

**Abstracts
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Extended Abstracts
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Educating the Child in a Peaceful and Conflict Free School: Good Practices in Sri Lankan Schools

Abstract

This study envisaged to explore the state of the art of selected five schools that have been pinpointed as having good school practices in the field of education, peace and conflict resolution. The objectives were to explore peace concepts embedded in the good practices of school processes, and to identify causal factors for the peace related processes.

Case study method was employed. Convenient sampling method was used to select Deputy / Assistant principals (7), teachers (50), Grade 11 students (50) and parents (50) to collect qualitative data by in depth unstructured observation, in depth interviews and conference cum reflective incident analysis. Content was analyzed on curriculum material to identify sections that deal with peace education and to evaluate the prevalent practice at classroom level. Correlation Coefficient of responses in questionnaires was calculated and z test was used to determine the significance of the correlations. Qualitative data were coded to identify specific patterns of good practices and they were elaborated in narrative style citing qualitative judgments as vignettes. In the report, a rich and vivid description of events in the respective schools emphasizing chronological order of school history, individual actor's role in good practices, school processes in a day and during the year were emphasized.

Good practices in peace and conflict resolution in nine school processes (School management, Classroom management, Student development, Staff development, Teaching/ learning process, Co - curricular activities, School environment building, Community relations and cultural harmony) and peace concepts embedded in these processes were identified. The role of the principal was an influential factor in deciding good practices. The co-operation of teachers, students and school community are centered on principal's role and personality, which is 'Sri Lankan' in nature. The child friendly approach in planning school and classroom programmes, implementing them in fulfilling needs of the child and sensitizing community needs have contributed to develop peaceful environment of the school. Good school practices in co curricular activities were centered on developing school premises beautifully, inculcating peaceful minds and behaviour patterns of students and teachers.

Extended abstract

Introduction

The conceptualization of 'school effectiveness' and framing indicators to assess it, has been the subject of interest to many educationists over the years. Effectiveness is referred to as the extent to which a specific set of objectives is attained. The indicators of school effectiveness identified by researchers are varied and many. Early efforts in the area were undertaken mostly by professional educators resulting in several cost - quality studies. Some other studies were related to actual measures of pupil performance whereas some others use process variables such as the rate at which the schools adopted innovative instructional practices or new curricula. Later studies undertaken by sociologists emphasized the significance of the student's social context rather than school services as determinants of pupil performance.

The nature of good practices in schools related to their social context that have emerged recently have not been researched to identify their nature and the real influential factors for them. This study envisaged to explore the state of the art of selected five schools that have been pinpointed as having good school practices at different school processes. The purpose of the study was to identify the good practices of Sri Lankan schools in the field of education for peace and conflict resolution. The objectives were:

- To explore good practices and models of peace education in nine selected school processes
- To identify peace concepts embedded in the above mentioned practices
- To suggest ways and means to disseminate the identified practices and models to the Sri Lankan school system

Methodology

The study was concentrated on isolating a set of events and relationships among nine selected school processes (School management, Classroom management, Student development, Staff development, Teaching/ learning process, Co - curricular activities, School environment building, Community relations and cultural harmony) that are appropriate to the theme of the study. To study the selected events and processes in depth it was decided to select case study method considering its strengths in harnessing qualitative data that was to be used to build stories of good practices in selected school processes in school sites.

Five schools were selected according to the purposive sampling technique. Convenient sampling method was used to select Deputy / Assistant principals (7), teachers (50), Grade 11 students (50) and parents (50). Qualitative data collection methods employed included in depth unstructured observation of events, incidents, and processes at school premises, in depth interviews with the principal, vice principal/s, teachers, students, and parents, conference cum reflective incident analysis with a group of 10 teachers, 10 students and 10 parents to elicit qualitative examples for good practices, content analysis on curriculum material to identify sections that deal with peace education and to evaluate the prevalent practice at classroom level by a selected group of 12 teachers (Grade 11), 2 curriculum developers, 2 teacher educators, 2 resource persons on peace education, and a content evaluation sheet used to analyze the content of three subjects namely: Mother Tongue, Social Studies and Hygiene and Physical Education in Grade 11. 10. Resource persons, involved in the development of research instruments, collected data. They discussed the ways of collecting data at workshop level and consistency among data collectors was maintained in the process. Further, written instructions were given.

Quantitative data were analyzed to identify the peace and conflict resolution concepts in the selected aspects of school processes quantitatively. Items in questionnaires were categorized according to the selected school processes. Percentage values of these categories of responses were calculated. Correlation Coefficient of responses of teachers, students and parents were calculated and z test was used to determine the significance of the correlations. Qualitative data in audio taped interviews were transcribed and qualitative data in interviews and observations were coded based on selected aspects of the study. Specific patterns of good practices identified through qualitative and quantitative data analysis were elaborated in narrative style citing qualitative judgments as vignettes. When writing the report attention was paid to have a rich and vivid description of events in the respective schools emphasizing chronological order of school history, individual actor's role in good practices, school processes in a day and during the year.

Results and Discussions

The role of the principal was found to be an influential factor in deciding the good practices in schools. The co-operation of teachers, community and students are centered on the principal's personality, which is found to be 'Sri Lankan' in nature. To build good school practices, the principal has effectively harnessed the specific factors of the school and community environment.

The child friendly approach in planning school and classroom programmes, implementing

such programmes in fulfilling needs of the child have developed peaceful environment of the school. Sensitivity towards parents was reflected in preparation of plans in such a way not harassing them.

Good school practices in co curricular activities were centered on developing school premises, creating beautiful school gardens, inculcating the habits of maintaining bio-cycling.

The specific good practices and related peace concepts, identified according to school processes are as follows:

School and classroom management

- Free midday meals, staff appraisal programmes, staff welfare programmes, proper maintenance system, positive use of voluntary support, use of school-based programmes, data base management, devolution of power: **Honouring human rights, Inner harmony, Equity, Equal opportunities for all**

Student development, Staff development

- Promotion of human competencies: **Equality among pupils lead to capacity building**

Teaching/ learning process

- Use of multiple teaching methods, close relationship among teachers and students, teacher and student appreciation, sharing limited resources, leadership building and opportunity to participate in multiple activities: **respect for other cultural biases, care of cultural differences**

School environment building

- Environmental harmony: **Love and care for physical and plant environment**

Community relations and cultural harmony

- Ethnic harmony, Cultural harmony, Social harmony: **Living together without prejudice, Peaceful co-existence,**

Learn, love and live together unto fullness:

Good practices on peace at Tri / St. Mary's Girls' College

Abstract

Tri/ St. Mary's girls' college (name is cited with the consent) was one of the five schools selected to identify the good practices in peace and conflict resolution followed by Sri Lankan school system. Observations, questionnaires, informal interviews, & document analysis were the data collection techniques. Data from questionnaires were collected from ten students in grade eleven, ten parents/guardians of them & ten teachers who taught them. Number of important themes was identified from informal interviews & observations and the ten students were asked to write essays on them. Exhibits, models, quotations, photos and written sources kept in the principal's office and in classrooms were considered as data for document analysis. Good practices related to nine school processes were identified. The **school management** was completely built up on the vision of the school. "Love Learn & Live together unto fullness". All the tasks in the school were decentralized. Every process in school was bound to each other in a good communication chain. It helped to build a peaceful environment without conflicts. Principal's flexibility, humanity & capability helped to build the peaceful school environment. A large portion of work related to **classroom management** was assigned to the students. Every classroom in the school had common systematic plan and due to this no conflicts emerged among students or teachers. Monitor was responsible to prefects for their workload. The student of this school was directed towards leadership practice, through **student centred management**. The characteristics of social harmony & environmental harmony were developed in students through this process. This also induced other students in the school to acquire such characteristics and it made the classroom a joyful place for them. The prepared duty list for monitors beginning from the time they enter the school premises in the mornings thoroughly effects the student development. There were chances for students to engage in all activities such as co-curricular activities, extra curricular activities, cleaning classrooms & school premises. Accordingly every student has to take responsibility and get accountable to his or her immediate higher management and to fare higher management. Hence we could observe higher degree of attitude development in students. **Teacher development** and **Teaching-learning process** promote the teaching-learning process. **Co-curricular activities** built the peace in school system through co-operation between various types of societies. **School premises** developed with the help of **school community** have developed an environment of **Cultural harmony**.

Extended abstract

Introduction

St. Mary's girls' college (name is cited with consent) was one of the five schools selected to identify the good practices followed by Sri Lankan school system. The objective of the study was to find out good practices on peace and conflict resolution in the school.

Methodology

Observations, questionnaires, informal interviews, & document analysis were the data collection techniques. Data from questionnaires were collected from ten students in grade eleven, ten parents/guardians of them & ten teachers who taught them. Number of important themes was identified from informal interviews & observations and the ten students were asked to write essays on them. Data collected by various techniques were transcribed in written form. Exhibits, models, quotations, photos and written sources kept in the principal's office and in classrooms were considered as data for document analysis.

Findings

1. School Management

- The school system was completely built up on the vision of the school. "Love Learn & Live together unto fullness".
- All the tasks in the school were decentralized. Hence all the students & teachers had to be responsible & accountable for their work load and no situations & time were arisen for unnecessary chats.
- Every process in school was bound to each other in a good communication chain. It helped to build a peaceful school environment without conflicts.
- Even when the principal was not in the school, every duty in school was well done in the right manner. The school culture was very strong due to such a management system.
- Principal's flexibility, humanity & capability helped to build the peaceful school environment.

2. Classroom management

- Every classroom in the school had common systematic plan. There was a common physical resource list that is required for minimum needs, in every classroom. Only the students promoted to upper grades were shifted to a new classroom but no furniture or

other resources were required at the beginning of a new year. This was a very special situation. No conflicts emerged among students or teachers because of the common systematic plan in classrooms.

- A large portion of work related to classroom management was assigned to the students. Monitor was responsible to prefects for their workload. They performed their duties satisfactorily. Observing their classrooms before morning assembly & after school proved this factor.

3. Student development

- The student of this school was directed towards leadership practice, through student centred management. The characteristics of social harmony & environmental harmony were developed in students through this process. This also induced other students in the school to acquire such characteristics and it made the classroom a joyful place for them.
- The prefects' role was classified into four categories, daily role, weekly role, monthly role & annual role. There was a prepared duty list for each role.
- There was a systematic sequence in every task in which students were engaged during the period, beginning from the time they enter the school premises in the mornings and stop their cycles and till the time the school is over. This situation thoroughly effects the student development.
- There were chances for students to engage in all activities such as co-curricular activities, extra curricular activities, cleaning classrooms & school premises. Accordingly every student has to take responsibility and should be accountable to her immediate higher management and to farther higher management. Hence we could observe higher degree of attitude development in students.
- Good characteristics such as self-discipline, tolerance, appreciating and valuing the environment, co-operation, good manners, law-abiding, mutual honour and helping each other were salient in students and they expressed the inner development of them.
- Giving priority to student centred management has effectively brought out students' skills. This situation also influences the future human skill development. It is confirmed by past pupil's declarations.

4. Teacher development

- A peaceful environment without conflicts in school is grown when educational & professional guidance of teachers occurred and when they develop their equality and motivate the students to value the teachers in school system.

5. Teaching-learning process

- Classroom structure promotes the teaching-learning process. A pleasurable learning environment giving priority to group activities is a good practice found in this school. Another methodology used in this setting was learning from prefects.

6. Co-curricular activities

- Principal, staff and prefects built the peace in school system through co-operation between various types of societies such as literacy society, girl guiding, field trips, sports, environmental society, St. John's ambulance society etc.

7. School premises

- Attractive and systematic school premises gave pleasure to all who enter the school.
- The guided name boards direct the way to various school buildings.
- Blooming flower bushes, shady trees, ponds with cool water were all in place in an attempt to keep the school environment natural giving a peaceful environment.
- Exhibits were displayed in school buildings where students had frequent eye contact. These helped to develop the students' attitudes and knowledge. It also promotes peaceful co-existence without conflicts.
- The cleanliness of school premises gave freshness to students' minds. It made the way to peaceful environment.

