



SITUATION ANALYSIS REPORT

July - September 2022

Contents

1.0	Introduction	4
1.1	Teach First Sri Lanka	4
1.2	Aim of the Situational Analysis.....	5
1.3	Objectives of the Study	5
1.4	Rationale of the Study.....	6
2.0	Methodology	7
2.1	Secondary Data Analysis	7
2.2	In-depth interviews.....	7
3.0	Situational Analysis	12
1.	Teacher Shortages	12
2.	Teacher Quality.....	17
3.	Professional Development of Teachers	20
4.	Student Performance	24
4.0	List of References	30
5.0	Annexures	32
	Annexure 1: Demographic Information of the Two Zones	34
	Annexure 2: Teacher Shortages & Attrition	36
	Annexure 3: School Performance	40
	Annexure 4: Student Dropouts	49
	Annexure 5: Discussion Guides	58

Acknowledgement

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to the individuals and organizations who have contributed to the success of our research project. Their support and cooperation have been invaluable in shaping the outcomes and impact of our work.

First and foremost, we extend our heartfelt thanks to Bernadine Yatawara, who served as a co-researcher for the situational analysis research. Bernadine's dedication, expertise, and collaborative spirit greatly enhanced the quality and depth of our research findings. We would also like to express our gratitude to Henry De Mel of Paltra, who served as the consultant for this project. Henry's extensive knowledge and guidance were instrumental in the review of our research and provided valuable counsel that helped us navigate complex issues effectively. Also our gratitude to Thadini Liyanage, Jayani Thilakarathne and Dilsha Ranaweera for further contributions to our research.

Our heartfelt appreciation goes to Ms. Ahila Canagasooriyam, the Zonal Director of Batticaloa West Education Zone. Her facilitation, support, and permission to conduct research in the zone were crucial to the success of our project. We are also grateful for her organization of the focus group discussion, which provided valuable insights and perspectives. We extend our thanks to M G Amarasiri Piyadasa, the Provincial Director of the Central Province Education Department, for granting us permission to conduct research in their zone and personally attending the workshop and focus group discussions that we conducted. We would also like to acknowledge the support of Mr. A L M Zarudeen, Additional Director of the Central Province Education Department, and Mr. Karunarathne, Zonal Director of the Wilgamuwa Zonal Department.

We would also like to acknowledge and thank Dr. Sujata Gamage, Shalini Wickramasuriya, and Ramya Jirasinghe for their invaluable contributions as key stakeholders in our work. Their expertise, guidance, and support have been instrumental in the success of our research project. Lastly, we would like to express our gratitude to KinderNothilfe for their generous support and funding, which made this project possible. Their commitment to educational initiatives and their belief in our work have been instrumental in driving positive change and creating impact.

Our deepest gratitude goes to the zonal officers, principals, teachers, students, and parents who actively participated in our research. Their willingness to share their experiences, perspectives, and insights played a vital role in shaping the outcomes of our study. Once again, we sincerely thank all individuals and organizations involved for their unwavering support and contributions to our research project. Without their collaboration and dedication, this endeavour would not have been possible.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Teach First Sri Lanka

Teach First Sri Lanka (TFSL) is developing a proposal to initiate a Fellowship Program in Sri Lanka. The fellowship will identify and recruit young individuals from professional and academic backgrounds, they will be trained and placed in schools that face educational inequity to serve as teachers for a period of two years. This program will be firmly rooted in collaborating with underprivileged schools to learn and make an impact in disadvantaged communities using education. With teaching at the foundation of their leadership, our fellows will engineer social change and find solutions that will help change the outcome of children that face educational inequity.

To develop the proposal TFSL has done a Situation Analysis, to look at the current issues, areas that need immediate attention and challenges faced by the school system to assess the need for the intervention of the TFSL Fellowship and to identify the areas in which the fellowship can be most effective. The Following report is an analysis of the collected research from the Wilgamuwa Education Zone in the Matale district of the Central Province and Batticaloa West Zone in the Batticaloa district of the Eastern Province of Sri Lanka.

This project was funded by KinderNothilfe (KNH) in Sri Lanka. Teach First Sri Lanka consulted Partners in Alternative Training (PALTRA) for guidance in completing the situational analysis and in the use of this study to construct a Logical Framework Matrix to understand how our project would contribute to our 5-year development goal. This analysis and Logical Framework have contributed to the construction of the Teach First Sri Lanka Project Proposal.

1.2 Aim of the Situational Analysis

The purpose of the Situation Analysis is to assess the need to introduce the TFSL Fellowship program which focuses on teacher-leadership. The study will also identify key factors that contribute to educational inequity in the Batticaloa West and Wilgamuwa education zones. The Situation Analysis is expected to point towards evaluating the practical factors to identify the most suitable districts/zones to implement the TFSL model in Sri Lanka. Finally, this Situation Analysis will support a comprehensive project proposal based on the findings of the situational analysis, which will justify the need to implement a TFSL Fellowship Program in Sri Lanka. This Project Proposal will be submitted to key stakeholders, partners, and the Zonal/ Provincial Ministry of Education.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The Objective of this situational analysis was to assess the need and feasibility of introducing a fellowship program which focuses on teacher leadership and to further understand the key resources and requirements needed to effectively deploy a strong fellowship program that will introduce competent teachers in the classroom. This study will understand the practicality of the fellowship and the scope of work required to create an effective fellowship program. The following objectives will be achieved through the feasibility study.

1. To analyse the existing state of Education quality through the collection of secondary and primary research from two non-urban zonal education zones in Sri Lanka to justify the need for the Teach First Sri Lanka intervention.
2. To identify the ways in which it can work effectively within the formal teacher recruitment process in these zones.
3. To evaluate practical factors in identifying districts/zones in which the fellowship program can be introduced in Sri Lanka.
4. To develop a project proposal aligned to the identified needs using the Logical Framework Approach to be presented to stakeholders, the Ministry of Education, the National Institute of Education, and other governmental bodies to effectively collaborate in our efforts for Sri Lankan Education development.

1.4 Rationale of the Study

Teach First Sri Lanka recognizes the need to create a program that is contextualized to the needs of the Sri Lankan Education System and the communities that we aim to uplift. This fellowship model has been introduced in 61 countries since 1989. It has had a sustainable impact in these countries with over 83,000 alumni contributing to this global change and continuing to transform education. This study will support TFSL to understand if and how the global program can be adapted to suit the needs of Sri Lanka to create a long-term impact in our country.

Furthermore, there are significant shortages of qualified teachers that are willing to serve in underprivileged communities. Teachers are rarely motivated to empower children in poverty-stricken communities to change their life outcomes. Fewer young people are willing to choose the role of a teacher despite many opportunities to improve education for underprivileged children. However, for the fellowship to be truly effective it is vital to understand the needs of key stakeholder groups and the feasibility based on the Sri Lankan context.



Image 1: Bogawewa Viduhala Devagiriya

2.0 Methodology

To identify the issues in Wilgamuwa and Batticaloa Education Zones, TFSL conducted a secondary research analysis on information that the zone maintained. Thereafter TFSL collected qualitative information on actual experience and personal perceptions from Zonal Education Officers, Principals, Teachers, and Volunteer Teachers were collected. This information was collected using in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with principals and teachers from the two Education Zones.

2.1 Secondary Data Analysis

Thereafter Teach First Sri Lanka acquired data and information from the Wilgamuwa and Batticaloa West Education Zone to analyze the following factors.

1. School Performance based Grade 5 Scholarship pass rates 2016 to 2020.
2. School Performance based on O Level pass rates 2014 to 2020.
3. School Performance based on A Level pass rates 2016 to 2020.
4. Teacher Shortages as of August 2022
5. School Drop-out rates from 2015 to 2021

This data has been presented in the Appendices of this document and has been referred to in the analysis.

2.2 In-depth interviews

Four Teachers from Wilgamuwa Education Zone and Three Teachers from Batticaloa West Zone were Interviewed by phone using the Discussion Guide. Once the information based on actual experience and personal perceptions of different discussion areas was collected, it was organized into Five key broad areas and recorded as Current Situations, Emerging Issues and Challenges. This qualitative information has been plotted in the Situational Analysis Matrix in a narrative form. This was adapted to support and justify the secondary analysis that TFSL had recorded.

2.3 Focus Group Discussions

A discussion guide was created to speak to a group of principals and teachers from both Zones. Using this Discussion Guide, 2 Focus Group discussions were held with a mixture of Principals and Teachers from the two Education Zones.

The Wilgamuwa Focus Group Discussion was held with a total group of twelve, including five School Principals, two Deputy Principals, one School Teacher and four Zonal Directors at the Wilgamuwa Zonal Education Office.

The Batticaloa Focus Group Discussion was conducted with the participation of fifteen individuals, including eight Teachers, five School Principals and two Deputy Directors. In total twenty-seven respondents' information was compiled through two Focus Group Discussions.



Image 2: Focus Group Discussion at Pankudavaly



Image 3: Focus Group Discussion at the Wilgamuwa Zonal Office



Image 4: Focus Group Discussion at the Wilgamuwa Zonal Office

2.4 Review of the Analysis

Based on the Situational Analysis developed with the research that was found. A further analysis and review were conducted with the support of Paltra. TFSL conducted a consultation of the final research on the 4th of August 2022 with experienced individuals in the education and development sector to discuss the findings of the research. Among those present were, David Boehm chairperson Teach First Sri Lanka, Dr Sujata Gamage of Education Forum, Ramya Jirasinghe the Country Coordinator of KNH, Shalini Wickramasuriya, Henry De Mel consultant from Paltra, Bernadine Yatawara a researcher for Teach First Sri Lanka.

From the discussion a number of factors were discussed in terms of the issues that are faced in schools and the lack of sufficient funding to remote schools resulting in large inequity in Sri Lanka. The intention of Teach First Sri Lanka was discussed and the need to run a pilot based on our ability to secure permission from the zonal and provincial authorities was brought to our attention. Some of the findings of the Situational

Analysis received constructive criticism and suggestions were raised for Teach First Sri Lanka for our way forward. Several other points were raised which were recorded and reviewed by Paltra and Teach First Sri Lanka in formulating a plan.

Some key points that were taken note for the further progress of Teach First Sri Lanka were as follows:

- The need to direct the study toward the possibility of an MOU with the Provincial Ministry with defined entry points.
- The need to focus on a pilot project that can evaluate the potential success of the program.
- To conduct further evaluation on schools that have a shortage of teachers in key STEM subjects and evaluate the performance of children in schools that have STEM teachers.
- The need to review national training standards in the development of our fellowship program.

A further and final step in the of Situational Analysis was the participatory workshop and discussion in which Teach First Sri Lanka invited a mix of Zonal Officers, Teachers, Parents and Past students. The purpose of the workshop was to formulate a development process with participants to help them systematically solve the identified problems in education that they see in their zones using the logical Framework Approach. The program was facilitated by Henry De Mel the consultant from Paltra.

The workshop attendees consisted of 3 Principals, 2 teachers, A volunteer teacher, 2 parents and 2 zonal officers from both Batticaloa West and Wilgamuwa zones. Based on the results of the workshop a log frame was developed which aided the construction of a TFSL project proposal.

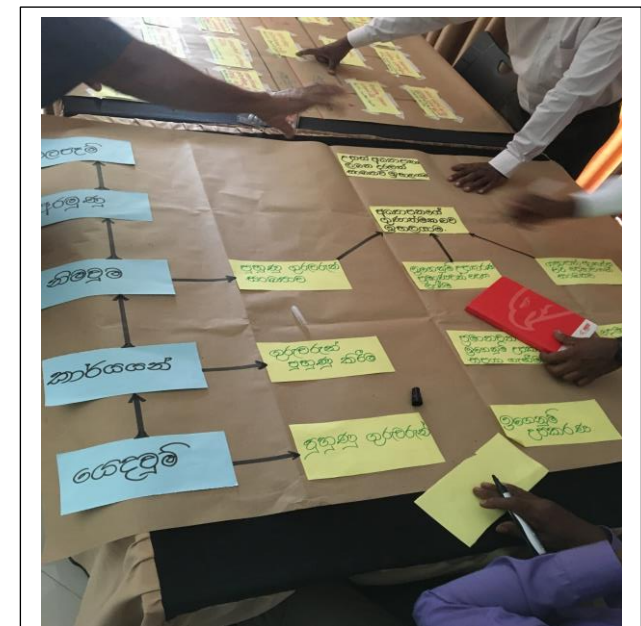
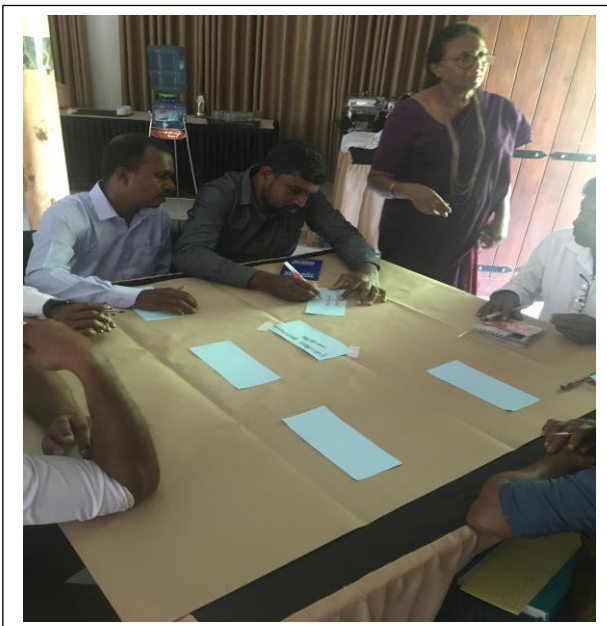




