

Title of the Study : **A Study on the Grade V Scholarship Examination**
Researcher : **Prof. Raja Gunawardhane**

Objectives / Terms of Reference

The specific objectives of the study were as follows.

1. To examine the structure and content of the Grade V Scholarship Examination:
 - A. Structure of the revised examination papers
 - B. Content validity of the examination papers
2. Examine the impact of the Grade V Scholarship Examination;
 - A. On the development of the child
 - B. On the distribution of educational opportunities
 - C. On the development of the school system.
3. Propose measures to improve the scope and effectiveness of the Grade V Scholarship examination in terms of human, social, and national development.

Methodology

Objective one has been studied by perusing the past examination papers over a period of 4 years (1999-2002).

Objective two has been studied by collecting data from three purposive samples of (a) teachers, (b) students and (c) university students. A questionnaire was administered to a sample of 200 teachers who are following different postgraduate courses

Student questionnaire has been administered to a sample of 200 Grade 5 Scholarship holders of years 2000-2002 mainly to obtain information about their primary schools .

In addition, a questionnaires was administered to another sample of university undergraduates was chosen from the Colombo University to obtain views on the Grade 5 Scholarship Examination.

Document analysis method has been used to examine the structure and content of the Grade V Scholarship Examination.

Findings and Conclusions

Analysis of Paper I

1. Most of the items were presented in the verbal form.
2. Substitution and Interpretation are fairly represented in the Papers of 2000, 2001 and 2002 but not in the 1999 paper. Problem solving ability, Relationships, Organization of Facts and Information, Perception, Interrelationship, and Conclusion were fairly represented in all the four years. Ability to identify causes and effects and ability of observation were two other areas that have not been adequately represented other than in the 2002 paper.
3. There is no accepted format of using different forms of test items. Different types of test items have been used to test different abilities.

Analysis of Paper II

4. Nearly 50% of the items are for testing ability in comprehension. Writing ability has been tested through out the four years. Creative writing ability has been measured by asking students to write few sentences on a given topic or a given picture. All the language skills stated in syllabi and teachers' handbooks of Grade 4 and 5 (NIE, 2002, 2003) were not covered. Most important and measurable language skills are included among language test items.
5. Approximately 20% of the test items were on Mathematics.

6. Approximately 40% (30-34 items) of the items comprises questions on Environmental Related Activities.
7. More emphasis has been given to measure science-based knowledge.
8. Less emphasis is given to Aesthetic Studies.
9. Most of the Language items measure skills related to comprehension and synthesis and most of the items on Environment Related Activities measure application and analytical skills.
10. However, evaluation skills were not measured by any of the papers during the four years covered.
11. Majority of items connected to English and Environmental Related Activities are based on knowledge.

Teachers' Views

12. Two third of the teachers who responded do not accept that the Scholarship Examination is not successful as a selection devise. Students are coached for the Grade 5 Scholarship examination and they answer most of the questions mechanically.
13. Grade 5 Scholarship examination has been transformed into a competitive examination with harmful consequences for the psychological and holistic development of young children.
14. Teachers who consider that the Grade 5 Scholarship examination is relevant and successful as a selection devise are on the view that content validity of the examination is high as it consists of a variety of subject components.
15. The examination, as an aptitude test is capable of predicting the probability of future academic success.
16. It is true that the students are coached for this examination, but merely the training obtained through coaching does not certify success.
17. Student motivation is inspired by the Scholarship examination.
18. Majority of teachers supports the view that students do tend to study harder when they expect to sit for the Grade V Scholarship Examination.
19. Scholarship examination is most wholesome because it does a good job of measuring the achievement of essential course objectives.
20. Competition enhances the extent of attention given by the teachers as well as the parents.
21. Scholarship examination, as an anticipated test, contributes to learning only as an extrinsic motivator.
22. Students do learn, but it's only a mechanical type of learning.
23. The percentage of candidates who obtained marks above the cut-off point was less than 10%.
24. Students who come from rural areas face difficulties in adjusting to the new environment in urban schools.
25. Data obtained from four popular schools in Colombo reveals that a majority of students admitted to Colombo schools are not from rural areas or disadvantaged districts.
26. Scholarship holders hold positive attitudes towards their new school.
27. Data reveals that less than 10% of candidates gain scholarships and get the privilege of entering a popular school.