THE BACKGROUND AND NEW TRENDS IN IMPLEMENTING SCHOOL BASED MANAGEMENT SYSTEM AS A SCHOOL GOVERNING MODEL IN SRI LANKA: LESSONS FROM SRI LANKAN SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

The policy implementers in Sri Lanka introduced 'School Based Management' (SBM) system, the Sri Lankan version of 'Programme for School Improvement' (PSI) for enhancing the quality of administration of government schools in Sri Lanka in 2006. The main focus of this programme is to enhance the quality of government school management. Therefore, this study aimed to investigate the experiences of SDC members on the implementation of SBM. The research site is government schools in the Colombo district. The main research problem is: what is the background and new trends in implementing the PSI in the Sri Lankan government schools? And the specific objectives of the study are: identify the nature of implementation of the PSI; examine the perception of the community members on the implementation of the PSI; and recognize challenges faced by stakeholders in implementing the PSI in the government schools in Sri Lanka. This study used qualitative inquiry, and a multiple case study approach was appropriate to study the main research problem. Purposive sampling technique was employed to select participants in this study. In order to gather data from participants; mainly semi-structured interviews and document survey were employed. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data. The findings of this study revealed that the SDC members do not have a proper understanding of school management. There isn't high-quality participation and sufficient contribution of stakeholders for school development. Schools do not completely follow guidelines issued by the MoESL, when selecting their SDC members. The collaborative decision-making process is not being implemented in the majority of schools. Schools have not been provided maximum authority to make decisions. The government does not provide adequate facilities and resources to schools. Schools have not identified importance of SBTD and its relationship with education development. There is no higher-level supervisory board or monitoring system at ministry. Many opportunities have been opened for outside community members to be involved in school management. Schools have some autonomy for decision making. However, it seems that schools in this study are not completely implementing all the characteristics of the original version of SBM yet.

Keywords:- *Decentralization, Decision Making, School Management, Participatory Management, Programme for School Improvement, School Based Management*

1   INTRODUCTION

Before the implementation of the School Based Management (SBM) as the Programme for School Improvement (PSI) in Sri Lanka, most of the decisions associated with the school activities were made by the principal of the government schools. Although government schools had School Management Committees, most of the members of the committee did not get themselves involved in the decision-making process. They did not concern of their responsibility in making important decisions related to the school activities (Perera, 1998; Fernando, 1986). Hence, there were many issues related to management, and there was a lot of criticism against the school management (Perera & Palihkkara, 1997). As a solution to this problem, the Ministry of Education in Sri Lanka

(MOESL) implemented the Programme of School Improvement (PSI) in the government schools in Sri Lanka (MoESL, 2005; NECSL, 2003).

Implementing the PSI initiatives, it was expected to be established a very close relationship with the community members of the school, and in order to develop school management system, School Development Committee (SDC) and School Management Committee (SMC) were set up as the main decision-making bodies in schools. The SDC members are responsible for preparing school policy, setting out mission, objectives, strategies, and all key school decisions. Stakeholders are supposed to be involved in preparing school development plans, annual plans, and project plans. The principal of the school is the chairperson of the SDC, and teachers, old pupils, parents, and one education officer are members of the SDC. The SMC takes actions to implement the decisions, made by the SDC. The composition of the SMC is decided by the SDC and the chairperson of the SMC is also the principal of the relevant school. (MoESL, 2005, 2008). The members of the SMC assist the SDC to make decisions when necessary. Accordingly, the decision-making process was changed in the government schools following the implementation of the PSI. Consequently, other necessary changes also have been materialized and the role of the school management has changed accordingly. The principal and the other members of the school community are supposed to be adapted to the PSI changes and to the new situation in the school. Participatory decision making, community participation for school activities, school autonomy and school based staff development programmes are indicated as the key elements of the PSI system in Sri Lanka.

What is SBM

Many developed and developing countries have been implementing SBM system in their school systems for more many decades. Therefore, this concept is not new to most of the countries. SBM has a number of definitions, which reflect how different countries apply it. There are, however, common characteristics. According to Banicky (2000), several terms commonly used to describe this governance model include "Decentralization, Restructuring, Site-Based Management, Participatory Decision-Making, Shared Decision Making, and School-Based Decision Making" (p. 3). De Grauwe (2005) also indicates that several countries implement SBM in different titles as School Based Management, School Based Governance, School Self-Management, and School Site Management, etc.