Image 5: The Workshop Participants in Wilgamuwa

3.0 Situational Analysis

Research Findings	Analysis
1. Teacher Shortages	
<p>1.1 Challenges that principals face in integrating new teachers into schools.</p> <p>Most principals in both zones complained that when teacher appointments are given, Teachers take up the appointment, sign the contract committing for 2, 5 or 8 years. However, as these are remote schools, with no proper transport and accommodation facilities, they request transfers much before their committed time is completed. In most cases, Marriage, pregnancy, and childcare are common reasons for transfer requests.</p> <p>The Wilgamuwa Zonal Director explained that when transfers are given before the number of years the teacher has committed to (in their appointment letter) has been completed, it is often considered as a “Temporary Transfer”. Because by law the teacher is not allowed a transfer (as per their contract), therefore they circumvent this law by using influence to get a temporary transfer. These teachers do not return and are integrated into their new schools and the vacancy they leave remains, creating a teacher deficit for months/years.</p> <p>The Principals and the Zonal Directors have little control over these transfers. The Wilgamuwa Zonal Director mentioned, with the current transport and economic situation 85 Teachers from the zone have requested for transfers, and he is holding it as it will cause a teacher shortage that will affect the school’s functionality. He also mentioned that he faces a lot of pressure from teachers when these requests are held. He also explained that once transfers are made it is a challenge to resolve. The Zonal director in Batticaloa mentioned that “when new teachers replace the teachers that have been transferred out, the teachers that come in are inexperienced and often are not qualified to teach the subjects that have existing vacancies”.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. As seen in Table 1.2 there is a teacher shortage of 101 teachers in Wilgamuwa which is 13% of the needed teacher cadre and 284 teachers in Batticaloa which is 20% of the needed teacher cadre. 2. There is an excess of 75 teachers in Batticaloa for subjects which are of lesser priority. Which highlights an issue of misallocation of teachers to the zone based on infield or experienced teachers. 3. The zones have taken remedial steps to the shortage by appointing teacher assistants/ volunteer teachers. 37 in Batticaloa West and 6 in Wilgamuwa (Table 1.2). 4. Looking at Figure 2.1 to 2.3 we see that there is a significant shortage of teachers in secondary schools. There are also shortages in Primary school, that is in Batticaloa West there is a shortage of 70 teachers for primary. 5. The Transfer of teachers: Teacher shortages are a continuous challenge for both zones as new teacher appointments start off with serving these high need schools and thereafter, they are transferred to other schools on request. 6. Table 2.1 shows that 55 to 100 teachers are being transferred out and retiring from the two zones in comparison to those being transferred in. 7. Teachers are transferred from the high need schools as temporary transfers; however, they often do not return. Temporary transfers cannot be replaced and therefore the vacancy for these teaching positions often go unfilled for long periods of time. (With reference to Table 1.1 and Table 1.2)

Research Findings	Analysis
<p>The Provincial ministry fills the number of teachers but not the need. Unfortunately, they have no choice but to adapt and appoint these teachers to teach in the subjects with no teachers in the schools. For Example, in Batticaloa, if 20 Teacher vacancies are filled, they will be filled by using the existing DO Cadre who are Arts Graduates, who will not have the ability to teach Science and Math's. This will not resolve the Teacher Shortage for Science and Math's but will fill the cadre of teachers.¹</p> <p>1.2 Subjects that are affected most because of Teacher shortages.</p> <p>In both zones, the Teacher shortages are around subjects such as Math's, Science, English, ICT and Aesthetic subjects.</p> <p>Teachers from the Batticaloa West Zone explained that there is the "Basket Subject" concept, which is if the teacher shortages occur in aesthetic subjects, it can be covered by another teacher in a different aesthetic subject. However, this is not possible with Math's, Science and English.</p> <p>1.3 How schools work around the Teacher Shortage.</p> <p>When another Teacher is delegated to teach the subject, the requirement is often between Math's and Science. A Science Teacher may have a basic knowledge of Math, So the said teacher can substitute for the subject.</p> <p>If there is no teacher for Math, the science teacher may fill in. However, the teacher would divide his or her time between the two subjects and students will not get the complete amount of learning time required for both Math and Science as the teacher's time has been split between the two subjects. For an Example, if one teacher is required to complete 32 to 40 periods lasting for 40 mts each in one week. If one teacher is required to fill in for the shortage of another subject, she or he will still be teaching the same 32 period allocation and</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. The line ministry often appoints teachers with a background in arts to teach subjects that require expertise in Math and Science. Still leaving schools with weak science and Math teachers. According to the Zonal director, the cadre is filled with teachers who come from arts backgrounds, when the need is for teachers in Science & Math and the zone is not equipped to give these teachers subject specific training. (In reference to RF² 1.1) 9. Due to other subject teachers filling in for the void in other subjects, the student's learning time per subject is halved, as the Teacher's time is divided between two subjects during school hours (in reference to RF 1.3) 10. There is a significant shortage of Math teachers: in Wilgamuwa and in Batticaloa (Figure 2.2). As a result, Student performance in Math is weak due to the shortage of Math teachers (Refer to graph on OL pass rates of Batticaloa/ Wilgamuwa on Figure 3.1 & Figure 3.2). Furthermore, children are progressing to A Level grades despite having to repeat subjects such as Math and Language. 11. Due to teacher shortages in Math's, Science, ICT and English, there is an impact on low School Completion Rates of the GCE O/L Exam (Figure 2. 2 Number of teachers short in Secondary School Grades (G 6-11). The Batticaloa West average pass-rate in O Levels is 54% while Wilgamuwa passed rate is 63% over the past 4 years (Figure 3.1 & 3.2). 12. As a result of a lack of teachers children who have not grasped the primary grades progress to higher grades without the required knowledge and struggle in higher grades. With reference to RF 1.3, students are not getting the needed education in primary and middle school in key subjects such as Math, Science and English.

¹ There is a possible lack of a proper census regarding the number of volunteer teachers in the zone.

² RF refers to Research Finding points made on the left column.

Research Findings	Analysis
<p>not more. But the time will be split between the two subjects and where a class needs to be doing 10 periods of Math and 10 periods of science, if the teacher is the same the teacher would complete 5 periods of Math and 5 periods of science. These teachers do not get any incentives or additional benefits if they cover another subject.</p> <p>According to a teacher from Batticaloa West, students from Grades 1 and 2 often proceed to grade 3 without having received the total amount of learning time or the skills required for grade 1 and 2. These students are not ready for grade 3 and grade 3 teachers need to spend more time teaching them the basics. However, teachers are not capable of spending so much time with them. Schools have now started recruiting voluntary teachers or additional teachers to come into schools and teach. These salaries are paid by School Welfare, patrons, or charitable organizations.</p> <p>The suggestion of experienced teachers that move into city schools could be encouraged to teach online classes via Zoom, which can be streamed in the village schools with a facilitating teacher in the classroom was made.</p> <p>1.4 Suggestions from teachers to lessen the impact of teacher shortage.</p> <p>Most Teachers, Principals and Zonal Officers from both zones suggested asking AL Students that have passed to fill in for the Teacher Shortage. “There are smart AL qualified students waiting for university admission or looking for opportunities” said one Principal. The schools have recruited some of these teachers and they have been highly motivated and committed to teaching.</p> <p>1.5 The experience of volunteer teachers.</p> <p>Teach For Sri Lanka was able to have conversations with two volunteer teachers. The School Volunteers expressed that they enjoyed teaching, as it was their own school, or the village school and they wanted to help their students. However, since it was not formal and no appointment letters were given, they felt that there was no job security. Furthermore, it is not possible for them to consider this as work experience without a service letter.</p>	<p>13. As a result of shortages of teachers in key subjects such as Math and Science in Grades 6-9 (Figure 2.2), children that could have done Math and Science for AIs could be choosing Arts (Figure 3.6), In 2020 out of 323 students sitting for their A-Levels, 74% of them followed Arts Streams.</p> <p>14. While 14 schools have Arts Stream, only 2 schools have Biology, Technology and English Technology (Table 3.1). The most popular stream is Arts (Figure 3.6) due to the lack of Teachers in other streams (Figure 2.3) and due to the lack of availability of schools with Maths and Science streams, Children could be choosing Arts subjects as a matter of convenience based on availability of schools and teachers.</p> <p>15. Strong suggestions emerged on recruiting AL graduates to teach in schools as an approach to solve teacher shortages (With reference to RF 1.4).</p> <p>16. Suggestion to employee credible city teachers that cannot travel to rural schools to teach via video conferencing software to be facilitated by teachers physically available in the rural school classrooms (With reference to RF 1.3).</p> <p>17. There is a larger amount of schools in Type 2 and 3 in the two education zones as per Table 1.1 (Only 22 out of 116 schools in 1ab and 1c). There is a need to strengthen the systems to help children have a stronger foundation in STEEM Subjects and can pursue streams in commerce, math, science, and technology in these schools.</p> <p>18. According to RF 4.9, there are schools that have only 1-2 teachers, a principal, and a small population of children. However, these schools are kept open due to policy restrictions.</p> <p>19. There is a gap in our national system and the need to channel good teachers into schools that can encourage a larger number of skilled secondary school graduates and a higher number of STEM graduates. 1.6 also highlights the need for the school system to encourage more STEM graduates and have STEM A Level stream available to children in rural schools. (refer Figure 3.6 & Table 3.1).</p>

Research Findings	Analysis
<p>They also mentioned that the senior teachers do not always treat them with respect and dignity because they are young teachers, which is disheartening. Volunteer teachers are excluded from any official training and support that is offered by the Ministry of Education or the zone. The reason for this is because they are not officially recognized as appointed teachers. Therefore, their only support system are the senior teachers in schools and the principals.</p> <p>They enjoy teaching however and feel that the children respond to them well, and therefore they feel inclined to the profession. However, they do want to change and given the chance may consider another line of work.</p> <p>They mentioned if they were given a steady and regular allowance then they could commit themselves for a longer period, so that it will help the student’s learning to be uninterrupted. The voluntary teacher from Batticaloa West said that they have been asked to leave when teacher replacements were made and then asked to return when there is no teacher. This could impact their ability to sustain a livelihood. The teacher had to resort to becoming a daily labourer until he was asked to come back as a teacher and has survived on a voluntary teacher’s salary for the last 6 years.</p> <p>1.6 Educational attainment</p> <p>In Batticaloa and Matale the unemployment rates are 6.2 and 4.6 per cent, respectively (Sri Lanka Labour Force Survey 2020, Department of Census and Statistics) According to the article ‘SL only country in the world to have unemployed graduates’ : OPA calls for Part Time Employment Policy by Shirajiv Sirimane, the OPA (Organization of Professional Association) President 2022, Dulitha Perera, stated that as of December 2020, Sri Lanka has 100,000 unemployed graduates.</p> <p>According to Samaraweera and Weerasiri (2021) in Sri Lanka, individuals who have completed their “post-secondary” education are less likely to be employed. Samaraweera and Weerasiri (2021) argue that this is due to individuals with higher education aspiring to find job opportunities that match their qualifications while individuals with a secondary education are willing to be employed anywhere.</p>	<p>20. 1.6 highlights the need for graduates to develop skills and abilities that are desirable to the private sector and public sector to secure gainful employment. By Coaching them to adopt the needed skills through a teaching fellowship. We could help graduates to develop skill and versatility in the work force.</p>

Research Findings	Analysis
<p>Moreover, the article Sri Lanka's Youth Employment Challenge: A Dilemma of Attitudes and Aspirations by Kaushalya Attygalle , states that there is a mismatch between the job aspiration of young graduates and the job opportunities available to youth in the Sri Lankan labour market. Accordingly, Attygalle (2012) states that the public sector cannot employ all of these youth while the private sector is not willing to offer them gainful employment unless they have the skill that is required from the available jobs. 45% of our university graduates are graduating with degrees in arts and more than half of them are unemployed (Economy Next , 2023).</p> <p>Another, key demand that the Sri Lankan job market is the demand for skilled workers in the fields of automobile engineering, electronics, and textile manufacture.</p>	

Research Findings	Analysis
<h2 style="margin: 0;">2. Teacher Quality</h2>	
<p>2.1 The background/ qualification to become a teacher.</p> <p>Teacher recruitment is done by formally appointing University Graduates. Recently graduates from the College of Education (COE) joined as Development Officers.</p> <p>There are two sources of teachers. The first is for teacher vacancies to be filled by the provincial ministry by appointing teachers from the teacher training colleges. The second is to open up the vacancies for university graduates to apply and they will then be employed into service. Many of the teacher appointments are graduate appointees.</p> <p>In 2016, the government employed many graduates into government service as development officers. Most of these development officers were appointed to schools to teach temporarily until other government vacancies could potentially open. However, as Development officers they do not have access to teacher training and teacher development that an appointed teacher would have access to.</p> <p>According to the Wilgamuwa zonal planning officer as per an MOE gazette, development officers will be absorbed as teachers into the schools that they are serving. Teacher Training at the COE is a comprehensive 3-year program and covers topics such as Child Psychology, Counselling, Critical Thinking etc.</p> <p>The percentage of graduate teachers that are appointed to schools is approximately 60% in both zones in reference to Table 1.1. 23% of the teacher population in Batticaloa West zone has not been trained. In Wilgamuwa, 17.5% are untrained teachers.</p> <p>2.2 Teachers In-Service Professional Development</p> <p>There are modules that teachers can complete to progress as teachers and become better qualified. However, teachers do not always complete these modules, and whether they complete them or not they still have a permanent job. According to the Wilgamuwa zonal planning officer, all teachers in the zone have completed at least 1 module in the zone. However, there are pockets of teachers who do not pursue the module completion actively. (Discussed further in RF 3.1).</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In the Batticaloa West Zone 23% of the teacher population are untrained and 17.5% of teachers were untrained in Wilgamuwa as per RF 2.1 2. Students are continuously faced with inexperienced teachers being appointed to schools. Once teachers obtain some experience, they request transfers to central or city schools (RF 1.1). 3. A larger population of Teachers are graduates (Approximately 60% in both Zones as per Table 1.2). Graduates have little to no teaching experience when they start. This could be a potential impediment on the education Impact on the students. 4. Responses on the Teacher’s performance quality assessment were contradictory between the Teachers, Principals and Zonal Officers. Some Teachers felt that the assessment is inadequate, while zonal officers and principals feel it is adequate (In reference to RF 2.4) 5. The performance quality assessment methods followed by schools are limited to observation of teaching and visits by the zonal in-service advisors. 6. Teachers and principals claim that the need for teachers to travel from far may inhibit the ability for teachers to be effective in their teaching and do more than what is required to support children with special needs (In reference to RF 2.3) 7. Looking at the pass rates of ordinary levels and advanced levels, in Annexure 3 and Grade 5 scholarship pass rates in Figure 3.7, we can see that the pass rates and performance of students in the zones are low. An inference can be made based on the expressed level of quality of teachers in these zones, as well as the need for more or different teachers for children who come from difficult backgrounds.

