

**Dr. C. W .W. Kannangara Memorial Lecture
In Commemoration of his 121st Birthday**

Context of Educational Reforms Then and Now

by

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The Context of Educational Reforms Then and Now

Dr. Christopher William Wijekoon Kannangara is commemorated by all Sri Lankans because of the educational reforms that he brought forward six decades ago for the development of education in Sri Lanka. Dr. Kannangara entered Sri Lanka politics with the granting of universal adult franchise to Sri Lankans by the British colonial rulers. The last decade before independence was a transitional period of self government which allowed Sri Lankans to elect 46 State Councilors to the State Council of the Donoughmore Constitution. The Donoughmore reforms granted seven portfolios to the elected Sri Lankan councilors. Education was one of the seven portfolios. Each of these portfolios had an Executive committee. The Chairperson of the executive committee was the Minister for the portfolio. Dr. Kannangara became the first Minister of Education in Sri Lanka and chaired the committee from 1937 - 1946. One should also remember that three critical portfolios were left with three British officers –Legal, Finance and Chief Secretary were appointed by the colonial administration. Together with the elected Chairpersons the ‘Board of Ministers’ was formed. (Note: There was no Tamil representation because the four constituencies of the Jaffna Peninsula boycotted the election as they felt they were under-represented.)

Dr. Kannangara is better known as ‘the father of free education in Sri Lanka’ because of the successful struggle that he led to grant free education to all who seek access to education. His struggle was not only with the British Colonial rulers to find financial support for his reforms particularly at the time of 2nd world war. He also had to struggle with some of his fellow Sri Lankan State Councilors who were directly or indirectly opposing the free education move. Over and above these struggles the ‘Board of Education’ that had the administrative responsibility for education inherited more authority than the ‘Education Committee’ by Ordinance No 1 of 1920 and hindered the efforts for reforms. Prof. J. E. Jayasuriya, who had the opportunity to work with Dr. Kannangara as the Chairperson of the 1960 National Education Reforms Commission, states that for sixteen years, Dr. Kannangara strove unceasingly to open wide opportunities for free education for all. The facilitation of the expansion of free education in the context of the then Sri Lanka was no easy task – (Jayasuriya 1988).

I do not intend to talk much about each and every reform that the Special Committee of Education Report of 1943 headed by Dr. Kannangara presented because there are hundreds of articles and book on his contribution to education. The major reforms included:

- Granting Free education,
- Establishing three types of schools – Secondary, Senior, and Practical Schools
- Introducing Vernacular medium of instruction at Primary level and bilingual or English Medium schools for Junior Secondary level and English schools for Senior Secondary and higher education;
- Establishing Central schools with boarding facilities and scholarships to expand access for higher secondary education;
- Introducing Religious education
- Facilitating Adult Education for illiterate adults;
- Institutionalizing regular monthly salaries for teachers;

- Localizing curricula and examinations
- Establishing an autonomous university

The 1944 Educational Reforms generated a process to facilitate schooling. The number of schools, number of students enrolled, number of teachers serving, number completing primary and secondary schooling increased significantly. During the four years 1944-48 400 new schools were built and student enrollment reached 1.2million. One must realize that education cannot progress without the support of other services. Side by side health services too improved during this period. Feeding programs for the poor were introduced under the Poor Law Ordinance of 1939 and social services expanded. Milk feeding programs and milk distribution centers started all over the country. The Anti malaria campaign began spraying DDT to stop spread of malaria. It is important for us to understand that these collective efforts of all departments supported the progress of education.

These programs enabled all school aged children to enroll in schools, and learn to improve standard of living. The reforms provided night schools for adults as well. Dr. Kannangara proposed three types of schools – secondary schools leading to university education, senior schools leading to polytechnics, and practical schools leading to Agricultural colleges . Although evaluation supported the Practical schools experimented with under Handessa Schools system in 243 schools, it had an abrupt ending. If the Handessa school system (Grameeya Pasala) was continued and expanded the crisis of unemployment that Sri Lanka has had to face through out the recent history (post independence period) would have been better addressed.

Socioeconomic Context of 1943 Reforms:

It is important for us to understand the contextual framework of Kannangara Reforms. Why he supported free education, vernacular medium of instruction, Practical Schools for 80% of the students and limited access to 05% to Secondary Schools and 15% to Senior Schools. All these recommendations have a bearing on the socioeconomic context of that era. Reforms were needed to address the issues those were evident.

Dr. Kannangara opted and dedicated his efforts for change. His intentions were to bring social reforms through education to address the burning problems of the day. Column two of Table –I presents some of the critical socioeconomic indicators. People were so poor and they could not afford fee levy education. The number employed in wage earning occupations was so small. In 1937 only 39% was literate; female literacy was as low as 12%. Less than 8% had some form of secondary education. Health situation in the country was very poor and was threatening all socioeconomic activities. The malaria epidemic was causing 36 deaths per thousand. Birth rates were as high as 38 per 1000. Infant mortality rate was as high as 141 per 1000. Life expectancy was around 42 years. In a 6 million population dependency rate was as high as 72% and only 2.6 million was engaged in some occupation and over 50% was peasants. Only 900,000 were wage earners. Unemployment rates were high. Access to education and health care was seriously limited.

One should not forget the global situation in this period. The 2nd world war broke out at the same time. Scarcities were growing. Transportation of goods and services became more difficult. Despite these difficult circumstances the educational reforms were implemented.

