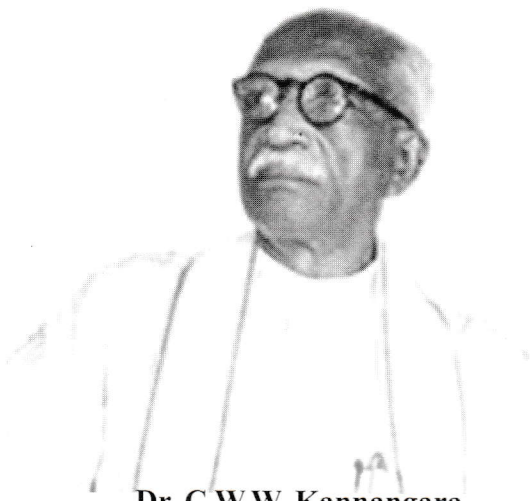


English Education in Sri Lanka; Is It a Failure?



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The vast dimension of education poses a challenge when finding an exact definition as it is a process of receiving or giving systematic instructions; especially at an educational center. On the other hand, it is the lightning of the learner experience that is of foremost importance.

With regard to the Sri Lankan education system, its history can be traced to times adorned with the epoch-making step taken by introducing the free education system in Sri Lanka in 1938. By 1945, every Sri Lankan became entitled to free education because of the great contribution made by Dr. C.W.W. Kanangara who was the Minister of Education at the time. Later with the development of technology and globalization, the Sri Lankan education system forged ahead in keeping with the current trends.

As a result, new methods of teaching, new teaching strategies and many new things were adopted and gradually developed. However, one of the methods of teaching that is being practiced is the age-old theory-based approach prevalent in Sri Lanka. Its

evolution begins with the introduction of the free education system, the student population started growing and the need to build new schools became a compelling need.

The curriculum development couldn't cope with the growing demand; thus theory-based education became an easier option; it was a matter of printing textbooks and getting the teachers to teach them. Therefore, the theory-based education became an entrenched tradition in the Sri Lankan system of education.

Thereafter, it became the only teaching method in Sri Lanka. For each grade according to the subjects that have to be learned, each student is provided with textbooks and as a result, students have become totally dependent on textbooks. Even the teachers teach what is in the books and never let the student go beyond them. For example, after a lesson in Science, the teachers can take the students to the laboratory and do the practical or else while the lesson is being conducted they can do the practical. But instead, the teachers get the students to do the activities after school at home as spelled out in the textbooks. Therefore, the students have no opportunities to gain hands-on experience on what they learnt. They go home and do the exercises having memorized the procedure.

One of the main reasons for this is the lack of facilities in schools. Therefore, most children do not get the necessary facilities to learn their subjects well; there is rote learning mainly in a theoretical context. Everyone tend to cover the syllabus using