

THE OPEN UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA

**A STUDY OF THE PROFESSIONAL
ASPIRATIONS, COMMITMENT AND
ATTITUDES OF TAMIL PRIMARY SCHOOL
TEACHERS IN THE PLANTATION SECTOR IN
THE NUWARA ELIYA DISTRICT**

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ABSTRACT

This study deals with the with the professional aspirations, commitment and attitudes of Tamil Primary School Teachers in the plantation sector in the Nuwara Eliya District.

The education scenario in the plantation area is fast changing as a result of the inputs from both the government and non-governmental agencies specially after the incorporation of estate schools into the national education system, a decade ago. The infra-structural and other physical facilities are improving in the plantation schools.

However a study of the Ministry of Education in 1986 revealed that one of the factors for the relative backwardness of plantation education was the non-commitment of teachers. During that time most of the primary teachers in the plantation sector were from non-plantation districts. Since then the number of teachers from the plantation districts has considerably increased. Hence this study tries to find out the relevance of the Ministry's finding of 1986, with regard to the teachers' commitment.

The objectives of this study were:

1. To find out the level of job satisfaction among the Tamil primary school teachers in the plantation sector in the Nuwara Eliya District;
2. To identify their expectations with regard to higher education and career development;
3. To study their commitment towards the educational improvement of their community;

4. To evaluate their attitudes towards the plantation children, parents and the estate schools;
5. To make suggestions and recommendations to promote the plantation Tamil primary school teachers academically and professionally.

To realize these objectives five research questions were formulated. In order to solve these questions a questionnaire was designed with 70 items to be administered among teachers. A random sample of 40 primary teachers (20 males and 20 females) were selected from 20 schools from Ambagammuwa and Nuwara Eliya Education Divisions in the Nuwara Eliya District. The principals of these 20 schools were also asked to respond to another questionnaire. To supplement the questionnaires 7 Education officers, 10 parents and 5 Trade Unionists were interviewed.

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques on the basis of five variables namely sex, geographical location, age, marital status and professional qualifications. The analysis and interpretation of the collected data yielded the following conclusions:

- Most of the Tamil primary school teachers are satisfied with their job and will continue to remain in their profession;
- Most of them are interested in pursuing higher education/ training;
- Most of them are interested in improving their professional capabilities;
- Most of them are committed towards the educational improvement of their community;
- Most of them have a very positive attitude towards the plantation children, parents and the estate schools and

- Most of them have an understanding of their role as a facilitator of educational growth in the plantation.

The study also brought out the many barriers and impediments in the path of their academic and career development. Finally a number of suggestions and recommendations were made to help the teachers in their academic and career development.