

Education

for Economic Development and Prosperity



Ministry of Education, Sri Lanka
2005

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Vision

Enriching education to empower future generations of Sri Lanka.

Mission

To excel in modernizing education, for young people to be valuable citizens of Sri Lanka with a competitive edge in a global setting.



Educating Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka lays claim to a long history of learning harking back to the beginnings of the island's civilization 2500 years ago. Education and learning have, throughout Sri Lankan history, been given priority and enjoyed exalted status.

The modern era of education in Sri Lanka is considered the period post-1930 – when the foundations for a system of access to free education for all were set. Extensive education reforms and curricular innovations led by then Minister of Education Dr C W W Kannangara heralded a system that promulgated free education from kindergarten to university. Significantly, Sri Lanka honoured the right to education as a Fundamental Human Right many years before it was encompassed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948.

Sri Lanka has invested heavily in education and health and this has paid rich dividend - the country is widely considered a success story in the achievement of a high level of human development.

Today, a paradigm shift in the philosophy of education - from 'teaching rudimentaries' to 'learning competencies' - has paved the way for a vibrant 21st Century generation of creative thinkers ready to take on the challenges of knowledge-based economies in a globalised world.



Country Profile

Location	7°00 N, 81°00 E South Asia
Land area	65,000 sq. km.
Climate	Tropical
Government	Democratic Socialist Republic
Languages	Sinhala, Tamil, English
Religions	Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity, Islam
Currency	Sri Lankan Rupee
Population	20.5 Million (Est.)
Per Capita Income	USD 1031 (2004)
Life Expectancy	72 years
Population Growth	0.8
Fertility Rate	2.0
Adult Literacy Rate	92.5
Human Development Index	0.751
Net Enrolment Ratio	95%(Primary) 77.6% (Secondary)
EFA Development Index	0.956
Under 5 Mortality Rate	15 / 1000
Access to School	Within 2 Km (primary) Within 4 Km (secondary)

2005

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Laying the foundation

- 1939 Education Ordinance No 31 of 1939 introduced, to govern education in Sri Lanka
- 1947 Free Education from kindergarten to university
Grade 05 scholarship examination created to provide talented children from low income households with bursaries and places in popular schools
Provision made to subsidise transport costs for students
A mechanism of school feeding put in place
- 1961 State takes over schools managed by denominational institutions to ensure education devoid of discrimination
- 1974 Non-formal Technical Unit established to organize and coordinate vocational training for school leavers
- 1980 Free text books provided to students from Grade One to GCE O/L
- 1982 Emergence of International Schools (English Medium) registered under Companies Act.
- 1986 National Institute of Education established
National Colleges of Education established
- 1987 Devolution of responsibilities in the Education Sector to provincial councils within a national policy framework. The Central Ministry continued to hold full responsibilities for 24 National Schools, 24 Special Schools and 64 Private Schools.
- 1990 A set of free school uniforms provided to all school children
Training of untrained teachers through distance education
- 1991 National Education Commission established, vested with the responsibility of formulating national policy on education
- 1994 Sri Lanka Teachers Service set up to enhance status of teachers
- 1995 Non formal technical unit assumes role of provider of non-formal education to out of school children and literacy programmes to adults
- 1997 Major educational reforms stimulating a wave of progress in primary, secondary and tertiary education.
- 1998 Compulsory Education Regulations introduced to ensure the enrolment of all children aged 5-14 in schools. School Attendance committees and School Attendance Monitoring Committees were established to facilitate enrolment.
- 1999 Navodya Schools Programme was launched to develop at least one school of excellence per administrative division.
- 2001 English Medium education was reintroduced in GCE A/L Science and for selected subjects in secondary school.
- 2005
- National ICT education drive launched.
 - The implementation phase of second and third generation education reforms begins. The second wave of curriculum reforms, examination and text book reforms launched. The Education Sector Development Programme (2006-2010) with emphasis on modernization to suit global needs, is set to begin.



Education Reforms of 1997



1997 - the “Year of Educational Reforms” – propelled Sri Lanka to a new dimension in education; strides were made to breakthrough from the traditional track and create a culture of creative thinking and learning.

Educating the Human Capital was recognized as a primary tool in leveraging the country’s prospects by the government, which showed a will and unwavering commitment to expand and enrich the quality of education.

The reforms of 1997 were grounded on enhancing life competencies and upholding the value of peace and social cohesion. The task at hand was to lay a firm foundation from which the existing culture of memory based, examination oriented teaching could be transformed into a thinking, creative and problem solving learning culture.

High on the agenda was minimizing the gap between education and labour market requirements by making quantum improvements in education, promoting access, ensuring the equitable allocation of resources and providing adequate infrastructure facilities and support.

Exceptional emphasis was given to competency-based education, special education and inclusive education, empowering students with knowledge-commodities such as ICT and English education, reducing regional disparities in enrolment and achievement and improving teacher competence and commitment.

The reforms of 1997 have already reaped rich dividend and Sri Lanka has made impressive achievements in education. Further enhancements are planned in the coming years as the country forges ahead towards excellence in education.

A set of reforms based on the recommendations of the National Education Commission were implemented starting in 1997. The National Education Commission’s findings and recommendations were based on a wide public consultation on existing problems and issues in the education sector. The recommendations covered General education, University education and Technical and Vocational education. Her Excellency the President, Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga, President of Sri Lanka appointed a Presidential Task Force that included academics and experts from the education sector and private sector to study the recommendations of the NEC and formulate a National Policy on Education.

Promoting Access and Equity

- Enactment of Compulsory Education Regulations:

These regulations paved the way for School Attendance Committees, which were tasked with ensuring that all children of school going age (5 to 14 years) were enrolled at a school. Once students were enrolled, the Committees also monitored their attendance. The School Attendance was in turn monitored at the Divisional Level.

- Non formal education

Literacy Centre Programmes launched by the Non-Formal Education Branch to provide alternative education opportunities to non-school going children. The literacy centres conduct classes at flexible times and implement a condensed curriculum that seeks to instill essential skills.

- Supplementary food, clothes and stationery provided free of charge to needy students.
- Advocacy programmes were launched with the support of non-governmental organisations to create awareness.

Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)

- Early Childhood Education was promoted through the expansion of pre-school facilities. The efforts to improve the quality of pre-school education have reaped rich dividend – pre-school attendance jumped from 40% to 60% during the reform period.
- Provincial councils were empowered with statutory authority on preschool education. The Councils became responsible for ensuring the quality of education through the training for teachers and provision of facilities and material.
- A Department of Child Study was set up at the Open University to carry out specialized research and training.

Improving Quality of Education

A four pronged strategy was adopted in 1997 to bring about quality improvements to the existing education system.

- Revision of school curricula and text books

Primary, junior secondary and senior secondary curricula have been revised with the focus on making the new content more child centered, activity based and relevant to employment. The curriculum reforms were formulated with the goal of empowering students with basic competencies.

- Introducing new methodology for teaching and learning

The new curriculum reforms were introduced to the teaching cadre of the country through an orientation programme while an In-service Advisor Network carries out further training of teachers. Teacher training, both pre-service and in-service has been given much emphasis under the new reforms. The pedagogy has been renewed by the introduction of child centred individualised focus on students. The interaction between the students and the teacher has been improved through active participation of students in the learning process and the increased use of education technology.

- Providing quality inputs to schools

With focus shifting to activity-based learning methods, schools required teaching aids and material for classrooms. A large amount of funds were allocated to upgrade classrooms and to purchase other requirements.

- Improving the management of educational institutions

It was recognized that the reforms could only be implemented successfully if schools were managed efficiently. Thus schools principals were given management training while individual schools will be granted greater autonomy.

The reform programme was assisted by major international development partners. The World Bank, Asian Development Bank, UNICEF, DFID, JICA/JBIC, GTZ and Sida undertook specific activities. It is however important to note that 90% of the expenditure is financed by the state.

These reforms are addressed in detail in the next section.



A Curriculum for a balanced education

There are three key stages of education provided within the system in Sri Lanka.

- General Education
 - Pre School
 - Primary
 - Junior Secondary
 - Senior Secondary
- Tertiary and University Education
- Vocational Training

The Government of Sri Lanka, as a policy, provides free education from the primary stage of general education to the first-degree level of University education. According to the regulations enacted under the Education Ordinance, education is compulsory from age 5 to 14 years. This span covers grades one to nine. Although the compulsory span ends at Grade 9, over 83% of children proceed to the next grade. The government is contemplating extending the upper age limit of compulsory education to 16 years.

Under the education reforms of 1997, curricula and teaching methods across all these stages were revamped with focus shifting to the creation of a generation of well rounded citizens who were employable and ready to face the challenges of the future.

Curricular Emphasis during stages of education

Senior Secondary Education (GCE A/L)

- The GCE (A/L) course is of two years' duration and is an attainment examination as well as a selection examination for university admission.
- Three subjects must be offered, chosen from 54 available subjects
- Focus on developing problem solving, reasoning, communication skills and general awareness
- Student's abilities and application of knowledge in practice are explored through two compulsory projects and various assignments
- English language compulsory for all students

Senior Secondary Education (GCE O/L)

At ordinary level, students are expected to offer 8 core-subjects and two optional subjects. The core subjects are:

- Language
- Mathematics
- Religion
- English
- Science and Technology
- Social Sciences, History, Geography and Civic Studies
- Aesthetics
- Technical Subject

Students obtaining passes in 6 subjects including Language and Mathematics and three credits or higher, qualify to follow the GCE Advanced Level course.