During the 2nd world war and immediately after the war the entire world had to address new issues. Europe, the Colonial Masters, was helped by the Americans with their Marshall Plan. The colonial administrations were not geared to have development plans for the colonies. The approach to development was a 'Charity Based Approach' (CBA) where things were given on charity. Charitable allowances for the poor (Pin-Padi), free food, distribution of milk etc were extended to a large number in Sri Lanka. The Poor Law Ordinance was implemented. The Charity Based Approach to development continued with adjustments until the 1960s. Free rice ration was a big issue in the 1960s. Situation changed in the 1960's. The free rice to all was change to subsidized rice. If education is to be given to all, free education was the only choice. Vernacular medium was the only choice because only 03% of the population was literate in English and even finding teachers to teach in vernacular media was difficult. Reforms advocated 80% of the students to be admitted to Practical Schools because unemployment was so high and there was no gainful employment for many. The only possible area of employment was agriculture. The nation was not self-sufficient in rice and food. The peasants were so poor. They did not own land. Night schools were opened because parents were illiterate and did not know how to deal with personal, family and community health problems. There were more births and deaths. The village elite were exploiting the poor. The economic dependency was very high.

Free education was the only choice if education was to be given to all. Vernacular medium was the only choice because only 3% was English literate and even finding teachers to teach in English was not possible. Reforms advocated 70% of the students to be admitted to Practical Schools because unemployment was so high and there was no gainful employment for many. The only possible area of employment was agriculture. The nation was not self-sufficient in rice and food. The peasants were very poor. Night schools were opened because parents were illiterate and did not know how to deal with personal, family and community health problems. There were more births and deaths. The village elite were exploiting the poor. With the changing global context in mid 1960s Need Based Approach (NBA) to development was advocated under planned economies.

These educational reforms were introduced in October 1944 after the approval of the reforms by the Sate Council. The Practical School that the reforms proposed was not implemented.

The nation was fortunate to have Dr. Kannangara as the first minister of education because as an elected politician he had the right commitment and will to bring about a real change to provide free education and expand it for the common good of the people. This is evident to us because some of the elected members of the same State Council did not support the move for free education. If one of those elected members had been the chairperson of the committee, the future of the children of the less affluent class in Sri Lanka would have been jeopardized, free education would have been definitely delayed and our present achievements in the domain of human resource development would not have been achieved. The nation is thankful to Dr. Kannangara as well as to those who untiringly supported the struggle during the 16 years to bring about free education and expand educational facilities to all citizens of Sri Lanka. It is important for all Sri Lankans to realize that many of the

developing countries, including all South Asian countries introduced free education only after the Jomtien conference on Education For All in March 1990. When the other developing countries were making plans to achieve universal primary education, thanks to Dr. Kannangara's vision and leadership, we had already reached those goals by 1990. The Human Development Index of 1990 is a clear indication of this when Sri Lanka recorded 0.65, it was 0.185 for Bangladesh, 0.29 for India, 0.305 for Pakistan (UNDP 1992).

Socioeconomic Up-liftment:

The impact of the educational reforms of 1944 facilitated an unprecedented social upliftment in the last sixty years in Sri Lanka. All governments elected after independence continued to support free education and the expansion of education at all levels. The 1960 – 65 period Mrs. Srimavo Bandaranaike's government facilitated the further expansion of free education and established a larger number of schools than in any other five year period and up-graded a large number of schools to Maha Vidiyalayas. They introduced free textbooks and curriculum reforms. The 1970 educational reforms further expanded the facilities and the quality of free education with the introduction of English, Math and science education to all schools. As a professional who has served in almost all South Asian countries I value these reforms more because I have realized how much the Kannangara reforms contribute to the general welfare of all Sri Lankans. The policies and practices that he initiated and institutionalized were the beginning of a long journey for the betterment of the quality of life. If not for the Kannangara reforms we would have been at a similar stage like our neighboring countries. Although India, Bangladesh, Pakistan has made significant progress yet they have a long way to go in providing basic education to achieve basic literacy for all; where-as Sri Lanka stands out amongst all developing nations as the most literate nation.

The current educational issues in Sri Lanka are not about achievement of basic literacy like in India, Pakistan or Bangladesh. The nation salutes to Dr. Kannagara and his close associates for the process that he initiated, facilitated and enabled us to achieve such distinction over the last six decades. Kannangara's education movement is even more appreciated because India - (Bangladesh and Pakistan were a part of India then) made a similar move to introduce education reforms in 1944 but the Indian educational reforms did not make any significant headway. We all know that the political reforms of 1930s' – 1940s were not only in Sri Lanka. In fact our political movements for independence closely followed the Indian political movements. That's why India got independence before Sri Lanka. Similarly there were education reforms in India and transitional governments vested with similar responsibilities in the Indian sub-continent yet the reforms died and failed in India. What Kannangara and his associated brought forward, facilitated and established in Sri Lanka undoubtedly contributed to the pride of Sri Lanka as an educated nation, not just a literate nation.

Today in Sri Lanka 76% of the younger population has achieved secondary education. Today Sri Lanka has a population where 62% have had secondary education which is an unprecedented level of achievement even when compared with developed countries.

I wish to introduce Dr. Kannangara as a reformist of that era. He was one of the leading Change Agents of that era. He was strongly supported by several State Councillors and without their support Kannangara could have failed to introduce the changes to the same extent. It is important for us to pay tribute to all those who untiringly supported Dr. Kannangara in his endeavor for change.

