

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT



THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION

BY THE SARVODAYA SHRAMADANA MOVEMENT OF

SRI LANKA

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Abstract

The foundation for the development of any society depends on the effective investment on its human resources. The quality of the human beings who constitute society determines its stability and progress. The fundamental importance of education for human development has been acknowledged by civilized societies all over the world. The Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement which started as an educational experiment in 1958 has pioneered human development for over three decades. From humble beginnings it has grown up to be one of the largest people's development agencies found anywhere in the world. Sarvodaya's unique identity and its novel approach to development springs from the inspiration it has derived from Buddhism. The Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement considers education an indispensable element of its integrated plan for community development.

The study of the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement could offer to society a new way of thinking, a new way to approach problems and above all a value system consonant with religion. A survey of Sarvodaya's nonformal education programme, referred to as Development Education could be

considered significant particularly in to-day's context of the relevance of education for Sri Lanka's national development. For a developing country as Sri Lanka, with limited natural resources it becomes necessary to concentrate on human resources for development.



Development education of the Sarvodaya context could offer valuable insights in this direction. The study could also throw considerable light to overcome certain shortcomings in the formal system and to harness educational resources of our Sinhala Buddhist heritage for education.

The study of the educational activities of Sarvodaya Movement could stimulate our search for alternate strategies in education in accordance with the evolving needs and problems in Sri Lankan Society. This could help us not only to effect innovations in formal education but to counteract educational wastage, offer insights for leadership training, balanced personality development, resource mobilisation, character building, moral education and community development.

The present study investigated the activities of the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement with reference

to its programme of Development Education. In this analysis the total programme of the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement had to be kept in mind though the aspects pertaining to education have been examined in greater detail.



Attention had to be focussed on the historical background of Sri Lanka. The social, economic, cultural and political contexts through which the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement evolved and functions in the present day. The nature of Development Education in the Sarvodaya Shramadana context, its impact and to what extent it could help in the evolution of a national action strategy have been discussed.

One of the most difficult problems for a researcher dealing with a movement of the magnitude as Sarvodaya is to develop indicators to measure the success of the Movement on the participants and the villages. It was not difficult to collect statistics about what has been done by the Movement. It was also not possible to get all the data necessary for the researcher by a questionnaire or interview schedule. Hence it was necessary for the researcher to become a participant of Sarvodaya activity- a participant

in a family gathering, a Shramadana, an educational programme pre-school programme^{and} an evaluation seminar for participants in a training programme. This gave the researcher the much needed insights as to what the participants and villagers felt about the Movement. This participatory research proved most rewarding. Based on these findings suggestions are made to improve the conditions bearing on Development Education. Three Development Education centres, Kandy, Anuradhapura and Bandaragama were selected. These were selected taking into consideration their geographical, social and economic conditions; 100 participants formed the sample.

As evident from this study it was apparent that the Sarvodaya Educational Programme has achieved considerable success, though there were instances where remedial action has to be taken considering the socio-economic and political aspirations of young people. This necessitates certain internal adjustments in the Movement and structural transformations if the message of Sarvodaya is to reach the target groups in a more effective manner. The findings indicate that the objectives of Sarvodaya Development Education have had a positive impact. The study highlights the fact that



the majority of the youth continues to affirm its faith in the Movement. Despite the fact that Sarvodaya is unable to engage in development activities in the North and East due to war and ethnic violence the programme of rehabilitation rests largely with Sarvodaya. Development Education in the North and East seems to have been totally eclipsed.

An all island sample of Sarvodaya Development Education would have yielded more reliable data but due to prevailing conditions in the country and constraints of time the study had to be limited to the above sample. Future research would be necessary to add to existing data.

Sarvodaya Development Education covers many aspects of education which a developing country could utilise. A vibrant democracy requires that the people are able to deal with common issues in a well-informed and intelligent manner, in accordance with the socio-cultural milieu of one's country.

