

# CHAPTER 3

## SCHOOL AND CLASSROOM CONTEXT OF CIVIC KNOWLEDGE

### 3.0 Introduction

This chapter examines the context in which civic education is taught in Sri Lanka and the relationship between school and classroom factors and civic knowledge.

Section 1 is a brief overview of the civic related subject teaching in the National Education System in Sri Lanka.

Section 2 Analyses the parts in the three questionnaires pertaining to classroom context of Civic knowledge.

### 3.1 Background of civic related subjects in the schools

The aims of education to contribute to the development of good citizens and caring individuals with a balanced personality has been emphasized over the years. But education has failed to achieve this aim.

The Presidential Commission on Youth Unrest Report (1990), which became the basis for both the 1992 and 1994 National Education Commission Reports and the 1997 reforms, highlighted some of the systemic features that had not been addressed in the education system or any of its introduced reforms. The National Education Commission Report of 1992 proposed nine national goals, which were also considered to be the goals of education. The goals reflect the expectations of the nation. Three of these goals (numbers one, two and six) specifically aim at the achievement of social cohesion:

- the achievement of national cohesion, national integrity and national unity;
- the establishment of a pervasive pattern of social justice; and
- the active participation in nation building activities to ensure the continuous nurturing of a sense of deep and abiding sense of concern for one another.

Five basic competencies on which education was to be founded were also identified. The competencies related to communication, ethics and religion, in particular complemented

the three national goals mentioned above and, if consciously pursued, would address the most critical concerns of social cohesion (IBE, 2003, p. 397).

A comprehensive proposal for reform was presented in 1997, covering the entire spectrum of general education from primary to junior and senior secondary levels, with the expected outcome of achieving the national goals and five competencies.

In the Case Study of Sri Lanka (Perera et al, 2003), in a seven country report on 'Curriculum change and social cohesion in conflict affected societies' (IBE, UNESCO, 2003), educational reforms since 1972 were reviewed, to identify conscious efforts if any, to address the issue of social cohesion and national integration through curriculum change and other aspects of the reforms. The authors conclude that at the levels of conceptualization, design and implementation, the various reform initiatives in 1972 and 1981,

“...did not seek to address either directly or indirectly the major divisive systemic features such as segregation of children by ethnicity, the need to enable children become bilingual and thereby facilitate communication among them, and, the need to introduce a multi-cultural perspective in designing curriculum (Perera et al, 2003, p.397).

### **3.2 Historical overview of Civic education in the National Education System in Sri Lanka**

Prior to 1972, Civics was taught as a separate subject in the national secondary school curriculum. The education reforms of 1972, in keeping with the global trends, integration of subjects was introduced. As a result Civics, History and Geography were integrated as Social Studies. In order to facilitate this integrated approach necessary changes were made in teacher development provision to ensure that teachers were equipped to bring about the expected transformation. However, the expected outcomes as stated in the National Education Commission Report have not been achieved.

The integration of these content areas in the social studies curriculum, however, never took place and many teachers continued to confine themselves to their own areas of subject specialization, thereby undermining the expected outcomes of subject integration. Criticism grew over the years that there were significant gaps in knowledge in what was perceived to be an amorphous subject (NEC, 2003, p.170).

Some changes to the curriculum were introduced due to the dissatisfaction with subject integration, particularly with the integration of History in Social Studies. Change of the name of the subject to Social Studies and History in 1988 and, writing the textbook for History separately while continuing with the subject integration were some of the changes. In civic education, the dissatisfaction, has been equally strong, in respect of student learning outcomes.

“In a plural society driven by ethnic and religious divisions, education has failed conspicuously to promote nation building by fostering mutual understanding and tolerance for the rich cultural diversity of Sri Lankan society, and in this process has made little contribution to ensuring social cohesion and stability.” (NEC, 2003).

A policy decision was taken by the government of Sri Lanka on the recommendation of the National Education Commission (NEC, 2003) that the subjects History, Civics and Geography be reinstated, in the secondary school curriculum. Civics to be taught as a separate subject starting in Grade 7 in 2005 and subsequently in other grades. Syllabuses were drafted, and textbooks were written. This curriculum revision resulted in another name change. The subject was referred to as *Life Competences and Citizenship Education* for grades 6-9 and it was a compulsory subject for all students. On the other hand, for grades 10 and 11 it was *Citizenship Education and Governance* and it was a category subject ('basket') where the students had the choice of selecting one subject from that category and hence it was not compulsory for all students.

### **3.3 Study on Civic Education in Sri Lanka -2003**

The research study on civic education, was conducted in the latter part of 2003 at the completion of the reform cycle initiated in 1997 and in place since 1998. There had not been any research studies that had focused specifically on civic related student learning outcomes of the 1997 reforms. Nor has any comprehensive and national level research been conducted in Sri Lanka on more generalized student learning outcomes of civic education gained in the school and classroom and, home and out of school contexts. The Civic Education 2003 study assessed the learning outcomes in 14-year-old students in Grade 9, studying Civic Education in the national school system in Sri Lanka. This study was further significant as on the recommendation of the NEC (2003) Civic was to be

reintroduced as a separate subject to the curriculum. Further, as mentioned before, the Sri Lankan students' performance was also compared in this study with that of the international students' performance.

Findings of this research revealed that the achievement of Sri Lankan students in Civic knowledge, content and skills were lower than that of the international students achievement in the CIVED study. In particular Sri Lankan students have performed poorly in items that test their interpretive skills. The teachers in the sample strongly agreed that schools are places where civic education ought to be taught and can be taught effectively. However, they believe that the integrated model is the best model to teach Civic Education. There for having introduced Civic as a separate subject there is a need to find out whether the teachers' perceptions have changed.

### **3.4 National Policy on Social Cohesion and Peace Education (SCPE)**

The need for a national policy on social cohesion and peace education (SCPE) was the result of the continuing issues concerning the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka and from the view that various peace education initiatives in the country lacked coherence and coordination. The key role of education in social cohesion was recognised but needed to be strengthened.

The objectives of the SCPE policy are fivefold: to generate innovative strategies which build on existing provision; to provide coherence across the various organisations and activities involved; to provide coverage and avoid gaps; to avoid unnecessary duplication; to ensure sustainability.

The Policy has identified seven strategic areas and the activities within them. The first of these is the:

**Curriculum:** Reinforcement of the importance to ESCP of the existing *Life Competences and Citizenship Education* (grades 6-9) and the *Citizenship Education and Governance* (grades 10-11) curriculum, monitoring the impact of this through research, and reviewing as appropriate.

However, this policy framework is yet to be implemented and there for the Civic Education Study 2017 is significant.

### **3.5 The scope and content of civics education**

The scope and content of civic/civics education in the national school curriculum prior to the 70s and since 1972 is shown in Annexure 1, relative to a list of 20 topics identified in the IEA CIVED study.

In the proposals for a national policy framework on general education in Sri Lanka, the National Education Commission (NEC, 2003, pp.173-174) proposes that civic education or civics needs to incorporate four major aspects in the present context.

- (i) As in the pre 1970s syllabus, the role of citizens, their rights and duties and governance at local and central level, but working towards changing the existing political culture in the country, starting with respect for the rule of law and moving purposefully towards a vibrant, participatory democracy and coping with globalization.
- (ii) Strengthening this process through awareness of international norms of human rights, and specifically, political, civil, economic and social rights, including women's rights and the rights of the child.
- (iii) Meeting the immediate need for social cohesion through learning to live with others in harmony.
  - respecting the diversity of cultures in a multi-ethnic, multi-religious, multi-cultural society.
  - promoting egalitarian social relations including class and gender relations, in the family, community, workplace, society and polity.
  - sensitivity to differences, preventing and resolving conflict through discussion, and rejecting violence.
- (iv) Using an issue based and activity based approach in the classroom and in field activities such as a critical study of governance at local level in the environment of the school as a project, and at central level through debate and discussion, open discussion of current issues, problem solving sessions, role play in exercising the franchise, community service projects.
- (v) Promoting writing textbooks in this area is a challenging task to encapsulate theory and practice with objectivity.

A glance through the civic education topics listed in the national school curriculum over the past few decades and, the curriculum in place from 2018 indicate that the scope and coverage has been relatively consistent over time. The generic goal of educating children for citizenship in a democratic society by familiarizing them with the institutions, principles and practices of governance in democratic and other systems has been pervasive, with increasing stress on educating children for global citizenship, in more recent times. Equally pervasive is the stress on civic virtues, which are more or less synonymous with basic human values. In the present context in Sri Lanka, it is widely acknowledged that through the civic education curriculum, the school should contribute to social and civic reconstruction, a priority national concern in the aftermath of decades of violent identity based conflict. The demand that the subject civics be reinstated in the school curriculum was fuelled by this strongly felt need expressed by stakeholders.

In (Annexure 1) the topics covered in the Civics syllabuses in secondary grades prior to 1972, topics incorporated in the subject Social Studies since 1972, and topics identified in the present subject Civics/Citizenship education to be introduced from 2018 are listed, in parallel with a list of 20 topics from the teacher questionnaire of the International CIVED study. The topics covered areas such as history, political systems, citizens' and human rights, economic affairs, international affairs and media. Other than a few, most topics in this list of 20 have been featured in the Civics/Social Studies syllabuses in the secondary school curricula, over the period reviewed. A few topics such as migration of people, environmental issues, dangers of propaganda, media have not been included in the respective syllabuses as separate topics; however, some of these issues are covered under other topics such as 4, 12 and 13. Within the integrated subject Social Studies, only some of these specifically civic related topics are covered up to Grade 9. Some of the other topics are covered in Grades 10 and 11, depending on the appropriateness of subject content for the respective age groups. This is reflected in teacher responses shown in Table 3.1 to items in Section H of the teacher questionnaire, indicating 'How much opportunity up to and including Grade 9 have students had to learn these topics'.