A nation cannot keep implementing the same recommendation of 1943. After 60 years of its successful implementation of the process of change today we are one of the best performing nations in the world in health and education. The World Human Development Report – 2004 places Sri Lanka in the 96th position amongst 177 nations, with Human Development Index (HDI) of 0.74. Sri Lanka stands above India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal and Pakistan. If Dr. Kannangara is given the task of addressing today's education sector issues, will he come up with the same recommendation that he made in 1943? We all know that he will not because he would have considered today's context of reforms. The socioeconomic context of today is very different from what it was in 1940s..

My attempt from this point onwards is to address this question and to understand the way forward for educational reforms.

Education and Change:

Education is the most powerful tool of change. Education gives an individual the capacity to adapt to change. Education can prepare people for change. Education can initiate change. Building awareness of the self, society and human welfare more and more rests upon education. Education is considered the best strategy of initiating, achieving and sustaining progress and development. Moreover, education can mitigate disparities in society amongst people. Education is a powerful tool in conflict resolution. In short Education is the most powerful tool of achieving what we ought to achieve.

Not every one welcomes reforms and change. Not everyone aspires to set targets and reach targets. Not every one is futuristic. Envisioning is a hypothetical situation. No doubt that there are risks. All reforms are not supported by all. One should always expect opposition in the cause of introducing changes and reforms. Do not forget that Dr. Kannangara after 16 years of dedicated service to education sector was defeated at the first elections after independence. The father of free education was not recognized. Mr. Wilmet A. Perera defeated Dr. Kannangara with the help of the rich and the socialists camp. Even the communist in Sri Lanka worked against Dr. Kannagara's election. He was elected once again at the 1952 but never made the minister of education. **The merits of today's events and actions are judged by the next generation. It cannot be judged by protest movements of today. The beneficiary is the future student. Merit of reforms will be judged by the benefits that they receive and not the short term gains of a political movement.**

Change is an inevitable natural happening in human civilization. Evolution itself is nature's inherent wish for change and is a positive and progressive happening. However, evolution is a slow process. It is evident in history that all living beings do change and need to change over time to function more effectively and efficiently. The supreme capacity in human beings is the capacity to learn and utilize learning to accelerate progress. It is this capacity that has made the human being the supreme species. The disparity and difference that exist amongst people and nation are largely due to the capacities of people in those countries to select the right cause of action to accelerate positive changes. Today human development is a story of acceleration of the acquisition of skills, qualities and knowledge required for positive change. Preparing the younger generation to face the rapidly changing global surroundings is the challenge that education is faced with. It is not only to bring new knowledge to the school curriculum. Shaping up of the total personality of the child to face the future challenges is becoming increasingly more important. The challenge today is to facilitate the development of full-potential of each and every individual learner for the

benefit of that individual and the larger society. The more we delay reforms the more will our children be kept away from the rapidly changing socioeconomic arena and they will lose opportunities. The conservative elements oppose change simply because they have no understanding of the expected future. Even the Industrial Revolution was opposed by large masses of people and activists but it has swept across all corners of the world and those who opposed do not exist. Similarly Globalization is opposed by various movements not only in Sri Lanka everywhere, yet it will not stop; it will spread to all corners of the globe.

Alvin Toffler (1971) one of my favorite authors, stated that it is important for us to realize that the agriculture revolution took a long time to spread and a long time to fade. It has taken 3000 years to reach all corners of the world. The Industrial revolution overpowered the agriculture revolution. The Industrial Revolution has taken only 200 years and yet reaches almost every one. According to Toffler it will take 300 years to reach all. The Third revolution, the 'Technology Revolution' has begun and although there is opposition it will sweep across the world at high speed and complete its journey in 30 years. The reformists should understand this hypothetical premise better than the common citizens because it is the task of the professionals to analyze trends and do the envisioning of education.

Education will become the most powerful tool under the new wave because general education will not be sufficient to face the emerging challenges. This demands more intellectual skills than knowledge. This demands translation of knowledge to skills. This demands new social and emotional learning. Emotional Intelligence (EQ) is even more important than Intelligence (IQ). These new developments in the field of education cannot be delayed for our children. Just the way free education and vernacular media and cultural revival was needed in a growing socialist world to establish the 'Nation States' and 'National Citizenship' in the 1940 – 60, today we are faced with the challenge of initiating and facilitating an educational reforms process to lift our children to share in the 'Global Village' to become 'Global Citizens'. Global trends sweep across the globe. Socialist ideology spread fast in 1940 – 70s. Democratization is now sweeping across the globe and socialist ideology has lost its place. Even red China has embraced globalization. Just the way the Industrial Revolution spread to all corners of the globe, globalization will spread. The challenge is for us to bring about change striking a balance without destabilizing current progress.

Education will become the most powerful tool under the new wave because general education will not be sufficient to face with the emerging challenges. This demands intellectual skills than knowledge. This demands translation of knowledge to skills. This demands new social and emotional learning. Emotional Intelligence (EQ) is even more important than Intelligence (IQ). EQ is now advocated by all educationists and developed countries have got a large number of programs to include EQ as a major input to education at school level. These new developments in the field of education cannot be delayed to our children. Just the way free education and vernacular media and cultural revival was needed in a growing socialist world to establish the 'Nation States' and 'National Citizenship' in the 1940 – 60, today we are faced with the challenge of initiating and facilitating an educational reforms process to lift our children to share the 'Global Village' to become 'Global Citizens' and improve their living conditions, dignity of life and status. Global trends sweep across the globe. Socialist ideology spread fast in 1940 – 70s. Democratization is now sweeping across the globe and socialist ideology has lost its place. Even the red China has embraced globalization. Just the way the Industrial Revolution spread to all corners of the globe, globalization is spreading to all corners. The challenge is

for us to bring about educational reforms striking a balance without destabilizing current progress.

