

THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE

**PROMOTING EQUITABLE ACCESS TO EDUCATION IN
SRI LANKA OVER SIXTY YEARS**

BY

**HARSHA ATURUPANE
SENIOR ECONOMIST
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT UNIT
SOUTH ASIA REGION
THE WORLD BANK**

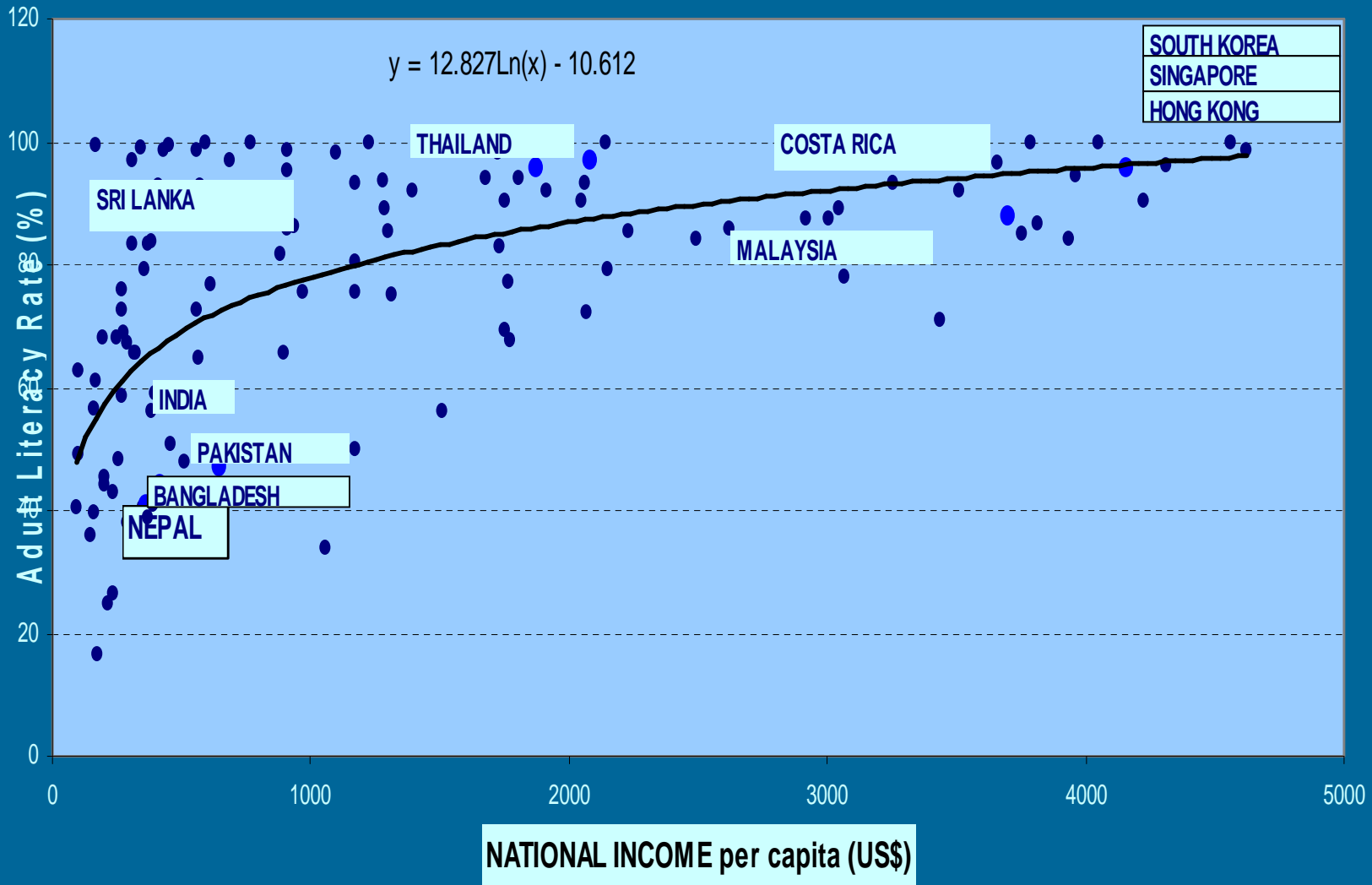
THE POLICY CONTEXT

- HISTORICAL TRADITION OF INVESTMENT IN EDUCATION (E.G. MALE ADULT LITERACY RATE IN SRI LANKA IN 1815 EQUAL TO ENGLAND)
- VISIONARY POLITICAL LEADERS IN THE 1930'S AND 1940'S
- COMBINATION OF DEMAND AND SUPPLY SIDE POLICIES TO PROMOTE ENROLMENT AND RETENTION IN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION
- SUCCESS BREEDS SUCCESS (AND POLITICAL POPULARITY)
- SUCCESS CONSTRAINS REFORMS AND DEVELOPMENT