Research Findings	Analysis
<p>COE-qualified teachers are confident and experienced in handling a classroom. Principals seem to prefer COE-qualified teachers as new appointments.</p> <p>If teachers are Graduates, or Development Officers with no training or experience in classroom management or teaching techniques, the principals assign a senior teacher to support and mentor them during the initial few weeks until the teachers are confident enough to manage a class independently.</p> <p>2.3 Other factors that affect the quality of teaching</p> <p>When Teachers travel to school from outside areas, they spend almost 3-5 hours travelling both ways. This impacts their commitment to teach. Some children from remote schools are slow learners and it requires extra effort from teachers. In some instances, teachers conduct additional classes free of charge. However, it is difficult for teachers who travel from afar to reach these remote schools.</p> <p>2.4 How teacher quality is assessed</p> <p>There is no standard mechanism to assess the performance of the Teachers. However, the Teachers develop an Annual Plan in agreement with the principal including Targets. These are based on developing students’ competencies. A Teacher is supposed to meet these targets. Some Teachers felt that this is a non-value adding activity as it is not carried out diligently and does not help the student. The principals verified this saying that they must do an Annual Plan with the agreement of the principal. But it was a formal document only and the plans were not monitored or evaluated. If the Annual Plan targets are not met, however, no action is taken. In case they were unable to meet the targets, there was no effect on their salaries or promotions.</p> <p>The In-Service Advisors visit schools on a weekly schedule and monitor teachers’ performance based on eight-themed criteria and they observe teaching skills. Moreover, they check the Annual Plan to see if targets are being achieved. However, in some instances these activities are not carried out consistently due to a shortage of in-service advisors or other priorities.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Teachers do not take an interest in their personal development for teaching or accumulating new knowledge. Furthermore, there is no encouragement to improve their personal development. The only incentive is to complete modules (In reference to RF 2.1 and RF 3.1). 9. Assessments conducted by Zonal in-service advisors are inconsistent and are not constructive. Therefore, teachers are unhappy with the support and feel that it does not help them become better teachers (In reference to RF 2.4)

Research Findings	Analysis
<p>A few Teachers mentioned that the In-Service Officer’s class observation is at times demotivating. Some teachers complained that the officers have a check list and there is nothing done beyond fault finding. Therefore, anyone who has done work that passes the checklist is safe, even if they are inadequate teachers, they obtain better ratings. Some teachers explained that the areas monitored are of no significance to education outcomes. For example, they check if the facilities are maintained and are clean, if the environment is clean etc.</p> <p>2.5 Do teachers invest in their own personal development?</p> <p>Some teachers stated that they are pressured for time to complete the Syllabus and follow up with records and documentation. It does not give them much time to invest in personal development.</p> <p>The Batticaloa Zonal Director mentioned that many schools do not have libraries, or the library area is now used for other purposes. The value of reading is gradually diminishing among students and teachers.</p>	

Research Findings	Analysis
<h3 style="text-align: center;">3. Professional Development of Teachers</h3>	
<p>3.1 Kinds of Teacher Development and training available for teachers</p> <p>The Zonal officers said, The Ministry of Education has a scheme initiated by the National Institute of Education (NIE) to hold a 3–4-day Training for the newly appointed Teachers. This training discusses Pedagogical concepts. The training either happens at the NIE Colombo or in the local Zonal Education area. However, after covid the training has been stopped. The Provincial Education Department provides a series of trainings commonly known as the completion of “modules”. This training used to be compulsory, However, due to the actions of the Teacher Union, it has been made non-compulsory.</p> <p>Each Module has 7 parts. The training is held at the Teacher Centres in the Education Zone. It is held on the weekends and consists of a 2-day Theory lesson and the 3rd Day is a written examination. Once Modules 1-7 are completed, the Teacher moves up from level 3-1 Level to 2-1 with an increase in salary.</p> <p>Then when 8-14 Modules are completed, the Teacher moves from level 2-1 to level 1-a. This is how teachers go up the ranks if the teacher has not completed the PGDE or BAEd and opts to follow the “Module” system. However, even if no training is perused the Teacher is still promoted after every 7 years and can reach Level 1-1 at least with 21 years of Service.</p> <p>3.2 Do all teachers receive training/induction before they start in a classroom?</p> <p>The zonal officers from Wilgamuwa said that they are given training that has been developed by the NIE. The zonal director in Batticaloa explained that they try to train teachers if there is an opportunity, however, most often they are appointed to schools as soon as possible.</p> <p>However, several teachers from Wilgamuwa and Batticaloa responded saying that they do not receive training. If they are graduates, they often do not have classroom teaching experience, therefore they are informally appointed to work with a senior teacher until they are able to teach independently.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There appears to be an inconsistency in terms of pre - service training offered to graduates appointed as teachers in these zones as per RF 3.2. 2. There are a group of Teachers who continue without training. (Batticaloa west statistics show 23% of the Teachers in the zone are Un-trained in Table 1.2). Training is not made compulsory; it is a choice which could allow teachers to continue in schools without any impact on their careers. 3. Teachers feel that they lack training in ‘soft’ skills which are essential for them to help, guide and reassure students from difficult home environments. (In reference to RF 3.4) 4. Teachers can be allowed to take long breaks from teaching for their self-development. During which the schools do not get a replacement teacher. (In reference to RF 3.3) 5. Special programs (i.e.: SBTT & GEMP/ RF 3.5 & 3.6)) that are put in place to support the school system are not implemented and monitored adequately. 6. Special programs (i.e.: SBTT & GEMP) are not contextualized to the needs of the teachers; therefore, teachers often find them overwhelming to stay updated. (In reference to RF .3.5 & RF 3.6) 7. Teachers feel that they require training in areas that help them practically handle challenges that they face in real life. (In reference to RF 3.4) 8. Teacher guides and material result in the focus of one goal, which is to complete the curriculum content and pass exams (In reference to RF 3.7 & RF 3.8)

Research Findings	Analysis
<p>3.3 Are there any other training facilities for Teachers?</p> <p>Graduate Teachers who do not have Teacher Training are encouraged to do the Post Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE). Most Graduates tend to complete this as they are then entitled to a Salary Increment. However, this is not compulsory either. This is the only CPD training available for Teachers. The Zonal director of Batticaloa West said that the PGDE is now online and is easy for teachers to complete. It is not as effective as it was before in terms of improving the Teacher quality.</p> <p>Graduates who are recruited as teachers are encouraged to complete the 2-year Teacher Training Program within 5 years of appointment. Due to the incentive given by the government, it is a 2-year paid salary break. However, during this period the Teacher’s school does not get a replacement but must manage until the teacher returns.</p> <p>3.4 How teacher training can be improved</p> <p>There were some positive responses on the impact of Training, while other teachers thought that Module Completion is not enough to help teachers. Areas such as Leadership, Motivational Skills and Psychosocial Counselling are not areas that are covered in the modules.</p> <p>The Teachers explain that the biggest challenges they face is that the students face complex social issues. They come from economically challenged families, with food security issues, broken families, parental figures with addiction problems, financial insecurity and some children are victims of sexual abuse. Teachers need to manage these complex situations and ensure students in school are met with a safe environment. Children need to be supported by teachers to complete at least 10 years of schooling and sit for the O/L examination. However, to do this, the teachers do not have the expertise in counselling. Furthermore, teachers require training on how to practically manage classrooms and help children focus on their studies. They also need training on how to use activities and techniques that can help children focus and understand their subject matter. The role of a teacher also requires a lot of administrative work, such as organizing information, marking papers, and ensuring accountability for their students.</p>	<p>9. Teachers can only be recruited through the ministry and appointed to schools. Therefore, there is an inflexibility of meeting teacher shortages unless the ministry can respond to the need. These teachers are recruited only from the pool of graduates and from National Colleges of Education.</p>

Research Findings	Analysis
<p>3.5 The World Bank funded - School Based Program for Training Teachers (SBTT)</p> <p>The Zonal officers from Wilgamuwa explained that all Schools have the World Bank Program SBTT, and this is a participatory, self-monitoring system that is used to improve school teaching. They explained that only a few schools are picked for the evaluation process. However, due to disruptions following Covid-19, the program has not been implemented. However, 3 out of 7 school Teachers said the SBTT is not functional in their schools. While others complained that it is a high work intensive - record keeping exercise. It takes most of the Teacher’s time and leaves little time for Teaching. One teacher found the program effective and gave the example of a “Quality Circle” mechanism, where teachers are encouraged to communicate to solve problems. However, it takes a collective effort to make use of this initiative and after Covid-19 the initiative has taken a backseat.</p> <p>3.6 The General Education Modulated Program (GEMP)</p> <p>The General Education Modular Program (GEMP) is operational in only a few selected schools. It has a budget allocation of around Rs. 50,000.00 per school and it covers a wider area than the SBTT program. It covers Math, English, Science, Library development and Zonal Office staff capacity building. It also has a strong Counselling component. It has the capacity development component for Zonal Staff, where it could fund them to complete the PGDE or BA/Ed.</p> <p>3.7 Are the Teacher Guides and textbooks useful?</p> <p>The general idea was that the Teacher Guides are useful. Though a few Teachers did say that it is exam oriented and does not build the thinking capacity of the students. However, the Teacher Guide was helpful to guide the Teacher and maintain consistency in Teaching across schools.</p> <p>About half of the Teachers said that they use additional textbooks and software apps to teach the subject more effectively. While others responded saying the Teacher Guide is very effective and complete and they do not require any supplementary reading or references. The teachers felt that the Syllabus is enough to help the student to pass the exam. However, there was a lot of focus on the guides being aligned to curriculum content completion and passing examinations.</p>	

Research Findings	Analysis
<p>3.8 Teachers experience with the Syllabus.</p> <p>The overall census was that the syllabus is inconsistent. Several Teachers mentioned that students in these areas are slow learners and depend only on the school curriculum, therefore, they need more time to teach and ensure that students understood lessons. However, due to the limitation in time, it is difficult to give children the time they need.</p> <p>The syllabus does not help children with skills such as critical thinking and analytical knowledge. The syllabus does not give teachers the time to help slow learners due to the vast amount of content. Some teachers find that changing the syllabus is a hindrance to teaching, while others stated that the syllabus is old-fashioned and traditional, and that it must be updated and improved to meet the needs of the students.</p>	

Research Findings	Analysis
<p>4. Student Performance</p>	
<p>4.1 Student Performance</p> <p>Ordinary Level Exams</p> <p>Language (First Lang) and Math are compulsory subjects; however, students are allowed to proceed to AL while being given the chance to re-sit subjects that they fail (Maths & Tamil are mandatory resits). We see that approximately 10 to 15 % of the students fail Math and Tamil when compared to those who passed O/L's in Batticaloa as per Figure 3.1. Furthermore, when we look at Wilgamuwa we see that 15 to 20% fail Maths & Sinhala as per Figure 3.2, the zonal officer of Wilgamuwa explained that the challenge is the pass rate of Maths and not Sinhala. The average pass rate is 44% without Math's and first language in Batticaloa. Which is a strong indicator that there are many children who are lacking support in these subjects.</p> <p>Advanced Level Exams</p> <p>As we can see from Figure 3.5 the average pass rates for various streams are sporadic. The reason for this is because of the number of students that sit for these streams. The breakdown of the number of students who sit in these streams in 2020 can be seen in Figure 3.6 gives a further breakdown of the number of students who sat vs passed for the specific streams. ¼ of the student population choose Arts subjects for A levels.</p> <p>With the lack of schools and teachers that offer these subjects and a lack of a strong foundation in Math's, science, commerce, and technology in middle school to O Level grades. It is evident that many children choose arts subjects because they do not have an option but to pursue the arts stream.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Data indicates that there is a strong correlation between lack of teachers in subjects such as Maths, Science and the children's results at O levels and A levels. There is a huge impact on children, resulting in an average 44% pass rate in children who pass O levels including Math and their first language in Batticaloa West (Figure 3.1); In Wilgamuwa an average pass rate of 51% (Figure 3.2). 2. Based on RF 4.1 and RF 4.2, we can infer that the Teacher shortage has a direct impact on the student's potential and future education attainment. This education inequity may have eliminated many professionals coming out from this area due to Teacher shortage. 3. The dropouts are spread across grades 1 to 13, as seen in Figure 4.3. We see that more than 50% of children drop out between grade 10 to 13. 4. From Figures 4.1 & 4.2 we see that dropouts dipped in 2020, which partially could be due to the inability to account for dropouts and is now on a rise in 2021. 5. From Figure 4.4 we see that majority of the dropouts are boys and a study done in 2022 of dropouts in Figure 4.6 show that student's dropout due to several reasons. Some of them being the lack of support from the family, the need to find employment, learning difficulties and psychological hardship. All of these issues are as a result of economic poverty and inequity. 6. Based on RF 4.6, school dropouts are on the rise especially after covid. Batticaloa has an increase of 2% to 2.8% of the student population drop out of 14,500 Students (Figure 4.2). 7. Further information from the zone gave evidence to the fact that there are teenage pregnancies and underage children taking up daily wage jobs such as sand mining (RF 4.6)

Research Findings	Analysis
<p>Grade 5 Scholarship Exams</p> <p>Rate of students qualified in the grade 5 scholarships above cut-off in these zones are between 4 to 9 % in Batticaloa West and between 9 to 11% in Wilgamuwa.</p> <p>In 2019, we see that qualifying rates are as follows.</p> <p>Batticaloa West: 8.94% (Figure 3.7)</p> <p>Batticaloa District: 13.61% (Figure 3.9)</p> <p>Wilgamuwa: 11.47% (Figure 3.8)</p> <p>Matale: 11.73% (Figure 3.9)</p> <p>Nationally: 14%</p> <p>This shows that zones like Batticaloa West and Wilgamuwa have a significantly lesser number of children qualifying for Grade 5 scholarship exams as opposed to district and national levels.</p> <p>4.2 How do teacher shortages affect children?</p> <p>Students do not have the opportunity to learn Science and Mathematics as the schools do not have teachers to teach these subjects. Students are taught other subjects such as Tamil or History during the time periods allocated to teach Science or Mathematics.</p> <p>Students may not be able to afford tuition classes to compensate for the subjects they are not taught in school. A student who aspires to be a doctor one day may never be able to pursue her ambition as they may never be taught Science in school due to the absence of a Science teacher.</p> <p>4.3 What do children enjoy about school?</p> <p>Having spoken to a group of students in Batticaloa, students look forward to engaging in classrooms and interacting with teachers during the lessons. Students themselves feel they learn better when they enjoy learning.</p> <p>They appreciate teachers that use innovative teaching methods such as activities and games.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. From RF 1.3 we learnt that there are Slow learners progress to higher grades without the needed support until it is too difficult for them to continue, and they resort to dropping out of school. Due to pressure to complete the Syllabus, slow learners are not given the needed support, and may ultimately drop out of school. 10. According to RF 4.6, the school Mid-day meal seems to be an incentive to attend school. However, the method of reimbursement is not enough for these children, given the low-income status. Furthermore, given the economic situation of the country, the government has cut costs on providing the morning meal. If the Midday Meal Program is improved, school absenteeism and the dropout rate can be reduced. 11. RF 3.7 points out that the Syllabus is aligned to prepping children for exams, which takes away the ability to help students learn practical skills. 12. As per Figures 3.8 & 3.7 we see that Pass rates of Grade 5 scholarship from the two zones are between 3 to 4% for Batticaloa West and 5 to 6% for Wilgamuwa. 13. As per RF 4.1 , a comparison of pass rates with district level and national level data show that Batticaloa West and Wilgamuwa Grade 5 Scholarship are way lower than their respective district and national level as seen Figure 3.7, 3.8 Vs 3.9. 14. As per Figure 3.4 Average pass rates for A/L's are between 60% to 70% for the two zones, however majority of the children that pass is from the arts stream.