The success of reforms comes with the setting up of realistic strategies, targets and efforts of achieving targeted changes. In the course of targeting change it is natural to have opposition for change because not everyone accepts change. Those who express fear of change, fear of new developments, go against the forces of change to slow down change. Those who oppose targeted changes believe in 'conservation'. They believe in having more of what they already have. Therefore, it important for us to understand that 'Conservation' and 'Development' is the dichotomy that potentially could destabilize implementation of reforms. The challenge is to find more realistic strategies, targets and interventions to take the nation forward without destabilizing the balance. The biggest challenge the education reformist face is to strike a balance between 'Development' and 'Conservation'.

Today's Context:

I wish to illustrate the progress that Sri Lanka has achieved over the last sixty years as a preamble for way forward for current educational reforms.

Socioeconomic Achievements:

Many Sri Lankans do not know that despite spending on the civil war, **Sri Lanka has graduated to the status of a Middle Income country. We are no more a Low Income Economy. Our per capita income is to reach \$1000 by 2005** – current projection is \$1100 (Central Bank 2005). **Table 1** shows the significant developments that Sri Lanka has achieved in the last six decades. All governments irrespective of the political party governing have contributed to the success that Sri Lanka has achieved. When most of the countries are under the threat of HIV/AIDS we are not threatened by such diseases. The population growth is near freezing with 1.2% growth one can be hopeful of zero growth by 2020. The literacy level is 93% and if the rate is assessed with the younger age group it is near 100%. Moreover, we are hopeful of a society with over 75% having had secondary education by 2010. These are no easy achievements for any nation. Life expectancy at birth has reached 74yrs which is on par with most of the developing countries and is the highest level recorded by any of the Middle Income countries. Crude Birth Rate and Death Rate in the current years is on par with most of the developed countries such as United States and New Zealand. Unemployment has significantly dropped and the current level is 9%. However, unemployment amongst the 18 – 25 age groups is high as 25% and this remain the critical issue to be dealt with and educational reforms have to address this issue because the quality of education of the global economy is the employability of the school leavers. We need to introduce skills based education to enable the secondary school leavers to find employment in the growing economic centers. According to the recent statistics over 500 leave for foreign employment daily, which is higher than the number provided with new employment in country. Educational reforms have to take a serious note of this.

Table – 1: Some Selected Socioeconomic Indicators

INDICATOR	1940	1960	1980	2003/4
Population Million	6.2	9.8	14.7	19.2
Literacy	40%	72%	88%	93%
Life Expectancy	42	61	69	74
Infant Mortality per '000 live births	141	68	34	17
Birth Ratio per '000	38.4	36.6	28.4	18
Death Ratio per '000	20.3	8.6	6.2	6
Population Growth Rate	3.2%	2.8%	2.1%	1.3
% No Schooling	68	26	15	8
% With Secondary Education	11	27	42	62
% of population between 0 – 18yrs	60	52	45	34
% Employed in Agriculture Sector	55	53	51	33
% Unemployed in Labour Force		16.6	24	9
Per Capita Income US\$	na	187 (1970)	540	997

The bottom line of the discussion is that our socioeconomic conditions have significantly improved and sustained over the last few decades. Moreover, the individual monthly income as well as the number employed in a given house hold has significantly increased. The incomes of every one, including the poorest household has significantly increased. The graphical illustrations in the rest of this paper show these trends.

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Figure-1 shows since 1970 how the population growth rate and the Gross Domestic Production Growth (GDP) rate have behaved. The two important trends clearly indicate that the population growth rate decreased meanwhile the GDP growth rate increased. This is a clear indication to say that Sri Lanka is making a steady progress towards increase of incomes. **Figure – 2** shows how the average rate of unemployment since 1963.

Unemployment rate has sharply declined since 1973 indicating that there are more people employed. **Figure -3** shows when age groups wise unemployment rates are analyzed although the unemployment in all age groups have significantly decreased yet the rate of unemployment is significantly higher amongst the age 14 – 25 age groups. Of this the age group 14 – 18 should be a important target group for Educational Reforms to ensure the employability of those school leavers.

Figure - 4 on wards show schooling- related changes. Figure -4 shows that the number schooling steadily increased until year 1995 and thereafter there is a decrease in numbers. The number enrolled has decreased not because schooling age children are out of school. It is because of the declining numbers in the cohort of schooling age children. This is a clear reflection of what we observed in Figure – 1 indicating the population growth rate declined

over the last four decades. This trend is to continue over the next decades and hopefully by 2020 on wards we will have stable number coming to schools.

