

Poverty and Education

A Study located in selected
schools in Sri Lanka

by

*Prof. Swarna Jayaweera &
Prof. Chandra Gunawardena*

Right to Education

- free education up to University Education
- establishment of a network of schools,
- grade 5 scholarships,
- subsidised transport
- and later free textbooks, free uniforms and mid-day meals for the needy

Education played a major role in reducing poverty(W B) and promoting socio-economic mobility and gender equality in participation and retention in education

Nevertheless

- Universal primary education has yet to be achieved
- wide regional and socio-economic disparities in access to education
- All studies point to the fact that poverty and socio economic disparities are the major barriers to the provision and utilisation of equal educational opportunities

In this context, a study funded by Save the Children was undertaken in

- ten schools in eight districts – 80 urban, rural and estate, and Types IAB, IC,2 and 3 , schools
- to examine the issues of participation in education and the quality of education in schools
 - Jaffna, Batticaloa, Vavuniya Ampara- conflict affected;
 - Batticaloa, Ampara-Conflict and tsunami affected
 - Matara –tsunami affected
 - Nuwara Eliya- plantation
 - Moneragala – rural, disadvantaged
 - Colombo- the capital

Uncleared areas not included in the Sample

Methodology- interviews, questionnaires, FGDs, case studies with parents, principals, teachers, students of Grades 5 & 9 and high absentees

