

CORRESPONDENCE

GEOLOGY IN SCHOOL EDUCATION

[We are happy to reproduce below some more excerpts from the responses received on the above subject — Ed.]

(5)

.... A product of the current system of schooling myself, I feel a sense of loss at not having given an initiation into geology. And my appreciation is of geology *per se*, as it is one of those few subjects that takes man back to his source—nature. What however perplexes me is the fact that geology is taught at the University level to students who obviously have not had an introduction to the subject matter at school. This practice compels the treatment of the subject from its rudiments. The fallout being that the impatient youngsters develop an aversion to the subject and the interested few will take years to acquaint fully with it.

A sensible and workable proposition will be to go by Mr. Srikantia's suggestion – to introduce the subject at the 8th standard level. The field work and practicals suggested for the 9th and 10th standards will help in breaking the monotony of class-room teaching and expose the students to the benign influence of studying in nature, about nature.

The modification of school education should come to include subjects that broaden the pupil's outlook and provide him/her with the highest number of avenues to choose a career from. The educationalists should not have any reservations about including geology as an exclusive subject in the modified curriculum.

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YATISH BALLOLLA

(6)

... It is true that awareness of geology among students is yet to achieve the desired level. Exclusion of an important branch of science which has profound economic and environmental significance is hardly justified.

However, it is worth pondering to know why geology was not taught at school level, say a hundred years ago. Author is not aware of any serious attempt of induction of geology at school level or any attempt of resistance to its induction in science curriculum. This might be due to its descriptive nature, large number of controversies in many topics, part-time occupation of early geological workers, clubbing of geology with humanities and the development of geology linked with development of other subjects particularly dealing with science. Perhaps, most compelling reason was that curriculum of geology was heavily based on knowledge of other subjects. Therefore unless foundation in those subjects is not strong enough, the grasping and appreciation of geological facts would not be of a required level.

The addition of geological knowledge for information purposes is unlikely to yield significant results in the prevailing tendency of securing as many marks as possible.

The purpose of education is to develop analytical ability of a person to arrive at correct judgement by logical reasoning. The present day education is transforming gradually towards acquiring more and more information and simply putting logical approach in background, which should not be the aim of education. Therefore, even less volume of knowledge given in systematic manner to activate the brain is much more useful than large volume of knowledge destined for quick forgetting.

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A.K. BIYANI

(7)

.... In order to introduce geology at the 8th, 9th and 10th standard level, suitable books need to be written. Presently geology forms a part of "Social Studies" in the school syllabus and is not even discussed as science. Schools should have clinometer compass, pocket-lens, Walker's steelyard balance for specific gravity, hardness-box, streak plate and the like.

We should approach the Department of Public Instruction and set the ball in motion.

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(8)

..... While fully endorsing the views of Shri S.V.Srikantia, I strongly recommend that the young minds should be opportuned to understand nature and enthused to be more curious to many natural phenomena and also to become environment friendly especially in the field of land and water management. The dwindling groundwater resources and attendant problems should be made known to inculcate judicious usage and conservation of water at various levels of hydrological cycle. For an effective introduction of geology in the syllabus, each State has to have a committee with the Secretary to the Government, Education Department as Chairman and one of the Professors or Director of Geology and Mines as Member-Secretary with some popular science writers, professionals in geology and experienced Earth Science teachers as members.

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(9)

.... It is really gratifying to note that you have chosen a crucial subject matter for discussion. In this connection I would like to share my thoughts on the matter.

You have rightly pointed out that students hear about geology only during their years in college, even though they are administered this concoction under a different prescription by a different expert. Geology and Geomorphology at the school level are being taught by Geographers who possess a 2-D view of the multidimensional earth. People who opt for the subject at the graduate level rarely have the right aptitude.

You are right in your statement that the high school students should be given a course in geology and that they should be taken out of their class rooms into the field to observe nature. More and more students will show genuine interest in the art of exploring the planet and in finding out answers to the elusive questions: but the precondition is that their teachers should be excellent and equally motivated. Once the grass roots are strengthened, it will no doubt get reflected in the quality of the professionals in the days to come. Thus, the subject will get a new lease of life.

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K.P. JAI KIRAN

(10)

.... I agree that time is ripe to introduce Earth Science at the Secondary School level. People do not understand that Earth Science is mother science and not mathematics. Everything is derived from Earth Science. In 1956, Dr. K. Jacob and Prof. T.S. Sadasivam, Head of the Department of Botany, Presidency College, Madras, prepared a curriculum for introduction at the Secondary School level and submitted the same to Education Ministry. Although, initially, they accepted, later, it did not fructify. Another attempt was made in 1972 by the Late Dr. M.V.N. Murthy, Dr. S. Balakrishna of NGRI and Prof. Y.J. Rao, Head of Geology Dept., Osmania University, Hyderabad and the syllabus was submitted to the Ministry. Nothing came up. Now, this aspect is no longer with the Ministry of Education but with NCERT, New Delhi, who prepare the syllabus. They are reluctant to have a separate subject of geology, but would include it in geography. The material on geology in 'geography' is obviously inadequate.

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