

TITLE : "Gifted Adolescents In Sri Lanka"

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ABSTRACT OF THE STUDY "GIFTED ADOLESCENTS
OF SRI LANKA"

Many studies have been carried out in Sri Lanka on backward, mentally retarded or handicapped children but scant attention has been paid to the question of gifted children. The study "Gifted Adolescents in Sri Lanka" arose out of the consideration that the gifted were a neglected class and that light should be shed on their needs, hopes, and aspirations as well as their problems and frustrations so that action would be taken in educational circles to enable the potential leaders of the nation to "realize their best selves".

The sample for the study was selected from the Educational Regions of Colombo North and South. This area contains urban, semi-urban and rural schools. One thousand and eight students, both boys and girls, were tested, using the Intelligence Test of the National Education Society of Sri Lanka. The process used for selection was Stratified Random Sampling, giving weightage to the different types of schools. It was found that 117 students had I.Q. scores of 135 and over. A questionnaire was sent to the teachers of these students, school records were consulted and class marks ascertained. A Research Group of 50 adolescents was formed of those who showed high intelligence, combined with high school achievement. Then a control group of 50 adolescents was formed from those who had average I.Q. scores in the same sample

(between 80 and 120 I.Q. scores) after similarly consulting teachers and school records. 10 hypotheses were formulated regarding the selected adolescents; and the control groups and the research groups were statistically compared to verify the hypotheses. The students in both groups were then interviewed at their homes. The extent of the influence of home background was gauged and the students were encouraged to speak of their problems, hopes and aspirations.

The study revealed that the gifted adolescents were physically slightly better built than the average students. The gifted started talking and reading early, showed desirable personality traits and had less behaviour problems than the average. The gifted generally had a stable home background with encouragement from parents or guardians. The majority of the gifted adolescents were drawn from the middle-class and had economic security. However, the gifted were not identified early and there was no special provision for their development. As a result, there were many under-achieving gifted children.

The study also revealed other interesting facets of giftedness such as the influences that had operated on children gifted in special subjects, and the factors associated with giftedness.

As a result of the study, a number of conclusions regarding gifted adolescents were formulated and a few suggestions made. In essence, a plea was made for special facilities for the gifted and that they should be treated with understanding by parents, teachers and educational authorities.