De Grauwe (2005) indicates that SBM principally means "the transfer of decision-making power on management issues to the school level" (p. 1). Further, Caldwell (2005) described the SBM as the "systematic and consistent decentralization to the school level of authority and responsibility to make decisions on significant matters related to school operations within a centrally determined framework of goals, policies, curriculum, standards, and accountabilities" (p. 3). It seems that SBM is a methodical decentralization of authority, decision making power to the school level to make decisions in the school site. It includes delegation of power, authority, and responsibility to the local schools by the central education authority. In addition, the SBM schools are given autonomy to make their decisions in a democratic and participatory manner. Hence, it is expected to amplify much community participation in school decisions and increases their involvement in various school activities. The PSI in Sri Lanka persuades stakeholders of school for the participation in school management, and in particular for school planning and decision making. Decentralization is one of the key fundamentals of the SBM, and most countries implementing SBM include decentralized decision-making as a part of the process (Osorio, Fashih, Patrinos, & Santibanez, 2009). Decentralization of decision-making power and responsibility to the school level is expected by the MoESL through the PSI. In the Sri Lankan context, PSI involves the delegation of power, authority, and responsibility to the school level by the education authority and seeks accountability for school decisions (MoESL, 2008, 2013, 2018). Through decentralization, the schools are seen as having more autonomy for making their own decisions. Furthermore, Ministry of Education expects more community participation in school decisions. Raihani (2007), Briggs & Wohlstetter (2003) and Cheng (1993) list basic common characteristics of SBM schools, such as: a shared mission, school based staff development activities, participation of the stakeholders in decision making, shared school leadership among administrators and teachers, participatory and democratic decision-making in the school, and power distributed throughout the school. These circumstances are new to the government schools in Sri Lanka as they had not practiced before the participatory decision making, distribution of power, authority and responsibility among staff. Johanson (1999) indicates that the eight key elements of successful SBM schools, namely: an active vision; meaningful decision-making authority; distribution of power; development and use of knowledge and skills; collecting and communicating information; rewards for progress; shared leadership; and cultivating resources.

Leithwood and Menzies (1998) identify four models of school based management as Administrative control model – the principal, as representative of the education administration, is dominant; Professional control

model – the teaching staff receives the authority; Community control model – a local group or the parents, through a board, are in charge; and Balanced control model – the parents and the professionals (teachers and principal) share authority equally.

The Sri Lankan SBM/ PSI programme

Some of the above characteristics are reflected in the Sri Lankan PSI programme. For instance: participation of the principal, and representatives of teachers, past pupils and parents in school decision making, and distribution of decision-making power among school staff. The PSI in Sri Lanka is expected to increase transparency about school activities for the public. In the PSI system, relatively there are opportunities for more stakeholders to be involved in school decisions more than the former management system practiced by the government schools. Therefore, decisions in the PSI implemented schools are more open to the public (MoESL, 2008, 2013, 2018). Many public schools in Sri Lanka have been implementing the PSI system for many years. Therefore, the stakeholders and the SDC members have much experience in relation to the implementation of the PSI.

The pros and cons of SBM

The number of articles discusses the merits and demerits of SBM and the pros and cons of the SBM models. Some authors argue that SBM is the panacea for quality improvement, while others argue that its introduction has led to deterioration in quality, especially in the marginalized schools. However, the merits and demerits of SBM are depended on the strategies used by the education authorities of varies countries for the implementation of this policy in their school system. Lugaz and De Grauwe (2005) argue that the lack of transparency, especially in the use of funds at school level by the principal and the school boards as a challenge for smooth functioning of SBM in many countries. A research carried out by the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) on school functioning in the context of decentralization in West Africa shows that parents and teachers have nearly no knowledge of or control over the use of the fees which they pay for their children's schooling (Lugaz and De Grauwe, 2005). According to the anecdotal evidence decision-makers and school managers in the Sri Lankan schools also face many challenges in implementing the PSI. However, problems and challenges naturally emerge when implementing any new policy. Relevant research findings also can be used to understand the real situation and find solutions for the problems faced by the school leaders. Therefore, the researchers in education also have a big responsibility for that. It is evident that the SBM has become most famous concept of public-school management systems in most countries around the world (Osorio, Patrinos, & Fasih, 2009). The SBM is being increasingly advocated as a shortcut to more efficient management and quality improvement in education. Especially, in developing countries, concerns remain about the possible detrimental impact of SBM on school quality; equity among different schools in the same system; the motivation of and relationships between principals and teachers; and financial as well as administrative transparency (Botha, 2012; Gamage, 2009; Mokoena, 2012; Patrinos, 2009). However, international experience on SBM can be used for improvement of the effectiveness of the PSI system in Sri Lanka since most countries like USA, UK, New Zealand, and Australia have been implementing SBM for more than thirty years.

