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Formation of School Subjects

The history of school subjects of today is of recent origin. It has started around last few decades. This area of study has not been explored much and thus a very fertile area of research. This requires one to study the socio economic and political conditions of India at different times, which have significantly influenced the system of education and from which the present system of education, including the set of subjects has emerged. To understand the emergence of school subjects, we need to refer to number of sources like the study of school laws and decrees, external prescriptions to teachers and students form authorities, enforcement of subjects and pedagogic prescriptions. The 80ø -cultural trendø which believed that individual experiences being always the result of a particular social-political context, influenced this trend of looking at school practices as a resultant of socio-political contexts.

To know about the emergence of school subjects, first of all, it is necessary to trace the appearance/disappearance of subject/subjects, its rise and fall at different times, according to the documents. We need to verify the text books, its content, language and style etc which give number of clues to trace the formation of school subjects.

Research and writings by experts reveal that the existing pattern of subjects in majority of our schools today is the result of the historical and cultural phenomena through the years. The system of education, including the pattern of subjects taught in schools is highly influenced by different forces during the course of time.

In ancient India, schools were in the form of Gurukul, where the numbers of subjects, both practical and theoretical in nature were taught according to the needs of students. These were traditional Hindu residential schools of learning. These were typically the houses of teachers or the monasteries. During Mughal rule, Madrasas were introduced to educate the children of Muslim parents. We come to know from the records of British times that indigenous education was wide spread in 18th century, with a school for every temple, mosque or village in most regions of the country. The subjects taught in these schools included reading, writing, art, theology, law, astronomy, ethics and medicine, science and religion.

Under the British rule in India, Christian missionaries from England and other countries established schools throughout the country. These schools marked the beginning of



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modern schooling in India and the subjects they prescribed became the bench mark for schools in India. Today, majority of schools follow the same model given by British.

This does not mean that Indians were not aware of different subjects to be taught in schools. There were well established subjects of Indian origin which were simultaneously taught in Indian schools, as mentioned above. These were closely related to the life of students and useful for daily living. Developing Reading and writing skills in Indian languages (according to the linguistic background) were the focus of Indian educational institutions. Other subjects had deep support in their disciplines. These subjects were seriously taught in schools and colleges. Nalanda University, which was established in 5th century, was offering education in well-established subjects like theology, logic, astronomy, metaphysics, medicine and philosophy. Takshashila (800B.C) offered law, medicine and military science along with archery, hunting and elephant lore. Vikramashila (783 B C) had subjects like philosophy, grammar, Indian logic, metaphysics etc.

This theme, the formation of school subjects in India is very vast, and demands an in-depth study of the political, socio-cultural aspects of the country which have influenced the system of education of India. Make a thorough study of this subject to deduct apt findings.