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СИСТЕМА ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ ШРИ-ЛАНКИ В УСЛОВИЯХ СОВРЕМЕННОГО ЭКОНОМИЧЕСКОГО КРИЗИСА

Аннотация. В статье подробно рассказывается о системе образования в Шри-Ланке в условиях нынешнего экономического кризиса, анализируются проблемы, с которыми сталкивается страна в различных аспектах системы образования. Шри-Ланка является примером достойной системы образования среди стран Южной Азии, лидирующих с высоким уровнем грамотности взрослого населения в 92,3 % по данным 2019 года. С тех пор как в 1948 году страна обрела свободу от британских колоний, в системе образования многие аспекты были хорошо развиты с более новаторскими идеями. Разрабатываются различные системы образования, такие, как среднее школьное образование, высшее образование, дистанционное образование, образование взрослых и профессиональное образование, которые преобразуются во многие изменения. Хотя система образования в Шри-Ланке находится в хорошем состоянии на протяжении многих лет, некоторые определенные проблемы создали многочисленные проблемы в ее развитии. Например, пандемия КОВИД-19 является одной из основных проблем системы образования Шри-Ланки. После пандемии КОВИД-19 в стране нынешний экономический кризис создает множество проблем для надлежащего развития системы образования. Нехватка основных ресурсов неожиданно сказывается на системе образования с еще большими проблемами. В этой статье анализируются проблемы, с которыми столкнулась страна после начала экономического кризиса в Шри-Ланке.

Ключевые слова: Экономический кризис, система образования, проблемы, основные ресурсы.

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EDUCATION SYSTEM IN SRI LANKA UNDER THE CURRENT ECONOMIC CRISIS

Abstract. This article clearly explains about education system in Sri Lanka under the current economic crisis, illustrating the challenges faced by the country in different aspects of the education system. Sri Lanka is an example in having a good education system among South Asian countries leading with high adult literacy rate of 92.3 % with the data of the year 2019. Since the country attained freedom from British colonials in 1948, under education system, many aspects were developed well with more innovative ideas. Different structures of education system, such as formal school education, higher education, distance education, adult education and vocational education are being developed and converting into many changes. Though the education system in Sri Lanka is in good condition for last many years, some certain problems have created many challenges in its progress. For example, COVID - 19 pandemic situations is one of the major challenging points of the education system of Sri Lanka. Following COVID-19 pandemic issues in the country, the current economic crisis is creating many challenges to progress the system of education in proper way. Shortages in essential resources are unexpectedly affecting the education system with more challenges. With this main idea, this article analyses the challenges faced by the country since the economic crisis is started in Sri Lanka.

Key words: Economic crisis, Education system, Challenges, Essential resources

Introduction

Education in Sri Lanka has a history of over 2300 years with outstanding developments in various sectors of education system. With the outset of the colonial expansion on the island, the country was developed in various ways. Sri Lanka was ruled by the colonials, such as Portuguese, Dutch, and British more than 443 years since the advent of Portuguese in 1505 until the country attained freedom from the last colonialism of British in 1948. Therefore, colonialism in Sri Lanka made many changes in the development of education system up to now.

Sri Lanka is also known with the nick names as “The pearl of the Indian Ocean” and “a drop of tears in the Indian Ocean” in the world. These names are used to call the country, Sri Lanka considering its geographical location around the world. Sri Lanka has been officially known as “Democratic socialist Republic of Sri Lanka since 1972. Before that, it was known as Ceylon. It is an island country in the northern Indian Ocean of the Southern cost of Indian subcontinent in South Asia.

The COVID-19 has been a major challenge plaguing the world for more than 03 years since the year of 2020. Sri Lanka is also one of the countries affected by COVID-19 pandemic in various sectors of the countries development including the major part Education system. Like a coin has two sides, all the repercussions of COVID - 19 in Sri Lanka has positive and negative impacts. Apart from the positive impacts, this COVID-19 causes many negative impacts on the Sri Lanka education system in various ways. The longer-term consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic for the global economy are coming into focus. The pandemic is now recognized as having constituted the largest synchronized fall in global GDP in modern history, although its impact was quickly mitigated by governments which were guided by lessons learned from the global financial crisis in 2009(Faik ÖZTRAK, 2021).