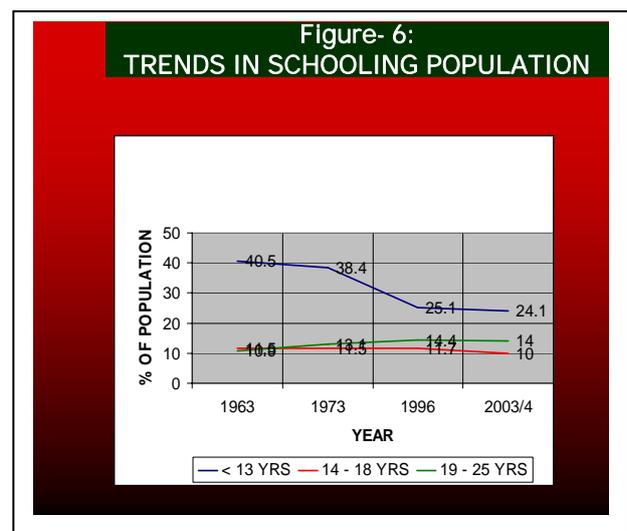
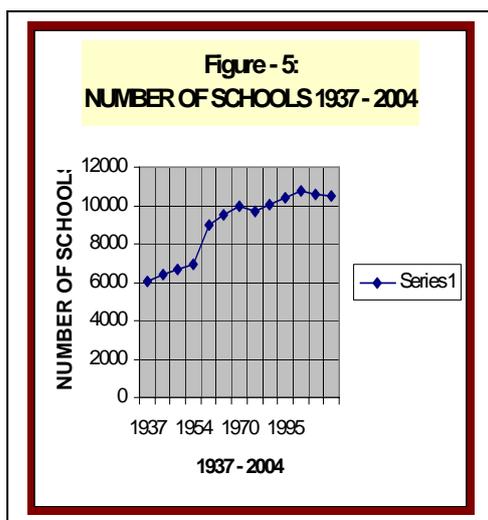
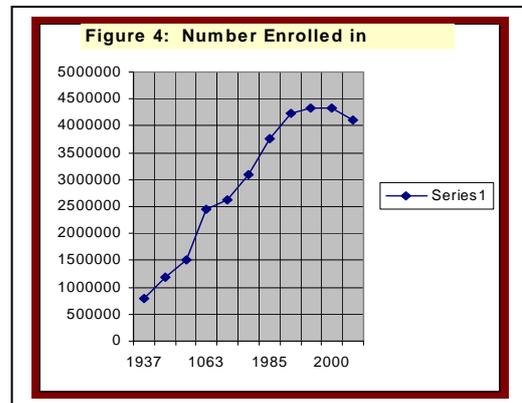
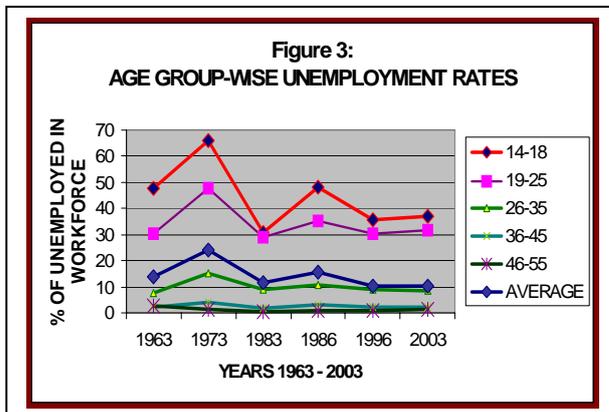
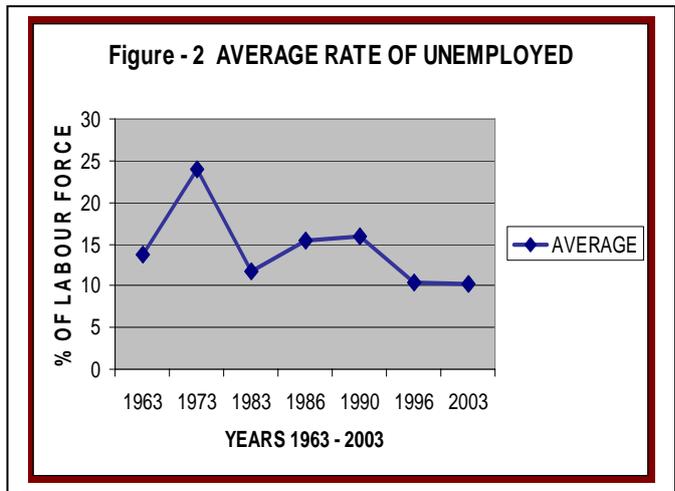
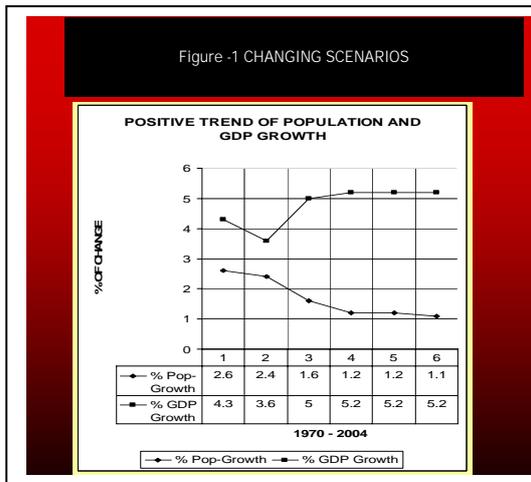
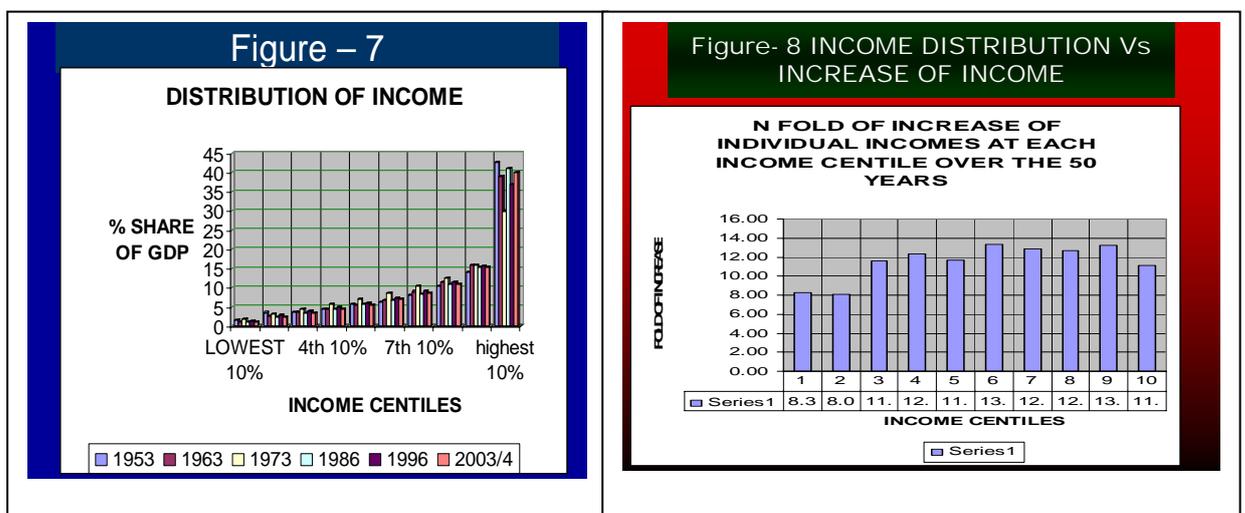