Section 2: Analysis of questionnaire data related to classroom context of civic knowledge.

### 3.6 Teacher's views on Civic content

Teachers were asked to rate each topic in the list of 20, to indicate i) how important they think these topics are for civic education, ii) how confident they feel to teach these topics and, iii) how much opportunity the students have had to learn these topics up to and including grade 9. The results are shown in Table 3.1.

**Table 3.1: Percentage ratings by teachers for topics, in combined response categories 2003 & 2017**

Section H :Teacher questionnaire		How important do you think these topics are for civic education				How confident do you feel to teach these topics				How much opportunity the student have to learn up to and including grade 9			
		Not impt/ little important		Impt/ very impt		Not at all/little confident		Confident /very confident		Not at all/little		Considerable/very much	
		2003	2017	2003	2017	2003	2017	2003	2017	2003	2017	2003	2017
H1	National constitution and state political institutions	5	12	95	88	18	25	82	75	61	57	39	43
H2	citizens right and obligations	1	1	99	99	9	10	91	90	55	27	45	73
H3	Different conceptions of democracy	9	6	91	94	18	16	82	84	64	33	36	67
H4	different/comparative political systems	19	27	81	73	36	40	64	60	78	69	22	31
H5	Election and electoral system	10	9	90	91	19	22	81	78	60	41	40	59
H6	the judicial system	3	8	97	92	31	33	69	67	66	54	34	46
H7	human and civil rights	2	0	98	100	19	17	81	83	58	31	42	69
H8	important events in the nation's history	4	8	96	92	16	21	84	79	51	40	49	60
H9	international organizations	9	14	91	86	23	31	77	69	64	62	36	38
H10	international problems and relations	10	23	90	77	31	46	69	54	69	70	31	30
H11	migration of people	26	31	74	69	40	46	60	54	67	65	33	35
H12	Economic issues	5	15	95	85	23	28	77	72	59	51	41	49
H13	social welfare	3	6	97	94	24	17	76	83	65	36	35	64
H14	trade/labor union	26	34	74	66	49	48	51	52	77	64	23	36
H15	Equal opportunities for women and men	16	12	84	88	29	33	71	67	70	51	30	49

Section H :Teacher questionnaire		How important do you think these topics are for civic education				How confident do you feel to teach these topics				How much opportunity the student have to learn up to and including grade 9			
What topics do you teach?		Not impmt/ little important		Impmt/ very impmt		Not at all/little confident		Confident /very confident		Not at all/little		Considerable/very much	
		2003	2017	2003	2017	2003	2017	2003	2017	2003	2017	2003	2017
H16	cultural differences and minorities	10	7	90	93	26	27	74	73	60	41	40	59
H17	Environmental issues	3	5	97	95	14	15	86	85	45	26	55	74
H18	Civic virtues	3	4	97	96	16	17	84	83	54	34	46	66
H19	Dangers of propaganda and manipulations	17	19	83	81	36	37	64	63	71	57	29	43
H20	Media	4	6	96	94	25	22	75	78	61	42	39	58

As can be seen in Table 3.1, Teachers rated 15 of these topics as important/ very important, with response percentages in the 90-99 range in 2003. On the other hand in 2017 the number of important topics in the same range has dropped to 11. In the international study, teachers ranked national history, citizens' and human rights as well as environmental issues at the top of the list of important topics. They deem topics in the areas of international and economic affairs less important, and in most countries, international migration and labor unions are topics very low in importance relative to other topics. Same trend in identifying the importance of topics is seen in both 2003 and 2017.

### **Teacher's sense of confidence in teaching the topics**

In the CIVED study, for each country a score based on teachers' sense of confidence in teaching the 20 different topics was computed. The score was calculated by averaging the national means for each topic, and by computing an average across all topic means. The scale arrived at ranged from 1 to 4. The confidence scores show that in most countries teachers feel fairly confident imparting civic education. However, while 16 topics in the list of 20 received 3.0 or higher mean ratings in importance, using the same mean criterion, teachers described themselves as confident in teaching only five of these topics, and believe that students have had considerable opportunity to learn only one of these topics - national history.



In Sri Lanka 26 percent teachers rated five topics as not important /little important, with response percentages ranging from 16-26 in 2003; in 2017 also four of those topics have been identified as not important /little important. It is interesting to note that in 2017 the percentage that claimed that “equal opportunities for women and men” are not important has lessened while the percentage for “international organizations’ has increased. It is noteworthy that the topics that the teachers claimed as not important are among the topics rated by them as topics they were not at all / little confident to teach.

Some of the topics that teachers rated as not important / little important have not been included as separate topics in the syllabuses (Annexure 1). Migration of people, Dangers of propaganda and, Media are three such topics. In the present context both nationally and globally, all three topics are of critical significance, and should be incorporated in Civics syllabuses. The topics that teachers were not quite confident to teach should also be taken note of, by providers of Civics in-service for teachers.

The enhancement of the knowledge base of teachers by provision of supplementary source materials, in-service provision, to enable teachers critically examine these topics with students in Civics classrooms is suggested, to meet these felt needs of teachers.

### **Opportunities to learn the topics**

The responses of teachers on how much opportunity students have had to learn these topics up to and including Grade 9 indicate that some of these topics have either not been offered at all, or studied in a limited manner, depending on the spread of topics over the Grades 6 -11 in the secondary school curriculum and, the depth of treatment to suit students’ age ranges. In interpreting civic achievement, attitudes and behaviors indicated by 14 year olds in response to the student questionnaire, one needs to be cognizant of the opportunities students have had up to and including Grade 9 to engage in direct civic related learning of these topics.

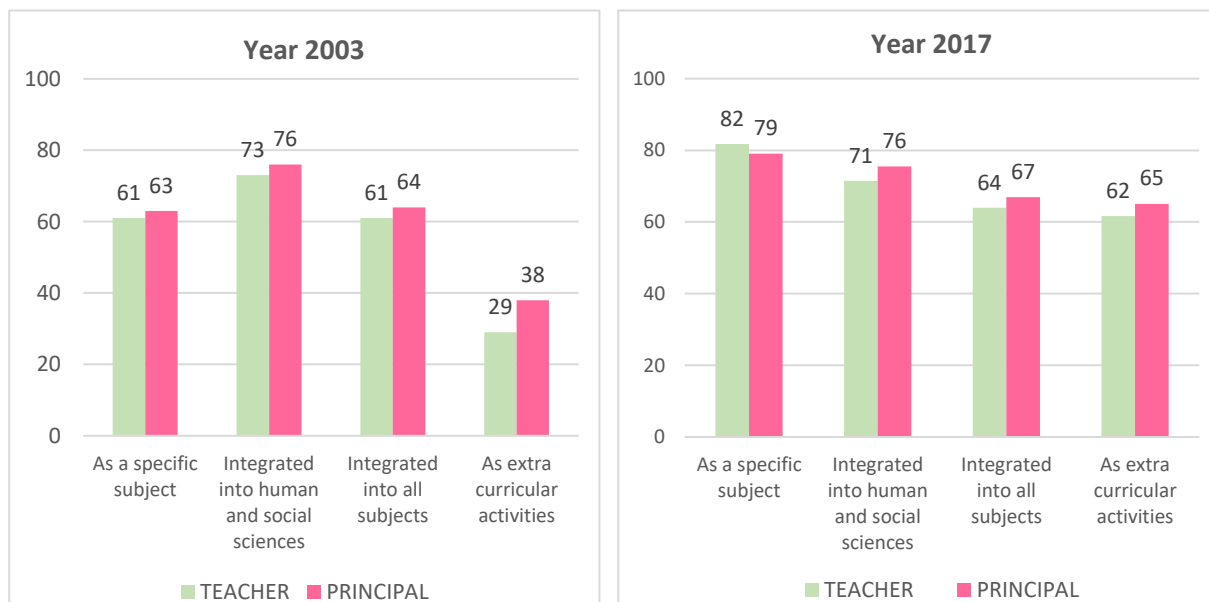
In 2003 teachers had claimed that students have had very little opportunity to learn most of the subjects. However, it is noteworthy that more than 50% of the teachers claim that there are considerable/very much opportunity to learn 10 topics. Of these citizens rights, human and civil rights and different conceptions of democracy top the list.

### 3.7 Teachers', principals' and students' views on different aspects of civic education

#### Models of teaching Civics

The questionnaires administered to teachers and principals asked them the question 'how should civic education be taught'. Should it be taught as a specific subject, integrated into subjects related to human and social sciences, integrated into all subjects in the school curriculum or, be an extra curricular activity? In the context of the curriculum decision already taken and will be implemented with effect from 2005, this question posed to teachers and principals in the respective questionnaires in 2003 may have seemed superfluous. Although in Sri Lanka curriculum decisions such as these are generally in the hands of policy and curriculum developers, it was a most appropriate question to pose, to teachers and principals who are the implementers of curriculum policy.

The data in Fig. 3.1 indicates the percentage responses of teachers and principals in the category Agree/Strongly agree to the 4 statements in Part II, Section A in the teacher questionnaire, and in question 12, in the principal questionnaire. This set of data is presented in Fig. 3.1.



**Fig. 3.1: Percentage responses of teachers and principals indicating how civic education should be taught – 2003 & 2017**

In 2003 when the study was conducted the students were taught Civics as an integrated subject. The teachers and principals seem to have considered the merits of each option offered and the widest possible exposure to be obtained for students in light of the complexity of the task at hand. The highest response in the combined response categories of strongly agree and agree, of both teachers and principals was for integrating civics education into some subjects related to human and social sciences, followed by a relatively high percentage of both teachers and principals also agreeing with an across the curriculum integration. With a history of Civics having being taught as an integrated subject since 1972, first integrated in Social Studies and subsequently as Social Studies and History, teachers and principals are apparently more comfortable with the teaching of civics as an integrated subject, and their responses are probably a reflection of the preference for the familiar.

