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Introduction

Education was mostly challenged by the pandemic. Since middle of March, 2020 schools were closed. Different progammes - depending on the available resources. Sri Lanka could not depend only on online education.

Aim

To study the nature of distance education programmes implemented in government schools during covid situation

Objectives

- 1. To investigate the distance education programmes implemented during Covid-19 pandemic
- 2. To find out the facilities available for teachers and students to actively participate in distance education programmes
- 3. To analyze the strengths and weaknesses distance education programmes implemented moulding with blended learning principles
- 4. To examine the mechanism implemented to monitor the distance education programmes
- 5. To investigate the views and suggestions of students, teachers, principals and parents on distance education programmes implemented
- 6. To make suggestions for policy makers and implementers to improve the quality of distance education programmes

Academic Context

The literature review was made through the following fields:

- Key features of education in Sri Lanka
- The nature of distance education
- Distance education linked to the Sri Lankan schools
- Distance learning developed with new technology
- Blended learning theory and new technological distance learning
- New technological distance learning aligned to face the educational challenges that Sri Lanka encountered during COVID 19 pandemic

It was revealed that the implementation of this research was essential to bridge the research gap on the process of distance education that was operational using digital technological methods during the time of COVID 19 in Sri Lanka.

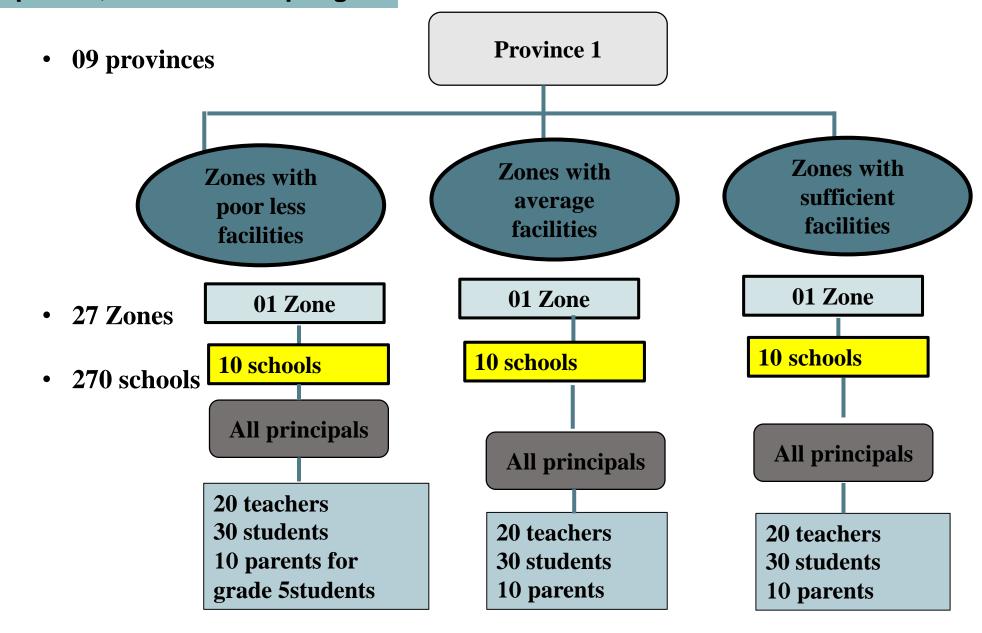


Research Methodology

- Design: Survey design under scientific research method
- Approach: Quantitative and Qualitative Mixed research approach
- Data Triangulation: Questionnaire, Interviews and Documentary Review
- Data Analysis: MS Excel and SPSS
- Duration: 2020 2021

General Education Distance education (including online education) Ministry of Provincial External Institutes Zonal / Education Department of **Telecommunication** Division al Education/ Education Television **Attached Institutes** Provincial Radio Social Media Instructions Technical / other support/Supervision/Monitoring School Principal, School Teachers Parents & School Community Students' Management Team Provision of Provision of Active facilities, facilities, participation Coordination, organization, Giving Giving feedback implementation, feedback Supervision and monitoring Varieties/modes of distance education Distance Education Practices (Learning-Teaching and Assessment) Ability/Inability, Issues, Challenges Strengths and Weaknesses Suggestions for development

Stratified, Purposive, Random Sampling.



Province	Zones with low facilities	Zones with average facilities	Zones with sufficient facilities
western	Horana	Negambo	Gampaha
Southern	Hambanthota	ambalangoda	Mathara
Central	Wilgamuwa	Kothmale	Kandy
Sabaragamuwa	Embilipitiya	Rathnapura	Kegalle
Uwa	Mahiyanganaya	Monaragala	Badulla
North West	Puttalam	Kuliyapitiya	Kurunegala
North Central	Kebithigollewa	Higurakgoda	Anuradhapura
Northern	Island	Vadamarachchi	Vavuniya
Eastern	Trincomalee	Kalkudha	Kalmunai