Research Findings	Analysis
<p>4.4 What would you like to learn in addition to what you are taught?</p> <p>Students were keen to learn skills that can help them support their families economically. They Suggested skills such as weaving and making handcrafts, to contribute towards generating a revenue stream for their homes while staying in school.</p> <p>4.5 In the opinion of teachers, challenges that children face.</p> <p>The majority of the students in schools come from low-income families. Parents do not value education, due to their life experience. The students are not encouraged enough to attend school. Some students come to school without the morning meal and are unable to concentrate on learning. Some students do not have sufficient school supplies to work in the classroom. Some teachers use their personal money to help students with their nutrition, food, and school supplies.</p> <p>The midday meal is what attracts children to school and if that is not provided then children may not come to school at all.</p> <p>4.6 Why are there children dropping out of school.</p> <p>Wilgamuwa zone has 21 dropouts and Batticaloa West has 338 dropouts. Based on the discussion we had with the zonal planning officer the dropout rates have increased by 195 (about 533 students have dropped out after covid). Analysis of these dropouts and as to why they are leaving.</p> <p>Children drop out of school for many reasons. In Wilgamuwa the zonal officers explained that there are children who run away from home. Furthermore, in Batticaloa teenage pregnancies are common among female students. The zonal director commented that there were 16 teenage pregnancies in her zone, and boy’s dropout to become daily wage laborers (Figure 4.4).</p> <p>The principal of a private vocational school explained that many children struggle through school because they find it hard to learn. There is due to a lack of good teachers in schools and when children fail their O levels this demotivates them in life and they feel they are destined for a life of hard work. Those who leave school fall into one of the following groups.</p>	

Research Findings	Analysis
<p>Group 1: Those that are hired by contract workers and get them to do labor intensive work. Some of these jobs are to mine sand illegally. Young boys are happy with this because they are paid and feel that this is enough to survive on and do not consider any personal development.</p> <p>Group 2: Those who attempt to get a government job in some shape or form.</p> <p>Group 3: Those who opt to apply for labor intensive work outside the country.</p> <p>Girls who drop out of school and do vocational courses in Batticaloa would finish the course and get a certificate but many of them do not join the work force. The most common courses for girls are baking and sewing. However, the girls have the potential to get involved in motorbike mechanics and hone other skills that will help them progress. Unfortunately, most girls shy away from this.</p> <p>4.7 Challenges children face to stay in school.</p> <p>The majority of students come from very economically challenged households and get to school without breakfast. Students also have shortages related to school supplies such as Books Pencils pens etc. due to their low-income situation. Some students face sexual abuse, physical abuse etc. which again inhibits their ability to attain the education they need. The use of Digital devices and digital systems is becoming more and more challenging to the Teachers and to the students, with a growing dependency on digital learning, which these children cannot benefit from.</p> <p>4.8 How are these challenges addressed in schools?</p> <p>In the past the Government has had a Mid-day meal program from Grade 1-5. Each student is allocated Rs. 35.00 per meal. The School with School Development Society and parents is supposed to coordinate this activity and later get the cost reimbursed. However, this is not an effective method as no parent is able to put in such large amount of Cash as credit upfront.</p>	

Research Findings	Analysis
<p>Rs. 35.00 per student is barely sufficient to give children a cup of rice with. The Teachers were concerned that due to the low quality of the meal, it will not interest students and the incentive to attend school (at least to have the meal) will not be there anymore. Further increasing the potential number of absenteeism and dropouts in the primary section. Several Teachers responded that school's function with the contribution from Teachers to support the students with School Supplies, supplementing food, or clothes.</p> <p>4.9 The school spread across the two zones.</p> <p>With reference to table 1.1, the total number of School in the Batticaloa West Zone is 68 and in Wilgamuwa Zone is 48 with a total student population of 14685 and 9498 respectively. Out of these schools 94 schools (more than 80%) belong to Type 2 and Type 3 which caters to Primary and Middle school students. Any education inequities, unequitable access to learning at this stage of life can have major negative consequences in their education outcomes. Furthermore, children need to change school and travel far to complete their A/Levels due to the lack of access to 1AB and 1C schools. This results in dropouts or for them to follow arts streams that are available in nearby schools. The Zonal officer in Batticaloa West explained that there are small schools in their zone that keep operational. One school has just 6 to 8 students, a principal, a teacher, and a development officer. They are not permitted to close these schools.</p> <p>4.10 School dropout rates</p> <p>G.C.E O/L</p> <p>According to Figure 4.7, the national school dropout rates from G.C.E O/L examination is in the range of 25-30% from 2015 to 2018. According to Figure 4.8, the national dropout rates from G.C.E A/L examination of the same year are in the range of 33% to 46%. This indicates that a significant number of dropouts are from grade 10 to 12.</p>	

Research Findings	Analysis
<p>Zonal Level dropouts (Batticaloa - West)</p> <p>According to Figure 4.2, In Batticaloa West education zone, the highest number of dropouts was recorded in the year 2017. Furthermore, according to Figure 4.6, the most popular reason for dropping out of school in Batticaloa - West zone is identified as the negligence/ignorance/lack of parents' motivation. Moreover, Figure 4.3, which indicates a grade wise analysis of the drop-out rates, has found that the highest number of group-outs in the Batticaloa-West zone happens in Grade 10.</p> <p>Comparison between the national level data and zonal level data</p> <p>There is a lack of data to show the exact number of dropouts in Sri Lanka. However, there is evidence to show that there is a dropout rate between 60,000 to 100,000 a year in Sri Lanka, which is approximately 2-2.5% of the student population. Furthermore it can be seen that the number of children in school is diminishing (Sunday Times, 2022). Furthermore, Sunday Times (2016) stated that Batticaloa has had severe dropouts in Batticaloa, and poverty as the main cause.</p> <p>Linking this situation to poverty indices.</p> <p>According to Figure 4.9, there is a higher percentage of student dropouts within poverty-ridden communities than in financially stable communities. Moreover, the dropout percentage is significantly high in the 17 to 18 age category (28% in "non-poor" category and 64% in "poor" category) which provides further evidence that children from underprivileged regions terminate their education after O-level grades.</p>	

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5.0 Annexures

List of Tables

Table 1. 1 Student population by school type.....	34
Table 1. 2 Data analysis of school demographics.....	35
Table 2. 1 Average School Attrition in a zone annually	39
Table 3. 1 Number of Schools that have Subject Streams available in Batticaloa West Zone	45
Table 4. 1: School Attendance Rates for Batticaloa West Education Zone - 2021	57

List of Figures

Figure 2. 1 Number of teachers short in Primary School Grades	36
Figure 2. 2 Number of teachers short in Secondary School Grades (G 6-11)	37
Figure 2. 3 Number of teachers short in A- Level Grades	38
Figure 2. 4: Age Composition of Teachers in Batticaloa in 2021	39
Figure 3. 1 O-Level Pass rates in Batticaloa West Education Zone	40
Figure 3. 2 O-Level Pass rates in Wilgamuwa Zone.....	41
Figure 3. 3 Comparison of O- Level Pass Rates in Batticaloa West Zone & Wilgamuwa.....	42
Figure 3. 4 Comparison of A/L Pass Rates of Schools in Wilgamuwa & Batticaloa West.....	43
Figure 3. 5 A - Level Pass rates based on Streams in Batticaloa.....	44
Figure 3. 6 Batticaloa West Student Composition for A/L's in 2020 (323 students).....	45
Figure 3. 7 Grade 5 Scholarship Pass Rate of Batticaloa West	46
Figure 3. 8 Grade 5 Scholarship Pass Rate of Wilgamuwa	47

Figure 4. 1 Number of Students that have dropped out of School -2021 49

Figure 4. 2 School Dropouts as Percentage of School Population 50

Figure 4. 3 Dropout Analysis of Batticaloa West Education Zone by grade 51

Figure 4. 4 Dropouts by Gender Composition 52

Figure 4. 5 Family Structure of Drop-outs in Batticaloa West,2021..... 53

Figure 4. 6 School Dropouts by status 2022- Batticaloa West,2022 (From a sample of 156 children)..... 54

Figure 4. 7 Percentage of school dropouts GCE O/L 2015-2018 (National Level) 55

Figure 4. 8 Percentage of school dropouts GCE O/L 2015-2018 (National Level) 56

Figure 4. 9 Percentage of children not attending school or any other educational institute by age Nationally (2016) 57

Annexure 1: Demographic Information of the Two Zones

S.No	Zone Type	Batticaloa		Wilgamuwa	
		No.of schools	Student Population	No.of schools	Student Population
1	1AB	5	3052	1	1296
2	1C	9	4877	7	3330
3	II	20	4402	8	1680
4	III	34	2354	32	3132
Total		68	14685	48	9498

Table 1. 1 Student population by school type

	Batticaloa West	Wilgamuwa
Number of total teachers	829	682
Total Number of schools	68	48
Total number of students	14685	9498
Average Number of Students per teacher	17 Students per teacher	14 students per teacher
Average number of teachers per school	12 teachers per school	14 teachers per school
No. of Trained Teachers	637 teachers (76.84%)	Not given
No. of untrained teachers	192 teachers (23.16%)	120 (17.5%)
No. of graduate teachers	513 teachers (61.8%)	408 teachers (60%)
No. of development officers	247	Not given
No. of graduate trainees	44	Not given
No. of teacher assistants	37	6
Total Shortage of teachers	284	101
Excess Teachers specific subject	75	Not given

Table 1. 2 Data analysis of school demographics

Annexure 2: Teacher Shortages & Attrition

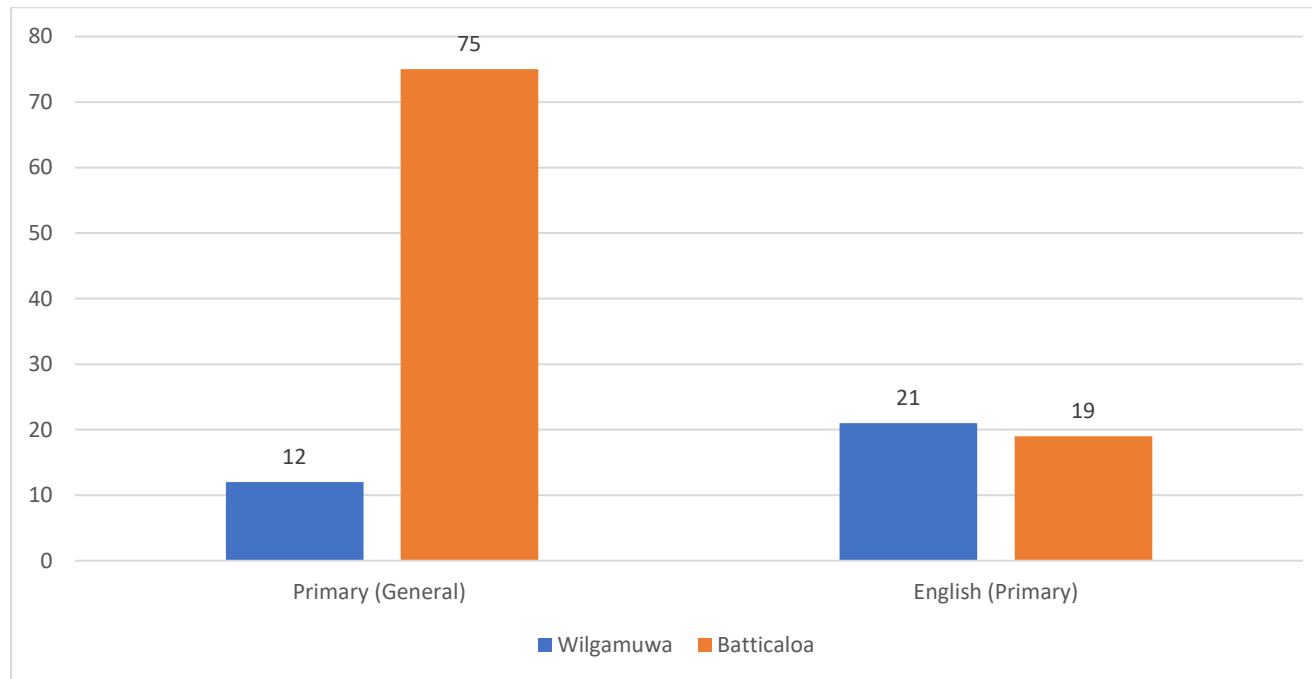


Figure 2. 1 Number of teachers short in Primary School Grades

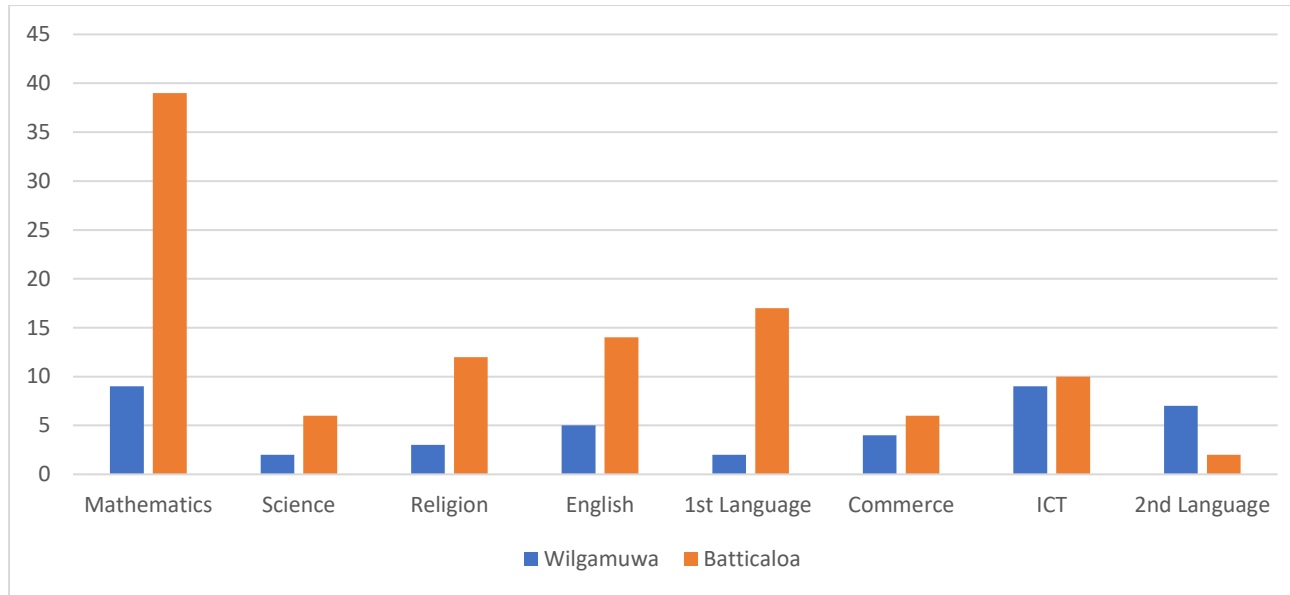


Figure 2. 2 Number of teachers short in Secondary School Grades (G 6-11)