However, the dissatisfaction with civic related student learning outcomes of the subject Social Studies may be reflected in the responses of teachers and principals indicating agreement with the statement that Civics should be taught as a specific subject. There is a felt need for curriculum focus on civic virtues and responsibilities in particular within the school system, with increasing truancy and violence on the part of students, no doubt a direct reflection of what significantly characterizes the social milieu outside the school.

In 2017 the grade nine students were taught Civics as a separate subject. According to Fig. 3.1 majority of the teachers and principals seem to be happy with this situation and they feel that Civics should be taught as a separate subject. However, there is also a high percentage of teachers and principals who think that Civics should be taught as an integrated subject.

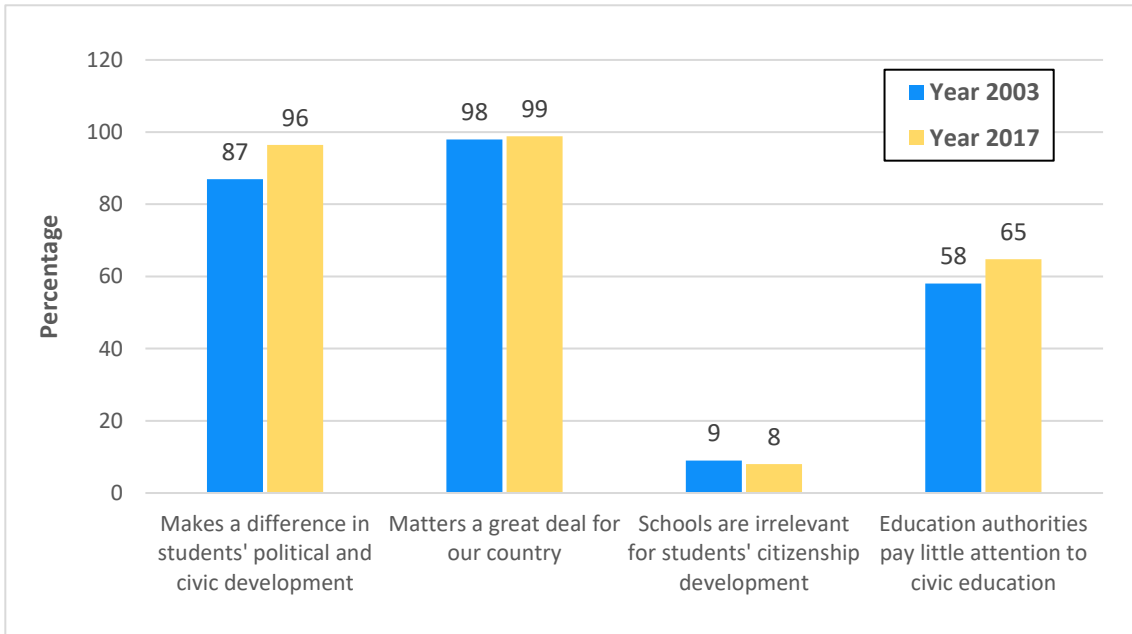
On the other hand the findings of the CIVED international study, the model that integrates civic education into other social sciences is the most popular among teachers. The report indicates that overall, the support for civic education as its own subject is overshadowed by teachers' support for the integration model. It is also commented on that generally, when respondents envision a place for civic education in the curriculum, they in some respects reflect the institutional status quo in their countries.

### **Teachers' perception on the importance of Civic Education**

In Section C of the teacher questionnaire, four statements probed teachers' perceptions on 'How much does civic education matter'. The percentage responses of teachers in the category Agree/Strongly agree in 2003 and 2017 is presented in Fig 3.2. There is very high consensus on the part of teachers that civic education in school matters a great deal for our country in 2003. This consensus is even more in 2017. They also endorse clearly in 2003 and 2017 that teaching civic education would make a difference in students' political and civic development by relatively high percentage responses in the combined category strongly agree/agree and, that school has an important role to play in citizenship education by indicating very high percentage disagreement with the negatively worded statement that schools are irrelevant for students' citizenship development.

Similarly, in summarizing the findings of this section in the CIVED study, the report states that fairly uniformly across countries, students are taught by teachers who strongly affirm that schools are places where civic education ought to be taught and can be taught effectively. For large proportions of respondents, civic education matters a great deal in facilitating students' civic development and teachers therefore fulfil an important role in their country.

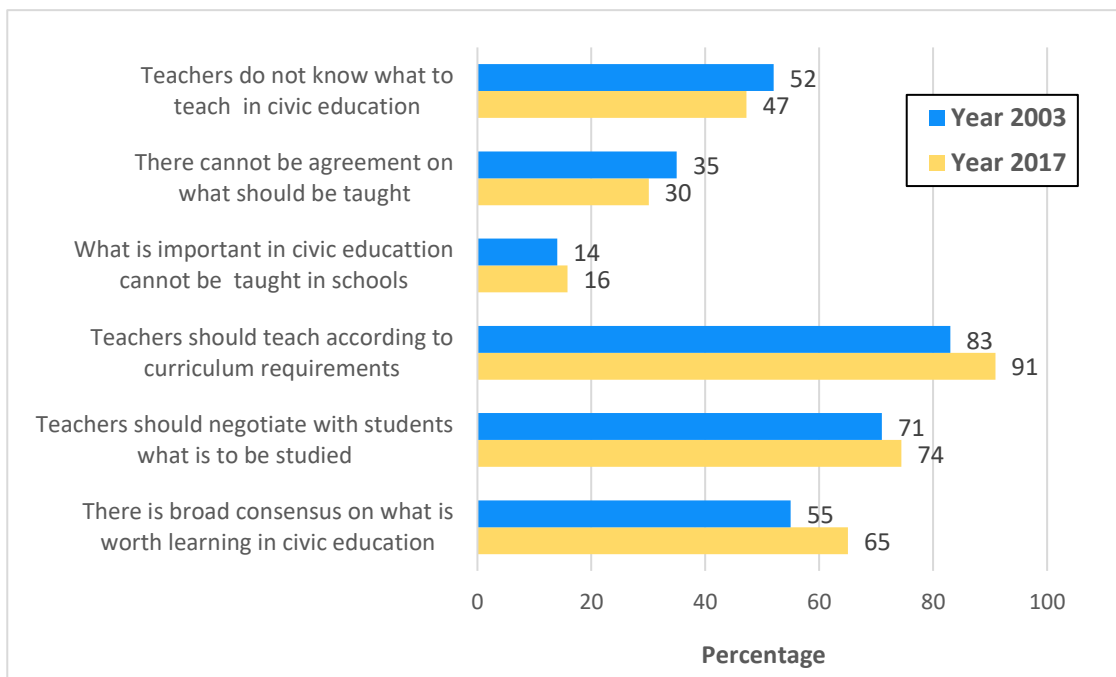
It is noteworthy that 58 percent (2003) and 65 percent (2017) teachers in Sri Lanka agree with the statement that education authorities pay little attention to civic education, indicating perhaps that more support is needed for the school system to forge ahead with this task of the school. It is significant that this percentage has increased in 2017, perhaps due to the fact that Civics is one of the category ('basket') subjects in grades 10 and 11.



**Fig. 3.2: Percentage responses of teachers indicating how much civic education matters**

### Civic content

In Part II Section B of the teacher questionnaire, teachers' opinions on 'What is worth learning in civic education' were solicited in response to six statements. Their responses in both years to these statements in the category Agree/Strongly agree are presented in Fig. 3.3.



**Fig. 3.3: Percentage responses of teachers indicating what is worth learning in civic education**

It is noteworthy that though in 2003 majority (52%) claimed that they do not know what to teach in Civic education, this percentage has dropped to 47% in 2007. Similarly, while in 2003 only 55% claimed that there is broad consensus on what is worth learning in Civic education in 2017 this percentage has increased to 65%. In both years majority of the teachers agree that there can be agreement on what should be taught and what is important in the subject can be taught in school. The percentage of teachers who favour of conforming to curriculum standards (B3), has increased in 2017. It is heartening to note that while in 2003, 71 percent agree that teachers should negotiate with students this percentage has increased to 74 in 2017. The message being communicated by teachers therefore is positive. They firmly believe that school has a role to play in students' civic education, and are willing to negotiate with students on what is to be studied in civic education, a very progressive outlook indeed.

Similarly, in the CIVED study, teachers tended to doubt societal consensus, but skepticism notwithstanding, they believe that agreement on what is worth learning is nevertheless possible. The great majority stress official curriculum as points of orientation, but this orientation does not stand in the way of teachers' willingness to negotiate with students over what is to be studied in civic education.

In Section L of the teacher questionnaire, a list of 15 skills, attitudes and goals for civic education 'that may be controversial' were presented, and teachers were asked to rate 'how important it is to you that students learn' these.

