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**An investigation in to the problems related to effective teaching  
of mathematics at upper primary grades in  
Ambalangoda Educational zone**

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## Abstract

Basic mathematics is considered to be one of the major subject in the primary curriculum. Therefore some outstanding researches have been carried out in the sphere of achievement levels of primary mathematics in Sri Lanka. But unfortunately all researchers are in agreement that achievement levels of primary mathematics are not satisfactory. The researchers attributed this downward trend in achievement levels to a number of causes including the teachers' monotonous and dull teaching. But no research, so far, has been carried out to find the causes for this effect. Before criticizing teachers we should be well aware whether the teachers are provided with a conducive classroom environment with sufficient resources leading to efficient primary mathematics teaching.

The main objective of this present study was to probe into some of the problems faced by teachers as they teach in the classroom environments. The study concentrated mainly in investigating the problems faced by teachers due to physical resources and some student related factors only.

The study was conducted in Ambalangoda Education zone, Covering 97 schools distributed within three divisions, Ambalangoda, Hikkaduwa, and Balapitiya. A questionnaire which is the main data Collecting instrument was administered to a randomly selected sample of Seventy three teachers teaching in

upper primary Classes of the zone. It was supplemented by classroom observation and Interviews Conducted in a random sample of 30 Schools in the zone. The data obtained through above three techniques were analyzed both qualitatively and qualitatively.

The research gave evidence to Suggest that most of the Schools With resources are Situated in Urban areas , and most of the Schools Situated in rural areas are lacking in Such resource.

Physical resource allocation for upper primary mathematics are also not satisfactory in the zone . It was found that more than One -third of the Classrooms in the sample had less than 10 square feet available per Student while 10 square feet is the accepted norm . In most of the rural schools, spatial facilities are satisfactory, although they had some other problems related to students. It was also found that mean class size of urban schools ( $\bar{x} = 35.5\text{ft}^2$  ) are significantly larger than their rural counter parts ( $\bar{x} = 26.31$ ).It was also revealed that 28 percent schools in the sample do not have enough Seating facilities for their children in upper primary classes. This problems was more Conspicuous in rural schools. Cupboards were available only in 22% of the classrooms. Teachers' table and chair was available only in 68% of the classrooms only . Other teachers were seen to use large size student desks and chairs.

The Condition of the teaching – learning Aids were very unsatisfactory. Eight teachers out of 73 who had answered the questionnaire said that they do not even have a board and chalk which is the minimum teaching and learning Aid available. Most of these classes which did not have black boards were found in rural areas. The Condition of other teaching – learning Aids were even more unsatisfactory.

It was also found that the Student related factors like pupils' ability level , language skills, previous knowledge, social and Emotional problems, Absenteeism are responsible for lowering efficiency of upper primary mathematics teaching. However there was no Significant difference between urban and rural Schools with regard to above mentioned student related factors.