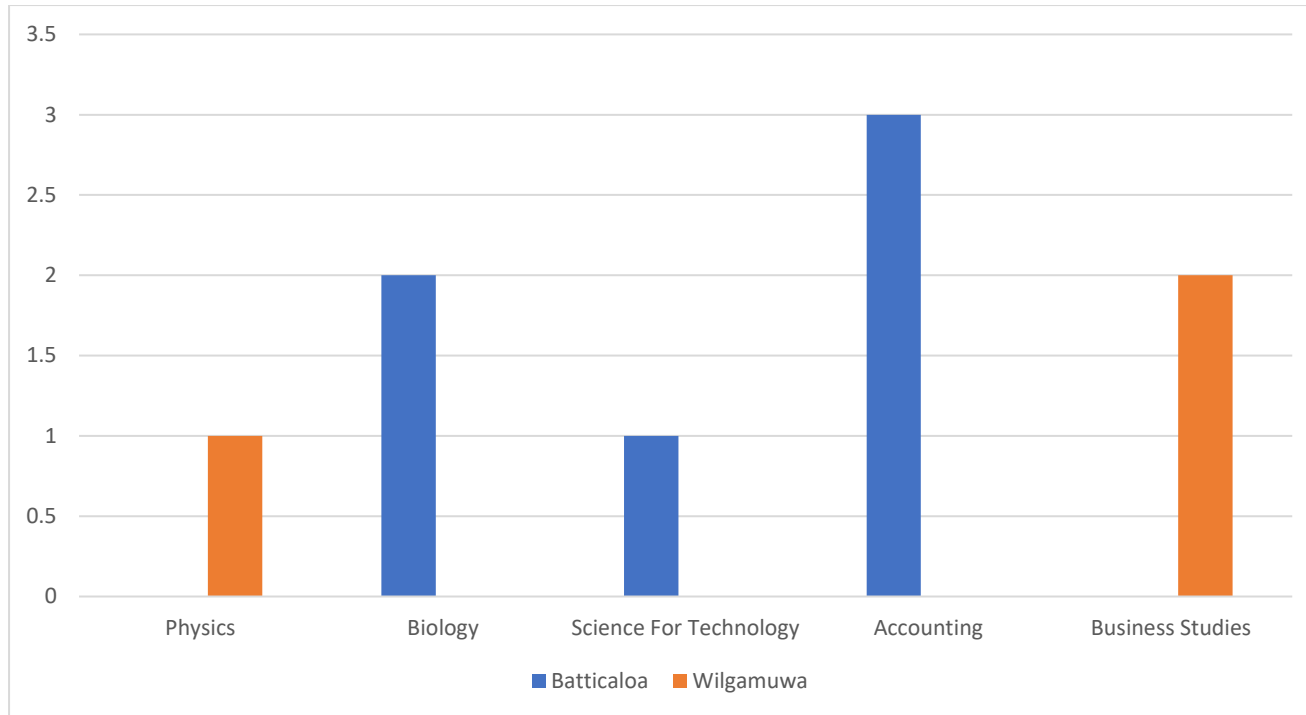


Figure 2. 3 Number of teachers short in A- Level Grades

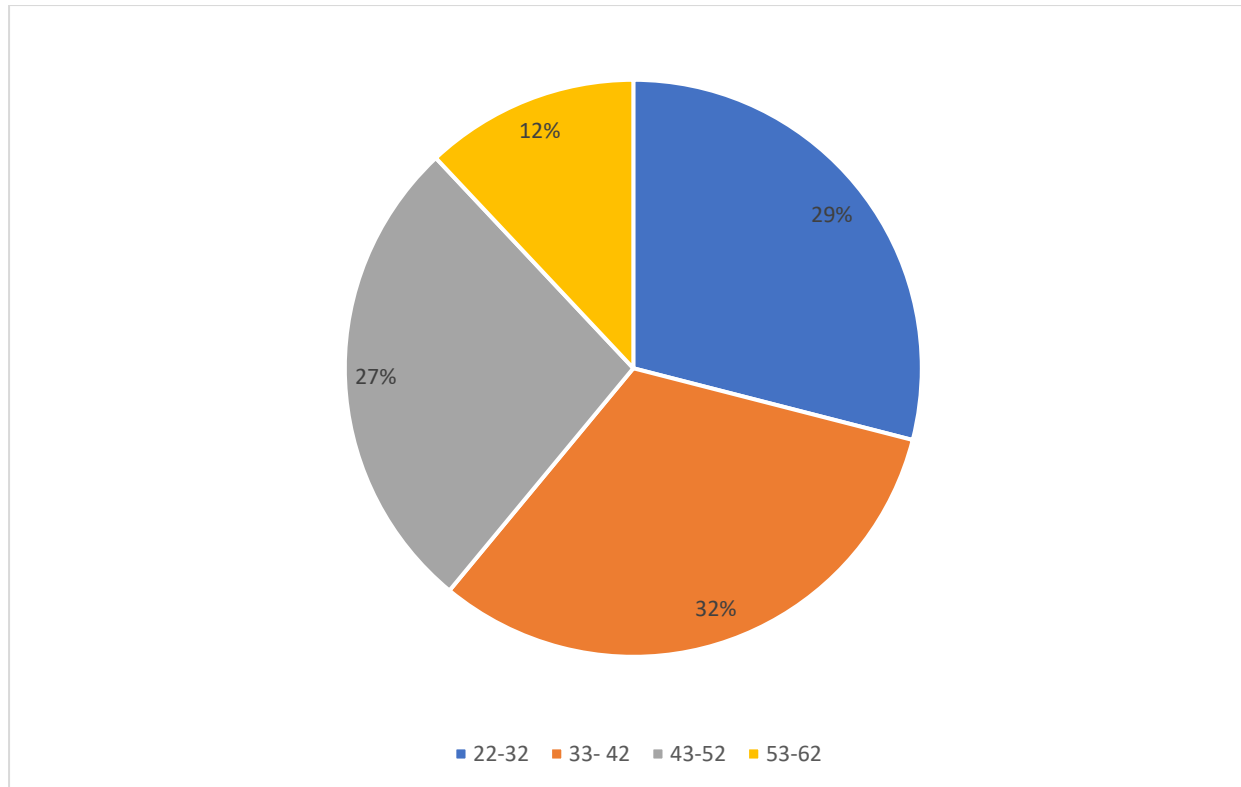


Figure 2. 4: Age Composition of Teachers in Batticaloa in 2021

Zonal Attrition	Batticaloa West	Wilgamuwa
Avg Num Teachers Transfer In Annually	35	40
Avg Num Teachers Transfer Out Annually	99	55
Avg Num Teachers in Retirement Annually	7	10

Table 2. 1 Average School Attrition in a zone annually

Annexure 3: School Performance

Ordinary Level Examinations



Figure 3. 1 O-Level Pass rates in Batticaloa West Education Zone

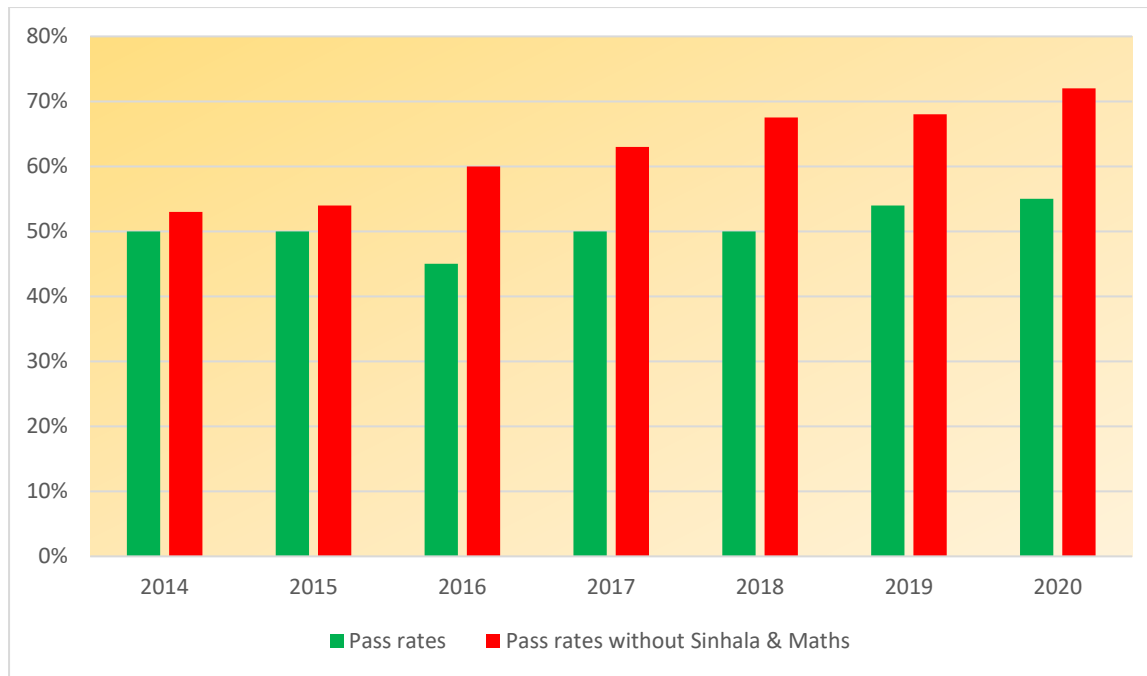


Figure 3. 2 O-Level Pass rates in Wilgamuwa Zone

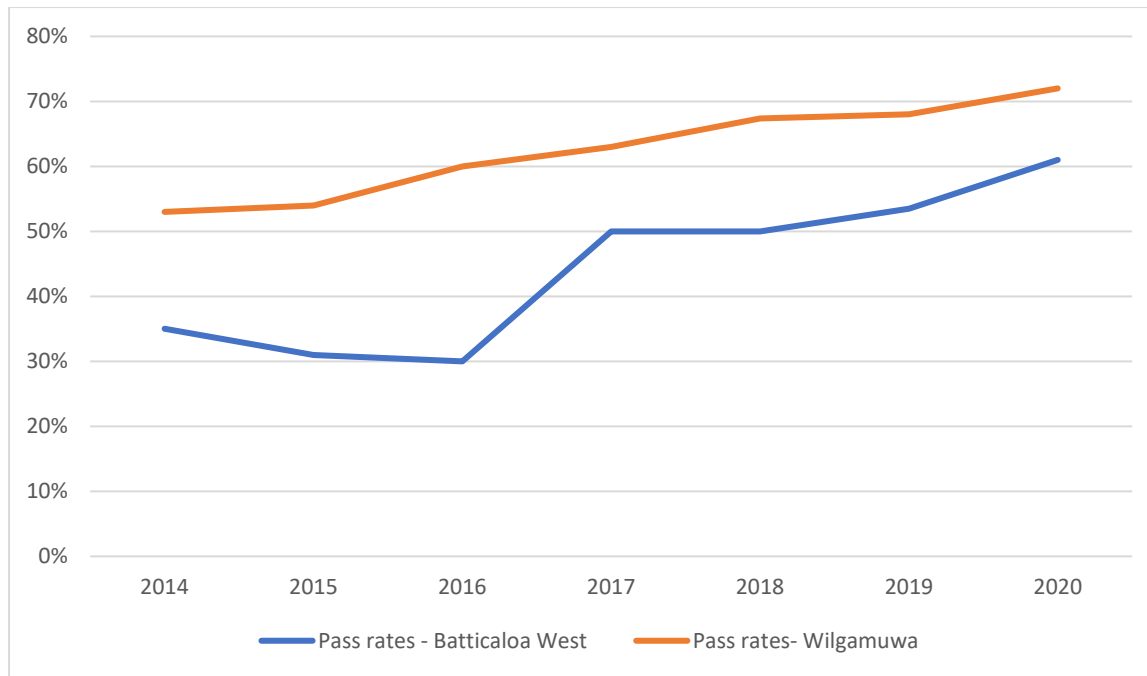


Figure 3. 3 Comparison of O- Level Pass Rates in Batticaloa West Zone & Wilgamuwa