8. Community relationship

- School development society, past pupils' association, education officers took part in various functions, religious activities and extra curricular activities in the school. It helped to build a peaceful environment in school.

9. Cultural harmony

- There were occasions and freedom to protect religious customs of various nationalities in this school environment. Actions for equality, honouring the school culture, giving priority to talents and good manners, helping each other through empathy and honouring others etc. were in place for the development of cultural harmony among the teachers and students.

Understanding the Sri Lankan Child: A Longitudinal Study (2002-2006) of a Cohort of Primary School Children

1. Methodology

Methodologically a novel experience

Abstract

With the intention of enriching indigenous research literature on primary school children of Sri Lanka, a longitudinal research was initiated in 2002. The main objective of the research was to observe a cohort of students who entered Grade 1 in 2002 continuously and provide a detailed description of patterns of stability and changes in participation in school education and a coherent explanation of how changes have occurred or failed to occur in the selected aspects of competencies. The study focused on two themes: student participation in primary school education and the way the students develop their competencies.

Forty-three classrooms from forty-one schools that represent the diverse social, cultural, economic, demographic, geographical and educational backgrounds of the country were selected as the school sample and all new entrants to Grade 1 in January 2002 (1021) were considered as the student sample. Teachers collected data and a researcher was appointed to each school to guide the teacher. Each researcher conducted a case study on a randomly selected child, resulting 43 case studies. Perceptions of teachers, researchers and parents, classroom artifacts, observations of teachers and researchers, documents, interviews with children, teachers, and parents, planned activities assigned to children were the data collection methods.

Experiences about the methodology

32 researchers appointed to schools to guide teachers and conduct the case studies were academically qualified in research. They, however, did not grasp the difference between survey method and longitudinal study and it took considerable effort on the part of the core researchers to acquaint with them of the new mode of the methodology. In the report writing stage they were inclined to write survey reports rather than longitudinal research reports, resulting in recasting of texts using original data. At the data analysis stage too,

analysts tried to analyze data, considering them as survey data. Having themselves equipped with formulas and statistical methods/ packages close to their research experience, they were surprised when they were made aware of the longitudinal nature of data sets. Proper balance of main activities, development of instruments, data collection & monitoring, data analysis and reporting, which were to be implemented repeatedly, could not be maintained due to under staffing, and unavailability of resource persons on payments due to delayed monitory support.

Extended abstract

Introduction

With the intention of enriching indigenous research literature on primary school children of Sri Lanka, a longitudinal research was initiated in 2002. The main objective of the research was to observe a cohort of students who entered Grade 1 in 2002 continuously and provide a detailed description of patterns of stability and change in participation in school education and a coherent explanation of how changes have occurred or failed to occur in the selected aspects of competencies. The study was focused on two themes and sixteen related areas (figures 1 & 2).

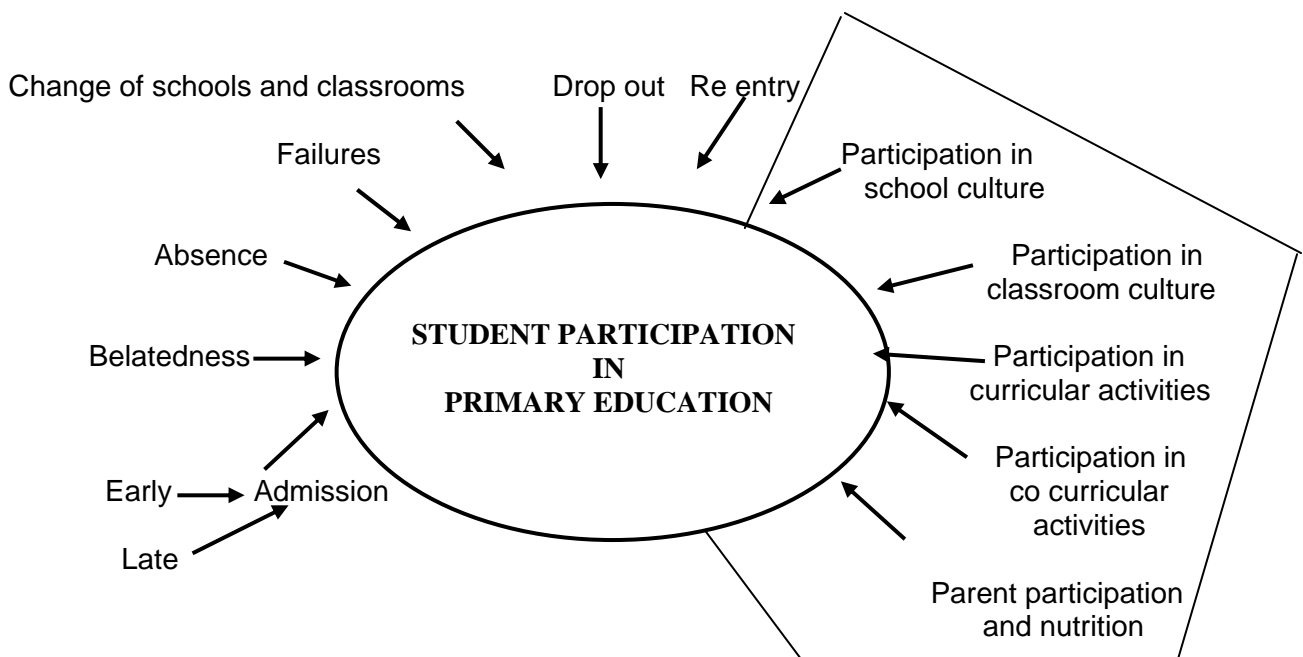


Figure 1. Theme 1 - Participation of the child in primary education

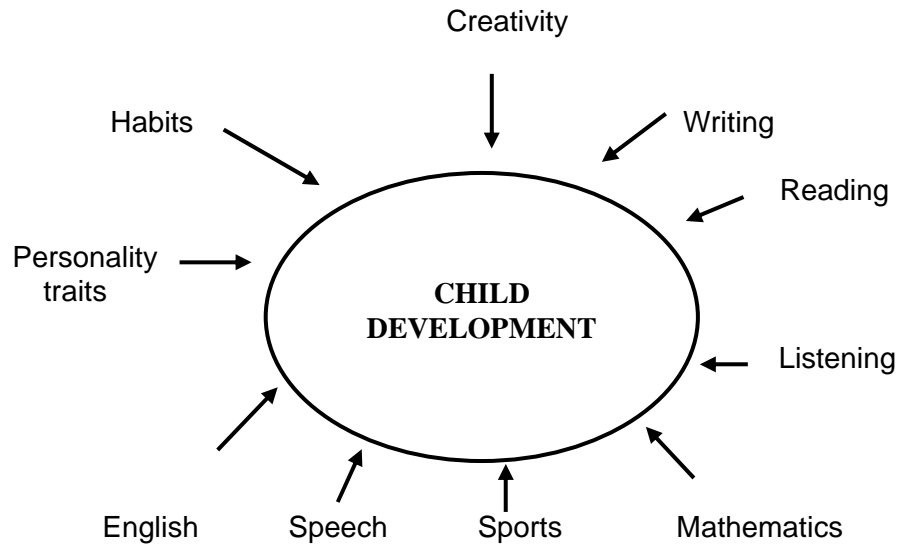


Figure 2. Theme 2 - Development of the child

Methodology

Forty-one schools that represent the diverse social, cultural, economic, demographic, geographical and educational backgrounds of the country were selected as the school sample and the total number of Grade 1 classes chosen for the classroom sample increased to forty-three because of the two schools that had bilingual streams (Sinhala and Tamil). All new entrants to Grade 1 in January 2002, who entered the forty-three classes in the school sample were considered as the student sample. Total number of students in the student sample recorded on the first day of the selected schools was 1021. During the first year of the study some changes had taken place in the student sample (Table 1) and for the first year data were collected from the whole sample.

Table 1. Sample of children (Grade 1)

Sex of the child	Number of students at the beginning of school year	New entrants	Leavers	Deceased	Emigrants	Number of students at the end of school year
Female	463	86	22	01	01	623
Male	558	73	15	-	01	521
Total	1021	159	37	01	02	1144

The areas depicted in figures 1 & 2 were researched using the following data collection techniques:

- Perceptions of teachers, researchers and parents to get the general picture
- Texts / records/ classroom artifacts were studied to specify the general picture that emerged from the perceptions.
- Observations of teachers and researchers to explore further aspects of the child that were not identified through perceptions and documents
- Interviews with children, teachers, and parents to clarify understandings gained through aforesaid techniques
- Planned activities assigned to children to elicit hidden aspects of student development that were to be found further

Teachers and researchers in their data collection maintained diaries and Reflective Journals. From the 2nd year onward cassette recorders were provided to researchers.

The research team of the Research Unit of the National Institute of Education acting as the core researchers planned, guided, implemented the four main aspects of the study, namely development of instruments, data collection, data analysis and reporting, with the help of around 110 resource persons and research assistants which included the 43 class teachers and 43 researchers who collected data through the two facets mentioned below.

Facet 1: Data from the whole student sample - The class teacher of each selected class collected data using sixteen instruments, mainly structured in nature. These instruments were used to collect data either on daily basis, monthly basis, once a term basis or once a year basis.

Facet 2: Case studies of forty-three children - One child (either boy or girl) from each school was randomly selected for the case study. The researcher appointed to the school observed the selected child once every month at school and once in every three months at home. Observations at school were made specifically during the following instances.

- During a lesson in the classroom
- During an outdoor learning activity
- During the interval

The researcher visited the child's home in order to investigate the child's home environment. Information regarding the child's nutrition, health and behavior at home and

the learning he informally acquired at home was collected through observations and informal interviews with parents. The researcher was expected to prepare and submit a case study report based on the triangulated data collected by them and the teachers about the child, at the end of each year.

Findings about the methodology / Experiences about the methodology

32 researchers appointed to schools to guide the teachers and conduct the case studies were academically qualified in research. They, however, did not immediately grasp the difference between survey method and longitudinal study. It took considerable effort on the part of the core researchers to acquaint with them with the new mode of the methodology. At the report writing stage they were inclined to write survey reports rather than longitudinal research reports, resulting in recasting of texts using original data.

At the data analysis stage too, analysts tried to analyze data, considering them as survey data. Having themselves acquainted with formulas and statistical methods/ packages close to their research experience, they were astonished when they were explained of the longitudinal nature of data sets.

At institution level, lack of an adequate number of researchers competent in research and having the language ability to handle data in both Sinhala and Tamil media, having sufficient knowledge of English to write reports targeting the international community and also having the ability to handle and manage huge data sets without computers, resulted in immense effort on the part of the core researchers sometimes extending their working hours on the project, for over 18 hours a day.

Proper balance of main activities, development of instruments, data collection & monitoring, data analysis and reporting could not be maintained at times, due to the under staffing, and unavailability of resource persons on payments due to delayed monetary support.

To enhance the quality of data and the research project as a whole, a set of ethical issues were introduced to teachers, researchers and others involved in the research. However the adherence to its expectations was somewhat doubtful due to lack of quality research culture, at all levels of the research hierarchy.

The sampling: Issue of balancing representativeness

Abstract

This study, a research on research methodology focuses on structured experiences on the sample of an ongoing five-year longitudinal study (2002-2006) started to identify the patterns of participation in primary school education and the competency development of primary school children. 1000 children were to be selected to represent Sri Lankan children entering government school system in 2002. Sampling was done considering the diversity of Sri Lankan school system and student population. The objectives of the study are to identify the changes occurred in the sample, reasons for the changes, the influence the changes made to the sample and the impact made by remedial measures. The researchers, teachers of the selected classrooms, who collected data from students and researchers who helped teachers by keeping diaries, collected data. 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th Instruments, focused on the participation of students in school education were also used in the analysis of data.