Responded to questionnaire

Conducting of DEP by Principals' Service

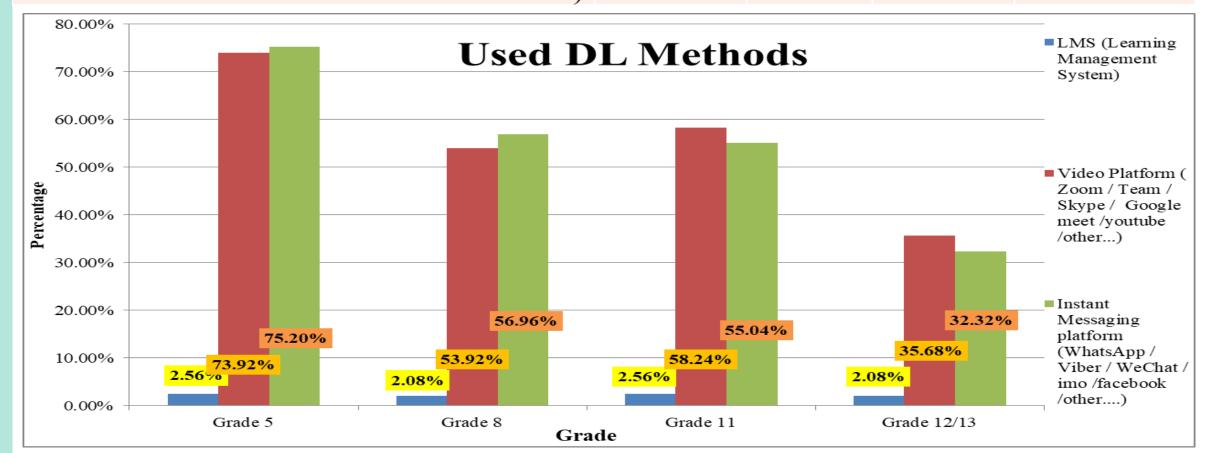
No. of school	Schools conducted DEP	Schools not conducted DEP
No. of school	910 (94.89%)	49 (5.1%)
Total		959

Service		Schools not conducted DL	%
SLEAS	20	0	0
SLPS	685	30	4.4
SLTS	205	17	8.3

Conducting of DEP by Principals' Period of Service

Period of service	>20	15-20	10-15	5-10	1-5	<1
Schools DL Conducted	80	63	248	298	179	42
Schools DL not Conducted	2	1	11	17	13	3
total	82	64	259	315	192	45
Schools DL not Conducted %	0.8	0.6	2.6	3.2	1.9	0.5

Used DL method	Grade 5	Grade 8	Grade 11	Grade 12/13
LMS (Learning Management System)	2.56%	2.08%	2.56%	2.08%
Video Platform (Zoom / Team / Skype /				
Google meet /youtube /other)	73.92%	53.92%	58.24%	35.68%
Instant Messaging platform (WhatsApp /				
Viber / WeChat / imo /facebook /other)	75.20%	56.96%	55.04%	32.32%



Problems encountered by the principals in DEP

Problems faced by the principal's in implementing DEP	%
Financial difficulties of teachers	10.31%
Financial difficulties of parents	33.02%
Lack of technical equipment for teachers	25.73%
Lack of technical equipment for students	50.10%
Lack of technical knowledge and skills for parents	25.52%
Lack of technical knowledge and skills for teachers	21.25%
Lack of technical knowledge and skills for students	14.69%
Lack of internet facilities	35.10%
Lack of signal facilities	45.63%
Lack of student participation & ignorance	25.94%
Missuses of internet by students & addicting	8.33%
Different levels of students knowledge of other reasons	5.52%
other reasons	33.65%

Proposals derived through Principals' Questionnaire

Proposal	% of Responses
Provision of strong, uninterrupted and powerful internet facilities	10.31%
Provision of technical equipment and resources	65.31%
Imparting knowledge and practical experience for using technical equipment	49.58%
Establishment of smart classrooms in schools	9.90%
Provision of trained IT teachers and technicians	3.75%
Establishment of special TV channel for education	8.54%
Conducting of special programmes for rural and difficult schools	3.54%
Blocking the access of unnecessary web pages/applications	2.81%
Other	48.33%



Findings

Responded that online education programmes are successful:

Respondent	Percentage of interest
Students	46.2%
Teachers	61%
Principals	35%

- 4.7% of schools have not been able to implement any type of distance education programmes due to:
 - unavailability of equipment at home (85.71%)
 - unavailability of necessary technical knowledge for students or parents
- Level of student participation was hindered due to:
 - loss of signal.
 - unavailability of smart phones, computers and other technical equipment
 - lack of internet/data facilities
 - lack of technical knowledge to use equipment
 - lack of support from other family members

Findings

- Non-participation in other distance education programmes conducted through electronic media such as TV programmes/radio programmes due to parallel transmission of programmes and communication gaps
- According to principals and students, the most successfully delivered subjects are:
 - Mathematics, First language and English for primary and secondary classes (6-11grdes)

Suggestions and Recommendations

 Provision of necessary technical facilities, equipment and other physical resources as well as affordable internet facilities to create an authentic classroom environment equipped with state-of-the art technology.

- Formulating and implementation of proper training programme
 on the use of technical equipment and blended learning methodologies.
- Introduction of both **physical and mental fitness programmes** to avoid discomfort, laziness, eye pain etc. caused to children due to staying in the same place for a long time.
- Establishment of a proper monitoring mechanism to assess and evaluate the distance education programmes as to receive the involvement of all partners from home level to school level

Suggestions and Recommendations

- Embedding of systematic progress reviews and effective monitoring systems into national and regional Distance Education Programmes
- Co-oridination among related actions and processes which lead to take immediate actions to minimize failures.
- Establishment of **productive national and regional coordination bodies** to ensure getting optimum benefits of programmes and streamline them when different agents catering to the same persons by different methods
- Making available clear well-written specific duties and responsibilities with check list and person responsible for each and every personal involved in Distance Education Programme including students and parents.
- Identification of positive and negative features of DL at every levels through more researches

In succinct.....



Curriculum,
Pedagogy and
Assessment system



Learning
Environment
(School and the classrooms)



Human resources of the education system



Management/Admini strative system of the education system

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Q & A



THANK YOU.