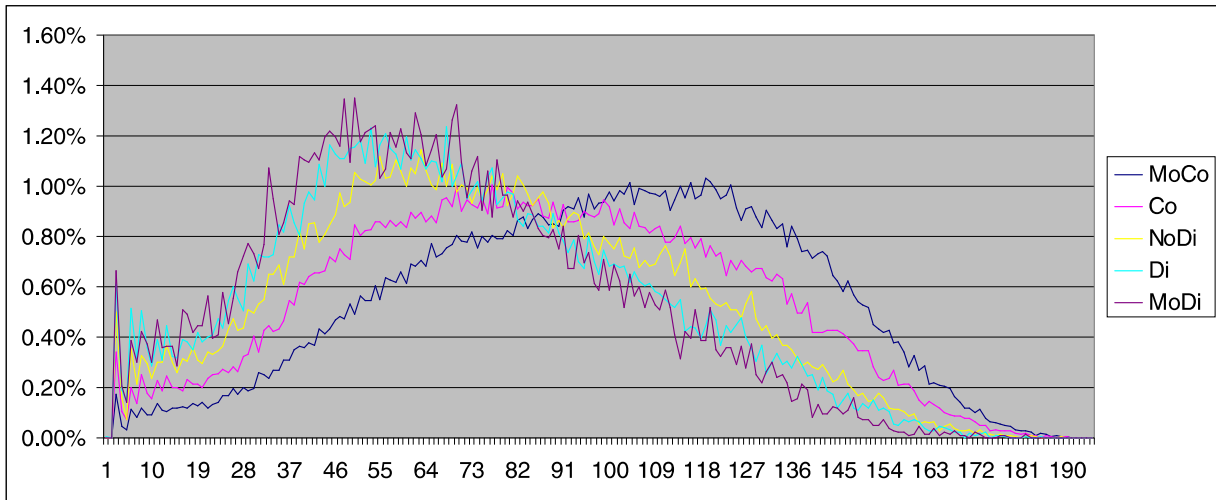
males and females. This graph reveals clearly that girls perform better than boys at the examination.

The total of these illustrations conclusively prove that there is a marked disparity in providing resources for curriculum implementation which has resulted in the denial of the right to equitable access to education of acceptable quality for some categories of children. It will not be able to achieve UBE until these shortcomings are addressed.

**Figure 3.6: Performance of Students at Grade 5 Scholarship and Placement Examination 2005 by category of Schools**



**Figure 3.7: Performance of Students of Estate Sector Schools and Other Schools at Grade 5 Scholarship and Placement Examination 2001**



**Figure 3.8: Performance of Students of Estate Sector Schools and Other Schools at Grade 5 Scholarship and Placement Examination 2005**

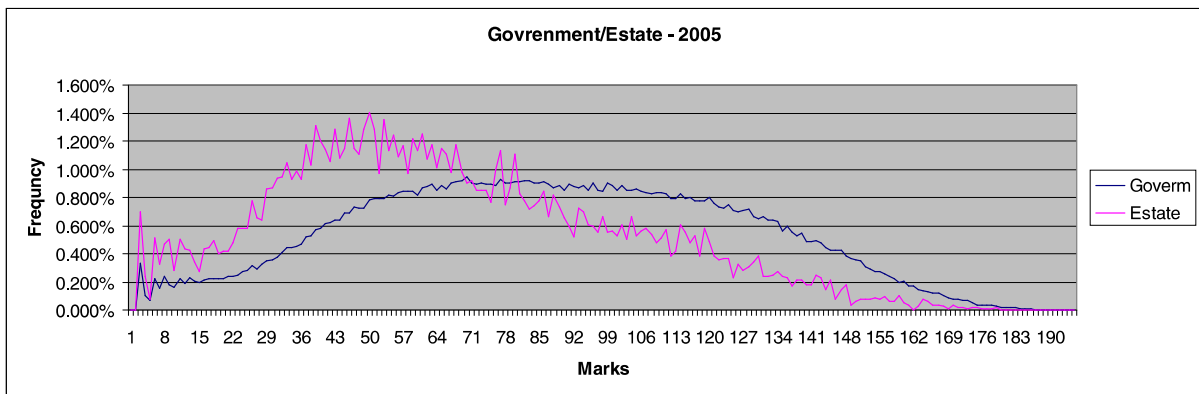


Table 3.25 shows disaggregated data in respect of the performance of students at the General Certificate of Education (Ordinary Level) Examinations in 2001 and 2005. In both occasions, sharp differences in achievement are exhibited by students in different categories of schools. Students in urban schools, more congenial schools and 1 AB schools have achieved better results. Students in plantation sector schools have fared poorly when compared to students of other schools. Among