1021 (Boys: 558 Girls: 493) children who entered the first day of 43 classrooms in 41 schools were selected as the sample. Schools were representative to social economic zones used by Central Bank to conduct socio economic surveys, provinces, climate zones, relief zones, different social cultural backgrounds and school types. The student sample was representative to the variables of ethnicity, religion and medium of learning. In the analysis of data, data collected on the variables of the way of coming to school and the distance from home to school were also considered into. As a longitudinal study the justification of the sampling procedure was not ended at the beginning of the study. It was a continuous problem to maintain the balance of sample representation throughout the study period. The researchers had to face two fold problems of sampling i.e. maintaining the original sample as it is and collection of data continuously from the sample to have sufficient data for each and every month/ term for comparison purpose. Increase of the student sample due to late entrance of children to the selected classrooms throughout the year, the readjustments of parallel classes and their children, changing of schools, emigration and passing away of children altered the sample. Employing research assistants to collect data solved teacher and researcher related problems.

Extended abstract

Introduction

Research on research methodology helps to understand the methodology better and to develop the methodology itself. Structuring research experiences gained by researchers of the Department of Research and Development of the National Institute of education will enlighten the research culture of educational sector in Sri Lanka, as this is the key institution in Sri Lanka researching on various aspects of education. This study focuses on experiences gained by an ongoing five-year longitudinal study (2002-2006).

The study was started in 2002 to identify the patterns of participation in primary school education and the competency development of primary school children. For the study 1000 children were to be selected to represent Sri Lankan children who entered Sri Lankan school system in 2002. Sampling was done considering the diversity of Sri Lankan school system and student population. Accordingly 1021 (Boys: 558 Girls: 463) children who entered the first day of 43 classrooms in 41 schools were selected. Schools were representative to socio - economic zones used by Central Bank to conduct socio economic surveys, provinces, climate zones, relief zones, different social cultural backgrounds and school types. The student sample was representative to the variables of ethnicity, religion and medium of learning. In the analysis of data, data collected on the variables of way of coming to school and the distance from home to school were also considered into. The following variables were represented in the selected sample (Twins: 11, Children with special needs according to the perception of teachers: 45, Emigration of mothers: 10, Emigration of fathers: 9, Parents separated: 5, deceased mother/ father: 2/15, Entrance to school by underage: 5)

Method

The objectives of this study are to identify the changes occurred in the sample selected at the beginning of the study, to identify the reasons for changes occurred, to identify the influence, the changes made to the sample and to impact made by remedial measures to overcome effects that may occur on the findings of the overall study. The researchers of the National Institute of Education collected data on the ongoing longitudinal study, by keeping diaries. Further diaries kept by teachers of the selected classrooms, who collected data from students and researchers, who helped teachers to collect data were also considered as data collection tools. Altogether 16 instruments were used in the

longitudinal study and 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th Instruments of the study were focused on the participation of students in school education. Data derived from these instruments were also used in the analysis of data.

Findings

The findings with regard to sampling are various. As a longitudinal study the justification of the sampling procedure was not ended at the beginning of the study. It was a continuous problem of justification, classic problem as has been cited in the literature, to maintain the balance of sample representation throughout the study period. The researchers of the present longitudinal study had to face two fold problems of sampling i.e. maintaining the original sample as it is and collection of data continuously from the sample to have sufficient data for each and every month/ term for comparison purpose.

The following problems with regard to the original sample were occurred during the first two years.

- Increase of the student sample due to late entrance of children to the selected classrooms throughout the year cause the problem of collection of data from the sample without neglecting these new entrants due to the ethical concern of non-segregation principle. At the end of January the number of children rose to 1061. Altogether 159 (Male: 86 Female: 73) children entered the sample classrooms after the first day of the school. Out of them, 38 were newcomers and two children entered the sample schools waiting almost eight months seeking 'good' schools and without attending any school. At the end of Grade one, the number of children rose to 1143 (Male: 622 Female: 521)
- The readjustments of parallel classes and their children due to various reasons (Maternity leave taken by the teacher in one school, teacher shortage in one school, and readjustment of classrooms in two schools at the beginning of Grade 3) by respective school management at classroom level created the same problem of additional children in selected classrooms, again posing the problem of collecting data from the original sample only.
- Changing of schools by 37 children, emigration to foreign countries by two children and passing away of one child due to Dengue were other factors that affected sample.

Collection of data from the sample continuously to have sufficient data for each and every month/ term for comparison purpose was affected due to following reasons.

- Maternity leave taken by five teachers and serious illness of one teacher of selected classrooms.
- Difficulty in reaching the school prevented two researchers visiting respective schools continuously affecting case studies of the same schools.
- Some teachers and researchers did not grasp the importance of continuing data collection from the field for longitudinal studies, as against surveys, where data collection is done at a time, although they were given thorough pre training on data collection. Hence there are zero patches in data sets for some months in the first year.
- Unscheduled elections altered data collection patterns, originally planned.
- Transfer of five teachers and new teachers having less training influenced the data sets.

The solutions for the problems faced are also twofold:

- The changes or alterations of original sample created the problem of 'no data areas' of data sets and in the analysis attention was paid to balance data in months/ school terms.
- Employing research assistants to collect data solved teacher related problems. Research assistants were employed from 'Tharuna Aruna Institute' and they were trained to perform the relevant roles.

2. Participation in primary education

Absenteeism patterns of Grade one children in Sri Lanka: A Longitudinal study

Abstract

A longitudinal research was initiated in 2002 to study student participation in primary school education and the way the students develop their competencies. Forty-three classrooms from forty-one schools representing the diverse social, cultural, economic, demographic, geographical and educational backgrounds of the country were the classroom and school samples and all new entrants to Grade 1 in January 2002 to the selected classrooms were the student sample (1021). As one aspect of student participation, data were collected from classroom registers on absent children daily. A data collection sheet was used for the purpose and classroom teachers daily entered data into the sheets. The reason for absenteeism was marked either using letters sent by parents or if the letters were not sent, conducting informal interviews with children. The objectives were to find out absenteeism patterns during the year, to find out reasons for absenteeism and to find out associated variables for absenteeism. Percentage of absenteeism was calculated and association of variables was tested using Chi square test (P-Value is less than 0.05).

Only one child (a girl) attended the school every day out of 1021 children of the sample. The highest number of absenteeism was in the months of April, May and June. Lowest is in January. 102 reasons for absenteeism could be identified. They were categorized into 12 themes, ie. illness, minor accidents, social/ religious customs, no reason given, influence of the family members, student specific reasons, socio political reasons, school related reasons, economic background of the family, climate/ environmental reasons, transport related reasons, and absence of data. The main reason for the absenteeism was illness of children. Patterns of absenteeism during the year show that the illness of children was the main reason for the absenteeism of children in each month of the year. Other than climate other twelve variables (school type, ethnicity of school, medium of instruction, socio economic zone, province, relief zone, climate, sex of child, ethnicity of child, religion, residence, way of coming to school) are associated with the absenteeism of students of grade one.

Extended abstract

Introduction

A longitudinal research was initiated in 2002 to study student participation in primary school education and the way the students develop their competencies. Forty-three classrooms from forty-one schools representing the diverse social, cultural, economic, demographic, geographical and educational backgrounds of the country were the classroom and school samples and all new entrants to Grade 1 in January 2002 to the selected classrooms were the student sample (1021). Teachers in the selected classrooms collected data and a researcher was appointed to each school to guide the teacher. Perceptions of teachers, researchers and parents, classroom artifacts, observations of teachers and researchers, interviews with children, teachers, and parents, planned activities assigned to children were the data collection methods.

Methodology

As one aspect of student participation, data were collected from classroom registers on absent children daily. A data collection sheet was used for the purpose and classroom teachers daily entered data into the sheets. Further the reason for absenteeism was marked. For that purpose teacher was instructed to use letters sent by parents. If the letters were not sent, informal interviews with children were used to collect data on absenteeism. The objectives were to find out absenteeism patterns, to find out reasons for absenteeism and to find out associated variables for absenteeism. Percentage of absenteeism was calculated as follows:

$$\frac{\text{No. of absent days}}{\text{No. of school days} \times \text{No. of children}} \times 100$$

Association of variables was tested using Chi square test.

Findings

Only one child (a girl) attended the school every day out of 1021 children of the sample. The highest number of absenteeism was in the months of April, May and June. Lowest is in January (Figure 1).

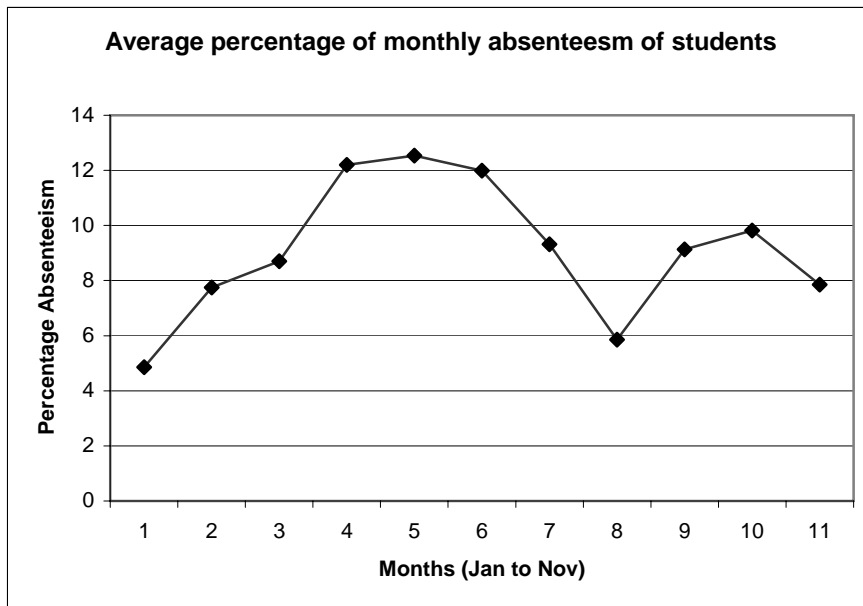


Figure 1. Average percentage of absenteeism of the students by months

102 reasons for absenteeism could be identified. They were categorized into 12 themes, ie. illness, minor accidents, social/ religious customs, no reason given, influence of the family members, student specific reasons, socio political reasons, school related reasons, economic reasons of the family, climate/ environmental reasons, transport related reasons, and absence of data. The main reason for the absenteeism was illness of children (Figure 2). Patterns of absenteeism during the year show that the illness of children was the main reason for the each month of the year (Figure 3).

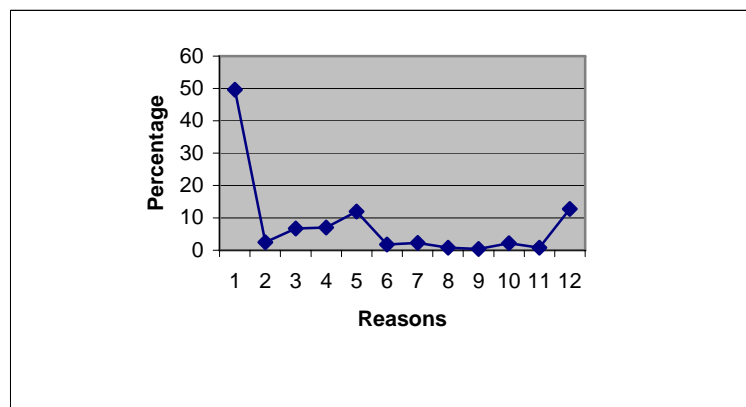


Figure 2. Average Absenteeism according to reason

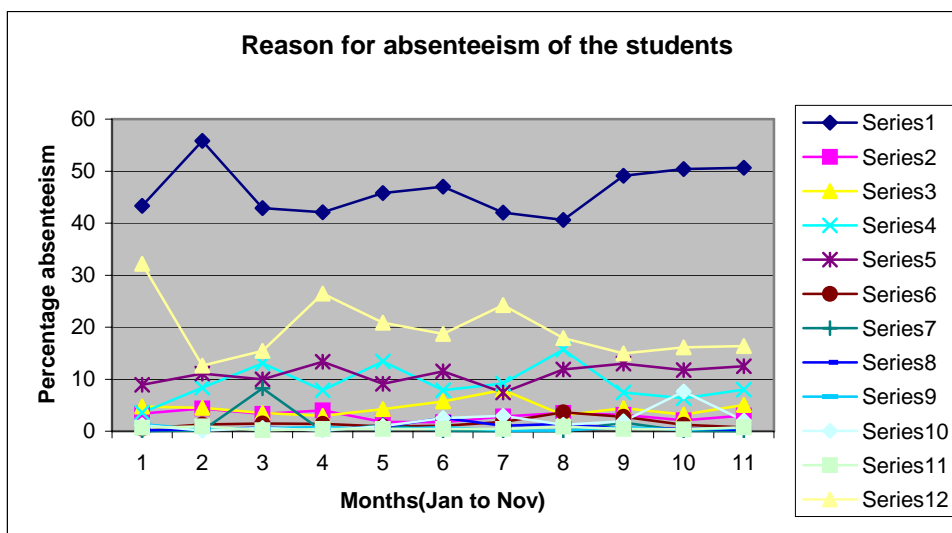


Figure 3. Absenteeism according to reason and months

Association between absenteeism and thirteen variables were tested using chi-square test (Table 1). It was found that other than climate other variable are associated with the absenteeism of students of grade one.

