Respect for Diversity in Educational Publication
- The Sri Lankan Experience

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24th March 2003
Contents

1. Environment: education, conflict and peace.........................................................3
   1.1 The structure of the education system and the role of textbooks
   1.2 Education and conflict: an historical perspective
   1.3 Education and peace: policy reforms and the current peace process

2. Textbooks and respect for diversity: issues and sources of complaints..............7
   2.1 The process of textbook production and the problems that arose
   2.2 Studies and sources of complaints
      Ceylon Tamil Teachers Union (CTTU)

3 Measures taken to address diversity issues in textbooks...............................10
   3.1 Establishment of units to monitor bias
   3.2 The rugged path of the MBO
      3.2.1 Single Textbook Option (SBO)
      3.2.2 Multiple book option (MBO)
   3.3 Training of authors and publishers.
      3.3.1 Trial of Respect for Diversity Criteria
   3.4 Respect for Diversity review panels
      3.4.1 Reaching consensus on a review criteria
      3.4.2 Keeping in touch with reality

4 Lessons learnt and policy implications..............................................................19

Annex 1:
Excerpts from Tamilnet .................................................................21

Annex 2:
The evaluation system.................................................................23

Annex 2:
Selection Criteria for Textbooks.................................................35

Annex 3:
Sensitivity.................................................................25

Annex 4:
Presentation.................................................................26

Annex 5:
Evaluation Docket.................................................................30

Annex6:
Compromising reality.................................................................41

Bibliography.................................................................42

1.1 The structure of the education system and the role of textbooks

Sri Lanka has some 10,000 government schools serving just over four million primary and secondary students, and staffed by 190,000 teachers. Private sector involvement is small, with some 3% of pupils enrolled in private schools. Schools are mostly divided by medium of instruction according to the two national languages: Sinhala (70.6% of schools) or Tamil (28.7%). English - the medium of instruction up to Independence - is officially the 'link language'. Enrolment and retention figures are high by South Asian standards, with universal or near universal primary enrolment and 76% gross enrolment at secondary level. However, there is only capacity to enroll 3% of the age cohort at the tertiary level, with a further 3% attending distance education courses or enrolled overseas. Competition for admission to the best schools and to precious university places contributes to an exam-oriented culture, with a large number of primary students and a majority of secondary students involved in private tuition. Achievement levels are low, relative to the high levels of enrolment and national literacy (92%), with around 30% of students obtaining the pass marks for the key subjects at G.C.E. O Level.

The 13th Amendment to the constitution (1987) devolved the bulk of the responsibility for primary and secondary education to the provincial level. The eight Provinces administer the school system, hire and deploy teachers and deliver training through Provincial Ministries of Education (reporting to the Provincial Councils) and Provincial Departments of Education (reporting to the national level line Ministry). The national-level line Ministry is primarily responsible for policy development, planning and monitoring, national examinations, the provision of some school supplies, and the management of about 200 'national schools'. Affiliated to the line Ministry, the National Institute of Education (NIE) develops the national curriculum (producing syllabi and teachers guides), and is also responsible for developing teacher training content, and conducting some research.

In spite of current educational reforms which emphasize a student-centered and activity-based approach to teaching and learning, teaching is still for the most part heavily teacher-centered, relying on traditional 'chalk and talk' techniques. The textbook is very much the central component of the teaching-learning process, with teachers making little reference to the syllabus, to broader pedagogical resources, and to the development of broader competencies beyond the remit and content areas of textbooks.

The historical monopoly of textbook production, combined with the reluctance of teachers and students to deviate from the textbook, has made the content of the single textbook that much more critical and contentious, both as an academic resource for children, and as a window to the troubled world around them. To understand that troubled world, it is necessary to trace briefly the historical links between the development of the education system and the development of an ethnic-based politics, leading to armed conflict.

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2 Currently divided in the Ministry of Human Resource Development Education and Cultural Affairs, and the Ministry of School Education
1.2 Education and conflict: an historical perspective

Sri Lanka's ethno-graphic mosaic can be divided along ethnic, religious, and geographical lines. The majority ethnic group is Sinhalese, constituting around three quarters of the population. There are three sizeable minority groups: Sri Lankan Tamils, Indian Tamils and Muslims\(^3\). (Most of the Muslim community speaks Tamil, but identified as an ethnic group by their religion.) Most Sinhalese are Buddhist, and most Tamils are Hindu. A minority of Sinhalese and Tamils are Christians\(^4\).

Geographically, Sinhalese are spread across the island, with few in the North-East, and with a concentration in the Southern half of the country. Sri Lankan Tamils are concentrated in the North, and to a lesser extent the East, which has the largest proportional representation of Muslims. Indian Tamils are concentrated in the plantation areas in the center of the country. Mixed communities can be found in Colombo, in the center of the country (particularly Kandy and Badulla), and across the East coast (particularly Trincomalee). Clear divisions along geographical lines have led in part to the demand for a separate Tamil state across the North and the East.

Both the Sinhalese and Tamil communities trace their origins to India. The Sinhalese claim descent from Aryan settlers around the 5\(^{th}\) Century BC. Many Sri Lankan Tamils claim their descendants predated the Aryans. The Muslims are descended from Moorish traders. Indian Tamils\(^5\) are the descendants of plantation laborers brought over by the British.

The development of clear Sinhalese and Tamil ethnic identities formed between the 9\(^{th}\) and 12\(^{th}\) centuries in the face of external threats from southern India. These wars were portrayed in historical chronicles compiled by Sinhalese Buddhist monks as campaigns to protect the Sinhalese Buddhist national identity. This interpretation which was put forward in school textbooks, and continues to be a source of grievance and polarization today (Perera, 1999).

Pre-independence Ceylon saw the emergence of nationalist movements against British colonial rule. While the Tamil community was apprehensive about the prospect of majority Sinhalese rule, there was also apprehension and resentment on the part of the Sinhalese due to the pre-dominance of Sri Lankan Tamils in university education and in the civil administration. This was largely as a result of missionary schools having been established in Tamil areas of the north, and the disproportionate hiring of Tamils by the British colonial administration. These fears led to the increasing consolidation of an ethnic-based politics.

In 1944 a resolution was passed specifying that Sinhala and Tamil would become the language of instruction at primary level (previously it had been English), with schools choosing their medium of instruction at the post-primary level. From 1952-56 the medium of instruction in secondary schools gradually changed to Sinhala and Tamil. The expansion of

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\(^3\) According to the 1981 Census [replace with 2001 census figures] the population is divided as follows:
- Sinhalese (74.0%)
- Sri Lankan Tamils (12.7%)
- Indian Tamils (5.5%)
- Muslims (7.1%)
- Burghers (0.3%)
- Malays (0.3%)
- other (0.2%)

\(^4\) Buddhists (69.3%) (Sinhalese); Hindus (15.5%) (Sri Lankan and Indian Tamil); Muslims (7.6%) (a distinct ethnic group); Christians (7.4%) (minority Sinhalese and Tamil, and Burghers)

\(^5\) The one million Indian Tamils brought over by the British were disenfranchised in 1948 under the Ceylon Citizenship Act. 300,000 were repatriated to India under the Ceylon agreement of 1964. While the rest have gradually been conferred citizenship rights (as "Indian Tamils"), they are still an impoverished community with little political voice.
schooling in the national languages through the 1950s and 1960s opened up new educational opportunities. However, it also resulted in fewer opportunities for interaction between Sinhalese and Tamil children and youth. Divided by language and ethnicity, they increasingly lost the ability to communicate with each other, leading to alienation and mutual suspicion.

Divisions were exacerbated by successive government policies discriminating against the Tamil minorities. In 1956, the government of S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike established Sinhala as the single official language of the country, through the "Sinhala Only Bill" (Official Language Act, No. 33 of 1956). The 1960s saw the development of state-aided colonization schemes resettling Sinhalese communities in the predominantly Tamil and Muslim territories in the North and the East. The 1971 "standardisation" policy ensured that the number of students qualifying for university entrance from each language was proportionate to the number of students who sat the university entrance examination in that language. This led to a reduction in Tamil students gaining admission to universities. The university admission policies of the 1970s were a landmark in that ethnicity became an official basis for discrimination in national education policy.

Divisive ethnic politics and loss of confidence in non-violent and democratic politics fuelled the desire for autonomous, separatist solutions through the 1970s. Among the separatist groups, the Tamil Tigers (later the Liberation Tamil Tigers of Eelam (LTTE)) emerged in the 1970s. The 1970s and 1980s also saw armed insurrections from the radical left Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP), based in the South. Both groups drew from the large numbers of disadvantaged and disenfranchised youth. The JVP insurrections in 1971 and 1987 accounted for 60,000 - 70,000 lives, as many as the 19-year civil conflict between the government and the LTTE. The government-LTTE conflict emerged into full-scale armed conflict in July 1983.

