

Trends In Secondary Education In The 21st Century

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SECONDARY Education Division of UNESCO and the National Commission of the People's Republic of China for UNESCO organized an international expert meeting on General Secondary School Education at Beijing on 21-25 May, 2001 in the 21st century. Trends, Challenges and Priorities. High level officials from Ministry of Education, directly responsible for General Secondary Education from the least developed and most highly populated countries to the developing and developed nations, namely Bangladesh, Canada, China, Guinea, Lebanon, Mexico, Russian federation and South Africa were the invitees participants in the meeting. Two international experts in the field of Secondary Education reforms were invited to participate in the meeting to share information and experience in the field. The National Commission of People's Republic of China handled all the logistics and assisted in the preparation of drafting of the meeting by three experts.

The objective of the meeting was to identify the major Trends in General Secondary Education, the challenges that are being faced by different countries at the commencement of New Century and the priority of areas to be acted upon.

Following the Jomtien, Thailand (5-9 March 1990) world declaration on Education for all, Education for all summit in Delhi (16 Dec, 1993) and Dakar Declaration (26-28 April 2000) number of adolescent have been increased for seeking enrolment in Secondary Education and Contemporary societies are becoming more complex and numerous challenges are emerging. The increase in enrolment between 1970 and 1997 has been spectacular, in many countries have risen to two or three times and this process have become universal both in richest and poorest. Parent's New Trends to choose to have their children carry on their studies up to higher secondary level have been marked both in Northern and Southern hemisphere. It is no longer reserved, as in the past for the fortunate minority. So with the advent of much secondary enrolment a new approach of secondary education

establishment, with a new clientele and new missions to be fulfilled. This mass enrolment has not always been furnished and fabricated with the requisite fund allocation to provide adequate conditions for learning and pave the way of a pupils an inconvenient journeys to school without proper infrastructure, learning materials and with insufficient teaching staff or staff without necessary skills.

Secondary Education has functions other than preparing pupils for higher education. Students need life skills, study skills and responsible behaviour in one hand and on the other hand young people's responsibility for the society and their integrity in the world of work. Different states have started to feel the dire necessity to embark on reforming General Secondary Education with a modification of "Traditional Schools". The massive introduction of new technologies, where intellectual operations take precedence over manual manoeuvring, may lead to questioning the policy of retaining vocational training in the secondary school, when pupils could learn requisite general knowledge. Modernization of Education though innovation in the modes of operation of teaching methods with many adaptation to cope with the development of knowledge and technological advancement must be achieved. With these considerations Beijing expert meeting was arranged with the thematic debate on 1) General Secondary Education VS Diversified Vocational Education, 2) Mass access VS. selection competitiveness, 3) Knowledge based Instructions VS. behavioural and skills education.

Secondary Education may be considered as the educational opportunities available to adolescents, though adolescents have no fixed age limits; yet it is referred to it as the span of life between twelve and twenty. It is the extension of basic education and provide guiding and promoting the development of normal individuals who were not prepared to participate effectively in society or were not ready for the specialized work for productive objectives.

In Bangladesh secondary education is divided into three cy-

cles: Junior Secondary (3) years, Grade-VI-VIII), Secondary (2) years, Grade -IX-X) and higher secondary (2) years, Grade XI-XII). Islamic instruction based Institution like Dakhil and Alim Madrasa correspondent parallel to secondary and higher secondary educational institutions respectively. From statistical point of view at of 9.4 million secondary students, Madrasa constitutes about 1/4th in terms of enrolment. A glut of Madrasa certificate holders of Dakhil and Alim float in the Job Market with poor foundation of knowledge of modern technology, because of posing under-emphasize of development of skills and aptitudes. Moreover, opportunity of lateral entry Madrasa pupils to the tertiary education pulling down the standard of university education of modernage; that is absent in the total scenario of the world of education.

In the New Education policy 2000 denotes the inclusion of lower secondary school education in compulsory schooling Bangladesh has extended the length of primary education from five years to eight years. To upgrade 5 years school to eight grade; primary schools needs further attention. Management of pedagogical commitment to the new eight grade school with the existing staff pattern would lead to illusion. Sophisticated teachers with proper aptitude and skills shall have to be provided inevitably in the education and learning process. Five years primary cycle followed by 3 years secondary cycle need extra space of facilities for class room accommodation. At the same time disjunction of 1316 Intermediate Colleges with the college education and accomplishment purely with a part of secondary education (XI-XII) will hurl the status of those colleges and 23,819 teaching staffs to uncertainty and thus problems in pluralistic nature may be uncarried.

Current curricula are overloaded with the information and facts to be memorized for the preparation of public examination and less importance have been given to modern technological education. Secondary education is to serve the need of

society and of the individual students. The curriculum is the means by which the secondary school meet these needs. In today world sound secondary school curriculum is more important than before. This will not only prepare pupils for a suitable job and make them acquainted with the surrounding heritage, but also make them able to face self, society, nation and world's problems with courage, vigour and determination. So selection of essentials and elimination of our dated Thoughts and Technological know hows should be continued in the changing world of 21st century.

Though the non government secondary institutions has been out numbered the government institutions since a pretty long time the attitude of government towards disparity in all respects were never in melting point and that is the thorny problems, identified by experts, prevailing in the total system of education.

Subvention should not be linked with result of the institution where majority teachers are not responsible for it; but morality of teachers should be upgraded where accountability is at-stake. There are other factors that are responsible for poor quality of education such as—large class sizes, lack of teaching materials, low quality of text books, untrained teachers, lack of supervision by proper authority and guardians and political involvement in the machinery of school management.

Illustration of reticence is very much spectacular for some, self-government schools in the country. They are very much reluctant to follow the norms of the system in terms of syllabus which generate inequalities in education provision in the secondary education that escapes close vision of the authority.

Secondary Education of Bangladesh must be highly diversified to flourish most varied talents and modernization through innovation still remains to be forged, tackling complexity of problems posed by the existing situations.

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