Table 1. Association of variables with absenteeism

First variable	Second variable	P-value of the chi-square test
Absenteeism	School type	0.000
	Ethnicity of school	0.000
	Medium of instruction	0.000
	Socio economic reasons	0.000
	Province	0.009
	Relief zone	0.000
	Climate	0.762
	Sex of child	0.006
	Ethnicity of child	0.000
	Religion	0.000
	Residence	0.000
	Distance	0.000
	Way of coming to school	0.000

Note: If the P-Value is less than 0.05, then the two variables are associated with each other with 5% significant level.

Patterns of participation in primary education of father, mother and daughter: A longitudinal study

Abstract

1021 children from 43 classrooms belonging to different socio - economic strata were selected to study how Sri Lankan children participate in primary school education and develop their competencies at primary stage, longitudinally. A child from each of the 43 classroom were selected for case studies for in-depth investigation. For the longitudinal case-study on Darshani (pseudonym) who studied in grades 1, 2 and 3 in a type 2 school situated 6 km away from Kandy town, data were collected and analyzed qualitatively from structured instruments used by teachers for collecting data, researcher's monthly school observations, once a term observations of home environment, interviews with the teacher, the teacher's perceptions, assessment records and exercise books of the child. The Grade one class comprised of 15 Sinhalese and Tamil students. It does not comply totally with the new educational reforms. Darshani is the youngest of a family of 5 children. Home, an unauthorized shanty built on a government land, does not have the basic needs. Father did not have a permanent employment. Her mother took her to school every day and used even to clean the classroom after school before taking Darshani home. In 2003 father started producing and selling illegal liquor and the police arrested him thrice. Mother's time was spent in attempting to get the father released and Darshani who went to school with her mother in 2002 started to go to school with her sisters in 2003. In 2004 mother opened a flower stall near a temple. After that mother came to school rarely. From 2002 to 2004 the parent's participation in school activities has deteriorated rapidly. In 2002 Darshani was absent from school for 18 days. This has increased to 43 days in 2003 and by the end of June 2004 the number was 31. Darshani's participation in school activities by then has been very unsatisfactory. In 2003 she got absent mostly because of family problems. In 2004 she used to accompany her mother to the flower stall. Without any outstanding changes in the school, classroom or teacher an obvious change has taken place in Darshani's participation in school education. Stressful and painful events (change of her house, setting fire to the house, change of employment of parents) have directly influenced the home atmosphere effecting her educational participation and was slowing down her competency development. Therefore we could come to the conclusion that the home environment has a greater effect than classroom, in a child's education. Time has come to introduce a system, which will identify problems in the home environment of child and provide counseling both to the child and the parents.

Extended abstract

Introduction, objectives and method

1021 children from 43 classrooms belonging to different social economic strata were selected for the purpose of studying how Sri Lankan children participate in primary school education and develop their competencies at primary stage, using longitudinal methodology. Out of them 43 children (- ie. a child from each of the 43 classrooms) were selected for case studies for in-depth investigation. For the longitudinal case-study on Darsani (pseudonym) who studied in grades 1, 2 and 3 in a type 2 school situated 6 km away from Kandy town, was selected. Data were collected and analyzed qualitatively from structured instruments used by teachers for collecting data, researchers monthly observations, once a term observations of home environment, interviews with teacher, teacher's perceptions, assessment records and exercise books of the child.

The school population (125 students) comprises with the children of multi ethnic workers and in 2002. 15 teachers were on the staff. The school has had a history of fluctuating in development from time to time. Presently it is on the hard way to development. For this it needs a lot of physical facilities as well as earnest attention. If not the school won't be able to escape from the pressurization it receives from the popular schools in the town. The Grade one class comprises of 15 Sinhalese and Tamil students and barely manages the facilities. It does not comply totally with the new educational reforms. The class teacher of grade one is teaching methodically. Because of this the students have the opportunity of methodical learning. Darshani is the youngest of a family of 5 children. Home, an unauthorized shanty built on a government land, is in a valley about 2 km away from the main road. It does not have the basic needs like electricity, room facilities, health facilities etc. They don't have even a bed or chair to sit on. Amidst all these, the house is kept clean and tidy. The out side environment too is full of unauthorized erections. There is no facility for play or rest. Although the home surrounding depicts, poor economic situation the parents have taken steps to feed the girl with nourishing food, provide security, love and supply all the necessities of the girl.

Findings

Participation in School Education

Darshani's father did not have a permanent employment and day to day needs of the family were fulfilled by merchandizing at daily fair. Her mother took her to school every day and used to even clean the classroom after school before taking Darshani home. In 2003

father started producing and selling illegal liquor. The police have arrested him thrice. Mother's time was spent in attempting to get the father released over and over again and unlike in 2002 Darshani started to go to school with her sisters in 2003. In 2004 mother opened a flower stall near a temple. After that mother came to school rarely. In 2004 the parent's participation in school activities has deteriorated rapidly. In 2002 Darshani was absent from school for 18 days. This has increased to 43 days in 2003 and by end of June 2004 to 31. Darshani's participation in school activities by then has been very unsatisfactory. On 2003 she get absent mostly because of family problems. In 2004 she used to accompany her mother to the flower stall. The principal who let her mother pick flowers in the school premises without any payment, asked her to send the girl to school regularly. But there has been no change.

Darshani followed a silent attitude at the beginning of the year 2002. Gradually she presented her necessities and exhibited a good participation in her subjects. In early days of 2002 after finishing an exercise she used to demand tick (/), and later she demanded an asterisk (*) in addition to the tick. But after 2003 with her increasing absence from school she lost interest in ' / ', and * 's. She has started forgetting most of the things she learnt by 2004 as a result of being absent frequently and has lost interest and enthusiasm in her studies.

Like in 2002 Darshani participated in extracurricular activities in 2003 and 2004 as well. She took part in annual sports meet, and language days. How ever she never won a competition. In 2002 the most prominent characteristic in Darshani has been her cleanliness and neatness. In 2003 she did not wear a new uniform and the tie was absent most of the times. By 2004 her uniforms were worn out and her clothes were in a very poor state.

Darshani used to bring a proper lunch in 2002. She used to bring rice, Bread, String hoppers, Rotti, milk rice, Dosei, ect. From 2003 to 2004 she tends to buy something like buns or biscuits for her lunch. Further she gradually refrained from sharing her meals by 2003 and 2004 unlike in 2002. In 2002 she used to bring lunch in a lunch box covered with a napkins. This has changed to a bun or biscuits in a paper bag by 2003 and 2004. Although her frequency of getting absent was increasing in 2003 and similarly in 2004. On the days she come to school she used to take a very good interest in school activities. The other children would usually express their happiness loudly when teacher put a right mark in their exercise books but Darshani would display silence at times like that. She managed to keep her relationship with teacher well balanced in 2002, 2003 as well as 2004. There was no change in her silent manner and answering by nodding her head. She showed

some ability to all the subjects she learnt. However, of all the subjects she learnt in 2002, 2003 and 2004 she showed a special preference to the subject, Art.

Development of competencies

Before Darshani entered the school, she had been attending a pre school in a church for one month. During that period she had exhibited a silent and quiet behavior. From 2002 to 2004 Darshani used head and eyes to communicate rather than words. If there were any noticeable differences in her speech it was the use of English words to convey her needs. Darshani had acquired the ability to make requests in English. Eg. may I go to the toilet? Although she was able to read the letter 'A' at the beginning of the year 2002, towards the end of the year 2004 she could read simple sentences and even write simple sentences. She learned to write sentences, small essays and she also could successfully complete dictated exercises by 2004. But in writing during 2003 and 2004 some mistakes could be detected concerning the arithmetic competencies. By March Darshani could write the digit 1. Towards the end of the year 2002 she could count from 1 to 20. She also had the ability of doing additions in digits ranging from 1-9. By 2002 she could solve sums regarding money transactions successfully. By 2002 she knew multiplying tables up to the multiples of 6. From the beginning of the year she did not display the use of gestures in expressing ideas. She was also unable to identify directions and to cut pictures to a particular shape. She drew a railway line vertically when all the other students drew it horizontally.

Competencies related to play and use of leisure

Darshani participated in all the co-curricular activities. Although she did not win at any one of the competitions she used all the play equipment like the ladder, glider and rotation at the beginning of the year. She faced these challenges successfully. From the beginning of the year Darshani voluntarily participated in Art, Music and creative activities thus exhibiting her creative abilities.

Competencies related to Learning to Learn

In 2002 and 2003 Darshani used to revise her lessons. Everyday she dedicatedly completed all her homework in 2002. With the decreasing of her attendance to school she started to work only when she was at school. She has forgotten whatever she learnt earlier.

Conclusion

Without any outstanding changes in the school, classroom or teacher, an obvious change had taken place in Darshani's educational participation and development of competencies.

Stressful and painful events like change of her house, setting fire to the house, change of employment of parents have directly influenced the home atmosphere, affected her educational participation and was slowing down her development. Therefore we could come to the conclusion that the home environment yields a greater effect than classroom, in a child's education. The following statement of the teacher further confirms this. "If Darshani attends school regularly she has the ability to fair well". The time has come to introduce a system which will identify problems in the home environment of child and provide counseling not only to child but to parents as well.

3. Development of competencies

Competency in pre - writing and writing of Grade one students:

A longitudinal study

Abstract

As a part of a longitudinal research initiated in 2002, competency of writing included in the set of communication competencies was measured using an activity given to 1021 children from 43 Grade 1 classrooms in forty-one schools selected to represent the diverse social, cultural, economic, demographic, geographical and educational backgrounds of the country. The specific objectives of the study are to identify the competency of writing basic shapes within a spacious area, writing the same basic shapes within a limited area and in a blank paper, to analyze the competency in writing words joining dotted lines, to analyze the competency of writing words without 'pillam (affixing vowel symbols)' while looking at them and listening to them, to analyze the competency of writing sentences with 'pillam' while looking at them and listening to them and to analyze the competency of writing the child's own short name. Ten Instruments were developed to collect data during the Grade one at different intervals. Each instrument was specified a certain aspect of competency and the ten instruments were representative to hierarchical nature of competencies in writing. Each activity sheet was administered to children by their respective class teachers who were trained for the purpose.

Developmental patterns of selected nine aspects of writing were identified (Table 1).

Table 1. The percentage of students achieved and not achieved competencies in pre writing and writing by competency level at the end of Grade one

Instrument Number	Competency level	% of students acquired competency	% of students not acquired competency
6.9	Writing the child's own short name	39.24	60.76
6.8	Writing sentences with 'pillam' while listening to them	27.16	72.84
6.7	Writing sentences with 'pillam' while looking at them	54.76	45.24
6.6	Writing words without 'pillam' listening to them	45.69	54.31
6.5	Writing words without 'pillam' while looking at them	70.28	29.72
6.4	Writing letters/words joining dotted lines	84.06	15.04
6.3	Writing the same basic shapes in a blank paper	70.04	29.06
6.2	Writing the same basic shapes within a limited area	76.71	23.29
6.1	Writing basic shapes within a spacious area	85.15	14.85

Pearson chi-square test was used to identify the association between nine competency levels with school, country and child related variables and explanatory variables for the achievement of competency were identified.

