

ABSTRACT

The schooling of a child depends on various factors, social, economic, cultural and religious: the aim of this dissertation was to study profoundly the characteristics of those factors influencing the schooling of children of a specific sub-cultural community in Sri Lanka. A group of fishermen of Modara-wella was selected, as this community has its own cultural identity as a disadvantaged group in Sri Lanka.

Since independence Sri Lanka has strived to educate all her citizens. Various incentives have been provided to achieve this aim of education for all. Yet in spite of all these incentives there exist under-privileged schools and disadvantaged school going children in various communities of Sri Lanka.

It is generally accepted that the children of fisher families, considered as under-privileged, have less access to higher education; getting little attention from parents they have a pre-determined future as fishermen. It was one of our objectives to find out whether such is the case with the Ganiyans of Modara-wella. Further, to the best of my knowledge there has been no serious study done on

the schooling of the Ganiyans of Modara-wella. Hence a sample of 183 personnel was selected from the area. Questionnaires and an attitude test were administered to collect the necessary data. These data were processed to arrive at important conclusions.

In the research it was found that the educational standard of the Ganiyans has changed during the past few years. In the case of parents, the standard of education was low compared with the standard of education of the parents in the rest of the island. However the attitude towards education has changed for the better, and at present the Ganiyan children are being motivated for education. Further there are substantial facilities for education in this area. Hence according to the research data it is rather difficult to say that the fishermen in this category are under-privileged or disadvantaged.

The sample for our research was very small, and what we have found from the research could not be generalised. The adults of this community were illiterate and do not have functional literacy. This has to be remedied with appropriate educational programme. It was also found that the fisheries industry of the area is at stake. Hence alternative employment opportunities have to be created to

protect the standard of life of the Ganiyans of Modara-wella.

These educational programme for adults as well as for children, related to the social and cultural institutions, and the ensuing economic progress will enhance the progress of education of the whole country.