

# The politics, policies and progress of basic education in Sri Lanka

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# UN Secretary General 2010

We do not need more pledges. If nations deliver on the financial commitments they have already made, we can achieve the goals.

*There is clearly a lack of political will*

# What is political will?

- *A sustained commitment of politicians and administrators to invest the necessary resource to achieve specific objectives and a willingness to make and implement policy despite opposition*

## Adult literacy rates

	1950	1990	2005
Ghana	20	40	65
India	28 (1960)	49	62
Sri Lanka	65	87	93

- Was there an underlying political driver of the reform?
- What is the policy environment within which Political Will was exercised?
- Where and how did Political Will operate?
- In their implementation how did Political Will interact with the Non Political Dimensions of Reform?

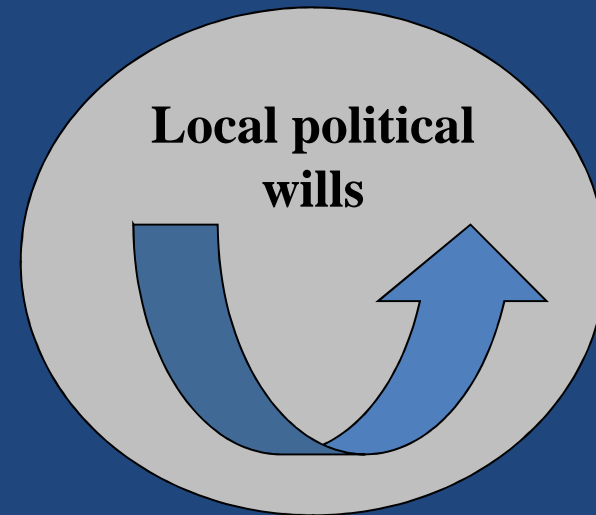
# Policy environment

Constitutional changes

Policy formulation machinery

Patronage politics in education

- *Political will at the highest level is needed to correct this situation. Unless politicisation is eliminated from the education system no amount of policy reforms, structural and organisational change can prevent a total breakdown of the system. It is proposed that leaders of all political parties should agree to eliminate political interference in the education system, make a 'joint declaration' in this regard and implement an action plan to achieve this goal on a priority basis in the best interest of the nation*



*Political will is double-edged sword*



- Political will apparent in democratic and non democratic regimes since before independence.
- During implementation myriad political wills comes into play. Political will can be a double-edged sword.
- Political will is necessary but not sufficient. Administrative, technical, financial and human resources are as essential and require sustained attention.

- *Is the rate of progress towards EFA more rapid in education systems where policy and administrative elites and government teachers send their own children to government schools?*
- *how much do development partners need to understand about specific policy contexts, specific policy and practice histories and about the extent to which the interests of the poor coincide with the interests of political elites?*