Extended abstract

Introduction

As a part of a longitudinal research initiated in 2002, competency of writing included in the set of communication competencies was measured using an activity given to 1021 children from 43 Grade 1 classrooms in forty-one schools selected to represent the diverse social, cultural, economic, demographic, geographical and educational backgrounds of the country. Objectives of the study are to identify the development of competency in psychomotor development and pre- writing, to identify the way the development of writing for day to day activities, to identify the development of writing for communication, and to identify the development of creative writing. The objectives were specified as follows:

- To identify the competency of writing basic shapes within a spacious area
- To identify the competency of writing the same basic shapes within a limited area
- To identify the competency of writing the same basic shapes in a blank paper
- To analyze the competency in writing words joining dotted lines
- To analyze the competency of writing words without 'pillam (affixing vowel symbols)' while looking at them
- To analyze the competency of writing words without 'pillam' listening to them
- To analyze the competency of writing sentences without 'pillam' while looking at them
- To analyze the competency of writing sentences without 'pillam' listening to them
- To analyze the competency of writing the child's own short name

Methodology

Ten Instruments were developed to collect data during the Grade one on aforesaid objectives. Each instrument was specified a certain aspect of competency and the ten instruments were representative to hierarchical nature of competencies in writing. Instruments consisted of written instructions for teachers, guided sheets (EX: A sheet with relevant sentences without 'pillam' to be used by students in relation to the competency of writing sentences while looking at them), activity sheets to be filled by teachers, and data entry sheets. Their respective class teachers who were trained for the purpose administered each activity sheet to children. They were familiarized with research ethics on data collection too. They were further instructed and assisted by a researcher appointed to each school.

Findings

To identify the competency developmental patterns of selected nine aspects of writing a general table was prepared (Table 1). Accordingly the following patterns of development were identified.

- At the end of the Grade one 15% of the students could not attain the first competency level
- Only 39% of students achieved all the competency levels
- 2% of children were not self- directed for writing at the end of Grade one.
- 11% of students use left hand for writing
- During the second and third terms the achievement of competencies is accelerated than the first term.

Table 1. The percentage of students achieved and not achieved competencies in pre writing and writing by competency level at the end of Grade one

Instrument Number	Competency level	% of students acquired competency	% of students not acquired competency
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6.5	Writing words without 'pillam' while looking at them	70.28	29.72
6.4	Writing letters/words joining dotted lines	84.06	15.04
6.3	Writing the same basic shapes in a blank paper	70.04	29.06
6.2	Writing the same basic shapes within a limited area	76.71	23.29
6.1	Writing basic shapes within a spacious area	85.15	14.85

Nine competency levels were compared with school, country and child related variables to identify whether they have significant influence on competency on writing (Table 2). Considering 5% significant level, following inferences was made.

According to student related variables

- The variable 'Ethnicity' has significant relationships on eight competency levels other than on 'writing the same basic shapes within a limited area'.
- There is a significant association between 'Religion' and eight competency levels other than 'writing words without 'pillam' listening to them'.
- 'Mode of traveling' has considerable influence on eight competency levels other than 'writing letters/words joining dotted lines'.

Table 2. Significant levels of competency according to thirteen variables (X^2)

Category of variable	Variable	Writing basic shapes within a spacious area 6.1	Writing the same basic shapes within a limited area 6.2	Writing the same basic shapes in a blank paper 6.3	Writing letters/words joining dotted lines 6.4	Writing words without 'pillam' while looking at them 6.5	Writing words without 'pillam' listening to them 6.6	Writing sentences with 'pillam' while looking at them 6.7	Writing sentences with 'pillam' while listening to them 6.7	Writing the child's own short name 6.9
School	Type	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.558*	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	Ethnicity	0.000	0.046	0.000	0.002	0.000	0.191*	0.000	0.000	0.000
	Medium	0.000	0.051*	0.000	0.041	0.000	0.622*	0.000	0.000	0.000
Country	Socio economic zones	0.018	0.000	0.000	0.540*	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	Provinces	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.074*	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	Relief zones	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.597*	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	Weather zones	0.030	0.000	0.000	0.463*	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Student	Sex of the child	0.213*	0.003	0.009	0.098*	0.602*	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	Ethnicity	0.000	0.076*	0.000	0.038	0.001	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	Religion	0.000	0.016	0.000	0.008	0.000	0.112*	0.000	0.005	0.000
	Nature of residence	0.815*	0.844*	1.000*	0.350*	0.855*	1.000*	0.503*	0.709*	0.855*
	Distance to school	0.250*	0.000	0.126*	0.003	0.142*	0.002	0.162*	0.310*	0.063*
	Mode of travelling to school	0.000	0.000	0.002	0.692*	0.018	0.000	0.003	0.000	0.017

There is no any significant relationship between nature of residence and all the competent levels of writing skills. But the distance to school has shown a considerable influence on writing letters/words joining dotted lines

According to school related variables, type of school significantly influences all variables other than 'writing letters/words adjoining dotted lines'. There are significant relationships between Ethnicity of school and all the variables apart from 'Writing words without 'pillam' while listening to them'. Medium of school has significant relationships with variables other than 'writing the same basic shapes within a limited area', and 'writing words without 'pillam' while listening to them'.

According to country related variables, "Socio economic zones, Provinces, Relief zones, and weather zones" are significant influential factors with all competency levels, except the variable, 'writing letters/words joining dotted lines'.

Factors related to competency level of reading numbers of Grade One students: A longitudinal study

Abstract

As a part of a longitudinal research initiated in 2002, competency of identifying numbers (not in order: 1,3,6,2,5,7,4,9,8) was measured using an activity given to 1021 children representing 43 Grade 1 classes. Thirteen variables were considered to study their relative association with the competency of identifying 1 to 9 during the three school terms. The associations between competent level (Response variable) (Level 1: Competent - students who were able to read more than 80% of numbers); Level 2: Not competent - students who were not able to read more than 80% of numbers) and rest of the variables were measured using the Pearson chi-square test. Significantly associated variables in the three terms clustered using multivariate technique and four meaningful clusters could be identified. Four variables (School Type: ST, Medium: M, Socio-Economic Zone: SEZ, and Way of Coming to School: WCS) were selected to represent each cluster. The way of contribution of selected variables to the competent level was studied fitting a Logistic Regression Model. Forward selection procedure was applied to obtain the model. The model is:

$$\text{Logit}(p_{ijkl}) = \text{Constant} + (\text{School type})_i + (\text{Medium})_j + (\text{Socio-Economic Zone})_k + (\text{Way of coming to school})_l$$
; where $\text{Logit}(p_{ijkl}) = \text{Log}_e((p_{ijkl} / (1 - p_{ijkl}))$

Here, p_{ijkl} is the probability of being competent of reading numbers for a grade 1 student who studies i^{th} type of school in j^{th} medium, who belongs to k^{th} socio-economic zone and who comes to school by l^{th} way.

Accordingly for a grade 1 student who belongs to 3rd SEZ, who studies in a Type 1C school in Tamil M and comes to school by a vehicle has the maximum possibility of being competent in reading numbers in the first term. Minimum possibility is recorded from a student belonging to SEZ – 2, studying in a Type 2 school in Sinhala medium and who comes to school on foot. In the third term, for a grade 1 student who belongs to 1st SEZ, who studies in a Type 3 school in Sinhala medium and comes to school by a vehicle has the maximum possibility of being competent in reading numbers. The relevant minimum possibility is recorded from a student belonging to SEZ– 3, who studies in a Type 2 school in Tamil medium and comes to school on foot. It can be clearly identified that the medium of instruction has been a major influencing factor of becoming competency on reading numbers of grade 1 student from school term 1 to term 3.

Extended abstract

Introduction

A longitudinal research was initiated in 2002 to study student participation in primary school education and the way the students develop their competencies. Forty-three classrooms from forty-one schools representing the diverse social, cultural, economic, demographic, geographical and educational backgrounds of the country were the school sample and all new entrants to Grade 1 in January 2002 were the student sample (1021). Teachers in the selected classrooms collected data and a researcher was appointed to each school to guide the teacher. Perceptions of teachers, researchers and parents, classroom artifacts, observations of teachers and researchers, interviews with children, teachers, and parents, planned activities assigned to children were the data collection methods.

Methodology

As a part of the study, competency of identifying numbers from 1 to 9 (not in order: 1, 3,6,2,5,7,4,9,8) measured using an activity. Children were asked to identify the numbers and read. Thirteen variables were considered to study their relative association with the competency. Pearson chi-square test was used to identify the associations between competent level (Response variable) which was categorized into two levels (Level 1: Competent - students who were able to read more than 80% of numbers from 1 to 9 correctly; Level 2: Not competent - students who were not able to read more than 80% of numbers from 1 to 9 correctly) and the rest of the variables. Accordingly, school type: ST, ethnicity of school: ESC, medium: M, socio-economic zone: SEZ, province: PRO, relief zone: RZ, ethnicity of child: EC, way of coming to school: WCS have associated significantly with competent level in the first, second and third terms. Additionally the variable religion: REL was significantly associated with competent level in the first and third terms. In the first two terms, climate zone: CLZ has a significant association. The factor called distance from home to school: DHS has shown a significant association only in the second term. These variables were selected for clustering using multivariate technique and four meaningful clusters for three terms could be identified (Table 1). Four variables having relatively lower number of categories were selected representing each cluster. They are school type: ST, medium: M, socio-economic zone: SEZ and way of coming to school: WCS. These variables were closely related to the competent level separately.

Table 1. Clusters identified

Cluster	1 st term	2 nd term	3 rd term
1	ST	ST	ST
2	ESC, M, EC, REL	ESC, M, EC	ESC, M, EC, REL
3	SEZ, CLZ, PRO, RZ	SEZ, CLZ, PRO, RZ	SEZ, PRO, RZ
4	WCS	DHS, WCS	WCS

Hence it is important to investigate how far these variables have contributed to the competent level. To achieve that objective the most suitable technique is fitting a Logistic Regression model. That model was constructed using competent level as the response variable and the above selected five variables as the dependent variables.

Results

The model was fitted applying the Forward Selection Method. All the variables have shown a significant contribution to the model for three terms.

$$\text{Logit}(p_{ijkl}) = \text{Constant} + (\text{School type})_i + (\text{Medium})_j + (\text{Socio-Economic Zone})_k + (\text{Way of coming to school})_l$$

$$\text{where } \text{Logit}(p_{ijkl}) = \text{Log}_e((p_{ijkl} / (1 - p_{ijkl})))$$

Here, p_{ijkl} is the probability of being competent of reading numbers for a grade 1 student who studies i^{th} type of school in j^{th} medium, who belongs to k^{th} socio-economic zone and who comes to school by l^{th} way.

Declaration of factor levels is as follows.

School type: 1 – Type 2, 2 – Type 3, 3 – Type 1C, 4 – Type 1AB, 5 –National School

Medium: 1 – Sinhala, 2 - Tamil,

Socio-Economic Zone: 1 - Colombo (except city limits), Gampaha, Kalutara, Galle and Matara districts, 2 - Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa, Monaragala, Hambantota and Puttalam districts, 3 - Districts belong to Northern and Eastern province, 4 - Kandy, Nuwaraeliya, Matale, Badulla, Kegall and Kurunegala districts, 5 - Colombo city limits

Way of coming to school: 1 – Walking, 2 – By a vehicle

Table 2. The parameter estimates of three models for three terms

Variable and it's level	1 st Term		2 nd Term		3 rd Term	
	Coefficient	p-value	Coefficient	p-value	Coefficient	p-value
Constant	-1.136	0.000	0.036	0.844	1.546	0.000
School type						
1	0.000		0.000		0.000	
2	-0.021	0.932	0.864	0.000	0.955	0.002
3	0.381	0.077	0.472	0.020	0.484	0.113
4	0.296	0.342	1.140	0.000	0.705	0.054
5			1.144	0.024	0.765	0.224
Medium						
1	0.000		0.000		0.000	
2	0.835	0.001	0.215	0.349	-0.334	0.264
Socio-Economic Zone						
1	0.000		0.000		0.000	
2	-0.026	0.913	-0.770	0.001	-0.015	0.968
3	0.274	0.395	-0.395	0.150	-0.998	0.006
4	-0.043	0.839	-0.320	0.120	-0.714	0.028
5	0.055	0.883	0.057	0.856	-0.684	0.076
Way of coming to school						
1	0.000		0.000		0.000	
2	0.629	0.000	0.471	0.002	0.645	0.002

Conclusions

For a grade 1 student who belongs to the 3rd Socio Economic zone, who studies in a 1C school in Tamil medium and comes to school by a vehicle has the maximum possibility of being competent in reading numbers in the first term. That of minimum possibility is recorded from a student belonging to the 4th Socio Economic zone, studying in a Type 3 school in Sinhala medium and who comes to school on foot. In the second term, for a grade 1 student belonging to the 5th Socio Economic zone, who studies in a National school in Tamil medium and comes to school by a vehicle has the maximum possibility of being competent in reading numbers. The relevant minimum possibility is recorded from a student belonging to the 2nd Socio Economic zone, studying in a Type 2 school in Sinhala medium and who comes to school on foot. In the third term, for a grade 1 student who belongs to the 1st Socio Economic zone, studies in a 3 school type in Sinhala medium and comes to school by a vehicle has the maximum possibility of being competent in reading numbers. That of minimum possibility is recorded from a student belonging to the 3rd Socio Economic zone, studying in a 2 type of school in Tamil medium and who comes to school on foot.

