CHAPTER 2

STUDENTS' CIVIC ACHIEVEMENT

2.0   Introduction

As discussed in Chapter 1, the National Research Study on Civic Education in Sri Lanka, 2003 utilized the same instruments used in the Civic Education Study conducted by the IEA in 1998. The IEA civic knowledge test consists of 38 items, 25 of which refer to knowledge of content (Type 1) and 13 to skills in interpretation (Type 2).

All items were given in a multiple-choice format, with student responses coded as correct or incorrect. The items cover a broad range of content areas selected from a much larger set of trialled items after intensive piloting.

Civic content referred to content knowledge of Civic principles such as the knowledge of what constitutes a democracy. On the other hand, Civic Skills referred to interpretative skills needed to make sense of Civic related information such as the skills needed to make sense of a newspaper article or political cartoon.

However, in 1998 only 16 items of the 38 items in the scale were released by the IEA for use by researchers. Therefore, the Civic Education Sri Lanka study in 2003 to test the Civic Knowledge only these 16 items were used. Of these 9 items related to content and 7 related to skills. Since the present study is a replication, the same 16 items were used to assess the students Civic Knowledge in order to compare students' performance in 2017 with that of 2003.

Section 2.1 briefly describes the test items. This would be followed by the analysis of students' performance in 2017 in comparison with 2003 and the international performance in 1998.

2.1   Domain sub-categories covered by test items

The 16 items were in 6 broad sub categories.

Table 2.1 gives the sub categories and the corresponding test items.

Table 2.1: Sub categories and the corresponding test items

|	Sub category	Test items
1	Democracy and its defining characteristics	6,8
2	Institutions and practices in democracy	5,9,10,11,1,16
3	Citizenship rights and duties	2,12,4
4	National Identity	15
5	International relations	14,7
6	Social cohesion and diversity	3,13

2.2   Students' Civic knowledge

In Table 2.2 Sri Lankan students'(SL)composite mean scores for all 16 items in both 2003 and 2017 are presented relative to the comparable mean scores of the International (Int) student sample.

Table 2.2: Students' performance in Civic knowledge, content and skills

	Average		
	SL - 2003	SL - 2017	Int.
Knowledge	54	55	65
Content	60	65	70
Skills	45	42	58

This performance is also graphically presented in Fig. 2.1
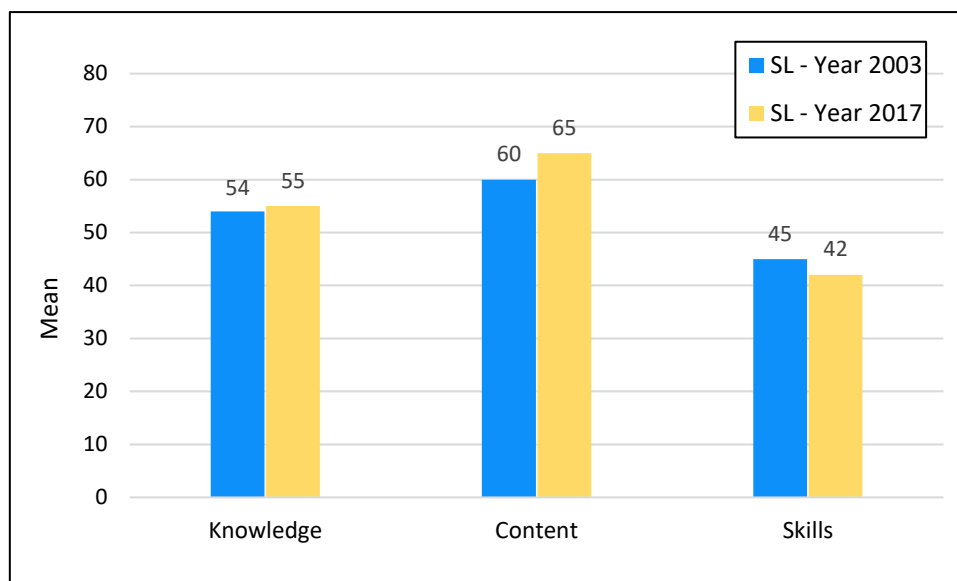
Fig. 2.1: Students' performance in Civic knowledge, content and skills

When comparing the total Civic knowledge of the students there is only a slight increase in 2017. However, when compared to the International student performance Civic knowledge of the Sri Lankan students is low.

