

08 OCT 1996

THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER

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Plight Of Secondary Education

M A Shukur

THE object of education is to develop the mental faculties as well as the physical conditions of an individual. Opinions vary on the subject. Aristotle holds that education does not create rare qualities, rather it sharpens the dormant faculties or traits in an individual. Tendencies inherited from ancestral stock by a person, that is, the in-born tendencies of individuals, are naturally transmitted to subsequent generations while knowledge only brings it to a take-off stage or expression.

"The true object of education should be to train one to think clearly and act accordingly," — as J. Van Dyke, an eminent scholar puts it. Words and actions, according to him, are of no avail if they do not coincide. The Holy Prophet (SM) of Islam used to lay much stress on the acquisition of profitable knowledge (Ilm-un-Nafisun) i.e. the knowledge aimed at welfare, spiritual and material, guiding man to a certain destination.

Of the various stages of education, the secondary stage is of paramount importance, a stepping-stone of higher leaning and a preparing ground for the adolescent, and it should be put to proper care and vigilance in order to buildup a healthy nation.

The sorry plight of secondary education in our country may be attributed, among other factors, to a set of futile and erroneous policies pursued by subsequent governments, one of which is the compulsory introduction of text books compiled and edited by the National Text Book Board from primary level onwards, thus depriving children of good books written by competent and

reputed authors. This sort of imposition from above kills their creativity, dampening their imaginative faculties and robbing the students of a democratic class atmosphere.

Secondly, the huge book-pile which the boys and girls are subjected to, is rather a burden for the children of tender age. The system impairs them from within and drags them towards ruination of whatever intellectual capability they might own, their future prospects thereof become bleak and narrower. On the other hand, the teachers, over-worked and fatigued with so vast a course to be completed within a calendar year, find little time to concentrate on and devote themselves to the students and hence the pernicious system of 'private tuition.'

Thirdly, the adoption of extensive method of teaching these days vis-avis intensive method pursued during the by-gone days in detrimental to the mental growth or originality of adolescents. As a result, the teachers, to some extent become apathetic to the intellectual needs of the taught while the latter naturally turn to cramming, devoid of research and fore-sight. Under the process, the students easily become prey to ordinary market note-books. It is admitted on all hands that 'intensive method' of teaching is by far the best for the true evaluation of the students' inner qualities.

Fourthly, over the years, the teaching of English has not been receiving due stress and proper care as it should have been. It is suicidal on our part to do away with or throw-off the language as it is not only one of the most used medium of

communication among various nations, rather it is a powerful vehicle of thought of the erudite people throughout the world. Ambitious boys and girls must be proficient in English if they wish to pursue higher studies. The growing decline in the educational standard in our country may be ascribed to the set-back students face if they are poor in English, as they are then unable to take advantage of important reference books published in English. It is an irony of fate that our students have to undergo refresher courses in English when they go aboard for further studies.

With a view to arresting the situation due emphasis should be given to teaching English Grammer and Composition from the very grass-root level. It is a plain truth that learning of Grammer and Composition of an alien tongue is a must if we are to master the language. To that end, at the SSC level, three papers in English carrying one hundred marks each from class IX onwards should henceforth be introduced and care must be taken to include unseen portions for examinations. Refresher courses in English may be organised from time to time, for the teachers to keep them equipped for better teaching.

Education is a psychological phenomenon. Religious aspirations are said to be as old as mankind and education can be a viable tool to guide human conduct. Religious education should therefore be part of our education. Needless to add that religion teaches morality. Unless the sense of morality is developed among

the young generation, we will not be able to weed out lawlessness, terrorism and sex violence.

As Stanely Haig observes, "If you teach your children the three Rs of reading, writing and arithmetic and leave the fourth R of religion, you would get another R of rascality." In that connection a book on religious studies up to SSC should be mandatory. But our students are made to learn Grammer and Composition of the language of our scripture instead of the essence of human religions. So the students not understanding the text, keep getting verses by heart from the summary note-books and cross the examination hurdle without much knowledge about religion.

History is a mirror of nations. The future has its roots with the past and for that matter, we find that advanced nations of the world are history-conscious. By reading the history of various nations around the globe, we are able to learn and compare different situations. We see in our country little regard to learning and teaching history properly at secondary level. Our boys and girls therefore do not seem concious enough and proud of our national heritage. We should rectify this and retain up to SSC class the History of the Sub-continent from the ancient period down to the present era.

As the country is predominantly Muslim, Islamic History should as well be fixed as compulsory subject at that level. It is necessary that the students should be aware of the Islamic world, including OIC and the other Forums of the Muslim world at large.