From 1983 to 2001, the state and the LTTE prosecuted a civil conflict founded on disputed Tamil demands for a separate state in the North and East. The battle arena was for the most part localized to the North and East. The war accounted for over 60,000 lives, massive physical destruction, large population displacement, and an economic cost that the government could not sustain. In addition to the effect of people's livelihoods, the war further entrenched deep-rooted ethnic polarisation and resentment. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the warring parties in February 2002 following a unilateral ceasefire declared by the LTTE. The peace process has been made possible through a combination of factors: a military stalemate, unsustainable economic burden for the government, a change of government, proscription of the LTTE by certain powerful nations of the world, a reduction in international financing for the LTTE. Formal peace negotiations have been conducted through 2002 and 2003, around a proposed federalist structure of government.

It is worth recounting these historical developments in some detail for two reasons: first, to chart the emergence of an ethnic-based politics and conflict; second, to show the prominent

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6 The 13th Amendment to the Constitution (1987) decreed Tamil as an official language, along with Sinhalese, with English as the "link language".
7 The language-based admission policy was abolished in 1977.
8 e.g. the failure to implement the devolutionary measures of the 1957 Bandaranaike-Chelvanayagam Pact, and the 1965 Dudley-Chelvanayagam Pact
9 The JVP are now a mainstream political party, and a strong voice against the current peace process.
role of language policy and education policy in the development of these divisions and of this conflict. As the principle instrument in the teaching-learning process, the production and content textbooks have been a potent symbol of these divisions and grievances for the minority communities, within a system, which has historically divided, rather than united, the diverse and rich cultures of the island.

1.3 Education and peace: policy reforms and the current peace process

Against the backdrop of these historical developments, Sri Lanka undertook two cycles of education reform, in 1972 and 1981. It is worthy of note that both of these reform processes were virtually silent on issues of respect for diversity, multi-culturalism, and the role of education in developing a peaceful and plural national identity. The first serious examination of the inter-relationship between education and social cohesion came with the Report of the Presidential Youth Commission in 1990, which attributed the youth unrest of the late eighties in large part to the inadequacies of the existing education system. In response to this report, the President established the National Education Commission (NEC), as the new policy-making body for education, to spearhead a new cycle of reforms.

The First Report of the NEC in 1992 (NEC, 1992) established nine national goals for education, which still provide the vision for the education system today. The first national goal reads as follows: “The achievement of a functioning sense of National Cohesion, National Integrity, National Unity”. This was a landmark statement. Since the NEC report in 1992, it is fair to say that all the government policy documents governing the structure and content of the education system have strongly positioned the role of education in promoting diversity and peace building (see Table 1 below).

Table 1: GoSL Policy Framework for addressing Social Cohesion in Education (selected)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>• National Goals of Education: “The achievement of a functioning sense of National Cohesion, National Integrity, National Unity” (Goal 1) The First Report of the National Education Commission, 1992</th>
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<td>• “The educational process should seek to engender in impressionable minds the conviction that no ideology or approach constitutes the sole repository of truth. In a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural society there must be recognition of the inherent value of diversity.” The First Report of the National Education Commission, 1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “Concepts relating to stabilisation of morals, inculcation of values, appreciation of other social groups and cultures, and living in harmony will run as unifying threads through all three Key Stages [of primary education].” General Education Reforms, 1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “The broad curriculum framework should serve the needs of…a multi-cultural, pluralistic but nationally integrated society” Curriculum Policy &amp; Process Plan, June 1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “Even if good schools and textbooks exist, they are unlikely to play a positive role if teachers are not properly trained to take into account the country’s multi-ethnic and multi-religious reality…trainees should also be given the necessary teaching skills for serving in a multi-ethnic and multi-religious socio-political environment.” National Framework for Relief, Rehabilitation and Reconciliation in Sri Lanka, June 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “Concept of social harmony, conflict resolution and democratic living will be integrated into secondary and tertiary curriculum” Regaining Sri Lanka – Action Plan, 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “The school curriculum will be opened to scrutiny by multicultural textbook review panels” Regaining Sri Lanka – Action Plan, 2002</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10 'Regaining Sri Lanka' is being put forward as the government's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
Most commentators agree, however, that this commitment to diversity and multi-culturalism has never been properly articulated and operationalised through the education system. Initiatives to promote diversity and pluralism have been for the most part small-scale, and peripheral to the mainstream of the curriculum, textbook and materials production, teacher development, school management and the structure and governance of the education system. However, these policy commitments, or aspirations, have provided a significant lever for efforts to promote respect for diversity in textbooks, due in large part to pressure and support from actors external to the government education establishment.

2. Textbooks and respect for diversity: issues and sources of complaints

2.1 The process of textbook production and the problems that arose

The Government dominates the educational publications sector in Sri Lanka through its provision of free textbooks to all students from grade 1 to 11. The production and distribution of these textbooks are handled by the Education Publications Department (EPD). The EPD and the National Institute of Education (NIE) both also produce other educational material, such as supplementary readers, workbooks and teacher guides. In addition, the private sector produces a range of books. These books are mainly produced for the GCE A/L cycle, although some books are also produced by the higher education sector. The quality of contents of the books, where considered by the Ministry of Education to be inadequate. The material in the free textbooks is often poorly written and presented. The subject matter covered is inadequate and somewhat outdated. This is linked to the fact that there is no established cycle for curriculum development or an efficient mechanism for relating reforms in the school curricula into new, improved textbooks.

The premier institution for the production and distribution of educational material is the Educational Publications Department (EPD). The EPD was founded as a closed department of the Ministry of Education in 1965. As a closed department, the EPD was not part of the overall public service system. Instead, the EPD was treated as a sophisticated, specialized field requiring appropriate skilled staff. The EPD had a specific staff recruitment and training scheme with a written aptitude test and a viva voce interview. This ensured a full complement of skilled professional staff for the EPD.

The main purpose of the EPD, when it was first established, was the production and distribution of Sinhala and Tamil language textbooks. This became necessary due to the need for textbooks in Sinhala and Tamil following the change in the language of instruction in the school system from English to Sinhala and Tamil. The EPD developed Sinhala and Tamil textbooks parallel to the private sector publishers who were involved in the production and, mainly the import of English language textbooks.

Two important changes weakened the capacity of the EPD.

1. In 1975, the EPD was absorbed into the Sri Lanka Educational Service (SLES, later SLEAS). The commissioner of the EPD, the Additional Commissioner, the Chief Editors and the Editors were all absorbed into the career civil service. This caused the EPD to lose its closed status, resulting in it receiving a recruitment and career system.

There are currently efforts to do this. It is hoped that it will result in much-needed reforms.
that were not appropriate to its specialized status and needs. And leading to a drain of skilled staff.

2. In 1980 the Government initiated the Free Textbook Scheme. With the advent of this scheme, the objective of the EPD was to translate, publish and distribute textbooks for use in primary and secondary education. Produce, Publish, distribute and sell dictionaries, glossaries etc. Purchase the copyright of approved textbooks for higher education and translate and publish them in Sinhala and Tamil. The EPD encouraged book production for reading and also prepared study aids and audio and visual equipment.

From this the central objective of the EPD, was the production and distribution of textbooks and workbooks under the free textbook scheme. The task of successfully distributing textbook titles and workbooks to over 375,000 students, ranging from grades 1-11 scattered across more than 10,000 schools, absorbed virtually the entire capacity of the EPD. Since the EPD lacked the capacity to produce more than one textbook per subject, and in the absence of the private sector all students in the country were restricted to the use of one particular textbook per subject. The absence of competition also weakened the quality of textbooks.

The state monopoly on production of a single textbook inhibited the development of writers and authors. The EPD was compelled under Government rules to pay Government rates to authors for their books. These rates were extremely low and did not reflect the value of the labour put in by authors. As a result, the development of a cadre of skilled, professional writers of educational material was inhibited.

The National Institute of Education (NIE) was originally established as a high level educational policy making body. Essentially, the NIE was to act as an educational think tank for the ministry of Education. However over time the NIE assumed a multiplicity of roles. Currently, it prepares curricula, prints and distributed teacher guides, conducts seminars, has commenced the preparation of model textbooks under an ADB funded curriculum reform project in Science, Mathematics and Language, prints books and conducts workshops and seminars. In the process of conducting and implementing such a wide variety of tasks, almost inevitably, bottlenecks and inefficiencies appear to have crept into the NIE.