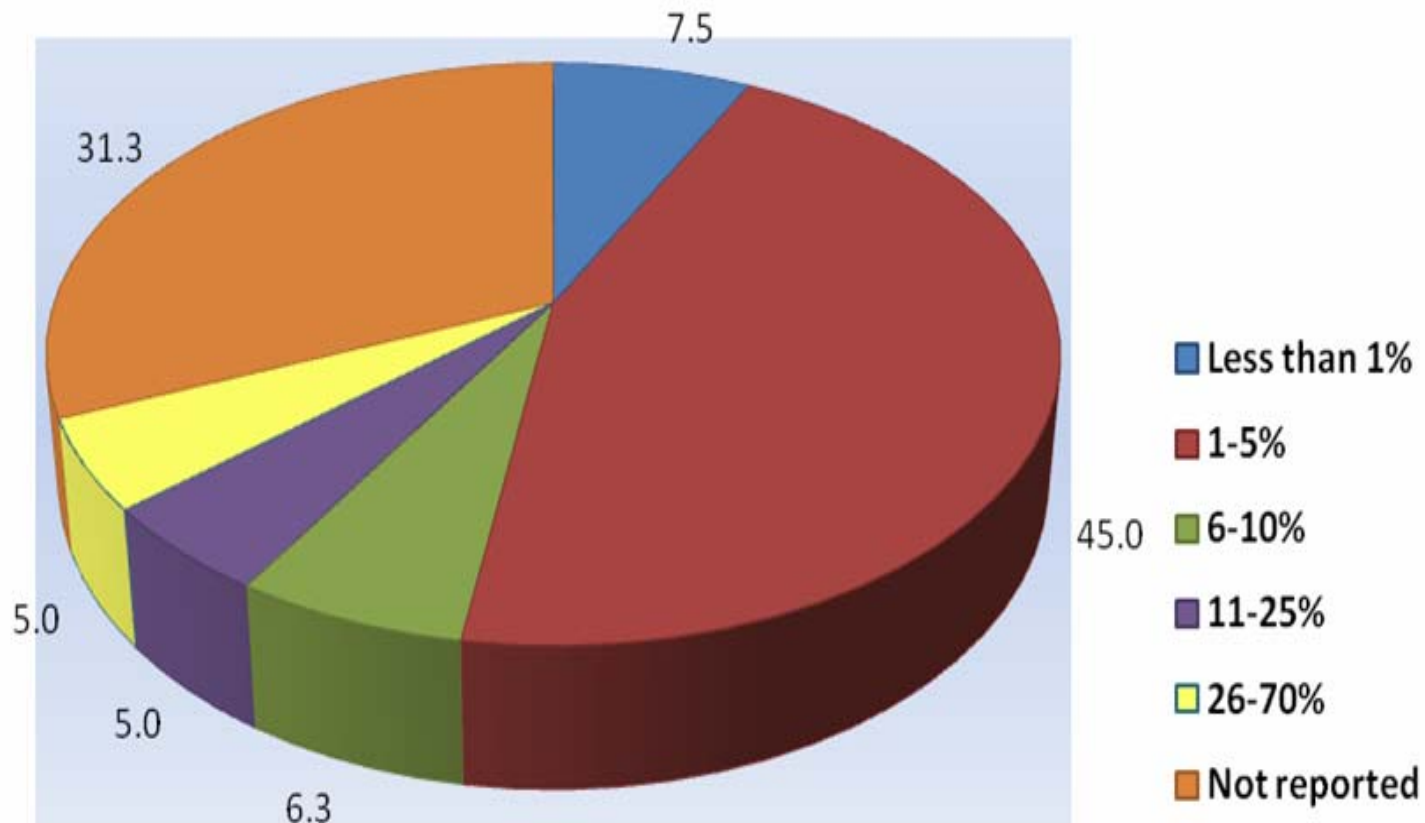
Access to Education

- (i) Half the schools belonged to the category of small schools
- (ii) Around one third were affected by instability and insecurity in the environment as a result of armed conflict.
- (iii) 10% of the teachers said that the lack of a birth certificate.

(iv) 34 of the 80 schools had been closed for varying periods of time-one school often, 9 schools sometimes and 24 schools on a few occasions

- ❖ as a consequence of armed conflict, conflict and the tsunami, the tsunami, landslides, marking scripts.
- ❖ 60% of these schools were in conflict affected districts where schools had been damaged or education disrupted.

Percentage of Students Dropping Out from School Annually



Presented at the 10th Annual Symposium on Poverty Research in Sri Lanka - Session 3 - Children coping with crisis: the post conflict perspective

Table 1- Factors affecting participation in formal school education (percentage)

Factors	Principals	Teachers	Parents		Principals
	Dropping out from school	high absenteeism	Non enrolment non school going of children	Dropping out from school	Irregular Attendance
Poverty	40.0	52.7	50.0	33.5	38.5
Child Labour	22.2	9.7		17.6	14.3
Family related factors	20.1	46.9	331.8	11.8	57.2
School related factors	15.1	9.6	18.2	22.3	12.2
Illness		4.3		7.1	16.4
Impact of Conflict/ Disaster	8.8	5.4		5.5	6.1
Personal Propensities	6.3			5.1	
No Response	27.5	16.1	18.6	4.7	34.7
Total	80 Schools	145 Teachers	22 Children	17 Children	49 Schools

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Table 1- Factors affecting participation in formal school education (percentage)

Factors	Students		
	Frequent Absences from School	Decline Going to School	Considering Drooping out
Poverty	25.7	35.3	35.9
Child Labour	11.2	23.6	10.9
Family related factors	11.1		10.9
School related factors	6.9	35.3	39.3
Illness	36.3		
Personal Propensities	5.1		
No Response			6.5
Total	509 Students	51 Students	93 Students

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Positive developments during these years

- (i) The responses of the majority of Grades 5 and 9 students in schools in conflict affected areas revealed that
- the majority had engaged in studies at home
 - or gone to tuition classes organised by the school or by voluntary groups
 - less than 10% had remained idle at home.
- (ii) Only 43 of the 80 principals said that the local School Attendance Committees were active and they were mainly in the conflict affected districts of Jaffna, Batticaloa and Vavuniya.

- (iii) Catch Up programmes to assist children who had been denied access to schools except in Moneragala
- (iv) School Feeding programmes to meet the needs of children from deprived homes or from IDP camps were implemented in around 40% of the schools- chiefly in conflict affected areas (95%).

Principals had organised awareness programmes for parents and students to get children back to school and had assisted deprived children.