On the other hand, content knowledge has increased in 2017 even though it is still below the international value. As the Table 2.2 indicates the lowest mean score in both studies is in civic skills. Even though International students mean score is also lowest in civic skills, the Sri Lankan students score is very much below and there is a decline in 2017. The low score for civic skills has adversely affected the overall score for civic knowledge. Therefore, there is a need to further analyse some of the questions to find out the reasons for low performance in civic skills.

2.2.1 Content Knowledge

Question No.6 in the student questionnaire relates to content knowledge. This question tested the ability of defining the characteristics of democracy. Student responses are analysed in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3: Defining characteristics of democracy

Q6. In a democratic political system, which of the following ought to govern the country	
A. Moral or religious leaders.	6
B. A small group of well-educated leaders.	12
C. Popularly elected representatives.	69
D. Experts on government and political affairs.	14
Correct Answer : C SL Average : 2003 :74 2017: 69 *Int. Average :71*	
Total Sample : 2003: 2619 2017: 5419	

As can be seen in student performance in both 2003 and 2017 as well as performance of International students, the majority of the students selected the correct response.

On the other hand, majority of the students has not been able to select the correct response to Q.8 even though it also tests content knowledge. This question tests the students' ability to apply their knowledge about democracy to identify the undemocratic process.

Table 2.4: Application of concept of democracy

Q8. Which of the following is most likely to cause a government to be called non-democratic?	
A. People are prevented from criticising the government.	27
B. The political parties criticise each other often.	31
C. People must pay very high taxes.	33
D. Every citizen has the right to a job.	9
Correct Answer : A SL Average : 2003 :26 2017: 27 *Int. Average :53*	
Total Sample : 2003: 2602 2017: 5419	

This question requires respondents to demonstrate knowledge of content by identifying a practice that 'most likely causes a government to be called nondemocratic'.

Among the four answers, the first one (A: 'People are prevented from criticising the government') is the correct response. The correct answer requires a reliable knowledge base as to the properties of democratic governments and the ability to apply that knowledge to the opposite case ('non-democratic government').

The international average of correct response to this item is very much higher than the Sri Lankan average both in 2003 and 2017. The reason for majority of the students to select option B and C in both 2003 and 2017 could be due to the political situation in the country or because of their lack of higher order thinking skills.

Question No.4 tests civic-related content knowledge, more specifically knowledge as to the rights and duties of citizens in a democratic country.

Since the original data is not available for the 2003 study the comparison between 2003 and 2017 was not possible.

Table 2.5: Democracy and role of organizations

| Q4. *In a democratic country having many organizations for people to join is important because this provides...*	
A. A group to defend members who are arrested.	5
B. Many sources of taxes for the government.	7
C. Opportunities to express different points of view.	49
D. A way for the government to tell people about new laws.	40
Correct Answer : C Average : 2017 : 49 Int.: 69 Total Sample : 5389	

The students could choose from four reasons justifying 'freedom of association', with the correct response being C ('Having many organizations for people to join is important because this provides "opportunities to express different points of view"'). According the International CIVIC ED 1999 National percentages of correct responses range from 46 to 82 percent. The SL average in 2017 is 49. With an international mean of 69 percent correct, this item is clearly among the easier ones in the test. It calls for basic background knowledge, or perhaps some recall of politics-related experience, to rule out the incorrect responses and to select the correct one.

Table 2.6: Democracy and functions of political parties

Q5. *In democratic countries what is the function of having more than one political party?*	
A. To present different opinions in the national legislature.	64
B. To limit political corruption.	12
C. To prevent political demonstrations.	5
D. To encourage economic competition.	19
Correct Answer : A Average : 2003: 63 2017: 64 Int. 75 Total Sample: 5419	

The forth example is another Type 1 item, which relates to institutions and practices in a democracy. In this item, four potential functions of a political system with more than one party were presented to the students who had to select the correct one (A: 'to represent different opinions [interests] in the national legislature'). The task turned out to be quite easy, with an international average percentage correct of 75 and a range across countries of 54 to 88 percent. In this context SL students' average of correct responses being 64 is satisfactory. In terms of its cognitive demands, this item is quite similar to the previous example, that is, a certain amount of political background knowledge and/or politics-related experience is needed if the correct response is to be identified.

