



The Impact of the Kannangara's Philosophy of Education (*Kannangara Chinthanaya*) for the Free Education System in Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

Mr. C. W.W. Kannangara, who holds a unique position in the field of education in Sri Lanka, is a scholar who has made an effort to reform education with a philosophical thought. He pointed out that every citizen has the equal right to education and the expense of the government that education at is not worthless. He regarded the expenditure on education as an investment for the country and pointed out the value of education in his own language. He introduced the concept of "4H" as a way of contributing to the purpose of education and pointing out the meaninglessness of non-practical education. Furthermore, he pointed out that there is a possibility of socializing the social values and cultural values by the education. He also pointed out that education is the basis for all the racial and religious issues in the country and he proposed mixed religious and national school system

INTRODUCTION

Christopher William Wijekoon Kannangara was born on October 13, 1884 in Randonbe, Ambalangoda and was educated in the village school and higher education at Richmond College, Galle. Later he worked as a mathematics teacher at the same school. His biography shows that he excelled in mathematics and passed the exams conducted in England in mathematics; He was able to surpass not only the Sri Lankan students but also the British students in that exam. He also studied law when he works at Welskumara College, Moratuwa and Wesley College, Colombo. And he worked as a lawyer at the Galle Courts until he entered the political arena of Sri Lanka. For the Sinhalese who were imprisoned in the Sinhalese-Muslim racist struggle of 1915, he performed his duties as a free lawyer and a patriotic Sinhalese. Dr. Kannangara represented the Southern Province for the Legislative Council in 1920 and the Galle District of the Reformed Legislative Council in 1924. In 1930 a new era had begun in the political sphere of Sri Lanka and he was appointed as the President of the Ceylon National Congress. The year 1931 was a landmark in the history of Ceylon, and the first universal franchise in all of Asia was awarded to Sri Lanka under the Donamore Constitutional Reform. Kannangara was elected to the State Council in 1931, representing the Galle Electorate for the first time in the General Elections and he was appointed as the Minister of Education in 1931 and held that post until his death in 1947. Through free education reforms introduced by Kannangara, there was an educational and social revolution in the country as well.

For the first time under the Donamora government, a public representative was elected as Minister of Education, and his Executive Committee, which was elected by the Minister, was responsible for the public interest. It was the first time that a person who knew the interests of the people of the country was entrusted with the education of the children of the country. When Sri Lanka gained its independence in 1948, Mr. Kannangara, who was the Minister of Education from 1931 to 1947, looked into the problems of education in Sri Lanka and resolved some of these and implemented a system of education suitable for the people of Sri Lanka. It is no secret that the Education Reform Act of 1938, which was introduced by Kannangara who is the Minister of Education to the State Council, based on these solutions, was a major change in the field of education in Sri Lanka. In 1940, a committee was appointed on Education in Sri Lanka based on the proposals made by the Act. The Report of the Select Committee was published in 1943, and the Free Education Act of 1945 was debated again in the State Council in 1944. These proposals marked a new era in the education system in Sri Lanka.

THE EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND OF SRI LANKA DURING THE C.W.W. KANNANGARA

The educational policies of C.W.W. Kannangara have made a tremendous impact in Sri Lanka. Before inquiring about his service and his thoughts on education, one should get a glimpse into the education system and thinking that prevailed in Sri Lanka. There were roughly two types of schools. They are English schools and Piriven and their own native language schools. These English schools were administered by the Societies of Christianity. British Graduates were appointed to the position of Principal of these Christian schools. For these reasons, English schools in Sri Lanka could not be made to look like private schools in Britain. The exam system was developed according to the Cambridge exam system. Also, the services rendered by these schools should be mentioned here. Among these are services such as sports and character development, law and medical services. It is also important to note that the existing system of education has created a need for administration. That factor contributed to Sri Lanka's post-independence progress in effectively. But this system of education has been criticized by many scholars. Walter Zindel and Robert Bridge were among them. They said that this system of outsourcing was not suitable for Sri Lanka. They pointed out that this system of education would make the younger generation look down on traditional culture and would have to wait at the office gates to find work. And a French educator pointed out that teaching in English to Sinhala and Tamil children is dumbing their brains. The problem with the English education was that these schools were located only in the city. As a result, children living in rural areas were denied the right to education. And this education was only open to the children of wealthy families. These English schools taught based on economic values. The only way to a higher status in society is to study in these English schools.