Junior Secondary Education (Grades 6 to 9)

- Development of aptitudes and interests
- Subject based curriculum and thematic approach; from Grade 7, all students take 10 common subjects
- Learning is made more meaningful and relevant with subject matter integrated under different themes
- A second national language, Sinhala for Tamil speaking students and vice versa is taught wherever teachers are available
- Learning through simple projects and practical work
- School Based Assessment (SBA) – to assess students continuously through written and practical tests.

Primary : Stage Three (Grade 5)

- Acquisition of knowledge through desk work (pupils prepare for early years of secondary education)
- Active learning and play to supplement desk work
- Basic skills and abilities
- Optional curriculum to suit learner interests
- Use of activity based oral English in environment related activities
- Focus on acquisition of desirable and essential learning competencies

Primary : Stage Two (Grade 3-4)

- Play & Activity based learning
- Desk work
- Development of personality, attitude and values
- Use of activity based oral English in environment related activities
- Focus on acquisition of desirable and essential learning competencies

Primary : Stage One (Grades 1-2)

- Planning of Learning activities after assessing the entry competencies of children
- Guided play and Active Learning to aid personality development and socialization
- Less emphasis on structure and examinations
- Five essential competencies:
 - Communication
 - Environment
 - Ethics and Religion
 - Enjoying leisure and play
 - Learning to learn
- English is introduced orally through environmental related day to day activities
- Interaction with older children



General Education

The General Education policies have been formulated not only to develop knowledge, skills and attitudes but also general competencies such as thinking skills, decision making, creativity, problem solving, communication, social skills and coping skills which are essential in modern society. Schools are encouraged to impart these skills through the adoption of curricular as well as co-curricular activities. Concepts on peace, social harmony, democratic values, conflict resolution and sensitivity to gender issues are also integrated into the new curriculum.

General Education is provided to students from the age of 5 years to 18 years, subdivided as follows:

Pre-School Education

The government's National Policy on Early Childhood Care and Development lays down national policy guidelines on the standards of pre-school education.

Pre-schools are monitored by Local authorities (Provincial Councils) which are authorized to

- Register Pre-schools
- Inspect pre-schools
- Provide guidelines on teachers
- Provide teacher training
- Provide teaching materials
- Maintain quality

In addition to Local authorities, the private sector as well as religious and voluntary organizations have been given the responsibility of conducting pre-schools.

Figures show that 62% of children between the ages of 3 and 5 presently attend some form of preschool. The government targets 80% attendance by 2008.

Having recognized the importance of the early years in the physical as well as emotional development of a child, the policy also envisages the provision of home-based care to pre-schools children. Mothers and caregivers are being educated via one to one meeting and the electronic media on providing suitable environments and nutrition to their children.

	Age	Grade
Primary Education	5-10	1 to 5.
Junior Secondary Education	11-14	6 to 9.
Senior Secondary Education	15-18	GCE (O/L) & GCE (A/L)

Primary Education

The primary stage covers the first five years of schooling which are considered key to the subsequent years of learning. Primary education is child centered and activity based to help in the development of the mind, basic skills and abilities with less emphasis on structure and examinations. Primary education takes place in three stages, during which the emphasis shifts from play based activity to desk learning.

Junior Secondary Education

The integrated curriculum is replaced at this stage with a subject based curriculum and under the new reforms, a "thematic approach" has been adopted at this transitional stage (Age 11-14, Grade Six to Nine). Learning is made more meaningful and relevant in Grade Six with subject matter integrated under five main themes. English medium instruction is introduced in selected subjects in Grades Six to Nine.

Senior Secondary Education

Students complete Junior Secondary Education and proceed to Grade 10 to follow the GCE Ordinary Level course. Students obtaining passes in 6 subjects including Language and Mathematics and three credits or higher, qualify to follow the GCE Advanced Level course. Approximately 45% of the student population proceeds from O/L to the A/L grade.

The GCE (A/L) course is of two years' duration and is an attainment examination as well as a selection examination for university admission. Currently 54 subjects are available of which students must offer three subjects in combinations specified by the University Grants Commission. The reforms introduced ICT in all GCE A/L classes while General English was introduced as a subject for all students. Also as part of the reforms, English Medium instruction was introduced for Science Subjects at A/L. In a bid to diversify the GCE (A/L) curriculum, a proposal to introduce Technology subjects is to be implemented in the near future.

Role of NIE in Curriculum Development

The National Institute of Education, a corporate body functioning under the Ministry of Education, formulates a national curriculum for schools.

- The NIE together with experts in each field, prepare syllabi for all subjects and accompanying teachers' guides. The NIE also has a continuous dialogue and feedback process with teachers.
- Each curriculum change is introduced to teachers through an orientation programme. The NIE also has a network of In Service Advisors who assist teachers in the implementation of new curricula.
- Teachers are given the freedom to adapt the curriculum to each school's local environment so that teaching and learning is more meaningful and interesting.
- NIE has a continuous dialogue with teachers' groups in order to get a feedback from the schools.
- A curriculum cycle of eight-years' is followed. Major changes are introduced as per the cycle. The next curriculum change is due in 2007.

An Examination Reform

All public schools examinations are conducted by the National Evaluation and Testing Services of the Ministry of Education, housed since 2000 in a new building equipped with modern facilities.

The three main examinations held each year are:

• **Grade 5 Scholarship and Placement Examination**

Students who have completed Grade 5 sit for this examination which provides bursaries to promising students and places them in schools with better facilities for secondary education.

• **GCE (O/L) Examination**

The O/L examination is held at the end of a student's general education stage at Grade 11. Over 500,000 students sit this examination annually. Around 45% proceed to higher secondary level while the balance exits the school system.

• **GCE (A/L) Examination**

The GCE A/L, a school leaving examination, sees about 200,000 candidates each year. The examination is highly competitive as it also serves as the passport to a place in a University.

The following reforms were made in the examination and testing services under the reforms of 1997:

- The Grade 5 Scholarship examination paper has been revised and remodeled to test deductive thinking and analytical and application skills of students while reducing the focus on factual recall.
- Both the GCE O/L and A/L examinations are currently subjected to review and revision to raise the standard of achievement assessed to be on par with that in developed countries.
- An item bank of 6 subjects at GCE A/L and 4 subjects at GCE O/L has been introduced.
- General Knowledge has been introduced as a compulsory examination paper at GCE A/L to test the aptitude of students. Students are required to obtain a passing grade at this examination to qualify to enter university.
- Having identified some shortcomings in the public examinations system, the Ministry of Education recently introduced School-Based Assessment (SBA). The grades aggregated by students during a particular stage of education are now displayed in a separate column on the General Education certificates issued by the Department of Examinations.
- The National Evaluation and Testing Services prepares and disseminates annual evaluation reports on students'

performance at the GCE (O/L) and GCE (A/L) examinations. This evaluation provides a performance profile of students by school, education zone and province to facilitate comparisons at various levels in order that suitable follow up action may be taken.

- The National Evaluation and Testing Services has over the past few years, worked towards speeding up the release of examination results while timely availability of the results has been ensured through the publication of results on its website.

The Way Forward

As part of the Second and Third generation Education Reforms, the National Evaluation and Testing Services will:

- Improve evaluation and testing tools to be on par with the developed world through the introduction of world class technology
- Expand and improve the item bank for examination questions, in terms of number of subjects covered and the number of items available for each subject at GCE O/L and A/L. It is planned to cover 12 subjects at GCE A/L with at least 1000 items in the bank for each subject.
- Focus test instruments on skills and competencies such as Critical and divergent thinking, creative initiative, leadership skills, problem solving, decision making, responsibility and team work
- Prepare and publish examination guidelines in relation to the core subjects at GCE O/L and A/L. This will usher in a culture of benchmarking the desired learning outcomes and achievement levels expected from students.
- Launch a 5 Year Plan to carry out a comparative study on the evaluation and testing systems in light of corresponding curricula, syllabi, expected learning outcomes and achievement levels in developed countries in order to review and upgrade the evaluation and testing system in Sri Lanka.
- Institutionalise School Based Assessment to facilitate the award of a holistic profile of students with regard to the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains. The five competencies of communication, ethics, environment, enjoyment of leisure and learning to learn which are underscored in the Sri Lankan education system, will have

detailed dimensions in the SBA report. Every student leaving school on completion of GCE O/L and A/L will receive a profile report.

- Introduce novel items and formats to question papers to incorporate modern aspects in evaluation and testing systems. The question papers will be made more examinee friendly by ensuring clarity and validity in the questions.

New Policies for New Text Books

Free textbooks are provided by the State to all children up to GCE (O/L) grade in an exercise that involves writing, printing and distributing 6.3 million copies of 224 titles in 2006. Text books on General English and General Information Technology are provided to students in GCE A/L classes.

Text Books have undergone major reforms since 1997 with better content and physical quality as well as wider choice being the primary focus.

