



Hidden stories behind the challenges: School based management experiences of Sri Lanka

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Abstract

The schools in Sri Lanka where the School Based Management (SBM) is being implemented are facing various challenges. This study was carried out to explore the real challenges faced by the stakeholders of schools in implementing SBM in Sri Lanka. The main aim of this study was to investigate experiences of School Development Committee (SDC) members on challenges in implementing SBM in Sri Lanka. This is a qualitative research study, and multiple case study approach was used in investigating the research problem. Purposively selected the SDC members as participants, and document analysis and semi-structured interviews were employed for data gathering in this study. Thematic analysis was used in analyzing data. It was revealed that the key challenges faced by stakeholders as negative attitudes of community members towards school development, lack of resources; poor participation of parents and past pupils in school development. The background of stakeholders of school is one of the challenges that they face in implementing this programme. Schools do not have adequate facilities for extracurricular activities; the Ministry of Education or Provincial Ministry of Education do not provide sufficient amount of resources to schools, so, they are compelled to generate funds for school development. However, schools have not been provided sufficient power and authority in collecting funds, constructing buildings and purchasing of lands etc. Therefore, existing rules and regulations need to be amended for the smooth functioning of this programme in school. It is imperative to have a supervisory body for monitoring schools, and a better mechanism to train staff members and relevant partners of schools.

Keywords: school based management, school committees, challenges, power and authority, autonomy, decision making

1. Introduction

The title of the Sri Lankan version of School Based Management (SBM) programme is the Programme for School Improvement (PSI). The SBM for the Sri Lankan schools was introduced in 2006. As stated by the Ministry of Education in Sri Lanka (MoESL), one of the objectives for the implementation of this programme is to enhance the quality of government schools in Sri Lanka (MoESL, 2014)^[30]. At present, the SBM programme is implemented at the government schools throughout the country in Sri Lanka. Basically, the SBM includes key characteristics/features like; high community participation in school management activities, governing boards for decision-making, more autonomy devolved to schools, improvement of responsibility and accountability of the staff and stakeholders of school, participatory management of schools, strategic planning and school based staff development etc. (Briggs & Wohlstetter, 2003; Cheng, 1993; Raihani, 2007; Sumintono, Mislán, & Said, 2012; Vally & Daud, 2015; Tansiri & Bong 2019)^[7, 13, 34, 36, 39, 37]. The Sri Lankan version of SBM also includes some of those characteristics. However, according to anecdotal evidence, the Sri Lankan government schools have not yet been provided complete autonomy alike the schools in the developed countries where the SBM is implemented. The school governing board members and the stakeholders of schools implement SBM policy regulations at their schools for many years without having full autonomy and complete decision-making power. Anyhow, as anecdotal evidence, the government schools in Sri Lanka implement this programme by facing several challenges. For the successful implementation of this programme, identification of the

challenges faced by the stakeholders of schools would be very important, and also the findings of this study may be very useful for the policymakers to streamline the implementation process of this programme. The respective discoveries may be helpful for the stakeholders to get a real understanding of the challenges in implementing the SBM. Therefore, this study aimed to investigate the challenges which are being experienced by the stakeholders of the government schools in implementing the SBM at their schools.

The Education Sector Development Framework and Programme (ESDFP) was initiated as a major development innovation on primary and secondary education by the government of Sri Lanka for the period of 2006-2010. The SBM is also a central element of the World Bank's support under the ESDFP. The ESDFP II: 2012 - 2016 also concerned about the implementation of the SBM. The ESDFP II project has three pillars: pillar one committed for promoting equity of access to basic and secondary education, the central initiative under this pillar is to ensure that all the children and the youth aged 06-16 years complete 11 years of formal school education; pillar two for improving the quality of education. A strategic initiative under this pillar is the development of a system for the regular and continuing assessment of cognitive skills of the students; pillar three stresses the strengthening the governance and also the delivery of education services. A very independent school system is expected to be established in Sri Lanka through the ESDFP II. In order to that, as a strategy, the SBM system is implemented in Sri Lanka. In the beginning, in 2006, the SBM, as titled as PSI was introduced as a pilot project, and now it is being implemented in almost every

government school as it is mandatory to be implemented. The MoESL has issued several instruction manuals, circulars, and guidelines to every government school in order for the effective implementation of this programme. According to the guidelines and instructions of the MoESL, by now, the majority of government schools have taken necessary steps to implement it at their schools.

