

Concept Note

Improving School Performance through Educational Decentralization

The education sector in Sri Lanka has recognized the importance of decentralized decision making as a means of effectively responding to local needs and improving the performance of schools. There have been concerted efforts by policy makers to decentralize the management of the education system for several decades. Although in principal decision making has been decentralized to zonal and school levels, the participation of the local levels in education management has been limited. This is due to a variety of reasons as highlighted by various researchers on the subject both locally and internationally. Decentralized education systems has not shown expected results for several reasons, including, weak technical, managerial and leadership capacity at the local level, weak ability of local communities to voice preferences, lack of authority given to local level decision-makers, and inadequate attention given to reorienting the functions of the central government (to the role of guidance and support from that of decision making and resource allocation).

These resource issues and implementation problems of educational decentralization need to be addressed to improving school performance through decentralized decision making effectively. The proposed seminar hopes to bring together existing knowledge on the experience of decentralized management of education in Sri Lanka to identify main issues and to make recommendations for taking corrective action.