

THE ROLE OF THE PRINCIPALS IN MANAGING SCHOOLS IN A CONFLICT AREA IN SRI LANKA- A STUDY IN THE BATTICALOA DISTRICT.

M.Selvarajah

Education unit, Faculty of Arts & Culture.

The study centres around an analysis of problems and challenges in schools faced by principals and their roles in response to the problems and challenges in a war-torn environment. The objectives of the study are (i) to identify the problem and challenges faced by the Principals in managing schools, (ii) to evaluate the roles of the Principals in response to the problems and challenges in schools in Batticaloa, (iii) to identify the professional development needs of the Principals in managing schools effectively.

A sample of 20 schools were selected from 3 education zones in the Batticaloa district. Twenty Principals, 30 Teachers, 6 Education Officers and 10 parents constituted the sample. The separate questionnaires were administered to the Principals and Teachers for data collection and others were interviewed. Analysis of data was done under the following categories: (i) Office management (ii) Co-curricular activities (iii) Personality development of students (iv) Management of physical resources and (v) Management of personnel in schools.

In office management, education management information system, delegation of work, keeping records, managing school finance are satisfactory in schools. Shortage of office equipment and unsatisfactory functioning of discipline committees are the problems in office management.

In curricular management, In-school supervision is satisfactory in general, but lack of laboratory facilities, lack of motivation at homes, lack of parents care of their children, conflict situation that disturb schools are problems and challenges. In co-curricular activities, 40% of schools have athletic competition at a very satisfactory level and only 15% of schools have other sports activities very satisfactorily. But prize day, educational tour, shramadana, etc. are not successfully carried out in majority of the schools. Educational tour and field studies are affected due to security reasons. Lack of finance, lack motivation of teachers, lack of physical resources, lack of parents co-operation, lack of playgrounds, lack of teachers with skills training are the problems for effective co-curricular activities in the schools. Most of the schools have personality development programme for students but content and qualities seems to be poor. In managing staff 50% schools face teacher shortage. Principals have problems in managing conflicts among teachers students and parents. This shows that there is an immediate need to staff development of Teachers and Principals.