- The prevalent system entailed all students of a particular grade using the same text book, which was written either by the NIE or the Education Publication Department. The monopoly the Ministry of Education had in the preparation and production of text books was questioned in the search for excellence in the provision of text books. The government is now in the process of providing a wider text book choice in select subject, with schools given multiple options (3-4). These books will be written by authors outside the state system. Authors and Publishers, both local and international, are now encouraged to bid openly for the production of text books. The bid documents will be on par with international standards with more focus on transparency. It is hoped that this element of competition will lead to a higher standard of books, in terms of content and physical quality.
- In order to further enhance and sustain the quality dimensions of text books, Text Books Evaluation Boards consisting of experts and specialists evaluate the whole manuscript of a particular text book submitted by

publishers. The scrutiny of the Board focuses on the content quality, factual accuracy, layout, illustrations and design of the text book in light of the respective curriculum and syllabus. This stage is followed by an evaluation by a Technical Evaluation Committee which looks into the printing aspects of the text book, thereby completing the quality assurance process for text books.

- The distribution system for text books is continuously being improved to ensure that quality books are delivered on time. Lead time planning has now ensured that preparations for a text book start 18 months before the date on which the text books is expected to be in the hands of a student. In order to overcome persistent bottlenecks in the distribution network, a pilot project in 2006 (in select national and private schools) will see the distribution of text books directly to schools by the publishers. The 11 fee levying private schools that have not been receiving free text books will also receive free text books in 2006.

The Way Forward

- Curriculum reforms set to begin in Grades 6 and 10 in 2007 will be supported by the provision of appropriate, modernized text books.
- Factual accuracy of content, editorial quality assurance will be ensured.
- The Multiple Book Option will be extended to five core subjects namely Sinhala Language, Tamil Language, Mathematics, History and English Language. The English Language text book will be accompanied by a CD to facilitate interactive and self-directed learning.
- The syllabi for text books will be posted on the websites of the Ministry of Education and the National Institute of Education to support authors and publishers in the preparation of text books and supplementary readers.
- Learner friendly formats will be encouraged in text books to make them more attractive to children.
- Supplementary readers, and other learning material will be made available for all subjects, in school libraries and in the market.
- Provision will be made to ensure that all versions of multiple option text books and other text books are stocked in sufficient numbers in school libraries.

School Libraries



Well stocked school libraries are of utmost importance in creating and sustaining reading habits among schools children. In 1997 a paltry 20% of all schools had libraries, and these were of various size and quality. The government initiated a targeted intervention in 1998 to equip schools with libraries and today, about 45 % of schools have libraries while 105 schools have established reading rooms. "Flooding the schools with books", a programme implemented from 2001-2004 encouraged the production of supplementary readers for school children while supplying books to schools.

The Way Forward.

- Reading Camps in schools will be encouraged.
- Mobile libraries will be established to cater to the needs of schools which do not have libraries.
- Productive partnerships with the publishing industry will be forged to establish libraries and "Rooms to Read" in schools that are in need of library facilities
- Reading rooms and libraries will be made more attractive and reader friendly.

National ICT Education Drive

The National ICT Education Drive is a comprehensive programme planned by the Ministry of Education with the aim of strengthening and expanding IT Education in the Education system from Primary to Higher Education. It is part of a master plan for ICT Education from 2005 to 2010. The ICT drive is the first such plan for developing ICT education and was formulated with the active participation of the private sector. The programme involves:

ICT Education for Schools

Introduction of ICT as a subject in the school curriculum, from Grades 1 to 13:

- Plans are in place to introduce ICT as a technical subject at GCE O/L in the academic year commencing January 2006
- Planning has been completed to introduce ICT into Junior Secondary and Primary Classes
- General Information Technology (GIT) introduced as a common subject for Grade 12 Students in the GCE A/L class. The first national GIT exam was held in August 2005 with over 80,000 students sitting for the examination

Adopting ICT as a tool in learning and information handling, especially in subjects such as Mathematics, Science and Geography from Grades 1 to 13. Content providers from the non-government and corporate sectors have been invited to contribute towards efforts of the Ministry in the preparation of ICT based teaching-learning material in all subjects from Grades 1-13.

ICT education for Universities

A Policy framework and action plan has been prepared by university academics to improve ICT education through its extensive use in teaching and research. ICT education for Non-ICT degree programmes is being improved to help make graduates more employable.

ICT Education for All

This is aimed at creating an ICT Culture in Sri Lanka, with the objective of making 50% of Sri Lanka's population ICT literate by 2010. A national Examination in ICT, "Sri Lanka ICT Education" is due to be introduced in 2006. The examination will be conducted by the Department of Examinations and will be open to the General Public. The Sri Lanka ICT education examination will consist of three levels of certification:

ICT Literacy Certificate

ICT Application Certificate

ICT Vocational (Foundation) Certificate



Enriching minds with pivotal skills in Science, Mathematics, English and ICT

In 1994, several studies on the mastery level of students in terms of literacy, numeracy and life skills revealed that the education system has been failing in its output in qualitative terms. This alerted policymakers and practitioners to the urgent needs for redeeming the education systems from the trend of deteriorating in quality.

The major education reforms initiated in 1998 were built on a vision of building capacity in Mathematics, Science, Information Technology and English competencies and skills, which are in high demand in the employment market.

- Schools were given enhanced facilities to strengthen Science, Mathematics, English and IT education. Eg: Good laboratories, teaching aids, libraries
- Curricula were modernized to be on par with international standards; they were more practical oriented, with comparatively less focus on recalling theory.

- Teachers exposed to rigorous training in Science, Mathematics, English and IT. More on-site training carried out to improve teachers' subject knowledge, understanding and competencies.
- Interactive learning was encouraged with students more actively involved through assignments and practicals.
- A pre-test in Mathematics was held for the first time in 2005, to gauge students' abilities ahead of the O/L exam. The examination helps to identify areas of weakness enabling teachers and students to take corrective measures in order to optimize performance at the O/L examination.

The new technology and competency based, modernized curriculum to be introduced in 2007 has, as a priority, aimed at developing the syllabi and infrastructure required to enhance these areas. A radical departure is being proposed from the existing methods of teaching these key subject areas.





Modernising Schools

The present schools system which has evolved over the past two centuries, now involves 9766 government schools and 54 private schools as well as 607 Buddhist Centers of learning (pirivenas).

Categories of Schools:

Type of Schools	Most senior class offered
Collegiate Schools	GCE (A/L) (Sciences, Commerce and Arts) GCE (A/L) (Arts and Commerce only)
Secondary Schools	GCE (O/L)
Primary Schools	Grade Five, and in some cases Grade Eight

The total enrolment of students in government schools is 3,875,050. An issue facing the current schools system is its bi-polarization; mega schools are constantly growing larger while the smaller schools are becoming even smaller. For example, 77 schools in the island have heavy enrolment of over 3000 students while 184 schools have a lean enrolment of less than 15 students each.

Schools, Students and Teachers in government schools by Province

District	Total number of Schools	Total number of Students	Total number of Teachers	Students per School	Student -Teacher ratio
Western	1,374	856,972	36,972	624	23.2
Central	1,472	514,265	27,009	349	19.0
Southern	1,121	512,421	25,598	457	20.0
Northern	887	257,177	10,864	290	23.7
Eastern	961	364,841	15,617	880	23.4
North Western	1,229	459,679	24,344	374	18.9
North-Central	780	255,942	12,308	328	20.8
Uva	828	284,122	14,512	343	19.6
Sabaragamuwa	1,114	369,631	18,731	332	19.7
Sri Lanka	9,766	3,875,050	185,955	397	20.8

Source: School Census 2004 (Provisional)

Many of these schools have very basic facilities and the reforms of 1997 proposed refurbishments and improvements in schools to suit modern learning needs.

It was recognized that the outmoded facilities available at majority of the schools would not facilitate effective learning. Steps were taken to refurbish and rebuild modern facilities such as upgraded classrooms, IT Laboratories, fully fledged Science Laboratories, activity rooms, libraries, aesthetic units, home science units and play areas.

The Total Quality Development (TQD) programme undertook the development of physical infrastructure in schools with modern facilities. The TQD was implemented first at 440 Navodaya Schools and 324 National Schools and will then be rolled out to all schools in the country.

The TQD Programme involves two Stages:

Stage 1

Involves fast track development of physical atmosphere by carrying out minor repairs, building boundary walls, landscaping and colourwashing.

Stage 2

Stage two involves the provision of basic facilities as well essential and higher-order learning spaces supplemented by adequate furniture, equipment and material. These will include :

Infrastructure corresponding with curricular reforms:

The infrastructure available in many schools pre1997 was inadequate to reflect the quality of the system being introduced through the reforms. Infrastructure changes now being made include the introduction of special science laboratories for primary grades, ordinary level students and advanced level students.

Libraries:

Schools across the island have been provided with funding and assistance to set up libraries so that students have access to a wealth of knowledge outside of text books.

Aesthetic Units:

Schools have been encouraged to assist children in expressing their creativity by setting up Aesthetic Studies Units for Art, Music and Dance.



Environmental exploration:

Schools encouraged to have well maintained gardens and landscaping, in order to promote children's relationship with nature.

Facilities for Teachers:

Teacher complexes and teacher villages are being set up in remote areas to assist those teachers who are posted to these areas.

Health facilities:

Gymnasiums and play areas created to promote the importance of being healthy and fit.