Many researchers have identified several models of SBM, particularly, Leithwood and Menzies (1998) have identified four models of SBM as Administrative control model of SBM – the principal, as representative of the education administration, is dominant; Professional control model of SBM – the teaching staff receives the authority; Community control model of SBM – a local group or the parents, through a board, is in charge; Balanced control model of SBM – the parents, external community members and the professionals (teachers and principal) share authority equally.

The MoESL stresses schools to implement Balanced control model of SBM. Accordingly, the schools are supposed to carry out a participatory management culture in schools and to make school-level decisions by considering ideas, proposals, and suggestions of the stakeholders. Consequently, the MoESL anticipated in cultivating a sense of ownership of school within the stakeholders. In addition, many developmental initiatives have been planned to establish in the government school system through this programme. The MoESL expects to make a radical change of school management in the Sri Lankan government school system through this programme.

In particular, according to the MoESL (2013, 2014), schools have been provided more autonomy and authority to generate resources from the community, especially from the parents, from the past pupils' associations, and also from the local philanthropists. Schools can use those funds, particularly, for the development of education, school plant, physical resources etc.

The MoESL has issued several circulars, 24/2005, 35/2008 and 07/2013 and 2018 instruction manuals in relation to the implementation of this programme. Those circulars have been issued for the purpose of making aware of stakeholders on the localized SBM programme, and also in order to guide and instruct them for effective implementation of the programme. In addition, before and after the implementation of the SBM, principals and staff members of the government schools have been provided with a training on this programme by the MoESL with the National Institute of Education in Sri Lanka (NIESL).

It seems that, presently, the SBM programme plays an important role in the government schools. Initially, this programme was implemented as a pilot project, and Colombo district schools also were included in that pilot project which was commenced in 2006. Therefore, the Colombo district schools were selected as the research site in this study since the SDC members of those schools have more experiences in implementing this programme in their schools. Thus, this study critically analyzed the experiences of stakeholders in the process of implementation of the SBM at the Colombo district schools. In addition, this study explored experiences of the School Development Committee (SDC) members on the SBM policy implementation. Particularly, this study identified the constraints and challenges faced by the SDC members in implementing this programme at their schools.

The SBM has a number of definitions, which reflects how different countries apply it in their own education systems. There are, however, common characteristics. According to Banicky, Rodney and Foss (2000) ^[5] and Banicky (2000) ^[5], Arar & Nasra (2018) ^[1] several terms commonly used to describe this localized governance model include “decentralization, restructuring, site-based management, participatory decision-making, shared decision-making, and school-based decision making” (p. 3). De Grauwe (2005) ^[18] suggested that the SBM basically means to “the transfer of decision-making power on management issues to the school level” (p. 1). Further, Caldwell (2005) ^[11] 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 the SBM is a systematic and popular decentralization system in the school education sector in many countries. It includes delegation of power, authority, and responsibility to local schools by the central education authority. In addition, the schools where the SBM is being implemented have an autonomy to make their decisions in a democratic and participatory manner at their school level.

In this study, SBM is identified as a decentralization process of decision-making power and responsibility which seeks to empower school managers and school leaders. Decentralization is one of the key elements of SBM and most countries implementing SBM include decentralized decision-making as a part of the process (Osorio, Fashih, Patrinos, & Santibanez, 2009) ^[33]. Decentralization of decision-making power and responsibility to the school level is expected by the MoESL through implementing the Programme of School Improvement (PSI). In the Sri Lankan context, SBM means the delegation of power, authority, and responsibility to the school level by the education authority and seeks accountability for school decisions (MoESL, 2008). Since the decentralization, the government schools in Sri Lanka are seen as having more autonomy for making their own decisions.