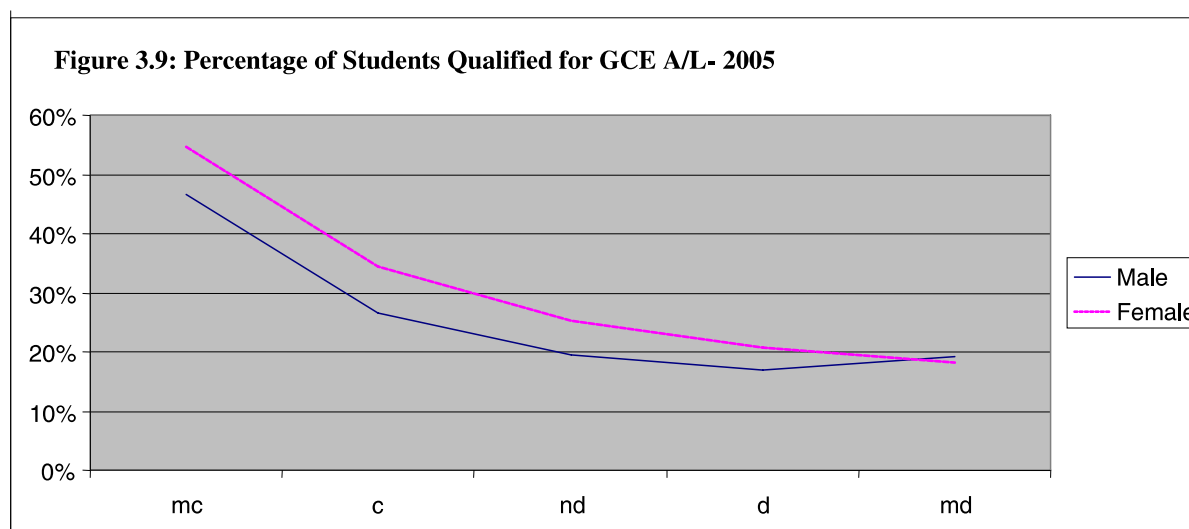
the ethnic groups Sinhala students have attained better achievement levels than Tamil and Muslim students. These results show a close similarity to the results of the grade 5 scholarship and placement examinations. They also have a correlation to the disparities in the provision of resources as shown by the achievement levels of students in schools with different difficulty levels from more congenial to very difficult.

**Table 3.25: GCE (O/L) Examination Pass Rates by Category of School and Gender, 2001 & 2005**

Category	School Type	2001		2005	
		Male	Female	Male	Female
<b>Location</b>	Urban schools	52.99	60.48	53.31	60.76
	Rural schools	24.91	31.82	27.20	33.67
<b>Difficulty Level</b>	More congenial	46.89	55.79	46.67	54.70
	Congenial	27.01	36.74	26.70	34.41
	Not difficult	19.42	26.53	19.40	25.37
	Difficult	17.84	23.07	12.84	20.69
	Most difficult	19.14	21.06	19.27	18.17
<b>Type of School</b>	1 AB schools	55.23	63.63	54.07	61.78
	1 C schools	23.64	33.52	22.78	30.49
	Type 2 schools	17.64	25.34	16.62	22.44
<b>Sector</b>	Plantation schools	11.51	8.37	16.84	14.80
	Other schools	31.94	39.06	34.36	41.45
<b>Ethnicity</b>	Sinhala schools	32.66	40.40	34.44	42.18
	Tamil schools	26.42	26.51	32.05	30.44
	Muslim schools	26.21	34.15	29.37	39.59

Source: DoE

It is noteworthy that the performance of females at the examinations is slightly better than that of males.



Sri Lanka has exhibited a unique performance in the education system. At intake level, the female and male participation is 48% and 52% respectively which is more or less equal to the female and male proportion in the population. However, when the student population reaches grade 10, the female and male proportion is reversed as 52% females and 48% males. This phenomenon is the result

of higher dropping out among male students. The performance of females surpasses that of males at central examinations as evidenced by Figures 3.8, and 3.9. In the GCE A/L classes too, female enrolment is higher in all streams except Science. This is because few girls still opt to take up engineering. However, more girls than boys study Bio Science subjects.