2   MATERIALS AND METHODS

The main research problem and objectives of this study are as follows. The main research problem is: what is the background and new trends in implementing the PSI in the Sri Lankan government schools? And the specific objectives of the study are: identify the nature of implementation of the PSI; examine the perception of the community members on the implementation of the PSI; and recognize challenges faced by stakeholders in implementing the PSI in the government schools in Sri Lanka.

This study used the interpretive paradigm and qualitative inquiry to study the implementation of the Sri Lankan version of SBM, the PSI is being implemented in the government schools. Generally, qualitative research focuses on the inner experience of people, as they interact with others. "A primary purpose of qualitative research is to describe and clarify experience as it is lived and constituted in awareness (Burns, 2000; Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000). Therefore, the qualitative research approach is most appropriate in this study, because of this research designed to explore insights and experiences of the principals, teachers, parents and past pupils of schools in relation to the implementation of the PSI. Particularly reference to the Colombo district government schools in Sri Lanka, researcher used a case study approach to study the research problem. Simons (2009) provides a definition for

case study as "an in-depth exploration from multiple perspectives of the complexity and uniqueness of a particular project, policy, institution, programme or system in a real-life context" (Simons, 2009 in Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). The case study investigates social reality and examines a social unit as a whole (Best & Kahn, 2006). This study designed to investigate the social life context of community members of the PSI implemented schools. In this study mainly two data collection methods were administered: document analysis and semi-structured interviews. In addition, informal observations also employed to gather real-life information from the participants. The sample was selected purposively and selected them from ten schools. Four principals, four deputy principals, and eight teachers, eight parents, eight past pupils participated in this study.

A total number of 32 participants provided information in this study. As the main instrument of analyzing the data, thematic analysis was used in this study. Thematic analysis can be identified as the process of recovering the theme or themes that are embodied and dramatized in the evolving meanings and imagery of the work. Themes emerged within the transcribed data gathered through interviews and documents. Data gathered through informal observations was useful to get a better understanding of the implementation of the PSI in the government schools in Sri Lanka. In addition, information collected during the informal observation used to triangulate the data gathered through interviews and documents. Finally, the themes were organized, described and interpreted (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Radnor, 2002). Thematic analysis is one of the most common approaches of qualitative data analysis (Bryman, 2001; Mutch, 2005) and according to the nature of this study, it was the most appropriate method for analyzing data in this study. Therefore, it was decided to analyze data using thematic analytical method in this study.

This study used a qualitative research methodology to study the research problem. Qualitative research uses a variety of interpretive research methodologies that seek to investigate the quality of relationships and experiences (Wallen & Fraenkel, 2001). In general, qualitative research focuses on the inner experience of people, as they interact with others. "A primary purpose of qualitative research is to describe and clarify experience as it is lived and constituted in awareness (Polkinghorne, 2005, p. 138). Therefore, the qualitative research approach was most appropriate in this study, because this study also aimed to investigate the perceptions of the members of the staff on the implementation of the PSI in Sri Lanka. The participants in this study provided their information regarding the PSI implementation at their schools as their real-life stories.

This study employed a case study approach. This approach can be used to investigate actual contemporary life settings and life cycles of people, and it allows researchers to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events of people (Yin, 2009) and it provides the researcher with a holistic understanding of a problem, issue, or phenomenon with its social context (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). Since this study designed to explore deeply the experiences of staff members about the implementation of the PSI in their schools, a case study research approach was more appropriate. Each and every school considered as a different case in this study, and therefore, it was particularly employed multiple case study approach to study research problem.

