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1 INTRODUCTION

Education is a process which leads a person to self-realization and competence. In the complex and dynamic society of today, education provides the means for acquiring information, knowledge, skills, beliefs and attitudes. Educating a child is a joint enterprise where the parents and family circle, teachers, religious personages, social leaders, the community and the media have roles to play.

However, the state has a major role as the main provider of a formal institutional system of education where those mentioned earlier can also participate effectively. All education, be it formal, informal or non-formal has aspects which come under the purview of the state. These aspects will be dealt with in conformity with the National Education Policy.

The National Education Policy has to be consistent with Overall National Goals relevant to Sri Lanka. The National Education Commission has identified a set of Overall National goals and has also formulated an extensive list of Educationally Relevant Goals which are derived from them. The foundation of education is a set of Basic Competencies which are a pre-condition for the attainment of the educationally relevant goals. The Overall National Goals and the Educationally Relevant Goals are given as an appendix. (Annex -A)

In the National Education Commission Act No. 19 of 1991, it is stated that "The National Education Policy shall be formulated on a consideration of the recommendations and advice made to the President by the National Education Commission". The Commission was entrusted with the responsibility of making recommendations on Educational Policy in all aspects enabling the education system to respond to changing needs in society. It was considered vital that sudden and drastic changes in educational policy are not introduced with every political change. Policies that are to be introduced should straddle over a wider time range.

The Government has embarked on formulating a National Policy in Education. The Commission assisted this by producing a basic document entitled 'Towards a National Education Policy', a copy of which is annexed. What would be of practical use to the Government would be an identification of specific action to be taken in respect of all the policy guidelines set out in that document, the major contents of which have been analyzed under five areas.

The contents cover, substantially, formal general education of children from 5 to 18 years of age and related areas. This sector serves about 4.2 million children and employs more than 190,000 teachers and other personnel. It is a sector that urgently requires policy directions that would enable it to respond to the educational needs of an independent nation aspiring to usher in significant reforms on a broad front.

General Education up to first degree level will be provided free. Education will be compulsory to all children of school going age up to the age of 14 years and will be made accessible to all with a freedom of choice of medium of instruction between the two national languages, Sinhala and Tamil. The need to reorganize the school system and restructure it in a manner that will be in conformity with National Goals and the expected outcomes has been emphasized.

The school system when restructured will eventually have two tiers: namely, the 8 year Junior School providing Primary and Junior Secondary education and the 5 year Senior School providing Senior Secondary education. This arrangement is the preferred one, on practical and purely educational considerations. However, it will not be

implemented in a manner that either inconveniences any child or disrupts the schooling arrangements in any given locality.

Divisions which are deficient in educational facilities will be identified through a school mapping exercise and adequate provisions made. This exercise will also bring into focus other inequities in the provision of schooling, and will enable planned interventions to improve the distribution of schools throughout the country. All the above matters can be encapsulated under the heading 'Extending of Educational Opportunity'.

Qualitative aspects of Education with emphasis on activity methods and integrated systems of teaching will be given due consideration. The revision of curricula, improving the competence of teachers, the need to lay greater emphasis on teaching of mathematics and languages, evaluation at various levels have been discussed. These matters can be classified under 'Quality Improvement in Education'.

Shortcomings in the Teacher Service such as the need for training before deployment as well as inservice training have been recognized by the Commission. The setting up of a Teaching Service Commission has been recommended to attend to the career needs of the teaching community. Considerable discussion has been conducted regarding teacher education. The restructuring of the Teacher Education Curriculum, the strengthening of the teacher training institutions and the management of the entire teacher education system through appropriate agencies under the Ministry of Education and Higher Education has also been discussed in the section titled 'The Teaching Profession'.

The schools will not only impart a scholastic education which places emphasis on 'book-learning' but also provide opportunities for children to acquire information and skills which relate to life and the world of work. Such arrangements are eminently feasible although the normal school which provides a general education cannot impart formal vocational education. It may even be uneconomical to do so. The section titled 'Technical and Practical Skills Education' includes proposals regarding necessary arrangements.

The Management of the Education system which covers all the institutions in the Island and the need for coordination of what is managed centrally and what is managed through Provincial Councils, mechanisms to establish effective linkages, the need for periodic policy review etc. have been emphasized in the policy document. It has also discussed the urgent need and justification for a higher resource allocation for Education, particularly in view of the proposed changes in the system and the new concepts that have to be introduced in the near future. All these aspects come under 'Management of Education and Resource Provision'.

What would be of practical use to the Ministry of Education and Higher Education would be an identification of specific action to be taken in respect of all the policy guidelines set out in the document, 'Towards a National Education Policy', the major contents of which have been analyzed as indicated above under five headings.

We therefore submit herewith a document where these five important policy areas falling within the general education system are presented and action to be taken are identified. The annexed document should therefore be considered as **an action oriented strategy document** which will facilitate the implementation process. The five areas addressed in the document are as follows:

- (a) Extending of Educational Opportunity
- (b) Quality Improvement in Education
- (c) The Teaching Profession
- (d) Technical and Practical Skills Education
- (e) Management of Education and Resource Provision.

While this document deals with General Education, similar documents with an action oriented approach will be prepared in respect of Higher Education and Technical Education. A separate study on Higher Education has already been completed by a group of national experts and specific recommendations of a wide ranging nature have been made by them.

These recommendations could form a basis for reforms in the Higher Education sector. These proposals will have to be prepared in consultation with several other agencies such as the University Grants Commission and Technical and Vocational Education Commission which will have to play key roles in implementing what will ultimately be recommended.

Periodic reviews play a catalytic role in improving education. Considering the size of the system and the time and effort needed to revise curricula, text-books, lesson materials and teacher guides, a **ten-year policy review cycle** should operate in general education. Each such policy review cycle will be arranged into a sequence of activities which will culminate in the implementation of a revised policy.

2 EXTENDING OF EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

2.1 Compulsory Education

In the chapter on 'Directive principles of state policy and fundamental duties' of the Constitution of Sri Lanka it is stated that the State is pledged to establish in Sri Lanka a Democratic Socialist Society of which one of the objectives is, "the complete eradication of illiteracy and the assurance to all persons the right to universal and equal access to education at all levels". Since 1945 the country is committed to a policy of free education from Kindergarten to the University. The United Nation's Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) which has been ratified by Sri Lanka requires all member countries, among other things, to provide compulsory primary education.

Studies conducted on school participation and literacy have shown that:

- school participation rates have reached the **upper eighties** and remains with little change, and
- literacy rate for population over ten years and over has also reached the **upper eighties** and tends to remain more or less static.

It is estimated that around 8% of 5 - 9 year age group and around 30% of the 10 - 14 year age group are not participating in formal schooling or in any other educational programmes. Therefore, a firm commitment to attain full participation by the year 2000 is a priority. Two approaches are recommended for the realisation of this objective:

- **ensure total enrolment of children aged 5 to 14 years in the school system.**
- **provide alternative structures of schooling to give a meaningful and adequate education for the drop-outs and non-starters.**

In May 1995 the government approved the introduction of regulations under the Education Ordinance of 1939 to enforce compulsory attendance. In order to ensure that these regulations are enforced effectively, without hardship to parents in economically disadvantaged families, it is necessary to develop an implementation plan that includes support programs to facilitate implementation in preference to the strict enforcement of the penalty clauses.

Compulsory education regulations should be enforced:

- i. For the 5 - 11 year age group, from July 1996.**
- ii. For the 12 - 14 year age group, from July 1998.**

Attendance in out-of-school learning centres for the 5 - 14 year age groups and activity schools or enrolment in the Open School will be accepted under the regulations until universal eight year basic education can be achieved by the year 2000.

The Ministry of Education, with the assistance of Divisional Education Officers and Principals of schools, will make arrangements for some of the students who have sat for the G.C.E. Advanced Level Examination and are awaiting results to conduct a survey towards the end of 1995, to:

- i. ascertain the numbers and locations of children between 5 and 14 years who are not in school;
- ii. identify reasons for non-schooling.