**Table 3.2: Percentage responses of teachers indicating how important it is to him/her as teacher, that students achieve these learning goals**

TQ	How important is it to teachers that students learn these skills, attitudes and goals	Never/ Sometimes (%)		Often/ Very Often (%)	
		2003	2017	2003	2017
L1	To recognize the value of our nation	7	3	93	97
L2	To criticize nationalism	73	72	27	28
L3	To follow the rules/ regulations	21	9	79	91
L4	To develop honesty	8	3	92	97
L5	To develop consciousness about the needs of the whole world	29	26	71	74
L6	To be aware of the dangers of technological progress	26	9	74	91
L7	To develop industriousness	8	7	92	93
L8	To fight against social injustice	39	34	61	66
L9	To recognize ones' own interest	23	15	77	85
L10	To accept conflict and make the best of it	25	18	75	82
L11	To develop orderliness	8	6	92	94
L12	To understand that civil disobedience is sometimes necessary to achieve better conditions	64	57	36	43
L13	To ensure opportunities for minorities to express their own culture	39	28	61	72
L14	To stand up for ones' opinion	39	31	61	69
L15	To strengthen national culture against foreign influence	35	23	65	77

In this list of 15 more or less generic civic goals for students, over 90 percent teacher responses in the combined category 'very often and often' were received for items 1, 4, 7 and 11 in both years. In addition, in 2017, 3 and 6 have also received over 90% responses. This trend indicates that teachers have realized the need of such values in the present context. Some of the more 'need of the hour' yet sensitive goals for students in Sri Lanka such as 'accept conflict and make the best of it' (L10), and to 'ensure opportunities for minorities to express their own culture' (L13), to 'fight against social injustice' (L8), to 'strengthen national culture against foreign influence' (L15) the response percentage of teachers has increased in 2017. On the other hand, 'to understand that civil disobedience is sometimes necessary to achieve better conditions' (L12), and 'to criticize nationalism' (L2) have perhaps been tempered with caution, for these have received lesser percentage responses from teachers. Only 27 and 28 percent teachers apparently consider even constructive criticism of nationalism an important civic education goal for students. Likewise, understanding that civil disobedience is necessary to achieve better conditions is favored by only 36 and 43 percent as an often-valued civic goal.

It is heartening to note, however, that percentage of responses to items L10 and L13 have increased in 2017, for these are two civic goals that need to be nurtured consciously in Sri Lanka. That is 'to accept conflict and make the best of it' and 'to ensure opportunities for minorities to express their own culture' the more pro-active and interventionist goals of 'to fight against social injustice' and 'to stand up for one's opinion' are among the items that have received relatively fewer response percentages of 66 and 69 percent respectively in 2017.

As in 2003, in 2017 as well, a percentage of teachers in their preference for civic skills, attitudes and goals for students seem to be exerting considerable caution and steering clear of the controversial or non-conventional goals that require taking a more proactive interventionist stand. In the present crucial socio political context in Sri Lanka however, students need to be guided to confront issues, analyze them objectively and draw their own conclusions. If teachers withdraw passively from enlightening and engaging students in objectively deliberating on burning issues, the student outcomes of civic education through school curriculum will only be superficial.

In Section F of the teacher questionnaire, teachers were presented a set of questions to be rated on a scale 'Strongly Disagree/Disagree/ Agree/ Strongly Agree', considering 'what students should learn to become good citizens. The same set of questions were presented to students in the student questionnaire, asking them to rate how important they believe each is, on a scale 'Not Important/Somewhat Unimportant/Somewhat Important/Very Important' respectively, for explaining what a good adult citizen is or does. The responses of teachers to this set of questions is presented relative to those of students, to assess what congruence there is between the two response sets.

Teachers' views on what students should learn to become good citizens may strongly influence civic education instruction. The value that teachers place on specific behaviors may translate into learning goals and objectives that teachers pursue in their classrooms. Some of these behaviors refer to conventional forms of political allegiance and participation while others imply a more activist stance.



The response patterns of teachers and students are mostly similar, with significantly fewer percentage responses in the two categories strongly disagree/disagree and, not important/somewhat unimportant, combined as composite categories respectively.

**Table 3.3: Percentage responses of teachers on what students should learn to be good adult citizens, relative to the comparable responses of students**

TQ_P_II_F: To be a good adult citizen students should learn to recognize the importance of		Strongly Disagree/Disagree				Strongly Agree/Agree			
SQ_P_IV_B: An adult who is a citizen		Not Important/Somewhat Unimportant				Very Important/Somewhat Important			
		TQ		SQ		TQ		SQ	
		2003	2017	2003	2017	2003	2017	2003	2017
F/B1	obeying the law	2	1	5	5	98	99	95	94
F/B2	voting in every election	12	7	11	10	88	91	89	80
F/B3	joining a political party	50	38	42	28	50	52	58	52
F/B4	working hard	6	4	6	9	59	94	94	85
F/B5	participating in a peaceful protest against a law believed to be unjust	23	25	30	23	77	68	70	65
F/B6	knowing about the country's history	3	3	7	6	97	95	93	86
F/B7	being willing to serve the country's military to defend the country	28	19	13	13	72	62	87	79
F/B8	reading about political issues in the newspaper, on radio or TV	3	2	9	9	97	95	91	86
F/B9	participating in activities to help people in society	1	2	7	7	99	96	93	87
F/B10	showing respect for government representatives	6	3	9	7	94	95	91	87
F/B11	taking part in activities promoting human rights	2	1	8	9	98	98	92	81
F/B12	engaging in political discussion	27	27	33	25	73	61	67	59
F/B13	taking part in activities to protect the environment	1	2	6	5	99	98	94	91
F/B14	being patriotic and loyal to the country	16	4	24	13	84	93	76	74
F/B15	ignoring/ disregarding a law that violated human rights	56	52	35	32	44	36	65	50

In 2003 difference in agreement between teachers and students to most of these items ranges between 2 to 8 percentage points. In 2017 this difference is between 1-10. The lowest agreement is with items 7 and 15 in 2003 to which the difference in agreement was 15 and 21 percentage points respectively. In 2017 the disagreement for Item 7 has been reduced to a difference of 6. Being willing to join the country's military to defend the country (B/F7) seems to have appealed more to 14 year olds than to their teachers in 2003. The negatively worded statement in B/F15 is rejected by more teachers than students in both 2003 and 2017 with a difference of 21 and 20. However, it is a cause for concern that 36 percent of teachers even in 2017 consider it important that students, to be good citizens, should learn to recognize the importance of ignoring a law that violated human rights! A disturbing trend in the 2017 findings is that while the teachers percentage of responses to B11, 'taking part in activities promoting human rights' has not changed significantly percentage of student responses has declined from 92 to 81. On the other hand, teachers' response percentage to B14 'being patriotic and loyal to the country' has increased, which is a positive trend, students responses have declined slightly and there is a gap of nearly 20 points between teachers and students' responses.

In the international study, there was nearly unanimous approval among teachers across all countries for 'knowing about the country's history', with lesser importance given to history by students than teachers. Both students and teachers give priority to 'the importance of obedience to the law', 'protecting the environment' and 'promoting human rights'. 'Joining a political party' is the item universally perceived as least important among the 15 choices, by teachers and students. Responses to 'willingness to serve the military to defend the country' differ among countries.

**Table 3.4: Percentage responses of students, teachers and principals on what students learn in school**

<b>SQ_P_IV_K:</b> In school I have learned <b>TQ_P_II_E:</b> In our school our students learn <b>PQ_Q13:</b> Students in this school learn		Strongly Disagree/Disagree (%)						Agree/Strongly Agree (%)					
		Student		Teacher		Principal		Student		Teacher		Principal	
		2003	2017	2003	2017	2003	2017	2003	2017	2003	2017	2003	2017
1	to understand people who have different ideas/point of view	17	20	18	5	4	5	83	73	82	95	96	91
2	to cooperate in groups with other students	5	7	5	2	1	2	95	89	95	98	99	98
3	to contribute to solve problems in society	13	12	21	11	11	11	87	80	79	89	89	85
4	to be patriotic and loyal citizens of the country	7	7	13	2	3	6	93	88	87	98	97	93
5	how to act to protect the environment	6	7	6	4	3	6	94	86	94	96	97	93
6	to be concerned about what happens to other countries	14	13	14	13	10	14	86	77	86	87	90	81
7	about the importance of voting national and local elections	21	17	17	5	18	10	79	69	83	95	82	84

A set of 7 statements were presented to all three categories of stakeholders, students, teachers and principals respectively, soliciting their opinions on what students learn in school. In the 2003 study, a very high consensus is noted in the responses of all three groups indicating that in school students learn to work together in groups with other students and, how to act to protect the environment. The composite responses of all three groups to each of these items, in the combined category agree/strongly agree is 96 and 95 percent respectively. A percentage of both students and teachers strongly disagree/disagree that in school students learn to understand people who have different ideas/points of view, to contribute to solve problems in society and, to be concerned about what happens to other countries; the teachers and students composite response to these three statements in the combined category strongly disagree/disagree is 18, 17, 13 percent

respectively. The principals seem to be relatively more idealistic in their responses to most items in this set, indicating the highest percentage agreement to almost all statements.

However, in the 2017 study there is closer agreement between teachers and principals but a lesser agreement between them and teachers. A disturbing trend is that 20 percent of students disagree that they should consider other peoples' point of view.

The responses of teachers to these items are very similar, in the international CIVED study. When asked to assess specific attitudes and skills that make up civic education instruction, the majority of teachers attest to their own effectiveness. They agree that students learn to understand people, to cooperate, to solve problems, to protect the environment, to develop concern about the country and to know the importance of voting.

In Sri Lanka, the students' disagreement with the statement that in school students learn about the importance of voting in national and local elections, is recorded by 21 percent, in 2003 but has declined to 17% in 2017 in the combined category strongly disagree/disagree. In response to item B2 in 2003, 11 percent of students considered 'voting in every election' as not important/somewhat unimportant for a good adult citizen and in 2017 this percentage is reduced to 10.

### **3.8 Classroom context of civic education**

Part 3 of the teacher questionnaire probed the classroom learning teaching context. Teachers were asked how they plan for civic education, from what sources they draw, how often the different activities listed are used in their classes, how they assess students and, what in their view needs to be improved about civic education in their school.