Qualitative researchers use various methods for data collection: "observation (participant and non-participant), interviewing, and document analysis" (Ary, Jacobs, & Razavieh, 2002, p. 430). However, the interview appears to be the most popular data collection instrument in qualitative research. Interviews allow the researcher to gather direct information from the participants, and the researcher has an opportunity to get more clarifications about the information provided by them. Since this study aimed to explore the perceptions of principals, deputy principals and teachers of the schools on the implementation of the PSI, interviewing was more appropriate for data collection. Interviews were very useful for gathering direct and richest information from the participants in this study. In addition, the interviewer had many opportunities to get more clarifications when interviewing the participants. In order to collect rich information more open-ended questions were asked form the participants, and accordingly it could be able to uncover inner experience of the participants in this study.

Atkinson and Coffey (2004, p. 59) state that "documentary materials should be regarded as data in their own right. In this case study research, public documents were one of the data sources used. Documents were important because in the nature of the PSI has more paperwork, and documents provided the formal frameworks of the PSI. The documents in this research were minutes of the SDC meetings, minutes of the SMC meetings, school plans, policy statements and documents, and PSI guidelines, etc. The data gathered through documents used to triangulate the data collected by other instruments. Therefore, the data gathered through the documents was more useful to get a better understanding of the research problem.

The thematic analytical method used in this study to analyze the data. Thematic analysis is a qualitative data analyzing strategy that starts in the data and pursues identifiable themes and patterns (Aronson, 1994). Thus, thematic analysis can be understood as the process of recovering the theme or themes that are embodied and dramatized in the evolving meanings and imagery of the work. Therefore, thematic analysis was used in this study to analyze the data gathered through interviews, observations, and documents from the participants. In the process of

analyzing data in this study, the themes emerged within the transcribed data gathered through data collection instruments. Then the themes were organized, described and interpreted.

3   RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Community participation

The MoESL expected to increase community participation for school affairs in introducing the PSI system in the government schools in Sri Lanka. According to the regulation framework established by the MOESL, every school is anticipated to establish SDC to make school decisions with the participation of the principal, and representatives of teachers, parents and past pupils. According to the MoESL the SDC selection process must be democratic. However, it seems that in order to select knowledgeable and suitable members for the SDC, selection process is controlled by the principal. Therefore, reasonable and balanced community representation for SDC and school management is not taken place in the schools. However, it seems that there is less community involvement in decision making and school management. Most of the occasions a selected group of stakeholders is involved in the SDC decision making. Thida & Joy (2012). Found that the school support committee, parents and community members and non- governmental organizations have directly involved in school development in Cambodia.

Selection of the members for the SDCs is not transparent, and also the community of schools does not have sufficient knowledge on PSI rules and regulations. According to the responses of the majority of the respondents; past pupils, parents, and teachers of SDCs, most principals influence to select members for the SDCs in the schools. Thus, it is evident that it is not put into practice a democratic and genuine participatory decision-making process in most schools. In contrast Hirata (2006, p. 63). revealed that the SBM form of school governance in Japan expects the decision-making authority to be shared with many stakeholders, such as principals, teachers, students, parents, and community members, etc. Furthermore, the SDC meetings of the schools are also not conducted in participatory manner. One teacher (TD2) provides proofs for that as: *"Community participation in the SDC meetings are only a formality for the purpose of legitimacy. Everything is previously arranged by the principal and what is required from the members of the SDC is their agreement and signatures".* It is also useful to note that this teacher perceived the role taken by the principal as too dominant in the SDC meetings. As the information provided by the majority of respondents apart from the principals, in most of the occasions, only a half or less outside SDC members are invited to attend the monthly SDC meetings and these are always the same people in each time. It seems that only a limited number of outside SDC members are attending SDC meetings. Thus, usually only the same community members are actively taking part in the SDC meetings. However, as Gamage & Zajda, (2005) the main aim of the implementation of SBM in New Zealand, just as in other countries, had been to achieve a systemic efficiency and to increase local community involvement.

Comments made by the majority of the parents and the past pupils during the interviews it was clarified that the monthly SDC meeting is seen as a mechanism for informing and consulting with members of the SDCs on school decisions rather than as a mechanism for making decisions.
Gamage & Zajda, (2005) found that the building partnerships between schools, parents, and communities have developed in Victoria territory. According to the findings of Karmel, 1973 cited In Gamage & Zajda, (2005: 38). schools in the Australian Capital Territory have much community participation in school programmes. It was identified that, generally, most of the principals design the school's plans, and at the meeting, SDC members are requested to approve the plans previously prepared by the principal. It is likely that even though members should be in a position to bargain, the principal holds more power than they concerning this decision. However as found by Aturupane et al. (2013), and Kasturiarachchi (2012, 2014), when parents and community members of schools are involved in school affairs, their commitment and empowerment will be improved. However, previous to the implementation of the PSI in schools, the majority of stakeholders did not use such opportunities for the participation of school activities (Kasturiarachchi, 2014; Perera, 2011).