The Divisional Officers will take appropriate measures to meet the needs that have been identified. For example, they will request:

- Grama Niladhari to issue alternate birth certificates where necessary;
- NGOs to provide stationery, clothes etc.
- NGOs to organise pre-schools to relieve girls of school going age of child-care responsibilities;
- School Development Societies to organise advocacy programs for parents to motivate them to send all children to school.

The non-formal learning centres will be extended to all pockets of non-schooling children and be reorganised to:

- i. facilitate entry to the formal school if desired;
- ii. provide vocational instruction for the 12 - 14 year age group.

With the implementation of these measures, compulsory education for all in the age range 5 - 14 years will be a reality.

2.2 School Structures

Under the existing system, no uniformly accepted and legislatively sanctioned set of school structures operate in the country. The different stages of schooling are classified as follows:

- | | | |
|---------------|------|---|
| Years 1 | - 5 | Primary. |
| Years 6 | - 8 | Junior Secondary. |
| Years 9 | - 11 | Senior Secondary up to G.C.E. (Ordinary-Level) |
| Years 12 - 13 | | Senior Secondary up to G.C.E. (Advanced-Level.) |

Schools are organised with combinations of various stages. Thus there are schools with classes from:

- | | |
|--------------|-------------------|
| Years 1 - 5 | Primary. |
| Years 1 - 8 | Junior. |
| Years 1 - 11 | Junior Secondary. |
| Years 1 - 13 | Senior Secondary. |
| Years 6 - 13 | Senior Secondary. |
| Years 9 - 13 | Senior Secondary. |

In the school census schools are classified as follows:

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| Type 1 AB | with G.C.E. A-L Arts, Commerce and Science streams. |
|-----------|---|

Type 1 C	with G.C.E. A-L Arts and Commerce streams only.
Type 2	with G.C.E. O-L only.
Type 3	with classes up to Year 5 or 8.

A group of large schools managed by the Ministry of Education are designated as National Schools. Most of these schools have classes from Years 1 - 13 while the others have classes only from Years 6 - 13.

The term 'year' used presently to denote a class will be **replaced by** the term 'grade'.

It is necessary to **work towards a rationalised school structure in contrast to that described above**. Ultimately there should be **two types** of schools: **Junior schools** with years 1 - 8 and **Senior Schools** with years 9 - 13, with appropriate streams in G.C.E. Advanced Level classes.

A Junior School going up to Grade 8 will help to reduce dropouts resulting in the process of transfer from primary schools terminating at Grade 5, as there is all the likelihood of pupils continuing in the same school up to Grade 8 rather than moving on to another school. The division as proposed will also facilitate the growth of a school culture more suitable to the two different age groups.

However, **restructuring will be carried out without much disruption, on the outcomes of a school mapping exercise**. A plan should be formulated to commence this exercise from 1996, and target its completion by year 2001. The present flexible structure may continue until then or even beyond, in special circumstances.

It is recommended that schools should be classified as follows:

- i. Schools where the terminal class is Grade 8 - **Junior Schools**
- ii. Schools where the terminal class is Grade 11 - **Secondary Schools**
- iii. Schools where the terminal class is Grade 13 - **Senior Secondary School**

To promote a more equitable distribution of senior secondary classes, that are the avenues to advanced technical, technological, academic and professional education, steps have to be taken to ensure that each Divisional Secretary's division will have at least one Senior School, with all streams and facilities.

The present scheme of designating schools as National Schools and taking them under the purview of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education will be changed. A school will be so designated if it has facilities which cater to pupils from outside its province, where feasible. Preferably, for schools located in the large cities, the selection of pupils will be on an island-wide basis. If the catchment of a National School has children whose mother tongue is different from the medium in that school and their needs are not served by another National School in their vicinity, such a school will be required to have two language streams.

There are disadvantaged schools situated in economically underprivileged locations imparting education at only the Primary level. These are mainly:

- a. plantation sector schools;
- b. schools in remote areas;
- c. less developed schools in urban localities.

Specially targeted programmes are being implemented to upgrade these schools. These programs will be continued until such schools reach acceptable standards.

A development plan will be formulated to upgrade selected schools on a phased out basis commencing from 1996. Schools will be selected for development and upgrading on the basis of a school mapping exercise. The plan will be for:

- developing at least 600 Senior Secondary Schools distributed on a demographic basis, ensuring the development of at least one school in each Division;

- upgrading the infrastructure and facilities in at least 1000 Secondary Schools;
- upgrading the facilities in Junior Schools in educationally disadvantaged areas in the provinces as well as in urban locations.

Donor assistance may be used for this purpose.

Development will involve:

- i. deployment of adequate staff in keeping with the school cadre;
- ii. provision of safe drinking water and sanitation;
- iii. provision of adequate buildings and improvement of existing buildings;
- iv. supply of books, equipment and instructional materials;
- v. provision of hostels for children in Grades 9 - 13 and staff accommodation where convenient transport facilities are not available;
- vi. provision of playgrounds, access roads and other infrastructure facilities.

2.3 Award of Scholarships

The present Year 5 Scholarship Examination which tends to distort the objectives of a sound primary education, has to be restructured to reduce the pressure arising from an unhealthy competition for placement in so-called popular schools. Ten to eleven years is too early an age to uproot children from their home backgrounds and place them in unfamiliar areas with more stressful conditions. Instead, what is needed is a means of identifying the pupils who require financial assistance to continue with schooling and to eventually develop the potential to benefit from advanced education and training.

The present Year 5 Scholarship Examination will therefore be restructured and a test held at school level under the supervision of the Provincial Education Ministry to identify pupils with scholastic potential and who need financial assistance. The instrument will be a test in the First Language of the child.

The children who fail this test will be further screened to identify those who need some form of intervention, so as to enable appropriate remedial action.

In addition to the Grade 5 scholarship scheme, scholarships will be awarded at the end of the Junior Stage, i.e. Grade 8, as well. Such awards will be made on an index of assessment which reflects the many-faceted development of the child in addition to his scholastic potential. Performance at this test may be used for placement of deserving pupils in schools with specific facilities which match better with their aptitudes.

2.4 Pre-school Education

A multitude of pre-school arrangements ranging from simple day care centres with some educational input to elaborately organised pre-schools based on international conventions and practices are found in various parts of the country. The quality of facilities, the competence of personnel and the motivation of the operators vary widely between schools.

Pre-schools will not be operated by the State. However, the government may provide facilities for training of teachers and regulate them for the maintenance of minimum standards in pre-schools.

A policy on pre-school education will be formulated after a deeper study of pre-schools and the demand for their services.

3 QUALITY IMPROVEMENT IN EDUCATION

Education is, operationally, a combination of structures and processes which is directed towards a goal. As such these structures and processes have to be selected and put into effect in a manner that is consistent and suits the purpose. This consistency and suitability for the purpose is encapsulated in the term 'quality of education'.

The primary requirement for improvement of quality in any situation is for all those concerned to have an agreement about their collective goal or mission and the objectives of each one's specific roles in relation to the goal. Secondly, they must have a clear understanding of their present position with respect to the objectives that have been agreed upon. Then they should identify the gap between the final outcome and the present state, and what must be done and not done so as to eliminate the gap. The fourth step is the implementation of the identified strategies with genuine and sustained interest.

It is essential that the members of a team work in a co-operative and responsible manner. It is important to recognize the strengths of every member and to make good use of them; to recognize their weaknesses so that they could be remedied; and to find out the deficiencies in the resources such as knowledge and to supply them. Every activity will have waste, hurt feelings and other undesirable or disadvantageous outcomes in addition to the desired outcomes. Those involved must pay due attention to these outcomes too. There should be efforts to minimise their negative effects through planned procedures or organisational strategies.

3.1 Training of Persons for Curriculum Preparation

The group of persons conversant with curriculum preparation will include those drawn from various categories. Even the school teacher needs the ability to prepare curriculum, because he has to prepare a segment appropriate to the locality of the school according to guidelines provided by the National Institute of Education. He has to also interact competently with those who are engaged centrally in curriculum design.

The Master Teachers and Senior/Guide Teachers should have a deep knowledge of curriculum preparation and extensive experience in it.