The other type of school that existed was the own native language school. Joining these schools were poor children who were not even rich enough to go to the English school in the city. The purpose of own native language schools is to educate the mother tongue. These schools were run amidst great difficulties without educational equipment, playrooms and laboratories. The future of the children who did not have enough money to go to the English school after their native language school was very sad. They had to stay in the village. There was a tremendous service from these own native language schools as well. That is, the educated Sinhalese of the mother tongue were born from this school system.

The concept of English language schools and the own native language schools created a class divide in Sri Lanka. It has been pointed out: "We have divided people into two parts. One part is superior and other is inferior. One group wear trousers while the other wears cloth (fabric). Due to English education our country is divided into two classes. Those who are affluent and able to pay are going to a foreign-language school. They have to pay for it. Such a payment is worthwhile, because the official language of the country is English. Also, no one who does not know English can be promoted." (Hansard 1944, p.847) The statement provides a good overview of the system and the division that prevailed in Ceylon. This social divide also led to political conflicts. C.W.W. Kannangara had been well understood this situation and paid a major concern for that issue. As a child in the countryside, he was educated in one of the highest schools in the city. He understood the value of education. For this reason, his sole objective was to provide this educational opportunity to the rural children. These factors can be traced back to the expansion of his thinking towards free education.

INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY OF KANNANGARA

"Education is not just literacy. It should be important to shape the thinking of the people of a country. The main objective should be to create a free and open-minded people. Free education should be the hallmark of national thought. The functioning of the school system in our country is to make our language our religion, our culture and traditions, and to produce a generation of children and adults with deep thinking." It is very clear his thinking and philosophy of education that what kind of educational system should be in a country by the above-mentioned statement made by Kannangara in a special lecture in Calcutta in 1947. C.W.W. Kannangara is a Philosophy-based educator. Therefore, it is important to know his thinking. His Philosophy of education can be identified in several ways.

Education and Culture Education and Government Education and economy

Education is not just a one-off development. It has multiple objectives and meanings. He was of the view that education was represented in the fields of culture, politics and economy. Accordingly, it can be pointed out that Mr.Kannangara thought is wide-

spread. This thought of him is not mere coincidence. His experience and knowledge from an early age was the basis for that. He also investigated education in a philosophical sense. As a result, a unique educational thought emerged through him.

Accordingly, the purpose of this study is to study his thinking and Philosophy behind the various bills presented and the measures taken for the betterment of education. It does so through three predefined approaches. The services rendered by him based on this thinking are unsurpassed. This study does not consider the services rendered by him to the field of education. It will be examined here how his thinking in the field of education was made in relation to the three approaches.

EDUCATION AND CULTURE

Emphasizing on education and culture is one of the major points of C.W.W. Kannangara's Philosophy of education. He has used the term "culture" in a sociological or anthropological sense. (Sumathipala, 1993, P.157) A. L. Kroeber, who is considered the head of American anthropology, interpreted the term as: "All non-spontaneous reactions or instincts and activities that are related to human personality can be defined as non-psychological effective culture. In biological and psychological terms, this definition means that the culture is composed of qualitative or learned activities and the products. We return to reconsider whether the idea of learning is something that is socially entrenched, something that comes from tradition and is acquired by man as a member of society." (Koeber, 1963, P.61) He also pointed out the link between religion and culture. Culture cannot be spoken without religion, and religion is also based on culture. Accordingly, his thinking on culture and education comprise three things.