Briggs & Wohlstetter (2003) ^[7]; Cheng (1993) ^[13]; Raihani (2007) ^[35]; Sumintono, Mislán, & Said (2012) ^[36]; Vally & Daud (2015) ^[39]; Edwards (2019) ^[20] list some of the common characteristics of SBM in schools, such as a shared mission, school based staff development, participation of principal, teachers, and parents in the decision-making of schools, shared school leadership among administrators and teachers, participatory and democratic decision-making in the school, and distribution of power throughout the school. When the SBM was introduced in Sri Lanka, these characteristics were new to the schools as they had not practiced participatory decision-making, distribution of power, authority and responsibility among staff there before. Some of those characteristics are reflected in the Sri Lankan SBM system. For instance, the participation of principal, deputy principal and representatives of teachers, past pupils and parents in school decision-making, distribution of decision-making power among school staff. The MoESL expects to increase transparency of school decisions for the public with the implementation of this programme. Since the implementation of the SBM system, stakeholders have more opportunities to be involved in decision-making in schools rather than earlier. (MoESL, 2008) ^[23].

Many public schools in Sri Lanka have been implementing

the SBM system for more than ten years. According to the SBM project plan, the number of Sri Lankan government schools involved in the SBM has been increased annually. Table 1 shows the number of schools participating SBM programme from 2006 to 2009. A number of 5222 schools by 2009 which implemented SBM represents more than 50% of government schools in Sri Lanka. The MoESL made a decision to implement this programme in every government school throughout the country since 2010.

Table 1: Number of schools participating in SBM, 2006-2009

Year	Number of new SBM schools	Total number of SBM schools
2006	1490	1490
2007	934	2424
2008	1980	4404
2009	818	5222

Source: MoESL (2015)

International literature provides evidence, and also researchers have identified a range of challenges faced by the staff and the stakeholders in SBM schools. These challenges include lack of resources; poor coordination among school decision makers and staff; and lack of professional development opportunities for staff (Cranston, 2000; Cranston, 2014; Edwards & Higa, 2018). Guzman (2006) added challenges associated with role conflicts, lack of school governance experience of those on school boards, lack of commitment from the community, unnecessary interference from political and education officers, and the resistance of staff to change. The researchers have identified that the schools in various countries face challenges in implementing SBM due to insufficient funds and resources for school development. Most of those schools do not make efforts to generate funds at their level for the development of schools. As most of the scholars revealed, the poor social background of the parents and the community members and also the poor relationships among staff, and decision makers directly affects the smooth functioning of schools. Thus, it is evident that the schools in various countries face challenges and difficulties in implementing SBM schedules (Briggs & Wohlstetter, 2003; B. Caldwell, 2005; Gamage, 2008; Edwards & Higa, 2018).

Anecdotally, the researchers have noted that the lack of autonomy and less decision-making power badly affects the effective functioning of school activities. Through the implementation of the SBM, the MoESL expected to a delegation of power, authority, and autonomy to schools; however, they are still in the hand of the central Education Ministry and the Provincial Ministries of Education. So, what are the issues that the staff and stakeholders of schools where the SBM is being implemented face? What is it like for staff in schools embarking on this system? Why is understanding about SBM difficult to grasp? Therefore, this study aimed to investigate the challenges faced by staff members and stakeholders of schools in implementing the SBM.

As a result of this programme, the previous management culture and the decision-making environment was changed. Basically, with the implementation of this programme, two governing boards were introduced in the government schools. Previously to the implementation of the SBM, schools did not have such governing boards, and the principal used to make key decisions. Those governing

boards are named as School Development Committee (SDC) and School Management Committee (SMC). Those governing boards are represented by the principal of the respective school, representatives of teachers, parents, past pupils and an education officer.

The location of this study is the Colombo district government schools in Sri Lanka, and this study critically analyzed the nature of challenges faced by stakeholders in implementing SBM policy regulations in their schools. This study is important, because, since 2006 the decision-making power and authority on school education have been transferred to school level through the SBM system (MoESL, 2008). So far, no sufficient number of qualitative or mixed researchers have been undertaken in investigating the challenges faced by stakeholders of the schools where this programme is being implemented. Especially, researchers have not paid enough attention to exploring the real experiences of staff members and stakeholders in the implementation process of this programme. Therefore, the findings of this study may be useful to get a better understanding of the nature of challenges faced by schools in implementing the SBM. And also, the findings may be important for the future policy decisions in relation to this system. Moreover, the findings of this study would be very useful for the people who are engaged in school education in Sri Lanka, and also for the international community who are interested with regard to the SBM programme in Sri Lanka.