Every specialist in the N.I.E. should have an operational capability in and a deep understanding of curriculum design, its implementation and management.

There will be means to bring about a consensus and common understanding regarding objectives among all those who are involved at all levels of the education system. Especially, the curriculum, teacher guides, text-books, equipment for the classroom and materials will be designed and produced to enable the attainment of the Basic Competencies that have been published by the National Education Commission.

During the planning process the involvement of teachers will be ensured through the following means:

- a) The content of each subject will be separated into sections to match the Grades in school and relevant topic lists prepared by specialists at the N.I.E.
- b) Through workshops held for groups of teachers selected on a provincial basis prototype questions, teaching/learning activities and pupil projects will be identified for the topics in every segment of the curriculum for each Grade. Through this means it would be possible to find out within a short span of time, the content that is most suited to the teaching and learning of each topic in each Grade, in light of the teachers' experience. Furthermore, the relevant authorities would be better able to match writing of text-books and preparation of examinations to each Grade of school.

It would be possible through this process, to minimise the mismatches between teacher guides, text-books and examination papers. The publication and collection of prototype questions produced through the workshops would be an invaluable aid to every teacher in teaching his subject.

In addition, it would be possible to reduce the need for the pupil to go to tuition classes outside the school due to the better matching of the teaching/learning in the classroom, the text-books and examination schemes.

3.2 | Primary Stage of Education

Comment:

Years 1 to 5 constituting the primary stage of education is a formative period in the life of the child when the foundation is laid for physical, mental, emotional and social development. These beginning years of a child's schooling will be made pleasant and memorable.

The freedom for pupils to discover things for themselves, to discuss things among themselves when necessary, freedom to move about and express their thoughts and ideas is conducive to the development of a growing child's individuality, creativity and co-operative ability. The child should also be disciplined to the extent that he can concentrate his attention for a significant period of time on a task in hand.

The educational process at this stage will be a synthesis of play, activity and formal learning. For this purpose the classroom will be well provided with equipment and materials for the child to engage in creative activity.

The curriculum will provide flexibility for the teacher to design learning activities suited to the needs of children.

The school also has a custodial function - the school is a home away from home. Basic services such as water for drinking, sanitation facilities, a place to have meals and first-aid should be available.

The teachers will monitor the health of the child in collaboration with health authorities. Teachers will take height and weight measurements of pupils and maintain records of physical growth to identify malnourished children.

Health care activities will be arranged in collaboration with teachers, parents and health education authorities so as to promote the conservation of health and sound physical growth of every child.

The scheme to train primary school teachers to screen children for impairments that affect learning and minor health defects will be strengthened.

Immunisation programs will be organised in schools with the assistance of health authorities. These activities are of particular significance where parents' knowledge on such matters is limited.

A close rapport will be maintained between the teachers and the parents. Regular meetings between the parents and the class teacher will provide an opportunity to make the parents more aware of their role and make them more sensitive to the needs of the growing child.

The readiness of parents to assist the child at home in a way that is complementary to what is happening in the school and to help in obtaining various resources to enrich the teaching-learning process will be enhanced through making them more directly aware of classroom activities.

The primary school curriculum will be designed to initiate the child to the development of **Basic Competencies**, through an integrated curriculum.

The classroom climate will be designed to strike a balance between the tendencies in the child to compete and to cooperate. The inculcation of social skills, engendering a spirit of sharing and caring, developing a sense of responsibility, and a concern for the rights of others will be essential themes of primary school activities both within and outside the classroom.

English will be used for oral communication in the classroom during activity learning sessions. Teachers will be oriented to the use of simple English through the provision of teacher guides, word lists and through workshops conducted for their benefit.

Comment:

3.3 Junior Secondary Stage of Education.

At this stage the pupil will be introduced to more formal and structured courses of study. The approach to the curriculum will be one of consolidation of the Basic Competencies acquired at the primary stage. A foundation will be laid on which later learning can be well established. This is necessary for the vast majority of pupils who will proceed to the next stage of education.

The curriculum will be designed with continuing emphasis on the **Basic Competencies**. The content will be arranged into subject areas as found at present to enable rigour in treatment and convenience in management of resources. However, the integration of learning will be ensured through pupil projects.

At the same time it has to be considered that some pupils will leave school at the end of Grade 8 and these may be the last years of their formal schooling. It is necessary that they should acquire the competencies necessary for living, understanding of the natural and social environment, basic knowledge for healthy living, civic responsibility, ethical values and life skills associated with life and work situations.

In addition the pupils will be encouraged to study the Link Language, i.e. Sinhala for Tamil speaking students and Tamil for Sinhala speaking students; and the facilities at schools will be strengthened for this purpose.

The Junior Secondary curriculum will also contain a segment on **Life Skills**. The section 'Technical and Practical Skills Education' contains a set of specific proposals on Life Skills learning.

At the end of Grade 8 a Junior School Proficiency Test will be held at school level for certifying the pupils.

This test will have the following components:

- i. Written examination administered by the school authorities under the supervision of the Provincial Education Authority.
- ii. A grade given for subjects with practical skills based on the records maintained at the school. In the evaluation for practical skills, the classroom based assessment of practical work done in Grades 6, 7 and 8 will be taken into account.

The grades obtained by a pupil will be entered in the certificate which will be issued under the signature of the Provincial Director of Education and the Head of the school.

Practical skills tests for those who wish to be tested while they are in Grade 9 or in the first year of leaving school after Grade 8 will be provided through Provincial Testing

Centres established for this purpose. A certificate of practical competence will be issued as an adjunct to the Junior School Proficiency Certificate.

Unlike in the primary stage where most of the teaching was done by one person, with the introduction of specialised subjects there may be one teacher for each subject. Hence, there is a need to have one teacher for each class, designated 'class teacher' who will take an interest in following up the progress and performance of the children in a class. The class teacher will teach at least two subjects.

There will also be frequent interaction among all the teachers of a class so that they act in a coherent manner in the interest of the pupils.

3.4 Senior Secondary Education

Ordinary Level Stage

Up to the end of Ordinary Level, the education will be aimed at developing the **Basic Competencies**. The Ordinary Level content will be arranged under the subject headings of:

- First Language (Sinhala or Tamil)
- English
- Mathematics
- Religion
- Social Studies
- Environmental and Scientific Studies
- Technical and Technological Studies
- Aesthetic Studies.

The Technical and Technological Studies area and the Aesthetic Studies area will allow the choice from among a number of options. The options in Technical and Technological Studies will be designed to cater to the needs of current industrial and service needs of the country including Agriculture and Food Processing. The Aesthetic Studies area will include Visual and Graphic Arts, Performing Arts and Literature.

In addition, candidates may offer two or more subjects from the following list of specified subjects, which includes:

- Link Language (Tamil or Sinhala)
- Other Languages (any of specified languages)
- Commercial Studies (any of a specified number of options)
- Mathematics will be taught and examined at three levels namely:
- Mathematics 1: Practical Mathematics
- Mathematics 2: Ordinary Mathematics
- Mathematics 3: Higher Mathematics

Practical Mathematics will be for those who do not need Mathematics for further education beyond Ordinary Level. Ordinary Mathematics is for those who require some amount of pure mathematics for further education. Higher Mathematics is for those who intend to read technology, physics or mathematics up to degree level. This paper will include both Pure and Applied Mathematics.

Science will be taught and examined at two levels, namely:

- Science 1: Basic Science
- Science 2: Advanced Science

Basic Science is for those who do not intend to follow Science for further education. This course is for giving a general awareness. Advanced Science is for those who wish to study Science for further education.

English will be taught and examined at three levels depending on the needs of the pupil and his proficiency. This is discussed further in Section 3.9.

Although learning at this stage is subject-based, every effort will be made for the integration of learning through projects. The projects will be designed with the emphasis on '**Learn to Learn**'.

As the school time allotted within the time table may not be sufficient to do additional work, classes may be conducted in the afternoons for those students who have special interest in particular subjects. Such interest groups may function voluntarily, under the guidance of staff. Persons from the community who possess specialised skills can be invited to assist in these programmes.