2.2 Studies and sources of complaints
Ceylon Tamil Teachers Union (CTTU)

The CTTU were perhaps the strongest critics of the NIE and the Ministry of Education, and the most persistent advocates for change. Over a period of years, the CTTU make continual representations to the central education authorities, and as high up as the President. Annex 1 presents a digest (verbatim) of articles taken from 'TamilNet' - a news service for the Sri Lankan and international Tamil community - over a four year period from 1999-2003. Excerpts from articles are quoted at some length to trace the dynamic of how change brought about. The key messages that emerge from reading the articles are as follows, organised into three categories (i) criticisms of textbook content (ii) criticisms of the textbook production process (ii) comments on the process of lobbying adopted by the CTTU:
(i) criticisms of textbook content:
• distortion of facts and distortion of history
• grammatical, spelling and factual errors
• material offensive to Hindus
• dominance of Sinhalese Buddhist culture

(ii) criticisms of the textbook production process:
• Tamils not involved in writing the textbooks
• Textbooks written in Sinhala, and then translated into Tamil

(iii) comments on the process of lobbying adopted by the CTTU:
• the persistent pressure exerted by the CTTU on the central government;
• unfulfilled promises from the state (often due to the many changes in senior personnel);
• complaints were take to the highest levels of government (successive Ministers, President, Prime Minister);
• the role of the World Bank, perceived by the CTTU as an important ally ("It is high time to implement that decision that the World Bank has endorsed.");
• progress took time;
• the virtual absence (in terms of participation of, or mention of) the two other Tamil speaking communities i.e. Muslims and Indian Tamils
• no mention that the Sinhala-medium books also contained many errors


This study by the Sama Sakthi Teachers Forum was presented at 2 day workshop in 1999 on textbooks and diversity, co-hosted by World Bank and DFID, and including international representation from Ulster University. The study made the following criticisms:
the textbooks do not educate the child about the various characteristics of a multi-religious and a multi-racial society;
the majority of Sinhala medium textbooks emphasize Sinhalese Buddhist attitudes;
distorted maps under-represent North and Eastern Provinces;
"geographical, social, economical or cultural features" of Tamil communities (including the plantation sector) are not adequately discussed or presented;
in studying art, the Tamil student only studies Sinhalese Buddhist aspects of art;
the textbooks encourage children to develop "apartheid attitudes";
It should be noted that the Sama Sakthi report itself contains its own negative stereotypes.

12 "In Year 7 textbook on Buddhism, it is said "I shall refrain from killing". This explanation has been limited to only to the killing of animals. But no doubt, that its reference should be extended to the idea that all human beings have the right to live freely. It is known that some Buddhists extend their sympathies only towards animals. Some pious Buddhists who abstain from eating flesh are seen indulging in inhuman cruelty when it comes to the question of Tamil people. It is time to raise the awareness of the students in this matter, and make them consider the first precept of Buddhism in a much perspective [sic]." (Sama Sakthi, 1998)
Education and Social Cohesion Analysis of Potential Ethno-Cultural and Religious Bias in the School Text Books of History and Social Studies for Year 7, 8, 10 and 11, Yoga Rasanayagam & V. Palaniappan, 1999

- the history of Sri Lanka is confined to a few selected Sinhala kings
- there is no chapter allocated to Tamils, Hinduism, and the Jaffna Kingdoms
- bias through use of words and language e.g. Tamils are portrayed as "aggressors"; forces of the Tamil kings are "mercenaries", whereas forces of the Sinhala kings are "soldiers"
- Tamil and Hindu culture and history is largely absent
- the Tamil vocabulary / terminology is often not accurate
- neglect of demographic and sociological information, important for cultivating unity amongst diverse groups
- no Tamil scholar on the Advisory Board, and not Tamil author included

Assessment of Ethno-cultural and Religious Bias in Social Studies and History Texts of Years 7, 8, 10 and 11, Nira Wickramasinghe and Sasanka Perera, 1999

In the introduction, the authors point out that the content and politics of textbooks have not become part of a wider public discourse in Sri Lanka, as has happened in other countries. The study goes on to note the following in its assessment of the texts:

- the history represented is the history of the Sinhala Buddhist nation state;
- the history is event-centred; it might be more problem-centred, encouraging the student to take on a multiplicity of possible interpretations;
- the textbook provides the truth which the student is expected to absorb and accept as a given;
- myth and scientific evidence are amalgamated;
- cultural identity is presented as a fixed essence, rather than a fluid positioning;
- modern history does not address inequitable policies or ethnic tensions and conflict;
- pictures represent Sinhala Buddhist art and culture; Christian, Hindu and Muslim cultures are virtually absent;
- compared to the social studies texts in the 1970s and early 1980s, biases and negative portrayals are considerably less; however, the difficult issues of ethnicity and history are more or less avoided.

The study concludes that biases are present in the theoretical understanding of what constitutes history (the unquestioned narrative of the Sinhala-Buddhist nation state), in what constitutes identity, and in what is not referred to. A greater understanding of history, pedagogy and child psychology is necessary to present a syllabus and texts which promotes tolerance, critical thinking and multi-culturalism.

3 Measures taken to address diversity issues in textbooks

3.1 Establishment of units to monitor bias

Respect for diversity was formally affirmed as policy in the NIE curriculum Policy Plan Which stated thus: ‘Units will be set up at the NIE and the EPD for Bias detection. All
resource material produced centrally will be checked for ethnic, religious, gender and poverty bias by the responsible organization.\(^\text{13}\)

How the EPD policy appeared in the NIE document is not clear. But EPD realized that setting up a unit in the EPD from its own members would not have served any meaningful purpose as they are neither qualified nor trained to detect bias. They believed that the inclusion of the Sensitivity criteria in the evolution process was a good interim arrangement. The Sensitivity factor is simple to apply and has proved very effective. Sensitivity is only one out of 8 factors used in the evaluation of manuscripts by the EPD. (Please see Annex 2 & 3).

### 3.2 The rugged path of the MBO

The Implementation Plan of the Second General Educational Project\(^\text{14}\) (October 1997) recognizes the need for a Multiple Book Option (MBO) as ‘The student free textbooks have resulted in one inadequate book being available for each subject or grade negatively effecting the learning opportunities of education as a whole.’ The recommendations include ‘to promote private sector participation in all steps of book production’ (page 6) and ‘Government (MOF and MEHE) would agree to establish the multiple book option’ (page 16).

#### 3.2.1 Single Textbook Option (SBO)

The main purpose of the SBO was to trial out the documentation, the submissions by the authors, and the evaluation system. Any errors confronted could be corrected in time for the smooth implementation of the MBO. In their schedule ‘EPD planned to Invite bids for Single Book Option (SBO) No1 in October 1\(^\text{st}\) 1999, followed by SBO No.2 on January 1\(^\text{st}\) 2000 In the SBO, the authors were selected by a process of competitive bidding.’\(^\text{15}\) They were contracted to submit the book in electronic format on a CD. Only one title was selected and the EPD will be the publisher. The MBO Nos.1 and 2 were scheduled for Invitations on January 3\(^\text{rd}\), 2000 and December 1\(^\text{st}\) 2000 respectively.

The Sinhala and Tamil readers for grade 5 were the first two books published using private sector authors selected by the new criteria for evaluation. Although these books were not tested for ‘Respect for Diversity’ they were tested for Sensitivity. Following is a comparison of the Sinhala textbook.

The Grade 5 Sinhala textbook was first printed in 1985. It was revised in 1990. The book was used as the only textbook in Grade 5 classes for a period of 15 years. Quality of illustrations, design and printing the book was poor. Yet when evaluated during a training session for Subject specialist Panels it passed the sensitivity criteria. Special mention was made to lesson 11, titled “In Jaffna” (page 46-51). Through this lesson the students are made aware of the different cultural practices of the people in the North. The whole lesson is very delicately handled. But there is no mention of Tamil or Muslim communities in any of the other lessons.

In her introduction, the author of the new Grade 5 textbook, as mentioned thus: “I am aware that Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim students are studying in the same grade. In some lessons I

\(^\text{13}\) Curriculum Policy of the NIE, June 1999 (Page 23)
\(^\text{14}\) The general education project II is a World bank (IDA) funded project.
\(^\text{15}\) World Bank Mission Aide Memoire - May 1999 Annex 2
have included suggestion to assist students to live in harmony”. This is evident from the first lesson “World News from home” (Page 1-9). In this lesson the Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim children mix as equals. They have common interests and play together. To a lesser degree lessons 5 and 6 (page 31- 49) also refer to Muslim and Tamil people with respect. Lesson 5 deals with the Sri Lankan New year which is celebrated by the Sinhalese (mostly Buddhists) and the Hindus (mostly Tamils), probably this lesson could have been exploited to achieve respect for diversity. Elsewhere in the book, the author has skillfully introduced several poems from the Tibetan Buddhist monk Rev. Mahinda. The choice of verses and the introduction leaves no room for bias.

3.2.2 Multiple book option (MBO)

Although the government needed multiple textbooks for the children in schools, neither they nor the implementing agency, the EPD had a clear idea how to get started ‘Clarification is also needed on what is understood by various parties by the term “multiple textbooks”, and how such a concept can be introduced equitably while retaining the free book scheme.’ It was in late 1998 that two International consultants along with the National Consultant worked out the modalities of the MBO. By May 1999 EPD had a clear view and a plan of action for the MBO. One of the main restrictions being ‘by far the most important issue is the timely availability of the syllabus produced by the NIE.’

While the SBO went off smoothly, resistance to the MBO was brewing. ‘Opposition to the enrolment of the private sector in textbook production is to be expected in light of loss of the state printing monopoly and also from elements of the private sector concerned with possible competition from Indian printers.’