1. The great culture which developed by ancient Sinhalese.
2. The gradual decline of that culture under Western influence and its place in the country are increasingly foreign. Missionary education was instrumental in this transformation.
3. The need for a revival - not in its old form but in the value of both cultures - is a combination of its own unique personality into a new ecosystem. He believes that this can be done only by developing a national education. (Sumathipala,1993, P.158)

He thought that the ancient Buddhist culture in Sri Lanka belongs to the ancient Buddhist Jambudweepa (India). Buddhism, the basis of Sinhala culture, was brought to Sri Lanka from India. "Our culture is ultimately derived from the cultural heritage of Jambudweepa. We got our seed from its rich, traditional tree." (Kannangara, C.W.W. 1947) Our culture which received from India was developed through a unique system to Hela Diva (Sri Lanka). "The seed of culture fell on a fertile land. It nurtured it in many ways and over time it produced an excellent result." (Ibid) Similarly, the Sinhalese have inherited such a high standard of culture, while the Western people were in an inferior position.

He pointed out that the most important responsibility for Sri Lankans is to protect the Buddhism. This Sinhala culture was superior to the Eastern and Western cultures. He represented all aspects of literature, music, art, as well as sculpture art. Sri Lanka was also a haven for foreign trade. After considering the origin and development of Sinhala Buddhist culture, he examines the reasons for its decline. The main thing he encounters here is the arrival of the Portuguese. He has also pointed out how the subsequent Dutch and English invasions affected this. "In the last few centuries or two centuries, there have been few Asian people in the cultural sphere who were accustomed to the west for inspiration. The decline of the institutions that fostered national culture, as this small nation had to contend with Europeans for a period of three and a half years, beginning with the Portuguese who arrived here in the early eleventh century and lost the last vestige of independence in 1818 to the British. It happened." (C.W.W.kannangara, 1947)

According to this point, the temple-centered education system in Sri Lanka has been ruined. The result was the gradual decline of the noble Buddhist culture that had nurtured Sri Lanka so far, and the cultures of foreigners began to spread in Sri Lanka. The school system they created was designed to bring about the destruction of the Sinhala language by teaching only English. Not only that, everything Sinhala was abolished. All traditions, customs, religion, language, etc., were destroyed.

This education was used for Christianization and Westernization. The church was assigned by the government to administer the schools. He believed that a revival of Sinhala Buddhist culture was necessary in this context. He believed that education was the best way to achieve this. Education in the mother tongue, teaching young people with subjects such as history, such methods could be used.

Because of his direct thinking, he was accused by some. One allegation is that he acts as a religious dissident. He replied, "It is sad to say that Buddhists are always underestimating that they are trying to raise religious differences in the island when they are trying to claim their rights. But even if we are accused, there are certain things that we have to do to demand justice." (Hansard 1945, 2881)

Due to his talk of culture and religion, he was known by some as a madman. He stated that he was neither a religious fanatic nor a Christian opponent. He has also been impartial in his work without being an extremist in religion. The school was not investigated as Buddhist or Christian. All necessary measures were taken to ensure that all children were entitled to the right to education. He pointed out that imperialism's culture was spreading in the country through imported education systems as foreseen. He also said it was a dangerous situation. The only way to escape this trap was through a re-education system. The only successful attack on the Renaissance was the reform of the education system. This is what his statement says: "**We will start a national education system, aimed at fulfilling the destiny of the nation. Don't build a nation? Are we always in slavery? Don't we get some freedom? If we aim for it, we will start our schools. Let's educate our people. If it is to be a national education it must be religious in spirit and**

patriotic in form. If it is to be a national education, its inspiration must be drawn from the past, not from recent history. If it is a national education it should be based on the principles of fairness, equality and mutual service. If it is to be a national education system it should be under national control. If it is to be a national education it must serve all the nation and it should be aimed at their physical, moral and intellectual prosperity.” (Hansard, 1944, p.946)

According to him, in order to build up our education, of other nations should adopt the methods and knowledge, but their culture should not be borrowed. “Our culture should always be able to engross and absorb something from other sources, but its characteristics should not be destroyed. The mere molestation of others is certainly the cause of the destruction of individuals or nations as well as of cultures.” (kannangara, C.W.W. 1947) He was of the view that education should be use to preserve its historical roots. He also consistently appreciated the quality of the people. It showed that a civilization is great. Accordingly, the National Education proposed by him had three parts.

