National Assessment of Achievement of Grade 08 Students in Sri Lanka - 2012

National Report

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Executive Summary

National Assessment of learning outcomes has become an important component of education policy analysis and programme monitoring in Sri Lanka. The National Education Research and Evaluation Centre (NEREC) of the Faculty of Education, University of Colombo has been the forerunner in conducting these assessments.

NEREC has conducted National Assessment of Learning Outcomes both at primary as well as at secondary level. At secondary level National Assessment of learning outcomes were conducted at Grade 8 in 2005 and 2008. This report presents the findings of a National assessment conducted in grade 8 for English, mathematics and science in the year 2012.

The national assessment of learning outcomes of 2012 used new instruments to test cognitive skills in English, mathematics and science in keeping with the new competency based curriculum which was introduced in 2009 in grade 8. Therefore, there is a need to find out whether the introduction of the new curriculum had an impact on the learning outcomes.

However, it is not possible to compare the findings of this assessment with the previous assessments as new test items have been constructed. Instead, the 2012 national assessment will serve as the baseline for monitoring the level and distribution of learning outcomes overtime.

The national assessment covered the entire country and the sample was drawn to enable analysis by province, type of schools, gender and medium of instruction. It also collected information pertaining to correlates of achievement through administering questionnaires to students, teachers, principals and parents. However, this report will be restricted only to the analysis of the achievement of learning outcomes related to cognitive skills. The background information would be discussed in a separate report.

Patterns in learning achievement was discussed using measures of central tendency -Mean and median, Skewness values of the distribution, cumulative percentages

and percentile ranks. In addition, graphs – frequency polygon and box plots were also used

Data gathered through the achievement tests were analyzed on a national and provincial basis in relation to medium of instruction, school type, and gender.

The findings revealed that there is disparity in achievement in all three subjects in relation to provincial performance, school type, gender and medium of instruction.

It was also revealed that the competency based curriculum needs to be revisited.