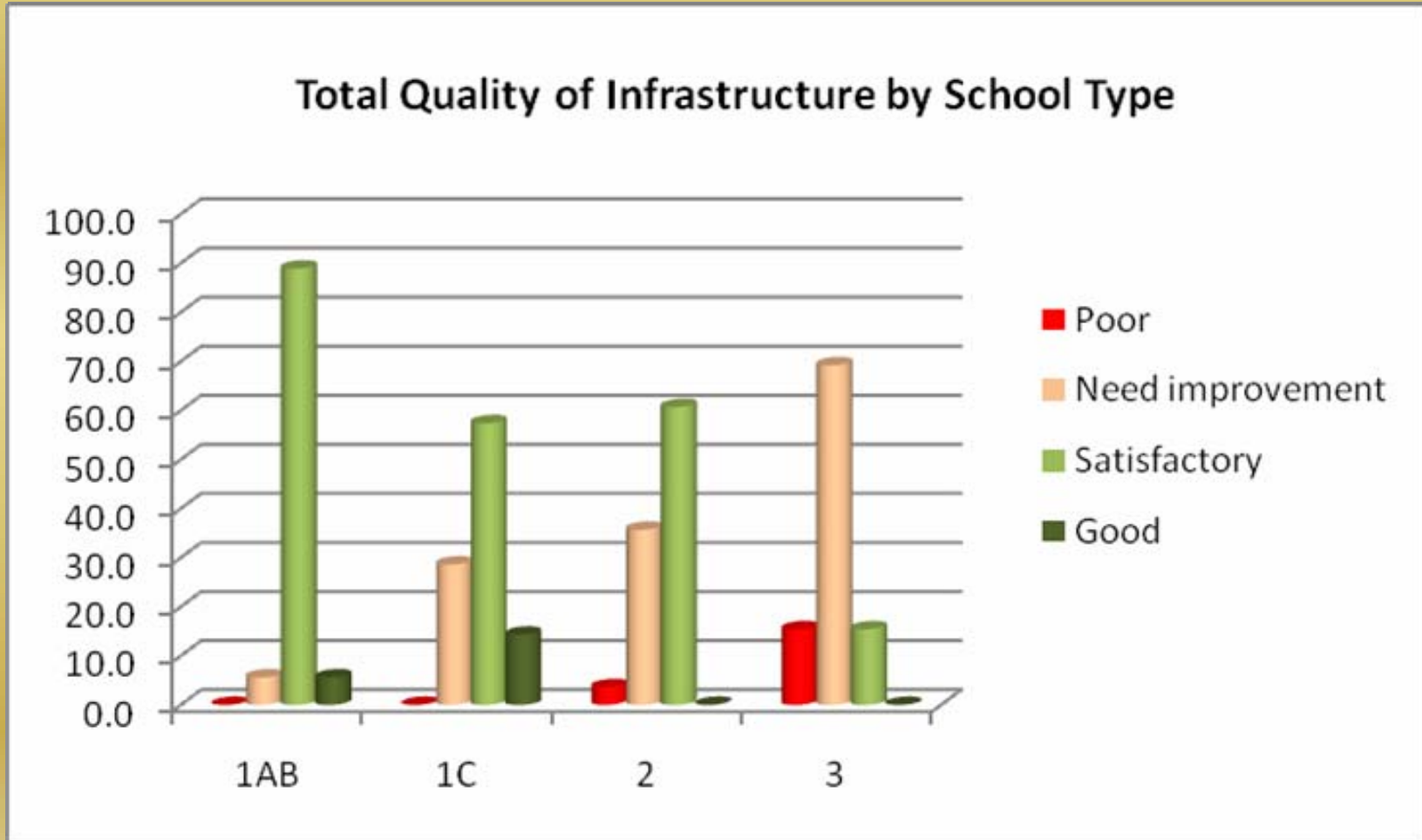
Access

- Armed conflict had affected access to education while at the same time communities appear to have a future oriented positive stance.
- Programmes had been conducted in conflict affected districts to minimise the adverse impact of the conflict by motivated officials.
- Overall, poverty in its manifold dimensions of income poverty, relative lack of access to assets, services and facilities, educational disadvantage, powerlessness has been the major barrier to access to education in all locations.
- But historically disadvantaged Moneragala district, the plantation sector and low income urban neighbourhoods in the city of Colombo continue to be marginalised by poverty despite the fact that they have not been directly affected by the tsunami or by armed conflict

Infrastructure & Teacher Deployment

- Contextual factors - parental background, natural disasters, linkage with politicians & non-governmental organizations affect provision of resources in schools
- School textbooks provided to all schools
- 10 - 15% of schools lacked essential amenities such as safe water, separate toilets & electricity
- Insufficiency of teachers experienced mostly in Type 2 & 3 schools
- Batticaloa district worst off in teacher deployment
- Vavuniya & Moneragala had 4 schools without trained graduates

Total Quality of Infrastructure by School Type



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Quality of Infrastructure

- ***“Attention on the school is less because the student number is low. Parents do not contribute much because they face economic difficulties & lack time to devote to visit or assist the school”***

(Parent of a Type 2 urban school in Colombo district)

