

# The Struggle for Curriculum Relevance: The St. Kitts and Nevis Experience

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## Introduction

One of the more commonly accepted definitions of Curriculum is that it embraces all the learning which is planned and guided by the school, whether this is carried out in groups inside or outside the formal setting. Additionally we cannot escape the notion of the hidden curriculum, which suggests that unconsciously many of our societal norms, mores, customs, attitudes and values do impact upon and influence the formal curriculum.

The notion of the relevant curricula has surfaced for over three hundred years in the Education of the peoples of St Kitts and Nevis. In every era the questions of relevant to whom, relevant for whom, and who determines relevance have been played out in the ongoing struggle of the various dominant vested interest groups who made their entrances into and their exits from the educational scene along a continuum sometimes mixed with comedies and/or unforgettable tragedies.

If we seem to be struggling to find answers to the apparent negative attitudes of students to certain forms of technical and vocational education, if there seem to be a preference for academic education and the obvious corollary marked preferences for certain forms of blue and white collar occupations, and if there are the issues of gender stereotyping, then we need to spend some time reflecting on our history, our culture, our aspirations and ambitions or lack thereof manifested in the private and social demand of certain delivery modes of education.

The blunt truth is, in our ongoing search for curriculum relevance overtime by different interest groups, including the main stakeholders in education, namely the economic magnates, parents, teachers, students, employers, policy makers and the general public, who sometimes have conflicting and even competing interests in and not infrequently dissimilar expectations and perceptions of the outcome of formal schooling.

We are still struggling with some of the educational theories and ideals which have been postulated by great philosophers and educators, whether Socrates, Plato, or Dewey for example, and we are still wondering who is to blame (*Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 1999 Volume 31. No.3.). We are still struggling with prescriptions laid down by our donor agencies and lending agencies whether World Bank, UNICEF or UNESCO or USAID.

This is not to deny that they have been helpful, but as we move towards the 21st Century we need to heed the warning of the current Vice-Chancellor of the University of the West Indies, that "We have been far too long the victim of flawed paradigms". (*Contending with Destiny: The Caribbean in the 21st Century*, edited by Hall and Benn (2000) page 594).

In this presentation we shall look briefly at our experiences under:

1. The immediate Pre- and Post Emancipation period.
2. Secondly, the immediate Pre- and Post Independence era, notably the democratization of secondary education in St. Kitts and Nevis with emphasis on selected struggles and successes.
3. Thirdly, and finally we shall put our heads together and attempt to identify some possible suggestions or projections as the way forward.

## I The Immediate Pre- and Post Emancipation Era.

In the Pre- and immediate Post emancipation era, wherever education appeared disruptive of the status quo, it was considered both dangerous and irrelevant, but when there emerged a substantive congruence between the "economic substructure and the education super-structure, the curricula of schools appeared to have been developed essentially to support and re-produce that economic social order." (Bacchus 1980 p. xvi).

Support for, or antagonism against the schools' curricula could be explained within the context of the conflicting and, or competing vested interests of the different social classes of the stratified society comprising slaves, free-coloured, mulattoes and whites.

Into such a rigidly stratified society the early missionaries introduced religious, then secular education. Planters raised objections to the religious education of the slaves on the grounds that causing the negroes to become Christians would make them bad slaves and "inspire them with pride and wisdom, less disposed to fulfill their duties and humble station and less submissive to their masters" (Flax 1984 p. 1). As was opposition to the mission of conversion, so later was the claim against secular education. To fulfill their missions in church life, or as supervisors, it became increasingly relevant for negroes to read and write. Reading was for hymn singing, the Bible and the Catechism. Writing was to enable the supervisors to perform their duties for recording, and later arithmetic to effectively function as bookkeepers. In brief education was for the world of work.

But there were prohibitions against any such forms of secular education. For example, in the 18th Century one Governor declared, "If I catch you teaching a negro to read, I will banish you from the colony." (Augier *et al.*, 1989 p. 141). A similar view was expressed as late as 1928 when the Governor of the Leeward Islands was not convinced that our ancestors should be appropriately educated. Addressing the Legislature here in St. Kitts, the Governor said. "It is the greatest mistake to educate them out of their stations. It simply fills their minds with inflated ideas" (St. Kitts Nevis Budget Address page 2) In like manner members of the plantocracy were equally violently opposed to

any form of technical and vocational education. In the 18th century the St. Kitts legislature went to the extreme to enact injunctions against the employing of negroes as tradesmen. "Another great cause of decrease in the white inhabitants is the employing of negroes such as carpenters, coopers, millwrights, masons ... remedy this evil... by preventing the breeding up of to any such trades in the Future" (Augier and Gordon, 1963 p. 30)

Note carefully this change of attitude. Planters, seeing the success of the Moravian missions in discipline and productivity of the negroes on the estates likewise invited the Methodists to establish schools on their plantations and called for a programme of indoctrination in the virtues of industry, sobriety, honesty, faithfulness and obedience. In other words a moral curriculum was a relevant and powerful tool for the social economic and political exploitation and stabilisation of slave societies. After the Treaty of Utrecht (1713) and the absorption of the Catholic population into Protestant British St. Kitts, the English language was made compulsory in all church schools, as a counter-active measure to wean children from the corruption of French influence and mannerism. Thus early in our history, powerful forces were emphasizing the expediency of instituting schools as culture agents (Cox, 1984).

