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Despite the implementation of positive education policies over four decades, pockets of educational disadvantage exist in Sri Lanka so that even universal primary education has yet to become a reality. The plantation schools, 558 in number, constitute a significant proportion of the disadvantaged schools in Sri Lanka, and this study examines one facet of inequality - the supply and distribution of teachers in these schools.

The study is based on an analysis of school census data supplemented by an indepth study of the situation in one A.G.A. division in Nuwara Eliya and by a few case studies of schools in two districts - Nuwara Eliya and Ratnapura. It is argued in the study that teacher shortage and maldistribution in these schools are outcomes of structural constraints to educational opportunity that stem from the economic demands and the social isolation of the plantation sector and its historical context. The current situation is seen also to reinforce educational inequality. An attempt is made to identify measures that may contribute to reducing disparities and to improving the quality of education in plantation schools.