Advanced Level Examinations

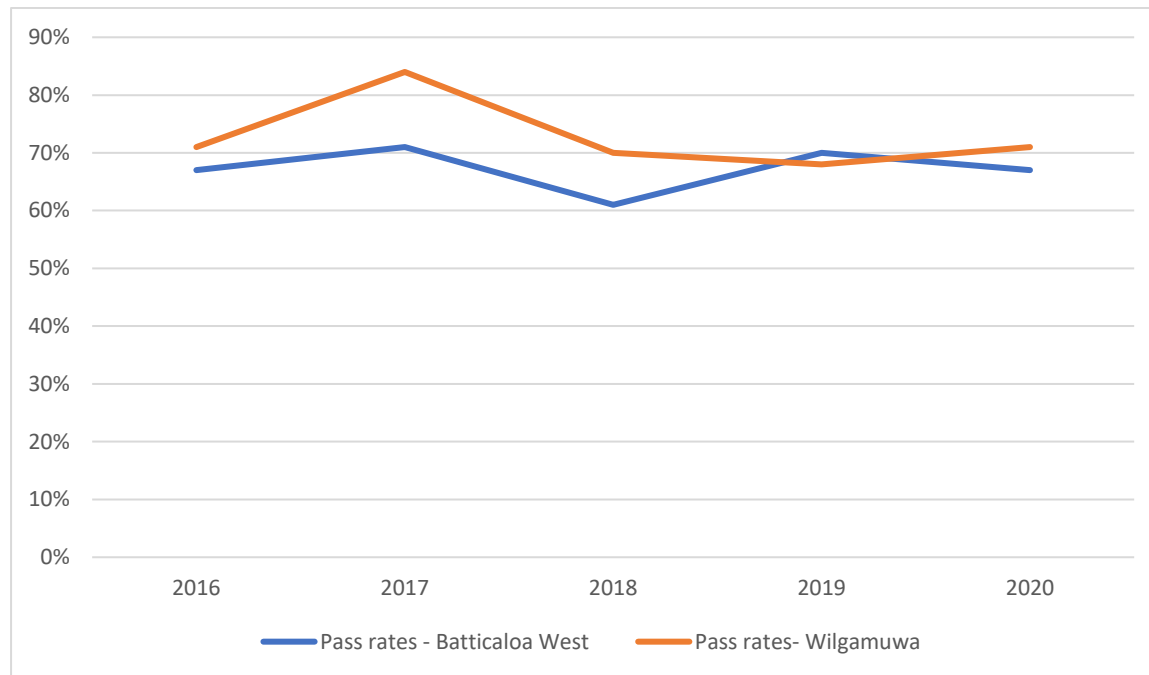


Figure 3. 4 Comparison of A/L Pass Rates of Schools in Wilgamuwa & Batticaloa West

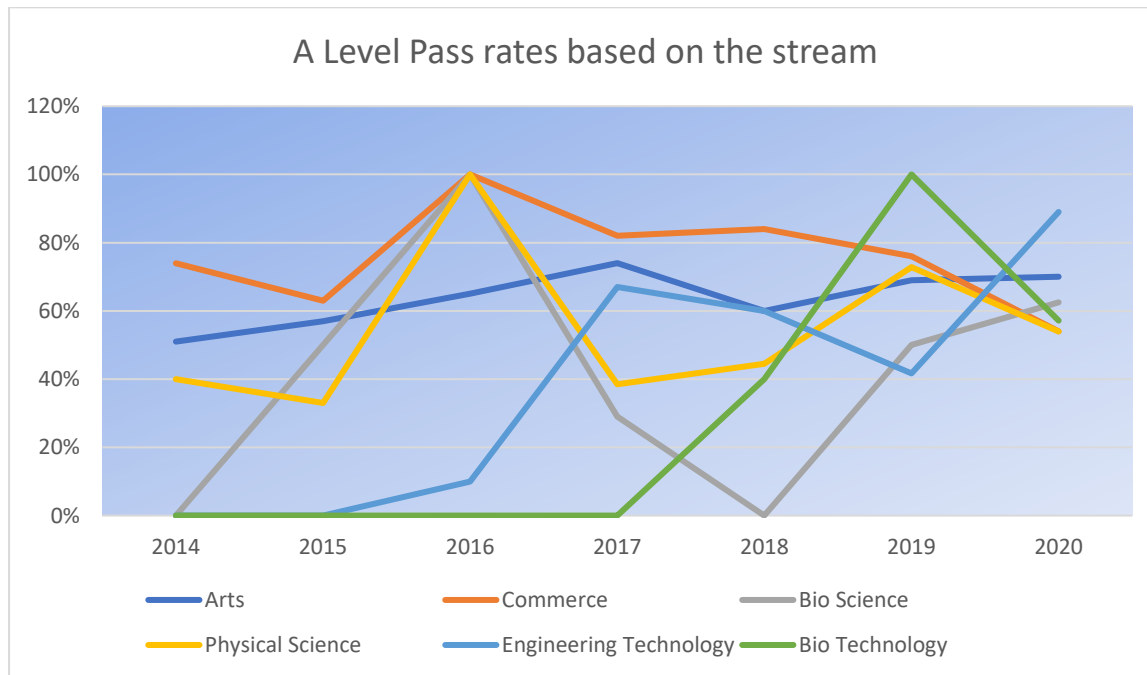


Figure 3. 5 A - Level Pass rates based on Streams in Batticaloa

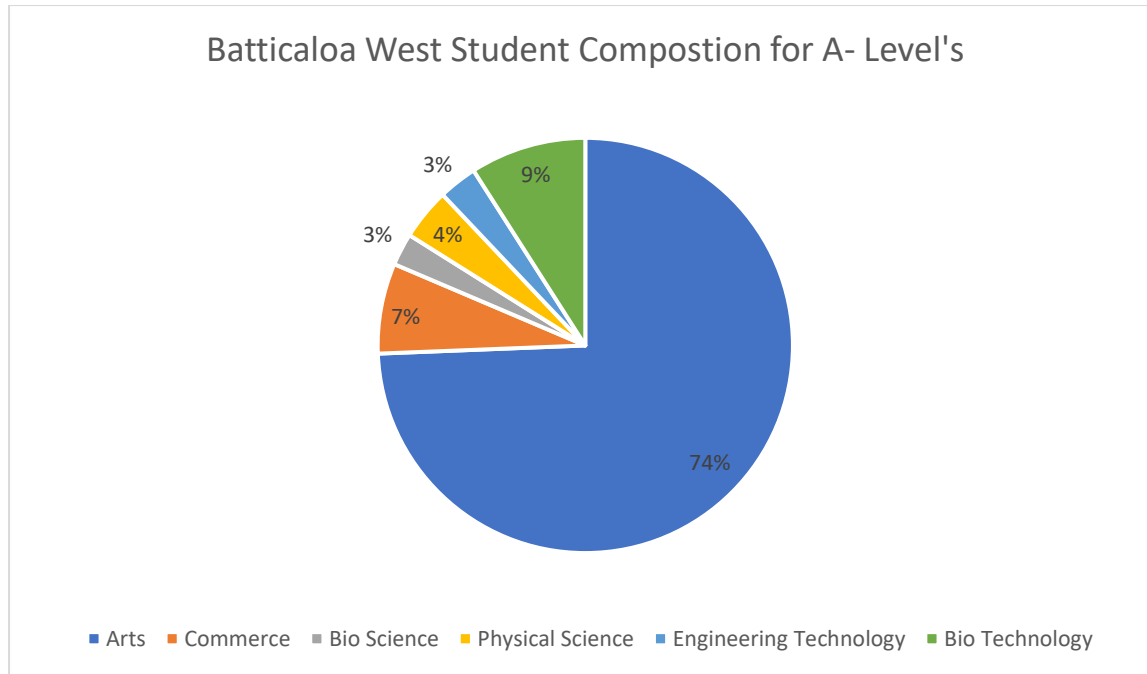


Figure 3. 6 Batticaloa West Student Composition for A/L's in 2020 (323 students)

Arts	Commerce	Bio Science	Physical Science	Engineering technology	Biotechnology
14 Schools	7 schools	4 schools	4 schools	2 schools	2 schools

Table 3. 1 Number of Schools that have Subject Streams available in Batticaloa West Zone

Grade 5 Scholarship Examinations

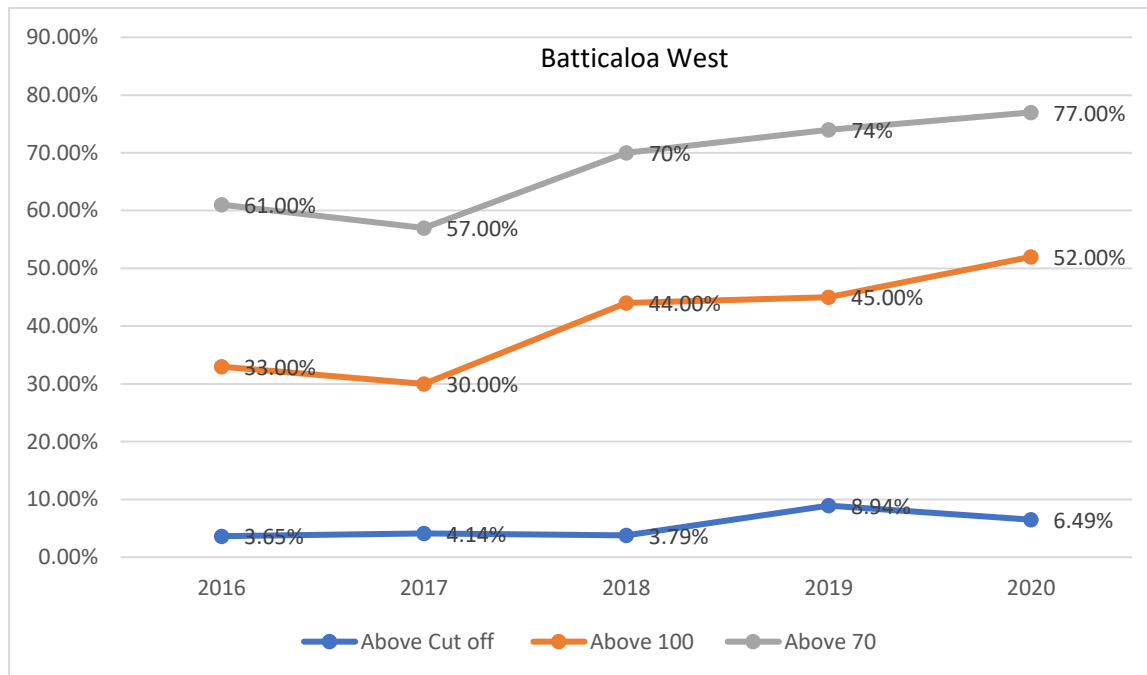


Figure 3. 7 Grade 5 Scholarship Pass Rate of Batticaloa West

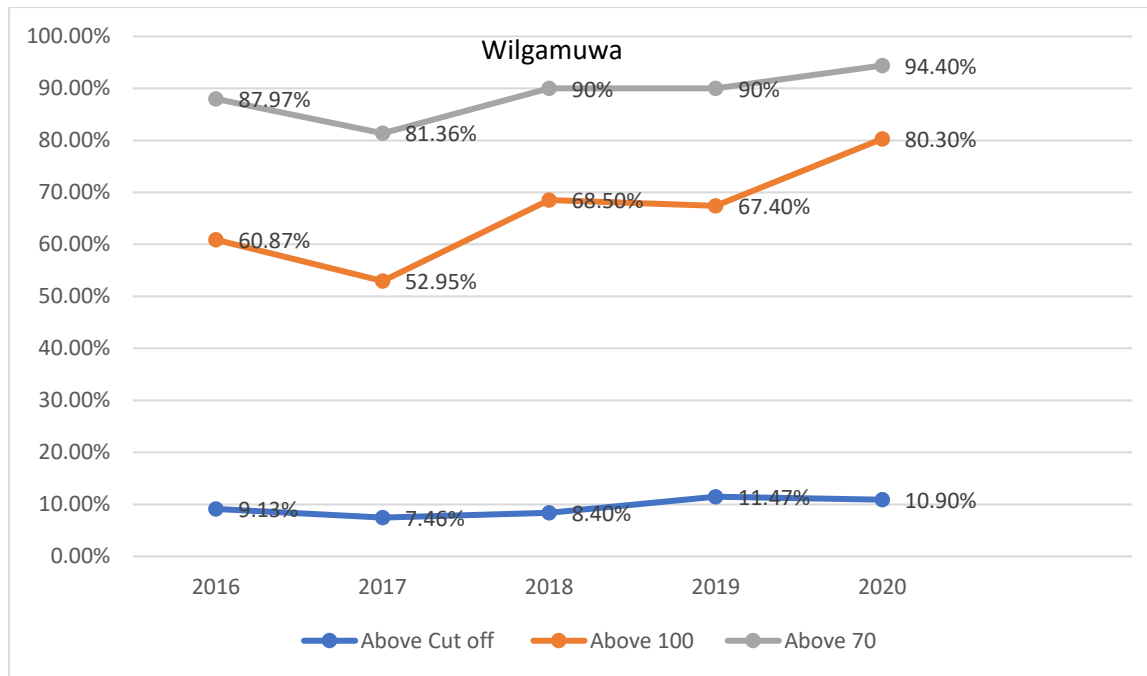


Figure 3. 8 Grade 5 Scholarship Pass Rate of Wilgamuwa

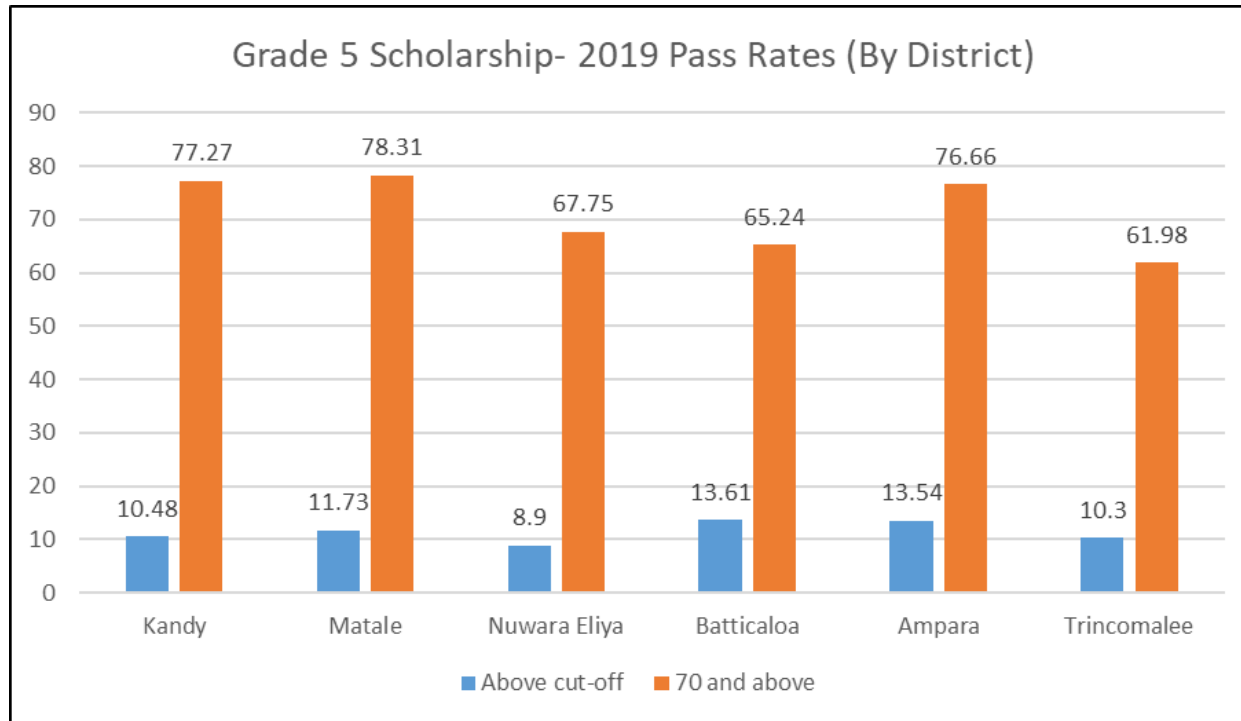


Figure 3.9 Grade 5 Scholarship Performance (District Level)