Considering the above results, it can be clearly identified that the medium of instruction has been a major influencing factor of becoming competent on reading numbers of grade 1 student from term 1 to term 3.

4. Influencing factors

Relative effect of home and classroom on a girl-child in grade 1: A longitudinal case study

abstract

In order to study how Sri Lankan children develop their competencies through school education, in grades 1 and 2 of the primary stage, 1021 children were selected from 41 schools belonging to different socio-economic strata. As a part of the study, 43 children were selected for case study. Out of these, data relating to the case study of Sudumali - a girl child who studies in a rural school in Kandy district, were collected using 16 structured research instruments, researcher's monthly observations, once a term observation of home environment, interviews with parents, teachers and pupils, teacher perceptions, assessment records, and exercise books and analyzed to identify patterns.

Sudumali is a child of a mother suffering from mental disorder, and her father- a labourer living in a deprived economic environment. She was absent from school for 22 days in 2002. But this was reduced to 3 days in 2003 due to her teacher's efforts. Late arrival and early leaving from school was not there, not because of home environment, but because of self-motivation. Participation in learning the subjects showed a remarkable improvement in 2003 in relation to that of 2002. There was a gradual disappearance of the effects of shyness, fear, suspicion and timidity, has been a major reason for this change. Even though she did not bring food from home, teacher was able to intervene and get other pupils to contribute to her meal during the school interval. In addition the teacher's love, affection, kindness, encouragement, reinforcement etc. had an influence on her. She was dirty and disorderly at the beginning but after providing the equipment she needed, she came to school in an orderly manner. The workbooks, equipments, aids, play area - all helped to increase her participation in curricular and co-curricular activities.

A fluctuation in her development of competencies was noticed during 2 years. Sudumali, who was far behind in language skills even in April, 2002 reached the level of competent children at the end of 2003. Her abilities in creative work and drawing were noticed from the beginning of 2002. But her competencies in singing and dancing developed slowly. However, getting her involved in concerts and other such activities helped the gradual development of her competencies in such areas towards the end of 2003. Thus, Sudumali,

who was a backward child at the beginning of 2002, displayed a considerable improvement in education. The conclusion one can arrive at, from this observation is that even though the home background is not conducive, the school and the classroom environment that provides a free education have contributed to the education development of this child during these 2 years.

Extended abstract

Introduction

The main objective of the longitudinal study is to identify how children who entered grade 1 in 2002 participated in education and acquire competencies during the 5 years at the primary school stage. The school sample consists of 1021 students from 43 classrooms, which are situated in diverse social, cultural and geographical backgrounds in Sri Lanka. Out of the whole sample, one child from each classroom had been selected for a case study. This case study is about the child called Sudumali (all names in this report are pseudonyms) who attended school No.4, situated in the Kandy district. Objectives of the case study are to identify how a child from the hill-country in a rural background participates in the educational process at the primary level of education, to study the development of selected aspects of competencies of the student and to study how the school, the teacher and the home affect the child's participation in the educational process and the development of competencies.

Methodology

For the longitudinal case study on Sudumali, quantitative data from 16 structured instruments and qualitative data from observations, informal interviews, perceptions, assessment records and exercise books were collected and triangulated to identify patterns. Data were collected for two years visiting school monthly and home once a three months.

Findings

Participation in school education

- Sudumali entered a Type C school situated on a by road in a rural area in the wet zone of the upcountry. The school had classes from Grade1 to Grade13, 27

teachers and a total of 430 students. The number of students in Grade 1 class was 31. In grade 2 she studied with 30 children who were Sinhala Buddhists. Two classrooms were arranged according to the requirements to the new educational reforms. The class teacher who continued to teach in the two grades was well informed and active and dedicated. Hence the classrooms had a motivating atmosphere conducive to learning. There was enough space in the classrooms and most of the students appear to be engaged in the learning activities except Sudumali who was rather lethargic, quiet and reserved in disposition at the beginning of her schooling.

- Sudumali's home was about 1 km from the school and she came to school walking. Sudumali's father was a labourer. Mother was unemployed and suffered from a mental disorder. Sudumali had two elder sisters and an elder brother. Her home was small and not spacious and had no electricity or other basic amenities. Sudumali had not got the necessary items for her studies or a suitable environment for learning at home. There was no one at home to support her in her school work. She had never attended a pre school nor was attending Dhamma School on Sundays. Her school dresses were neither satisfactory nor clean. She never brought any food from home and ate whatever food the other students gave her.
- Sudumali's parents never came to the school to look into her educational needs. Assistance towards her education at home was very poor. This was confirmed by the statement of the teacher, "mother or father did not come even for the admission of the child."
- During the year 2002 Sudumali had been absent from school for 22 days; 10 days because her mother's illness and 12 days due to her own illness. In grade 2 her attendance was increased due to teacher's intervention.
- Sudumali had never come to school late. Even though there was no clock at home and parents did not encourage her for schooling, she came to school in time. This may be because she lived in close proximity to the school and she joined with the children who lived in the vicinity of her home and the same school. Sudumali got ready herself and came to school on time. School was a safe place for her.
- At the beginning of the first year Sudumali's participation in classroom work was poor. But towards the end of the first year there had been a gradual improvement.
- She showed a successful participation in the lessons conducted through drawing. She was fond of drawing and she expressed talents in drawing. Hence she was

more successful in individual activities than in team or group activities. She was shy in front of a group. Her participation in singing and dancing was not satisfactory. This trait decreased to some extent at the end of the second year, and she managed to participate in a school concert.

- In relation to communication, she rarely spoke in the classroom or outside the classroom at all. That was also only with her friends. She was not talkative. Did not speak more than few words. At the beginning of the year, she replied a question by nodding her head. By the end of the first year she replied in a word or in a short sentence.
- She was not mischievous and did not roam about. By the end of the first year, however, on several occasions, she tended to hit and scold other children.
- In relation to play and use of leisure, she had showed a progress throughout the year. During February and March she had been to play compound in a sluggish manner. She did not participate in playing, instead she was watching. But by the end of the year she actively played. This trend improved in grade 2 and she tended to play on her own.

Development of competencies

- Being shy, timid and imitating others, Sudumali did not perform well in the team or group activities related to “listening”. She performed well only at individual activities. In the grade 2 she was more socialized due to classroom activities.
- She showed satisfactory progress under competency related to “reading for meaning.” By April she was not able to read the word “tree” (written with the picture). But by the end of November she displayed a significant progress. She was able to read all the sentences in the reading material except last two sentences correctly. At the end of the second year she read complex words in the Sinhala language and achieved 11 essential competencies out of 13.
- She showed a rapid progress in the competency related to “writing.” By the month of March the teacher had to make a tremendous effort to teach her to write the letter of “è (ga)”. But by November she was able to construct sentences with five words and to write letters and words accurately. Only defects were the different sizes of letters and inability to write on the lines. These weaknesses were decreased at the end of grade 2

- In considering her competencies relating to learning to learn her main process was watching and observing. She showed a considerable progress at the end of the year in this regard. For an example, on a certain day in November she approached the teacher and asked, “May I go to the toilet?” The classroom environment helped in many ways to develop her competencies in learning to learn.

The conclusion one can arrive at, from the case study is that even though the home background was not conducive, the school and the classroom environment that provide a free education, had contributed to the educational development of this child during the key stages of primary school education.

Two learning media; two school environments: A longitudinal case study of learning patterns of a Muslim child in grades 1 and 2

Abstract

This longitudinal case study is on a student called Rahul in the Nuwara Eliya district. For the longitudinal case study on Rahul, data were collected and triangulated from 16 structured instruments, researcher's monthly observations, once a term observations of home environment, interviews with teacher, teacher's perceptions, assessment records and exercise books of the child.

In 2002 and the first term of 2003, Rahul lived with his parents and younger brother in a wattle and daub house devoid of a good learning environment and lacking water and electricity facilities, in a new colony with rainy weather, where people of different cultural backgrounds lived together. There were Tamil, Sinhalese and Muslims. Rahul attended a school where the medium of instruction was Sinhala. There were 12 pupils belonging to different cultures in his class. In the second term of year 2003, Rahul moved into a Muslim Tamil medium school in the upcountry dry zone, residing in an environment of Muslim community where his grandmother and uncle were living in a more comfortable house with water and electricity and a good learning environment. There were 37 Muslim children and 2 Tamil children in his class. Change of environment and the change of learning medium had lead to an increase in motivation for learning. Rahul, who was at average level among the other 12 children, remained the same even in the new school. The changes found in the development of competencies in the child and his participation in education was notable.

First at school there was no opportunity to learn religion or to learn in his mother tongue and the dirty, disorderly and desolate nature of the classroom devoid of any learning needs failed to motivate the child for education. Further the teacher's negative attitudes, lack of commitment and inactivity, exerted a harmful influence on the development of competencies in the child. Secondly the school with its attractive and stress free environment with plenty of learning materials motivated learning. The teacher's positive attitudes, activeness, encouraged the child to learn and there was a higher level of participation in education and greater development of competencies than in 2002. Since it

was a Muslim school, it was possible to learn the Islam religion and have achieved 100% of competencies in religion – Islam as against 53% of competencies in religion (Buddhism) in the first school. He read only two letters without “pili” and could not read sentences. Could copy simple words, but could not listen and write. In the second school he read simple words with “pili” and phrases and copies simple words but could not listen and write.

Extended abstract

Introduction

This longitudinal case study was on Rahul. He was studying in two schools, first a Sinhala medium school located on a dairy and vegetable farm in Nuwara - Eliya district and later in a Tamil medium school in Badulla district. The main objective of the study was to identify participatory patterns and competency developmental patterns of the child during the first two years of schooling in two different schools.

Method

Longitudinal research method was employed. Data were collected from the following sources:

- Monthly/ term wise collection of data by class teachers using structured instruments
- Monthly observations by the researcher
- Observation made during a school term at home environment
- Interviews with teachers, parents, and pupils
- Teacher perception
- Assessment records/ Exercise books and classroom artifacts

Data were methodologically triangulated to identify patterns. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze data collected by structured instruments.

Setting

In the year 2002 and first term of 2003, Rahul lived in a new colony, where people of different cultural backgrounds lived together. There were Tamil, Sinhales and Muslims. Rahul attended a school where the medium of instruction was Sinhala. There were 12 pupils belonging to different cultures in his class. In term 2 in 2003, Rahul moved into a new school. His Muslim relatives were living there. There were 37 Muslim children and 2

Tamil children in his class. They all learned in Tamil medium.

The change of learning environment and the change of medium helped to increase motivation for learning in Rahul. The changes found in the development of competencies in the child and his participation in education is noted in the table.