### 3.5 Conclusion and Recommendations

#### 3.5.1 Conclusions

The intentions of the government, which are in league with the internationally accepted principles on the right to education of the child are appreciable and they are reflected in the national policy and objectives on education. However, weaknesses, shortcomings, gaps and lapses are evident in translating these policies and objectives into actions and strategies. For example, although education has been made compulsory by law, weaknesses surface in the enforcement of the regulations. Action cannot be taken against a parent or a guardian for not complying with the law. Attendance committees have been established at various levels, yet they are non-functional.

The government funds have been allocated - although not sufficiently. Free instruction, free text books, free uniforms, free mid-day meal and subsidised transport are provided to the school going children. In addition, bursaries are awarded to at least some needy children. In spite of all these steps Sri Lanka has still not achieved UBE. Although the non-formal education branch of the MoE is making a valiant effort to cope up with the problems of non-participation and dropping out, the priority given to such activities is not sufficient. Though plans and strategies are prepared to get the non-school-going children into the school system no concrete action is taken. A head count of non-participants has still not been undertaken to identify their locations. Plans have been made several times over to establish a fund to provide financial assistance to poor children who are out of school but it has not materialised so far.

Above all there are serious disparities in the provision of resources to schools. There is no strict policy or procedure to ensure that every school receives an adequate quota of teachers. There are excess teachers in urban popular schools while the rural and remote schools are starved of staff. Some strict policy need to be implemented to solve this problem.

The provision of infrastructure facilities and furniture is not equitably executed. There are shortages in some schools while there are surpluses in some. These shortcomings have seriously affected the quality of education and achievement levels of students in less fortunate schools. Therefore, the authorities need to become concerned with these serious gaps and take urgent action to address the situation.

#### Major challenges

- Extreme poverty of parents of excluded children. Children are employed to supplement the family income. The opportunity cost for education is very high in these families
- Failure of the education system to provide social mobility in disadvantaged pockets
- Dominance of anti social elements that offer more attraction to children and parents. Majority of schools in these vulnerable pockets is not attractive and the community does not perceive them to be of any use
- Schools in the distant and disadvantaged areas are understaffed
- Parents in above locations, who could afford it, send their children to urban schools and rural schools have become very small. No attempts have been made to carry out probing studies in the catchments areas of these schools that cater to the children of marginalised population.
- Upgrading of classrooms and provision of toilets and safe drinking water has not been adequately implemented.
- Teachers have not been appropriately trained to make them competent in adopting the curriculum to the local needs in order that learning by children in schools is perceived to be relevant by the community.
- Teaching learning methods adopted in those schools are mostly traditional and outdated.
- Supervision and support from the educational authorities is very minimal in most places.

- Lack of an adequate number of teachers with training to identify the needs of disabled children and teach them.
- Special measures to encourage and enable the disabled children to participate in activities outside the classrooms are not adopted.
- Reliable information is not available to ascertain the number of disabled children who are out of schools in the country. Though it is reported that there is a significant number of children with disability out of schools in the Northern & Eastern provinces owing to the effects of war, these children have not been enrolled in schools.

### **3.5.2 Recommendations**

#### **I. Identifying and locating the un-served and underserved**

Education subsidy allocation is not sufficiently directed to the deserving children of lower income groups. One of the main reasons for the continued existence of underserved groups is the problem of identification of these groups in order to provide the specific services or subsidies. Hence, these programmes had been for all. The difficulty of locating the proportion of the needy children to award bursaries is a problem in reaching the universal status of compulsory education. Compilation of data bases of the underserved groups will have to be undertaken by the relevant institutions.

Enrolling the non-participants of school going age in the school system should be a priority.

For this, data on non-participants, their locations and the reasons for non-enrolment need to be collected. This may be accomplished through the Attendance Committees if they are properly activated.

Rehabilitation programmes in the conflict affected areas should be given high priority.

#### **II. Enforce regulations on the rights of underserved/disadvantaged children**

Formulate appropriate legal provisions to ensure the right to education of vulnerable

groups of children and formulate policy to promote inclusive education, especially in school admissions.

#### **III. Restructure the resource allocation mechanism**

Schools in disadvantaged locations where most are poor are also adversely affected by the inequitable distribution of resources. Therefore, it is necessary to ensure that disadvantaged schools receive adequate resources. It is an urgent necessity to implement a policy of positive discrimination towards these disadvantaged schools to bring them up to the national standards until these inequalities are eradicated.