Annexure 4: Student Dropouts

Batticaloa West Education Zone School Dropouts Analysis

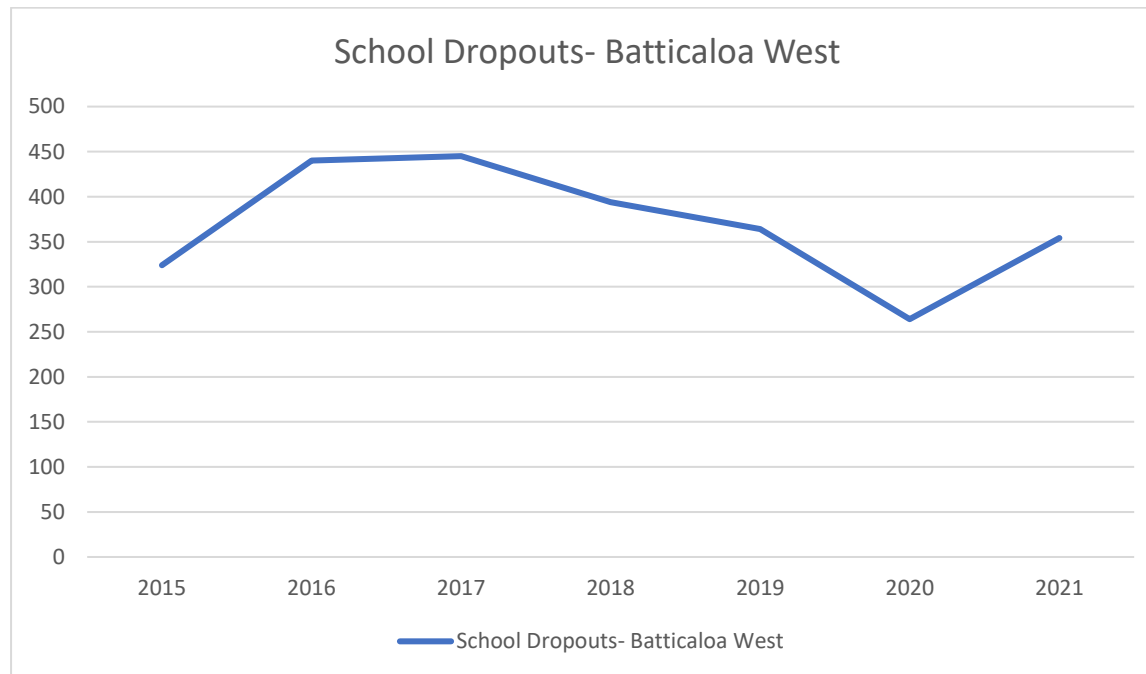


Figure 4. 1 Number of Students that have dropped out of School -2021

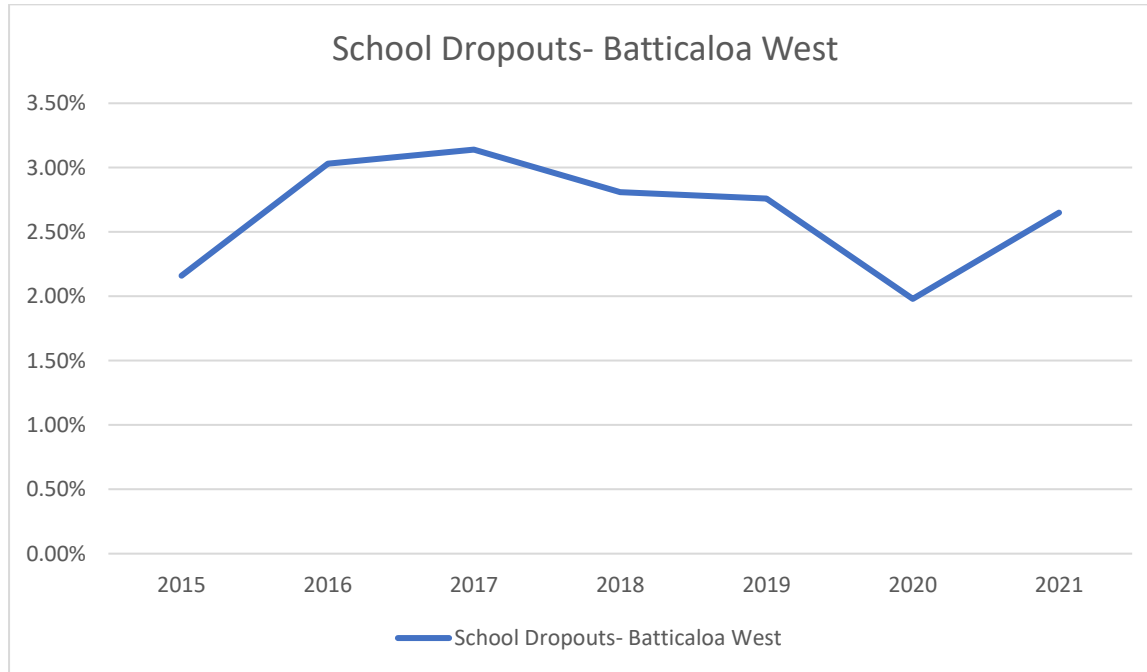


Figure 4. 2 School Dropouts as Percentage of School Population

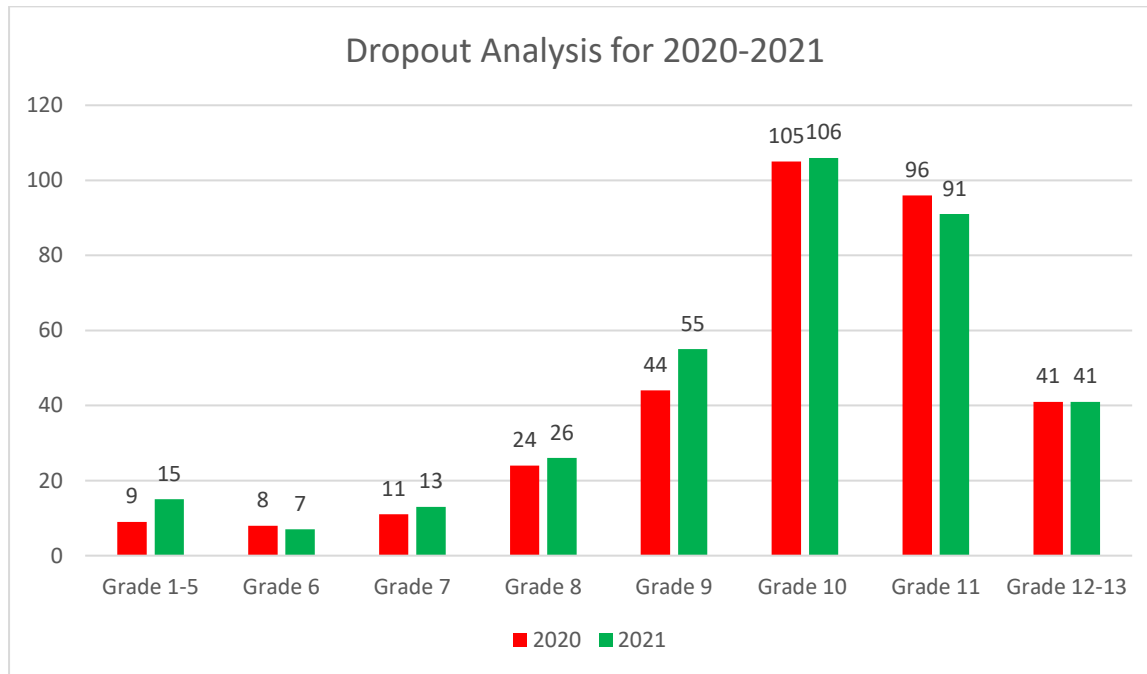


Figure 4. 3 Dropout Analysis of Batticaloa West Education Zone by grade

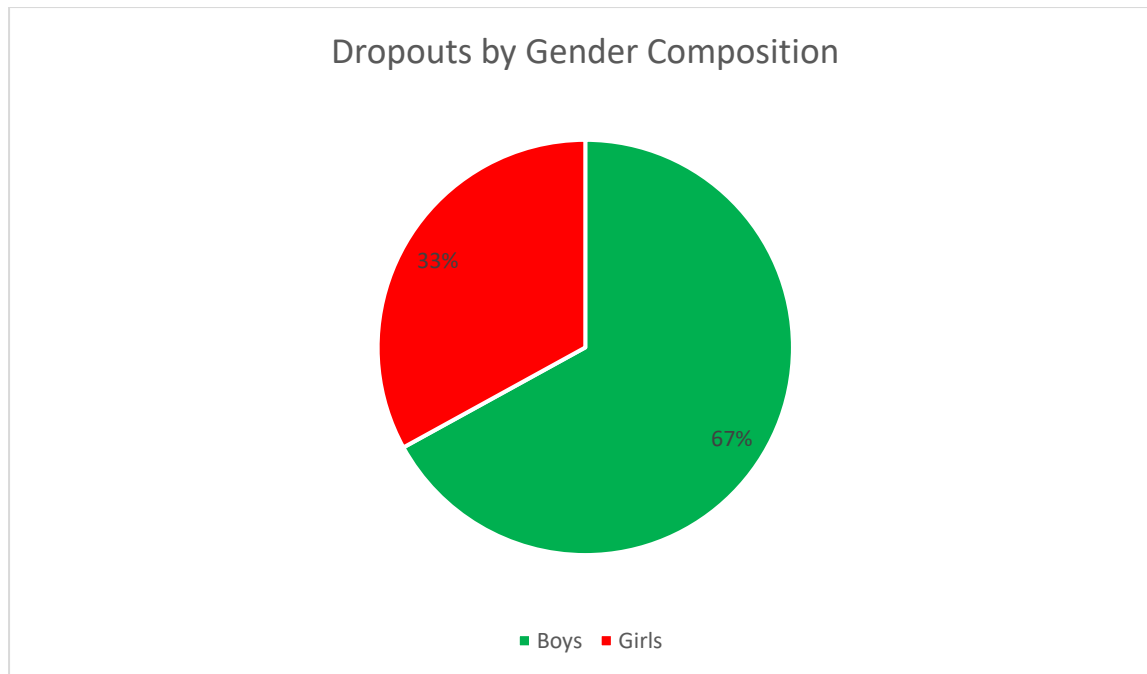


Figure 4. 4 Dropouts by Gender Composition

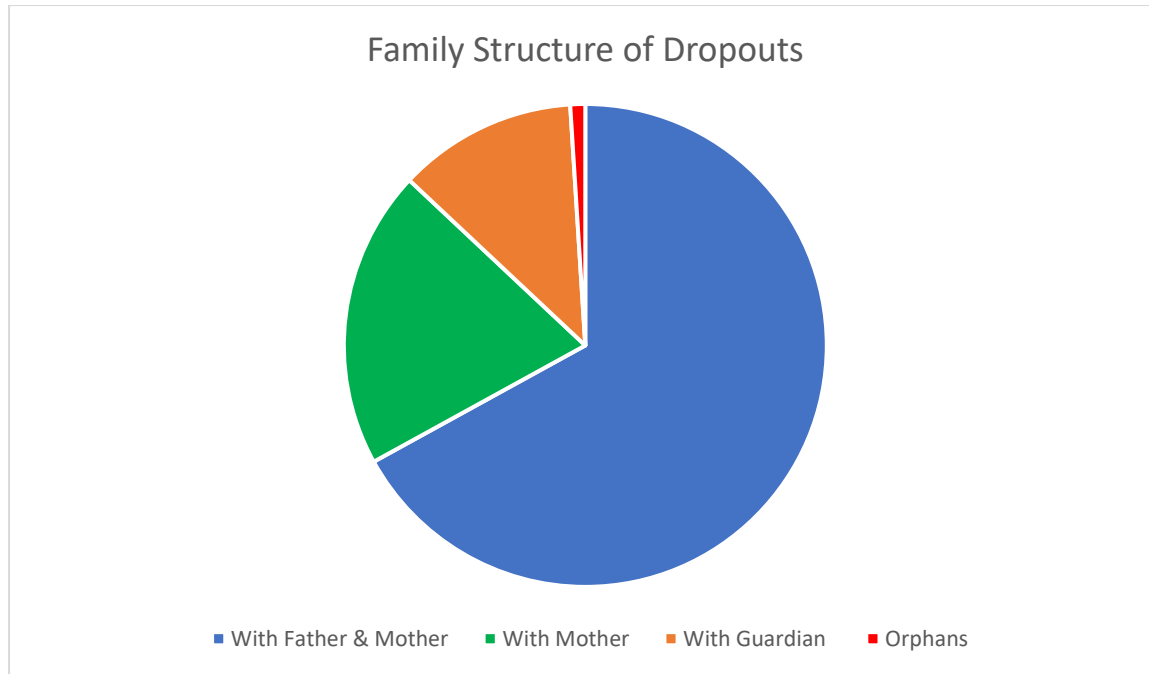


Figure 4. 5 Family Structure of Drop-outs in Batticaloa West, 2021

School Dropouts by Status - 2022 (Sample: 156 Students)