With the subsequent erection of the Juvenile School in Charlestown Nevis, by the Methodist church, "The girls and boys were taught either reading, writing or Arithmetic, and the girls the use of the needle. The Payment made by parents differed according to what was taught from half a bit to a bit and a half a month or from two pence to sixpence" (John Davis in Henry *et al.* 1975 page 18)

Commenting on the status value of the subjects, (Gordon, 1968) drew attention to the view which was made in the Sterling Report (1835) that children should not be taught to write without paying for instructions. Writing was then considered of little value to the poorer class and merely as an object of ambition to those who were in better circumstances.

Some 50 years after the Sterling Report, from the Oral Tradition of History, grand parents still had no objections to girls being taught to read, but definitely discouraged the notion that girls should be taught to write, for fear that the young ladies would write to their boy friends. For similar reasons in the secondary Schools girls were taught Arithmetic, but it was felt that the teaching of Algebra to females would make them vulgar. Girls were generally, not taught Mathematics, just a little consumer Arithmetic and Domestic Science, Needlework, Cooking, washing and ironing to prepare them for their role of domestic servants and/ or mothers. Until the late 1950s when the Male Assistant teachers did their Second Class Examinations in Algebra and Geometry the Female counterparts did Domestic Science and Needlework respectively.

In all schools "rote learning was free, thus the church in spite of its best intentions, had introduced the notion that the type of curriculum pursued should depend on parental ability to pay, an issue which became the very *raison d'être* of the traditional grammar schools.

The Crown had anticipated that there would be a demand for education by the ex-slaves, and hence made provision for their moral and social education through the Negro Education Grant which was to be administered by the Churches. (Gordon, 1968). Of this grant, St. Kitts obtained £800.00 Sterling, which was proportionate to the 20,660 slaves which were set free. This money and other endowments propelled the involvement of the various denominational churches in St. Kitts and Nevis in secular education. Such a mission several churches were to abandon fifty years later, when the increasing cost of education (maintaining buildings and paying teachers salary), caused them to turn their schools over to the Government.

The Church and the Planter Class, had some what differing motives for the establishment of secondary schools. The missionaries had very laudable intentions. They wanted to prove that negro children were equal in learning ability to their white counterparts in Britain (Gordon, 1963 page 45), and thus dispel the myth of negro inferiority so that ex-slaves would pursue the same curriculum and do the same examinations as that of mother Britain. Pertaining to foreign Languages in schools some missionary teachers saw no reason for the "cramming of Greek irregular verbs and Latin declensions which could have served no purpose to people in search of their souls". Others felt that the timetables of most schools were littered with fragments that bore no relevance to the lives of the pupils. (Gordon, 1968, page 23). Greek was first taught here in St. Kitts at Bethel Primary School. Latin remained in the Grammar School until the early 1960s.

From a different perspective it was only after the downfall of the planter class, which was the consequence of the declining fortunes of sugar that the legislature in their own self interest supported the Bill for a Grammar School in St. Kitts.

The motive was very evident, for at the official opening of the first Grammar School in 1861, Governor Pine declared: -

"The primary object which this legislature has in view, in the establishment of this school is to raise the standard of education in this part of the West Indies, by offering a sound complete education to the sons of respectable parents who are unable to send their sons to high class schools in Europe" (Alumni Reunion 1985 page 18)

As was further expanded on in a Government Report of 1862, The Grammar School was for the "middle classes" and was expected to provide competent civil servants. In that way the danger of mixing with the humbler class was obviated (Goveia, 1963). The legislative Act of 1861 did not lose sight of technical and vocational issues. The Act envisaged encouraging education among the industrial classes in St. Kitts, but there is no evidence to show that serious provision for that aspect of the Act was made.

The subjects taught included iron smelting, surveying and printing. Some other innovative features of the curriculum as attempted then were the inclusion of mechanics and German. According to an issue of the *Daily Express* in 1894, engineering works were to start for the apprentices of that school, "who after one year's attendance were to begin Smiths Mechanics and Founding Work. Later carpentry, cabinet and mechanical drawing were introduced" (Alumni Reunion, 1985 page 17).