In the Grades leading up to G.C.E. Ordinary Level, during a Grade year of the pupil's choice there will be tests of the knowledge of the society, technical practices and technologies, and of the sciences pertaining to the school and its locality. These tests will be optional and conducted by the school. A certificate will be issued by the school regarding the performance at these tests.

The qualifications necessary to proceed for further education and for job opportunities will be specified by the respective institutions. It will be the responsibility of the pupil to select the subjects other than the compulsories that match his aspirations and future prospects.

The **School will have an educational and career counselling and guidance service** through which pupils and parents will be guided on the basis of their respective interests, aptitudes and job prospects, and the availability of training facilities regarding the selection of subject options.

Advanced Level Stage

The Advanced Level Examination will be conducted as a terminal examination so that it would be useful to a larger percentage of pupils who sit that examination. Within the school the subjects taught will be clustered into **four** main streams namely:

Arts; Science; Commerce; Technology

and every Senior Secondary School will conduct classes in at least two streams.

The main aim of the Advanced Level Curriculum is not only to prepare the base for University education, but also **to bring about a readiness for other Tertiary Educational Opportunities in Agriculture, Industry, Professional fields and Commerce.**

By the progressive increase of specialised educational institutions the system will enable pupils to eventually have many optional educational pathways than the purely academic one, both after the Ordinary-Level and at Advanced-Level. These pathways will be more attuned to the children's educational needs and to the demands of the world of work.

The concept of **learning by 'doing'** will be introduced to the Advanced-level curriculum through project work. Projects will provide opportunities for pupils to apply

the theoretical knowledge learnt in the class room to realistic problems. Projects will also arouse their social consciousness, and help to enhance qualities of initiative, tenacity, teamwork, leadership and a work ethic which cannot be taught in the classroom. Instruments should be built into the examination scheme to assess the projects and give weightage to the project in the final evaluation.

The students in Advanced-Level classes are near adults and need a different school climate from what is found in the normal primary and secondary schools. These students need a different kind of discipline and a different kind of teacher pupil relationship. There will be a stimulating environment conducive to the development of leadership, initiative and a sense of responsibility.

Consultation with students in matters affecting their future and a process of participatory decision making is most likely to inculcate better attitudes. The traditional authoritarian climate in a normal school is not suitable at this stage. The head of the school and the teaching staff should have a vision and a clear understanding of the thinking of students of this age group and should try to draw on it as a resource by providing correct leadership. It is necessary therefore to treat the Advanced level section as a separate unit in the school.

3.5 Assessment of Learning Outcomes

The assessment scheme will be mainly focused on the development stages of Basic Competencies. The development of Competencies and associated skills can be arranged into Levels and Types according to the scheme given in Annex B.

In the first instance attention will be paid to the skills in the use of the child's **first language**. Progressively, as the child matures, attention will be also focused on **English** and the **second national language** of the child.

Special **emphasis will be given to the competencies in communication**. This set of competencies is essential for developing the other Basic Competencies.

The proposed programme for assessment will be introduced during the period from 1996 to 2001. This assessment procedure will be progressively introduced to the system by initiating in Grade 6. The existing procedures will also be continued uninterrupted. The new scheme will be carried out through a school-based strategy managed provincially.

A research study will be started simultaneously from 1996 to 1999 to indicate how to integrate the provincial programmes into a national programme. The integration will take place during the years 2000 and 2001. The integration will be fully operational from the year 2001 onwards.

In 1996 children in Grade 6 will be tested in Listening and Reading. The content will be drawn from **simple life situations**.

Tests of Speaking and Writing will be introduced through these children in Grade 7, in 1997. The tests in Grade 6 will be continued.

When the children reach Grade 8, in 1998, they will be tested in all three components of Communication competence, namely: Literacy; Numeracy; Graphics. The content will be drawn from **more complex life situations**.

In Grade 9, 10 and 11 the assessment of Communication Competencies will cover content regarding respectively the **Environment**, **Ethics and Religion**, and **Play and the use of Leisure** as detailed in Annex B.

Assessment of Competencies relating to **Learn to Learn** will be linked to projects carried out in the school and its neighbourhood by pupils.

Assessment of learning outcomes in general education will be done:

- i. in the school and classroom by the teachers
- ii. in the province by the Provincial Educational Authorities
- iii. on a national scale by the Department of Examinations.

The purposes and methods of assessment at each of these instances will be significantly different.

In the school and the classroom, assessment will be done mainly to give a feed-back to the child in his learning. Assessment will also provide information to the teacher and parents about matters on which they can take remedial action and guide the child in his education. Assessment at this level will cover all aspects of learning including the acquisition of skills and the formation of attitudes.

The assessment by provincial educational authorities will be to determine the educational attainment of the child at the end of compulsory education. It will be used as the basis for issuing a certificate to the school leaver. The performance of children at this stage of schooling will be an indicator of the effectiveness of the general education system which is being largely operated by the provincial educational authorities. The assessment data will also enable the better guidance and counselling of children who wish to proceed beyond the compulsory education stage.

The national scale assessment is essentially not for giving feed-back to the learner. It is best suited for the assessment of cognitive learning for the purpose of indicating to a prospective employer and to authorities who provide further education about a person's scholastic attainments. These assessments can also give an indication about the potential of the school leaver to benefit from further training or from tertiary and higher education.

In the Primary stage, in addition to the workbooks and the completed assignments, there will also be a record of the child's activities and progress, maintained by the class teacher with the collaboration of the parents. By the time a child reaches Grade 5 there will be a substantial amount of information indicative of his educational attainment and intellectual potential. This information together with an appropriate test at the end of Grade 5 will enable the selection of recipients of scholarships.

In the Junior-Secondary stage of schooling the pupil will be using the facilities in the Activity Rooms to develop life related skills. These learning experiences will enable the development of a strong individuality and strength of character. Refinement of psychomotor skills and the ability of **learning through exploration and discovery** are also to be introduced at this stage. The school-based assessment must be supportive of **all** the learning activities.

Periodic review of a pupils activity record and assessment of items completed in the activity rooms will form the main basis of school-based assessment at the Junior-Secondary stage. They will be supplemented by the marking of workbooks and end-of-term tests. At the end of Grade 8 which marks the end of Compulsory Education the pupil will be issued a certificate which indicates his overall attainments, and not only the subject specific grades.

In Grades above and including Grade 9 school-based assessment of learning outcomes will be provided to only those who request for it. Assessment will be done through the marking of assignments given at times throughout each year so that pupils are able to work steadily and to master their material. A record of the assessments will be maintained and a transcript provided at the time of leaving school.

The two public examinations will be available to the pupils as at present. They will be allowed to take papers in any two optional subjects of their choice of the Ordinary-Level Examination while they are in Grades 9 and 10, and of the Advanced-Level Examination while they are in Grades 12. They will also be free to include English and either Tamil or Sinhala (if it is not their mother tongue) as one of the two optional subjects in any Grade.

3.6 Text-books and Supplementary Reading Material

The present arrangement for text-books will be changed. There will be three kinds of books used in the class room.

- i. The first kind will be **text-books** intended to help the child to **direct his own learning**, through instruction and guidelines. Its contents will include material, information and exercises that would facilitate the learning activities and skill development in the subjects together with an essential amount of knowledge. This book will be designed **to enable its use by the pupil with a minimum of help from the teacher**.
- ii. Secondly, there will be **work-books** prescribed for each subject. This will be designed to reduce the tendency to attend tuition classes. It will be used also as an instrument in the classroom-based formative assessment of pupils for the facilitation of learning.
- iii. The third kind of books are those which contain **supplementary** information and knowledge in a given subject. These books could be kept in the library in multiple copies for reference.

Suitably qualified persons will be given incentives to prepare supplementary texts which contain knowledge and information. Especially teachers in schools and university staff will be given authoring assignments. These books will be designed so as to:

- cater to pupil variability
- introduce new trends in each discipline
- provide in-depth treatment of selected topics
- provide locally relevant knowledge.

3.7 Value Education

Arrangements will be introduced with the co-operation of the parents, to inculcate values in children and to strengthen the children's character. Formal education will include activities intended to promote good-will and mutual respect among individuals.