2.2.2 Skills in interpretation
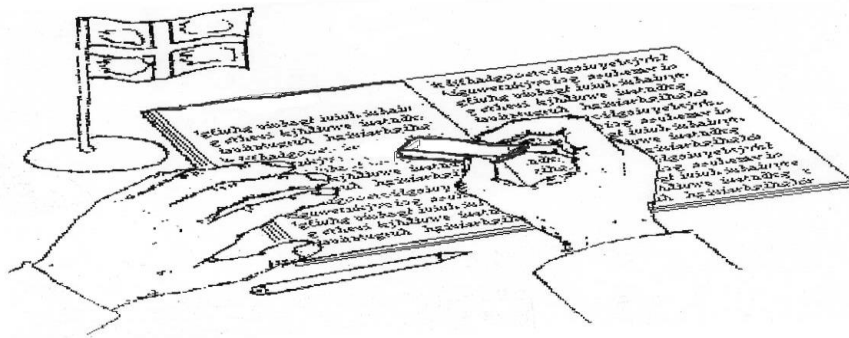
Fig. 2.2: Picture presented for Q.No. 15 of student questionnaire

This example is a Type 2 item that measures skills in the interpretation of civic-related material. Figure 2.2 demonstrates how the item was presented. There is a cartoon showing someone erasing words from a book, presumably one on the history of a nation as suggested by a flag and the word 'history'. The students were asked about the message or main point of this cartoon and had to select the correct response (A: 'History textbooks are sometimes changed to avoid mentioning problematic events from the past'). The distribution of correct answers across countries ranges from 26 to 79 percent. The international mean of 58 percent correct answers shows that this item is less difficult for students than the previous example, although it is slightly harder than the test on average. The task relates to the domain of national identity and international relations and requires the ability to interpret or comprehend the message that the cartoonist has attempted to convey.

As Table 2.7 indicates SL students have also found this item difficult, as their mean remains 48 in both 2003 and 2017. However, compared to the international marks range SL students' performance could be considered satisfactory.

Table 2.7: National identity and international relations

Q15. What is the message or main point of this cartoon? History textbooks …	
A. Are sometimes changed to avoid mentioning problematic events from the past.	48
B. For children must be shorter than books written for adults.	23
C. Are full of information that is not interesting.	18
D. Should be written using computer and not a pencil.	11
Correct Answer : A Average: 2003: 48 2017: 48 Int.: 58 Total Sample : 2003: 2610 2017: 5419	

The fifth example is also a Type 2 item. This question refers to institutions and practices in democracy. Here, students were asked to interpret an electoral leaflet directed against an imaginary party (presumably in power) and to indicate which political group had probably issued it. The correct answer is B ('a party or group in opposition to the Silver Party'). The lowest proportion of correct answers found in any country is 40 percent and the highest 85 percent. The international average is 65 percent. Thus, the item is slightly easier than the international average of the test as a whole. There are several clues suggesting the correct solution, although the interpretation of some of these requires quite complex inferences as to the two mentioned parties' approaches to taxation and government spending. The last line of the leaflet ('Vote for Gold Party') is unambiguous and clearly marks its origin. As such, the interpretative task is primarily to identify the alleged negative economic consequences of the Silver Party's fiscal policies and to recognize that such arguments could come only from an opposing group.

Analysis of content knowledge indicate that when students are tested on specific content there scores are high. However, when the test items requires higher order thinking skills their performance is low.

Table 2.8: Institutions and practices in democracy

Q9. This is an election leaflet which has probably been issued by ...	
A. The Silver Party.	7
B. A party or group in opposition to the Silver Party.	65
C. A group which tries to be sure elections are fair.	20
D. The Silver Party and the Gold Party together.	8
Correct Answer : B Average : 2003: 67 2017: 65 Int.: 65 Total Sample : 5441	

SL students' performance matches with the international performance in this test item as the mean values are the same.

A summary of the students' performance in the 16 items according to the six categories is given in Table 2.9.