1. Developing a culture of conservatism that modernizes society but does not conform to western culture.
2. Establish a universally equitable democratic state with equal opportunities for all.
3. Diversifying secondary education to facilitate optimal growth of economy and exceptional human resources. (Sumathipala, 1993, P.179)

Accordingly, it is the duty of every government to educate for every child in their mother tongue. “I and my Executive Committee will make every possible effort to provide a high level of native language education to the people of the island and to provide higher level education in the country.” (Hansard 1931, p.824) This is a fact that is recognized all over the world. A child develops his intelligence by learning the language he speaks. Kannanthara's slogan was "if there is a no language, there is a no nation". Accordingly, he pointed out the importance of teaching in his mother tongue. He also pointed out the importance of teaching English in schools. “English has become a worldwide language. Hundreds of thousands of books brought from abroad are English books. Exclusion of English is not justified unless a large number of books are published in their own language. (Hansard 1944, p.936) He was of the opinion that the religion of any sect should not be taught at school time. However, it was later revealed that they had agreed to the Executive Committee and had been instructed to teach their religion to their children. “If there is a Buddhist child, he should be taught Buddhism. If there is a Catholic child, he should be taught Catholicism. If there is a Muslim or a Hindu child, they should be taught their religions. We are not partial to anyone and Public school is the only place where we can do that. It is treated equally to everyone.” (Hansard 1944, 2890)

EDUCATION AND GOVERNMENT

The second objective of the Kannangara Chinthanaya is to establish a universally equitable democratic state with equal opportunities for all. From his early days the idea was to create an integrated public-school system. Kilpatrick, who came to Sri Lanka in 1927, has said that his views have been affected by this. The statement made by the professor is as follows: “I find that there is a tendency for the people of this country to be divided into regular segments. Each group has the hazard of being morally suspicious and morally hostile. It is perfectly clear that Hindus and Muslims in India are extremely difficult to live together. Sri Lanka also has some difficulties. I think there is a great danger of this happening. That is, the Hindus would be interested in the existence of their religion in their schools. So are Buddhism and Christianity.” According to him, this division of schools on the basis of race or religion will have a major impact on the politics of the country. If there is a particular religion which is considered by the government, other religious people will accuse the government. They are suspicious of each other, and as a result, rivalries grow. He has pointed out; if this happens then the future of Sri Lanka will be very dangerous.

These conflicts arise by acting on the foundation that their child should only attend a school with their own children. Such thinking can lead to the emergence of a group of children who do not support each other. According to Mr.Kannangara the education of the country should be based on the theory of amalgamation. At present there are many schools run by various religions in Sri Lanka. He thought all these schools should be taken over by the government.

The reason for this idea is that he believes that a combined system of governance cannot be under dual control. He recognized the following shortcomings, through the religious education system of the time.

1. Establishment of small, needy and lack of facilities schools.
2. Depending on the religion of the students.
3. Competitiveness and specificity.
4. School administrators are not motivated by generosity or motivated encouraging a feeling of service.
5. Those that have education expenses have lack of control over it.
6. High religious officials, becoming powerful, rooted and privileged persons.
7. The quality of teachers is very low.
8. The effect of the investment is not proportional to the investment.

He pointed out that a system of public education should be administered by the state-linked government. It is also seen that, as a pretext for a universal election, the ability to read and write for all people, regardless of race, creed or caste, is equally focused on equality, community education and Sri Lankan citizenship.

