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A STUDY

The Systems Of Education

— Md. Maksud-Ul-Karim

IN the United Kingdom the responsibility for providing education other than in universities rests with the local education authorities. Public expenditure on education was £ 5,884 million in 1974/75 equivalent to 7.5 per cent of the G.N.P.

There are primary schools, grammar schools, secondary modern schools, comprehensive schools, free-paying schools, boarding schools, direct grant schools and numerous private schools in the U.K. In addition to these, the U.K. has a few sixth form colleges, teachers training colleges (known as Colleges of Education), General Certificate of Education (G.C.E) Ordinary Level and Advanced Level institutions and universities. The U.K. has 2,273 comprehensive schools, about 600 institutions and 45 universities including one Open University.

Education is compulsory from the age of 5 to 16. Since the mid 1960s there has been a move to replace grammar and secondary modern schools by comprehensive schools. During this period the number of comprehensive schools has risen from 262 to 2,273. In 1974 over 60% of secondary school children in England and Wales attended comprehensive schools. From September 1976 the Government intends to phase out direct grant schools.

NURSERY EDUCATION: Children below the age of 5 years may go to schools called nursery schools or attend nursery classes attached to infant schools. The Act of 1944 made special provision for it. Constructive play and training in social living and healthy habits are the main items in the curriculum.

PRIMARY EDUCATION: Primary education in Great Britain sometimes described as being first in the world. Some primary schools cater for the primary age range of 5 others are either infant or schools. At the infant stage there is no hint of an imposed by examination. There are valuable opportunities for exercise and this may be one why it is commonly the best education of all to be found in the

In this second instalment of his article the author examines the systems of education in the United Kingdom.

Education from about the age of 8 becomes an increasingly serious business in the minds of parents. Cooperation between parents and the school is all-important at every stage and the link is most easily forged early. To encourage all parents to make a habit of taking active interest in what goes on in the school is one of the primary school head's most important tasks. The older the child grows the more valuable active cooperation between parents and teachers becomes.

One of the major tasks of the junior school teacher is to foster the enthusiasm which is characteristic of the infant stage and gradually to develop habits of more ordered thinking. The play situation has to be changed into a state when the child appreciates that some lessons have to be learnt by the conscious exercise of self-discipline. The ability to read with facility, to write fluently and correctly and to become familiar with the symbolisms and language of mathematics are among the essential keys to enlightenment and must be acquired.

The right attitudes to work and to society have to be firmly instilled. The responsibility lies squarely with the primary schools to lay the foundations from which proper attitudes develop.

By and large, good work in English is a feature of the primary schools throughout the country today. After English, arithmetic, in the primary schools, ranks next in importance among the formal subjects. English and arithmetic are but two of the basic subjects which are given importance in the primary school, but they are subjects which come a great deal under fire. The U.K. is the only major European country which does not teach children at least one foreign language before the age of 11 or 12.

Art, music, dance, craft, drama are common features of primary schools work today and are particularly enjoyed by girls.

Outside the state system there

are private preparatory schools and the preparatory departments of the direct grant grammar schools. The preparatory departments keep roughly to a curriculum parallel with that in the maintained primary schools so that all pupils are in step with one another when they enter the main school. The end of primary education is marked in most local authorities by a secondary school selection examination.

Teachers try to lay foundations in the primary schools on which children build their own self-education. The dignity of primary education is important. The primary schools are not merely the handmaidens of education existing to serve the needs of other branches. There must be co-ordination of the right kind at all junctures in education, the primary schools stand in their own right as living institutions with an essential contribution to make to the whole.

Primary schooling covers six years secondary education five years. General Certificate of Education (G.C.E) Ordinary Level and Advanced Level five years (including two year advanced level), and university three to four years. Primary education is from 5 years to 10 years. After primary education pupils are qualified for entrance to five-year of secondary education course which generally starts at the age of 11. Since 1951 the G.C.E. has been introduced; and it is held at two levels, ordinary and advanced. Usually at the age of 16 the General Certificate of Education (G.C.E) Ordinary Level is taken by the students who have finished secondary education. The G.C.E Advanced level is open for those who have passed the G.C.E Ordinary Level. Now a few Sixth Form Colleges take pupils usually at the age of 16 for two year course. Universities are open for those who have completed five years G.C.E Courses. Although five G.C.E passes including two at advanced level are normally the general requirement for university entrance.

the decision to admit students is made by a university according to its own requirements.

Secondary education is given in grammar schools, secondary modern schools, comprehensive schools and some middle schools. The comprehensive schools provide a wider variety of vocational and academically biased courses to suit the individual ability. The Certificate of Secondary Education (CSE) is taken by pupils completing five years of Secondary Education but who are not up to NCE standard. Most of the boarding schools award a number of scholarships to suitable pupils. In direct grant schools up to half the pupils have their fees paid by the local authority. Some private schools are independent and some are run by charitable trusts or churches.

The General Certificate of Education (G.C.E) Ordinary level may be taken in as many subjects as a candidate wishes. The G.C.E Advanced Level generally taken two years later, qualifies for entrance to higher education. The institutions provide vocational and academic courses, on a full-time, part-time, sandwich basis. Teacher training colleges (known as Colleges of Education) provide three-year course for non-graduates and may provide a one-year postgraduate teaching course.

University degree courses generally extend over three or four years, though in Medicine five or six years are required. All the universities provide for postgraduate work and for research. In university the first degree course normally lasts three years and leads to a Bachelor of Arts or Sciences (B.A or B.Sc.) degree. The Open University provides degree courses by means of television, radio correspondence and summer schools.

In Britain the number of unemployed remains steadfastly around one and a half million.

Character, brains and skill are principal natural resources in the U.K. and she cannot hope to survive as an influential power unless she invests heavily in education. This brings to education a new importance and urgency.

(To be continued)