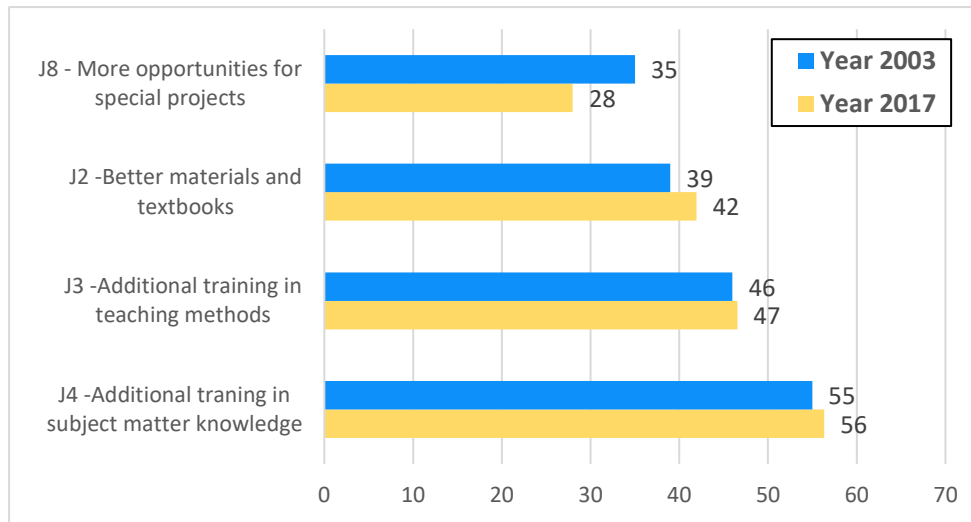
**Table 3.5: Percentage responses of teachers indicating from what sources they draw in planning for civic education**

TQ_PII_G	How do you plan for Civic Ed? From what sources do you draw?	Not Important/ Less Important (%)		Important/ Very Important (%)	
		2003	2017	2003	2017
G1	Official curricula or curricula guidelines or framework	3	2	97	98
G2	Official requirement in the area of Civic education	5	4	95	96
G3	Your own ideas of what is important to know in civic education	7	2	93	98
G4	Original sources	6	11	94	89
G5	approved text books	5	1	95	99
G6	Materials published by commercial companies ,public institutes or private foundations	36	10	64	90
G7	Self-produced materials	6	8	94	92

When considering Table 3.5, there is not much difference between the responses in 2003 and 2017. However, when compared to 2003 a higher percentage (90) claim that they use materials published by commercial companies, public institutes or private foundations. In Sri Lanka, what is important to know is very much curriculum and syllabus delineated and extending students' learning to incorporate a wider sweep of civic related issues, facilitate skills and attitude development is the challenge for the school and teachers. In the international CIVED study findings, it is reported that the extent to which teachers draw from externally generated materials (official curriculum and textbooks) and, from internally generated materials (teachers' own ideas, self-generated materials) is in balance.

### **Teachers' needs**

Teachers were requested to indicate the three most needed improvements from among those listed. The three need areas teachers prioritized were additional training in subject matter knowledge and teaching methods, better materials and textbooks.

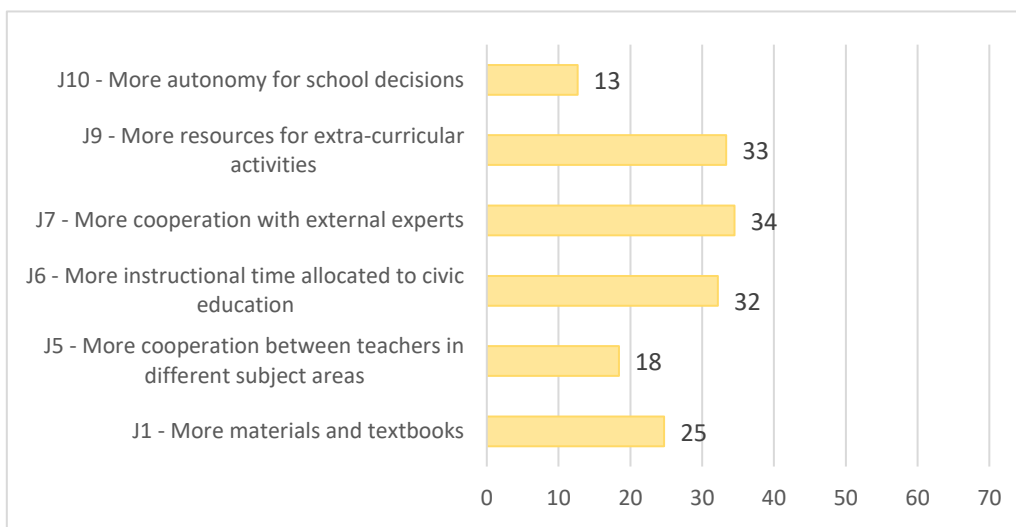


**Fig. 3.4: Teachers' responses on what needs to be improved about civic education in their schools (2003 & 2017)**

The responses of teachers regarding their priority needs are quite similar in 2003 and 2017. However, in 2017 percentage of responses for special projects has declined and the percentage for more cooperation with experts and more time for teaching has increased.

In the CIVED study, the top ranked needs indicated by teachers encompassed 'better materials and textbooks' followed by 'additional training in content' and 'more time for instruction'. Thus in many countries, teachers' more urgent needs refer to core activities of the subject, and more strongly to concerns relating to content than to instructional methods.

Fig. 3.5 indicates the other needs of teachers.



**Fig. 3.5: Teachers' responses on what needs to be improved about civic education in their schools – Year 2017**

It is noteworthy that in Sri Lanka, in 2003 only 14 percent teachers has selected ‘more autonomy for school decisions’ as a need area, although local variations within the national Curricula are possible and school projects are an innovative feature introduced by the system. Approximately a third of the teachers have indicated the need for more opportunities for special projects, more resources for extra curricular activities and more cooperation among teachers in different subject areas.

On the other hand, in 2017 teachers’ response to ‘more autonomy’ is even less (13%). For civics education to be meaningful experiential learning, the adoption of inter disciplinary approaches, pooling of teacher resources, conduct of projects and extra curricular activities, cooperation with external experts should be encouraged.

In order to check whether teachers’ needs are similar to Principals’ needs the same question was asked in the Principals’ questionnaire. The responses are given in Table 3.6 and 3.7.

**Table 3.6: Percentage responses of Principals on effects of shortages/inadequacies on civic education – Year 2003**

PQ_19	How much is the school affected by shortage / inadequacy of:	Not at all %	A little %	Some %	A lot %
A	Instructional materials (e.g. text books)	-	18	64	18
B	School buildings and grounds	3	44	42	11
C	Library infrastructure and audio-visual resources	11	25	52	12
D	Teachers trained specially for civic education (related subjects)	14	22	55	9

**Table 3.7: Percentage responses of Principals on effects of shortages/inadequacies on civic education – Year 2017**

PQ_19	How much is the school affected by shortage / inadequacy of:	Not at all %	A little %	A lot %
1	Text books	58	39	3
2	Teacher instructional manuals	38	55	7
3	School building and ground	19	45	36
4	Library infrastructure and audio visual resources	19	54	27
5	Computer resources	31	47	23

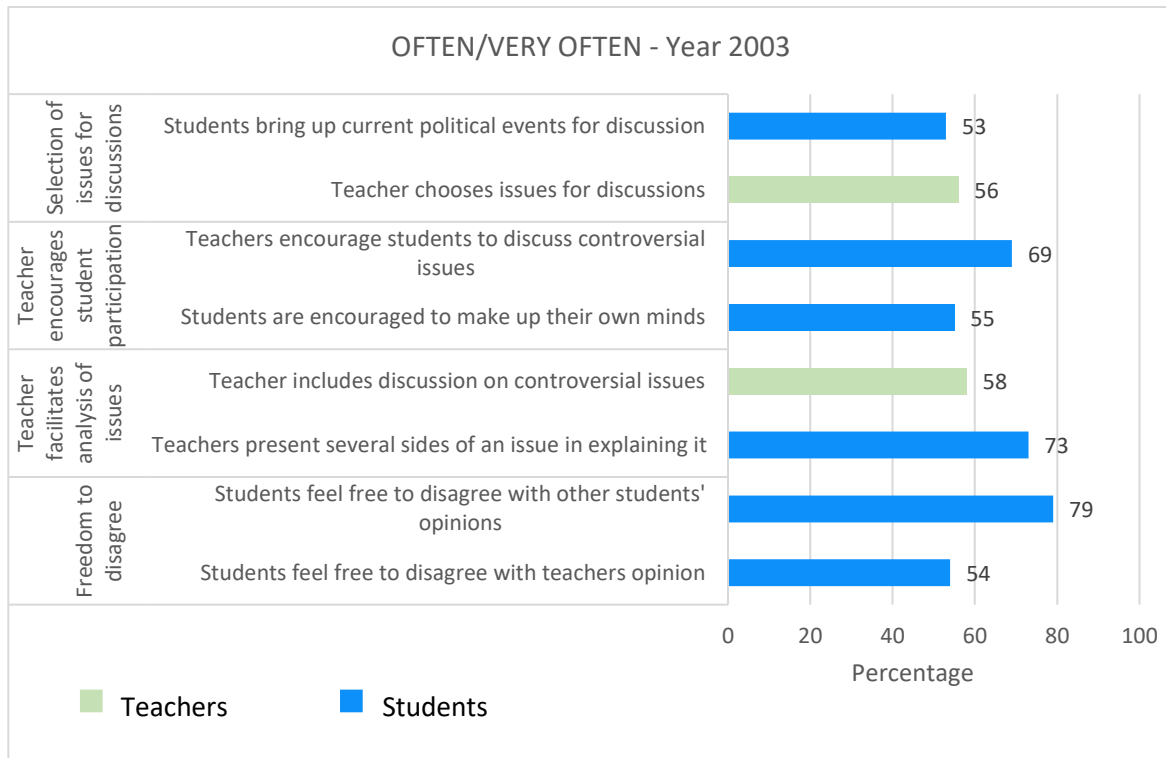
A majority (82 percent) of the Principals in 2003 (Table 3.6) on their part indicate that the school is affected some / a lot by shortage / inadequacy of instructional manuals for civic education. Their second pressing needs had been teachers trained and library and audio visual resources. However, in response to Q.No. 6 in the principal questionnaire, 97 percent of the principals did indicate that in their schools, there were teachers who have specialized in a civic related subject.

