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Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Parliament Secretariat
Standing Committee on the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education

Report on Sri Lanka Tour

A 8-member Bangladesh delegation led by Mr. A K M Zahangir Hossain, Hon'ble Member of the Parliament and Member of the Standing Committee on the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education visited Sri Lanka from 03 January- 09 January, 2016 on a study tour on School Management, Better Administration and Involvement of Society. The composition of the Bangladesh delegation is as follows:

01	Mr. A K M Zahangir Hossain, Hon'ble Member of the Parliament and Member of the Standing Committee on the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education	Head of Delegation
02	Mr.Md.Abdur Rahman, Hon'ble Member of the Parliament and Member of the Standing Committee on the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education	Member
03	Mr.Md.Abul Kalam, Hon'ble Member of the Parliament and Member of the Standing Committee on the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education	Member
04	Mr.Md.Gias Uddin Ahmed, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Primary and Mass Education	Member
05	Dr.Md.Abu Hena Mostofa Kamal,ndc Additional Director General(Additional Secretary), Directorate of Primary Education	Member
06	Mr.Mohammed Rezai karim, Director(Reporting) and	Member

	Committee Secretary, Standing Committee on the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education	
07	Mr. Satyakam Sen, Senior Assistant Secretary, Ministry of Primary and Mass Education	Member
08	Mr.Mohammed Ashrafuzzaman, Education Officer, Directorate of Primary Education	Member

The study tour was arranged under the auspicious of the Primary Education Development Programme-3(PEDP-3) of the Directorate Primary Education. In line with the objectives of the study tour it included meetings with the key policy makers and high officials in the field of Primary Education of the govt. of Sri Lanka visit to apex Training Institute responsible for Primary Education and field visits to Primary Schools. It also included exclusive briefing sessions made by the respective department concerned and interactions with the key personalities in the field of education and development in Sri Lanka.

The itinerary of the tour was as follows:

Date	Time	Activity
03 Jan, 2016 Sunday	15:05	Arrival at BIA & Received by High Commissioner of Bangladesh & Focal Persons in Sri Lanka
	16:00	Arrival at the Hotel
	20:30	Dinner hosted by IPTM & IJ & Programme brief by Gamini Kudaliyanage (Program Coordinator in Sri Lanka)
04 Jan, 2016 Monday	09:30	Directorate of Education for a presentation & Discussion on Primary Education in Sri Lanka (Policy & Mgt.) – Ms. Asoka Pandithasekara
	12:00	Visit to the Parliament of Sri Lanka

	13:30	Working Lunch at the Parliament of Sri Lanka
	14:30	Discussion with Hon. Bandula Gunawardana (Ex Education Minister) on Government Policy on Education
	15:00	Meeting with Hon. Jayawickrama Perera (Minister of Sustainable Development & Wildlife)
	18:00	Visit Galle Face/Sightseeing at Colombo
	20:00	Arrival at the Hotel
05 Jan, 2016 Tuesday	10:00	Visit an Urban Primary School
	11:00	Visit Provincial Primary School
	12:30	Visit the Zonal Education Office – Gampaha with Mr. Mallawaarchchi (Zonal Director Of Education)
	14:30	Working Lunch
	17:30	Sightseeing at Colombo
	19:30	Arrival at the Hotel
06 Jan, 2016 Wednesday	10:00	Arrival at South Asian Center for Teacher Development, National Institute of Education (NIE) & Meeting with Mr. Upali Munasighe (Director NIE-Meepe)
	13:00	Working Lunch at NIE-Meepe
	15:30	Arrival at the Embassy of the Republic of Bangladesh & Meeting with H.E. the High Commissioner of Bangladesh in Colombo
	18:30	Arrival at the Hotel
07 Jan, 2016 Thursday	09:00	Leave for Kandy (Via Pinnawala Elephant Orphanage)
	11:00	Arrival at the Pinnawala Elephant Orphanage
	11:30	Presentation hosted by Pinnawala Elephant Orphanage Officials

	12:00	Refreshment
	14:00	Arrival at Kandy & Working Lunch
	16:00	Sightseeing at Kandy
	20:30	Arrival at the Hotel
08 Jan 2016 Friday	10:00	Colombo City Tour
	16:30	Arrival at the Hotel
09 Jan, 2016 Saturday	07:25	Leave for Dhaka

Based on those meetings, briefings, interactions and visits a brief sketch on the primary education system of Sri Lanka is portrayed below:

Introduction:

The Constitution of Sri Lanka provides for education as a fundamental right. Sri Lanka's population has a literacy rate of 98.1%, higher than that expected for a developing nation; it has the highest literacy rate in South Asia and overall, one of the highest literacy rates in Asia. Education plays a major part in the life and culture of the country and dates back to 543 BC. Sri Lanka's modern educational system was brought about by its integration into the British Empire in the 19th century. Education currently falls under the control of both the Central Government and the Provincial Councils, with some responsibilities lying with the Central Government and the Provincial Council having autonomy for others. Primary education has been getting special priority and importance in the overall education system in Sri Lanka since long.