Materials & methods

This study was carried out to investigate the challenges faced by the stakeholders of government schools where the SBM is being implemented. 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. Human experience is a difficult area to study. It is multi-layered and complex, it is ongoing flow” (Polkinghorne, 2005, p. 138). Therefore, the qualitative research approach was most appropriate in this study, because, this study was designed to explore the SBM experiences of stakeholders of the government schools in Sri Lanka. In particular, it was explored the experiences of school principals, teachers, parents, past pupils and education officers who represent the SDC of the schools. It was purposively selected three government schools from the Colombo district in this study, and the researcher used a case study approach, especially, it was selected a multiple case study approach to study this 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). In this study, two data collection methods were employed: document analysis and semi-structured interviews. Thematic analysis is one of the most common approaches to qualitative data analysis (Bryman, 2001; Mutch, 2005) and it is the most appropriate method for analyzing qualitative data. Therefore, data were analyzed using thematic analyze in this study.

The sample was select purposively, and it includes three government schools. Three principals, nine teachers, nine parents, nine past pupils and an education officer participated in this study by providing information. The main research problem was: how is the nature of challenges

faced by stakeholders of the government schools in implementing SBM policy regulations in their schools? Therefore, the main aim of this study was to investigate the experiences of stakeholders on the challenges faced by them in implementing the SBM policy regulations in their schools.

Results

It was realized that the schools face various challenges in implementing the SBM at their schools. The School Development Committee members of schools including principals, teachers, past pupils, parents, and education office member of school A, school B, and school C are experiencing many difficulties and challenges in implementing this programme.

School A

The principal of school A (PA) stated that the time is a key constraint which hinders the implementation the SBM policy regulations in his school, and moreover, he mentioned some instances to explain them. The PA indicated the challenges that they faced in enhancing the performance of their students at the national examinations. School A demonstrates poorest results at the G.C.E. (O/L) examination during the last couple of years. It was observed that they do not have a sufficient number of teachers for every subject, most of the students are from non-Sinhalese language speaking communities (the medium of instruction is Sinhalese language in this school), and they are sitting for the examinations in Sinhala medium, that is a big challenge that the schools face in improving examination results. It was noticed that they do not have qualified teachers for teaching some subjects in their schools.

Moreover, the PA indicated that: "we have not yet been provided authority to hire and fire teachers; I believe that it is a weakness of this system". Further, PA indicated about some issues that they faced. For instance, one of them is the lack of awareness of staff and community members of school on SBM policy regulations and the poor commitment of the majority of teachers.

As deputy principal (DPA) indicated, parents of students of this school do not pay enough attention to the education of their children, they do not provide enough support and encouragement to their children, and therefore, it seems that the teachers face many difficulties in educating them. However, if there is such situation, they have dreams to produce future doctors, engineers, accountants, teachers from this school. As DPA indicated, teachers of his school believe that the students cannot learn since they are from the marginalized community, and also, they do not commit to their education. According to the majority of participants in this school; parents are not committed to the education of their children; thus, it seems that the teachers are also not much dedicated to educating students of school A. This can be identified as a very big issue for enhancing the performance of students in the national examinations.

One senior teacher who represents the SDC as its treasure in school A commented about the background of the students of her school, and also the behaviour of teachers towards the education development of their students as: "most of the students in this school are not native Sinhala speakers; the majority of students are Muslims, then Sinhalese and Tamils. Some students cannot write or read Sinhala even though they are in grade eleven classes, they have been

neglected by their teachers, and because of some teachers do not perform their duty properly. Every student cannot perform equally, and also like others, especially since this curriculum mainly expects to enhance the knowledge of students. But all the students are influenced by teachers, parents and school administrators to perform equally, it is unreasonable".

Even though the SBM policy encourages schools to enhance the performance of students, however, they face various difficulties in improving the performance of their students. Some of the problems that these schools face were indicated by one of the teachers. As she pointed out, their education officers always concern about the examination results of the students of the schools, they do not care about the facilities available in the schools or the facilities provided by the education authority to schools for enhancing the teaching and learning activities. And, they do not care about difficulties that the schools face in teaching students who have very difficult backgrounds.