The aim of Value Education is to facilitate the formation of a set of attitudes that enables the person to engage in team-work and co-exist in a multi-cultural and multi-religious society, so as to achieve peace and national harmony.

The classroom will be the setting for: orienting the child to be duty conscious, helpful and sharing in the use of scarce resources, and to be able to select strategies which are advantageous both to oneself and to others; and for instilling wholesome values and establishing valid beliefs which are complementary to subject knowledge. There should be guidance and opportunities to engage in activities which facilitate the formation of beneficial interpersonal relationships and character development through extra-curricular activities.

In Value Education children will be guided in character development by being presented with role models through the printed medium and other media.

The emphasis will be shifted from 'fact studies' to 'issue studies involving a moral load'. Emphasis in all teacher education programmes will be on those aspects which are necessary for the above strategies to succeed.

Religious education contributes undoubtedly to the formation of values, and values contribute towards making a person worthy of himself. Values cannot be divorced from worthiness. Nevertheless, there is grave doubt whether the objectives of teaching religion in schools, as is done at present meets the objectives of such teaching. Being a subject in the curriculum and finally at the G.C.E. O-Level Examination, Religion is studied to fulfil examination requirements. However, the objectives in learning and teaching religion should be twofold:

- a) acquiring religious knowledge
- b) stimulating children to acquire religious values

Changes will be made to achieve this twofold objective.

In the Primary and Junior-Secondary stages of education, pupils will be provided the facilities for learning the ethical and doctrinal aspects of his own religion. In addition they will be introduced to the histories and biographical information about important religious personages. The practical and ritualistic aspects will be largely left in the province of the elders, the family and religious organisations. Religious observances will, however, be organised in the school as well on appropriate days.

As the child matures he will be made aware of the practices, rituals and beliefs of religions other than his own. This is intended to promote the formation of positive attitudes and sensitivity towards those professing other faiths.

Schools will be assigned adequate numbers of teachers for teaching Religion. The allocation of time for religion will be on par with the other subjects and should in no way imply a lesser importance ascribed to the subject.

Advisory Councils both at national and provincial levels in respect of each religion will be appointed and made effective for directing and guiding religious education in schools.

3.8 English Learning

It is essential to focus the child's attention on English learning and take steps to facilitate the learning. The following actions are relevant in this regard. These would be in addition to the present arrangements for English learning.

During the periods when children are learning through activities, English will be used for communication in the classroom. It would not be difficult for the teacher and children to use English because the communication will be through simple words and sentences in directly visible situations.

All Primary teachers will be guided through appropriate word lists, teacher guides and workshops.

Teachers will be offered incentives for improving their English competence to a high level.

The current English learning programmes will be supplemented through:

- a scheme to get non-teachers who are proficient in English to teach English in schools

- classroom libraries
- mobile libraries
- community libraries
- programmes through mass-media
- cartoon series
- language camps.

3.9 Learning of other Languages

Every child will be provided facilities and opportunities to learn the other national language besides his mother tongue.

It will also be considered desirable to encourage every person aspiring to enter higher education or professional education to be proficient in both national languages.

It is essential to have a number of Sri Lankans who are proficient in foreign languages for the purpose of maintaining effective diplomatic, cultural, technological and commercial links with foreign countries. It would be very fruitful if the development of language proficiency is started in children at an early age. Therefore, a number of language learning centres will be established in selected locations within the school system.

There will be an immediate programme for educating and orienting teachers to serve in these language learning centres. Selected teachers will be sent for training in suitable institutions abroad as an essential first step. The production of books and audio-visual materials will also be included in this project.

3.10 Physical and Health Education

Physical and Health Education will be introduced to schools through many ways. Instructing, giving guidance and engaging in health care activities should be done so as to promote the conservation of health and sound physical growth of every child, with the consent and co-operation of the parents. The activities connected with these subjects will not be confined to those aimed at performance in examinations.

The maintenance of records of physical growth and state of health of children, counselling and obtaining the services of medical experts where necessary will be done as a matter of routine in the Primary and Junior-secondary stage of schooling.

In the Senior-secondary stage children will be given information on matters connected with mental and physical health, sexually transmitted diseases, effects of smoking, effects of intoxicants and drugs, and practical knowledge in first-aid and remedies drawn from the indigenous, ayurvedic and western traditions.

The assistance of physicians and health personnel working in the vicinity of the school will be obtained. The following projects are proposed:

- i. action to identify the stages and respective strategies for giving physical and health education to children
- ii. giving basic competence to teachers on physical development and preservation of health;
- iii. training of an adequate cadre of teachers for conducting physical and mental health programmes with a special emphasis on counselling;

- iv. physical activities and sports;
- v. instituting joint programmes among the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Sports and the Media;
- vi. production of books and pamphlets, teacher guides and audio-visual materials in sufficient quantities for the schools.

3.11 A Collective Responsibility

The operation and management of the Education System cannot be seen as a mere official exercise. Education has far reaching subtle implications. Those who are operationally involved in it such as directors, officers, specialists, teachers and support personnel not only have a restricted mission to keep the formal and non-formal systems functioning according to prescriptions and circulars, but also a **commitment to their role as facilitating the transmission of a culture, and promotion of the growth of a healthy and self-reliant younger generation.**

The strategies, structures, processes and standards in the education system should reflect this two-fold commitment. The educationists, educational administrators and the teachers should see themselves as being charged with the responsibility of ensuring that a mentally and physically healthy generation grows up. Their concerns, deliberations, discussions and working arrangements at all levels and locations should reflect this view of themselves.

4 THE TEACHING PROFESSION

This Chapter pertaining to the Teaching Profession will cover four major aspects, namely:

- i. Teacher Education
- ii. Teacher Service
- iii. Welfare and Incentives
- iv. Support Services.

4.1 Teacher Education

The objectives of Teacher Education will be in consonance with the objectives of National Education. For this purpose a clear policy of Teacher Education will be evolved, and in terms of that policy the following objectives will be fulfilled:-

- Meeting the need for competent and committed teachers for the school system.
- Assisting the professional and personal development of teachers.
- Facilitating the professional development of teachers to enhance the quality of life and value system of individuals, in nation building, community development and in functioning as change agents in education and in society.

The position that prevailed in 1994 regarding facilities for Teacher Education is as follows:

- there were 10 Colleges of Education with an enrolment of 2781 students.

- Colleges of Education
- in two Teacher Training Colleges
- also in 12 districts where no Teacher Training Institutions are found.

It may be possible to set up these centres in some of the Provincial schools.

Curricula for Teacher Training

It is extremely important that Teacher Education curricula be rationalised. In doing so special attention will be paid to the following aspects:

- Community activities
- Parental education
- Utilisation of community resources
- Guidance and Counselling
- Multi-cultural education
- Value education.

Curriculum development for Teacher Education should fulfil the following:

- All round needs of children, discipline, leadership, communication, information, values and attitudes, physical and social environment, aesthetic experience, sports, leisure and counselling.
- The professional development of the teacher.
- The personal development of the teacher.
- The role of the teacher in society.

A National Council

When considering the present condition of the teaching profession, it appears as if there is a lack of overall planning and co-ordination. Therefore having taken into consideration what has been mentioned above a National Council for Teacher Education should be established through an Act of Parliament.

The Council should have representatives from the following agencies:

- Ministry of Education and Higher Education
- The National Education Commission
- The National Institute of Education
- The Universities
- Colleges of Education.

It will also include the Provincial Directors, and a few members who have special knowledge of Teacher Education and Education Planning.

This Council will advise the Ministry of Education and Higher Education regarding Teacher Education policies. At the same time they will also be responsible for the co-ordination of Teacher Education programmes, evaluate progress, accredit Teacher Education curricula and provide the required human resources.

4.2 Teacher Service

There are at present approximately 190,000 teachers in the state educational sector alone. This is the largest single job sector and it consists of members of the profession belonging to many grades and classes. In order to attend to the career needs of such a large number of people and to infuse professionalism into the teaching service, it would be helpful, indeed essential to establish, a **Teacher Service Commission** which will lay down the requirements of a career oriented service from recruitment to retirement.