It appeared that most stakeholders of the schools are not much familiar with school management and the PSI policy. Therefore, the internal community members of schools control the decision-making process. Due to lack of knowledge on school management most community members work as observers of the SDC meetings. This was not expected by the MoESLwhen they plan the PSI. One of the main reasons for this situation is the ineffectiveness of the awareness programmes conducted for empowering school community members. It seems that the relevant higher-level responsible officers have not made genuine effort to empower stakeholders of the schools to implement the PSI effectively. Some internal members of schools do not wish to welcome ideas of outside community members for school management or school development. They indirectly depress the participation of the external

school community members for school decision making. They still do not consider outside stakeholders of the schools as very important parties of the school. Therefore, essential and most required changes have not yet been taken place in the schools located in the Colombo district effectively. But, according to findings of the study of Zajda and Gamage (2009, p. 03), SBM schools in Cambodia, community members, and parents have been more involved in school activities. Similarly, Bender and Heystek (2003, p. 150) have revealed that stakeholders' engagement and participation in school development appear to contribute to students' success.

It was observed that higher-ranking officers of education have not genuinely delegated decision-making power to the school site to make their decisions without restraints. Still many harmful influences are made by political authority and higher education authorities to school leaders. Although the MoESL expected to provide more autonomy to the schools in implementing the PSI, yet schools behave as less autonomous organizations. According to the rationale for SBM, stakeholders' participation in school management stimulates the awareness of low enrolment, attendance and academic performance of students (Shoraku, 2009, p. 12). Scholars indicate that the stakeholders can participate and develop their schools if schools implement SBM in a democratic manner (Anderson, 2006; Gamage & Zajda, 2009; Rodriguez & Slate, 2005).

Decision making

Decision making is one of the key elements of the PSI, and the MoESL expected to implement the participatory/ shared decision making in the government schools in Sri Lanka through the PSI, Therefore, the PSI encourages community members to be involved actively in decision-making in the government schools. Sackney and Dibski (1995) revealed that the SBM as a proposal to decentralize and de-bureaucratize school control in terms of shared decision making, involving parents and other stakeholders (p. 30). Bandur (2012, p. 326) found that it is mandatory to lead school councils in participatory decision- making and having a partnership at schools, with the implementation of SBM in Indonesia.

Selection of members for the SDC is a very important component in the PSI implementation. However, it seems that the selection mechanism of SDC is not much democratic as expected by the MoESL. The majority of the participants apart from the principals indicated that the selection of SDC members as a less democratic process. One teacher (TA 2) in this study indicated as: *"generally, members of the School Development Committees are selected and appointed by the principal, and the duty of the SDC members is to approve the programmes designed by the principal".* One deputy principal (DPA) confirms the above statement as: *"principal is the chief executive of the school; principal is responsible for all the things happened in the school. Therefore, principal must have power equal to the responsibility that he/she bears, and thus principal selects members for the SDC".* As a human resource manager in the PSI implemented school, principal makes many decisions, and the principals in the PSI implemented schools seem to have more power in decision making on human resources than others. It is obvious that participatory management is not being practiced in the majority of the PSI implemented government schools according to the PSI regulations. *As Wohlstetter (1995, p. 23) found, in struggling schools, many principals have been perceived as too autocratic by their staff; their principals appeared to have agendas of their own and dominate over all the decisions.*As Thida and Joy (2012) found, the principals in Cambodian schools play the leading role, and they have key responsibilities for all aspects of school decision making.

Moreover, one teacher (TC1) said that: *"most community members of the school do not have a better understanding of the concept of PSI in Sri Lanka, and even school management or administration. Therefore, principal has to select suitable members for the SDC, otherwise selection would be ineffective".* The majority of respondents contented about the current selection mechanism practiced by the schools to select members for the SDC. The main reason for that is the lack knowledge of the stakeholders of the schools on the PSI. Although the MoESL instructed and anticipated to be established a democratic selection procedure for selecting members for the SDC in the schools, unfortunately it is not materialized by most of the schools.