THE EXPANSION OF THE GENERAL EDUCATION SYSTEM 1950-2006

	1950	1960	1971	1981	1991	2006
GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS	3,188	4,394	8,585	9,521	9,998	9,714
STUDENTS (MILLIONS)	1.3	2.2	2.8	3.5	4.3	3.8
TEACHERS (THOUSANDS)	38	70	95	136	177	205
PUBLIC INVESTMENT (PERCENTAGE OF GDP)	2.5	4.4	4.1	2.4	2.5	2.6
ADULT LITERACY RATE (PERCENT)	65	72	79	87	87	93

FIGURE 1 . Adult Literacy Rates in Relation to National Income per Capita, 2001



EDUCATION ACCESS AND QUALITY MODERN TIMES

- RELATIVELY HIGH ATTAINMENT LEVELS AND GENDER PARITY IN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY ENROLMENT AND COMPLETION
- UNIVERSAL BASIC EDUCATION YET TO BE ACHIEVED
- REGIONAL VARIATIONS IN EDUCATION ATTAINMENT
- EDUCATION QUALITY CHALLENGES
(LEARNING OUTCOMES, AND ALSO NON-COGNITIVE SKILLS)
- CONTENTIOUS POLICY ENVIRONMENT: EQUITY OVER EFFICIENCY AND EXCELLENCE

SURVIVAL RATES THROUGH COMPUSLORY BASIC EDUCATION (GRADES 1-9) BY PROVINCE 2007

PROVINCE	BOYS (%)	GIRLS (%)
WESTERN	90	93
CENTRAL	86	91
SOUTHERN	90	94
NORTH-WESTERN	84	90
NORTHERN	74	83
EASTERN	70	76
NORTH CENTRAL	88	94
UVA	83	91
SABARAGAMUWA	85	91
SRI LANKA	84	90

THE RISING QUALITY OF EDUCATION

COGNITIVE ACHIEVEMENT SCORES OF PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS (ENGLISH)

PROVINCE	STUDENTS SCORING 50 PERCENT AND ABOVE	
	2003 (%)	2007 (%)
WESTERN	53	68
CENTRAL	31	46
SOUTHERN	36	55
NORTH-WESTERN	32	54
NORTHERN	29	40
EASTERN	22	45
NORTH CENTRAL	22	44
UVA	27	40
SABARAGAMUWA	34	47
SRI LANKA	31	49

THE RISING QUALITY OF EDUCATION

COGNITIVE ACHIEVEMENT SCORES OF PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS (MATHEMATICS)

PROVINCE	STUDENTS SCORING 50 PERCENT AND ABOVE	
	2003 (%)	2007 (%)
WESTERN	81	89
CENTRAL	64	79
SOUTHERN	71	85
NORTH-WESTERN	74	86
NORTHERN	53	77
EASTERN	52	75
NORTH CENTRAL	72	85
UVA	63	78
SABARAGAMUWA	69	83
SRI LANKA	67	82

THE EDUCATION SECTOR DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK AND PROGRAM (ESDFP)

**THEME ONE. INCREASE EQUITABLE ACCESS TO PRIMARY AND
SECONDARY EDUCATION.**

THEME TWO. IMPROVE EDUCATION QUALITY.

**THEME THREE. ENHANCE EFFICIENCY AND EQUITY OF
RESOURCE ALLOCATION AND DISTRIBUTION.**

**THEME FOUR. STRENGTHEN GOVERNANCE AND SERVICE
DELIVERY.**

INCREASE EQUITABLE ACCESS



- STRATEGIC UPGRADING OF THE SCHOOL NETWORK
- SPECIAL EDUCATION (HETEROGENOUS PROGRAMS)
- NON-FORMAL EDUCATION (LIFE AND WORK SKILLS)
- SCHOOL HEALTH AND NUTRITION (MULTI-SECTOR FOCUS)

INITIATIVES TO INCREASE EQUITABLE ACCESS TO BASIC EDUCATION

- COMPREHENSIVE NETWORK OF GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS
- FREE ENROLMENT IN GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS, SUBSIDIZED PUBLIC TRANSPORT, FREE TEXTBOOKS, FREE UNIFORMS, SCHOOL MEALS
- SCHOOL ATTENDANCE COMMITTEES
- SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS
- NON-FORMAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

SPECIAL EDUCATION

- IDENTIFYING OUT-OF-SCHOOL CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS (ISLAND-WIDE SURVEYS), MEDICAL SCREENING, AWARENESS PROGRAMS FOR PARENTS, PERIODIC ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS (I.E. EDUCATION CAMPS)
- INTRODUCING NEW INSTRUMENTS TO IDENTIFY CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS, UPDATING SYLLABI/MODULES AND PROMOTING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION
- PROVIDING INFRASTRUCTURE FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT TO SPECIAL SCHOOLS/ UNITS/ REGULAR CLASSROOMS
- CONTINUOUS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS FOR TEACHERS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION, AND IMPROVEMENT OF COMPETENCIES OF REGULAR TEACHERS IN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION.

NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

- COVERS FUNCTIONAL LITERACY AND WORK-RELATED SKILLS
- NON-FORMAL EDUCATION CENTERS UNDER THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
- OPEN LEARNING CENTERS OF THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
- PARTICULARLY USEFUL IN CONFLICT-AFFECTED AREAS

IMPROVING EDUCATION QUALITY

- CURRICULUM UPGRADING
- TEACHER DEVELOPMENT
- TEXTBOOKS AND EDUCATION PUBLICATIONS
- MODERNIZATION OF EXAMINATIONS
- PROMOTION OF SOCIAL COHESION
- TARGETED PROGRAMS FOR FIRST LANGUAGE, ENGLISH, ICT, SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS

CURRICULUM UPGRADING

- **MAJOR GOALS OF THE CURRICULUM UPGRADING ARE (A) TO ENCOURAGE ACTIVITY (RATHER THAN PASSIVITY) IN STUDENT LEARNING; (B) TO FACILITATE STUDENTS IN “CONSTRUCTING” KNOWLEDGE; (C) TO FOSTER THE DEVELOPMENT OF HIGHER-ORDER KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS; AND (D) TO PROVIDE FOR NON-COGNITIVE ASPECTS OF STUDENT DEVELOPMENT.**
- **COMPLEX ACTIVITIES INVOLVING: THE DEVELOPMENT OF GRADE-LEVEL SYLLABI, THE PREPARATION OF SUPPORTING MATERIALS (TEACHER MANUALS), AND THE PUBLICATION AND DISSEMINATION OF CURRICULUM-REFERENCED LEARNING COMPETENCIES.**
- **CHALLENGES: INADEQUATE HORIZONTAL AND VERTICAL ARTICULATION OF CURRICULA, (B) OVERLOAD OF STUDENTS, AND (C) INSUFFICIENT ATTENTION TO CURRICULA IN OTHER COUNTRIES.**

TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

- **ON-SITE SCHOOL BASED TEACHER SUPPORT.**
- **NETWORK OF 100 TEACHER CENTERS (ABOUT ONE PER ZONE) FOR TEACHER TRAINING**
- **NETWORK OF 17 NATIONAL COLLEGES OF EDUCATION TO ENSURE ADEQUATE PRE-SERVICE TEACHER EDUCATION**
- **CHALLENGES: (A) TEACHER SERVICE VULNERABLE TO PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT CREATION SCHEMES; (B) LOW TEACHER SALARIES; (C) GENEROUS LEAVE (TEACHER ABSENTEEISM ABOUT 20%) (D) NO INCENTIVES FOR TEACHER DEPLOYMENT TO REMOTE REGIONS.**

EXAMINATION REFORM

- **EXAMINATION AND ASSESSMENT GUIDELINES**
- **CONSTRUCTING AN ITEM BANK**
- **COMPARATIVE STUDIES OF EXAMINATION SYSTEMS**
- **CLASSROOM – BASED ASSESSMENT**

PROMOTING SOCIAL COHESION

- **PRODUCING DIVERSE AND CULTURALLY SENSITIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING MATERIALS**
- **SUPPORTING SCHOOLS AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS WITH MIXED MEDIA-OF-INSTRUCTION AND CULTURALLY DIVERSE MIXES OF TEACHERS AND STUDENTS**
- **PROVIDING INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS AND AIDS USING THE THREE LANGUAGES (SINHALA, TAMIL AND ENGLISH)**
- **PROMOTING THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF ENGLISH AS A LINK LANGUAGE**
- **ENCOURAGING PROGRAMS SUCH AS PEACE EDUCATION CAMPS, AND MIXED CULTURAL AND SPORTING EVENTS AMONG CHILDREN OF DIFFERENT ETHNIC COMMUNITIES TO PROMOTE GREATER UNDERSTANDING AND RESPECT BETWEEN STUDENTS.**

STRENGTHENING GOVERNANCE AND SERVICE DELIVERY

- **ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING (PARTICULARLY OF DECENTRALIZED LEVELS OF ADMINISTRATION)**
- **HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (LINKED TO ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING)**
- **SCHOOL BASED MANAGEMENT (PROGRAM FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT)**

SCHOOL BASED MANAGEMENT (PROGRAM FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT)

- **BALANCED CONTROL (SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES)**
- **MECHANISM TO RAISE ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR SCHOOLS**
- **POLITICALLY CONTENTIOUS AT THE OUTSET**
- **PHASED INTRODUCTION OVER TIME**
- **PROCESS AND IMPACT EVALUATIONS**

FUTURE CHALLENGES

- LONG-TERM NATURE OF THE ESDFP GOALS
- SUBJECT-SPECIFIC CHALLENGES (E.G. MATHEMATICS, SCIENCE, ICT, ENGLISH)
- LINKING RESEARCH, MONITORING AND EVALUATION TO POLICY FORMULATION
- A POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR TERTIARY EDUCATION
- THE TRAINING SECTOR
- ADULT EDUCATION