Figure 5 shows that the number of schools too increased steadily until 1995 and the number of schools has decreased in the last five year period. One may think that these schools were

just shut down. In fact with the declining student numbers rationalization of schools was necessary. The smaller schools were merged with the nearby larger schools and students have transferred to bigger and better schools. This has not hindered schooling. **Figure 6** shows that there is declining in the number of students in the 18 – 25 age groups and a slight decline in the under 13 year and 14 – 18 age groups. There were older age children enrolled in schooling before 1970. With gaining of internal efficiency in the system the rate of grade repetition has declined and enrollment at age is regularized and the number of older age students at primary and secondary levels has declined. However, there is also a tendency amongst the boys to seek employment than seek institutionalized full time education and this too has contributed to the declining trend in the 18 – 25 age groups.

However, it is also important to note some of the negative trends in the recent years in this domain. Although the Per Capita GDP has increased the disparity in the distribution of incomes has not decreased. **Figure 7** (Source: Central Bank 2004) shows how the income was distributed amongst the centiles of population from the lowest 10% to highest 10%. It clearly shows that the lower 35% of the population receives about 8% of the increased GDP while the top 25% receives 58% of GDP. The disparity is vast. **Therefore, the policy of free education must be continued targeting the poor sector of the population.** However, one must also realize that the increased incomes have also lifted the income levels of every one. The central bank data is reanalyzed here for each of the income centile against the share of GDP of the respective years. That information is tabulated in Figure 8. The **Figure 8** shows that income of the lowest 10% has increased 800% during the last 50 years. The highest increase was for the people who were in the 60th and 90th centiles. They received a 13 fold increase during the same period. The highest income earning centile received 11 fold increase. **Figure 9** and **Figure 10** illustrates this further.

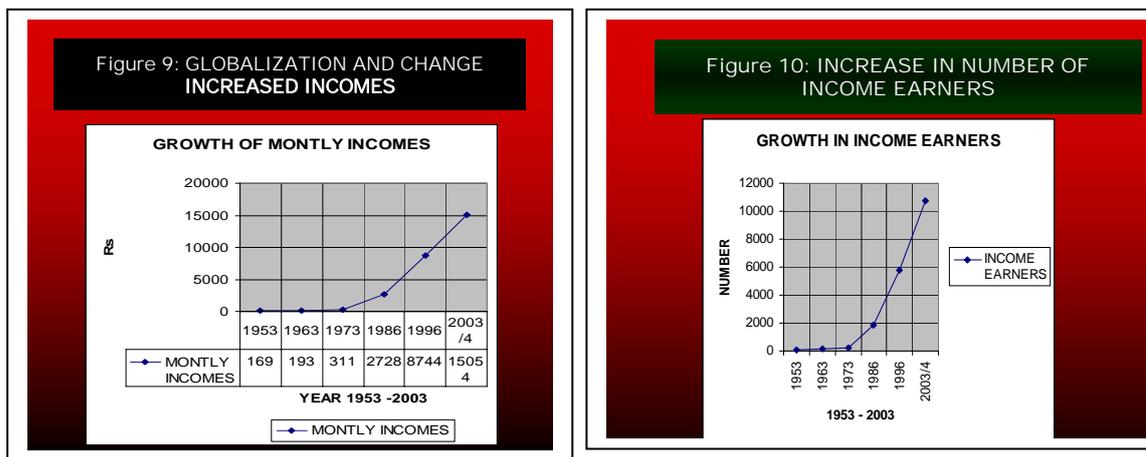
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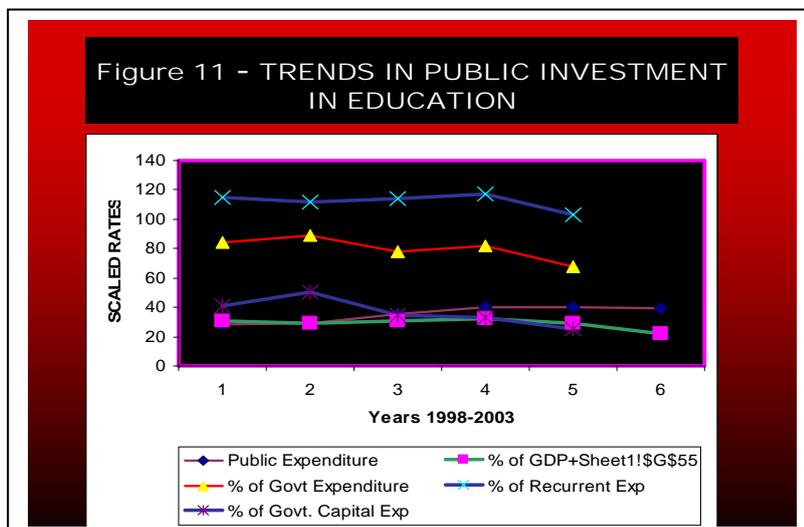
(Source: Please note all graphs are based on Central Bank of Sri Lanka Statistics)