According to one of the teachers who represent the SDC in school A, at the beginning of the implementation of the SBM, staff members and SDC members of schools had been provided with a training on the SBM system, but it hasn't been continued. At present, different community members are involved in the implementation of this programme; their understanding of this programme is not adequate, as a result of that, their commitment to the implementation of the programme is challenging.

As one parent of school A stated, his school does not have adequate facilities for extracurricular activities of students; there is not even a playground in that school. There is no a sports master in this school. As some of the parents indicate that the students like to participate sports activities and extracurricular activities. As one deputy principal of school A explained, the Ministry of Education or Provincial Ministry of Education do not provide sufficient amount of resources to the schools, thus, they have to find strategies to generate funds for school development.

School B

As explained by the principal of school B (PB), they are facing various difficulties in implementing the SBM policy proposals in their school. The support of parents, past pupils, and staff of her school is very poor in school development. It was noticed that the background of the parents, past pupils and community members of school B does not encourage the development of the school. According to the PB, external community members are not very much supportive in implementing activities of the SBM policy in their school. As she mentioned, parents and past pupils are not well committed to the development of the school, so, the school has to make a big effort to obtain their support. It was noticed that the majority of community members are not well educated and they are not in a good economic condition; hence, generally, they do not very much concern about the educational development of their children. It was realized that some teachers are not very enthusiastic about this programme; else, it seems that the teachers in this school have not been allocated additional work since most of them have already been allocated a heavy workload.

It was realized that there is no a proper mutual understanding and a good relationship between the principal and the deputy principal of school B, and thus, it has

affected the smooth functioning of the school. According to the SBM policy, everybody of the school is expected to work as a team for achieving the targets of this programme; otherwise, they may face problems in managing the school. As the information provided by the participants in this study, it was understood that there is no proper relationship between this school and its community members. It has become a challenge for this school to implement some activities of this programme.

One of the teachers in school B commented about their SDC members. "Well-educated, committed, experienced, and enthusiastic people should be appointed as SDC members. I do not see that in this school". She further indicated, "The principal also must have a very good knowledge and experience in school management. Teachers also do not have extra time in engaging SBM activities". The teachers of this school believe that they or students do not have any benefit in implementing this project. And they are not appreciated or given anything additional for their extra commitment. The principal also puts pressure on the teachers for covering up additional duties assigned to the school by the MoESL.

One past pupil of school B stated about the education office member of their SDC: "I think Education officers must provide enough support to schools and also to the SDC members for implementation of the SBM policy regulations. They do not even attend SDC meetings of school". One of the deputy principals of school B elaborated the challenges faced in implementing this programme in her school, and she especially mentioned the lack of resources, the poor background of the community members of the school, and rules and regulations of the MoESL as key challenges.

As one of the teachers in school B commented about the support of the external community members and the officials of education for the development of this school, as she mentioned, this school is facing problems in finding resources. For instance, support of the Zonal education officers for the implementation of the SBM programme is not adequate. The cooperation and the commitment of the SDC members in implementing this programme are not at a satisfactory level. It was observed that there is no real support from the political leaders for the development of this school. But it was identified that some schools in this study which is located in this area have been provided with their support, especially in providing physical resources. Another teacher of school B stated that the time is a big challenge for teachers in this school to complete their syllabuses while completing activities of the SBM programme. Lack of training of the SDC members and the role conflicts between them and the stakeholders seems to be a big barrier for the effective implementation of this programme in school B.

School C

The principal of school C (PC) stated about the development of her school as: "we have problems and challenges when we are developing the school. We collect a big amount of money for school development, and every year we do big projects. Some parents are surprised how we are doing such projects, and sometimes teachers, parents and community members criticize those activities. I think the SBM is a snake. We must catch it at the correct place; otherwise, the school will be put into trouble. We know how to do it" (PC). It was observed that the appointing a teacher to the treasure

position of governing boards of school is problematic. The responsibilities of that position are challengeable and it is an additional task for the person who holds it. It seemed that most of the teachers do not show their interest to undertake the treasure position since money is involved with this post, and they do not have a proper understanding of financial management, and alternatively, there is no proper mechanism at school level in order to make aware them in financial management or accounting procedures. Else, it was identified that they are not given even an additional payment for the service that they perform.

