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Course

Date



| EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IN AUSTRALIA

In 2010, the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) ranked the education system in Australia seventh in sciences, sixth in reading and ninth in mathematics. This was taken from a comparison with 56 other countries (Shepherd 2010). In 2008, the United Nations Human Development Index placed the system among the best in the world, with an index of 0.993, which is a tie with Finland and Denmark. The success has always been attributed to the process of developing the system, by the stakeholders, such as the Australian government, religious organizations as well as the general perception by the Australians. The process through which the system developed has been pivotal in its success.

Education in Australia started humbly in the 19th century. They started with one roomed-school houses on local farms on land donated by farmers (Marion 2000). City dwellers could not access education bar the wealthier class because it was very expensive to go to school. Schools were set up by churches and other religious groups. Women rarely went to school, however could learn from their husbands. They would later



pass the knowledge to young pupils at a cost. Learning was not professionally done. In the 1830s, the rise in criminal cases led to the leaders realizing that people needed to go to school. They decided that they need an educational system which would be better than the existing British system. Their system would go beyond what they called the three Rs, reading, writing and arithmetic. It would also include teachings morality and rising of law abiding citizens (Marion 2000). This has become very important aspect related to the Australians, where its students discipline is rated highly, with less teenage misconducts. The educational system, through the pillars it was anchored on during its development, has succeeded in bringing order and morality to the students and pupils.

After the development of a better and more orderly education system, there was another contention that ensued from the traditional belief in the caste system. It was believed that blacksmith's children would remain blacksmiths, hence would require less education that doctor's children. The system demanded that children should be taken to school to perfect what their parents did (Marion 2000). If a father is a farmer, then his children would be trained on how to become better farmers. This ensures that there were better professionals in all sectors. However, this was abolished, and students started to receive equal treatments from teachers and the society, regardless of their parents and their occupations. This aspect where the belief in professions along family lines has helped the Australian system to become among the best in the world today, with respect to science, mathematics and reading.

The intervention of the government to sponsor education was another major step into achieving the system that exists today. In the late 1800s,

the government took responsibility over the system of education and set up schools, employed teachers and provided training to those teachers (Marion 2000). It also developed a curriculum and a code of conduct among teachers and students. The curriculum was to be followed by all schools, regardless of the number of students that it harbored. This was a major step because it ensured that every child went to the school, whether rich or poor, girl or boy and enjoyed equal opportunities to succeed. Courses such as knitting and darning were introduced for girls and more intense arithmetic for boys. The system also looked to produce neat students and there was time for learning to wash and comb the hair among other personal hygienic issues. These aspects helped in orderliness of the system, a culture that has been followed to date. In any successful educational system, order takes a center stage, and this has been a very important ingredient in the success of the Australian education system. At the same time, the government's decision to provide facilities and environment for learning was a major step in developing the present-day education system. It ensured that anyone who could prosper from education was not barred as a result of being poor. This has been inherited to date, and the government has continued to offer education to all. This forms part of the culture of the education system, which ensures that the right education standards are met. Consequently, the education system is regarded as highly successful.

Further, the government started up a pupil teacher application for students above the age of 13 years. This was a very tricky issue because the teachers would only be slightly younger than their pupils, which eventually led to the loss of control of the classes by the teachers. However, it was a way that showed the society the importance of



education and more pupils were sent to school. More teachers were developed, and teachers gained their place in the society as very important people. As a result, Australians developed a mentality over the importance of education, which led to a culture that developed into the successful system we have today.

In the 1870s, compulsory education was established (Marion 2000). This led to the establishment of teacher's colleges, and the government saw the need have more detailed education system. In the 1890s, the curriculum was revised, and important details on the existing education system were added. This resulted from the British travelers who proposed that the system was poor, and they needed to improve it in order to become competitive. The Australian government sent people from their country to investigate the system in other countries and their reports recommended a major improvement. From here, high school education was developed as advancement of the primary schools. At this point, the present day education system started to take shape with the establishment of primary, secondary and tertiary education (Shepherd 2010). Colleges that had earlier remained unpopular among students in Western Australia and Queensland started to get enrollments.

The introduction of free scholarships for best students ensured that even the children who came from humble backgrounds got enough education for themselves. Moreover, they ensured that there was enough facilities for all, thus reducing the disadvantages of any of the pupils. This has continued to be the trend today, which has led to good performance of the system. At the same time, schools that were earlier owned and managed by religious institutions were taken over by the government in

the 1920s, in order to ensure that there was a unified system that could be evaluated using the same benchmark (Marion 2000). As a result, there system was easy to develop and policies easier to implement. With these in place, the system reached the success it has done today.

CONCLUSION

As indicated, the process of development of the educational system in Australia has played a large part of its success. The people concerned with the system, over generations have ensured that most of the shortcomings were dealt with in a way that they would not recur. Consequently, the system has been ranked among the best, which is not a meat feat. The compulsory education, order in schools as well as age brackets for primary and secondary schools have been important in ensuring that the system produced the desired manpower or trainees, which is always the objective of an educational system.

