

## The merits and demerits of the introduction of Biology for Grade 12 and 13

T D Ariyaratna

G/ Sangamitta Balika Maha Vidyalaya, Galle

Under 1972 Educational Reforms the subject Biology was introduced to the GCE (A/L) in 1976 and in 1978 it was again separated into two subjects as Zoology and Botany. Under the new Educational Reforms in 1998 the number of subjects in the GCE (A/L) was reduced from four subjects to three subjects. As a result the subjects Zoology and Botany were integrated into one subject as Biology. The aim of this study was to identify the advantages and disadvantages of introducing this new subject to the GCE (A/L) science stream. All 1AB schools in the Galle district were considered as the accessible population for this study and 24 1AB schools were selected as the sample based on the Multilevel Random Sampling Method. Forty teachers and two hundred students were represented in the samples. Data from students, teachers and curriculum developers collected by questionnaires and interview schedules were analyzed by quantitative and qualitative methods.

The new subject Biology has covered all the objectives in the Zoology and Botany curricula and these objectives are suited to Sri Lankan requirements. But there were weaknesses in curriculum development, as Zoology and Botany were not well integrated in the subject content of Biology. Common facts about life were scattered in different units and because of that the real nature of Biology was not well manifested.

There were defects in the teaching and learning process and the practical activities of Biology at classroom level. The teachers' attitudes about the nature of Biology were not favourable. The teachers who were engaged in the teaching and learning process of this subject did not have adequate knowledge about the new areas in the Biology syllabus. The students' attitudes regarding the new subject are favourable and there were enough evidence to prove statistically that these are normally distributed.

In the Teachers' Guides there were printing errors and also some errors in the subject matter. Extra reading material in Biology depict the subject matter in various different forms. Based on this study it could be suggested that the Biology syllabus should be reformed and all the Biology teachers should be informed well about those reforms immediately.

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