The Teacher Service Commission will be responsible for recruitment, selection for training, promotions and career development besides recommending to the Government salary revisions and grading. The Commission will lay down disciplinary procedures and delegate powers of disciplinary actions to administrative officers and principals of schools.

Teacher Recruitment

There should be a clear policy in the recruitment of teachers and the posting of teachers to schools.

In the recruitment of teachers the minimum requirements will not be changed as occasions demand on an *ad hoc* basis. Any changes should contribute to the advancement of the teaching profession.

When posting teachers to schools, the specific requirements of those schools will be given **prime** consideration.

The Current Position

When analysing teacher statistics, the following facts emerge:

- The attrition rate in the case of teachers is estimated to be 2.8% per annum and therefore an annual replacement of 4000 teachers becomes necessary.
- there is a shortage of teachers in subjects such as English, Mathematics and Technical subjects.
- there is a critical shortage of teachers in rural schools while there is an excess in most urban schools.

Some remedy must be found for this. While enrolment in Primary schools is projected to decrease in the future, enrolment in Senior Secondary schools is likely to increase. Teaching cadres have to be adjusted and strengthened for this purpose.

There is a backlog of untrained graduate and non-graduate teachers. This will be corrected within the next few years.

Professional Development

Opportunities will be provided for the professional development of teachers through the Teacher Service itself. While steps will be taken to avoid stagnation of teachers in higher grades, institutional arrangements will also be made to organise programmes for their professional development. Books, periodicals and newspapers should also be made available for their use.

At the same time a scheme will be devised for evaluation of the service provided by the teachers. They should also be encouraged to obtain professional and academic qualifications. Both factors will be taken into consideration when reviewing the career of a teacher for any purpose.

The Teaching Service Commission will also function as an accrediting authority for the Teaching Profession.

4.3 Welfare and Incentives

Teachers serving in difficult areas particularly in the villages have to face various difficulties. In some schools there is no provision for potable water and even minimum sanitary facilities. They have no place to have their meals.

Therefore action will be taken to provide drinking water, basic health care and sanitation facilities, and a special room for teachers to rest and to have their meals in the school.

Meanwhile there will also be a scheme to provide accommodation to teachers serving in areas where such facilities are not found.

A health insurance scheme for teachers will be formulated.

4.4 Support Services

Facilities will be provided to teachers for improving their capabilities. These include books, periodicals, information and such other material that can be used as teacher aids to be made readily available. Convenient locations where the teachers could gather for interacting with each other and also meet visiting specialists are necessary. For this purpose Teacher Resource Centres will be set up at Divisional level.

Where it is economically more feasible and likely to be more cost-effective, mobile library services will be organised at Divisional level.

A Centre attached to the National Institute of Education will be set up where more expensive but essential books, periodicals, journals and media items needed by teachers are available as a central repository. This centre will also be networked with university libraries and the National Archives. A teacher who is in need of information from this network will be able to write to the Centre and obtain extracts and copies as appropriate for his use.

5 TECHNICAL AND PRACTICAL SKILLS EDUCATION

5.1 The Scope of Technical and Practical Skills Education

It is not feasible to impart Vocational Education through institutional arrangements within the normal school system. It is not cost-effective to provide space, teachers and resources within the scheme of general education for this purpose since Vocational Education has to be done with a focus on individual students and with a specific set of objectives for each vocational situation.

However, general education in schools should include items for the development of general competencies such as manipulative skills, familiarity with and the use of common devices and equipment, engaging in an item of work with guidance through spoken and written instructions, use safety precautions, dos and don'ts regarding waste materials, and

description, selection, maintenance and storage of equipment which are essential for work situations.

One does become a more trainable person because of exposure to these basic activities either formally or informally during one's formative years.

5.2 Learning through Play and Activity

In the Primary stage play and activity will be used significantly for learning by children. Teachers will be prepared to organise and manage such learning through appropriate teacher education and orientation.

At this stage 'play' does not mean the mere use of swings and running about. The classroom will have games which give pleasure to the child, develop a participatory spirit, and stimulate his mental and physical growth. These should provide opportunities for the involvement of as many senses as possible.

Teachers and parents should be motivated to invent games and activities that would enhance the children's abilities to do logical thinking, face challenging situations, respond quickly, accept both defeat and victory, concentrate attention, and to remember details. Some means of providing such motivation could be to award prizes to the best creations each year, and to give royalties off the income from the marketing of games and activity kits.

The salient objectives of activity learning are:

- enhancing the urge to make or do something
- introduction to the use of materials for making useful things
- developing the ability to work with living plants
- developing the ability to work with tools and measuring devices
- inculcating positive attitudes towards teamwork.

During activity learning it is considered advantageous to use English for communication in the classroom.

5.3 Life Skills Learning

Life skills will be identified mainly in connection with **food, clothing, shelter, health, organisation, information and communication**. The pupils will not only acquire the knowledge and know-how concerning them but also an orientation to related practical skills.

Life Skills learning of pupils in Grade 6, 7 and 8 should be strengthened through the setting up of Activity Rooms and Agricultural Plots in schools. The Activity Rooms will have the basic facilities for children to develop their practical skills according to their preferences. The tools, equipment and processes will be grouped into the following:

- tools and equipment used in the home;
- equipment for office work, communication, and information gathering and handling;
- processes, tools and equipment for work with common materials such as paper, clay, wood, textiles, plastics and metals;
- instruments and tools for electrical and electronic work;
- equipment for graphic work and design;
- equipment for health and sanitation related activities;

- devices and equipment for processing farm produce and food materials;
- instruments and equipment for the performing arts;
- implements and equipment for agriculture and animal husbandry;

All the skill groups need to be supported through activity rooms and equipment in a given school. A selection will be made according to the needs of the locality and the availability of funds.

The aim of such skill development is to ensure that the child will eventually **become a person who is not helpless when he faces challenges in the life ahead of him**. He will face them as a strong and competent person. Through the development of life skills and gaining of more experience he will be able to fashion his life style and his environment to advantage. He will be able to advance as an individual through the advantageous use of information and resources from the world.

In Grade 8 special emphasis will be given to the development of practical skills associated with common and frequently encountered activities in adult life and work. An appropriate repertoire of skills will be identified through a project undertaken by the universities in collaboration with the National Institute of Education, National Institute of Technical Education and the National Apprenticeship and Industrial Training Authority.

5.4 Alternate Routes

Outside the formal school for general education there will be alternate routes for the acquisition of information, knowledge and skills, and the development of practically useful competencies.

Existing technical and vocational education institutions will be enlarged and other necessary institutions will be established to provide school leavers with G.C.E. Ordinary-Level and Advanced-Level with a larger number of educational opportunities and more options which lead to competencies that are in greater demand than conventional degrees. These institutions will be geared to both local and foreign qualifications which have acceptability in Sri Lanka and abroad.

Opportunities will be available (both formally and non-formally) for preparing them, if necessary, to join other streams at various levels even after periods of employment.

These arrangements are intended to provide more pathways to productive and gainful employment to a larger segment of the school leaving population. It is very likely that such pathways would be found more attractive and more rewarding than the conventional degree route.

5.5 Non-formal Education

The non-formal education sector will be strengthened to meet contemporary learning needs of the society to ensure education for all. It will serve adults as well as children who either do not enter the formal education stream at all or drop out of it early. There will also be provision for those who remain in school up to the end of Grade 8 and beyond to further develop their practical skills.

In the implementation of these programmes resources will be drawn from organisations outside the general education system such as banks, NGOs, Technical Colleges and health-care institutions.

These programmes will be based in schools and other strategically placed centres throughout the country. They will be open after normal school hours to enable both the school children and those out of school to make maximum use of them.

A study will be undertaken to identify the problems and ineffectiveness of the present non-formal programmes and to identify areas that need strengthening and new areas that need to be added.

5.6 A Data Base

The T.V.E.C. will maintain an up to date Data Base to provide information regarding:

- a) work opportunities in Sri Lanka and abroad
- b) skills and knowledge required
- c) institutional arrangements for education and training in the public and private sectors.