Table 2.9: Performance according to categories and subcategories

Category	Sub categories	Short titles for items	Que No.	2003	2017	Int.
Democracy and its defining characteristics	Identify defining characteristics of democracy	...who ought to govern in a democracy	6	74	68	71
	Identify limited and unlimited government, undemocratic regimes	...what makes a government non - democratic	8	26	26	53
Institutions and practices in democracy	Identify characteristics and functions of elections and parties	...function of having more than one political party	5	63	63	75

Category	Sub categories	Short titles for items	Que No.	2003	2017	Int.
	Identify qualifications of candidates for positions and making up one's mind during elections	…which party issued political leaflet	9	67	64	65
		…what issuers of leaflet think about taxes	10	48	61	71
		…which policy issuers of leaflet are likely to favour	11	68	71	58
	Identify basic character of law	…an accurate statement about laws	1	75	72	78
	Understand basic economic issues and their political implications	…a fact, (not an opinion) about laws	16	25	28	49
Citizenship rights and duties	Identify general rights, qualifications and obligations of citizens in democracies	… a political right	2	81	79	78
	Understand role of mass media in democracy	…result if large publisher buys many newspapers	12	44	41	57
	Identify network of associations and differences of political opinion	…why organizations are important in democracy	4	50	48	69
National identity	Recognize that every nation has events in its history of which it is not proud	…main message of cartoon about history textbooks	15	48	47	58
International relations	Recognize international economic issues and organizations	…an opinion, (not a fact) about the environment	14	40	41	53
	Recognize major inter-governmental organizations	…major purpose of United Nations	7	85	87	85
Social cohesion and diversity	Recognize groups subject to discrimination	…an example of discrimination in employment	3	45	61	65
		…an example of discrimination in pay equity	13	21	13	50

As Table 2.9 indicates SL students mean values are often below that of the international mean. The lowest mean values for the Sri Lankan students' performance is shown for

question number 13. This value is even less than the 2003 value. This question relates to the category of social cohesion and diversity. Both questions test students' ability to recognize group discrimination. Out of the two questions students' performance in the question related to discrimination in pay equity appears to be a problem to the students.

Another interesting finding is that when there are more than one question representing one category, students' performance in the second question is lower than the first. The reason for such performance could be that the second question measures higher order thinking skills.

As part 3 of the students' questionnaire probes further the same six categories, this section would be revisited in chapter 4.

2.3   Background information and students' knowledge and skills

This section analyses students' Civic knowledge and skills in relation to some background information.

2.3.1   Knowledge and skills in relation to medium of instruction

Table 2.10: Knowledge and skills in relation to medium of instruction

Medium of the student	%		Knowledge		Content		Skills	
	2003	2017	2003	2017	2003	2017	2003	2017
Sinhala	77	78	55	58	61	69	47	44
Tamil	23	22	49	42	57	50	40	32

As Table 2.10 indicates, Tamil medium students' performance is lower than Sinhala medium students in both content knowledge and skills in 2017. A similar pattern had been observed in 2003 as well. However, in 2017 Sinhala medium students' Content knowledge has increased while the skills have decreased. This has adversely affected the overall Civic knowledge of the Sinhala medium students in 2017. On the other hand Tamil medium students' achievement has declined in all three areas in 2017.

Tamil medium students' performance had been lower than the Sinhala medium students even in the National Assessments of achievement of learning outcomes at the end of grade 4 and 8 over the years 2003 to 2016.

2.3.2 Knowledge and skills in relation to ethnicity

Table 2.11: Knowledge and skills in relation to ethnicity

Ethnic Group	%		Knowledge		Content		Skills	
	2003	2017	2003	2017	2003	2017	2003	2017
Sinhalese	73	76	56	58	62	68	47	45
Sri Lankan Tamil	16	11	48	42	55	50	39	32
Indian origin Tamil	3	2	54	41	62	48	43	31
Muslim	7	10	60	45	60	53	42	34

As Table 2.11 indicates there appears to be a relationship between students' ethnicity and medium of instruction. In Tamil medium schools both Sri Lankan and Indian origin Tamil students as well as some Muslim students study. The content mean as well as skill mean of all these groups have declined. As a result, the overall knowledge mean has also declined. This could be one reason for Tamil medium student's performance to have declined. On the other hand, even though Sinhalese student's skill mean has declined their content mean has increased. As a result, their overall knowledge mean has increased and this is reflected in the Sinhala medium school students' performance.

