

Decentralization of Authority on Resource Management: Experiences of Government Schools in Sri Lanka

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The Ministry of Education of Sri Lanka has made several steps to decentralize their authority to the schools. The Programme for School Improvement (PSI) was implemented in 2006 by providing more autonomy and authority to schools. Effective resource management is one of the key aspects of this programme. Therefore, this study aimed to investigate the experiences of School Development Committee members on resource management within the framework of authority that they have been given. A case study approach was used in this study. As data collection methods; document survey, interviews and informal discussions were employed. Participants were selected purposively; the sample included principals, teachers, past pupils and nine parents from three selected schools. Thematic analysis was used for analysing data in this study. It was revealed that the schools have been provided freedom on making decisions on human resources, physical resources, time and also financial management. However, the majority of schools are utilizing authority maximum for finding physical and financial resources while paying less attention on human resource development. Unless the government provides sufficient amount of resources to the schools, they definitely are compelled to make strategies to find resources for their development. Even though the schools have been provided autonomy and authority in finding resources, it seems that some schools do not make many efforts on that. The majority of principals indicated that the bad experience in handling financial resources within this contradictory framework of rules and regulations as the main reason for that. The community support is very less in some schools though the schools are supposed to generate resources. However, the majority of schools are successful in finding resources while other schools are suffering due to less commitment of their partners. It is recommended that a change of the existing rules and regulation is needed for effective utilization of school autonomy on resource management. However, a very

strong supervisory system is needed to support schools in implementing PSI policy regulations.

Key words: *Authority, Decentralization, Programme for School Improvement, Resources.*