According to the guidance given by the MoESL, the schools are supposed to be established school management boards, which are SDC and SMC. It is expected to make key school decisions by the SDC. Accordingly, as the chairperson of the SDC, the principal has to perform a democratic and effective role in school management in the schools. Gamage & Zajda (2009). discovered the opportunity which is given to stakeholders to be involved in decision making of schools creates a feeling and a sense of ownership of the school in the community members. It may affect to improve their dedication to the implementation of SBM more efficiently and effectively.

It seems that the SDCs of the majority of the schools are not operating in participatory manner since the principals do not make efforts to make them more democratic. Similarly, Cranston (2009, p. 21) found that the principals dominate decision making process of schools. According to the information given by the participants in this study, it displays that the principals of the schools do not encourage outside community members to participate in school decisions. As a result of that, participation of the community members for school management has not

been increased as expected by the MoESL.   However, Eskeland & Filmer (2002) and Khattri, Reeve, & Kane (2012) have found that, the autonomy of teachers, principals, and parents in making managerial and educational decisions. Whereas Hallinger, Murphy & Hausman (1993) found that, decision making had been slowed down as more people become involved in those processes in schools of SBM. As found by Cranston (2009, p. 19), generally, parents are not involved in decision-making about curriculum issues, the principals and deputy principals tend to maintain a final say over major issues in Queensland schools.

Human resource management

As observed during this study sufficient degree of decision-making power has not yet been delegated to the schools on human resource management. However, school management boards have more responsibility to direct human resources to achieve school targets. Although the PSI expected to initiate participatory management in the schools, principals still play a key role in human resource management. Most of the human resource activities are still being handled by the principal, not by the SDC. One of the teachers (TC2) indicated that: "the principal does not like to delegate decision making power on human resource management to the SDC, and even most of the members of the SDC have been appointed by the principal. However, the principal's decisions are not very practical and not towards staff development". One principal (PD) commented that: "I do not have the power to make more decision on teacher affairs, but I make lots of effort to direct them for the development of the school, unfortunately, some teachers do not like to change their behavior". It seems that, although the principal has not adequate power on human resource management, he/she has to direct, guide, influence teachers and other staff members to achieve the school targets. However, most of the teachers are not happy about the principal's activities and decisions made by the principal on human resource management in these schools. In addition to the internal staff of the school, principal has to manage outside community members towards the development of school. Therefore, it was realized that the principals of Colombo district schools in Sri Lanka have to make extra effort to direct, guide, and influence external community members to achieve school targets. As found by Wylie (2014), the principals in Edmonton public school district in Canada do not have power to hire and fire teachers. Shamsudin (2011, p. 1491). revealed that school managers in Malaysia do not have any power to choose or hire teachers who would be best suited for the school.

School based teacher development

Although the MoESL expects, it appears that the majority of schools have not tended to conduct School Based Teacher Development (SBTD) activities at school level very effectively. The majority of principals' perception is that the lack of funds provided by the government is not sufficient for teacher training and development. But, as found by Katuuk (2014), the Indonesian SBM program is effectively improving teacher professionalism; schools encourage teachers to acquire professional skills which are required to be an effective teacher.

According to the financial rules and regulations, outside resource persons impossible to be paid a reasonable amount of money, therefore most of the time suitable resource persons do not participate in the teacher development programmes. However, some SBTD programmes are facilitated by outside resource persons and organizations in Sri Lankan schools (University of Peradeniya, 2007). According to Ramachandran et al. (2005) found one of the main issues is reducing teaching time of the teachers who attend training workshops. However, in the United States and other developed countries, vast amounts of money, time, and research are devoted to in-service teacher training (Piper & Zuilkowski, 2016, p. 173).