Other Strategies employed as part of TQD initiatives to develop infrastructure in schools will include:

- Continuous assessments on learning outcomes and feedback based on
 - School Based Assessment marks, O/L and A/L results
 - National Assessments conducted by NEREC [National Assessment of Achievement of Grade 4 students in First Language, Mathematics and English, conducted in 2004. Grade 8 and 10 students be assessed in First Language, Mathematics and Science, in August 2005]
 - Mathematics and Science promotion [Pre-Test in Mathematics held in July 2005. Science Pre-Test will be added from 2006]
- Improve current status of A/L Science labs and gradually modernize them
- Phased out programmes to introduce Science and Maths to all A/L schools.
- Encourage English medium Science in A/L as well as as Grades 6-9
- Improve and modernize Libraries (all National, Navodaya, Central and plantation sector schools will have school libraries by end 2006)
- Improve and modernize IT labs (all National, Navodaya and Central schools will have IT labs by end 2006)
- Facilitate teacher development programmes
- Promote on-site teacher development programmes (each school will conduct site-based programmes)

- Facilitate teachers' participation in continuing teacher education programmes
- Provide training for Principals and Senior Management Teams (SMTs) on educational planning, IT usage, financial management, quality improvement and organizing effective on-site teacher development programmes
- Conduct a network of monitoring mechanisms

Plantation Sector Schools

Total Quality Improvements are also being made in 270 schools in the plantation sector. The target of the programme is to develop 100 plantation sector schools in 2006.

North East Schools

Total quality development in schools damaged by the war is undertaken by North East Council for Rehabilitation and Development (NECORD) and many other donor partners. Physical infrastructure in 50 schools is expected to be developed in 2006.



Navodya Schools - taking education to the periphery

The Navodya Schools Concept was introduced to expand opportunities of quality education to children in disadvantaged and deprived areas of the country. It was the government's attempt to ensure equity in the provision of quality education. Under the Navodaya programme, a Centre of Education Excellence is created and sustained in each of the administrative divisions in the country.

These schools will be developed in a phased manner with a holistic approach towards infrastructure development. The traditional approach of providing ad-hoc facilities in a fragmented manner failed to improve the infrastructure quality of schools. Under the holistic approach of infrastructure development, the current infrastructure stock of a school will be matched against the infrastructure needs of the particular school for quality improvement. The needs gap is identified through this exercise and resources channelled to fill these needs.

440 Navodya Schools, 324 National Schools and 54 Central Schools of the Kannangara Era are currently included in this programme. The schools are being modernized with pleasing landscape, enticing natural environments and attractive physical appearance. The classrooms, laboratories, libraries, computer labs, aesthetic units, activity rooms, play areas and multimedia units of these schools are now being transformed into hives of activity where teachers and students enthusiastically engage in well planned learning activities.



Navodya Projects

Province	District	Number of Schools
Western Province	Colombo	40
	Gampaha	56
	Kalutara	21
Southern Province	Galle	24
	Matara	17
	Hambantota	10
Sabaragamuwa Province	Rathnapura	21
	Kegalla	20
North Western Province	Kurunegala	30
	Puttalam	13
North Central Province	Anuradhapura	12
	Pollonnaruwa	07
Uva Province	Badulla	19
	Monaragala	07
Central Province	Kandy	24
	Matale	06
	Nuwara Eliya	19
North East Province	Trincomalee	11
	Ampara	05
	Batticaloa	10
	Vauniya	06
	Jaffna	10
	Mannar	01
Total		388

Opportunities for the marginalised through Non Formal Education

The reforms of 1997 also paved the way for a non-formal education programme catering to the needs of children out of school and adults. The reforms related to non formal education helped address the issues of the marginalized segments of society and thus, are significant achievements in the strategy to provide access, equity and inclusion.

This addresses the education needs of marginalized children such as

- Children affected by war
- Orphaned children
- Homeless children

The programme aims at identifying such children and enrolling them in centres that provide basic literacy and numeracy skills as well as counselling through trained psycho social counsellors so that they are well prepared to enter mainstream schools.

Functional Literacy Centres

Designed for children who have either not enrolled in a school at all or have dropped out prematurely, some Literacy centres impart basic literacy to prepare children to attend a formal school while other centres help the students acquire basic literacy, numeracy and life skills so that they may obtain further training at a vocational centre.

Community Learning Centres

These provide continuing education opportunities for various target groups. Nearly 70 such centres operate at present and it is planned to expand the programme to other educational zones.

Vocational Training Centres

Vocational Centres have been set up to provide vocational training facilities to youth. The courses offered provide training for future income generation. Some of the available courses are carpentry, masonry, welding, electrical wiring, electronics and automobile repairs.

Special Education for special children

Special Education programmes are devised to address the education needs of differently-able persons such as the visually and hearing impaired, physically disabled and mentally retarded.

- The government provides financial assistance to special schools run by the private sector for the disabled.
- Special Education Units set up in schools with trained instructors and special facilities to attend to the child at an early stage
- Inclusive Education where children with handicaps are accommodated in regular classes with specially trained teachers
- The Ministry also supplies special education equipment, such as braille writing material, equipment required by hearing impaired children and teaching-learning aids for mentally retarded children.
- Advocacy programmes are also conducted to create awareness among the public about the needs of the disabled and their rights.

Counselling and Guidance

Counselling and guidance services available in schools have been improved. Counselling and guidance have been included as components in the pre-service teacher education programmes and in-service teacher training will be strengthened to equip teachers with skills on psycho-social counselling and career guidance. Material on career guidance and labour market information systems will also be provided to schools to consistently update information in this area.

Student Welfare

In addition to Free Education, the state continues to provide a package of welfare services to schoolchildren, including:

- Free textbooks up to GCE (O/L)
- A set of uniforms given free annually
- A scheme of scholarships, which gives financial assistance to deserving children.
- Subsidised transport to travel to school.
- Free medical inspections in school, provision of dental care and free spectacles to needy children.
- Supplementary feeding in identified schools with malnourished children in first year classes.

Centre for Autism



In a breakthrough development in Special Education for special children, an Autism Centre was inaugurated recently at the NIE premises. This centre will be specialized in the management of Autistic children, with the aim of equipping them with the skills to lead independent lives and reach their potential.



Our Human Capital

Sri Lanka enjoys one of the best teacher:student ratios among the developing countries – 1:21.

The number of teachers within the school system stands at 186,015 (as at 2004). This number includes trained graduates, untrained graduates, trained teachers, and untrained teachers. Teachers are organised under the Sri Lanka Teachers' Service, which provides a scheme of promotions based on merit and seniority.

Teachers by Qualifications

	Number of Teachers
Graduates	52,176
Trained Teachers	124,026
Untrained Teachers	5,080
Trainee Teachers	2,492
Other	2,241
Total	186,015

Teacher Education

The ministry of education recognizes that good teachers are the key to enhancing the quality of education and therefore, need to be provided avenues of professional advancement. The state thus provides many training opportunities to teachers free of charge while also paying them an allowance to help meet expenses incurred in attending training programmes.

Teacher Education and Teacher Deployment Project

This project helped streamline the teachers service, with the assistance of the World Bank. It encompassed training most of the untrained teachers through the institutional or distance mode. Further, teachers recruited

hereafter must undergo a diploma course in teacher education or be graduates of Universities.

National Colleges of Education

The number of National Colleges of Education has been increased from 10 in 1994 to 17 at present to expand the provision of pre-service training for aspiring teachers. These aspirants are chosen following the completion of their GCE (A/L) examination and trained thereafter for three years, which includes two years in residential training and one year on internship at a school. The curriculum at the National Colleges of Education consists of three components

- a) Professional training
- b) General education and training
- c) Subject specialization

The output from these NCOEs has now been planned to offset the annual attrition of teachers at a rate of 1.38.

Graduate teachers

Graduates entering the teaching field are provided orientation immediately after recruitment and thereafter, may obtain a diploma in education as a professional qualification.

Teachers' Centres

100 Teachers Centres have been set up islandwide to provide continuous knowledge updates to teachers. As per Ministry of Education guidelines, every teacher is expected to undergo a short training programme once in five years. The teachers are mentored in their professional development by In-service advisers who visit schools regularly, advise teachers and organize quality workshops for teachers.

Facilities available to teachers

Under the total quality development programme for education, incentive packages for teachers have been enhanced while steps have been taken to begin construction of teacher housing complexes in difficult areas.





Managing Education

Education is managed in Sri Lanka by the Central government, which shares responsibility with the provincial councils, in terms of the 13th amendment to the Constitution in 1987 devolving power to the provinces. All Sri Lankan children in government schools and some in private schools are provided free education. A handful of fee-levying elite private schools charge tuition fees. All these schools come under the management of the Central Ministry of Education or the Provincial Ministries of Education. The community plays a participatory role through School Development Societies.

Responsibilities of the Central Government:

- Formulating national policy on education
- Monitoring standards at educational institutions
- Formulating national curriculum and training provincial trainers through the National Institute of Education
- Management of specific schools designated as National Schools, special schools and private schools.
- Teacher Education
- Public Examinations

The Ministry of Education governs the subject of education with a Cabinet Minister in overall charge of the Ministry, assisted by two Deputy Ministers for School Education and for Higher Education.

The Minister of Education is vested with executive authority to implement education policy and is responsible to the President and Cabinet of Ministers. The Secretary to the Ministry is the Director General of Education and Chief Executive Officer. The Secretary is responsible for policy implementation and is accountable to the Minister and the President. The responsibility of managing key Departments and Divisions of the Ministry has been delegated to Additional Secretaries, Deputy Directors-General and Directors.