EDUCATION AND ECONOMY

He emphasized how education contributes to the country's economy and prosperity. "If a country lacks real education, there is no real prosperity in that country." Are shown. He pointed out that education can enable people in any field to do their work successfully. To strengthen the economy of the country, education had to be developed first. He pointed out that there is no developed nation without education. An uneducated society is adhered to customs and traditions, past practices and techniques. The society does not readily respond to changes that encourage new knowledge and skills. The education program breaks down the barriers to development. Education can be seen as a direct impact on the economy.

Mr.Kannangara, who was operating from this line of thinking, had little financial support from the government for the education of the country. The government was willing to develop electricity businesses, railways and highways as they relate to the economy of the country but refused to allocate funds to improve education in rural areas. At that time the Minister of Finance was of the view that schools should not be built with debt funds as there is no benefit. He has pointed out that it would have the opposite benefits. That is, when they learn, they will protest for better education and more. Then the spending sector will be much higher. Therefore, the best solution is to not borrow money to build schools.

But Mr.Kannangara strongly opposed the idea and said education is the best investment. **"Poverty must be eliminated wherever possible. I respectfully urge the Minister of Finance to change his old objections. We put our money into the best investment. Any amount of money spent on education will have a very big return. It will certainly compensate for the loss in the first instance."** (Hansard 1944, pp. 838-860)

He pointed out, that the rural children leave school at the age of 14, If you have further education in the school where your language medium has available and the only high place, he could go was to become a teacher. But all parents and children are expected to be economically superior. These children were denied the opportunity to take up government jobs or civil service, such as engineering, doctors and lawyers. The rural people had no hope of this. C.W.W. Kannangara questioned any person who has no such hope whether to pursue further education. For this reason, he emphasized the value of free education.

He pointed out that these conditions would be avoided if all were given the opportunity to study for free. He went on to say: "This is roughly what we had intended. Until the age of 12, everyone is given adequate training in general academic subjects, and then the students are divided into different streams according to their special abilities. There is academic neglect but the professional side is stressed." (Hansard 1940, p.2736) He was of the opinion that all these streams should be provided by one middle school.

The reason these children are graded and categorized is because of the prevailing erroneous system of education which leads children to study in unsuitable areas. A child who wants to learn art should have room for it. He also acknowledged that the child should be able to change his or her own field on several occasions. Mr.Kannangara pointed out that the children should be given vocational

Education, which is a government responsibility, cannot be transferred to another private sector. For these reasons, he pointed out the need for an integrated school system. He also pointed out that these schools are more likely to create problems in the middle school system which he hopes to propose in the future. He repeated the problems that the state faces due to religious schools being separate. What will happen to our nation if we run separate institutions such as kindergartens, primary schools and post-primary schools on religious grounds? If these students want to become teachers, then they are trained in their own religious schools. As a result, those who take on the role of child training are often unable to associate with other teachers. Those who oppose government training schools want to keep the nation as a people who have nothing to do with each other." (Hansard 1944, p.930) He has stated this.

He also opposed the administration of schools by other private managers when the government paid for it. There are many laymen and clergymen who have made management a profession. They see the school as their possession. He pointed out that the managers in these schools are making profits centered on the school. Many Christian clergymen, who were the administrators of such schools, built a monopoly on the school, receiving large salaries from the government. It was also an obstacle to the

education based on their Challenges and abilities. "We will do our utmost to make education, agriculture and industrial foundations as stable as possible." (Hansard 1931, p.825)

He pointed out that a child who grew up in the village, staying in the village must create a situation where service is not viewed as contempt. His aim was to appease the children in all aspects. "Our main goal is to spend at least two hours inside the school building and three hours outdoors. We mean with intellectual development, even more health and physical development, aesthetic and social development." According to him, through a holistic education, children can contribute to the economy of the country.

And the other problem with education is what they get for jobs. The Kannangara Chinthanaya also has a solution. In most schools, children are given knowledge in various fields such as farming, growing vegetables, caring for a vegetable box, mason work and carpentry. It is also seen that he tended to pay special attention to yarn and weaving in particular.