Moreover, one principal (PC) expressed his perceptions about SBTD as: "teachers do not like to participate in the teacher development programmes if those programmes conduct during weekends since they have their own commitments and it is harmful to the students if such programmes are conducted on weekdays. However, my duty is to organize such activities without harming educational activities". It is evident that as the PSI policy, SBTD programmes mandatory to be organized by the school leaders at the school level. However, due to many reasons SBTD programmes are not being taken place effectively in many schools. However, the common perception of teachers and the past pupils is: if the principal and other SDC members have entrepreneur skill it will be easy to find resources to conduct such programmes effectively, and there are many examples for that in Sri Lanka and in other countries. SBTD seeks to provide a solution to enhance professional practice, that will result in improved performance of learners in schools" (Fadokun & Ayankunle, 2013, p. 03). As the findings of Katuuk (2014), the SBM program in Indonesia effectively improved teacher professionalism. According to the findings of Beerel (2009) and Gronn (2002), school leadership encourages staff development and students' learning.

Financial management

The main finding of this study is that the contribution of stakeholders has not been changed significantly on financial resources as a consequence of the PSI. It was noticed that the stakeholders do not provide financial support autonomously, there should be some set mechanism or an encouragement. However, it appeared that the principal and the SDC members make efforts to generate funds for school development since the government does not provide adequate financial and physical resources to the schools. Similarly, in some countries such as Hong Kong, Thailand, South Africa (Gamage and Zajda, 2009) and Israel (Gaziel, 1998; Nir and Miran, 2006), budget allocations are approved by school governing boards which are prepared at school level (Thida & Joy, 2012).

On the other hand, the MoESL instructs the school leaders not to collect any money from the parents of the students of the school. However, it seems that for the purpose of the development of the school and also for the recurrent expenditure school has a responsibility to generate funds. Therefore, the principal has to play a huge role in relation to financial management in the school. As Botha (2012). discovered decentralization or devolution of financial management authority to schools and school management boards is an important strategy aimed at school improvement and school effectiveness of SBM system in many countries

It is evident that the principal has a new role in the school to find additional funds for school activities. The attitudes and skills of the person who held the principal position directly affect the successfulness of financial management of school. Some stakeholders, particularly the past pupils provide support to the schools to generate funds. The support given by the other outside community members except the parents of the students is not very satisfied. However, the principal and the SDC members make effort to find ways to generate resources for school activities. As Malaklolunthu & Shamsudin (2011, pp. 1491,1492). Found out financial management is a new task for many stakeholders who represent governing boards of schools; therefore, financial management skill is required by the members of governing boards for efficient mobilization and use of resources.

Earlier the implementation of the PSI, schools had to find resources since the government did not provide a sufficient amount of resources for school activities. With the implementation of the PSI, responsibility of the school leaders for generating funds to purchase resources and for school development has been increased. It was observed that the successfulness of fund-raising activities organized by the schools depends on the skills and attitudes of the school leaders. According to the studies carried out on the SBM programmes in Latin America and East Asian region, the budget management or financial management of schools focus more on overseeing and allocating budget and establishing school fees (Gropello, 2006).