History of Primary Education in Sri Lanka:

Education in Sri Lanka has a history of over 2300 years. It is believed that the Sanskrit language was brought to the island from North India as a result of the

establishment of the Buddhism in the reign of King Devanampiya Tissa from the Buddhist monks sent by Emperor Asoka of India. Since then an education system evolved based around the Buddhist temples and pirivenas (monastic colleges), the latter primarily intended for clergy (even to this day) and higher education. Evidence of this system is found on the Mahawamsa and Dipavamsa, the Chronicle of Lanka that deals with the history of the island from the arrival of Prince Vijaya and his followers in the 6th century BC. With the outset of the colonial expansion on the island, first in the coastal provinces and then interior, Christian missionary societies become active in education. The Church's monopoly in education ended following the Colebrooke Commission set up by the British administration.

Structure of Primary Education in Sri Lanka:

Sri Lanka's education structure is divided into five parts: primary, junior secondary, senior secondary, collegiate and tertiary. Primary education lasts five to six years (Grades 1-5) and at the end of this period, the students may elect to write a national exam called the Scholarship exam. This exam allows students with exceptional skills to move on to better schools. After primary education, the junior secondary level (referred to as middle school in some schools) lasts for 4 years (Grades 6-9) followed by 2 years (Grades 10-11) of the senior secondary level which is the preparation for the General Certificate of Education (G.C.E) Ordinary Level (O/Ls). According to the Sri Lankan law, it is compulsory that all children go to school till grade 9 (age 14) at which point they can choose to continue their education or drop out and engage in apprenticeship for a job or farming. Due to the variety of ethnic groups in Sri Lanka, many schools teach only in either Sinhala medium or in Tamil medium and not the English medium.

Age of Students for Primary Education

- Kindergarten: 4-5 year olds

- Grade 1: 5-6 year olds
- Grade 2: 6-7 year olds
- Grade 3: 7-8 year olds
- Grade 4: 8-9 year olds
- Grade 5: 9-10 year olds - Scholarship Examination

Primary Schools in Sri Lanka:

The Primary Schools in Sri Lanka can be categorized in two major types. These are: Government Schools and Non-Government Schools.

Government Schools:

Most of the schools in Sri Lanka are maintained by the government as a part of the free education. Currently there are 9,829 government schools with a total number of student 3.8 million and 212,441 teachers, 561 Pirivenas. The old schools which had been around since the colonial times were retained by the central government, thus creating three types of government schools:

- National Schools
- Provincial Schools
- Pirivenas (Schools for Buddhist priests)

National Schools:

National schools come under the direct control of the Ministry of Education and therefore have direct funding from the ministry. Most of these schools were established during the colonial period and therefore are established institutions. These few are referred to as famous schools or elite schools since they have a rich history and better maintained facilities than the average public school. This is mainly due the support of their alumni. In recent years newer schools and several central colleges have been upgraded to national schools from time to time, thereby making the total number of national schools 323.

Provincial Schools:

Provincial Schools consists of the vast majority of schools in Sri Lanka. Funded and controlled by the local governments many suffer from poor facilities and a shortage of teachers.

Piriven:

Piriven are monastic colleges (similar to a seminary) for the education of Buddhist priests. These have been the centers of secondary and higher education in ancient times for lay people as well. Today 561 Piriven are funded and maintained by the Ministry of Education. Young priests undergo training at these pirivenas prior to being their Ordination and study for GCE 'O'Level and 'A'Level examinations. They may gain entrance to State Universities for higher religious studies.

Non-government Schools:

Private Schools:

There has been a considerable increase in the number of private schools in Sri Lanka, due to the emergence of the upper-middle class during the colonial era. These private schools follow the local curriculum set up by the Ministry of Education in the local language mediums of Sinhala, Tamil or English. Many of the private schools have access to newer facilities than state run schools. Currently there are 66 Private schools (registered before 1960 and not since then) of these, 33 non-fee-levying Assisted Private Schools (also known as semi-government schools) and 33 fee levying autonomous Private Schools, in addition to the Government Schools.