Improving governance

Improving the governance framework for education is somewhat complex and combines elements of deconcentration, delegation and devolution of functions and power between the central government and the eight provincial councils. The central government is responsible for national education policy at all levels. However, provincial councils play an important role in the administration of the school system. Over half of all provincial expenditures go to meet educational needs.

Current policy thinking is to further devolve education management down to the level of individual education institutions, especially schools, to empower front line service providers such as principals of schools, section heads and teachers, and involve local communities closely, to increase school effectiveness and performance.

As a pilot project, School Based Management has been introduced in 1552 schools as a major step towards enabling schools to be governed autonomously. School improvement

councils were set up with representation from the principal, teachers, parents and past pupils who were empowered with the authority to make certain decisions regarding the given school. This empowerment leads to enhanced responsibilities for the councils and the school staff becomes accountable to the community. The communities in turn, contribute to the development of the school through a participatory process in its management, and thereby develop a strong sense of ownership.

Community involvement in the management of schools also becomes a mechanism of bringing about transparency in school affairs.

Steps have also been taken to make funding and financing more transparent and competitive. Performance based funding will bring in a culture of financial accountability. A competitive bidding framework will bring about greater transparency in bidding processes while a Public Expenditure Tracking System will help create greater equity in the disbursement of funds to educational institutions.

Institutes functioning under the Ministry of Education with responsibility for specific functions:

Institute

Department of Examinations
Department of Educational Publications
National Institute of Education
Book Development Council

Function/s

Conducting public examinations.
Publication and distribution of textbooks.
Development of curriculum, training of teachers and research
Support to writers



A new process for School Admission from 2006

Using computer software application technology, a new method of processing Grade 1 admissions to National Schools was designed as a landmark initiative. This paved the way for transparency and reliability in a highly competitive school admission system. It also minimised chances for corruptions and other malpractices.



Challenges transformed into opportunities

Post-Tsunami Education

As the killer waves of 26 December 2004 receded, it rapidly became clear that education was one of the worst hit areas of civic life.

182 schools took the brunt of the attack - 74 completely destroyed and 108 partially damaged - while 444 others were used to house the hundreds of welfare camps for those left homeless. The tsunami was experienced by nearly 91,000 students and 3700 teachers – it was witnessed by another 264,000 schoolchildren.

Within a few days of the disaster, relief and recovery activities in the Education Sector began. The Ministry of Education assessed and evaluated the damage caused to schools across the affected areas. The Ministry recognized that its response must be speedy with strategic direction to suit the emergency. Mindful of the donor driven agenda, the Ministry formulated post-tsunami education recovery programmes in line with the guidelines of the Inter-Agency Network on Education in Emergencies (INEE).

The speedy mobilization and dissemination of information pertaining to the extent of damage to the schools stimulated overwhelming support from foreign governments, international and local non-governmental organizations and individuals for the reconstruction of schools damaged by the Tsunami.

The Ministry together with the development partners decided that the disaster the country was facing could be transformed into an opportunity: it was resolved that the schools would be reconstructed with novel architectural designs consisting of state-of-the-art facilities. The traditional type plans used for school buildings have now been discarded to make these schools attractive learning environments which can respond to modern learning needs. The physical environment and the building facilities will become attractive with child friendly layout and standards. The modernized schools will consist of facilities as shown in the table on page 27.

In January 2005, reconstruction and rebuilding got underway to reconstruct 182 schools damaged by the Tsunami at a cost of Rs. 10 Billion. Another 444 schools situated in close proximity to the damaged schools are also being rehabilitated at an estimated cost of Rs. 3 Billion. Much of the rebuilding work has been completed while the other rebuilding projects continue apace. The priority of the Education Ministry has been to ensure that affected communities are empowered and encouraged to actively participate

in the reconstruction process, and to ensure that symbolic consultation and token participation are avoided.

Post-tsunami rebuilding of schools was carried out solely with, and because of, funding provided by development partners to the State. It was a rare nexus between the State, the Private Sector, Local and International Non Governmental

Organisations and foreign governments. It is this partnership between the State and Private Sector and NGOs that should evolve into the future, as it has the potential to liberate countries such as Sri Lanka and thrust it towards unfettered development supported collectively by all sections of the community.



G V S De Silva Primary School, Galle



Al Athan Vidyalaya, Malwatta

Facilities that will be made available in reconstructed schools

Specifications of Essential Facilities that need to be incorporated in the design for reconstruction / rehabilitation and upgrading of schools catering to children affected by the tsunami

	Dimensions (In Ft)
1 Science room for Primary grades	25 x 20
2 GCE O/L Laboratory	40 x 25
3 GCE A/L Laboratory	90 x 25
4 Home Science Unit	40 x 25
5 Agriculture Unit	30 x 25
6 Multi Media Unit	40 x 25
7 Fully fledged Computer Learning Centers* (two rooms with 20 computers each)	30 x 25
8 Administrative Block with Principal's office, Staff room, assembly room with computers	60 x 30
9 Assembly hall	120 x 30*
10 Aesthetic unit for music, dancing and arts	80 x 25*
11 Pavilion for the Playground	45 x 25
12 On-site environmental laboratory	50 x 20*
13 Gymnasium	60 x 25*
14 Large Library	60 x 25*

- 15 Library Books
- 16 Canteen 30 x 20*
- 17 Principal's Quarters/ Teacher's Quarters
- 18 Play area for school children
- 19 Electricity
- 20 Toilets, Urinals
- 21 Water Supply
- 22 Gate and fence

* One room with 10 computers is sufficient for a school with student enrollment less than 200

** Dimension may be reduced depending on the student size of the school

In addition to the above facilities one enclosed classroom of dimension 25 Feet x 20 Feet with a 5 Feet verandah is required for every unit of 35 students on roll.

Science Lab for primary grades need not be provided in schools which do not have primary Grades (1 to5).

Science Lab for secondary grades need not be provided in schools which have only the primary Grades (1 to5).

Furniture & equipment need to be supplied as well.

Investing in our undergraduates

Higher Education in Sri Lanka is also part of the state's free education policy and is provided to students selected on the basis of their performance at the Advanced Level Examination. University Education is managed by the University Grants Commission, which falls under the purview of the Ministry of Education.

Vision of the UGC

To develop a University System of the highest quality appropriate to national needs and aspirations, in keeping with global trends.

Mission of the UGC

To promote and sustain through resource allocation, a widely accessible University System that strives to attain the highest level of learning, professional training and research, relevant to the changing needs of the country, by encouraging where necessary the diversification of academic programmes, through inter university and university industry collaboration and facilitating the emergence of Centres of Excellence.

The 1997 Education Reforms placed a great deal of emphasis on reforming and modernizing the higher education sector in Sri Lanka.

The main thrust of reforms in Higher Education has been;

- Improving access to higher education
- Enhancing number and quality of undergraduate programmes
- Modernizing infrastructure

Access to Higher Education

The number of universities in Sri Lanka has nearly doubled since 1997, from nine to sixteen. These universities accommodate 16,000 undergraduate placements each year. That number however is less than 15% of the number of students who gain the A/L qualification required to gain a place in a university. Thus each year, the country faces the certainty of over 100,000 qualified students with undergraduate potential being denied a university education due to the lack of available space. This number also amounts to just 2% of the age cohort moving onto higher education, as against an average of 8% in South Asia and 30-40% in developed countries.

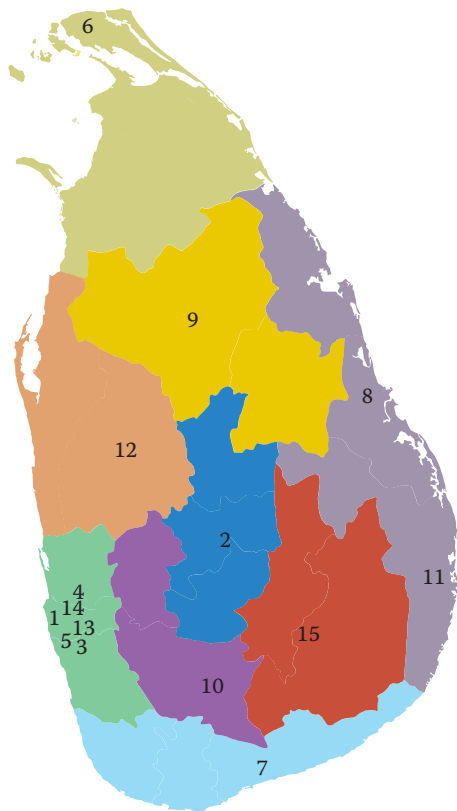
In order to increase enrolment, seven new universities were established in the country since 1997. They were :

- Rajarata University of Sri Lanka
- Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka
- Eastern University, Sri Lanka
- South Eastern University of Sri Lanka
- Wayamba University of Sri Lanka
- Uva Wellasa University of Sri Lanka
- Visual and Performing Arts University

The establishment of new universities has helped increase the intake in 1993 by twofold in 2005. However nearly 85% of qualified students are still denied a place in university as space is limited.