Since the introduction of the Open Economy there has been a sharp increase in monthly average incomes. **Figure 9** shows that the average monthly income has increased from Rs.2,700 to Rs.15,000 with the introduction of the open economy in early 1980s. Even if these sums are converted to US\$ still it is a substantial increase. Further, **Figure 10** shows the increase in the number of income earners. This too shows that with the introduction of Open Economy in the 1980s the number earning income has sharply increased. Therefore, although there is opposition to Open Economy it has the popular public support because the common people have benefited from the open economy. The open economy was the reason for the unemployment figures decline.

Another observation is that the GDP share of education has decreased over the last few years. Sri Lanka was the first nation amongst the developing nations to allocate 3.5% of GDP to education in 1973 with the education reforms for quality improvement in education. It has now dropped to 2.2%. Same is the case with all investment expenditures other the recurrent expenditure. **Figure 11** shows the trends in the share of public investment on education. This situation is largely due to the expenditure on war. Yet, it is a fact that public investment has decreased since 2001. An attempt must be made to increase the share at least to the level of 3.5%. The World Bank recommends 4%.



(Source: Please note all graphs are based on Central Bank of Sri Lanka Statistics)



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The Way Forward:

Globalization: There is very little choice that any developing country has for socioeconomic progress outside a global economy. Most of the developing nations have perceived globalization and open economy from a commodity perspective and its human resource development aspect is neglected and delayed. In the last decade Malaysia and South Korea have very successfully transformed their education systems to prepare their students towards a global economy. Malaysia introduced many changes at university education as well. Most of the developing nations are still protecting the general education model that was tailored to strengthen the 'Nation State' and a 'national economy' which was the mission of all developing countries immediately after independence from the colonial masters. Share of agriculture in domestic production has been reduced with increase of revenue. Share of industrial and service sectors have increased. This does not mean that the agricultural production is neglected; its share in domestic production has decreased. In fact the agricultural production and per acre yield has increased over the last few decades. National production and revenue has increased. This does not mean that agriculture sector is shrinking. The share of the agriculture sector has decreased due to significant increase in other sectors. An agricultural economy cannot resolve the burning unemployment problem. Even agricultural sector requires new skills to link it with global markets and industry. Share of industrial and service sectors have increased. In fact the agricultural production and per acre yield has increased over the last few decades.

The socialist movement at that time too had a similar ideology of a 'Nation State'. The planned economy that socialist ideology advocated is now replaced with market mechanisms. An agricultural economy cannot resolve the burning unemployment problem. Even the agricultural sector requires new skills. With these changes, globalization makes new demands on human resource development. It is necessary for all developing nations to identify those demands and translate them into learning activities to prepare them for the expanding labour markets. It is necessary for us to retain some of the underlying principles of the Kannangara reforms while attuning the system for globalization.

Increasing External Efficiency:

The efforts in the last six decades were more on increasing the 'internal efficiency' of the system by ensuring all schooling aged children are enrolled, retained and graduated within the set time frames for each level. Although there are internal efficiency issues yet to be addressed, with the new global economy 'external efficiency' has to be the focus. This means how well the education system could be knitted with the growing economy to ensure employability of the graduates at different stages of the education cycle. This is a realistic goal because nearly 30% of our school leavers remain unemployed for some time before get employed. This will also address the youth unrest to a larger extent and contribute towards social stability.

Development of Skills & Qualities:

Globalization demands employable skills and personality qualities of a employee or employer. This demand is not only in Sri Lanka even in the United States a special commission had to address this issue in 1990s. In the United States the Secretary Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills appointed by US Secretary of Labour has identified what work requires of schools (1991). SCANS skills have been embraced by both education and business leaders. SCANS has a powerful vision of how fundamental changes in the school curriculum, instruction and organization can create an educational system that solidly prepares young people for further education and employment (SCANS 2000, 1997). The SCANS classification of skills can be read on Internet --Web Site: <http://www.advedspc.com>. The SCANS report stated that *“Our primary message to schools is to look beyond the schoolhouse to the role students will play when they leave to become workers, parents and citizens. Our message to teachers is to look beyond your discipline and your classroom to the other courses your students take, to your community, and to lives of your students outside school..... Our message to employers is to look outside your company and change your view of your responsibility for human resource development..”* (SCANS Principles 1997). This statement is true for our own context as well. We need to identify the various skills a student has to develop to be a beneficiary of the global economy. It is said that low quality general education constrains the trainability, adaptability and productivity of the workforce. This is particularly true for social skills and emotional skills. These skills and qualities are not easy to change once they have taken root at an early stage of life. Learning a living will help educators in their efforts to transform schools into places where students are empowered and prepared for success. There are many studies where the type of skills required by the global economy is analyzed.

