

Academic Standards and rules of Schools for Talented Students in Asian Countries, A Comparative Study

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Abstract—This study has been performed regarding the Academic Standards and rules of Schools for Talented Students in Asian Countries. By reviewing the educational system for the gifted it was evident that Asian countries such as Iran and India are trying their best for achieving higher standard in their gifted Educational system. This strategy is properly managed by both countries educational ministration although some private sectors are active in Iran in this field. But it is noteworthy that many Iranian gifted students may be under diagnosed in this system because of only one method of general testing in the country. Since there are many high level students in Iranian regular schools, a more perfect system is needed for better diagnosis and selection of the gifted in the country.

Keywords— gifted, Iran, India.

I. INTRODUCTION

THE Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary defines the term "gifted" as: (1) Having great natural ability and (2) Revealing a special gift.

"Gifted" children have been defined as those "who by nature of outstanding abilities are capable of high performance". The term "outstanding abilities" refers to general intellectual ability, specific academic aptitude, leadership ability, ability in the visual or performing arts, creative thinking, or athletic ability.

Most gifted children display a higher rate of concentration and memory capacity. There is no typical gifted child, for particular talents and social environments give rise to varying personality patterns. Achievement patterns also vary. Differences among them will be found, even when they are grouped together. Some are very strong in one subject and weak in others. The gifted mathematician may be an average reader, the gifted artist may be poor in mathematic and the early reader may lack the ability to organize time and materials.

In the business world, many management studies attempt to find the traits and characteristics of the successful company leaders, with believes that leaders can be nurtured and trained. Likewise, there are also qualities and characteristics that are frequently found among gifted children, although no child will possess them all. One way that parents can tell if their children

might be gifted is to focus on a range of behaviors that occur in the daily conversations, activities, and responses to learning opportunities. A list of characteristics common in gifted four-, five-, and six-year olds includes abilities such as Express curiosity about many things , Ask thoughtful questions , Have extensive vocabularies and use complex sentence structure , Are able to express themselves well , Solve problems in unique ways , Have good memories , Exhibit unusual talent in art, music, or creative dramatics , Exhibit especially original imaginations , Use previously learned things in new contexts , Are unusually able to order things in logical sequence , Discuss and elaborate on ideas , Are fast learners , Desire to work independently and take initiative , Exhibit wit and humor , Have sustained attention spans and are willing to persist on challenging tasks , Are very observant , Show talent in making up stories and telling them , Are interested in reading.

II. AIMS OF THE STUDY

- To evaluate the educational system for the gifted in India
- To evaluate the educational system for the gifted in Iran
- To compare evaluation in Iran and India

A. India

India is the second most populous country in the world with a population of 1.08 billion. The UN predicts that by 2025 India will have surpassed China as the most populous nation. Life expectancy is 64 years. The country is divided into 28 States and seven Union Territories, each with their own elected or appointed governments.

About 70% of Indians live in rural villages, which are often very remote; 64.8% of adults are literate, 75.3% of males, and 53.7% of females. Kerala is the only state that is completely literate. Officially, 23 languages are recognized by the constitution but over 840 dialects are spoken. Hindi and English are the national languages used by the central government.

There are approximately 888,000 educational institutions in India enrolling around 189.2 million students. In its commitment to raise the quality of education, the central government has been steadily increasing the education budget since Independence in 1947. The goal is to allocate to it at least 6% of GDP (currently approximately 4% of GDP makes up the education budget). From this budget, 86% goes to

support higher education explaining in part India's world-class management and IT institutes. As a result India produces an elite number of highly educated graduates, but at the same time is struggling to meet basic educational goals including universal primary education, the total eradication of illiteracy and improving access and the quality of education in rural areas.