International Schools:

International schools in Sri Lanka are not restricted to the expatriate community, anyone with the ability and willingness to pay can join these schools. Starting in the late 1980s these schools have no regulation or control by the Ministry of Education as it comes under the Board of Investment (BOI), due to this the standard of education varies greatly between schools and with lesser levels of student discipline compared with other types of schools. The schools are mainly

for the children of the expatriate community, charge high tuition fees and can therefore provide good facilities and high standards.

Primary Education Management:

The primary education management of Sri Lanka is significantly decentralized. The Ministry of Education is responsible for overall education in Sri Lanka starting from primary to tertiary. Govt. allocation in the education sector is around 4% of the total GDP. The education management is governed by the Sri Lankan Education services.

Organization Structure

Ministry of Education
⇩
Provincial Education Department
⇩
Zonal Education Office
⇩
Divisional Education Office
⇩
School

Ministry of Education:

The National Institute of Education Development of Curricula training & research	The Department of Educational Publications Publication and distribution of text-books	The Department of Examinations Conducting Public examinations

Education Services:

- Education Administrative Service

- Teacher Educators' Service
- Principals' Service
- Teachers' Service

Structure of the School Education System:

- Grades 1-5 - Primary Segment
- Grades 6-11 – Junior Secondary
- Grades 12-13 – Senior Secondary

Examinations (National Level):

- Grade 5 Scholarship Examination
- GCE O/L examination
- GCE A/L examination

Schools by Type

Type	Category
Type 1AB	Schools having advanced level Science stream
Type 1 C	Schools having advanced level Arts and/or commerce stream (s)
Type 2	Schools having classes only up to Grade 11
Type 3	Schools having classes only up to Grade 5

Ancillary Services provided by the Government:

- Providing free text books
- Providing school uniform materials
- Providing subsidized transport facilities
- Providing mid-day meal for the students in primary grades of deprived areas