He hoped to develop the "H" four-fold concept of writing, reading and arithmetic beyond this "R" three-fold concept. Edu-

cation focused on the child's health, head, heart, and hand. He sought mental as well as physical development. He believed that combining these concepts with rural education would enable the country to achieve immense economic development. When this education is provided to the rural youth through middle schools, centered around the village, they will stop migrating to the city to find work. He pointed out that by adopting this method, children can accustom get use to ability to earn in their self-strength instead of looking for a teacher or any other job. He has also explained about food production. He pointed out that Sri Lanka's economy must begin with self-sufficiency in food. There will be no industrial expansion in Sri Lanka as long as the crops are imported from foreign countries.

He believed that the re-education of the villagers could create a self-sufficient economy. The scientific knowledge of farming and It's an honor to work hard should be impressed upon the rural people. He thought that agriculture should be made a part of education itself.

He pointed out that higher education of Sri Lanka should be incorporated into this system. It should not be a Passing heavy-duty exam in the western system. Higher education must also change so that it can be used to boost the economy of the country. Such a result could not be expected from people leaving the universities. "What is the joy to people, by educating in isolation as a monastery? What is the joy of keeping people separate from the practical aspect of life? He was constantly questioned. He is of the opinion that education should be promoted.

Accordingly, he came up with the idea of creating a university of this nature. Accordingly, a Buddhist Pirivena was found suitable for this purpose. Accordingly, it was decided to establish Universities based on the two centers of Vidyodaya Pirivena in Keleniya and Maligakanda. The University of Ceylon was open only to the wealthy English educated. But he wanted to make these two Piriven Universities a place of education in the Sinhala language according to the local system.

CONCLUSION

As forecasted, the Philosophy of C.W.W.kannangara will continue to grow. Kannangara scholars' ideas for the revival of education in Sri Lanka can be interpreted in several sections. His philosophical outlook on the concept of education is unique. His thinking has played a huge role in the free education system for all. His aim was to create education that was suitable for all, focusing on all aspects of government, child, teacher and parents. He has also commented on the importance of teaching in the native tongue and philosophically explaining the development of the individual. The Kannangara Chinthanaya helps to stabilize and develop the country's economy, politics and culture by creating educational policies that are appropriate for the country. He was of the view that no progress in any of these sectors could be achieved without education. He emphasized that all children should be afforded full education. His thinking, even in the present, can help to create a united Sri Lankan nation that alleviates racial issues in the country. He emphasized not only knowledge but also the practical application of that knowledge. He pointed out that education can give children with virtues to the country. He also believed that education has the potential to make a person capable of earning their own strength and living with a personality. He pointed out that the country needs a healthy nation with the development of physical and mental health and that need is met by education.

He made a strong effort to develop rural education. His thinking was instrumental in this regard. He pointed out that all children should be treated like children, without a poor rich split. He was afflicted with poverty during childhood. It has been noted, that "I speak through bitter experience. After a competitive examination, I was selected as a basic primary scholarship student at Richmond College. I won this scholarship by being the first in the exam. My college had hostel students belongs to three classes. The fee of one of these is 25 rupees and this class consisted of sons of the very rich. As an upper class, they ate with the teachers. The charge for the second class was 15 rupees. Those who ate with the teachers received two pieces of food in two kind of food and those who paid 15 rupees each received one share. I was included among the lowest paid. The fee for that class was 10 rupees. I have seen better food and better treatment, which I received more than any other child. But to this day, the fact that I received a free education at this school had always been an insult term for me. I certainly received a free education. But this insult is connected to with my life. I do not want to blame anybody on this free education. Arrangement should be made to ensure that all children are able to get their education and eat together" (Hansard 1945, 4675) This statement shows that he has been grounded in his thinking and experience for the better future of education system in Sri Lanka.

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