- ***“The school has been given only a temporary hall with a tin roof”***

(Parent of a Type 2 urban school in Matara district)

Punishment by Teachers

Grade 5

- Rural & conflict-affected areas (80%)
- Rural areas (40%);
- Type 2 schools (80%)
- Type 1C schools (60%)
- 1AB schools (40%)

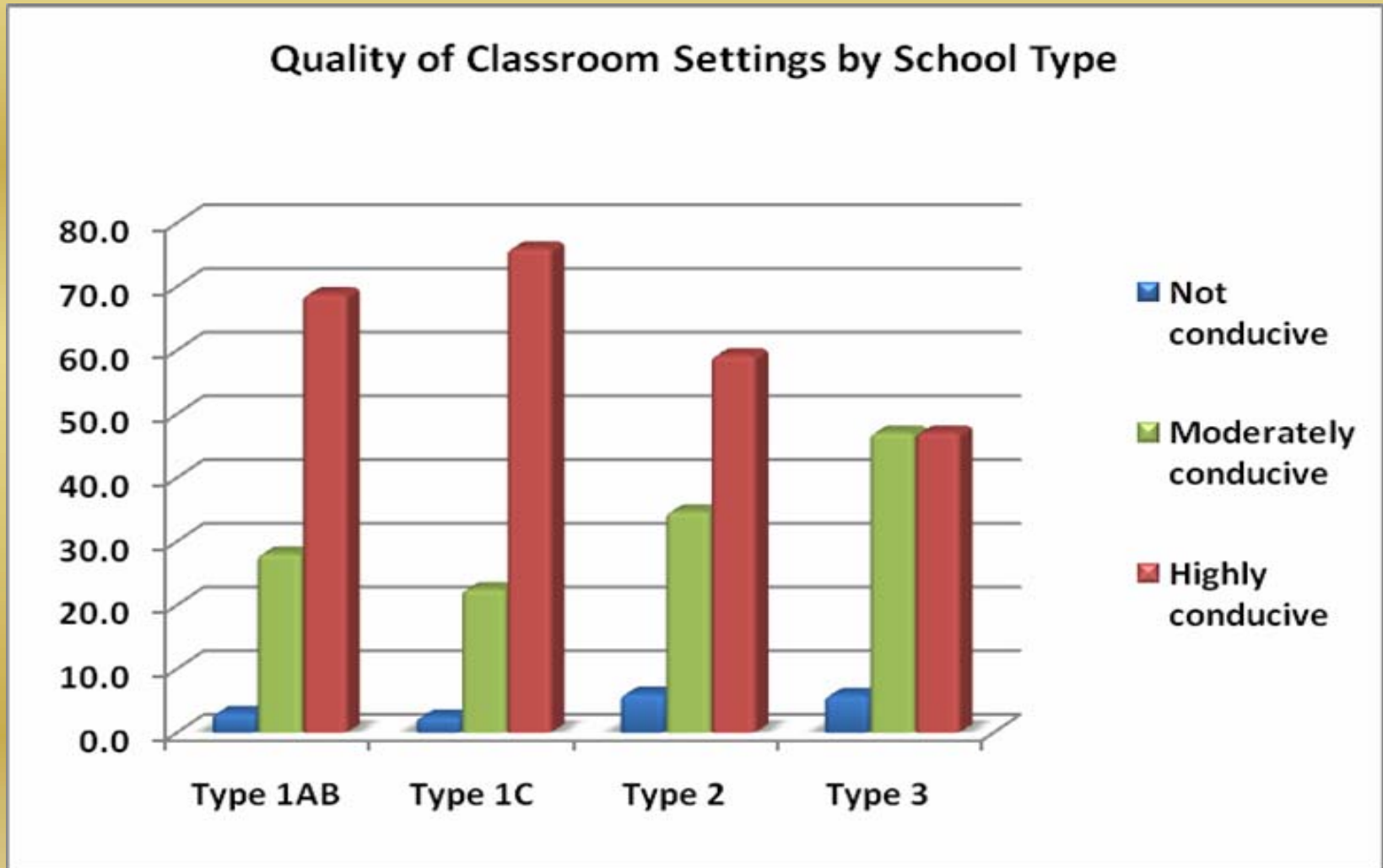
Grade 9

- Type 1AB (75.6%)
- 1C schools (74.4%)
- Type 2 (67.1%) and
- Type 3 (51.4%)
- Estate schools (88.7%),
- Urban (76.3%),
- Rural (73.2%),
- Conflict affected (63.1%)
- Tsunami affected (58.5%) & tsunami & conflict affected (47.3%)