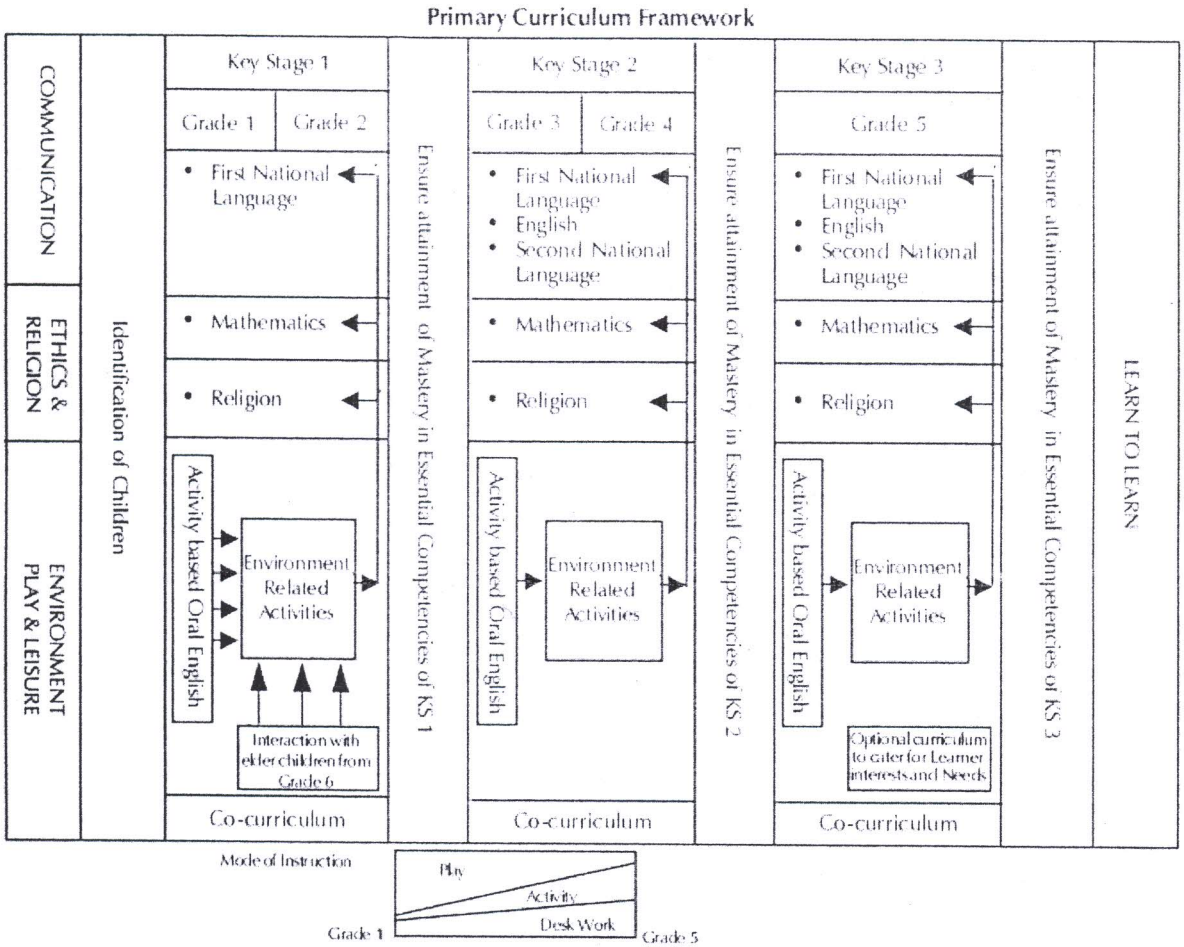


Figure: Basic Competencies: An Essential Foundation for Approaching the National Goals of Sri Lanka

It is important to note that at the key stage 1 for both the grades 1 and 2 Tamil is taught for the Tamil students and Sinhala is taught for the Sinhalese students as first language.

Most of the basic subjects like, mathematics, Environment and Religion are taught from the elementary level. Along with English other Second language are also taught for the students at the key stage 2 from grades three to grades five. Special emphasis is given for practicing oral English widely for the student.

Throughout the whole Primary education level a series of co-curriculum activities are practiced for the students.

Basic Features of Primary Education in Sri Lanka:

Vision:

Primary Education For Sustainable Development.

Mission:

Established a joyful learning environment in primary education ensuring self-esteem, self-learning 7 facilitating for exploration, effective communication, creativity & appreciation.

Motto:

All children have a right to education. Access to education is not a privilege that society grants to children, it is a duty that society fulfils to all children.

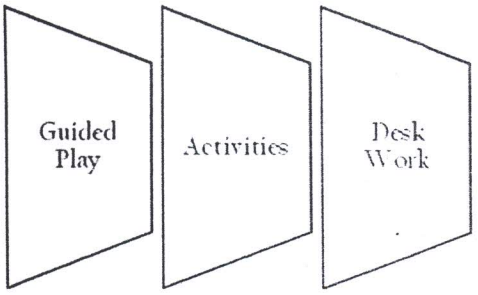
Objectives:

- To ensure full participation of age 5-10 children in primary education
- To ensure that 80% of the children completing primary education attain mastery level in desired learning competencies
- To ensure provision of infrastructure facilities for all primary schools according to the national norms

Basic Data of Primary Education:

Total No. of Schools	10,119
Primary school/schools with primary sections	9,480
Primary schools	3,577
Secondary schools with primary sections	5,903
No: of total students	4,078,037
No: of students in primary sections	1,726,492
No; of teachers in primary classes	69,640

Mode of Instruction



Identification of Children:

- When a child enters the Grade 1 he/she engages a set of guided play items & activities in two weeks period to identify the areas in which the child needs help.

This will enable the teacher to get to know each child & plan the learning-teaching process to suit individual needs.

Activity Based Oral English:

- Use of English in Conversation while Children are engaged in guided play & activity, especially in the area of ERA.
- Oral English is done by the Class Teacher
- No special Teacher & No special Period have been allocated.

Student Assessment and Evaluation:

The most important characteristics of the primary education system in Sri Lanka are the periodical student assessment and evaluation report and auto promotion to the next class. A quarterly periodical assessment and evaluation is made for each and every student based on around 42 criterion comprising most of the essential elements including performance, personality, response, responsibility, attendance, attentiveness, mindset, morality, lesson learnt and quality.

- The process of assessment and evaluation may be either informal or formal.

- Key Stage-1: receives more emphasis on Informal Method of Assessment and evaluation,
- Assessment is essentially diagnostic.
  - Do not compare children.
  - Continuously observe pupils & listen to them to gather information regarding their learning progress & difficulties.
  - Learning process & difficulties are recorded systematically.
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It was evident during field visits to Primary Schools both at urban and rural areas that quarterly assessment and evaluation sheets were present on the table of the Class Teachers.

The weekly timetable of primary education can vary between 16 and 24.5 hours, depending on the grade and age of the child.