The bleakest period for the MBO was the year 2000, when the Commissioner EPD and the Hon Minister of Education expressed doubts about it. A letter issued by the Minister of Education instructing the Commissioner of EPD to holdup the MBO, was responsible for creating a crisis during one World Bank Mission.

The problems faced by the MBO were many. ‘The MBO had the potential of making a very significant transformation in the field of educational in Sri Lanka. Yet, there was no clear policy regarding its implementation. As a result the execution was very slow. This in turn created doubts in the minds of the bidders. They were reluctant to invest in a project that would last only a couple of years’. It further stated. ‘The Grade 6 bid was a failure. The response was very poor with regards quality of manuscripts submitted and the number of bidders. The main reasons for this failure were identified as follows:

- The cost of Bid Security is off-putting to small bidders.
- Lack of confidence among bidders in new process of textbook renewal
- No statement of support from Ministry on its own policy
- The extreme left political parties using anti World Bank slogans.
- Poor awareness of what the MBO means, and confusion between the MBO as a concept in its own right and the World Bank supported procurement.

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16 World Bank Mission Aide Memoire April 1998
17 World Bank Mission Aide Memoire May 1999
18 World Mission, Aide Memoire Nov. 1999
19 Dr. Tim Hunt 2001
• Lack of ownership by MOE and especially by EPD.
• Lack of continuity and commitment in EPD top management throughout 2000.
• Negative behavior by NIE; ineffectiveness made worse by the TEB (example: stalling of Bid 001 Math. Grade 9 by one board member after it had been approved by Textbook Evaluation Board’s own specialized panel)
• Incomplete and hard to interpret syllabuses issued for Grade 6
• Shortage of authors
• Failure of experienced publishers to bid (Some caused by negative rumors)
• Small number of Tamil language bidders’

Official protests by the World Bank mission and Presidential intervention brought the MBO back on track. Having lost almost one year in the process the EPD was pressed to get the MBO on track. More problems were in store for the MBO. In 2002 the Cabinet of Ministers turned down the Cabinet paper requesting authority to offer contracts to selected bidders for the Grade 6 MBO, based on a technicality.

3.3 Training of authors and publishers.

As the manuscripts presented under the new scheme were of poor standard the need to train the authors was urgently felt. An International consultant was obtained to conduct two residential workshops and evolve a Generic manual for Textbook authors in Sri Lanka.

“A Guide for Textbook Authors” was prepared like a primer or a handbook, for easy reading and use. It consists of four chapters.

Chapter I :- gives answers to questions on the linkage between the textbook content and the curriculum requirements. It covers the enrichment, accuracy, objectivity in textbook content and explores the factors considered in assessing textbook manuscripts etc.

Chapter II :- offers some internationally accepted guidelines/or writing quality textbook manuscripts. It includes the organization and presentation of a textbook chapter, importance of chapter length, role of punctuation in textbooks, importance of summary and desired writing style, among others.

Chapter III :- contains a series of evaluation guidelines/or assessing final textbook manuscripts. The aspects for evaluation presented are on content, educational approaches, language use and illustrations.

Chapter IV:- presents sets of criteria as practical exercises during various stages of textbook development. The criteria for manuscript acceptability during the writing phase, the criteria for evaluation during the tryout phase,
and the criteria for revision are detailed to complete the development cycle of a textbook manuscript.

The EPD organized two national textbook development workshops in June 2002, with the International Consultant Ms. Caridad A. Miranda and National Consultants providing the lead role. The draft of the generic manual was discussed with more than 80 participants, comprising mainly of current and aspiring textbook authors. The National Consultants translated/summarized the first two chapters of the manual. The translations in Sinhalese and Tamil were presented for tryout during the second workshop. Revisions were made based on feedback from participants and concerned EPD officials.

Since the respect for diversity criteria was not developed by then, the participants were trained on the Sensitivity criteria in the evaluation system.

EPD made 100 copies of the Sinhala and 50 each of the Tamil and the English manuals for free distribution among those who were writing for Grade 6 and 7 textbooks. Having incorporated some corrections the Manuals are now with the printers to print 10,000 Sinhala and 5,000 each of Tamil and English.

3.3.1 Trial of Respect for Diversity Criteria

PELP\(^20\) after producing the textbooks for Grade 3-5 embarked on the project of preparing supplementary readers for the same grades. They developed 21 readers for each grade making a total of 63. PELP wrote the booklets and prepared an artist’ brief for each reader. EPD undertook to invite competitive bids for typesetting, illustration and printing of the readers. Various panels of the NIE has checked all the readers.

In the bid document it was stated and at the pre-bid conference it was stressed that they should strictly follow the text and the artists brief. The submissions were to be judged by the quality of layout and the appropriateness of the illustrations. In order to evaluate the submissions the bidders were asked to present one book in the final printed form for each grade. The title to develop for each grade was selected by a panel from the EPD.

An evaluation panel was formulated following the normal EPD procedure. Panel consisted of 6 members. It consisted of one Muslim, two Tamils and 3 Sinhalese. The ethnic and religious mix was proper. Yet the gender mix was way off. All the members were females.

An adaptation of the evaluation criteria used for textbooks was used to train the panel. The evaluation was completed ahead of time. This prompted the EPD to trial the evaluation of the ‘Respect for diversity’. A short training using the draft was well received by the panel. They were now instructed to take a fresh critical look at the 3 books that received the highest marks. Only difference being this time they were to evaluate the whole book including text, for sensitivity. Given below is the joint report submitted by them.

The Grade 3 Supplementary Reader ‘The lost Little dog’
The story suits the level of the child. The vocabulary and utterances are familiar to the child. Repetition is good. But it is unusual for a dog to be taken to the hospital and attended to by a

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\(^{20}\) Primary English Language Project funded by the UK DfID, Managed by the British council and implemented by the NIE.
doctor (MBBS) instead of a Vet. It is not customary for a Muslim girl to carry a dog. The shawl she wears is not appropriately drawn.

Grade 4 Supplementary Reader ‘The Magic Pedestrian Crossing’
Good story with language functions in simple language. Convey a good message to students. Freedom should be given to the artist. Too many instructions will inhibit the creativity of the artist.

Grade 5 Supplementary Reader ‘Life in 3002’
The story is interesting. It can hold the interest of the students. It makes the child aware of the importance of protecting the environment. The illustrations are clear and colorful. Good layout.

Out of the three selections only the Grade3 Reader dealt with normal day to day people. The other two samples dealt with fantasy worlds. The probability of finding material with bias is less in stories of this nature. But, going through the list of topics it is noted that majority of the stories do not deal with fantasy. This has placed EPD in a pensive mood, as to how they should proceed from here.

3.4 Respect for Diversity review panels

EPD is committed to publishing textbooks that do not hurt any group of people. As such it was concerned that all textbooks should conform to the Sensitivity guidelines set by it. Some complaints were received regarding content of textbooks published during the year 2000. Several teams were selected and all such offensive parts were removed in 2001. The revised books were handed over to the WB mission in February 2002. It should be noted that the EPD was not responsible for their content. They were written and evaluated by the NIE. Even the proof reading was done by the NIE.

The following action was listed in the February 2002 Aide-Memoire: "EPD should train and pilot test members of social harmony review panels and submit a brief objective evaluation report of training effectiveness by June 15, 2002". EPD was worried that the creation of another review panel would further delay the process of evaluation.

This was clarified thus: ‘The intention was not to set up another level of textbook review, particularly at a time when we are trying to simplify the review processes and make them more efficient. The intention is to assemble a multi-cultural team of historians / sociologists etc., in order to review some secondary level textbooks, with a view to
(i) Assessing objectively and expertly the 'sensitivity' of these textbooks in terms of ethno-cultural bias, gender, geography etc.
(ii) In so doing, also to assess the diagnostic tool itself and to recommend amendments as necessary. You might want to choose a selection of texts across relevant subjects and grades, but particularly focusing on Social Studies and History.