Examples of punishments given

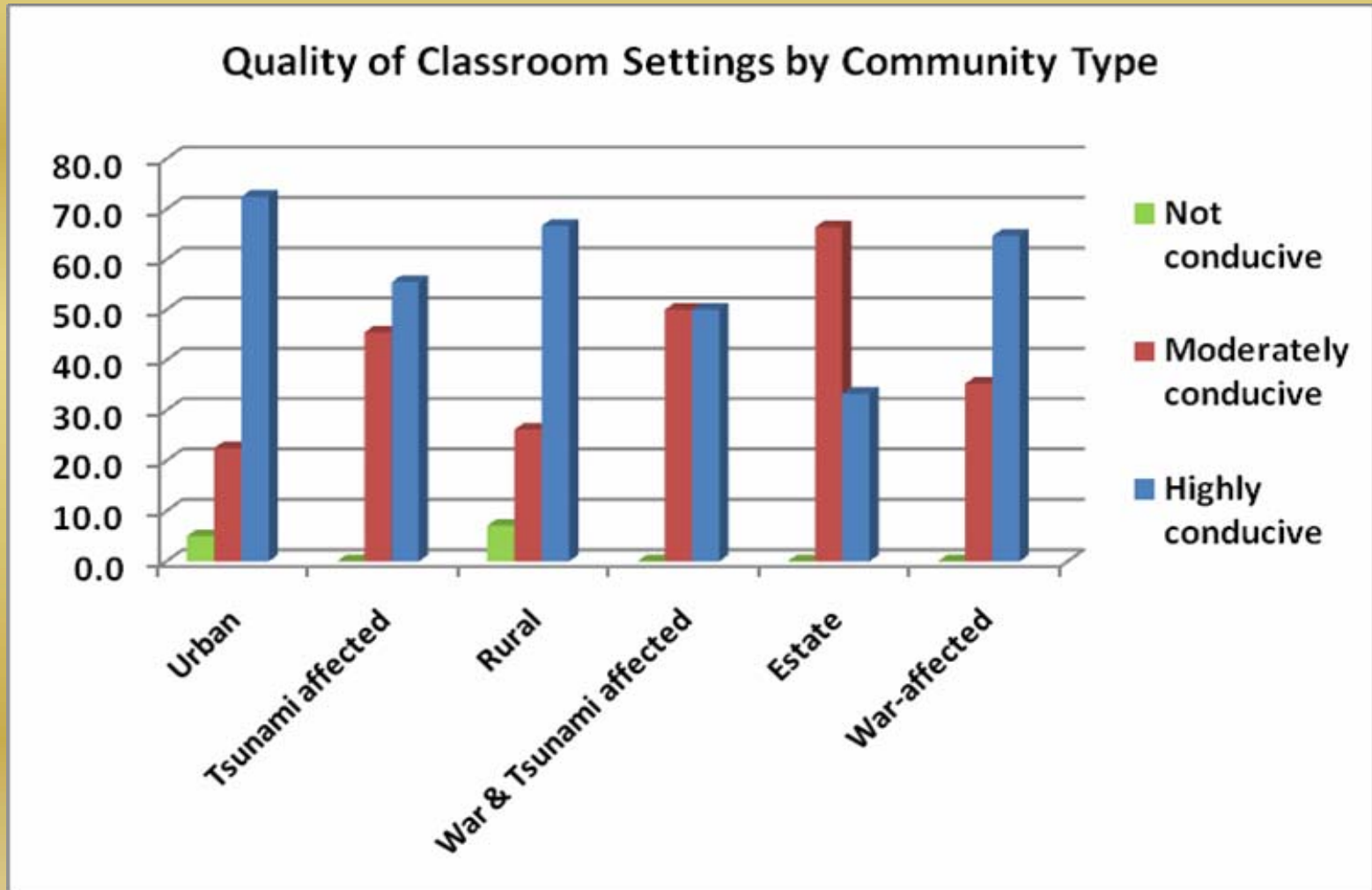
- Hitting with a cane,
- Pulling the ear,
- Making you kneel,
- Making you kneel while holding on to the ears,
- Making you keep the chair on the head & stand,
- Making you stand,
- Scolding,
- Giving knocks on the head,
- Limiting the interval &
- Giving minor punishments