Such a bold attempt at curriculum diversification was short lived. The School using unpaid labour produced goods and services more cheaply than the commercial firms and enterprises. It was believed that due to the clash of competing interests the school succumbed to the pressure and it was closed in 1897. When it was opened in the next century, the Grammar school was almost exclusively an academic institution, and introduced only such technical and vocational subjects which some educators may consider irrelevant to the development needs of St. Kitts, but which subjects no longer disturbed the dominant planter and commercial elite.

When the St. Kitts-Nevis Grammar School was reopened in 1901, with 24 pupils, care was taken not to offend the dominant interest groups. The Agricultural Science was in the form of "pot culture" a blue and white-collar approach, designed for the sons of planters, and was very distinct from the school gardening of the elementary schools, which involved actual hoeing and weeding designed for working class children who were being prepared for estate labour. Elementary Education for those of negro origin was designed to make them contented with their God-given lot in life. However, Government was mindful to provide a grant of £200,00 for five bright children of working class origin, who

were to pursue the type of programme most relevant to the country's economic need. Five scholarships to the Grammar school persisted for the next five decades.

Her Majesty's Royal Commission of 1938 to the Leeward (and Windward Islands) wanted more emphasis to be paid to the teaching of agriculture in schools and argued that the academic curriculum in the schools in St. Kitts and Nevis was irrelevant and "external to the real life of the people affecting it from without rather than from within" (Education in the Windward and Leeward Islands, 1938 page 3) A Commission was appointed, and recommended a land settlement for boys of secondary school age, which will be self supporting, and occupy them for the period between leaving school and taking up their own agricultural holding (Education in the Windward and Leeward, 1938 page 5). It was therefore advocated that an agricultural wing should be added to the Grammar School for boys.

To sum up so far, in the Pre- and immediate Post Emancipation era, a class centred approach to education represented the very quintessence of curricula relevance then, and for which that generation of educators strove, and for which this generation of educators are still striving. Again the issues of gender stereotyping, the need for moral education, and the dichotomy between academic and tech/voc education began emerging quite early in the history of both church and government education whether at the primary or at the secondary level.

## II EDUCATION IN THE IMMEDIATE PRE POST INDEPENDENT ERA

### Democratization Of Secondary Education In St. Kitts And Nevis

In this section of the presentation, I shall single out for special study, the democratization of secondary education in St. Kitts and Nevis. The perception that the curriculum which was available only through a Grammar School/High School Education, as the passport to blue and white collar jobs and for social advancement of children of working class origin, escalated the private and social demand for secondary education during the 1960s and 1970s.

#### 1.1 Statement of the Problem in General Terms.

As a macro educational innovation, of the 1960s and 1970s, the democratization of secondary education, in St. Kitts and Nevis was fraught with political, economic, social and most notably pedagogical difficulties. In the effort to break loose from the shackles of the traditional method of effecting the transition from primary to secondary schooling, and by the same token providing a more relevant curriculum at the post-primary level, the educational reforms of the then twin island State, became embroiled in a veritable pitched battle with conservative educational opinions, pockets of which still persist until this day.

The two islands imported the concept of comprehensive secondary education from the dominant metropole of Britain, but unlike its mentor in St. Kitts and Nevis, the traditional Grammar/High School was supplanted by, rather than supplemented with comprehensive secondary schooling. As Miller (1991) surmised, "This is an instance where the borrower went further than the originator of the ideas"

As a national education reform, the progress from universal primary education to the goal of universal secondary in St. Kitts and Nevis was about making strong political commitment to ideological and philosophical concepts of education. There were serious educational choices to make about alternative ways of enacting secondary expansion, and the type of school and non-school support systems, which were required to make a success of the innovation. Put another way in the Kittitian and Nevisian experience, the democratization of secondary education was a political and social intervention designed to challenge and change, the entrenched bastion of economic and academic elitism, which had posed a stranglehold on the potential human resource development of the vast majority of the indigenous population. Democratizing the secondary education sector was the enthronement of the principle of equality of educational access of all children to "Grammar School/High School Education" regardless of academic ability or social economic status.

#### 1.2 Statement of the Problem in Specific Terms.

Inclusive of those specific issues which confronted the political and educational administrators during the development and implementation of the innovation were: -

- (i) What constraints have been imposed on the education system by factors inherent in the educational past history of the islands?
- (ii) What alternatives were politically and socially acceptable to assuage the growing thirst for the social and private demand for secondary education?
- (iii) Would the democratization of secondary education lead to the dilution of academic standards previously attained in the traditional grammar school environment?
- (iv) Should the traditional eleven plus examination remain?
- (v) Were the islands ready to start the process of democratizing the secondary education system, and could those mini states meet the financial cost?
- (vi) Were there sufficient qualified teachers and school principals, and if not where would these personnel come from?
- (vii) What would be the nature of the secondary school curriculum, and what type of examinations would the children of the differing abilities take?
- (viii) Would the products of the secondary school find suitable employment, or would the innovation intensify the brain drain?
- (ix) Were there any implications for education at the primary and tertiary levels which were consequential to the expansion of free secondary education for all?
- (x) What are the strategies required to bring about desired qualitative improvements in the Education system?