The principal of school C elaborated her experiences about the factors that obstruct the implementation of the SBM programme in her school as: "we are facing problems in implementing SBM programme, why I am indicating that there is no higher level supervisory board or monitoring system to provide advises and to guide us when we face problems in implementing this programme. Time to time the Ministry of Education changes the rules and regulations". As she mentioned the MoESL has issued several circulars and instruction manuals, and however, there are some certain contradictions between circulars. Consequently, they face challenges in adapting to new changes. She further indicated that "They work with files and papers, but we work with people" (PC).

The PC listed the challenges that they face in implementing the SBM programme in her school as negative attitudes of some of the parents, past pupils, education officers, teachers, students and community members towards school development; lack of resources; human, physical and time; limited land area; poor participation of parents and past pupils for school development, however, they use several strategies for increasing their participation, actually the location of school is a big challenge. The background of stakeholders of school is one of the challenges that they face in implementing this programme, they do not have a set of well-educated community members, and also stakeholders who have a very good economic background.

One of the deputy principals in school C (DPC) added some challenges that they face in implementing this programme at their school. As she mentioned, the negative attitudes of some of the teachers towards this programme is a big challenge to get their maximum support. According to her, some teachers have a very good understanding on the SBM programme, and they are committed to developing the school, some are not like that, and she asserted that school administration does not force them to do administrative work since they are performing their teaching job properly.

The DPC in this school, most of the government schools are very poor in Sri Lanka. So, this programme is an additional burden for them, the community members of some schools are very poor and not educated enough to support schools. Therefore, this school also face difficulties in finding resources for the development of the school. According to the SBM agenda, it is required to increase community participation in school activities and events. Another challenge she mentioned is that the heavy workload of the teachers. Therefore, they are facing difficulties in allocating their teaching time for SBM activities. This deputy principal clearly stated that, if they take teachers' time for SBM activities teaching-learning process will be in trouble.

One parent asserted his experiences and the real situation that he is experiencing in implementing SBM activities as: "we would like to developed school of our children, the

problem is that the parents and past pupils are pressurized by the school to find resources. Some parents and past pupils do not like to give money or support". They believe that all the facilities should be given by the government for education of their children. The actual situation is different, actually since the government does not provide enough resources; the school has to find ways to generate money for school development. However, the actual situation is different, every parent in this school cannot support the school since most of them do not have a stable economic background.

One education office member of SDC elaborated his experiences and views on the challenges faced by schools. "This programme is very popular in other countries. However, according to my knowledge, this programme is not very effective in poor countries, sometimes, due to negative attitudes of community members towards the school development. Sri Lankans think that, every student must be provided school education for free of charge by every government". As he indicated, the government cannot provide all the resources to schools. They provide textbooks, uniforms, teachers' salaries, buildings, playgrounds, important physical resources etc. He further indicated that "I believe that the parents also have a responsibility to provide some assistance to develop schools for their children. Some parents do not have a positive attitude on that. Therefore, I have noticed that some schools face challenges in implementing this programme in their schools".

As the education officer further remarked, poor schools face challenges in finding resources, some staff members, external community members are not well committed to the implementation of this programme. Some principals do not have appropriate leadership skills in managing their schools. It was noticed that some schools believe that school development is a physical resource development; therefore, they pay less attention to education development of students and on staff development.

Discussion, conclusions, and recommendations

Limited time of staff members is a fact that hinders the implementation of the SBM policy regulations in all these three schools. However, it was noticed that the principals and sometimes the deputy principals also spend their own time after their working hours in the schools. Especially, mostly they spend time on meeting community members, patrons, politicians who are supporting the school development. Time is a big problem for teachers in these schools to complete syllabuses while completing the activities of the SBM programme. Lack of training of SDC members and role conflicts between them and the stakeholders seems to be a big barrier to effective implementation of this programme. Similarly, some researchers have revealed that, the time as a problem for teacher representatives as they are expected to devote extra hours for school administration in addition to their teaching tasks (Aturupane et al., 2013; Osorio, Patrinos, & Fasih, 2009; Zajda & Gamage, 2009) [7, 6, 23]. However, as Bandur (2012, p. 326) [3, 4] found, some teacher representatives are happy to spend additional hours on school administration. School A has demonstrated poorest results at the G.C.E. (O/L) examination during last couple of years. It was observed that they do not have a sufficient number of teachers for every subject; most students are living in Tamil

