

Secondary Education And New Curricula

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MOST important deciding factor for career building of a student all over the world is what he or she learns while undergoing secondary education formally from 9th grade to 12th grade class. In our country secondary education is divided into two sections: (a) Secondary education and (b) higher secondary education which follows undergraduate degree programme in various fields. However, here I am concerned with the secondary schooling classes and the diversification of education into science, commerce, arts, agriculture, industrial arts etc. at the stage of 9th grade class.

If you ask a child 'My love what do you want to be (in future)?' He or she would most probably reply 'I want to be President/Prime Minister/Doctor/Engineer/Barrister/Pilot/Driver/Police Officer'. The children can tell anything what they wish, for they are not in touch with the reality, for they are unconscious about their basic talent and the competence they will achieve by their efforts through the years of their young age. Although at the stage of 9th grade class all students become familiar with the world around them to a greater degree of consciousness. I want to emphasise that they are still immature to decide actually what their talents and acquired abilities are suited for. Most of the students still remain confused about their future possibility. Some of them are attracted by the immediate miracles of science and enroll themselves into science group, and later on may find that science is too difficult for them to carry an further education in competition with other students and may find it easier to enroll at a commerce College/department where again they will be in trouble in the class because they are lacking the background which a Secondary or Higher Secondary Commerce Student has. Another important aspect may be well considered that no 9th grade student in our country is independent of his or her parents or guardians. Most of the parents influence their dependents in the selection of Group without showing much regard to the aptitude and ambition of their wards.

Moreover branching out of education at such an early stage into different groups has narrowed the purview of further education at the undergraduate level. Thousands of students through the years are

the prey of this painful claws of grouping in general education before 12th grade. As for example if a student passing the H.S.C. from Commerce group fails to get an admission into commerce related department of a College or University the doors of almost all other departments also appear to be closed for him or her. Scope is more narrow for an arts group student who may have well intellectual ability to complete an undergraduate work. I cannot tell whether grouping of students at this stage into different categories of knowledge make them specialised or more skilled in their respective branch of knowledge; but I think parallel development of knowledge in language sciences, administration, history, religion etc. upto the 12th grade class level is more necessary for greater degree of understanding, interaction and consciousness about the history and for greater scope of further education. Thus any grouping of students in the name of specialising knowledge before 12th grade is seriously detrimental to the young students a major part of whom are uncertain about their future possibility. The abolition of such grouping of students at Secondary level in recent system demands the commendation of conscious intelligentsia of the country. Now prime consideration should be given to the same about higher secondary education level. This will also remove the superiority/inferiority complex created in a young student just because of the group he/she enrolled in not because of the difference in intellect and perseverance. We can follow a policy: Don't make the able the disable by grouping let the able cherish their ability in their possible fields without restraining them in the name of grouping. There may be provisions for various vocational training programmes after passing at least the 8th grade to satisfy the need for the technical hands in the country as well as abroad. But the mainstream is general education grade for greater cause of maintaining the uniformity of the basic education among the young people. Here basic education means the knowledge and training acquired till 12th grade schooling which till prepare a student to work on any undergraduate degree or diploma programme in any field—professional or non-professional. There is not much diversity in Secondary and Higher Secondary education in

our country except grouping of knowledge. Academic education is same through 1st grade to 8th grade schooling all over the country without any exception which has given a more equity in the comparative judgement of a student's merit through different competitive public examination e.g. Primary/Junior scholarship examinations. A more justification in judging comparative merit of a particular generation of students, nationwide should have been possible with the administration of public examinations by the four education boards under the same question papers prepared centrally with the coordination of four boards of public instructions. The uniformity of the basic education has always its advantages without having any demerits.

Next what comes is the syllabi or course contents of the basic education. It is not possible to cover every detail or entire aspects of this significant point in a short treatise. There are some moral and ideological aspects concerning which many personal opinions may arise drastically in contradiction with others' viewpoint. Setting a standard of moral and ideology to be incorporated in our basic education, is a question of national debate and the answer lies in a national agreement on the matter. However, here I shall try to focus on some of the very general points of the course contents particularly in mathematics. It's true that all the schools with a few exceptions in our country are lacking adequately efficient teaching staff. This is a serious drawback for introduction of a dynamic change in our school curricula. So far all the teachers I have spoken to informed me that the new Curricula especially of mathematics and science are too much hard for the students and candidly agreed that they themselves had not studied many things now included in mathematics and it's really hard for them to teach those things.

In fact, being a bit familiar with the subject matters, what I find is that the new concepts and chapters included are not really new and hard but are new and hard both for teachers and students due to unfamiliarity.

Statistics, set theory, binary numbers and binary operations etc. are among the new topics that are covered in class VI—VIII mathematics courses. The importance and usefulness of

these basic mathematical tools are no less significant. As days are passing by the impact of science on our everyday life is growing more and more. To perceive how science is regulating and reflecting our daily life we must have to understand the basic laws of science and their mathematical manipulations and reasonings for achieving which boys and girls should be introduced basic notions of scientific laws and some important mathematical concepts as early as their mental ability grows enough to comprehend those.

In many other countries these things are done during their high school education thereby for developing a more efficient and quick mental reasoning power. It is a matter of regret that general students in our country are lacking these since a long time just because no initiation has been adopted for revision of the Secondary and Higher Secondary School course content to adjust with the modern world trend. I have seen new mathematics of Class VI, VII, VIII and IX—X with the diversity of my education. In the mathematics book of Class IX—X many new chapters have introduced such as Fractions, Ratio and Proportion, Laws of Indices etc. These often appear hard to the students of general merits. In the geometry book many new theorems and propositions have been introduced from the elective geometry book. I think the new curricular in mathematics is much better and the difficulty of the course content in mathematics is maintained just up to a level that a general high school student of usual age can digest. The new concepts and topics included in mathematics if taught properly will help to extend a new dimension of thinking and reasoning procedure in the young students' mind. Thus the revision of this particular course content has a worthy significance. However it is worthwhile to point out that the number of problems for exercise set following each new topics is very less. Experience of a research at the MIT shows that practising and solving a greater number of problems involving a concept helps the learners to acquire a greater mastery over the latter. I hope this experience of the MIT researcher should be taken into account in the following editions of the books in the near-future. [Views expressed are that of the author's]