Realizing that the inclusion of the Sensitivity criteria alone is not sufficient to implement the “respect for diversity in textbooks” the EPD decided to form a panel of eminent persons to advice them as to how it could be accomplished. It was decided that the review panel should includes people from outside the Ministry, with the exception of the inclusion of the Addl. Commissioner, serving as the link between the EPD and the Panel. The constitution is multi-ethnic and multi-religious.
It was decided to allow the Panel to start by reviewing the newly written Science and Technology textbook for Grade 9. This book is to be handed over for printing soon.
The ‘Respect for diversity’ panel comprises of the following:

Ms. Ranjini Senanayake, BA SL, (Additional Commissioner EPD), heads the Panel. She will also serve as the convener.
Dr Sasanka Perera (Dept. of Sociology, University of Colombo)
Dr. Kamalanathan (President of Jaffna NCOE)
Professor Yuvi Thangarajah (Acting Vice Chancellor, Head of Anthropology Department, Eastern University)
Professor Sudharshan Seneviratne (Professor of Archaeology, University of Peradeniya)
Ms. Jezima Ismail (former Principal, Muslim Ladies College, NEC)
Professor Swarna Jayaweera (NEC Representative)
Mrs. Sepali Kottegoda (Gender expert)
Mr. V. Palaniappan (Dept. of Sociology, University of Colombo)
Dr. Nira Wickramasinghe (Dept. of History and Political Science, University of Colombo)
Professor Rev. Bellanvila Wimalarathana (Professor of Religious Studies University of Sri Jayawardenapura)
Father Rev. Ivan Perera, Bishop of Colombo
Professor Mendis Rohanadeera (Professor History, University of Sri Jayawardenapura)

The inaugural meeting of the panel was held on the 12th of March 2003. Only 6 out of 13 of the invited members were present despite sending out reminders and confirming their willingness to participate. The following members were present: Prof. Sudarshan Seneviratne, Dr. Nira Wickremasinghe, Dr. Sasanka Perera, Dr. Yuvi Thangarajah Ms. Flora Nanayakkara represented Ms. Ranjini Senanayake and Fr. Carlton Silva, represented Fr. Rev. Ivan Perera. and two members from the World Bank office were present as observers. The Addl Commissioner EPD chaired the meeting.

National Consultant EPD in a presentation explained the functions of the panel and offered them a draft Evaluation Criteria. The presentation was preceded by a brief introduction to the MBO. The first few slides were academic in nature. Slide 9 introduced a possible method to categorize bias. It was agreed that ‘factually incorrect’ content is unacceptable whatever the effect it has on the students. At the same time there was agreement that ‘factually correct’ material that does not hurt are acceptable. Leaving the ‘factually correct but hurts a group’ as the gray area that really the Panel should be concerned about.

Having gone through the Bias detection technique the members were presented with three ‘Case Studies’ that were unique to the Sri Lankan context. (Please see slide 9 Annex 4)

(i) Removal of certain lessons from the Sinhala language Grade 9 textbook

In June 1998 a study by a certain NGO, identified 3 lessons from the Sinhala Grade 9 textbook as objectionable and insensitive. They recommended to the government that the lessons should be removed to build better understanding with the minorities. The first item was a poem written by the Tibetan Buddhist priest in the pre independence era urging Sinhalese to fight for their independence. The second lesson on Anagarika Darmapala was also on the same theme, and the third poem titled Aspirations was written in praise of Sri Lanka.

The following year the Grade 9 Sinhala language textbook was reprinted minus the above three lessons. At the time this change caused no major protests. However during that year the
civil war escalated in which the temple of the tooth, that was sacred to Buddhists was bombed. This triggered a string of protests where a mass rally urged the Chief incumbents of Malwatta and Asgiriya to advise the President to reintroduce these lessons. As the socio cultural environment was not suitable to analyze the issues of bias and sensitivity the EPD on the directions of the Government printed and supplied these lessons unchanged in the form of a 16 page supplement to all grade 9 students. The print order was for 150,000 such supplements which was distributed to the students.

The panel noted that the particular lessons could have been retained with proper treatment as per section 3 of the Evaluation docket.

(ii) A question of cast

On August 30th 1999 the Honorary Assistant Secretary of the Kshatriya Maha Saba wrote to the Ombudsman under the heading ‘Cast discrimination’ complaining about contents of the Grade 11 History textbook. According to him “Another recently published government publication, this time a history textbook for schools “Sri Lankave Itihasaya part III”, says that the Govi cast is the highest cast and all others are low castes. We have written to the president on 10/12/1998 and protested against its unfair and historical inaccuracy. Apart from an acknowledgement from the Secretary referenced EAP/7/12/183 on 16/12/1998 no action appears to have been taken by the Government and the book is still on sale throughout the country.”

Concurrently the same organization has initiated action through an attorney at Law to take legal action against the EPD.

The EPD selected a panel to study the contents and submit a report. Their report submitted in Sinhala, makes the following points. The Chapter in question ‘The Sri Lankan Economy and Society from 16th to 18th Century” was written according to the Curriculum set by the NIE. A professor of a recognized University in Sri Lanka wrote the chapter. As a whole the contents of the Chapter is a factual commentary of Social events as it prevailed then. Some sections may appear objectionable when taken out of context.

The panel did not have a solution to the above. They felt that more caution should be taken at the preparation of the curriculum. They also realized that the solution to this problem should be Sri Lankan based, as it is unique. Since the cast system is much more subtle than in India the solutions they adapted could not be used in Sri Lanka as successive Governments are reluctant to acknowledge its existence or pass legislation as it may aggravate the situation and bring out a dormant issue to the surface.
(iii) Insensitive treatment of religious content

As a rule the EPD staff does not write religious textbooks. The responsibility of the content is with the respective religious organizations. The EPD is only involved in the printing of these textbooks. The following objection is interesting as it does not involve any minority. The following observations were made by Dr. A.T Ariyaratne, the founder and Chairman of The Sarvodaya movement.

“It appears that sometimes the books written, for the teaching of Buddhism as a subject have been written with only Buddhism in mind and ignoring elementary educational and psychological principles. As an example, in the pupil text for Grade 2, where the second of the Five Precepts is to be taught what is presented is a number of people assaulting a person who has stolen a bunch of banana fruits and who is to be handed over to the police. There is an illustration depicting this. The lesson being taught here is that one should not steal because one will get assaulted and will be subject to punishments from the police and the judiciary. Such simplistic lessons can never lead to the achievements of a Buddhist education.” The textbook referred to above is not in use now.

The question as to who is really responsible for religious textbooks was discussed. It was felt that religious textbooks too should be presented for review by the panel on Respect for Diversity. This was based on the supposition that the religious textbooks could nullify the good that will be achieved in the other areas. However, it was decided not to press this point further, as the panel should keep track of their entry point.

3.4.1 Reaching consensus on a review criteria

Slide 10 ‘Process of Assessing’ directed the Panel to the Evaluation docket. This document was discussed page by page. There was broad consensus on the ‘Evaluation criteria’ presented.

The members present requested that in future the books that are to be reviewed be sent to them approximately three weeks in advance so that they could go through them leisurely. They feel that this will give them an opportunity to come prepared to discuss issues if needed.

3.4.2 Keeping in touch with reality

Altering material to make it suit ‘Respect for Diversity’ should be balanced against the reality. Certain criticisms seem to exceed this boundary. If the recommended corrections are effected it would compromise the reality of such textbooks. The following are two such examples.

(Please see Annex 6)

Grade 3 English language textbook: An illustration of an exotic fish vendor exhibiting his fish in polythene bags was found to be undesirable. This image was replaced by an image of a vendor exhibiting his fish in fish tanks. The undesirable image is the reality. Even at the present moment this type of vendor is seen.

Grade 6 Environmental studies textbook: During the seminar conducted at the ‘Hotel Blue Waters’ the president of the Tamil Teachers Union pointed out that symbolize hostility towards minority ethnic groups as the lion in the direction of the green and orange strips

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21 First E.A.Wijesuriya Memorial Oration, Buddhist Education p 12, 2002
representing the minorities. However this was the approved flag of Sri Lanka it is the duty of the author to present it in the authentic form.

4 Lessons learnt and policy implications.

1. Agitation by the CTTU and the steady pressure used on the EPD by the World Bank resulted in the formation of a special panel for ‘Respect for Diversity’. As illustrated by our case study No.1, we learnt that the timing and the expert handling of bias related activities are crucial for its success. The introduction of bias detection in educational publications should be handled with the following in mind.
   • The timing is appropriate to introduce bias detection in educational publications as peace negotiations to reach a political solution for the twenty year old civil war is welcomed by the majority of the people.
   • Government organizations lack the flexibility and the sensitivity needed to respond efficiently to issues of this nature.
   • Political patronage could do more harm than good. Sri Lankan politics alienates one group no matter how good the cause is.

2. Consideration of the following factors would be prudent in identifying the target group for the implementation of respect for diversity.
   • The involvement of highly respected educationists and professionals will boost the image of the movement.
   • The perception of the movement as only reacting to minority demands and criticism will negate its image. It should be proactive.
   • Majority groups should be made aware that “Respect for diversity” does not dilute their position. In fact it enhances their moral status. They should be encouraged to take the lead.
   • The misconception of considering “Respect for diversity” as a magnanimous gesture by the majority should be counteracted.

3. It is a concern that even after confirming attendance, some panel members did not attend the first meeting. The reasons could be any or all of the following.
   • Members of the panel having doubts about its worth.
   • Member fearing possible political implications by their participation
   • Inadequate incentives for Panel members to participate.
   • Lack of enthusiasm of the organizers.
   • Financial and administrative constraints faced by the EPD to sustain continuity.
   • Inadequate infrastructure of EPD to maintain the momentum.

4. The participation at the inaugural meeting was just below 50%. Those who participated contributed much to its success. Yet, unless all sections are represented there is a real danger of the constitution of the Panel itself becoming unintentionally biased.