There is a wide variety of subjects taught in these schools including:

- First National Language (Tamil for Tamil and Sinhala for Sinhalese)
- Second National Language (Tamil Sinhalese and Sinhala for Tamil)
- English
- Environment related activities (Social studies, Science, Health, Physical Education, and aesthetic subjects such as Art, Music and Dancing)
- Religion
- Co-curricular activities (Meditation, participation in cultural and religious festivals and events)
- Optional curricular activities (pupils in 5th grade can choose a subject with regards to their skills and interests, for example Art, Agriculture or Dancing)

As well as these classes, pupils attend an assembly each morning, which has a religious focus, drills and exercise (1hr and a quarter per week of each). Children have between an hour and a quarter and two and half hours of break time per

week, depending on their grade. Students use to sit face to face in a group in the class room.

Essential Learning Competencies

- Essential Learning competencies (ELC) are identified for each key stage.
- Achievement of ELC is support to continue the next key stage successfully.
    - 1st Key Stage-40 ELC
    - 2nd Key Stage-52 ELC
    - 3rd key Stage-55 ELC

A Set of 7 Competencies

- Competencies in communication
- Competencies relating to the environment
- Competencies relating to the ethics & religion
- Competencies in play & the use of leisure
- Competencies relating to learn to learn
- Competencies relating to personality development
- Competencies relating to preparation for the world of work

One Teacher for Each Key Stage

- One teacher to be in charge of a set of children throughout a key stage
- To bring all the children in a class to the levels of mastery in essential competencies describe for each key stage.

Infra-Structure & Physical Resources:

- Allocating at least 10 Sq. ft.
- Providing a partitioned classroom
  - Enclosing the outer walls of the classroom with iron grills & fixing door locks
  - Preparing wall black boards to suit the height of children so that they too can use.
  - Providing facilities in the classroom to display the creative work of children
  - Providing a children's park/play area for children to engage in free activities
  - Providing work table to suit the height of children
  - Providing funds as quality inputs to schools for purchasing necessary stationary
  - Providing funds for buildings, furniture & necessary equipment

Strategies:

- Creating child friendly environment in primary schools
- Introducing co-curricular activities in primary education
- Providing infrastructures facilities & learning resources
- Conducting research, studies related to primary education
- Internal & external evaluation system
- Capacity development programs for teachers, students
- Coordination of Ministry of Health and other relevant institutions.

Creating Child friendly Environment in Primary Schools:

Six Dimensions

- Rights based & proactively inclusive
- Gender responsive
- Improving children's learning outcomes
- Health, safe & protective of children
- Actively engaged with students, families & communities
- Supported by child friendly systems, policies, practices & regulations

Text Books provided by the Govt.:

- Providing colorful & attractive text books
- The following books are supplied
- First language text book & word book
- English Language text book &word book
- Mathematics text book & word book
- Religion text book (one for each religion)

National Education Goals:

National Education Goals for Sri Lanka have been set out in the first report of the National Education Commission (1992). The report states that the national goals for education should be relevant to the individual and significant to the national community. Under these circumstances the commission sets out nine goals as relevant for planning activities in the field of education. These are:

- Achievement of national cohesion, national integrity and national unity
- Establishment of pervasive patterns of social justice
- Evolution of a sustainable pattern of living

• Generation of work opportunities that are dignified, satisfying and self-fulfilling

• Institution of a variety of possibilities for all to participate in human resource development

• Nurturing a continuous sense of deep and abiding concern for one another

• Learning to learn and adapt to changing situations

• Capacity to cope with the complex and unforeseen, achieving a sense of security and stability

• Development of competencies helping to secure an honorable place in the international community.

Reforms in Education

- Education reforms were initialized on an island wide basis in 1999
- Compulsory education to all children between the ages of 5-16 years
- 8 National goals and 7 basic competencies that should be attained by all pupils were identified by the National Education Commission

Recommendations:

The delegation considers that the study tour to Sri Lanka was highly educative and beneficial for the country and opines that lessons learnt from Sri Lanka in some important aspects can be replicated in the primary education in Bangladesh on pilot basis. These are as follows:

1) Student assessment and appraisal can be made on important basic criterion periodically,
2) The Primary Education Management in Bangladesh should be decentralized in a pragmatic manner,
3) Govt. allocation for education particularly for the Primary education should reasonably be increased,

4) There should be a clear vision, mission and objectives for the Primary education in line with the spirit of the War of Liberation, Constitution and Education Policy-2010 in a understandable language,
5) There should a comprehensive and integrated Teacher and student database along with biometric identification in order to establish proper and efficient e-primary education system,
6) Primary education should be targeted in line with the Sustainable Development Goals(SDGs),
7) Student-Teacher ratio, contact hours, sitting arrangements in the classroom should be at par with the international standard,
8) Adequate infrastructural arrangement for primary education should be made on priority basis.
9) Necessary researches, studies should be carried out with due importance in order to accomplish qualitative improvement education.

10.03.2016

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