The policy on University Admission involves a quota system, whereby students are selected on the following basis:

All Island Merit	40%
District Merit	55%
Educationally Underprivileged Districts	5%



Universities in Sri Lanka

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| 1 University of Colombo | 9 Rajarata University of Sri Lanka |
| 2 University of Peradeniya | 10 Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka |
| 3 University of Sri Jayewardenepura | 11 South Eastern University of Sri Lanka |
| 4 University of Kelaniya | 12 Wayamba University of Sri Lanka |
| 5 University of Moratuwa | 13 Open University of Sri Lanka |
| 6 University of Jaffna | 14 University of Visual and Performing Arts |
| 7 University of Ruhuna | 15 Uva Wellasa University of Sri Lanka |
| 8 Eastern University, Sri Lanka | |

Student Enrolment in Conventional State Universities

Year of A/L Examination	Student Enrolment
1993	8770
1994	9787
1995	11381
1996	12157
1997	11744
1998	12356
1999	12579
2000	12666
2001	12813
2002	13196
2003	14260
2004	14850
2005	16292

Private Sector Education

Much has been done since 1997 to expand higher education but the grim reality remains that each year, more than 100,000 deserving students are forced to abandon their ambitions to enter university due to the limited number of placements in state-funded universities. The government views private sector higher education as a positive development for the country – in as much as the private sector has contributed to a vibrant health care system and transport system in Sri Lanka. Having been one of about 05 countries in the world that has discouraged foreign universities functioning in the country, Sri Lanka has now recognized that private sector involvement in higher education is necessary.

Over thirty degree and diploma awarding bodies have been functioning in Sri Lanka in the past. However, due to the Government not recognizing these entities as providers of higher education, there has been a marked lack of quality assurance, quality control and monitoring.

However the government has now stepped in to set in motion a process whereby Private Sector Degree Awarding Bodies will be provided Accreditation under the State subject to quality standards and strict monitoring by the State.

A much needed regulatory framework is being introduced governing the private degree awarding bodies in order that they conform to specified standards. The State will be responsible for benchmarking private sector education, a policy that has served well in many countries.

Establishing constructive and qualitative partnerships by engaging the private sector in education will enable the country to develop its academic strengths and research capabilities. Transfer of knowledge, transfer of technology and building capacity will happen automatically when high quality academic institutions of international repute begin operating from this country.

A Quality Assurance & Accreditation Council has been established to provide a regulatory framework for private sector education.

Reforms in University Education

The reforms of 1997 brought immense improvements to the quality of undergraduate programmes available at Sri Lankan universities.

- A course unit and modular system of education together with continuous assessment has now been rolled out successfully across the higher education sector, while the semesters at universities across the country have been subject to synchronization.
- Curricula were reformed and broad-based with greater emphasis on new and relevant areas such as IT, English and Management while peace and social cohesion were woven into the undergraduate programmes.
- Undergraduates are now provided with greater flexibility in selecting their subject combinations. Meanwhile standards at universities are constantly being monitored through quality assurance and accreditation programmes.

Demand oriented degree programmes have been formulated in consultation with the private sector and chambers of commerce and industry, in order to improve relevance of programmes and ensure that graduates are readily employable. A series of employment creating degrees programmes are introduced each year - in 2005, 18 new degree programmes were introduced giving a new orientation to tertiary education. These were :

05 New Paramedical Degrees (available at four national universities)

- BSc. Nursing
- B. Pharmacy
- BSc. Medical Laboratory Science
- BSc. Radiography
- BSc. Physiotherapy

13 New Degrees in other areas (available at seven national universities)

- Environment Conservation and Management
- Facility Management
- Transport and Logistics Management
- Molecular Biology and Biochemistry
- Industrial Statistics and Mathematical Finance
- Statistics and Operations Research
- Computation and Management

Marine and Fisheries biology
Islamic Studies and Arabic Language
Science and Technology
Computer Science and Technology
Entrepreneurship and Management Studies
Animal Science and Export Agriculture

Modernizing Infrastructure

- Universities are being equipped with superior facilities in laboratories and libraries so they may cater to modern learning requirements. Infrastructure for student welfare such as cafeterias and counselling centres, has been improved. Capital infusions into the higher education systems are constantly growing - the capital investment on education has been doubled in 2005 over that of 2004. Meanwhile special programmes in IT and English have been made compulsory for undergraduates with staff and other resources provided through Ministry of Education to conduct English modules at Universities. ICT development has been made a priority with Rs 1000 million allocated for the development of IT in universities across the island.

Three new institutes have been introduced to expand the higher education system while three new faculties have also been established at national universities. These are

Institutes

- Postgraduate Institute of English
- The National Centre for Advanced Studies in Humanities and Social Sciences
- Swamy Vipulananda Institute of Aesthetic Studies, Eastern University Sri Lanka

Faculties

- Faculty of Health Care Sciences, Eastern University of Sri Lanka
- Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Science and Technology, University of Ruhuna
- Faculty of Arabic and Islamic Civilisation, South Eastern University of Sri Lanka

Postgraduate Institute of English

This institute will be set up to provide postgraduate study programmes on a national level in teaching and learning

English. The institute's focus will be on sharing course material from different universities through e-learning methodologies along with traditional universities. The institute will provide both residential and distance learning programmes while teaching in English medium in universities will be encouraged through continuing education programmes for university academics. It will offer common testing services to evaluate graduate standards of English while also encouraging research in ELT.

The Postgraduate Institute of English will also collaborate with institutes locally and overseas to promote the development of high standards of english education and english teacher education in Sri Lanka.

The National Centre for Advanced Studies in Humanities and Social Sciences

This Centre will be set up in 2005 with the objectives of fostering reflective and innovative thinking, creativity and originality, encouraging high quality research and enhancing national capability to absorb and integrate new knowledge. A major initiative of the Centre will be the creation of a digitalized library, bringing together resources from places such as the Nation Museum, Colombo University, National Archives and the National Library.

Swamy Vipulananda Institute of Aesthetic Studies

Affiliated to the Eastern University of Sri Lanka, this Institute was established by Ordinance No 01 of 2005 to be operative from 14 March 2005. The Institute has departments in the following specializations:

- Carnatic Music
- Dance, Drama and Theatre
- Visual and Technological Arts

Faculty of Health Care Sciences, Eastern University of Sri Lanka

This medical faculty will be established in the East to develop the community and hospital services to help uplift the livelihoods of people living in war affected areas. The Faculty of Health Care Science will serve as a Centre of Excellence for medical and paramedical sciences. The first MBBS course at the faculty gets underway in January 2006.

Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Science and Technology, University of Ruhuna

It has been proposed to establish this Faculty at the University of Ruhuna in order to enhance the academic knowledge required to help the island exploit the full potential of its ocean resources. This has been a much felt need that has not been incorporated into the academic and skill profile of the country. The medium of instruction at the Faculty will be English with graduates trained in the following fields:

- Capture fisheries
- Culture fisheries
- Fisheries and Aquaculture Management
- Fishery Socio-Economics
- Marine resources utilization
- Conservation and Management of aquatic resources
- Fish post-harvest technology
- Fishing gear and craft technology
- Other ancillary industries related to fisheries and aquaculture
- Integrated coastal zone management

Faculty of Arabic and Islamic Civilisation, South Eastern University of Sri Lanka

This faculty, established at the South Eastern University in September 2005, will promote the teaching of Arabic and Islamic Civilisation. The new Faculty will train those involved in Islamic Jurisprudence as well as those teaching Islam and Arabic in schools. The faculty will promote and develop relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes among undergraduates to develop social harmony. It will be affiliated to the National Islamic University of Islamabad, Pakistan.

Management of Universities

Vast improvements have been made in the management of universities and the decentralization of administration. Universities have now begun preparing corporate plans and have adopted a Per Student Financing Model. Universities have also introduced research evaluation and performance evaluation of academic staff.

Improved income generation methods, University expenditure tracking, and competitive funding formulae have been designed.

Staff Development Activities

60 PhD placements have already been completed in the fields of Humanities, Social Sciences, Management, Commerce, Education and Law in 2005. Over two thirds of these candidates are affiliated to foreign universities.

Research Promotion Centre

Research forms a basic cornerstone of higher education and the state is now focusing on strengthening the research culture among local academics. Young academics are now being oriented towards research through exposure to peers and global interactions. Academics are being exposed to advanced research abroad while universities are being geared for the knowledge generation process.

The initiatives of the Centre for 2005/06 include

- Training probationary lecturers and junior academics on research techniques, scientific writing and research proposal formulation
- Promotion of indigenous PhD programmes
- Promotion of international collaborative research
- Two awards for 1) quality research output and for 2) highest attracting research grant in 2004
- Support to sustain research culture

Major foreign funded higher education projects

Improvement of Relevance and Quality of Undergraduate Education (IRQUE)

This World Bank funded Project focuses on several aspects of higher education in an innovative approach to improve the quality and relevance of higher education. Under this project, quality assurance and accreditation were introduced for the first time in the higher education sector through a Quality Assurance and Accreditation Council, giving the university system a new lease of life. The project also promoted IT and

English education as well as social cohesion. It placed great emphasis on student welfare. It was as part of the IRQUE project that university staff was trained for the first time on how to apply for grants by designing and submitting suitable projects.