5. For the success of this, it is imperative that the respect for diversity should gain wide acceptance among the public. This could be achieved by;
   • A proper awareness campaign, conducted in Sinhala, Tamil and English medium.

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David Hayes, Making a difference, 2002
- Train a core group of committed and competent persons on the techniques on identification and management of bias.
- Propagate the idea using trained resource personnel.
- Establishment of a non-political non-governmental body to coordinate activities.
- Provide wider opportunity for Sri Lanka to exchange experiences with foreign counterparts.
Annex 1:

Excerpts from Tamilnet tracing the development of CTTU involvement in textbook issues (1999-2003)

TamilNet, February 8, 1999, 'Teachers protest 'distorted history' in textbooks'
"The 20,000 member-strong Ceylon Tamil Teachers' Union (CTTU) is demanding the immediate withdrawal of the Year 6 Tamil text book for Environmental Studies from the use of Tamil medium students as it consists of articles distorting the history of Tamils in the island"

TamilNet, April 27, 1999, 'Tamil teachers meet World Bank delegation'
"The World Bank team told the CTTU that complaints about spelling and grammatical mistakes in Tamil medium textbooks had been taken up...The misrepresentation of the history of Tamil people on the island caused the team particular concern, said CTTU sources. To prevent such unfortunate lapses occurring again the World Bank delegation has suggested that in future teachers could be trained and paid to write textbooks. The team also told the CTTU delegation that the printing of school textbooks would in future be handed over to the private sector."

TamilNet, May 7, 1999, 'Assurances for better Tamil textbooks'
"The Director General of the National Institute of Education...has assured a delegation from the CTTU that Tamil speaking representatives would be included in the Text Book Committee from the Year 2001. Professor X said that the NIE would get the services of well-known Tamil speaking scholars to write Tamil medium textbooks from 2001...Professor X assured the CTTU delegation that the NIE would be making necessary arrangements for teacher-representatives to go through all textbooks already written to identify mistakes and other shortcomings before printing."

TamilNet, June 30, 1999, 'CTTU to whet new textbooks'
"The Minister of Education and Higher Education, Mr Y, has instructed his officials that Tamil medium textbooks meant for Grade 2, 7 and 10 under the new education reforms, should be printed and distributed to schools only after a three-member committee of the CTTU had agreed, said sources...The CTTU delegation had demanded that Tamil medium textbooks printed and published by the MOE under the new education reforms, this year to grade 1, 6 and 9 should be withdrawn immediately as those contained distortion of facts and history of Tamils in the country. The CTTU wanted new books should be prepared and distributed. In reply, the Additional Secretary to the Ministry Mr Z said it was not feasible to withdraw those books now. However the ministry would take necessary steps to correct the mistakes and errors found in those books."

TamilNet, July 10, 1999, 'Protests over government textbooks'
"At a two-day workshop jointly organised by the World Bank and the Department for International Development (DFID) of the United Kingdom, the Samshakthi Teachers' Forum presented its report on the role of school textbooks for multi social reconciliation in Sri Lanka. The Samshakthi Teachers' Forum pointed out in its reports that several portions from the Year 7 Sinhala textbook on Buddhism, were humiliating Tamil community in the island."

TamilNet, January 19, 2000, 'Teachers urge action on Tamil medium text books'
"The CTTU has urged the Minister of Education and Higher Education to take stern disciplinary action against the Department of Educational Publications for failing to print and distribute textbooks to Tamil medium schools in northern province in time."

TamilNet, January 22, 2000, 'CTTU protests poor standard Tamil Texts'
"The CTTU has demanded the resignations of the Chairman of the NIE and Director of the Department of Educational Publications for having failed to prepare and print high standard Tamil medium school textbooks without grammatical, spelling and factual errors." [letter to President]
TamilNet, February 11, 2000, 'CTTU urges withdrawal of Tamil text book'

"The CTTU Thursday requested the Ministry of Education and Higher Education to withdraw immediately a Grade-7 Tamil medium textbook - Social Studies and History - that was replete with language errors and distorted facts…The letter [to the MEHE] further states: "At least 15 grammatical, spelling and factual mistakes are found in each page of this book. Several articles in this 72 page-book are likely to hurt the feelings of Hindus. 27 pages of this book contain articles pertaining to the Buddhist Sinhala culture and its history. Not even one percent of the space is given to other religions or races. This book, prepared by the NIE, was published and distributed to schools free of charge by the EPD. Not a single Tamil or a Muslim participated in the preparation of this book. Several Sinhala words have been introduced in this Tamil book, giving an impression that authorities are keen in forcing Tamil students to learn Sinhalese language. This Tamil textbook would certainly affect the development of Tamil language and also would force Tamil students to learn a distorted version of the history of their country. I regret to inform you that our teachers will not use this book in schools as part of the curriculum. Therefore our union kindly requests you to ban this textbook from being used in Tamil medium schools."
TamilNet, June 29, 2000, 'Complaint to World Bank on distortion in texts'

"The recommendations submitted by the CTTU to the Education Publications Department to eliminate the distortion of facts from the Tamil medium textbooks to be printed and published next year, have been completely rejected by the authorities. A World Bank team was informed of this by a delegation of the CTTU on Wednesday…The World Bank team assured the CTTU delegation that it would look into the complaint."
TamilNet, June 18, 2002, 'End discrimination against Tamils in Education'

"The current practice of writing textbooks in Sinhalese and then translating into Tamil, gives room for distorting the history of Tamils in the country. To overcome this problem it was earlier decided in consultation with the World Bank to hand over the task of writing Tamil text books to Tamils and Sinhalese textbooks to Sinhalese. But the decision has not been implemented yet. It is high time to implement that decision that the World Bank has endorsed." [meeting with Secretary to Prime Minister]
TamilNet, September 29, 2002, 'NIE rejects request for Jaffna Branch office'

"The NIE that comes under the purview of the MOE has turned down a request made by the CTTU to open its regional office in Jaffna district. The CTTU said its request was made to ensure equal opportunity in the northeast province as in other provinces."
The evaluation system

The appropriate Subject Panel established by the TEB/TEC will receive all Bids deemed responsive and will evaluate each title in a Bid individually in terms of pedagogic quality, presentation and illustration, using Factors 1-8 listed below.

Each of the factors will be allocated a number of points from 1 to 5,

Thus: 1 = unacceptable 2 = poor 3 = acceptable 4 = good 5 = excellent

As certain factors are given, greater weight than others are the highest possible score for these factors will be doubled as indicated below:

1. **Conformity to the Curriculum** 5*
   Does the material conform to the requirement of the current curriculum?

2. **Content** 10
   Is the factual content of the manuscript accurate and appropriate?

3. **Level of Language** 5
   Is the level of language used in the text accessible to the pupils of the Grade for which the text is intended, and does it also help to improve pupils’ understanding and use of language?

4. **Pedagogical Method** 10
   Is the pedagogical method appropriate to classroom circumstances and pupil needs, and are the exercises, tasks, and evaluation and testing materials equally useful?

5. **Teacher Support** (Teacher’s Guide) 5
   Does the Teacher’s Guide provide a good guide to the curriculum; help with lesson planning; give notes on each individual lesson; help with devising project work, homework; testing and evaluation?

6. **Presentation and design** 5
   How high is the quality of the following in relation to the pedagogic needs of the text and the motivation of the pupils?

7. **Illustrations** 5
   How high is the quality of the illustrations, and how relevant are the illustrations to the content and pedagogical intent of the text?

8. **Sensitivity** 5*
   To what extent does the book portray persons and events in an objective way? Are national groups and minorities represented in a way that is fair to them and their beliefs? Is the material likely to promote harmony and understanding, or could it evoke fear and hostility?

Total points: 50

*Submissions must receive at least 3 points for Factors 1 and 8

In order to successfully pass Stage 1 each title in a Bid must receive a minimum of 64% of the total number of points (or 32 out of 50). Each bid, which achieves this minimum for each title, will have its
scores for each title totalled and divided by the number of Students’ Book titles in the Bid to arrive at a Quality Score.

Stage 2

With regard to price, each Bid that has successfully passed Stage 1 will be evaluated on the basis of the Total Cost for Bid Evaluation as indicated in the Price Schedule.

