

Objectives

- To expand the provision of secondary education in the sub-region.
- To reconceptualise and change the nature, form and content of secondary education.
- To improve the quality of secondary education.

General Philosophy

Secondary education and schooling have a multifaceted character:

- It is education for persons at a particular stage of human development - adolescence. As such, it must cater to the personal developmental needs of adolescents.
- It is education of a standard above that of the primary level. That is, it assumes some mastery of basic functional standards in several areas as preconditions for successful learning at this level.
- It is really intermediary education. That is, it can no longer be considered terminal education for those who receive it. Secondary education should be followed by tertiary education in specialized fields or skills training for specific jobs in the labour force. As such, secondary school leavers must either be fitted for further education in a particular field or to be trained in some specific skill area in the world of work. Accordingly, secondary education must be of a general nature in a wide range of fields while facilitating the initial stages of specialization based on individual aptitude, achievement, interests and aspiration.
- It is schooling that can enhance and foster social cohesion and solidarity on the one hand or deep social cleavages on the other, depending upon how it is structured. Secondary schooling is an instrument of fashioning the social order.

Taking into account this multi-faced character of education beyond the primary level but before tertiary education and the world of work, the approach adopted here is that education beyond the age of 11 or 12 years should be related to the developmental status of children. The assumption is that in each chronological age cohort, there will be children at different developmental stages. These stages can be broadly defined as:

1. Precocious or gifted in several areas, that is, developmentally advanced relative to their peers.
2. Normal , that is, children whose capabilities are considered standard for that stage.
3. Slow learners, or children who are developmentally lagged. These children will achieve the same levels as the so-called normal children but who can and will take a longer period, time, and require sympathetic and supportive treatment from teachers and parents.
4. Children who are developmentally challenged, disabled in one or more areas so that they will not be able to do all that so-called normal children do, even with supportive and sympathetic

treatment by parents and teachers.

There are three important qualifications to these assumptions.

- Categories overlap, they are not neat and mutually exclusive.
- All human being are possessed of multiple intelligences and they overlap with all categories.
- Empirical studies and surveys are needed to give approximations of the incidence of developmentally disabled students in any age cohort. For example, the occurrence of severe malnutrition or rubella could significantly alter the incidence of various developmental disabilities in a specific cohort of children in a particular community or country.