In the 2017 questionnaire instead of teachers trained computer resources have been included. The principals still claim that there biggest need is school buildings, library and audio visual resources.

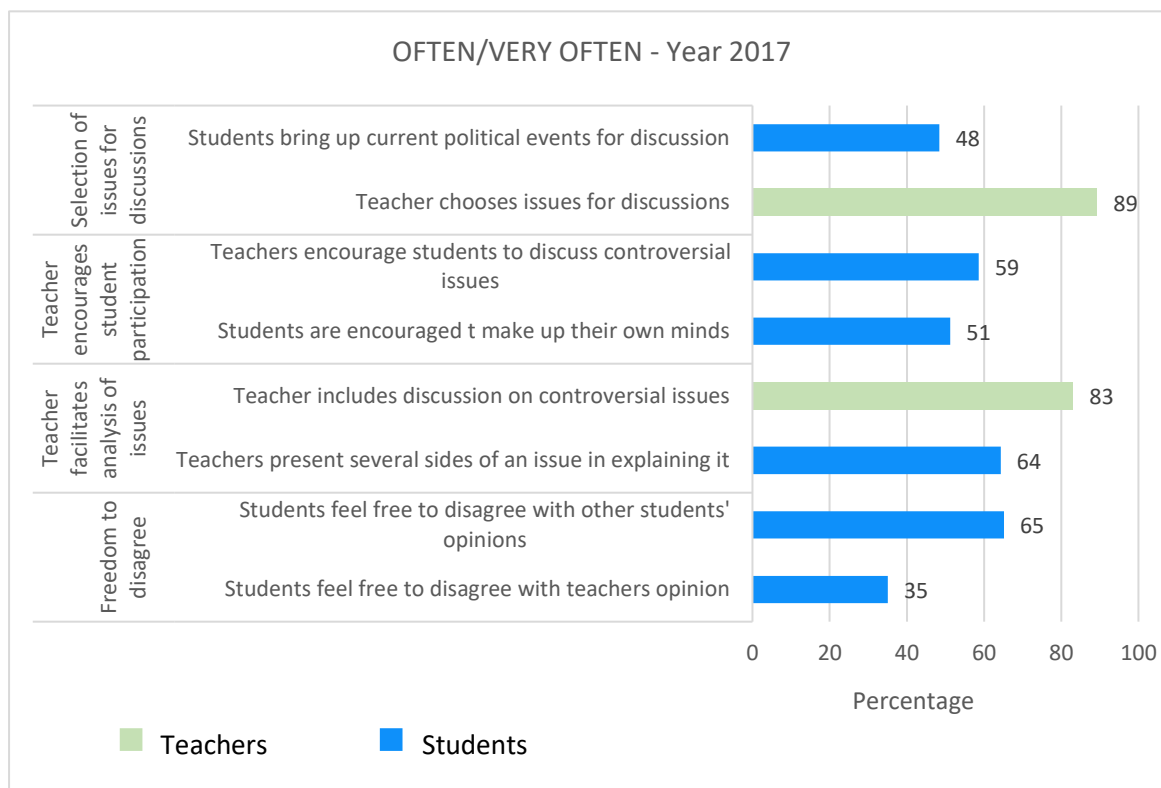
### **3.9 Climate of the classroom**

In the student questionnaire Section N: Classrooms - was designed to obtain a measure of the climate of the classroom for student participation. How democratic was the climate of the classroom? Did students have the freedom to discuss freely political and social issues, even of a controversial nature? Could they bring issues up for discussion in class, express opinions freely even if different from those held by other students and, teachers? Some of these statements were presented to teachers as well, in Section I in the teacher questionnaire, soliciting their responses on how often these activities were used in their classrooms. In the analysis that follows, the responses to these data sets in the two questionnaires, presented in Fig. 3.6 & 3.7 are triangulated.





**Fig. 3.6: Classroom climate in the perception of students and teachers – 2003**

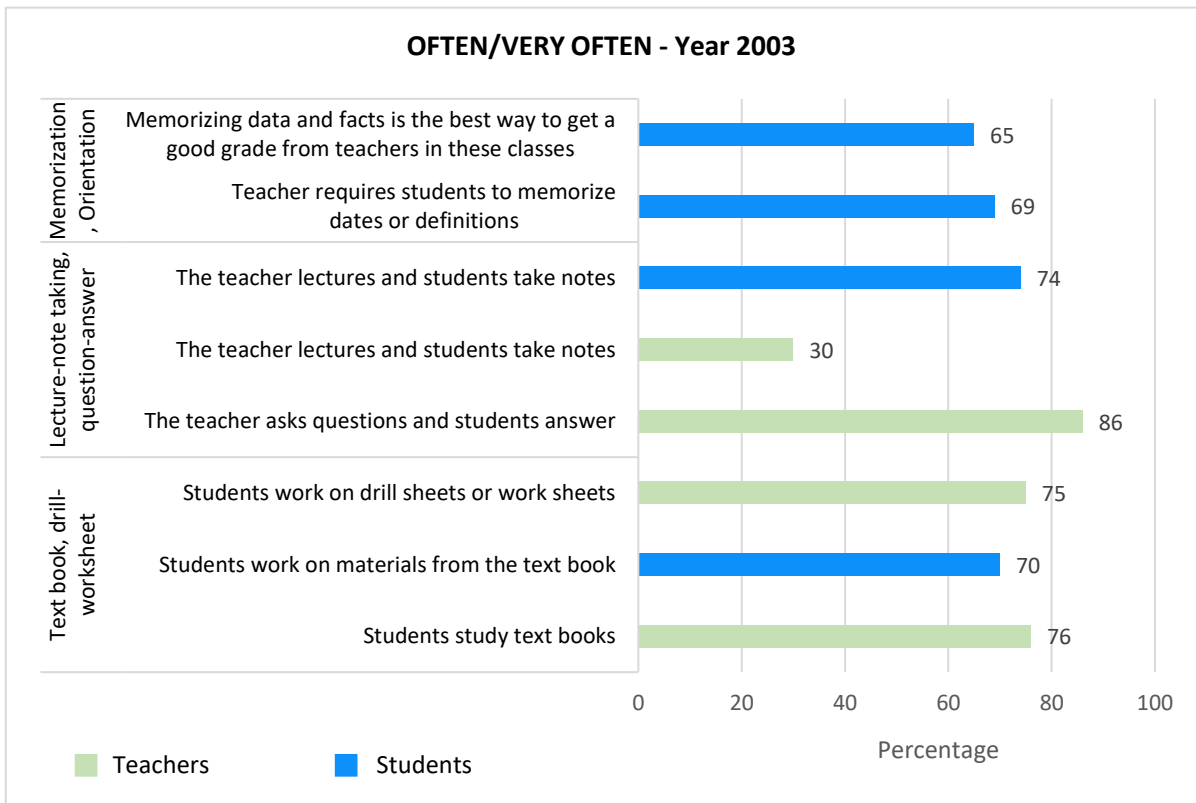


**Fig. 3.7: Classroom climate in the perception of students and teachers – 2017**

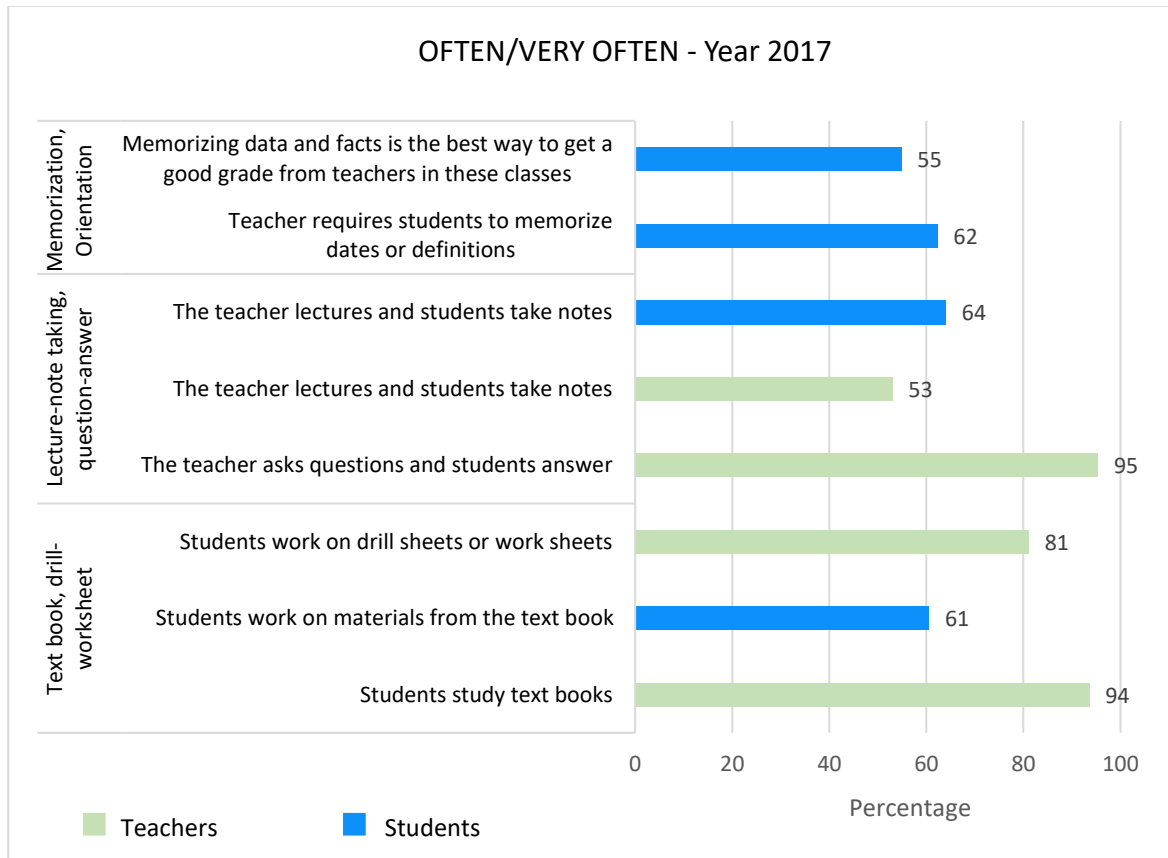
Classroom learning teaching climate for civic education, in the perception of both students and teachers, is democratic. Students have the freedom to bring up current political events for discussion in class. Teachers encourage students to discuss and to make up their own minds about controversial political and social issues. To enable this, teachers initiate discussion on controversial issues and present several sides of an issue when explaining it in class. However, students are somewhat reluctant to openly disagree with teachers about political and social issues whereas they feel relatively more secure to express their opinions even when differing from those of most of the other students. This is understandable, given the teacher-pupil relationship based on deference to teachers on the part of students, a value that is culturally ingrained.