The environmental characteristics and the competencies development in 2002 and 1st Term of 2003	The environmental characteristics and competencies developed in 2nd and 3rd term of 2003
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lived in a wattle and daub house devoid of a good learning environment and lacking water and electricity facilities. • Lived with his parents and younger brother in a colony with rainy weather. • It was not possible for the mother who had learned in the Tamil medium, or the father who had learned up to grade 2 and had low economic ability, to provide support the child's learning. • Since it was a Sinhala medium school there was no opportunity to learn religion or to learn in his mother tongue. • The dirty disorderly and desolate nature of the classroom devoid of any learning needs failed to motivate the child for education. • Teacher's negative attitude, lack of commitment and inactivity, exerted a harmful influence on the development of competencies in the child. • 79 days absent from school • Never comes to school late • Leaves school early on Fridays to go to mosque. • Read two letters without "pili (affixing vowel symbols)" and could not read sentences. • Can copy simple words, but could not listen and write. • Has developed 96% of competencies in Maths. • Has learned 86% of competencies in Mother Language • Have 53% of competencies in religion (Buddhism) • Did not engage in singing or story telling • Did not participate in extra co-curricular activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lived in a more comfortable house with water and electricity and a good learning environment. • Lived with his grandmother and uncle among his Muslim relatives in a dry weather environment. • An uncle with a higher economic strength and a grand mother, who can help learning in the Tamil medium, provided maximum support for child's learning. • Since it was a Muslim school, it was possible to learn the Islam religion. • The attractive playable environment with plenty of learning materials motivated learning. • The teacher's positive attitudes, activeness, encouraged the child to learn and there was a higher level of participation in education and greater development of competencies than in 2002. • Number of days absent was 13 • Never comes to school late • Since school closes early to go to mosque child never leaves school early • Read simple words with "pili" and phrases. • Copies simple words but could not listen and write. • Has developed 92% of competencies in Maths. • Has developed 63% of competencies in Mother Teague. • Have 100% of competencies in religion – Islam. • Engaged in singing and story telling • Participated in co-curricular activities.

Conclusion

The nature of learning environment in both home and classroom could affect the participation in school education and competency development. The medium of instruction is an important factor in competency development. Although the classroom of key stage two have been changed due to new reforms, in some schools the implementation of reforms were not according to the expected standards affecting the competency development.

A Tamil student in a school in Mathulu Danawwa

Abstract

In order to investigate, through longitudinal methodology, how Sri Lankan children develop their competencies during the participation for five years of the primary stage, 1021 children from 43 classrooms in different socio-economic strata were selected. Forty-three children - one child from each of the 43 classes - were selected for indepth study as case studies. For the longitudinal case study on Meena - a Tamil girl child - who studied in grades 1 and 2 in an estate school in the Matale district, quantitative data from 16 structured instruments and qualitative data from observations, informal interviews, perceptions, assessment records and exercise books were collected and triangulated to identify patterns.

The girl came to school accompanied by her brother during the first 2-3 days of commencing schooling in 2002 and later all by herself. She was able to ask questions related to her needs and conversed only with 2-3 children. By 2003, she on her own started talking with other children. Even though she did not engage in group play activities at the beginning of 2002, by the end of that year and in 2003, she participated in both in-door and out-door play activities and group activities, even without teacher's direction. By November 2002, when her guardian aunt left for employment abroad, her personal cleanliness diminished. The girl, who used to bring nutritious food to school earlier, started bringing just two slices of bread with or without sugar. But towards the end of 2003, due to continued guidance by her teacher, her cleanliness improved and she brought rice with some curries for her meals. At the beginning of 2002, the girl carried out classroom responsibilities under teacher's guidance but later took the initiative herself and was on the offensive when other children attempted to take over her responsibilities.

By October 2002, she managed to add three sentences to the letter her father wrote to her mother who was working abroad. In 2003, she could write short essays and read storybooks and newspapers. In 2003, she could count from 1 to 9 in sequence and out of sequence and was able to count up to 100 by the end of the year. She was able to master all the essential competencies of the curriculum and was ahead of others in classroom participation and in the development of competencies. The teacher and the classroom environment had greatly contributed to this situation. The existence of a clean, free and

spacious environment for growing up children, in place of the estate line settlements, they were brought up earlier, had immensely supported the development of the potential of the child. It is hoped that this longitudinal study will reveal how the classroom with an organized learning environment, the role of the teacher and the classmates will determine the future direction of the child.

Extended abstract

Introduction

In order to investigate, through longitudinal research methodology, how Sri Lankan children participate in primary school education and develop their competencies during the primary stage of schooling, 1021 children from 43 classrooms in different socio-economic strata were selected. Forty-three children - one child from each of the 43 classes - were selected for in-depth case studies. For the longitudinal case study on Meena - a Tamil girl child - who studied in grades 1 and 2 in an estate school in Matale district, quantitative data from 16 structured instruments and qualitative data from observations, informal interviews, perceptions, assessment records and exercise books were collected and triangulated to identify patterns. Teacher in charge of the classes collected data from 16 instruments, which were developed to enter data extracted from teacher perception, observations and activities to be done by children. The researcher visited the classroom once a month and home once a term to observe the child.

Research setting

The school situated in the middle of a rubber estate. The school has classes from Grade 1 to 5. The buildings of the school consist of an old derelict building alongside a new building and the principal's quarter. There are 55 students in the school. The total number of staff is 6. Although the school lacks a proper playground, the children use the grassy clearing in front of the school to play. The morning assembly is held here as well. The two main problems that the school has are lack of water facilities and the animals that harm and damage the plants in the school garden. Meena's classroom is arranged according to the new educational reforms. The classroom is used for both Grade 1 and 2. Mina's class

teacher is a fair and pleasant lady of medium height. She is very kind and visits the homes of students who often get absent from school and encourages them to attend school.

Meena's home is one of the 20 line rooms built as quarters for the estate workers. The house has electricity, but no water facilities. In the small living room there is a television, a cabinet, a set of plastic chairs and a set of chairs with cushions. In one corner of this room there is an altar where statues of God Gnash are kept. Mina's mother is employed in a country in the Middle East and her father is a labourer. Mina and her brother were looked after by their aunt who had two children of her own until she too migrated to the Middle East for employment.

Limitations

The researcher was assigned to this case study in July of the first year when the researcher who was in charge went abroad. Hence, data collected from July onwards would be presented in this report. The researcher had to face another difficulty as Mina's mother tongue was Tamil and the researcher could not speak Tamil, the conversations had to be recorded and translated later.

Findings: Participation in education

- Her brother accompanied Meena when she attended the programme held to identify entry competencies. But her mother came with her to enroll her in the school. Her home is about 30 meters from the school and at close proximity. Because of this she came to school very early and has never come late.
- In February she was absent for 4 days as her mother had gone to the Middle East to work as a house maid. Again she got absent for 5 days in the 1st term as she was suffering from fever and due to religious festivals. Comparatively her attendance was satisfactory.
- The child was very silent during the 1st week at school, but she willingly participated in the classroom activities. She worked cooperatively with the other students in the class and after 2 or 3 months she managed to acquire leadership in classroom activities.
- She did not like the group association much in the 1st term from January to March. She was reluctant to participate in games. She did not talk to others except when necessary. But towards the end of the year in September and October she liked the company of her group and began to play with other students willingly.

- In February and March she grouped the other students in the class, distributing books among the students, distributing equipment, arranging the classroom when the teacher asked her to do them. But in September and October she did all these collective things without the instructions of the teacher.
- Although she was feeling shy and uneasy in front of the teacher at the beginning of the year, towards October and November she was very confident in front of the teacher and other students and answered questions with a smile.
- At the beginning of the year she did not have the habit of washing hands before meals. But towards the end of the year she cleaned her hands well before partaking of meals. Similarly at the beginning of the year she did not take meals methodically but at the end of the year she was very methodical.
- The things done on the instructions of the teacher in February and March were voluntarily done in October and November. Unlike in June and July by October she collected all the books and pencils forgotten by the students for safe - keeping and also looked after the equipment in the class without the teacher's instructions. Towards the end of the year as another student tried to take over her responsibilities, she became a little aggressive.

Development of competencies

- The student, starting from January, developed her listening skill consistently every month by gradually listening well to the lessons taught, and giving expected answers. Early in the year she could differentiate natural sounds from artificial sounds. From this competency till the end of the year she developed her skill to answer questions correctly at the 1st attempt after listening to the lessons attentively.
- From the beginning of the year till March she was reluctant to relate stories in front of students and indulge in conversation with a group, but she got rid of this at the end of the year by September and October she related a story to a group and in November she sang a song in front of a gathering.
- At the beginning of the year and during the 2nd term she recognized a letter in the 1st attempt. In the middle of the year she read the Tamil textbook and the textbook for religion. Towards October and November she could read and understand all these books and the children's news -papers with meaning.
- In the beginning of the year when she wrote words on the line, they were not straight. But during the 2nd term she could write with correct alignment. But towards the last term

of the year when she wrote 2 words, they were not straight and went above the rule (See figure).



Conclusions

The student's trust on the teacher is based on teacher's rapport, love, security and recognition. It reflects on the student's development of competencies. As the supplement of textbooks, workbooks and quality inputs, the development of competencies has taken place without any hindrance. Due to the lack of water facility, the opportunity of using clay in creations at work desk has been deprived. Due to the lack of a play area and a proper playground, the students got - used to retain in their classrooms. Therefore it could be seen as a negative factor in developing their sport abilities. As the teacher collects exercise books at the beginning of the year, the tendency of carelessness of bringing books would not take place and also there is no difficulty in note taking in the specified subject books.

A child detached from home, attempting to gain success through school: A longitudinal case study

Abstract

1021 children from 43 classrooms belonging to different social economic strata were selected for the purpose of studying how Sri Lankan children participate in primary school education and develop their competencies at primary stage, using longitudinal methodology. Out of them 43 children (- ie. a child from each of the 43 classroom -) were selected for case studies for in-depth investigation. For the longitudinal case-study on Ruwan who studied in grades 1 and 2 in a rural school in Puttalam, data were collected and analyzed qualitatively from structured instruments used by teachers for collecting data, researchers monthly observations, once a term observations of home environment, interviews with teacher, teacher's perceptions, assessment records and exercise books of the child.

According to research findings, the child had been absent from school for 23 days in 2002 due to viral fever. In 2003 he had been absent for 21 days. With his mother's departure for foreign employment, he was admitted to another school on 24.07.2002 but came back to the previous school, this time not from his fathers' house but from that of neighbour's. In 2003 too, as in 2002, there was not a single day that he came late to school. This was because coming to school was psychologically relieving for him to get away from the neighbour's house. Ruwan, who used to attend school with personal cleanliness, began to appear dirty since 3rd term in 2002 when his mother went abroad. Even though the child had no opportunity to maintain healthy relationships with members of the family, because of classroom influence, he displayed leadership qualities in decision-making at the class by maintaining good inter-relationships with other pupils. This child, who willingly engaged himself in both in-door and out-door games and continued to do so even at the end of the 2 years. This child could not read a single Sinhala letter at the beginning of 2002. But by the end of the year, he was able to read 5 letters and by the end of 2003, he could read the letters $\text{æ}^{\text{`}}$, $\text{ù}^{\text{`}}$, $\text{û}^{\text{`}}$, $\text{í}^{\text{`}}$, ' , $\text{ý}^{\text{`}}$. with 'alapilla' (the mark for 'a' sound). The child learned to count 1-15 in 2002 and by the end of 2003, he was able to count up to 39. Throughout the 2 years, however, the developmental characteristics expected through the curriculum did not appear in the developmental patterns of the child. His minimum development was due to the influence of the classroom environment and the teacher. It should be appreciated that Sri Lanka has a school system that allows a child, in spite of

family problems, to get admitted to two schools and still progress according to his potential. Perhaps, it will be possible by 2006, to reveal, through longitudinal investigation how the role of the class teacher, with 7 pupils in his small class, and the multi - grade system with grade 3, will determine this child's future.

Extended abstract

Introduction

1021 children from 43 classrooms belonging to different social economic strata were selected for the purpose of studying how Sri Lankan children participate in primary school education and develop their competencies at primary stage, using longitudinal methodology. Out of them 43 children (- i.e. a child from each of the 43 classroom -) were selected for case studies for in-depth investigation. For the longitudinal case-study on Ruwan who studied in grades 1 and 2 in a rural school in the district of Puttalam, data were collected and analyzed qualitatively from structured instruments used by teachers for collecting data, researchers monthly observations (on indoor classroom lessons, outdoor classroom lessons and behaviour of interval), once a term observations of home environment, interviews with teacher, teacher's perceptions, assessment records and exercise books of the child.