In accordance with the National Policy of Education (1986), the central government envisaged a scheme in which intellectually gifted and talented rural students would be provided with quality residential education free of cost. The government made the decision to invest in gifted children because they are viewed as crucial to the social and economic development of India. One anticipated outcome of this scheme is that students will return to their rural villages in the future as professionals (for example teachers and doctors) and thereby help to raise the overall standard of living in their communities. The scheme was started in 1986 with the opening of the first two Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya (JNV) schools. This has grown to 515 schools at present serving 158,897 gifted and talented students. The goal is to have at least one JNV in each district of India.

JNV schools are co-educational residential schools for students aged 11–17. Education is free for all enrolled students including all residential care, uniforms, textbooks, medical care, and travel fares home. Many of the students come from uneducated and illiterate families, a trend which has never before occurred in Indian education. Admission of the 80 new students to each school each year is made on the basis of a selection test administered by the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE). It aims to be an objective, class-neutral test designed to ensure fairness regardless of prior educational attainment and is offered in 20 languages. It includes three sections covering mental ability, arithmetic and language, consisting of a total of 100 multiple-choice questions. Admission is extremely competitive, the national acceptance rate being roughly 4%.

All JNV schools follow the standard national CBSE curriculum which includes at least two languages, general studies, work experience, physical and health education and three of the following; mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, biotechnology, economics, political science, history, geography, business studies, accountancy, fine arts, agriculture, computer science, multimedia and web technology, sociology, psychology, philosophy, physical education, music and dance, entrepreneurship or fashion studies. The curriculum is not accelerated, but students are provided with enrichment opportunities.

B. Gifted Education Programme (Singapore)

The Gifted Education Programme (GEP) is a Singaporean academic program designed for the top 1% of pupils, identified in two rounds of tests at the end of Primary 3. The Gifted Education Program was first implemented in Singapore in 1984 amid some public concern. It was initiated by the Ministry of Education (MOE) in line with its policy under the

New Education System to allow each pupil to learn at his/her own pace. The MOE has a commitment to ensure that the potential of each pupil is recognized, nurtured and developed. It was recognized that there are pupils who are intellectually gifted and that there should be provisions to meet their needs. It actually began with two primary centers and two secondary centers but it has currently expanded to nine primary centers (as at October 2004) and was at its peak before the introduction of the Integrated Program.

As of 2007, nine primary schools and two secondary schools offer GEP.

In 2004, with the first five secondary schools implementing their own Integrated Programs with their affiliated Junior Colleges, they are officially no longer under the GEP. However, they still have their own programs within their respective Integrated Programs to cater to these gifted students, who still retain their "gifted" status. Despite all the changes, there have not been any major changes to the program, and this is basically just a change of name.

However, the Integrated Program proved so popular that in 2004, the remaining schools officially in the program (Dunman High School and Victoria School) saw a drastic decrease in enrollment. Dunman High School had to cut down on the number of GEP classes from the usual 2 to 1 while Victoria School had to totally suspend GEP classes.

As of 2005, four of the secondary schools officially offer only the Integrated Program (Hwa Chong Institution, Raffles Institution, Raffles Girls' School (Secondary), Nanyang Girls' High School). The mission statement of the Gifted Education Program is to provide leadership in the education of the intellectually gifted. The program is committed to nurturing gifted individuals to their full potential for the fulfillment of self and the betterment of society. Their vision is to make the Gifted Education Program a model of excellence in the education of the intellectually gifted. They will achieve this vision by providing professional expertise and exemplary resources to develop intellectual rigor, humane values and creativity in gifted youths to prepare them for responsible leadership and service to country and society.

All Primary Three students, at the age of nine, can choose to take 2 rounds of tests, the first round being the Screening Test, and the second round being the Selection Test. The 2 GEP tests allows the top 1% pupils to enter GEP.

During the Screening Test, English and Mathematics are tested. After the Screening Test, a certain number of pupils are eliminated. The remaining will go through the Selection Test.

The pupils will have to study in this program from Primary 4 to 6, and after that, the pupils can choose to continue studying in the program only, in the Integrated Program, or in the mainstream. Some parents and pupils have argued that the stress in the program is too great.

Schools in the program set separate (sometimes jointly set with other GEP schools) test papers and generally hold more enrichment activities for the students in the program.