The Bid with the lowest Total Bid Price receives 20 points (100%) which is the Price Score for that Bid. Each other Bid is awarded points to arrive at a Price Score on the basis of the formula below:

\[
\text{Price Score } E = \frac{\text{TBP } L \times 20}{\text{TBP } E}
\]

Price Score \( E \) = the number of points awarded for Price to the bid under evaluation
\( TBP = \text{Total Bid Price} \)
\( TBP L = \text{the Total Bid Price of the lowest priced bid} \)
\( TBP E = \text{the Total Bid Price of the bid under evaluation} \)
Annex 3

Selection Criteria for Textbooks

8 Sensitivity

1 Unacceptable

* There is material in the book which denigrates nationalities, groups of people or individuals
* There are texts or illustrations whose intent is to portray persons or events in a negative way
* Minority groups, whether determined by race, colour, gender, religion or nationality, are not represented with equal respect
* There is evidence of sex discrimination in jobs, professions etc

2 Poor

* Must have three but not all the characteristics of 3 Acceptable

3 Acceptable

* Groups, nationalities and individuals are represented in a way which is fair to them and in a way that will not provoke anguish or hostility
* Texts and illustrations portray a positive image of groups or individuals
* Minority groups, whether determined by race, colour, gender, religion or nationality, are represented with equal respect
* Equal opportunities between the sexes are represented
* Where role models (eg doctors, singers, sportswomen) are featured they (a) are represented as both males and females, and (b) reflect the diversity of national and/or global society

4 Good

* Must have all the characteristics of 3 Acceptable
* Must have one characteristic of 5 Excellent

5 Excellent

* There are texts and exercises which actively promote understanding between groups or individuals
* Opportunities are sought and taken for discussing and representing minority group interests, fears and potentials
* There is positive representation of the two sexes in employment and social situations
Respect for diversity
in textbook content

The Sri Lankan experience

Ariya Wickrama
Peter Colenso

The Multiple Textbook Option (MBO)
- It provides a choice of textbooks for all students, while maintaining the free textbook policy.
  - This objective enhances and supplements the policies of the educational reforms
  - It provides an option to the schools to choose the best textbook
  - It provides wider horizons due to the availability of additional textbooks on the same syllabus, in the library and the bookshops.
  - It helps students to refer alternate books for information
  - It encourages competition among Publishers and Authors

Evaluation Criteria
Conformity to Curriculum, Content, Level of Language, Pedagogical Method, Teacher Support, Presentation and design, Illustrations & Sensitivity.

What is Diversity?
Diversity is variety or differences among people
- Religious beliefs
- National and regional origin
- Cultural and socio-economic background
- Physical attributes
- Disability
- Ethnicity
- Family structure
- Gender
- Sexual orientation
- Age

Diversity is "otherness," or those human qualities that are different from our own and outside the groups to which we belong, yet are present in other individuals and groups. It is important to distinguish between the primary and secondary dimensions of diversity.

Primary dimensions are the following: age, ethnicity, gender, physical abilities/qualities, race and sexual orientation.

Secondary dimensions of diversity are those that can be changed, and include, but are not limited to: educational background, geographic location, income, marital status, military experience, parental status, religious beliefs, and work experiences.

Source: Diversity At UMCP: Moving Toward Community Plan 1995

"Everyone is Biased"
Our views and interpretations are influenced by
- Personal and social identities
- Values
- Experiences
- Allocation of resources

The first step may be to admit that biases are learned early and are counter to our commitment to just treatment. They can be challenged in children. Parents, teachers, faith leaders and other community leaders can help a child question his or her values and beliefs and point out subtle stereotypes used by their peers and in the media. The child should also be surrounded by cues that equality matters.

In his classic book, The Nature of Prejudice, the psychologist Gordon Allport observed that children are more likely to grow up tolerant if they live in a home that is supportive and loving. "They feel welcome, accepted, loved, no matter what they do." In such an environment, different views are welcomed, punishment is not harsh or capricious, and these children generally think of people positively and carry a sense of goodwill and even affection. If a child feels secure and loved, he or she is likely to have the basis for developing ideas of equality and trust. - Fight Hate and promote Tolerance - Tolerance.Org
Root causes of Bias

- A stereotype is an exaggerated belief, image or distorted truth about a person or group — it can be positive or negative.
- A prejudice is an opinion, pre judgment or attitude about a group or its individual members. A prejudice can be positive, but in our usage refers to a negative attitude.

Distorted images of different groups of people are portrayed in media

Red Indians are warlike, Italians are crooks, Turks are Barbaric, Americans are crass, Englishmen are unimaginative, Jews are miserly, Arabs are savage, Scots are mean, French are degenerated and Irish are drunken.

People accept favourable evaluations of their own group but accept unfavourable characterisation of other groups (Hamburg 1984)

Children were asked to imagine a desert island on which 5 British, 5 German, 5 Russian, 5 French, and 5 American dolls were marooned they were also asked to imagine that a ship arrived at the island but could rescue only 5 dolls. Which 5 dolls should the captain rescue? When told that the captain of the ship was British, an Oxford student replied that he would take on board one doll from each nation. Thus making an un prejudiced statement.

When told that the captain of the ship was Russian the same boy replied that he would take 5 Russian dolls on board. An example of moral virtual virtue being applied to one group but not to the other.

Why Assess Textbooks?

- In order to create awareness of diversity in schools
- Help students to think critically
- Provide opportunities to demonstrate respect for one another
- Help students understand the interdependence of cultures
- Create public consensus

In the United States of America, the number of half starved people is twice the number of unemployed, and is 5 million less than the number of people who live in slums. As one-half the number of slum dwellers is 11,000,000, what is the number of unemployed? (Chi Tung-Wei, 1956, p 46)

Shakespeare (Merchant of Venice)

The image of the murderous Jew is supported by the vibrant blood-lust that Shylock exhibits through numerous places in the play-text. Jessica relates how

“When I was with him I have heard him swear
To Tubal and to Chus, his countrymen,
That he would rather have Antonio's flesh
Than twenty times the value of the sum
That he did owe him”. (III,ii,284-88)
A test to detect bias evolved during the ‘Blue–Waters’ work shop. The idea dawned to me while discussing with the delegation from Jaffna who were very critical of the content of the Tamil textbooks. Being a residential workshop I took the opportunity to speak with them during and after dinner to determine the actual cause of the problem. Having gone through the list of mistakes we recognized that the majority of the mistakes pointed out were either related to grammar, style or spelling. Then it became obvious to us that bulk of the mistakes were not intentional but have occurred due to poor proof reading and usage of certain words that vary by region. The section that fell into ‘not being sensitive’ were few but important. We did not have a solution but while trying to categorize them in to groups we arrived at the above formula.

In Japan, the new Junior High School Social Studies, History Textbook to describe its movement into Asia during World War II uses the term “expansion” instead of invasion and claimed that its troops were liberating other Asian countries from their longtime European Imperial oppressors.

US students tend to have relatively little understanding of the causes and the events leading up to and during the Vietnam War. Part of this has been attributed to teachers lack of knowledge, their discomfort teaching this topic and also to the fact that it comes late in the history program.

National and international media plus leading politicians have denounced the content of books produced by the Palestinian Authority, claiming they denied the existence of Israel and they incited youths to wage wars and included inflammatory remarks such as “There is no alternative to destroying Israel.”

1. A study by an NGO, in June 1998 identified 3 lessons from the Sinhala Grade 8 textbook objectionable and insensitive. They recommended to the government to remove these lessons from the textbook to build better understanding with the minorities. This was done. In 2000, the EPD printed and supplied 150,000 copies of a booklet with these lessons.

2. A group alleged ‘Cast discrimination’ about contents of the Grade 11 History textbook. A panel that studied the the Chapter in question reported that “The Sri Lankan Economy and Society from 16th to 18th Century” was written according to the Curriculum, and that the contents of the Chapter is a factual commentary of Social events as it prevailed then. Some sections may appear objectionable when taken out of context.

3. Complaint is made that books written for the teaching of Buddhism as a subject have been written with only Buddhism in mind and ignoring elementary educational and psychological principles.
The Process of Assessing

- Read an entire chapter to get an overall sense of the content and approach
- Check for specific biases
- Rate the textbook using the evaluation sheet provided
- Make recommendations for change

Allocate marks as above

For the following criteria

1) Appearance Bias
2) Belief System Bias (Religious Bias)
3) Ethno-Cultural Bias
4) Gender Bias
5) Disabilities Bias
6) Family Structure Bias

Please Remember

- You can’t be an expert about everything
- You bring your individual views and experiences to the process
- It may be necessary to check the accuracy of the information or the validity of the assumption with other sources

If people are aware of their hidden biases, they can monitor and attempt to restructure hidden attitudes before they are expressed through behavior. This compensation can include attention to language, body language and to the stigmatization felt by target groups. Common sense and research evidence also suggest that a change in behavior can modify beliefs and attitudes. It would seem logical that a conscious decision to be egalitarian that might lead one to widen one’s circle of friends and knowledge of other groups. Such efforts, may, over time, reduce the strength of unconscious biases.

- Fight Hate and promote Tolerance - Tolerance.Org

I now challenge you to critically look at all the material presented to you today.

Let us discuss and arrive at a system of evaluation which would be simple and at the same time effective.