Research setting

This school was situated in a rural area in the Putaluma district of North western Province. The school comprised of two buildings and had sufficient desks, chairs, classrooms, lavatories and urinals. This area had a dry climate and the school lacks good drinking water. There were 9 teachers on the staff and 78 students on roll. The school had classes from Grade 1-9. The total number of students in Grade I was 5 (3 boys and 2 girls). The students had a play area next to their classroom. The classroom was organized as one group. In 2003 when the child was learning in grade 2 the class was amalgamated with grade 3 giving multigrade learning experiences for Ruwan. The inexperienced teacher, although she had trained in a Colleges of Education, could not use the multigrade teaching methods efficiently.

Limitations

The two researchers appointed to the school could not visit the school properly, which resulted in insufficient observation data for some months. Retrospective data collection methods were used to fill the gaps in data.

Findings

Classroom participation

- The child had been absent from school for 23 days in 2002 due to viral fever. In 2003 he had been absent for 21 days.
- The student has left the school 6 months after admission and has rejoined after 1 month. The cause was the migration of mother to a Middle Eastern country for an employment. After the migration of the mother, the child lived in another house with an aunty and her family. Father lives separately in a rental house.
- The school was safe house for the child due to his negligence in home front. Due to this reason he came to school every day without delay.
- The cleanliness of the child decreased in the grade 2 due to the negligence of the father and the family members of the home, where the child lived.

Development of Competencies

- He has listened keenly when a story was related and has given incorrect answers.
- At conversations in September he did not select the situation according to his experience. By October he selected a situation according to his experience and explained in order to build up the incident. He was a silent student in the organized classroom activities and talkative in unorganized interval play due the influence of family experiences.
- In April he read the 2 letters. In June he read the 3 letters and by September he was able to read 5 letters. In November too he could read the same 5 letters only. At the end of the grade 2 he could read six letters with "pili". At the beginning of schooling the child was suffering from a speech problem and due to intervention of the teacher it was remedied.
- In February he could not count any number, but during the 1st term he counted from 1-5 by memory. In the 2nd term he counted from 1- 10. By September in the 3rd term he counted only up to 10. In October and November he counted up to 15. But in

September and November he could show 9 objects only. At the end of the grade 2 he could count up to 39.

- In March he drew a small flower and coloured it and by May he drew something like a cloud and colored it. In October he drew 'stupa' and colored it. He made it a point to draw the figure large and keep blank area less. In November he made a dowsing rod and a house.
- In March he enjoyed indoor and outdoor games and participated in them voluntarily. During the interval, he participated in games continuously. In September and October he played observing instructions. By November he played with other students in a friendly manner during the interval; and within the classroom he played independently among the group.
- The development of religious and ethical competencies of the child was slow due to the unfavorable home environment and the less number of children in the class had less influence on the child in developing his competencies in this area.

Competencies related to the money earning motivated cane industry, and the competencies expected of school learning

Abstract

Samitha lives in a village famous for the production of cane furniture. Bookracks and chairs are produced in Samitha's home too. His father is also a carpenter. The school going elder brother, earns money by working at home in the evening. Samitha also has the skills to make a toy teapoy, chair or bench using the saw, hammer, and nails, strips of wood and rattan. Samitha who comes to school from this environment had been absent for 10 days in 2002 and had been late to school on 9 days in the same year. But in 2003 the number of absent days increased to 23 and the late comings decreased to 8. This was because he was suffering from phegrum. His participation in the economic activities at home was not the reason for this. Highest non - attendance recorded in class was 47. Thus, Samitha's absenteeism was moderate. There was none who was present throughout. At the pre-school attached to the temple in the village, this child had acquired the basic competences of working cooperatively with children If being concerned about others, of following advice and of adhering to religious rituals and moral principles. He entered this school as it was the parents' wish and the innocence, hospitality, religious mindedness, working in a leisurely manner that he displayed in the first week of his admission to school, were continued throughout the 2 years in the school.

In 2002, Samitha had achieved the essential learning competencies in the five fields of competency development. When compared with the total of 29 students - both girls and boys - in the class, there were 11 students better than Samitha; seven were at his level and 11 were weaker than he. Even though there was no clear-cut change in the development of competencies in Samitha in 2003, one student more competent than he had joined another group. But according to assessment records, Samitha had reached the essential competency levels and was ahead of others especially in creative activities. In extra curricular activities, he was a skilled "hevisi" drummer in the school junior band. He was good at characterization at concerts. He worked hard along with his parents in activities like Shramadana. Even though the environment he lived in was not very motivating due to his mother's encouragement and the teacher's concern and interest, Samitha gradually acquired the competencies.

Through this study it was possible to understand how a pupil maintains balance between the competencies he acquires from the community and those he acquires from the school.

Extended abstract

Introduction

In order to study how Sri Lankan children develop their competencies through school education, in grades 1 and 2 of the primary stage, 1021 children were selected from 41 schools belonging to different socio-economic strata. As a part of the study, 43 children were selected for case study. This longitudinal case study was on Samitha who was studying in a type 2 school in Gampha district. Objective of the study was to identify participatory patterns and competency developmental patterns of the child during the first two years of schooling and the factors that affected the participation and competency development.

Method

Longitudinal research method was employed. Data were collected from the following sources:

- Monthly/ term wise collection of data by class teachers using structured instruments
- Monthly observations by the researcher
- Observation made during a school term on home environment
- Interviews with teachers, parents, and pupils
- Teacher perception
- Assessment records/ Exercise books and classroom artifacts

Data were methodologically triangulated to identify patterns. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze data collected by structured instruments.

Research setting

The child chosen for the case study from School number 32 is a Sinhala Buddhist boy called Samitha. Samitha's school is situated in a village well known for cane industry. There are 2 parallel classes for each grade from Grade 1 to Grade 11. Samitha's

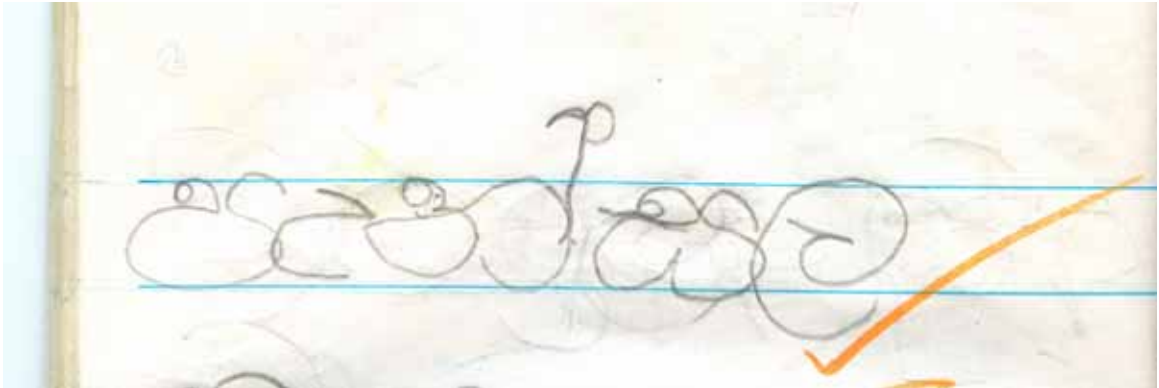
classrooms were arranged according to the specifications of the New Educational Reforms. The 32 children in these classes come from families with a low socio-economic background. Their class teacher's dedication, constant encouragement and support had got these students interested in their studies. By the end of the year most of the students had adapted those to the school culture and are well behaved. There are 4 students who are backward in this class. Samitha was a well-behaved boy who prefers to be on his own. He did his schoolwork quietly.

Samitha's home is situated 1.9km away from the school. There were electricity and water facilities and enough space for the 6 members in the family. The house is tidy spacious but lacks cleanliness. The child has resources and parental support for studies. There is enough space in the garden to play. Samitha walks to school and brings food from home.

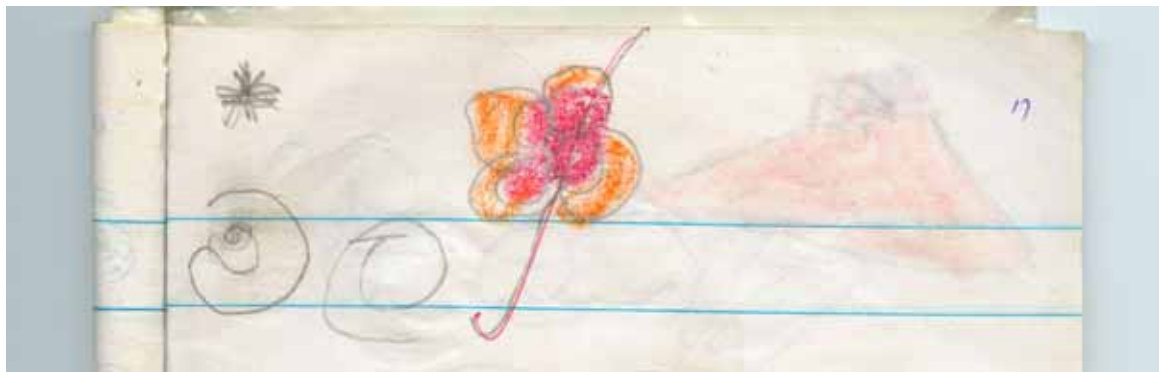
Findings

- The child had acquired experience in working with peers, helping others and following religious observances from his pre-school which was situated in the premises of the village temple.
- The child was enrolled in the school of his parents' choice.
- Throughout the year Samitha displayed a helpful attitude towards others, innocent and patient nature, orderliness and a deep respect towards his religion.
- In the first seven months, the child did not get absent from school. But towards the end of the year he got absent on 9 days due to illnesses and one day due to heavy rain.
- For 4 months the child had come to school early. Then for five months he got late once a month. During 2 months he had got late on 2 occasions.
- Since January the child could hold the pen correctly. He could hold the paper in the correct direction as well. In January and February he had asked what he should draw before drawing, but in the following months he started to draw immediately. In August Samitha could trace 5 simple words over the dotted lines and by September he could copy as well as listen and write sentences with 3 words without affixing vowel symbols (Figure 1). In October he could write sentences with 3 words with affixing vowel symbols and in November he was able to write his name.
- In February the child could read only 4 letters, but in November he read 22 letters. At the beginning of the year he could not read simple sentences with 3 words and in

November he read 4 out of the 5 sentences given for the activity for assessing the reading competence.



Writing in July



Writing in September

Figure 1

- From the beginning to midyear Samitha listened very attentively, but was unable to answer the post listening questions. At the end of the year in the activity for individual listening, he answered question correctly. The other 3 responses were incomplete. In the activities for group listening, he responded accurately to all the commands.
- At the beginning of the year he joined in conversations and discussions using brief sentences and gestures. At the end of the year he used lengthy sentences and facial expressions when describing an experience. His talk was relevant to the topic although he did not use adjectives or idioms.
- In February Samitha could count from 1 to 2. Towards the end of the year he could count from 1 to 9. In September he counted from 1 to 16 and later he could count up to 29 in the sequential order.

- Samitha displayed his creative talent in drawing. When he was asked to draw a plant with leaves, flowers and fruit, he drew a child watering a plant with leaves, flowers and fruit. Once he drew a flower using his imagination, which is shown in Figure 26. When compared to other children's drawings, Samantha's drawing shows that he is an imaginative and creative child.
- Samantha's participation in the co-curricular activities was satisfactory. He sold goods at the school fair and in the concert he took part in a drama acting the part of a tortoise.
- In the second term the child's inclination to volunteer to do things and to stay in class seemed to have weakened. Again he showed an improvement in the third term. Throughout the year he did not lose his temper and was always courteous and polite to the teacher. He also worked co-operatively with others.

Through this study it was possible to understand how a pupil maintains balance between the competencies he acquires from the community and those he acquires from the school.