Among the activities of the Quality Assurance and Accreditation Council will be:

- Evaluating new curricular courses and degree programmes, new institutes, staff availability and infrastructure
- Quality Assurance and Accreditation
- Developing criteria for recognition of new universities
- Establishing benchmark statements for subject disciplines

Institutional Block Grant (IBG)

The IBG has been awarded to the 12 public universities, with the aim of improving

- Students' IT skills and English proficiency
- Social Harmony
- Students' learning environment
- Special needs for disabled staff and students
- Expanding enrolment in IT and Computer Science

Distance Education Modernisation Project (DEMP)

This Asian Development Bank funded project focuses on the development of Open and Distance Learning with the objective of linking impoverished rural regions to urban areas through public-private initiatives in distance learning. Secondary schools graduates who are denied entry to conventional universities due to limited placement capacity, will have increased access to diploma and degree programmes.

The project aims to formally institutionalize open and distance learning by introducing concepts such as virtual education that enable students to be 'on campus' while being geographically

located off campus. Under the project, the higher education system is exploring the introduction of web-based instruction, tutorials and examinations.

Under the project:

A Distance Education Partnership Programme will be established to raise quality and enhance quality of distance education

Public and private post-secondary institutes will be established, thereby promoting more fluid private sector participation in post-secondary education.

Policies will be introduced for

- Universal Accreditation Standards
- Private participation in online distance learning
- Linking programmes with foreign and domestic institutions
- Scholarships and stipends to support education and training

The project will also modernize the Open University of Sri Lanka to be on par with world class standards in distance education

Commercial Publications for Academic Purposes

The purpose of this project is to develop the available Academic Publications through the involvement of international and local publishers in a competitive bidding process with the aim of publishing high quality books. This project gives impetus to academic writers within the higher education system seeking to have their research published.

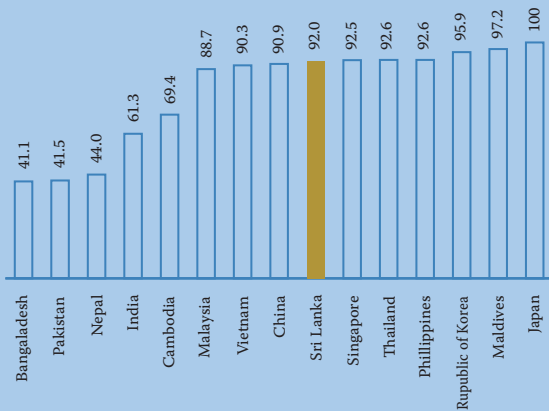
Education for all & Millennium Developments Goals

Sri Lanka's achievements in EFA and MDG are significant

ADULT LITERACY 92.5%

Sri Lanka ranks second among SAARC countries in Adult Literacy and has outperformed four countries in East Asia.

Adult Literacy



NET ENROLMENT RATIO (NER)

Primary	95.0%
Survival Rate to Grade V	97.6%
Secondary	77.6%

Survival Rate to Grade 5

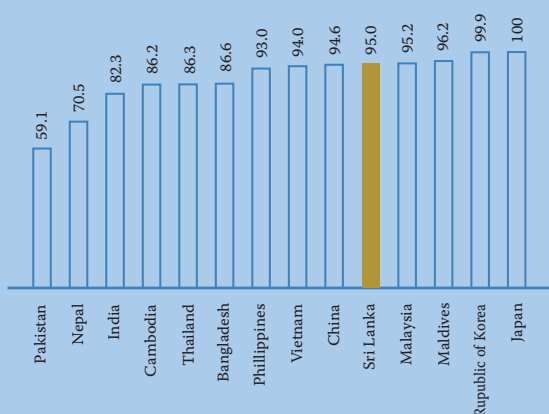
Sri Lanka ranks second among the SAARC countries and has outperformed Cambodia, Philippines and Vietnam in East Asia.



GRADE 1 ADMISSION (Net initial intake rate) 97.5%

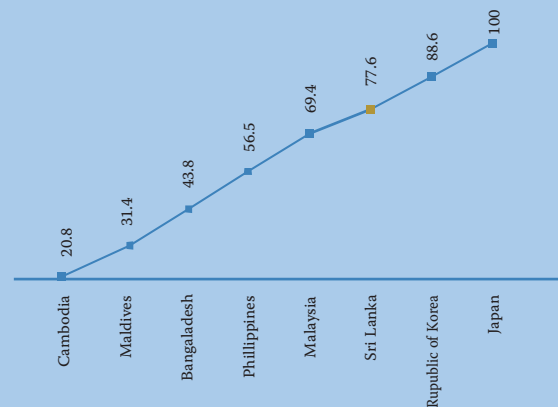
NER Primary

Sri Lanka ranks second among the SAARC countries and has outperformed five East Asian countries.



NER Secondary

Sri Lanka leads the SAARC countries and has outperformed Malaysia, Philippines and Cambodia.



EFA DEVELOPMENT INDEX (EDI) 0.956

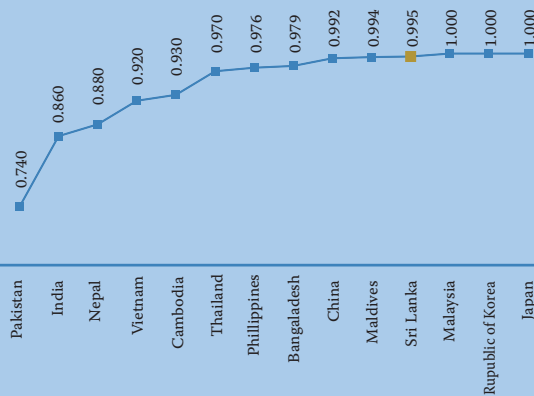
(As per the UNESCO ranking an EDI of 0.950 and above is considered high.)

GENDER PARITY INDEX (GPI)

Primary NER (M/F) 0.995
Secondary NER (M/F) 0.968
Adult Literacy (F/M) 0.959

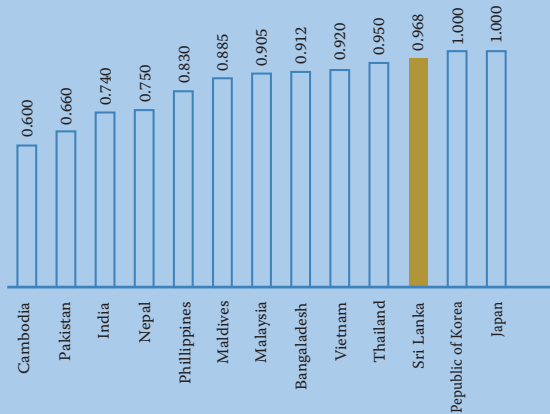
GPI in Primary NER

Sri Lanka leads the SAARC countries.



GPI in secondary NER

Sri Lanka leads the SAARC countries and is behind only two countries in East Asia.



ACCESS TO SCHOOL

Within 2km For Every Child In Primary
Within 4km For Every Child In Secondary

UNDER 5 MORTALITY RATE

15 PER 1,000 LIVE BIRTHS

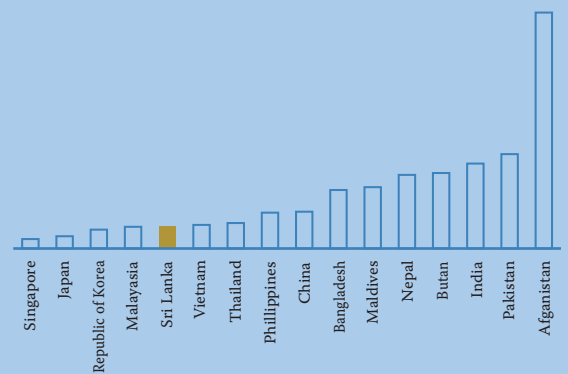
GPI in Adult Literacy

Sri Lanka ranks Second among SAARC countries and is behind Japan and Philippines in East Asia.



Under 5 Mortality Rate

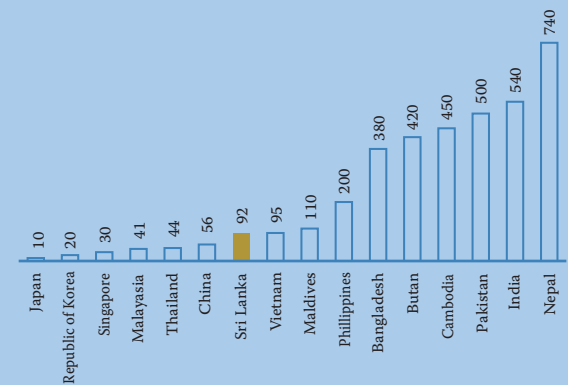
Sri Lanka has outperformed all the SAARC countries and is behind four countries in East Asia.



MATERNAL MORTALITY RATE (MMR)

Sri Lanka has the lowest MMR among the SAARC countries outperformed by only six countries in East Asia

92 PER 100,000 LIVE BIRTHS





Looking ahead

The way forward for education in Sri Lanka is the expansion and enrichment of the education system and its transformation from a culture of memory based, examination oriented teaching to a thinking, creative and problem solving learning culture. The education system needs salvaging from outlooks entrenched through decades of book learning – a sea change in attitude must be brought about to acknowledge the role of education as a tool of leveraging a country's prospects. A paradigm shift from teaching to learning is now being made– to enhance the quality of the learner and the learning experience.