#### **IV. Doubling the number of scholarships and increasing the bursaries**

To include a reasonable proportion it is recommended that the threshold income level and the number of scholarships should be doubled. However, adequacy of the stipend is also questionable considering the rate of inflation in the country.

The ESDFP report (MoE, 2006) highlights the absence of a strategy in identification of children with special education needs in order to provide the right services. This needs to be addressed without delay.

Education subsidy allocation is not sufficiently directed to the deserving children of lower income groups. The difficulty of locating the proportion of the needy children to award bursaries is a problem in reaching the universal status of compulsory education. Hence it is necessary to adopt a more efficient system to identify children for award of bursaries.

#### **V. Set up a rational school network**

As a solution for minimising polarisation and closure of schools it is proposed to set up a rational school network through organisation of school families of 5-10 schools in each family. Each school family should provide schooling facilities for primary and secondary education to all pupils living within defined geographical areas.

## **VI. Effective deployment of teachers**

Effective teacher deployment continues to be a challenge in the system. Recommendations can be made to establish a teacher deployment and transfer scheme and enforce incentive scheme which is already in place to meet the need of disadvantaged schools.

It is proposed that funds for teachers' salaries be allocated to each school so that a teacher serving in one school cannot be paid out of an allocation to another school. This way, excess teachers will be forced to take up duties in a school where there are vacancies.

## **VII. Developing quality of teaching in small schools**

Developing small schools in disadvantaged locations as model primary schools has been identified as a necessity.

These schools could operate as fully or partially multigrade schools because within a multigrade setting, a single teacher can be responsible for a class formed of children from two or more grades. Multigrade schools, multigrade teachers and children who learn in multigrade settings operate at the margins of these systems and are largely invisible. Little (2001) highlights 'in contexts where the choice for students is between attending a multigrade school or not at all' based on a literature review from many countries including Sri Lanka. Vithanapathirana (2006) recommends policy recognition of multigrade teaching as an option based on tested evidence from a curriculum innovation through a collaborative action research in Sabaragamuwa province where the prevalence of multigrade schools are high. For multigrade teaching to be successful it is necessary to train the relevant teachers adequately.

## **VIII. Implementing remedial teaching interventions**

Remediation is the process of reviewing and reinforcing learning of learners that did not successfully master with the normal initiative. A national level institutionalized remedial teaching

intervention needs to be in place within the school system. Towards this initiative a research project was planned with the aim of diagnosing the learning difficulties at grade 4, and to work remedially with failing pupils in order to ensure further learning in the normal classroom setting. The research was a collaborative action research with faculties and departments of Education of two universities, all NCOEs, all Teacher Colleges, National Institute of Education (Vithanapathirana, 2007) towards the National Programme for Remedial Teaching.

The following steps need to be taken:

- A national level intervention for capacity building in Diagnostic Testing and Remedial Teaching.
- Developing a complete kit for Diagnostic testing
- Develop training packages/ a course module on Diagnostic testing and Remedial Teaching to be incorporated into the teacher education programmes
- Develop resource material for remedial teaching for Mother Tongue and Mathematics.

## **IX. Establish standards for development of teacher competency**

It is very necessary that either the MoE or the NIE develop a set of guidelines identifying the factors that should comprise the criteria for standards of teacher competency such as:

- Clear vision about their instructional objectives.
- Broad knowledge of the subjects they teach and the methodologies of teaching.
- Sound understanding of the students and their individual needs.

Schools will be able to improve the competency of the teachers and the principal using the standards mentioned above. This should be implemented within the framework of self-evaluations.

## **X. Upgrading of teacher education programmes**

The need assessment of teachers is most important before starting the upgrading of the training programmes. Training programmers, both pre-service and distance mode, and in-service training, need to be upgraded: this should involve revising curricula, updating teaching materials, consolidating training programs, and increasing the content relationship between the school curriculum and teacher education curriculum.

## **XI. Utilising teachers centers**

The MoE has established 100 teacher-training centres and teacher educators are being trained. These training centres need to be properly utilised and managed. These centres need to provide continuous training programmes for teachers from the schools of the locality, serve as resource centres for teachers, as well as be a meeting place for teachers with advisors of the area for sharing their experiences for the betterment of education of the area.