2.3.3 Knowledge and skills in relation to religion

Table 2.12: Knowledge and skills in relation to religion

Religion	%		Knowledge - Mean		Content - Mean		Skill - mean	
	2003	2017	2003	2017	2003	2017	2003	2017
Buddhism	70	71	56	58	62	69	47	45
Hinduism	14	11	49	41	56	49	40	31
Islam	7	10	51	44	59	53	41	33
Catholicism	5	5	53	54	61	64	43	42
Christianity	3	2	51	50	57	59	43	39

2.3.4 Knowledge and skills in relation to school type

Table 2.13: Knowledge and skills in relation to school type

School Type	%		Knowledge		Content		Skills	
	2003	2017	2003	2017	2003	2017	2003	2017
1AB	33	58	61	59	68	69	52	46
1C	34	27	51	50	58	60	43	37
Type 2	26	15	47	48	53	56	39	37

In the 2017 study the 1AB schools in the sample have a 9 percentage points' lead in the civic knowledge mean score of 59 respectively, over the school Type 1C schools with the next higher mean score of 50. The comparable mean score of the Type 2 schools is 48. The challenge is to bring the 1C and Type 2 schools to the level of 1AB schools.

2.3.5 Knowledge and skills in relation to gender

Table 2.14: Knowledge and skills in relation to gender

Gender	%		Knowledge		Content		Skills	
	2003	2017	2003	2017	2003	2017	2003	2017
Female	52	54	54	55	60	65	45	42
Male	46	46	58	53	61	63	46	41

As Table 2.14 indicates boys performance in 2003 had been better than the girls in content as well as skill knowledge. As a result, their overall knowledge mean is higher than the girls. However, in 2017, the content mean of both girls and boys had increased yet the increase in girls' performance is more than the boys. The skill mean has declined in both groups. The increase in content mean has resulted in a slight increase in the knowledge mean of the girls.

2.4   Provincial wise performance

Table 2.15: Civic Knowledge Provincial wise

Province	Knowledge		Content		Skills	
	2003	**2017**	**2003**	**2017**	**2003**	**2017**
Central	53	50	59	60	44	38
Eastern	49	44	56	53	40	34
North Central	53	51	59	61	46	39
North Western	56	58	62	67	49	46
Northern	46	41	53	49	37	31
Sabaragamuwa	58	56	66	65	49	45
Southern	55	57	62	68	47	42
Uva	56	54	63	63	47	41
Western	54	58	61	69	45	45
All Island	54	55	60	65	45	42
INT	65		70		58	

As Table 2.15 indicates, in 2003 there had been five provinces in which students' knowledge mean was equal or above the island mean. On the other hand in 2017 there are only four provinces scoring above the island mean. When the content mean in 2003 is considered the same five provinces have scored above the island mean. In 2017, the island mean has increased by five points and four provinces have scored equal or above the island mean. In 2003, when the students' skill mean is considered six provinces have scored above the island mean. However, in 2017 this number had decreased to two provinces. Consequently, in 2017 the overall knowledge mean had decreased.

Next section of this chapter analyses student performance in relation to non-school based factors that affect the development of Civic competencies.

2.5   Participation in Organizations

Participating in co –curricular activities it is assumed gives the opportunity to practice the knowledge they have gained through Civic content knowledge. However, the questionnaire asked only about students' participation in organizations. While Table 2.16

asks about students' membership in organizations, Table 2.17 inquires about the frequency of participation.

2.5.1 Membership in organizations

Table 2.16: Students' membership in organizations

Category	%		Knowledge		Content		Skills	
	2003	2017	2003	2017	2003	2017	2003	2017
No membership	11	23	50	54	56	64	42	42
Membership in 1 organization only	51	46	52	53	59	63	43	41
Membership in 2-4 organizations	34	26	58	57	64	67	50	44
Membership in 5-7 organizations	4	3	56	50	61	59	50	38
Membership in 8-13 organizations	5	1	65	38	72	46	56	28

Then number of organizations a student obtains membership had shown a positive relationship with content and skill means as well as knowledge mean in 2003. However, in 2017 this relationship is negative. When students obtain membership in more than 4 organizations their content as well as skill mean has declined.

2.5.2 Participation in organizations

On the other hand as Table 2.17 indicates students' participation in organisations had a positive impact on their Civic knowledge in 2003. However, in 2017 when the number of memberships increases students' Civic Knowledge has decreased.

Table 2.17: Students' mean achievement scores, by frequency of participation in organizations

	%		Knowledge		Content		Skill	
	2003	2017	2003	2017	2003	2017	2003	2017
Never or almost never	9	14	49	49	55	58	41	37
A few times each month	50	45	55	56	61	66	46	43
1-3 days a week	22	23	56	55	62	65	47	42
4 or more days a week	13	10	53	55	60	65	44	42

2.6 Home literacy and students' Civic knowledge

The number of books in the home, and the availability of a newspaper had also been used as the indicator for the students' social background in both studies. The number of books in the home it was assumed can be interpreted as a proxy for the emphasis placed on education, the resources available to acquire and support literacy and, more generally speaking, the academic support a student finds in his or her family.