The second and third generation reforms of the education system are now being rolled out with the aim of producing highly employable students who are valuable citizens and globally competitive. Implementing these reforms in a modernized and progressive fashion is no easy task. However, with their implementation, it is expected that the country's education sector will be able to bring in the following quality enhancements to the education system:

- The organisation and structure of the school system will depend on a consideration of sound principles of education, the need to provide access to all, particularly the disadvantaged groups, geo-physical factors of the country and the need to maximise the utilisation of resources. With the country facing a problem of bipolarization in schools, it is imperative that the school system is reorganized in the coming years in order to ensure access and equity while ensuring quality and enhancing achievement.
- Curricular Reforms in 2007 will introduce a further modernized competency-based curriculum. Key focus areas will be:
 - Promoting creativity, problem solving skills, social skills and developing imagination.
 - Activity based learning with project activities and assignments forming an integral part
 - GCE O/L curriculum reorganized to have a core and baskets of subjects from which options are selected
 - Chemistry, Physics and Biology will be introduced at GCE O/L with the option of offering these subjects in English.
 - General Information Technology to be taught at Grade 12 with a separate examination conducted by the Department of examinations
 - Technology subjects to be introduced for Arts and Commerce Streams
 - GCE A/L Examination paper to take a common format and become more examinee friendly



- Quantum improvements will be made in creating a learning environment – pleasing environments and new learner-friendly architectural designs. The learning time in schools will also be increased as this is critical to the outcome.
- Use of technology in education, especially in terms of ICT aided learning and virtual learning will be promoted. Simultaneously teachers will be trained and equipped with the knowledge and resources necessary to optimize technology usage. The National ICT Education Drive will ensure ICT learning from primary onwards as well as the introduction of IT as a subject for all students at O/L. A national level IT Exam – the GIT will also be conducted for all school leavers.
- New avenues of encouraging learning are being pursued. Open learning where children and adults are not limited by time and space and are allowed to learn at their own pace, will and in their own space- will be practiced where necessary. Alternate arrangements such as mobile learning systems can be employed to educate students in remote pockets.
- English language education is being revitalized with oral exercises practiced from the earliest stages of education. English must be viewed as a commodity and not just a language because of the competitive edge it provides globally. The government is mindful of the need to ensure that adequate resources and interventions are available to improve English education. English medium education is to be strengthened and expanded to cover more subjects in all senior classes
- The role of the state will be transformed into that of regulator and not the sole provider. The state will forge partnerships with the private sector to enhance, strengthen and sustain quality standards of education. The private sector should be provided an opportunity to adopt schools – they can then utilize their management know-how to transform adopted schools into centres of excellence.
- Schools will be encouraged to develop academic partnerships with schools abroad in a bid to instill in students a need to expand their horizons and move towards a global village, without imprisoning themselves in impoverished situations.
- The ownership of schools must rest with the community, especially where education is delivered free. This shift in ownership will help enmesh the schools within the community and liberate schools from their traditional role as closed entities. The society in turn will take responsibility for the preservation of schools and maximize on the benefits of the schools.
- School based management, which was introduced in 2005 as a pilot project at 1552 schools, will be strengthened. In the case of universities, the transfer of institutional autonomy to Vice Chancellors and Senior Academics will be further strengthened.
- The government is now in the process of providing a wider text book choice to students where they will be given multiple options (3-4). These books will be written by authors outside the state system, thereby dismantling the state monopoly. The new policy initiatives envisage improved content and physical quality of text books while more supplementary readers will be provided to children so that they are not confined to text books only. It is also planned to divide bulky text books by term so that children's school bags carry less burden. The Education Publications Department will build partnerships with reputed book publishers to expand opportunities for book publishing, make better and more books available for children to read and to produce interactive learning material like CDs, based on local syllabi.
- The technical capacity of textbook writers, illustrators and editors will be enhanced while manuscripts will be subject to quality control and factual accuracy checks. Material that is insensitive of certain ethnic and religious groups will be removed. The production and delivery of books will be sped up to ensure timely distribution of text books before the start of the academic year.
- In order to generate better quality textbooks, it is planned that internationally recognized authors will be invited to submit their proposals in a competitive bidding process. This element of competition will no doubt lead to a higher standard of books. The curriculum for each subject will be available on the Ministry website so that every author has access to the same information – making the process more transparent.

- School based assessment (SBA) methods will be improved on par with international trends and standards relating to continuous assessment. Introduction of SBA and term-end tests will enhance the rigours of academic achievements. In addition, examination papers for GCE O/L and A/L will be reformulated along internationally accepted norms and standards.

- Plans are in place to strengthen Criterion Referenced Assessment mechanisms at Primary Level. This type of assessment involves teachers identifying entry competencies of primary students in their first few days of education and then adopting a child-centred individualized teaching and learning process. The teacher evaluates progress of the same child over time against a given set of criteria in terms of both cognitive and non cognitive skills, as opposed to peer comparison. This reform ensures that the teacher-student interaction becomes active. Understanding of the mechanism and its application by teachers will be improved.

- Funding and financing will become more transparent and competitive with financial accountability introduced through performance based funding. The next budget cycle will see the implementation of a Public Expenditure Tracking System for the school and university systems to help calculate per capita expenditure. This in turn will enable the rationalization of investments in education on a scientific basis. Competitive bidding will be further strengthened among universities and national colleges of education, where institutions will compete for funding based on their performance against given criteria.





Education Sector Development Programme and Framework (ESDPF) for the period 2006-2010

For the first time in Sri Lankan history, a blueprint has been made to take Sri Lankan education into brand new vistas of excellence. The government's systematic long-term planning has marked a paradigm shift from the ad-hoc implementation method practiced earlier. The blueprint for the path ahead is the Education Sector Development Programme and Framework (ESDPF) for the period 2006-2010: a comprehensive framework developed following a major review of the Sri Lanka education sector in 2004. The ESDPF proposed initiatives under four main themes, as outlined in brief below:

Theme 01 : Promoting Equitable Access to Basic and Secondary Education.

The education system enrolls 97.5% of the children who reach the official entry age to grade 01 with 97.6% of that group retained upto Grade 05. The net enrolment ratio in secondary education however is 77.6% of the age cohort.

The challenges the framework seeks to address are

1. ensuring children complete the compulsory basic education cycle from Grade 1-9
2. ensuring children have access to secondary education from Grades 10-13

The strategies being implemented are :

Establishment of school family networks

The Ministry for Education has a geographical positioning of schools and with the use of this mapping exercise, school family networks will be established. Each family will consist of about 5 – 10 schools and access to primary, junior secondary and GCE A/L classes will be planned in a rational manner to avoid exclusion. Each school family will have at least one school providing GCE A/L Science and Technology classes.

Norms for the provision of essential infrastructure facilities and basic amenities will be applied to ensure that every school has an appropriate learning environment for quality education.

Provision of free text books, free school uniforms, subsidized public transport and free school meals for undernourished children will be further strengthened.

Special Education Programmes

The provision of special education programmes for children with special education needs will be strengthened. The categories of children eligible for special education will be – Differently abled children, working children, and children without shelter.

Education for gifted children

The focus will be on providing challenging learning environments for gifted students.

Alternate Learning

The provision of appropriate and alternate learning opportunities for out of school children and adults who missed schooling.



Theme 02 : Improving the Quality of Education

The policies under this framework will include

- Programmes for enhancing learning capacity of children
- Enrichment of curriculum
 - to be consistent with emerging demands of the knowledge-based world
 - to be so designed as to enable smooth vertical transition from one grade to another
 - to stipulate the overall competencies and specific competencies expected of the learner
 - Subject content, strand and topics sequence will be well planned
- Introduction of new subjects with cross curricular themes
- Improvement of the evaluation and testing system
- Teacher development initiatives to enhance teacher motivation, skills and performance
- School based assessments to propel children's acquisition of cognitive and non cognitive achievements
- Programme for enhancing teacher competency and commitment
- Provision of quality learning material, accessories and equipment
- School management and community support
- Promoting democratic values, social cohesion and citizenship through school education

Theme 03 : Enhancing the Efficiency and Equity of Resource Allocation

The policy initiatives under this theme seek to improve the efficiency and equity of education resource allocation by addressing key issues. Some of the innovative policy initiatives to improve resource allocation are:



Establishing a medium-term expenditure framework for education

This will facilitate multi-year planning and monitoring, at national, provincial and lower tiers

An overarching education sector development plan

The long-term five-year education sector development plan for 2006-2010 enables education authorities to implement programmes with a long term perspective. As the plan is an indicative rolling plan, it can be revised and adjusted annually to suit emerging needs.

A public expenditure tracking system (PETS)

The PETS will trace the flow of expenditure throughout the education system, thereby ensuring equity and transparency in resource distribution. A competitive bidding framework will be put in place to bring about greater transparency in transactions pertaining to education.

Theme 04 : Strengthening Education Governance and Service Delivery

The framework seeks to improve the quality of governance and service delivery by making improvements to

- Decentralise decision making and administration
- Simplify organizational structure of the education system to rid it of organizational weaknesses
- Put in place well planned and systematic human resource development activities

These objectives will be achieved through the following policy reforms:

- School based management and school improvement programs to devolve responsibility of managing schools to school authorities and the community.
- Organizational analysis and capacity building exercise to review and assess agencies, define roles and responsibilities, identify gaps and to identify organizational capacity constraints and weaknesses.
- Developing a human resource strategy to provide high quality human resources. The Human resource will be provided strengthened technology skills and competencies, as well as leadership and management capabilities.



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