There are generic skills, operational skills, intellectual skills, communication skills, social skills, technological skills, economic skills, emotional skills and many other skills which need to be developed at school level. These demands are over and above the general education that we offer. The translation of knowledge that we impart today to achieve these skills is the challenge that we face. I have spelled out many of these skills in my earlier publications (Sedere 2000). The Activity Based primary school curriculum needs to be further strengthened and expanded to other levels. The global economy demands a dynamic personality. Adoptability, neuromuscular coordination, democratic behaviour, commitment to family and work, effective personal relations, community participatory skills, emotional stability, courteous behaviour, manners and many other personality traits are needed to be cultivated at very early in every child to enable them to achieve success in their future world (Sedere 2000). Our teachers are attuned to impart knowledge and they need training and mentoring to be effective teachers to cultivate these new skills and qualities.

Culture and Moral Values:

The global economy is blamed for the erosion of culture and moral standards. We need to address this issue and merge the skill and emotional developments with cultural activities and moral values. This is possible and our educators and policy makers need to develop their own capacity in addressing these dimensions. It is important for the educational reforms to include esthetics, cultural and moral skills and qualities side by side with the economic skills. Our identity is our language and culture. Even if we introduce English as the medium of instruction we should ensure that all Sri Lankan children learn their mother tongue, literature and culture, and religion. We need to work hand in hand with other cultural centers to achieve this objective. My suggestion for the proposed educational

reforms to combine Language and Literature as one compulsory subject and make it mandatory to for a child to select two areas of esthetics. The relative importance in the allocation of school time can be reduced yet over the 13 year education child should develop cultural skills to preserve our identity.

Socioeconomic Disparity:

It was evident that disparity in the distribution of incomes continues to remain unsatisfactory. Therefore, it is important for the policy makers to ensure that the poorer section of society is given direct assistance to schooling. The distribution of educational resources is biased in favor of the schools where the children of the privileged attend. A formula in favor of the schools which children of the poor attend has to be introduced and the allocations to schools where the children of the privileged, upper 25% of the socio-economic distribution, need not be given any public finance. Particularly at a time of declining spending on education, it is important to ensure that public funds are channeled to the schools which children of the poor are attending to up-grade these schools to provide the kind of skills and qualities required for them to reap the benefits of the global economy.

Education for Peace:

Progress of our nation will largely rest on the achievement of peace. The economic growth achieved in the last few years is undoubtedly due to the peace agreement. Before that our growth rate was heading towards negative growth. The peace accord may have shortcomings, yet it has given a peaceful environment for investment particularly the flow of direct investment. Educational reforms and economic advancement must go hand in hand. Therefore the educational reforms must make a serious effort to educate future generation to value coexistence of all ethnic groups and bring about a change in attitudes and values to leave the destructive emotions to achieve peace. It is also important for all children to learn Tamil and Sinhalese. We must not forget that Sri Lanka also had Sinhalese youth uprising in 1971 and 1988/89 and following these the national economy had serious set backs. There was a grave sense of fear. In the following years after the youth up-risings Gross National Production decreased. Education is a powerful tool for shaping behaviour. Intellectual development without Emotional Development will not develop the full potential of the individual or of the nation. Therefore, the younger generation has to be attuned to peaceful living.

Expanding Opportunities for Higher Education:

Sri Lanka has a rather sad situation in the higher education sector. The University education model that we advocate and practice will never be able to accommodate all those qualified youth who seek higher education. Over 100,000 qualify for university admission annually and only 16,000 find places. This limitation comes because of free higher education. The selected 16,000 denies the right to higher education of over 80,000 who are also qualified for entry. We need a radical change here to accommodate all. The present university model, structural setting and controls have to be totally changed to allow all students to register. This is possible only if the current fixed and rigid schedules, time frames controls and practices are taken away. We need to offer 'course unit based curriculum' and specify what courses and what pre-requisites are to be satisfied for entry for different degrees and what level of achievement one should demonstrate to graduate in that

field. The university Don has to market their skills and earn their salaries. Students should be allowed to work and earn while studying. The State can subsidize the deserving student's education with a voucher system letting the students of the lower economic levels to have full scholarships/bursaries, middle income groups to have limited subsidies, and fee levy higher education for the higher income category. Government investment to accommodate all students is not possible therefore the private sector should be invited to offer demand driven marketable higher education. All students should have the option to apply for either State or Private Universities for admission. If a student of a lower socioeconomic category is selected to a private university that student should receive his or her entitled share by a voucher to study in the private university. The total higher education expenditure should be divided to all those who are qualified but State assistance should be given on a differential-scale to students considering their socioeconomic standing. Our State universities could work longer hours and teachers should be paid according to the hours of work done at different levels. Students should be encouraged to work. Universities should create opportunities for on campus jobs at hourly rates. Accountability checks should be institutionalized for all students to continue to receive State assistance. A dynamic university system is needed to reap the benefits of the open economy. University reform should be a priority item of the government.

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