Table 2.18: Availability of books and newspapers - 2003

Variable	Category	% 2003	2003		
			Knowledge	Content	Skill
Number of books available at home	0-10	31	51	57	43
	11-50	25	56	63	47
	51-100	14	58	64	50
	101-200	9	57	65	47
	Greater than 200	11	60	67	52
Daily Newspaper at home	Yes	66	54	60	46
	No	33	55	62	45

Table 2.19: Availability of books and newspapers - 2017

Variable	Category	% 2017	2017		
			Knowledge	Content	Skill
Number of books available at home	None	5	44	53	32
	1-10	17	50	60	37
	11-50	30	55	65	42
	51-100	20	56	66	43
	101-200	11	58	68	45
	Greater than 200	16	58	68	45
Daily Newspaper at home	Yes	34	52	62	40
	No	65	56	66	43

According to Table 2.18 and 2.19 there is a co relation between students' Civic knowledge and the number of books, both in 2003 and 2017. However, there is no correlation between the availability of newspapers and students' civic knowledge. This could be due to the fact

that students may read books to increase their content knowledge. However, students appear not to read newspapers to develop their interpretive skills.

Home literacy

Previous research has consistently shown students' social background to be important in fostering civic knowledge. Students from less affluent and less educated families have less knowledge in this area than those with more affluent and better-educated parents. In the first IEA Civic Education Study, social status was a consistently positive predictor for the cognitive test score in all participating countries (Civ Ed study, 1999).

Even though for international studies it is very difficult to find comparable indicators for the social background of families, the Student Background Questionnaire of the 1999 IN. CIV Ed study as well as the SL CIV Ed study included questions to the students as to their father's and mother's educational attainment. Even though, the validity of this indicator may not be beyond question this question was included in the 2017 study as well.

Table 2.20: Students' civic mean scores by home literacy - 2003

Educational Qualification	%		Knowledge - 2003		Content - 2003		Skill - 2003	
	Mother	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	Father
Primary not completed	3	3	46	44	52	49	38	38
Completed Primary	12	11	50	48	55	54	41	41
Some Secondary 6-11	21	18	53	53	60	60	49	45
Senior Secondary 12-13 (A.L)	10	8	61	59	69	66	51	49
Voc/Tech Quals.	6	12	62	62	68	69	53	54
Bachelor's degree	4	4	65	64	72	71	55	55
Postgrad. degree	1	2	63	61	67	67	58	53

Table 2.21: Students' civic mean scores by home literacy - 2017

Educational Qualification	%		Knowledge - 2017		Content - 2017		Skills - 2017	
	Mother	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	Father
Primary not competed	3	3	39	43	46	51	30	31
Primary completed	7	7	47	48	56	57	35	37
Secondary education	23	19	52	53	62	63	39	41
Passed GCE O/L	13	9	54	55	64	65	42	42
Studied GCE A/L	12	10	57	57	68	68	44	44
Passed GCE A/L	13	9	61	60	72	70	48	46
Obtained VTE	7	14	62	60	73	70	49	46
Obtained a degree	5	5	61	62	71	72	47	50
Obtained a PG qualification	2	2	52	55	63	64	39	43
I don't know	11	12	52	53	61	62	40	40

As Table 2.20 and 2.21 indicate there appears to be a positive correlation between parents' education level and the students' civic knowledge. This relationship could be seen in 2003 as well as in 2017.

Family and home environment

In the International study as well as in the 2003 Civ Ed study and indicator for the home environment had been the number of people living at home with the student. Table 2.22 shows how this indicator is correlated with the civic knowledge.

Table 2.22: Students' civic mean scores by family and home environment characteristics

Total number of people in the home	%		Knowledge		Content		Skill	
	2003	2017	2003	2017	2003	2017	2003	2017
1-2	1	1	59	47	66	59	49	33
3	6	7	59	56	64	65	51	43
4	25	31	57	58	64	68	47	44
5	31	31	56	55	62	65	47	42
6	19	14	52	54	58	63	44	41
7-10	15	9	50	48	56	57	41	36
More than 10	1	0	42	47	47	58	36	34

As the Table 2.22 indicates in both 2003 and 2017 households with less than 3 members seem to correlated positively with the students' civic knowledge. However, as the number of people increases it correlated negatively with the civic knowledge.