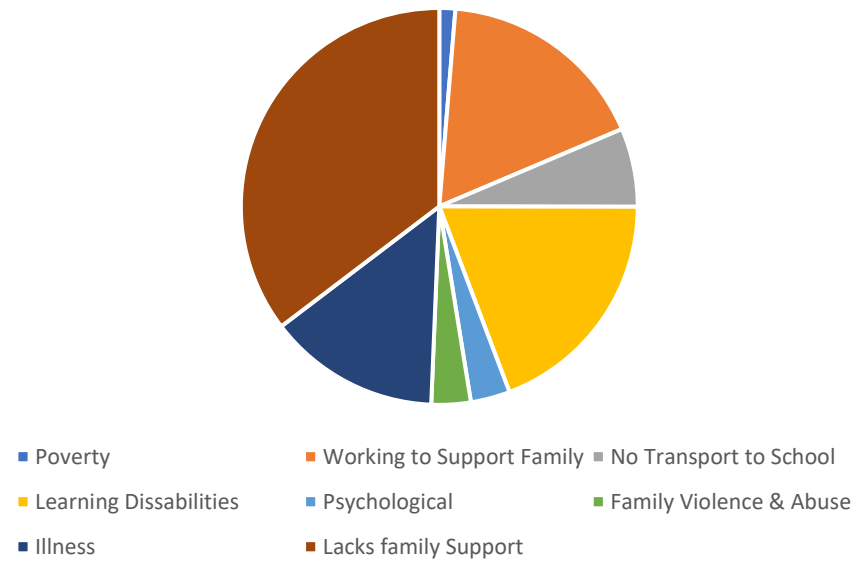


Figure 4. 6 School Dropouts by status 2022- Batticaloa West,2022 (From a sample of 156 children)

National Analysis of Children out of School

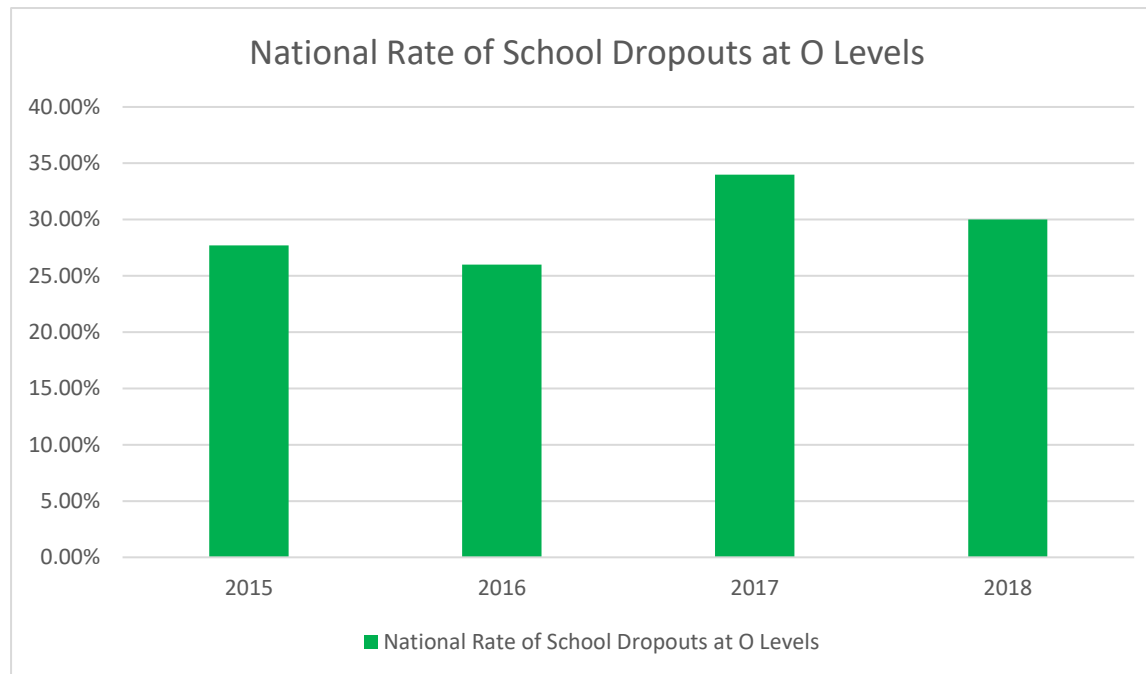


Figure 4. 7 Percentage of school dropouts GCE O/L 2015-2018 (National Level)
(National Human Resources Development Council of Sri Lanka, 2019, p. 13)

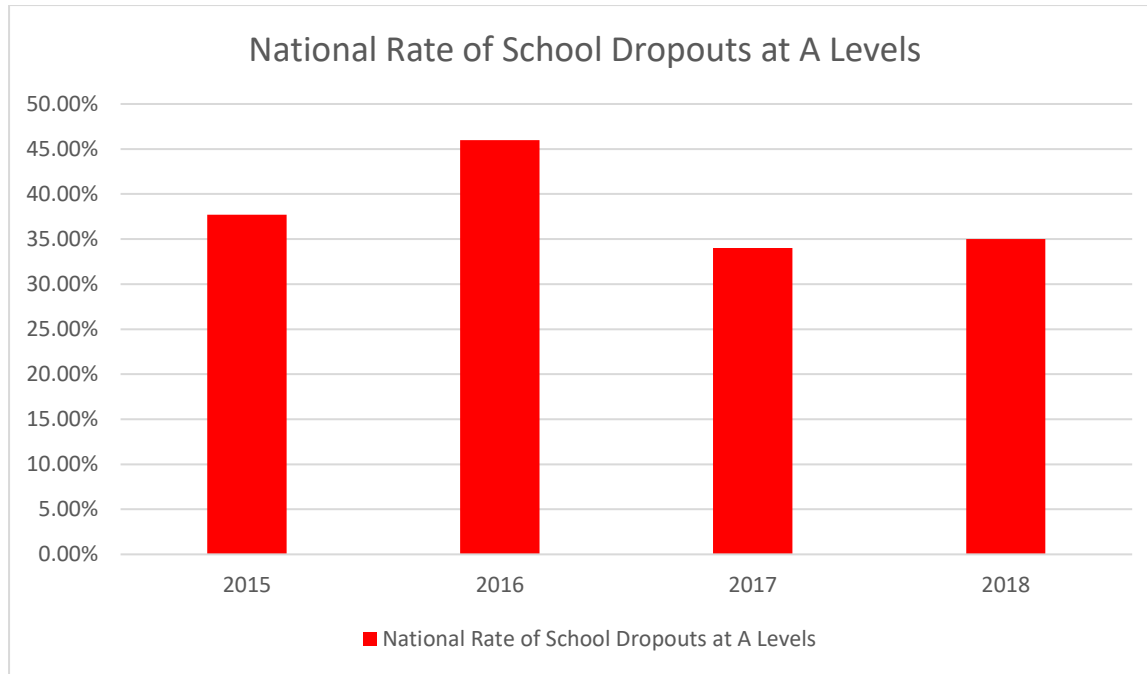


Figure 4. 8 Percentage of school dropouts GCE O/L 2015-2018 (National Level)

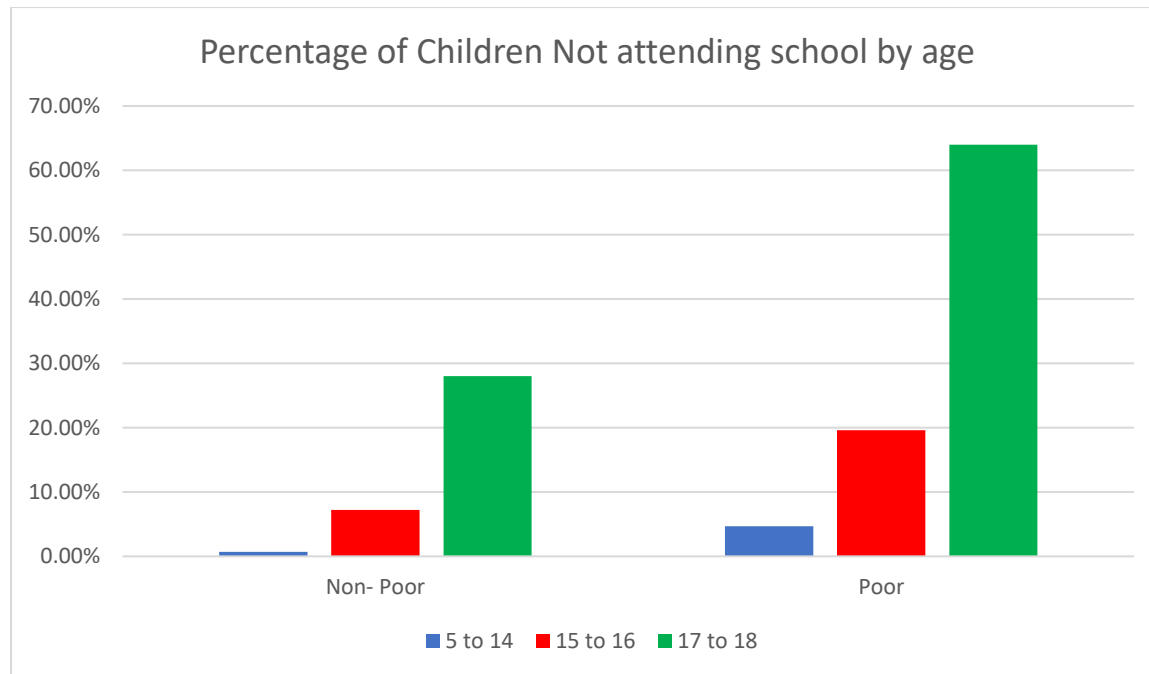


Figure 4. 9 Percentage of children not attending school or any other educational institute by age Nationally (2016) *“Education Equity in Sri Lanka: A Pathway out of Poverty”. In Talking Economics* (Official blog of the Institute of Policy Studies of Sri Lanka)- Author’s estimates based on Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES)- 2016 data, DCS.

Student Attendance Rates for Batticaloa West Education Zone

Normal Rate of Attendance	85%- 90%
During a Crisis Situation (Present)	80%- 85%
During 3 Week Fuel Crisis (May- June)	62%- 70%

Table 4. 1: School Attendance Rates for Batticaloa West Education Zone - 2021

[Annexure 5: Discussion Guides](#)

Focus Group Discussion Guide

1. **Introduction:** could you tell us a little bit about this zone,
How many schools –
Children who come to school and challenges that are common.

2. **Ice Breaking question:** How do you feel about the current situation for education?
(What key challenges do you think we are facing)

3. **New Teachers that join the school:**
 1. From what backgrounds are teachers mostly joining your school?
(Graduates, teacher training Colleges or other)
 2. From these backgrounds, which teachers seem the most prepared for the classroom?
 3. Do they require a lot of help and support to become independent teachers?
 4. What challenges do the principals face in integrating new teachers into schools?

4. **Teacher Training and Professional Development**
 1. What training is offered to teachers in their professional Development?
 2. Do all teachers receive training/induction before they start in the classroom?
 3. Does training help teachers to be better teachers?/ what kind of training proves most effective?
 4. What are the teacher training programs focused on?
(New methods of teaching, student engagement, syllabus changes)
 5. Are there practical teacher training programs? (Where the teachers are involved in activities)
 6. Is teacher training the same across all provincial schools?
 7. What methods are used to monitor and evaluate teachers?
 8. Do teachers have regular performance reviews?

9. Are there any nationally led capacity development programs for teachers from this zone?

10. How do teachers grow in their careers? (Is it based on academic qualifications or merit)

11. What is the role of Inservice advisors?

How often do they train and work with teachers?

What kind of training do they offer teachers?

12. Do teachers actively practice self-learning/ Wider Reading?

(Ask more details around this question. If So, Why and Why not)

Reading & Researching Skills for Teachers – how teachers can improve their own reading and researching skills to improve in their teaching.

5. Teaching Methods & Approaches

1. What alternative teaching methods do you think are valuable for learning?

Why would you use such methodologies in the classroom?

2. Do teachers use external resources (other than school textbook and teacher guide) in the classroom?

If so, where do they access them from

3. Which of the following skills are most urgent for teachers to acquire? Please explain why.

a. How teachers can use skills like **critical thinking, collaboration and social skills**

b. **Student Engagement** in Classroom – how to keep students focused and engaged in the classroom – (Use of activities and play in teaching)

c. Gender, Diversity, Inclusion and Empowerment

d. **Leadership** : How to motivate, encourage children and inspire creativity.

4. Do you think the understanding of child psychology is important to achieve the expected learning outcomes of learning? → if yes, do you think you received such training from your training providers? → what are the main aspects of child psychology that you remember from your training?

Discussion Guide for Semi-Structured Interviews with Teachers

Practical Teaching:

1. What made you choose the teaching profession?
2. What do you like/enjoy and dislike about the profession?
3. The most important/helpful thing learnt at university/teacher training college – related to teaching?
4. What do you wish you were taught or trained while at university/ teacher training college?
5. How do you think teachers can be helped to improve their teaching skills?
6. What are the biggest challenges that you face in a classroom?
7. How much guidance do the teacher guides offer? Is there room for interpretation/ creativity?
8. If you were not a teacher what would you want to do in life?
9. Is there something that you would like to change in your career?
10. Ask teachers if certain module content would be useful and how it will be so:
 - 21st Century Learning Skills – how teachers can use skills like critical thinking, collaboration, social skills and technology literacy
 - Student Engagement in Classroom – how to keep students focused and engaged in the classroom – activities
 - Reading & Researching Skills for Teachers – how teachers can improve their own reading and researching skills to make lessons more current and engaging.
 - Gender, Diversity, Inclusion and Empowerment
 - Sustainable Peace and Reconciliation
 - Civic Rights and Rule of Law
 - Culture, Leadership and Identity
11. Everyday challenges that teachers could be facing with regard to the existing syllabi

Student Challenges:

1. Student drop-out rates? Associations with – Male vs. Female | Age? | Social Status | Family background
2. How involved are parents in their children's education? Do teachers take extra initiative to help children that are failing
3. Is it difficult to keep the students' attention in a classroom? What do you do to overcome that?
4. What challenges do children face in the area?
5. Do you think there's something you could do, or anyone else could do to prevent school dropouts?
6. What's most challenging about the current education model (could/should be improved)?
7. Does the education model / syllabus used at the moment encourage students to be creative?
8. Does the education model/ syllabus encourage critical thinking and individual understanding?
9. Do you feel that more can be done to help children that are slow learners?
10. What do the brightest students do after O/L or A/L?

New Teaching methods

1. Do you feel that students should do self-assessments to evaluate their progress?
2. Do teachers take an interest in community development related initiatives?
3. Are you open to get formal feedback from your students about your teaching?
4. Can teachers play a role in the encouraging parents to be a part of the educating process of children?



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