This Data Base will provide material to the educational and career guidance schemes for schools.

5.7 Regional Skill Development and Testing Centres

To cater to the needs of those leaving schools at the end of compulsory education, there will be Regional Centres with courses which match the skill needs of employment opportunities.

In collaboration with the Department of Examinations, arrangements for Skill Testing will be made available at these Regional Centres.. They will be organised so as to provide testing on request under standard conditions in identified skill areas to children irrespective of whether they are attending school or not.

These Centres will be jointly operated by the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training and other relevant Ministries. They will be supported by a decentralised skill development fund.

6 MANAGEMENT OF EDUCATION AND RESOURCE PROVISION

6.1 A Necessary Change of Focus

Management is the process of efficient utilisation of resources effectively to achieve the objectives of the organisation. The education system has a vast reservoir of resources, human as well as physical, available at its command. All those resources should be directed to improve the quality of the teaching-learning process taking place in the classroom and outside, if the national objectives as enunciated, are to be achieved.

6.2 An Aspect of the Principal's Function

Attempts at quality improvement in the past have failed to achieve their objectives due to shortcomings at the level of implementation. Low morale, lack of direction and

purpose, administrative inefficiency and ineffectual leadership have been cited as causes for such failure.

A school, the institution where the educational process takes place, functioning as an outpost of the Ministry of Education, and its head functioning as a mere subordinate carrying out orders from the higher authorities has been identified as one important reason for this situation. The school, on the contrary, should be a dynamic organisation and its head a chief executive who will plan, organise, co-ordinate, monitor and evaluate the school programs subject to the general directives laid down by the Ministry of education and be held accountable for his actions to the Ministry as well as to the community.

The Principal has a key role to play. He is the first line manager in the educational hierarchy. He wields much authority and should be an effective leader. The selection and training of Principals should be done carefully.

Every Principal will be given an orientation regarding his role. They will be sent first as Principals of smaller schools and Deputy Principals of larger schools. Their performances will be carefully monitored and only tried and tested people be promoted as heads of large schools. Such a system of selection and training will ensure that there is a pool of capable Principals to manage the schools.

6.3 The Management Structure of the School

The school depending on its size and complexity should have an adequate band of supervisory staff to implement school policy. There should be one or two Deputy Principals, Assistant Principals as sectional heads, and Heads of Departments to plan, co-ordinate and implement and evaluate the teaching program and carry out the administrative functions ancillary to the successful performance of school programs. This team will function as the Senior Management Group of the school.

With the new salary structure granted to the Teaching Service, those in Class I of the Teaching Service can be entrusted with these responsibilities. It is essential that there is a proper distribution of such staff to man the schools in the rural areas, instead of permitting them to concentrate in a few urban schools. This will be achieved by working out a cadre for each school and strictly adhering to it in posting staff.

6.4 The Management of Small Schools

There is a fair number of small schools in the rural areas and in the plantation sector where it may not be possible to appoint a capable person as the head of the school. Such schools may be linked with a bigger school in the area and form a 'family of schools', so that the services of a capable Principal will be available, and also the resources of the schools can be shared for mutual benefit. An officer from the Divisional Education Office can oversee the arrangements of such groups of schools.

6.5 School Supervision

The traditional set up for school supervision that was there for decades has broken down in the process of management reforms carried out in the recent past. As a result there is a lack of adequate supervision of schools which has resulted in a deterioration of standards. Supervision will be strengthened at every level.

Internal Supervision of a School

Every school will have its internal scheme of 'school based' supervision. The Principal, Deputy Principals, Assistant Principals and Heads of Departments are to carry out a regular, routine system of supervision in the school. Preparation of schemes of work and lesson plans will be discussed at meetings at different levels so that all teachers are involved in this work.

The implementation of the curriculum can be monitored by the senior staff who should provide guidance and assistance where necessary. Staff development programs will be carried out to help teachers upgrade their skills. Teachers themselves will be encouraged to reflect on the work that they are doing leading to a system of self evaluation exercises in the school which can be validated by outside professionals.

External Supervision

The officers attached to the Divisional Education offices will be entrusted with the responsibility of supervising a specified number of schools, so that there is one officer responsible for a group of schools as in the past. He can organise teams of officers including specialists in subject areas to visit schools and assist the Principal and the staff. Such supervision should aim not at fault finding but helping the teachers to improve the quality of their teaching and identify the problems with a view to taking remedial action.

There will be teams of supervisors at Zonal Director/Provincial Director level comprising specialists in subjects as well as school administration. Even the services of professionals outside the education service can be utilised for these teams. Such teams should spend adequate time, even a couple of days in the schools and study the performance of the school in a comprehensive manner. The authorities will take follow up action on the findings of these supervision teams.

The Regional Supervision Division of the Ministry of Education should also engage in similar exercises not only with regard to National Schools managed by the Ministry but also with selected schools under the Provincial Councils.

6.6 The Role of the Provincial Director

After the establishment of the Provincial Councils, the position of the Provincial Director of Education has become less distinct. On one hand he is the representative of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, on the other hand he has to implement the policies and plans of the Provincial Council under the Provincial Secretary. Education is only one of the subjects coming under the Provincial Secretary and the exercise of sole authority is with him. This grey area has to be cleared and a solution may be to appoint the Provincial Director as an Additional Secretary to the Provincial Minister of Education and entrust educational functions to him.

6.7 Increased Funding for Education

The education sector which has a clientele of over one fourth of the population of the country require a vast amount of resources to deliver its services in a satisfactory manner. In the past Sri Lanka spent about 4 to 5 percent of its GNP and 15 to 18 percent of the annual budget on education. This high proportion of investment gradually started declining to around 2 to 3 percent of GNP in the early eighties. The trend has been reversed now and with the present emphasis on social development the percentage of

Comment:

GNP on education should go up to **4.5** percent within the next few years. Unless such a target is set and realised the much talked of quality improvement in education may remain a distant goal.

6.8 Special Attention to Deprived Schools

Provision of equal education opportunity is an important objective of the National Education Policy. It can be achieved only by diverting more resources to the rural schools so that adequate physical facilities and materials and equipment necessary for activity based learning can be provided in these schools. Proper classrooms, laboratories, workshops, resource rooms, libraries, toilet facilities and supply of drinking water are essential for a school.

A development plan to provide these facilities within a specified time period to the deprived schools will be prepared and resources provided for its implementation. There are several foreign funded programmes looking after deprived schools and all these should be components of one overall plan.

6.9 Improvement of Schools

School Buildings and Infrastructure

It is also necessary that physical facilities provided should be maintained properly. Well maintained, clean buildings and the school garden contributes to the development of the school image which is essential for a 'good school'. A scheme will be drawn up to maintain school buildings with funds provided by the Ministry and the well-wishers from the community, with the assistance of the school development society.

Materials and Equipment

Equally important as the physical plant is the provision of material and equipment necessary for teaching, if activity based projects are to be used as methods of teaching. Many schools in the rural areas do not have a supply of chalk, paper, charts, maps, globes and basic equipment for experiments. The laboratories, activity rooms and workshops should have sufficient materials for pupils 'to do things'. This does not mean that the materials in the natural setting are not considered 'glamorous' enough. The idea that the whole world is a laboratory and every thing in it is equipment and materials for education should not be a mere slogan. Teachers should be resourceful and try to make the best out of the environment for providing meaningful experiences to the pupils.

An Essential Priority

The action-oriented programme to improve the Competencies in Communication, especially the competencies **to listen** and **to speak**, can be **immediately** put into effect **without an unbearable increase in capital and recurrent costs**. Furthermore, the improvement in these two very critical skills will have far reaching effects not only in the classroom but also in the later life of the pupil as a working person. There is research evidence to establish a clear relationship between productivity of people and the ability to listen and to speak clearly for conveying meaning.

6.10 Redress of teacher grievances

One reason for the low morale of the Teaching Service is the delay in attending to establishment matters at Divisional and Provincial Education Offices. At times teachers have to pay repeated visits to an Education Office to get a salary increment paid, a salary adjustment done, arrears of salary to be paid, or a loan to be approved. These grievances will not be allowed to drag on. Sufficient authority will be delegated to the Principals, in this regard.