Out of school activities

The frequency of time spent in various out of school activities such as spending time with friends and watching television had been considered as a factor impacting on civic knowledge. According to Table 2.23 in both 2003 and 2017 students who had spent 1-3 days a week with friends had better scores in civic knowledge.

Table 2.23: Students' civic mean scores by frequency of time spent in various out of school activities

		Knowledge		Content		Skill	
		2003	2017	2003	2017	2003	2017
Time spent after school with friends	4 or more days a week	53	53	59	63	44	41
	1-3 days a week	57	56	64	67	48	42
	A few times each month	52	54	60	63	43	41
	Never or almost never	55	55	61	64	48	42
Time spent watching television or	No time	52	50	58	59	44	39
	Less than an hour	52	52	59	62	44	39
	1-2 hours	56	56	62	66	47	43
	3-5 hours	57	58	65	69	47	44
	More than 5 hours	57	51	64	58	48	42

Similarly spending 3-5 hours watching television seems to correlate positively with civic knowledge. However, in 2017 viewing television more than 5 hours a day had reduced their civic knowledge.

Students' aspirations

Students' educational aspirations have been correlated with their civic knowledge in Table 2.24.

Table 2.24: Students' civic mean scores by expected years of further education

	%		Knowledge		Content		Skills	
	2003	**2017**	**2003**	**2017**	**2003**	**2017**	**2003**	**2017**
Zero years	1	1	49	45	50	54	34	33
2 years only (to sit O/L)	12	10	45	49	52	59	36	37
3-4 more years (to sit A/L)	23	21	52	51	59	60	43	38
Till obtain a Degree	19	24	58	55	65	65	51	43
Till obtain other qualification (for employment)	24	26	58	60	65	70	49	46
I cannot say	20	18	53	54	60	64	44	41

Students who have higher aspirations have obtained higher mean scores both in 2003 and 2017. Therefore, high aspirations appears to correlate positively with civic knowledge.

2.7   Summary

This chapter analyzed students' Civic Knowledge in 2017 and compared their performance with that of 2003 as well as the International Students performance of the first Civic Education Study. As accepted in the International literature Civic knowledge was considered as a combination of Civic Content knowledge and civic interpretive skills.

In the comparison of SL students' mean scores for the test items with INT students' comparable mean scores, in civic knowledge, content and skills, the achievement of Sri Lankan students was seen to be lower, by 11, 10 and 13 percentage points, respectively in 2003 In 2017, even though their content knowledge has increased by 5 points. The students' interpretive skills have declined by 3 points. Thus, their overall Civic knowledge has increased only by 1 point. The data when analyzed by composite mean scores for the six categories, the SL students have fared poorly in items that test their interpretive skills in particular, such as in the social cohesion sub-category that call on them to identify discrimination in employment and in pay equity

The students' civic mean scores by selected school variables has highlighted the differences in student achievement by school type and medium of instruction, which has been a consistent finding in national level research studies and, in student achievement in

public examinations such as the General Certificate of Education Ordinary Level and Advanced Level examinations. The 1AB in the sample have a higher civic knowledge, over, 1C and Type 2 schools.

By demographic variables such as gender, ethnicity and religion, there is a significant difference in test mean scores of students. By gender the males, by ethnicity the Muslims and Sinhalese and by religion the Buddhists have scored higher in 2003. However, in 2007 girls and Christians/ Catholics have performed better than Muslims. The selected out of school variables, particularly home literacy and, family and home environment variables were found to correlate positively with mean scores. Students in whose homes there were more books, whose parents' educational qualifications were G.C.E. (A/L) or higher, and students who expected to continue studies till they obtained a degree or the necessary qualifications for employment, had higher mean scores than others. Likewise, students from smaller families had higher mean scores than those from relatively large families. Students who spend a reasonable amount of time with friends after school and, engage in TV/Video viewing - even fairly heavily on school days - recorded higher mean scores than those who do so very sparingly in 2003. However, in 2017 there is a negative correlation between heavy TV viewing and mean scores.

In the analysis of SL students' mean scores by memberships and participation in organizations, a positive correlation is shown between the variables. The finding therefore is that memberships in organizations and active participation devoting a fair percentage of time each month to activities conducted by organizations is positively correlated with civic scores.