Challenges

The majority of principals indicated the lack of experience and poor knowledge stakeholders on school management as a challenge in managing school. Other participants; parents, past pupils, and teachers argue that the poor leadership qualities and lack of knowledge on the management of the principal as a big challenge in decision making. It was realized that most of the school leaders have not undergone appropriate management or leadership course related to school management. Sometimes they do not have adequate professional skills on management or on leadership as a school leader. Grauwe et al., (2005). Discovered that since the lack of support of central government, stakeholders face difficulties in finding resources, and working on improving efficiency and effectiveness of management in schools where SBM is implemented. Bandur (2012) has revealed several problems; inadequate funds and resources; inadequate trained teachers; lack of school facilities and lack of appropriate professional development of school leaders. Moreover, inadequate parental participation; lack of adequate authority for decision-making were problems faced by Indonesian schools; lack of clarity of roles between principals and school councils was the other problem confronted by the schools where the SBM is implemented (Bandur, 2012, p. 325).
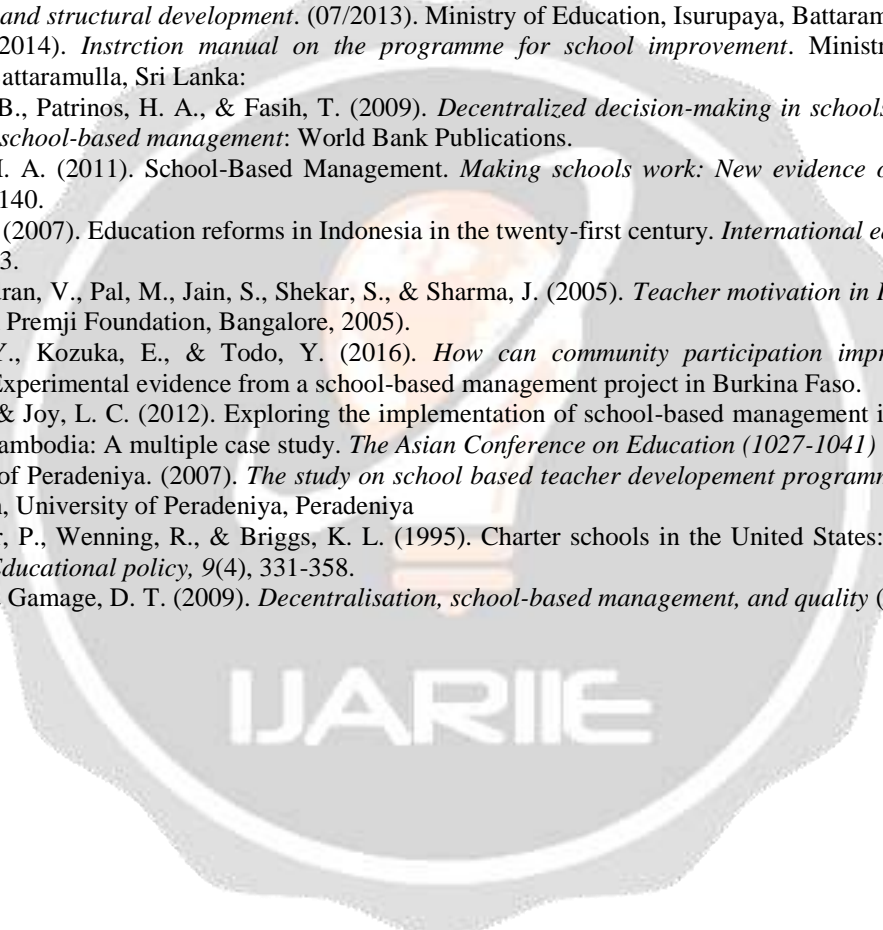
According to the responses made by the majority of principals and the teachers, schools face challenges in finding financial and physical recourses for school development. One of the other major challenges is poor attitudes of community members towards participatory management and community participation in school. Therefore, they do not tend to provide their maximum contribution to school management. Since the pathetic financial situation of the community members, the school has to find new ways of finding resources for school development. Therefore, school leaders have to dedicate much time for recourse generation for school activities. Some schools face challenges in selecting suitable, dedicated, committed and educated community members for school governing boards. It seems that the majority of community members do not have a better understanding of school management. Therefore, they are not willing to be involved in school decisions in schools by providing inputs. Thida and Joy (2012). found that poor participation of teachers, school support committee members and parents, the lack of knowledge and understanding of stakeholders on school management as challenges in managing schools.

4   CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Within the context of education decentralization through the PSI, community participation in school management, particularly regarding access to and control over decision making, and challenges faced by the stakeholders were investigated in this study. It seems that the community participation in the areas of decision making, attendance at the school meetings, involvement for school activities and control over financial resources have been changed very slightly as a consequence of the PSI. Moreover, it appears that the schools unwilling to welcome ideas of the external community members on school management may also lead to lack of trust, since trust is related to school openness and, therefore, cannot be established if external community members' expectations for increased involvement fail to materialize. The selection process in the SDC is not democratically taken place in the schools as expected by the MoESL. It is evident that the principal and the internal community members are not enthusiastic to practice participatory management styles in decision making. In these schools, most of the decisions are still made by the principal, or he/she directly makes an influence on school decisions. Moreover, the majority of members in the SDCs have not been empowered for participatory management. Reasonable opportunities should be provided to the most relevant community members to increase their involvement in setting school policy, school planning and decision-making in the school. Therefore, very democratic manner required to be adopted to establish SDC, selecting members for SDC and conducting SDC meetings. Since the lack of awareness of stakeholders of schools on school management, at least the SDC and SMC members should be provided opportunities for the participation for effective training and development programmes. Those programmes required to be organized by the higher education authorities, and in addition, it should be established a better monitoring system or a governing body to supervise schools. Those governing boards will provide such inputs for the improvement of school management system, and would make necessary recommendations and guidance for the benefit of important parties and stakeholders of schools.

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