### **Upgrading Master Teachers (ISAs)**

Since Master Teachers (or In service Advisors as they are called now) play an important role in the teaching/learning process and development of teaching skills and competencies in teachers it is vital to give them a proper and high level training to equip them as trainers/guides. Hence a comprehensive and systematic training programme need to be implemented to upgrade the knowledge, skills and capabilities of Master Teachers.

### **Self-evaluation system of schools**

A system whereby schools evaluate themselves should be introduced. This should be aimed at having school principals and teachers assessing their performance vis a vis targets that they would have set for themselves and help them eliminate their weaknesses by themselves with assistance from parents and community. For continuing strengthening of this school self-evaluation system, a set of quality indicators needs to be developed by educational

authorities with assistance of schools as well as communities. It provides an opportunity to continue the partnership at all levels of the education system that is central to quality initiatives at school level.

### **Improve the regular school supervision from within as well as from outside** *School based supervision*

Beyond the system of school self evaluation mentioned above, every school needs an established internal scheme of supervision. The management committee (principal, deputy principal and sectional heads) should carry out this task. It should be impartial and fair. Teachers will also be encouraged to self-evaluate in order to improve their performances. Teachers and sectional heads need to meet weekly in subject groups to prepare their lesson plans for the following week. This should be an in-house exercise. The sectional heads should occasionally observe teachers in the classroom. Any weakness in the teaching learning process would then be discussed directly with the teacher. It should be a friendly encounter. A qualified teacher needs to be appointed as the sectional head if this scheme is to be successful.

### **Criteria for recruitment & training of School principals**

It's important that professionally and educationally qualified persons are appointed as school principals. Hence clearly defined criteria for recruitment of principals is very necessary. New recruits should be given a minimum of 6 months training before being deployed to schools. This training should be designed to improve academic as well as managerial capacity and upgrade knowledge about contemporary trends in education and recent curriculum-changes. Principals must be equipped to guide and evaluate teachers in order to provide a quality education to the children. Hence a continuous training programme to keep the principals fully equipped is a necessity in the education system.

### **Preparation and implementation of school development plans**

A properly designed school development plan can shed light on the shortcomings and problems that affect internal efficiency of the schools and also targets to steer the functions of the school along a development path. It will give the principal as the head of the institution a clear idea of the status of the school its problems and possible solutions and also show the steps needed to be taken for the development of the school.

If the plan is prepared with the active participation of all stakeholders such as students, parents and teachers it will give the principal ability to obtain the active participation and cooperation in the management of his functions. Therefore a concerted effort need to be taken to motivate schools to prepare development plans and monitor their implementation.

### **External supervision of schools**

At present different levels in the administrative structure of the education system are supposed to carry out supervision, monitoring and evaluation of the teaching learning process in schools. However the present supervision, monitoring activities seem to be unplanned irregular and ad-hoc often without any follow up action. Therefore it is recommended that emphasis should be placed on the following factors in carrying out supervision/monitoring/evaluation activities by different persons.

- School supervision should be planned and carried out regularly and effectively
- There should be closer coordination and communication among different groups who carry out supervision, monitoring work.
- A network needs to be created among different bodies/ institutions/ groups involved in this work, to share their experiences and decide upon consented actions.

- Supervision/monitoring programme should focus on the total teaching learning process. Supervision should highlight not only weaknesses but strengths, of the evaluated institutions and also possible solutions to overcome the weaknesses.
- A feed back program is essential after supervision/monitoring exercise.
- Criteria for quality assurance and standards should be developed to guide the supervision monitoring teams.

### **Restructuring the administrative structure**

The present administrative structure of the education system from the Ministry level down to divisional office level does not conform to accepted management norms. Hence there is duplication, wastage, and neglect of functions at all levels.

This situation adversely affect the efficiency of the system. Therefore restructuring a system into an efficient and cost effective machinery is an urgent need.

The following factors need attention in such an exercise:

- Assess the workload of each level/ institution and prepare the structure to fit the workload.
- Identify the functions of each unit/person and delegate responsibilities and authorities accordingly.
- Identify the skills/competencies needed to perform roles and functions of different positions and prepare a detailed human resource development plan to train and upgrade the management capacity of officers so that they will fit into the structure.
- Set up linkages and communication channels among different levelsof administration from bottom to so that lower levels also will contribute to national level decision making.
- Develop a comprehensive efficient and up-to-date education management information system which can serve all the administrative levels and satisfy the data need of all administrators.