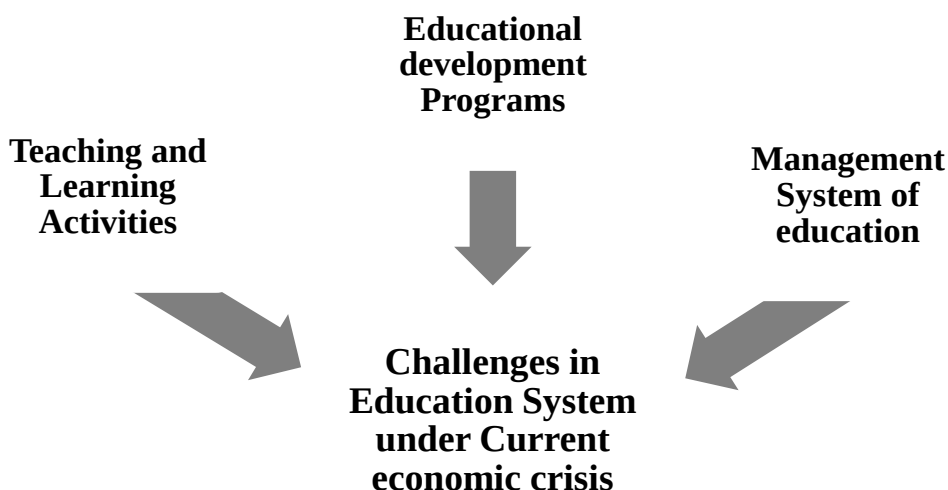
Following the repercussions of COVID-19 in education system, the country in 2022 is facing unbearable economic challenges in different sectors. Sri Lanka's nationwide inflation for March 2022 under the National Consumer Price Index (NCPI) surged to 21.5 per cent from 17.5 per cent reported in February 2022, the Department of Census and Statistics reported (Business Standard, 2022). Different sectors in Sri Lanka lifting up the economic developments, such as Education, Tourism, Transport,

Foreign trade and health has fallen back and confronting more challenges without accomplishing the needs of people. Among different sectors, education system is one of the leading parts of the countries development. According to that, this article portrays the challenges faced by the country in education system in this current economic crisis time.

Education system in Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka's education structure is split up into 5 levels as Primary education (From Grade 1-5), Junior secondary education (From Grade 6-9), Senior secondary education (Grade 10 and 11), Collegiate level (Grade 12 and 13), and Higher education. With that, Sri Lanka offers distance education, adult education, and vocational education with various purposes in the development of the country. Sri Lanka has special feature of the system and development of education. They are free education facilities, gender equality in education, quality maintained in the field of education, bilingual teaching and learning approaches, importance to professional development, authentic teaching and learning approaches, and expansion of distance education methods in various ways. Though the country is shining with these all special features of education system in Sri Lanka, the current economic challenges are making all sectors of education in a way of not making the progress towards national goal of the education.

The school education and higher education systems have been partially affected by this current economic crisis in some ways. The image below clearly shows the core areas and how the challenges have been made by economic crisis in Sri Lanka.



Teaching and learning activities

In Sri Lankan education system, 10,155 government schools and approximately 4.5 million students and 235,924 teachers face challenges in this current economic crisis. This is not only for school education rather it will be equal for teachers who are working in higher educational institutions, such as universities, colleges, technical colleges, and conational training centers. Teaching and learning in school and other higher educational institutions levels plays an integral part. Amidst COVID-19 pandemic, it was heavily affected and while gradually coming to the normal condition the current economic challenges have made many negative repercussions in continuing teaching and learning with the shortage of some essential resources. Due to these current issues, Sri Lanka's import and export transaction has come down and the country is facing many challenges in importing essential goods from other countries. The one of important essential need is import of fuel from other countries. With short of foreign currency in stock, Sri Lanka cannot fulfill this in line with people's needs. So, this has been creating problems in the transport sector of Sri Lanka. This transport challenges affect teaching and learning in education in the way of traveling to the schools from remote areas. Teachers and students are unable to travel to schools to continue teaching learning activities. The latest concern facing both teachers and students alike is that the surge in petrol and diesel prices has made transportation to and from school unaffordable. Over the past few months, fuel prices have sky-rocketed,

with the price of petrol rising by 33.1% and the price of diesel, increasing by a record 64.2% (the Sunday morning, 2022).

Moreover, not only transport issue but also teachers and students do not get essential things which are needed in teaching learning activities. Stationary items and laboratory related chemical items are in shortage in Sri Lanka. With this shortage and transport issue, the government has planned to reduce the working days in government offices. This will also be implemented in education system reducing the days of teaching and learning activities. The government has also planned to implement the decision of allowing students and teachers to attend schools in closest proximity to their homes. In teaching and learning activities, distance education in Sri Lanka has almost affected with some traveling and restrictions. Those who want to continue their higher education in foreign countries and those who are currently continuing the distance education system in Sri Lanka from other countries are facing some certain difficulties. In this way teaching and learning have been affecting by this current economic crisis in Sri Lanka.

