

Introducing z-score and English medium instruction at GCE advanced level

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After implementing the reforms in 1998 the government had introduced two major changes to the education system. Both were controversial decisions among the public. One was to introduce English medium at A/L science classes. Due to the demand of learning in the English medium, many international schools were started in major cities. It was a privilege to the English speaking upper class to capture administrative jobs, and was a disadvantage for the people who get benefit from free education. The ability of working in an international medium is a major necessity for globalization. So the government identified the need of English and started implementing English medium instruction as an option in a few schools. Introducing z-score as a selecting tool to university education was the other change. Although the aggregate mark has been in operation in Sri Lanka for many years, it is not a method that is used in educationally advanced countries.

The study aimed at finding out the preferences and views on above two matters. 10% of all 1AB schools in the country were selected for the study. Questionnaires were developed to collect data from students, teachers, parents, education officers, principals and university teachers. Data collectors visited the schools to administer the questionnaires. Some were allowed to respond in writing, while others were interviewed. Analysis of data from the interviews and questionnaires revealed that majority had positive attitudes towards introducing English medium. 20% of students and more than 40% of other respondents agreed to have z-score. A considerable percentage of all respondents were not aware of the concept of z-score. Making aware of the concept of the z-score for all categories of respondents is recommended for successful implementation of reforms.