language speaking environment and conducting their studies and also sitting for the examinations in Sinhala medium. Those are big challenges that they face in increasing examination results of the students. This situation can be seen in school B also. However, the examination result of students of school C is better than the other two schools. They are preparing students only for the 'Grade Five Scholarship Examination' while other two schools are preparing their students for 'G.C.E O/L examination' and also for the 'Grade Five Scholarship Examination'. The findings of Khattri, Ling, and Jha (2012) are also quite different from the findings of this study. As they found, the SBM programme in the Philippines shows that the school averaged student performance on national tests has been improved, and the level of improvement was higher in schools which had involved in SBM, compared with the schools that had not received the intervention or received it later.

The support of parents, past pupils and staff in school A and school B is not adequate; however, school C uses many strategies for getting their support. School A obtains much support from the politicians for generating resources for school development. The parents of these three schools do not pay sufficient attention to the education of their children, they do not provide enough support and encouragement for the education of their children, and therefore, the teachers face several difficulties in educating them. However, it seems that academic staff members of school C are much committed to enhancing the performance of students, and relatively they are successful in this regard. Sanga and Walker (2005) and West-Burnham's (2003) suggestion is that the maintenance of a pleasant relationship amongst the school, parents, and communities is important for staff development and ultimately the development of student learning. Similarly, Bender and Heystek (2003, p. 150) have revealed that stakeholders' engagement and participation in school development appear to contribute to students' success. This does not support the findings of Bandur (2012, p. 326) [3, 4], in which, parental participation is not a big problem confronted with the implementation of SBM in Indonesia.

School A and school B do not have adequate facilities for extracurricular activities of students; they do not have playground facilities for outdoor activities. The MoESL or Provincial Ministry of Education do not provide sufficient amount of resources to schools, so, these schools are compelled to generate funds for their development. These schools organize many activities to generate funds, for instance, they organize annual walks, school fairs etc. Some parents do not like to help the school in providing money, and some circulars of the MoESL create barriers to schools especially, for collecting funds. Bandur (2012, p. 325) [3, 4] revealed a similar situation in Indonesian schools, where, the SBM is implemented. They face problems due to inadequate financial facilities and lack of school facilities. A study of Fakaia (2005) [25] found that the limited resources had a negative effect on the extracurricular activities and it was seen as contributing to the lack of preparation of students for lives.

It was realized that some teachers' attitudes are not very positive about this programme. The common attitude of the majority of stakeholders in these schools is that the MoESL makes several changes in school education sector, but without consulting people who are really engaged in the

industry. Inadequate skills and knowledge of SDC members on school management and also the SBM is a real challenge in implementing this programme in schools. Especially, the majority of external SDC members do not have a sufficient knowledge of school management, and it can be seen in all the schools in this study. Similarly, Cavanagh & Dellar (1995) had revealed that the expected outcomes of restructuring education system in Western Australia had not been grasped, and as a result of that, the school changes hadn't been fully occurred owing to the lack of awareness of stakeholders on SBM policies. This supports what Thida & Joy (2012) ^[33] found, that the lack of knowledge and understanding of stakeholders on school management is a big problem in Cambodia, sometimes, they have to follow trial and error strategy in performing SBM policy reforms.

There is no a proper mutual understanding and a relationship between the principal and the deputy principal of school B, and thus, it has been affected the smooth functioning of that school. However, the relationship between the principal and the staff members of school A and of school C is better than the school B. Education office member is not even attending monthly SDC meetings of these schools. It was realized that the external community members of SDC have not been provided proper training on the implementation of the SBM, or else it seems that they do not have sufficient knowledge of the relevant circulars and instruction manuals which have been issued by the MoESL in relation to the SBM. Therefore, their contribution to the school development is not effective. Still, there is no a supervisory board at the national level or provincial level for monitoring this programme. Therefore, it was realized that the school administrators face challenges in getting advice for effective implementation of this programme.