Educational development programs

Sri Lanka planned to go with many educational development activities targeting sustainable educational goal number - 04 Quality educations. But now the present condition of the country is a stumbling block for that. Many educational development programs are in the state of stopping or postponing. The main reason for stopping all the development programs is lack of money in government due that they have planned to stop the activities for the time being and reduce the expenses for the programs which were already started. According to Save the Children (2022), All of the one million children receiving free school meals in Sri Lanka – or one in four students in the country - could go hungry after government funding was cut as food prices skyrocketed.

Moreover, Sri Lanka is in the grip of an unprecedented economic crisis, which has seen the government's 2022 federal budget slash funding for school meals by two-thirds to 2 billion rupees from 6 billion rupees (about. USD 6.1 mln from \$18.5 mln) – enough to only keep children fed for one school term at most (Save the children, 2022).

Sri Lankan government is working with Save the Children to provide meals to students in 850 schools across the country by distributing food commodities to complement the school meal programme. However, due to this current economic crisis in the country, more than half of the schools have stopped serving meals due to a lack of government funding. The main purpose of school meals scheme is to guarantee a nutritionally balanced meal to vulnerable children across the country in an effort to combat stunting and malnutrition and boost school attendance and educational performance. So, it is crystal clear that how the current economic crisis have affected educational development programs in school levels. Furthermore, higher educational institutions are also cut down the expenditure in various developmental programs.

Management system of education

Sri Lanka has a good management system in education levels since the originality of this made by British colonial in this country. Many programmes were introduced to improve the management system in Sri Lanka. For example, School-based Management (SBM) programme was introduced in Sri Lanka and it was implemented in the name of Programme for School Improvement(PSI) in 2006. At present in Sri Lanka, management system of educational institutions are challengeable amidst economic crisis with the lack of money in the country. The management system has partially affected and be unable to implement the activities properly. There are clear evidences to explain this with examples.

The financial crisis in Sri Lanka is set to impact almost 4.5 million students in the country. The island nation has cancelled term tests in schools in the Western Province as printers in the region have run out of paper (edex Live, 2022). Moreover, the country is facing its worst financial crisis since 1948, when it gained independence from colonial rule. The country is facing an acute shortage of not just papers for examination, but also essentials such as groceries and electricity (edex Live, 2022). This examination related management activity is an example for the challenges face by education system in Sri Lanka. Nevertheless, Sri Lankan government is taking more efforts to run everything successfully setting proper plan.

Another important educational management factor which has been affected by this current economic crisis is decentralization activities. In line with sustainable development goals number -04 Quality educations, to strengthen the education system in Sri Lanka; the country used the concept decentralization in education as a weapon. All schools and higher educational institutions should expand their activities with maximum efforts to go with the concept quality education. This was the main target I the management system of education and for that many activities were developed and implemented, but now this is not in the condition to run further with the current economic challenges in the country. Ministry of education and other relevant ministries connected with adult and distance education system are in the plan of rescheduling all the activities considering the prevailing condition in Sri Lanka.

In line with the challenges of educational management related activities, the management system of ODL (Open Distance Learning) in Sri Lanka has been affected not continuing the activities properly. In the ODL system of education, The Open University of Sri Lanka is playing a major role paving the ways in accordance with that. But now the management of The Open University is challengeable in accomplishing the target properly. Local and foreign students are also facing problems in continuing the education with this ODL method with lack of essential facilities like electricity and communication through technology, and ICT related problems. Likewise, the challenges in educational management system of Sri Lanka are also important to be solved.

The ways to overcome the current challenges in education system

Though there are challenges in various sectors of the country amidst economic crisis, the present government is taking more efforts to overcome them. So, the ways to overcome the challenges in Sri Lanka, especially in education system of Sri Lanka are implementing proper plan in education system forecasting on the future ahead. The second solution is using education as a weapon to make changes in the development of whole county. Third and fourth are enriching distanced mode education and more investment in education. Final way is seeking support and maintaining a good

relationship with other countries to get more innovative ideas to develop the country with the short time period.

Conclusion

Challenges are not permanent and common to all, but the success of challenges depends on how the challenges are overcome with more efforts. So, this economic crisis and its impacts on various sectors of Sri Lanka are not only for the country and it will not last forever if the country has innovative ideas to overcome the challenges. The history clearly says that many countries had this kind of economic crisis and came back in a successful manner with a short time period. As the education is the backbone of a country's development, the impacts on education will create more challenges in the development of the country. This is what education system currently facing challenges in Sri Lanka. As one country and one nation, getting back of this challenges including in education system depends on the efforts of relevant people over there.

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