### **3.9.1 Learning teaching methodologies and activities**

In Part 4 of the teacher questionnaire on Instruction, in Section I, ten activities were listed, and teachers asked to indicate how often these activities were used in their classrooms. Similarly, in Section N of the student questionnaire on Classrooms, twelve statements were presented among which were included some of the activities listed in the teacher questionnaire. The responses of teachers and students to items indicating activities used in civic education (Social Studies and History) classrooms are presented in Fig. 3.8 and 3.9. The teacher responses in the combined category Often/Very often, and student responses in the combined category Sometimes/Often have been clustered in three broad sets; activities focused on textbooks, drill and worksheets, on lecture-note taking and question-answer routines, memorization oriented activities.



**Fig. 3.8: Activities used in civic education classrooms as reported by students and teachers – 2003**

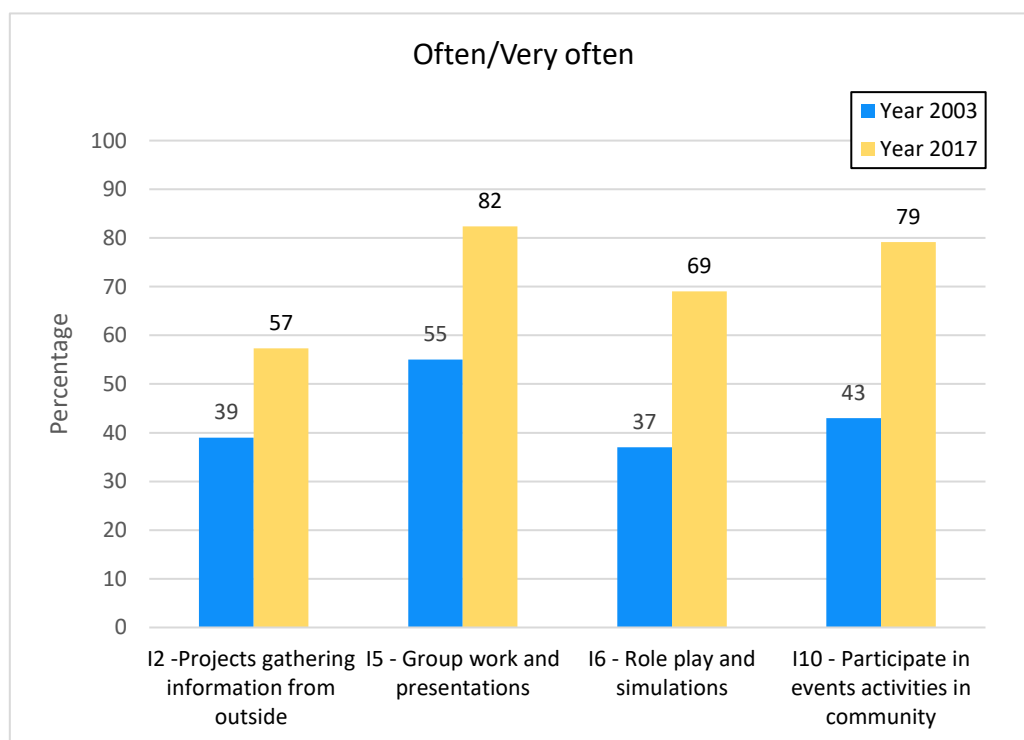


**Fig. 3.9: Activities used in civic education classrooms as reported by students and teachers - 2017**

The activities often used in classrooms are the question answer routines commonly encountered, the lecture note taking routines although only 30 percent of the teachers in 2003 acknowledged that they lecture and give notes, whereas more than 70 percent of the students say that this routine takes place, studying and working on materials from the textbook, on drill and work sheets. In addition, students have indicated that teachers expect students to memorize dates and definitions. In 2017 while the teachers claim that 53% of teachers lecture, 64% of students claim that teachers use lecture method. The conclusion that can be drawn therefore is that the classroom continues to be teacher and didactic teaching focused than learner initiated, inquiry based learning focused.

### 3.9.2 Inquiry based and student interactive approaches

In the teacher questionnaire, four activities that promote inquiry based student interaction oriented classroom learning were listed, and teacher response percentages to these items in the combined category Often/Very often are presented in Fig. 3.10.



**Fig. 3.10: Inquiry based and student interactive approaches used in classrooms as reported by teachers**

It is noteworthy that in 2017 the percentage responses are significantly higher for all the activities listed. By working on projects, participating in events or activities in the community, taking part in role-play and simulations, student learning becomes more meaningful and experiential. For civic education, these and other inquiry and experiential learning approaches are more appropriate than the traditional teaching focused methodologies.

However, the findings in the international study in 26 of the 28 countries, there is evidence of a preponderance of teacher-centered formats. A combination of textbooks with recitation and sometimes worksheets is used with the highest frequency. In some of the countries, students are also taught using group work. Across countries teachers testify to a fairly frequent occurrence of discussions of controversial issues in their civic education classrooms, and a far less frequent occurrence for role-plays and projects.

### **Assessment methods**

To assess civic related subject learning outcomes, teachers use multiple-choice tests, oral and other forms of assessments. The evaluation of the system of School Based Assessment at level of implementation has focused on the somewhat routine and mechanical fulfillment of SBA requirements by teachers. The use of inquiry based and student interactive approaches to learning would challenge teachers to assess students' learning outcomes using more innovative and diagnostic methods of assessment. Across the countries in the CIVED study too, the most common form of assessment is a combination of written composition and oral participation, with multiple choice tests a popular feature in some of the countries.

**Table 3.8: Percentage responses of teachers on use of different methods of assessments**

<b>TQ_P_IV_K - How do you assess students</b>	<b>2003 (%)</b>	<b>2017 (%)</b>
K1 - Written compositions or essays	31	47
K2 - Multiple choice tests	56	52
K3 - Oral assessments	42	51
K4 - Oral participation	30	50
K5 - Other forms of assessments	41	34
K6 - No specific assessments	4	9

Compared to 2003 in 2017 the oral and written assessments have increased while other forms of assessments have declined. It is also disturbing to note that 9% of the teachers claim that ‘no specific assessments’ are used.

### 3.10 The climate of the school

The climate of the school in general would impact significantly on students’ civic education through all formal, informal processes transacted in the life of the school. A measure of the climate of the school could be obtained from student responses to statements in Section J: School, in the student questionnaire; seven statements on students’ participation in school life were listed and the respondents were asked to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with each. Table 3.9 presents the responses of students to these seven items.

**Table 3.9: Perceptions of students on their own participation in school life**

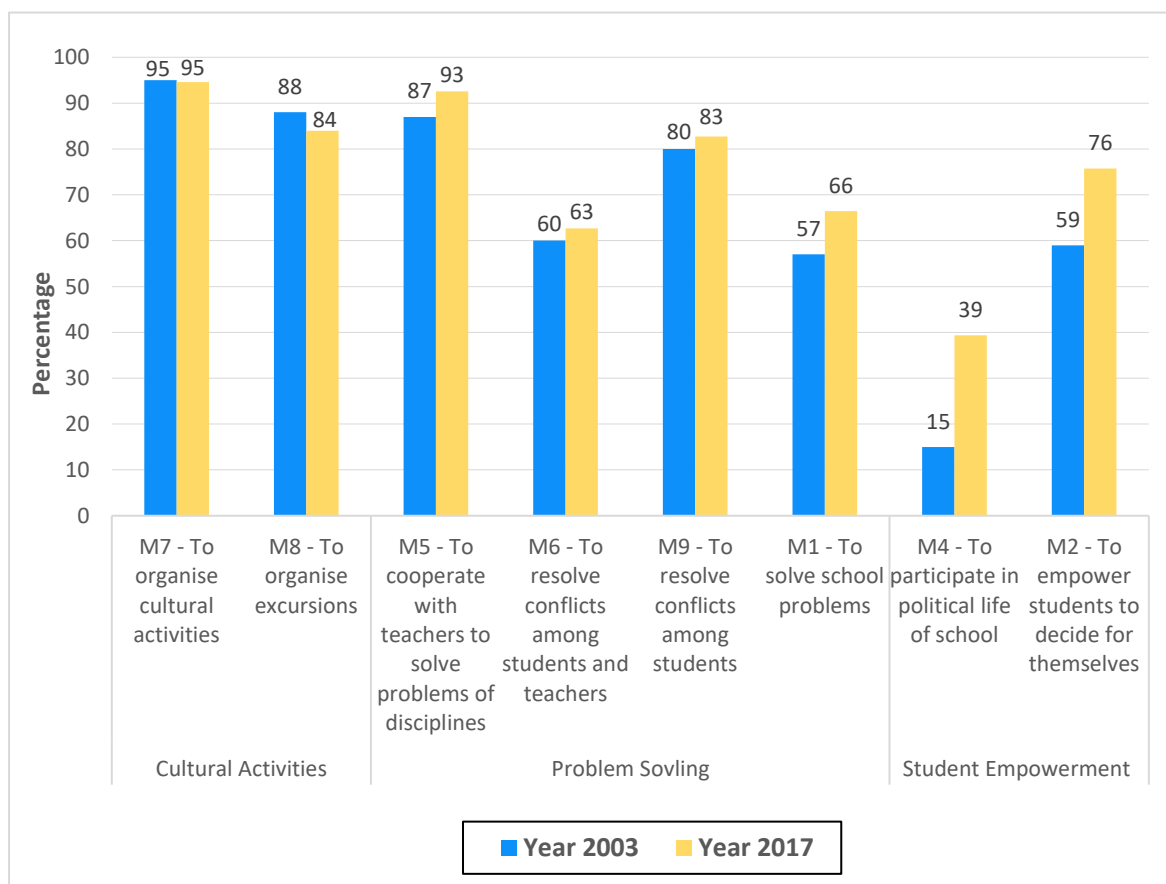
SQ_ Part-IV_J	Strongly Disagree/ Disagree (%)		Agree/Strongly Agree (%)	
	2003	2017	2003	2017
J1 - Electing student representatives to suggest changes in how to solve school problems makes school better	12	12	88	81
J2 - Lots of positive changes happen in this school when students work together	11	9	89	85
J3 - Organizing groups of students to state their opinion could help solve problems in this school	10	10	90	83
J4- Students acting in groups can have more influence on what happens in this school than students acting alone	13	15	87	74
J5 - I am interested in participating in discussions about school problems	10	15	90	77
J6 - If members of my class felt they were unfairly treated, I would be willing to go with the to speak to the teacher	9	12	91	78
J7 - When school problems are being discussed I usually have something to say	12	15	88	71