My thanks are due to:

Vincent Greaney for granting me permission to use parts of his study
Joseph Sabia, Kris Axtman, Chris Lang,
Cecilia Namulondo Nganda, Edward G. Rozycki,
Ladson-Billings, G.
Second General Education Project (GEP2)

EVALUATION DOCKET

RESPECT FOR DIVERSITY IN TEXTBOOKS

Science and Technology
Grade 9
Sinhala and Tamil

Prepared by

Ariya Wickrema
National Consultant EPD

12th March, 2003
1. The Evaluation System

Contents of this docket are intended to raise an awareness of bias and to provide the evaluator with guidelines to judge the quality of textbooks. It is also our intention to challenge you to judge sensitively and to think critically about the content presented to you.

Each of the 6 factors will be allocated a number of points from 1 to 4, thus:

1 = Unacceptable  
2 = Needs major revision  
3 = Needs minor revision  
4 = Recommended

The following classification may be made used to arrive at the assessment.

- Does the content of the textbook include all groups of people who can reasonably be represented?
- Does the material promote only one point of view, either a personal one or that of a specific group?
- Is the viewpoint appropriate and reasonable from a pedagogical point of view?
- Is diversity recognized and substantially included?
- Are the text, illustration, exercises and level of language used suitable for the intended age group?
- Is the information presented clearly and accurately?
- Are the text and illustrations used in the textbook modern and appropriate?
- Is the text free of discriminatory, or inappropriately value-laden language?

2. The types of Bias

1 Appearance Bias

Are people ridiculed because of their colour or shape?  
Are the successful people always depicted as elegant?

2 Belief System Bias (Religious Bias)

Is the content critical of people’s beliefs or worship?  
Are religious icons referred to with disrespect?

3 Ethno-Cultural Bias

Are some ethnic groups portrayed as being superior to the others?  
Are activities of one group commended, while the contribution made by another is ignored?

4 Gender Bias

Are women depicted as subservient?  
Do illustrations or text depict men as being more talented than women?
5 Disabilities Bias
Are people with disabilities laughed at?
Are old people treated with contempt?

6 Social Bias
Are children from broken homes treated as inferior?
Are the examples chosen refer to things generally familiar to the affluent people?

3-Marking System

- The entire textbook will be evaluated to determine the existence of subtle and overt biases.
- The Sinhala and Tamil textbooks will be treated as separate items and will be evaluated independently. The ‘The Teacher’s Guide’ will be treated as part of the textbook.
- In order to successfully pass, textbooks in either language must receive a minimum of 3 marks (which corresponds to ‘needs minor revision’).
- Whether the textbook is recommended or not a brief comment on each criteria explaining your rationale for the score allocated will be most welcome.

4-Ways to handle learning material with identified bias

1. Consider the impact they will have on the students, both as individuals and as members of a group.
2. Help students think critically about the material presented to them. The book should-
   - Identify and explain terminology and its use.
   - Explore beyond surface meanings and without accepting things at face value.
   - Look for gaps in perspectives, voices, and experiences that are not represented.
   - Explore the past and present from more than one viewpoint.
   - Provide a safe environment in which students feel comfortable
   - Encourage students to question the values and opinions expressed in the textbook.
   - Point out the bias and put it into the context in which the information is used.
   - Provide relevant background information and other points of view.
   - Encourage discussion about the bias and related concerns.
   - Make students aware that they should respect the response of those victimized by the bias
   - Help students recognize the opportunities that exist for positive change
1 Appearance Bias

1 Unacceptable

- People are referred to by the colour of their skin.
- People with impairments are ridiculed
- Smoking and drinking are depicted as macho behavior
- Inappropriate attire is utilized to depict persons

2 Needs Major revision

- 50% of Unacceptable

3 Needs Minor revision

- 50% of Recommended

4 Recommended

- The text and the illustrations refer with respect, to people from diverse backgrounds, colours and shapes.
- The pedagogical methods used help students develop decision-making abilities, social participation skills, and a sense of political efficacy needed for effective citizenship.
- Individual and Group activities are designed to foster positive interactions among staff, students and students' families.
- The content is developed to help students respect good qualities of individuals and groups as opposed to their physical appearance
Selection Criteria for Textbooks

2 Belief System Bias (Religious Bias)

1 Unacceptable
   • Distorted text is utilized to depict some beliefs as primitive.
   • Dogmatic treatment of subjects associated with faith.
   • Insensitivity in discussing religious viewpoints.
   • Badly chosen illustrations for text/age range

2 Needs Major revision
   • 50% of Unacceptable

3 Needs Minor revision
   • 50% of Recommended

5 Recommended
   • The text and illustrations contain images of people from diverse cultures and religions.
   • All religious teachings are discussed with respect and understanding.
   • The textbook provides opportunities for all students and staff to participate in anti-bias education programs that promote awareness of personal biases and provide opportunities to develop skills to challenge bias.
   • Illustrations reflect social situations appropriately and avoid stereotyping
Bias detection Criteria for Textbooks

3 Ethno-Cultural Bias

1 Unacceptable

- A group of people are described as being superior to others
- Stereotyping of some ethnic groups.
- Historical events are distorted to disgrace ethnic groups
- Controversial Ethno-Cultural topics are discussed in a prejudicial manner

2 Needs Major revision

- 50% of Unacceptable

3 Needs Minor revision

- 50% of Recommended

4 Recommended

- The textbook include imagery of diverse people engaged in everyday dress and activities, as opposed to ancient or ceremonial dress (for example, a Vedda in Western dress working at a computer, rather than in ceremonial Amude with an axe)
- The textbook fosters students’ learning of other languages, including sign language, as legitimate means of communication
- Students will find themselves, their families, and/or their race or ethno-cultural groups represented in the learning materials
- The content promote understanding of diverse perspectives, including the values, attitudes and behaviors that support cultural pluralism.
Bias detection Criteria for Textbooks

4  Gender Bias

1  Unacceptable

- Text involves rude terminology that are disrespectful of women and children
- Male domination is justified
- Text and illustrations shows only men engaged in vital jobs. (*Always the doctor is a male while the nurse is a woman*)
- Boys are portrayed as superior to girls

2  Needs Major revision

- 50% of Unacceptable

3  Needs Minor revision

- 50% of Recommended

4  Recommended

- The content presents the contribution made by both sexes in achieving certain objectives (*Fathers involved in caring for the children and helping in household activities*)

- The content include images that counter gender stereotypes (*for example women demonstrating physical strength and men performing domestic tasks or caring for children*)?

- The content recognizes the contribution widows make in their struggle to bring up a family against social discrimination

- Content recognizes the contribution of women in social development
Bias detection Criteria for Textbooks

5 Disabilies Bias

1 Unacceptable

• People with deformities and disabilities are depicted as amusing.
• War victims are portrayed as a liability to society
• Old people are portrayed as weak and absent minded.
• The material does not present a variety of positive role models

2 Needs Major revision

• 50% of Unacceptable

3 Needs Minor revision

• 50% of Recommended

4 Recommended

• The content of the textbook include images of people with a range of different abilities and body types engaged in a variety of activities.
• The teaching strategies reflect a variety of learning styles.
• The content of the textbook provide equal opportunities and maintain high expectations for all students.
• The textbook contains descriptions of people from diverse backgrounds and different age groups.
Bias detection Criteria for Textbooks

6 Social Bias

1 Unacceptable

- Poor children are depicted as being engaged in menial activities.
- Orphans are referred to as cursed children.
- Text and illustrations show children working as domestic servants.
- War is shown as patriotic while peace is portrayed as cowardice.

2 Needs Major revision

- 50% of Unacceptable

3 Needs Minor revision

- 50% of Recommended

4 Recommended

- The text and illustrations depict people from diverse backgrounds interacting with one another.

- The physical environment includes images of many different kinds of family compositions and socioeconomic groups.

- The author successfully demonstrates the geographic diversity of family dwellings, neighborhoods, and communities, such as urban, rural, suburban.

- Lessons are built up around many different kinds of family compositions and socioeconomic groups.
WORKSHEET

Evaluation marks for individual criteria

Respect for Diversity

Selection Panel:______________
Evaluator’s Name:_____________

Date:___/___/_____
Bid Package No____

Book Title_____________________________         Grade_____

1. Mark the elements of 4. Gender Bias by circling one number; eg 3

1) Appearance Bias
   1 2 3 4

2) Belief System Bias (Religious Bias)
   1 2 3 4

3) Ethno-Cultural Bias
   1 2 3 4

4) Gender Bias
   1 2 3 4

5) Disabilities Bias
   1 2 3 4

6) Social Bias
   1 2 3 4

Comments.

…………………………………………………………………………………………………
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…………………………………………………………………………………………………

2. Total the marks of 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5 + 6 = ______

3. Divide the Total by 6 = _____ (to nearest whole number) = Criteria Mark

Evaluator’s Signature ___________________
Moderator’s Consolidated Marking Sheet

Selection Panel: ____________
Moderator’s Name: ____________
Date: __/__/____

Book Title _____________________           Grade ____

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TOTAL SCORE

OVERALL SCORE _____ out of 4 ( = Total Score divided by the number of evaluations )

comment ____________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
Contrasting image from ‘Let’s Learn English’, Grade 3

Undesirable image

Desirable image

Sri Lankan Flag
Bibliography


