

THE CHANGING ROLE OF THE CIRCUIT
EDUCATION OFFICER

By

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The Abstract

The purpose of the present study is to elicit the information whether the Circuit Education Officers' role has changed and whether they are actually performing a useful function within the Educational Administrative System of Sri Lanka. It is intended to find out whether the rating of the Circuit Education ^{Officers} of themselves is similar or different to the rating of the Circuit Education Officers made by the Principals and teachers (termed teaching staff).

The main feature of this study is to explore the possibility of the Circuit Education Officer's role being performed by some other officer, perhaps with a different designation in case the post of the Circuit Education ^{Officer} ceases to exist.

The first chapter of this study deals with the statement of the problem. Although Supervision is essential to better educational management in schools as also for the improvement of the teaching-learning situation, the officers appointed for supervision are overloaded with routine administrative work and they hardly find the time for supervision. Hence the deterioration of the supervision work. However the necessity for it remains. Changes in the role of the Circuit Education Officer have been observed and the study aims to assess the present situation, with the view of making recommendations for the improvement of the quality of Education in Schools. This chapter also gives in brief other objectives of the study, its delimitations and the methods used to collect information, necessary for the study.

Chapter two discusses the changing concepts of supervision. Quoting recognized authorities in the field it is shown that the concepts of supervision have changed over the years. Concepts that were present in primitive society were found unsuitable when the societies developed and became complex. Hence the emergence of new concepts. When Sri Lanka came under colonial domination, the concepts prevalent in the imperial countries influenced this country and were adopted in the introduced educational systems.

Chapter 3 examines the evolution of the Inspectorate from its inception to the present period - to about 1981. ~~Though supervision~~ was always present the Inspectorate does not have such a long history. It originated under the Dutch and developed under the British. Finally the Inspectorate acquired the present form in the decade after 1960. It was reorganised once in 1966 and again in 1972 to serve the needs that emerged. Changes in designation was brought about in keeping with the development of enlightened concepts of supervision. The School Inspectors were termed Education Officers, the Circuit ~~Inspector~~ was designated the ~~Circuit~~ Education Officer. The Inspectorate is now on the threshold of another more radical change.

Chapter four deals with the changes in the role of the Circuit Education Officer. How the role acquired new dimensions was reviewed along with those new dimensions. Conflict situations in the performance of ~~the~~ role were also discussed. Cha



Chapter five is devoted to the review of the performance of two major dimensions of the role of the Circuit Education Officer. The first is his role in the present political set up and second is his role as a Community Leader. These are new dimensions which have emerged since politics became an important factor in the Sri Lankan society; and also because the educational system is no longer considered apart from society today.

Chapter six deals with the question of decentralization in relation to the performance of the functions of the Circuit Education Officer. It examines whether the Circuit Education Officer could work better under a decentralized set up which would give more scope for the use of his initiative. It also reviews briefly the system of school complexes or clusters which are expected to take the place of school circuits.

The data collected by the questionnaire and the interview method is analysed in the seventh chapter. The Circuit Education Officers' rating of themselves is analysed in relation to the variables which could effect the rating. Similarly their opinion is again considered in relation to the rating of the teaching staff made of them.

Chapter eight gives the summary of the dissertation in brief and also the writer's own conclusions and recommendations as a pointer to the future.

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According to the findings of the study it is revealed that there are a number of useful functions which are performed by the Circuit Education Officers, especially in the field of coordination and administration. It is also revealed that the Circuit Education Officer is a useful feed-back officer enlightening the government of the deficiencies in the schools. Finally it also reveals that they have very little time for guidance and classroom supervision. This has made them less acceptable to the teaching staff as capable guides and counsellors.

Very little research has been done about the functions of these much maligned officers. Though strong opinions have been aired against them an unbiased and honest approach to their problems has not been visualised.