Student perceptions were solicited on the effectiveness of student participation in school affairs such as in contributing to solve school problems, in bringing about positive changes, in claiming student rights. How inclined they were to participate actively in school affairs, and how secure they felt to do so could be gauged from the responses of students to these items. Student responses to all the statements in this data set were positive in both years with even an improvement in 2017.

### 3.10.1 The function of student assemblies in schools

Whether the school had a formal institutionalized structure to enlist such student participation in the conduct of the school’s affairs was investigated by a data set, Section M in the teacher questionnaire. Teachers were asked what the function is, of student assemblies in their schools?

The responses of teachers to the items listed have been grouped into three broad clusters - cultural activities, problem solving and student empowerment.



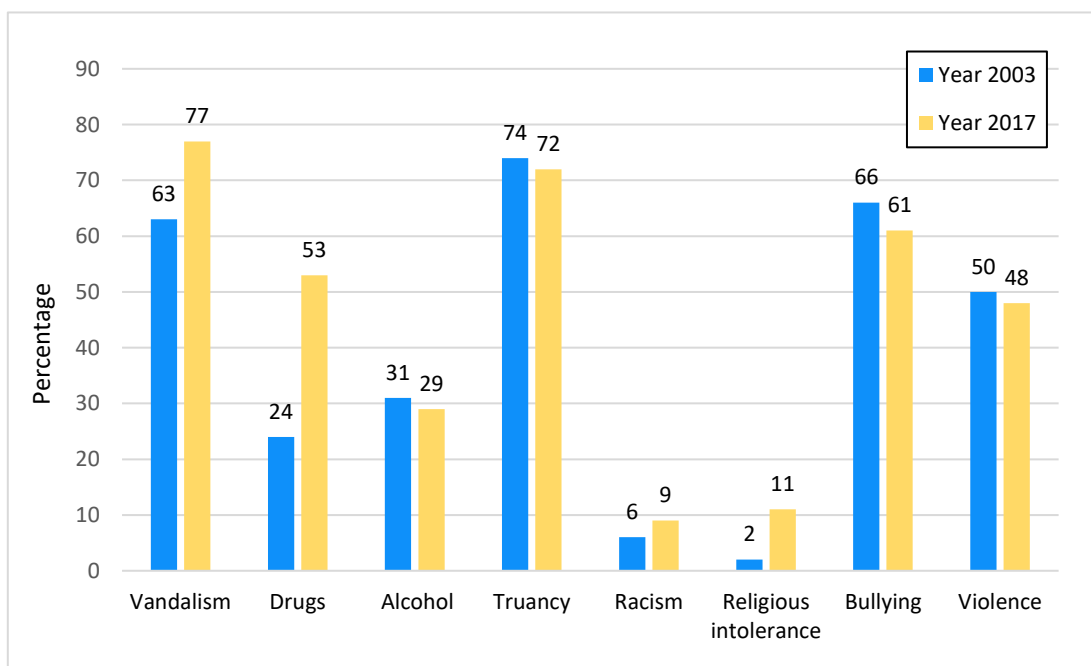
**Fig. 3.11: Function of student assemblies in schools**

It is noteworthy that compared to 2003, in 2017 function of school assemblies has increased. Even participation in the political life of the school is which was considered a function of school assemblies by only 15 percent of the teachers has increased to 40%. However, even with escalating indiscipline and school violence, the percentage of teacher responses regarding student assemblies being called upon to cooperate with teachers to solve problems of discipline has declined.

### 3.10.2 How civic conscious are students as school citizens?

In the school questionnaire, item 15 listed eight negative behaviors and, the principals were asked to indicate how frequently each of these occur in their schools. Responding to this item, in 2003, 74, 66, 63 and 50 percent of the principals reported that truancy, bullying, vandalism and violence respectively occurs sometimes in their schools.

On the other hand, in 2017 truancy percentage has declined. But 77, 72, 61 and 53 percent principals claim that vandalism, Racism, bullying and use of drugs respectively occur sometimes in their schools. This is a very sad situation and the incidents may be interconnected.



**Fig. 3.12: Percentage responses of principals indicating the frequency of student negative behaviours in school**



Making provision for student participation in the political life of the school in a responsible and accountable manner than the minimal participation indicated by 15 per cent responses to item M4 in the teacher questionnaire in 2003, accompanied by empowerment of students to decide for themselves (M2), which is reported by 59 percent of the teachers as one of the functions of student assemblies, may facilitate schools transform into democratic institutions promoting self-governance on the part of students. The opportunities schools provide for meaningful participation, self-government and respect for rights are among the factors potentially influencing students' attitudes and behaviors, as school citizens and, of society outside. In addressing student negative behaviors reported by principals in response to item 18 in the principal questionnaire for example, students' active participation as responsible members of the school community, to bring pressure on peers who engage in these deviant behaviors has proven to be effective. Therefore it is noteworthy that teachers' positive responses to all statements have increased except in M8 in 2017.

### **3.11 Summary**

This chapter commenced with a brief overview of the civic related subject teaching in the including the curriculum content in the National Education System in Sri Lanka.

In Sri Lanka 26 percent of teachers rated five topics as not important /little important, with response percentages ranging from 26-14 in 2003; in 2017 also four of those topics have been identified as not important/little important. It is interesting to note that in 2017 the percentage that claimed that "equal opportunities for women and men" as no important has lessened while the percentage for 'international organizations' has increased. It is noteworthy that the topics that the teachers claimed as not important are among the topics rated by them as topics they were not at all / little confident to teach.

Some of the topics that teachers rated as not important / little important have not been included as separate topics in the syllabuses. Migrations of people, Dangers of propaganda and, Media are three such topics. In 2003 teachers had claimed that students have had very little opportunity to learn most of the subjects. However, it is noteworthy that more than 50% of the teachers claim that there are considerable/very much opportunity to learn

10 topics. Of these citizens' rights, human and civil rights and different conceptions of democracy tops the list. Therefore, the new syllabus appears to cater to more opportunities to gain Civics knowledge.

Which model to be chosen to teach Civic education was also queried. In 2017 the grade nine students were taught Civics as a separate subject. According to Fig.3.1 Majority of the teachers and Principals seem to be happy with this situation and they feel that Civics should be taught as a separate subject. However, there are also a high percentage of teachers and principals who think that Civics should be taught as an integrated subject. This is in line with the findings of the International study on Civic education.

There is very high consensus on the part of teachers in both 2003 and 2017 that civic education in school matters a great deal for our country. They also endorse clearly both in 2003 and 2017 that teaching civic education would make a difference in students' political and civic development by relatively high percentage responses in the combined category strongly agree/agree and, that school has an important role to play in citizenship education.

In this list of 15 more or less generic civic goals for students, teacher responses indicate that teachers have realized the need of such values in the present context. Some of the more 'need of the hour' yet sensitive goals for students in Sri Lanka such as 'accept conflict and make the best of it' and to 'ensure opportunities for minorities to express their own culture' to 'fight against social injustice', to 'strengthen national culture against foreign influence' the response percentage of teachers has increased in 2017.

However, the activities often used in classrooms in 2003 are the question answer routines commonly encountered, the lecture note taking routines - although only 30 percent of the teachers acknowledge that they lecture and give notes, more than 70 percent of the students say that this routine takes place, studying and working on materials from the textbook, on drill and work sheets. In addition, students have indicated that teachers expect students to memorize dates and definitions. In 2017 there isn't much difference with 64% of students still claiming teachers use lecture method. The conclusion that can

be drawn therefore is that the classroom continues to be teacher and didactic teaching focused than learner initiated, inquiry based learning focused.

A disturbing finding in the report regarding the school context is that compared to 2003 there is an increase in schools of incidents of vandalism, Racism, bullying and use of drugs. More than 50% of the principals claim that such incidents occur in their schools sometimes.