Quality of Classroom Settings



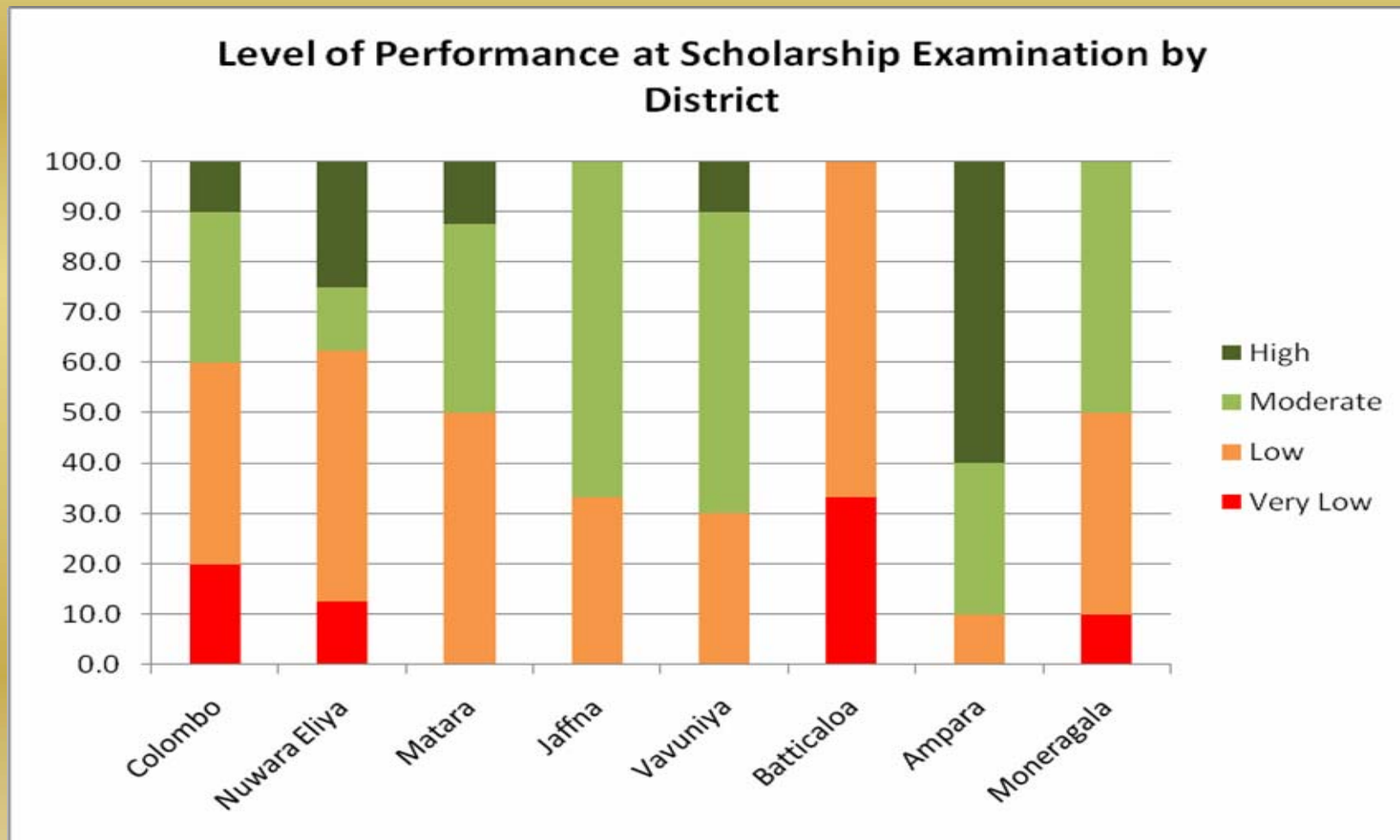
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Quality of Classroom Settings



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Level of Performance at Scholarship Examination



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Factors affecting Student Performance (Parents' Responses)

Parents' economic status/poverty	18
Parents' lack of interest	14
Children's lack of interest	07
Teachers' lack of interest	06
Lack of teachers/ Poor teaching	04
Lack of facilities/ Displacement	03
Need to be employed	02
Fathers' alcoholism/Transport difficulties/Best students join other schools/Migration of mothers	01

The End

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