In GEP, pupils in Primary 4 Chinese (not Higher Chinese) attend a program which includes content like Chinese poetry, comics, riddles etc. The program is called Chinese Language Appreciation (CLA) and is to be attended once a week. Individualized Research Study (IRS) is compulsory for pupils in Primary 4 or 5, wherein pupils do research on a specific topic. At the end of P4, the teachers would select approximately half the pupils to do the Innovation Program (IvP), where pupils invent items to solve real-life problems. Other pupils will have the option to do the Future Problem Solving (FPS), or continue staying in IRS.

Pupils in the GEP have to take Social Studies as a graded subject. They will study textbook based content more in-depth. Overall, lessons in the GEP are conducted with fewer textbooks and workbooks; lessons are more discussion worksheet- and project-based.

Pupils in GEP learn poetry and literature (Charlotte's Web in Primary 4, A Wrinkle in Time in Primary 5, and Friedrich in Primary 6) as part of the Concept Unit under the English Language subject. Charlotte's Web will be tested under the Miscellaneous section during the end-of-year-examination for P4. A project on A Wrinkle in Time and a Reading Journal will have to be completed in Term 4 at P5. These books replace the English textbook.

In an article in The Straits Times on 3 November 2007, the MOE announced its new scheme to "encourage" greater integration between GEP and mainstream students, to combat elitism and encourage socialization. GEP students in the nine primary GEP centers would spend up to 50% of their lesson time with the top 2% to 5% of the cohort, or the top mainstream students. They would do activities such as building structures with plastic blocks. The announcement of the integration.

C. Iran

In I.R. of Iran: development of rules and regulations is done by the Islamic Parliament, Higher Council of Education and the Cabinet. According to the article 30 of the IRI Constitution the government is obliged to provide all citizens with free education up to the end of secondary school and must expand free higher education to the extent required by the country for attaining self-sufficiency. Under article education should be gratuitous.

Some of the rules and regulations approved by the authorized bodies in this regard are presented in the appendix. Compulsory schooling is 5 years at present which covers 6 to 10 year old children. According to the Third Five Year Development Plan it will cover 6 to 13 year old children which will improve compulsory schooling to 8 years.

In order to improve the quality of educational activities, the assessment

system which is one of the effective factors in teaching/learning process has been revised. There are many reasons why this reform was made, some of which are outlined as: the previous system was based on traditional, non scientific and ineffective methods. The actual usage of the finding in the

real life was neglected and there was overemphasis on a great deal of knowledge. In the reform process some objectives like, matching the assessment methods with scientific findings, increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of school teachings and students active participation in teaching -learning process were taken into consideration. The I.R. of Iran has been trying hard, during the recent years, to increase the enrollment rate, in other words, to increase schooling chances for various groups of people regardless of their gender, age, tribal and ethnic diversities, In this regard the priority has been focused on the education of school age (6-10 year old) children. It has taken efficient measures and practical strategies in the framework of the country's second development plan to achieve this main objective. According to the CIA World Factbook, from information collected in 2003, 85.6% of males and 73% of females over the age of 15 are literate. Thus 79.4% of the population is literate. All schools of gifted and talented students in Iran are supported completely by Iranian Ministry of Education and there is a special budget for these educational centers.

Educational material and curriculum are much different from ordinary education in the country and gifted students are supposed to pass many laboratory and theoretical subjects in school. At the end of each year more than 90% of Iranian talented students are enrolled in high level public universities and continue their study under the supervision of Talented Students System there.

III. CONCLUSION

As it is evident from the above detail, Asian countries such as Iran and India are trying their best for achieving higher standard in their gifted Educational system. This strategy is properly managed by both countries educational ministration although some private sectors are active in Iran in this field. But it is noteworthy that many Iranian gifted students may be under diagnosed in this system because of only one method of general testing in the country. since there are many high level students in Iranian regular schools, a more perfect system is needed for better diagnosis and selection of the gifted in the country.

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