This programme mainly focuses on generating funds through the parents and also the outside community members for school development. So, it tends to create a negative attitude within the community with regard to this programme. And, it conceals the most important characteristics of the programme to the community of the school. It was observed that the appointing of a teacher for the treasure position of SDC and SDS is problematic. Most of the teachers do not show their interest to take over the responsibilities of the treasurer position, and also, they do not have a proper understanding of the financial management of schools. They are not paid even an additional payment for the service rendered by them as a treasurer. Malaklolunthu and Shamsudin (2011, pp. 1491, 1492) ^[28] found that the financial management is a new task for many stakeholders who represent governing boards of school; therefore, financial management skill is required for the members of governing boards for efficient mobilization and use of resources. Some schools in this study merely believe that the school development is the physical resource development of school; therefore, they pay less attention to the educational development of students and also staff development. The parents do not know whether they also have a big responsibility for education development of their children. It can be generally seen among parents in school A and also in school B.

Commonly, it can be seen several challenges in implementing the SBM programme in schools. For instance, parents those who criticize school do not attend important meetings of school, some of them do not keen to provide resources or money for school development, some schools

do not hold SDC meetings regularly. Some principals are involved in selecting their SDC members without considering guidelines of the MoESL. Some SDC members do not have a proper understanding about the SBM; there are some complications and contradictions among circulars. Moreover, lack of resources, limited time, and limited land area, poor participation, less autonomy, poor attitudes of the community, teacher absenteeism, and heavy workload of teachers can be identified as challenges in implementing the SBM in the Sri Lankan schools. It was noticed that the schools have not been provided power and authority to collect funds for constructing buildings and also for purchasing of some capital assets for schools. The majority of participants in this study indicated that their schools have not been provided sufficient degree of power and authority in decision making. As found out by Gamage and Sooksomchitra (2006) ^[10], SBM has drastically reduced the power and authority of the bureaucrats by devolving the power and authority as well as responsibility to school level in Thailand. As Caldwell (2009) ^[12] indicates, SBM is a consistent decentralization to school level of authority and responsibility to make decisions. Findings of Bush and Gamage (2001) ^[10] and Raab (2000) are slightly different from the results of this study, school governing bodies in England and Wales have been given greater powers to manage their own affairs within national frameworks. However, findings of Bandur (2012, p. 317) ^[3, 4] supported the finding of this study, the power has been typically devolved to school level governing bodies of Indonesia schools, comprising of the representatives of relevant stakeholders. The findings of this study are a bit similar to the findings of Hirata (2006) ^[24], in that, the decision-making authority is not sufficiently devolved to each school, and many groups of stakeholders are not significantly involved in decision-making processes, and SBM form of school governance has not yet been realized in Japan. As indicated by Wylie (2014), the principals in Edmonton public school district in Canada do not have the power to hire and fire teachers, however, they can choose teachers for their schools. Comparable findings have been indicated by Malaklolunthu and Shamsudin (2011, p. 1491), in which, school managers in Malaysia do not have any power to choose or hire teachers who would be best suited for the school, and also freely increase the number of teachers as may be required by the school.

As Wood (1984, p.63) indicated that, such reforms as SBM and shared governance cannot be "a panacea for the ills of the organization" as they only produce positive results when used under certain circumstances. This is similar to Bandur's (2012, p. 44) ^[3, 4] findings that, in practice, the effective implementation of SBM in Indonesia is highly challenging, depending on the readiness and willingness of stakeholders of schools. According to the information provided by the majority of participants in this study, the SBM programme has not been properly implemented in the schools, and also it has not yet been successful in solving every problem in schools. As indicated by Bruns, Filmer, and Patrinos (2011) SBM is not a "quick fix" for education systems. According to the research evidence from developed countries, it takes at least five years for SBM reforms to start enabling changes at the school level and around eight years to bring about any significant changes in student achievements (Bruns et al., 2011). As Hirata (2006, p. 70) ^[24] indicated, Japanese schools have not adopted a

SBM form of school governance yet, SBM reform is still ongoing, and not completed. Accordingly, it can be assumed that the Sri Lankan model of SBM might also take some time to exhibit significant positive changes in school management. Therefore, it is imperative to be established a supervisory body for supervising and helping schools for effective implementation of this programme. It is recommended to provide an additional support to marginalized schools and the schools who are facing problems in generating resources. It is important to organize continuous training programmes for empowering, strengthening and educating staff members and also the relevant partners of schools on school management. The academic staff members and also the SDC members of schools must be further empowered and motivated in developing schools.

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