The Principals of schools will also have the authority to intercede on behalf of teachers serving in their respective schools, and to **directly** draw the attention of higher authorities when action is not being taken adequately and promptly at any given level to redress a grievance of a teacher.

Machinery will be set up at education offices at appropriate levels to effectively attend to grievances of teachers **within set time limits**

6.11 Revision of Education Law

The main Legal basis of our present complex education system is the Education Ordinance No. 31 of 1939. The vast changes that have taken place in the educational system have been effected through amendments, special provisions, laws and regulations grafted on this Ordinance. These are scattered over a long period, and hence there is a compelling need for the enactment of a definitive Education Law consolidating all these and providing a vision for the future.

An Education Act and a set of new Regulations embracing all aspects of education will be promulgated. This will enable the smooth implementation of the National Education Policy.

Annex A

NATIONAL GOALS

This statement of National Educational Goals which includes Overall National Goals and Educationally Relevant Goals is extracted from the First Report of the National Education Commission (May 1992).

The text below contains in bold letters the Overall National Goals. Beneath each Overall National Goal, in normal type, is a set of Educationally Relevant Goals which are derived from it.

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

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

II. The establishment of a pervasive pattern of Social Justice and active elimination of inequities.

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

III. The evolution of a Sustainable Pattern of living - A sustainable Life Style.

- Awareness of and sensitivity to the assimilation of wholesome values in life and work.
- Awareness of and sensitivity to the importance of the evolution of a sustainable life style for the future.
- Having and attitude of continuous improvement with the interests of both self and others in view.
- Use of leisure, relaxation, recreation and rest which are conducive to mental and physical health.
- Awareness and appreciation of ecological balances.
- Willingness and ability to contribute constructively to environmental conservation.

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

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

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

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

VI. Involvement in nation building activities: learning to care.

- The evolution of a deep and abiding sense of concern for one another.
- Understanding and appreciation of one's culture those of others.
- Awareness and informed respect for all religions and belief systems.
- Awareness of others viewpoints and needs.
- Ability to function in a spirit of co-operation, tolerance and informed sensitive compromise.
- Awareness and appreciation of interests - self and others - and functions while recognising human limitations.
- Awareness modes of realising consensus and mutual agreement, avoiding arbitrary and unilateral actions.
- Awareness of the role of consultation, expression of opinion and constructive criticism with responsibility and ability to promote such participatory action.
- Capacity to work intensively, with perseverance and with attention to relevant detail, as situations demand.
- Ability to nurture among all participants deep and abiding commitment and concern for one another.

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

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

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

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

IX. Securing and honourable place in the international community

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

ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING OUTCOMES IN GRADES 6, 7 & 8 AND IN GRADES 9, 10 & 11

The assessment procedure will be focused on the development of the Basic Competencies which are essential pre-requisites of the realization of the National Goals. The set of Basic Competencies is given at the end of this Annex.

The set of Competencies in **Communication** is the one that is critically important to the development of all other competencies. However, in the schemes of assessment presently found in schools, the emphasis given to the assessment of competencies in communication is **inadequate**.

Competence in Communication has three aspects. *One* is the **knowledge** of the contents to be communicated. There is also the need to know rules about the use of language, to know conventions and accepted practices in the use of symbols and diagrams, and to know how to present mathematical information. *Another* aspect, where the sender is concerned, is the **skill in preparing the message** that is to be sent to another person who is to receive it. *Thirdly*, receiving a communication requires the **skills of sorting out the essential items of the message**. To **make sense out of a received message** a person needs to **know the meanings of words, rules and conventions**. A communication will be effective to the extent that the sender and the recipient have **common** or **shared** knowledge of meanings, rules etc.

Because most humans do receive signals through seeing and hearing, assessable communication competence can be identified in the three major modes of: **Literacy**; **Numeracy**; **Graphics**. A communication, whether it is in a spoken form or a written form, can be a combination of these three modes. Hence in the proposed scheme special emphasis will be given to them.

Enabling the child to acquire the Competencies in Communication is a shared responsibility of home and parents, the immediate community, the media and the school. Their collective responsibility is given effect through providing guidance, instruction, advice, examples and opportunities to the child.

Levels of Performance

There are three Levels of Performance.

Level **One** is characterised by:

- limited awareness, implicit simple knowledge,
- some commitment as yet insecure,
- simple skill repertoires executed perhaps hesitantly and error-prone.

Level **Two** is characterised by :

- greater awareness, larger significant knowledge areas,
- enhanced commitment, now more stable and secure,
- the skill repertoires are executed more confidently and accurately with greater or less discrimination

Level **Three** is characterised by:

- awareness, linked with large knowledge sets,
- commitment to oneself and society are firmly secured and established,
- the set of skill repertoires is adaptively routinized and one could extend them to refine the skill repertoires, and in addition execution of sequences includes a recognition of inadequacies and errors with acute discrimination.

Level two is the expected performance level of pupils from Grades 6 to 11. Level Three is for those who are proceeding beyond Grade 11. Children in the Primary stage will begin at Level One and progressively attain higher Levels in sequence. They are expected to attain Level Two by the time they complete Grade 11.

Types of Skills

In skill development attention must be paid to three Types of skills, referred to as Type 1, Type 2 and Type 3 skills. It is essential that a child is able to practise at least Type 1 and Type 2 skills with a high degree of competence by the time he completes Junior School.

Type 1 skills are those practised by virtue of having understood an explanation of the nature of the skill and its underlying principles, or having seen a demonstration of its practice.

A **Type 2** skill is the ability to identify when a skill is being practised wrongly and to take necessary remedial action.

A **Type 3** skill is practised when one creates a set of spoken or written instructions which will enable another person to perform a set of operations.

It may be seen that the development of skills of the three Types is closely parallel to the attainment of the three Levels of performance.

Assessment Procedure

The assessment procedure will be designed in conformity with the criteria of each Level of performance as indicated above. The tests used in assessment will be based on episodes which are drawn from real life contexts familiar to the child. The tests will include items which require a mix of the following categories of responses: outlining ideas; describing procedures; expressing emotions; sketching abstract ideas and themes.

Basic Competencies

A foundation must be put in place to enable the superstructure of development to be pursued effectively. In the development of competencies this foundation is made up of a set of **basic competencies** which are a precondition to the attainment of the educationally relevant goals.

These Basic Competencies are outlined below in five sets as follows.

A. Competencies in COMMUNICATION

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

- Literacy : Using words to represent concepts, principles, ideas, feelings, directions and instructions. The words are arranged in the form of compositions in either prose or verse.
- Numeracy : Using numbers to count, calculate, code and to measure, matter, space and time.
- Graphics : Making sense of line and form, expressing and recording essential data, instructions and ideas with line, form, colour, two-and three-dimensional configurations, graphic symbols and icons.

A complete communication can be made up of a mix of words, numbers, and diagrams or graphics which form a composition. Literacy, in the general sense, implies that a person is able to use such compositions to listen attentively to capture essential meanings, speak lucidly to convey priority meanings, read for assimilating meanings, and write lucidly and coherently.

B. Competencies relating to the ENVIRONMENT

This second set of competencies relates to the Environments - Social, Biological and Physical Environments.

- Social Environment: Awareness, sensitivity and skills linked to being a member of society, social relationship, personal conduct, general and legal conventions, rights, responsibilities, duties and obligations.
- Biological Environment: Awareness, sensitivity and skills linked to the Living World, Man and the Ecosystem, the Trees, Forests, Seas, Water, Air and Life - Plant, Animal and Human Life.
- Physical Environment: Awareness, sensitivity and skills relating to Space, Energy, Fuels, Matter, Materials and their links with Human Living, Food, Clothing, Shelter, Health, Comfort, Respiration, Sleep, Relaxation, Rest, Wastes and Excretion, Media of Communication and Transport.

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

C. Competencies relating to ETHICS AND RELIGION

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

D. Competencies in PLAY AND THE USE OF LEISURE

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

E. Competencies relating to ‘LEARN TO LEARN’

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