The above list, by no means an exhaustive one, is meant to be illustrative of the kinds of concerns, which the founding fathers of mass comprehensive education contemplated in the pioneering years. Let us briefly examine a few selected responses to some of the ten issues raised above.

(1) To issue number one, which spoke to the constraint factor, let me briefly reply that many educational and developmental projects were obviously stultified, because the shortage of skilled labour co-existed with serious unemployment problems, which were compounded by the importation of skilled labour for almost every segment of industry and top jobs within the civil service. It is a truism that prior to the introduction of the innovation the Education System of St. Kitts and Nevis left much to be desired. The paucity of enrolment in the secondary schools meant that the system was incapable of educating sufficient personnel to fill the manpower requirement needs of the private and public sector for blue collar and white collar jobs. The top jobs in the civil service and the private sector were filled with expatriates, and even the local Grammar School and High School were mainly staffed and managed by non nationals. Additionally the status of the school buildings, facilities and equipment were far from satisfactory. The vast majority of the teachers were untrained. Several of the experienced and more enterprising teachers had taken part in the outward migration movement of the 1950's and early 1960's. The system undoubtedly had less then, than do most Caribbean territories have today. It should be of interest, then, to the reader to examine some data pertaining to the education system of St. Kitts and Nevis and assess the progress or lack of progress for the next three ensuing decades.

According to the West Indies Census of 1946, out of a total of 5,206 students attending school, only 270 students or about 5% of the school population were in Secondary Schools which utilised about 85 % of the educational budget.

(2) As a National Response the following developments took place. Firstly, parents from the mass emigration movement to Britain, Canada, the U.S.A, Curacao and Aruba in the first decade after World War Two, were sending substantial remittances back home, indicating that they wished to pay for their children to go to Grammar School. Consequently, in St. Kitts and Nevis a major challenge to the Government of the 1950s and 1960s was to find politically and socially acceptable methods of expanding secondary Education. The Leeward Islands Education Report of the 1950s lamented that the curricula of secondary schools were dominated by the requirements of the Senior Cambridge Examinations. The St. Kitts Nevis Education Report of 1954, bemoaned the fact that students attending secondary schools lacked opportunities for technical and vocational education which seemed restricted to handicraft, gardening and woodwork.

Secondly, part of the Government's response was to merge the tops of neighbouring. Boys' and Girls Elementary School into single co-education Institutions called Senior Schools. Students who did not pass the entrance examination remained until 16 years of age in those Senior Schools, which were established in the major population centres of St. Kitts and Nevis. Inclusive of those Schools were the Gingerland Senior School, 1953; Sandy Point Senior School, 1954; the Senior Wing of the Charlestown Secondary School, in 1956, and the Basseterre Senior School, 1957.

Parents and to some extent the students gained a partial measure of satisfaction, from the fact that those Senior Schools were attempting "overseas" examinations such as the London Chamber of Commerce (LCC) and later the London College of Preceptors Examination. Talks about children writing their "LCC and their LCP" seemed to have given the respective communities some partial but only momentarily satisfaction. Meanwhile more progressive minded heads of "Elementary Schools" were retaining children beyond the "official" school Leaving Age and likewise prepared them for the LCC and LCP Examinations.

Thirdly, the fact that the "Scholarship Classes" in the Senior schools themselves were getting larger for each succeeding year of the 1950s and the 1960s was an indication that it was "Grammar or High School Education" that parents, teachers and students strongly most certainly desired, and had regarded Governments effort as a mere educational sop to Cerebus.

Government gave an educational/political response. The Education Act of 1966, was a declaration of war against the eleven plus examination, and the systematic provision of all children of secondary School Age to receive free secondary education in Zone Comprehensive schools. The Education Act of 1966 page one, enacted, "Free Secondary Education for all who could benefit from it." That was the legislation, which ushered in the systematic abolition of the eleven plus examination as a screening device for deciding, "who will go and who will not go" to High School in St. Kitts and Nevis. (The Education Act No 18 of 1975 enforced the previous Act, and advocated free and compulsory education for all children between the age of 5 and 16 years of age. The Act also gave the Minister of Education the power to establish or to disestablish schools.)

Certain top education officials were accused of "mashing up the education system", and many who could afford it sent their children abroad to receive real grammar school education.

Some educational data at this time is instructive. In the academic year 1977/1978 of the 12,799 students registered in the schools of St. Kitts and Nevis Primary Enrollment was 5,866, Secondary enrollment 6,774, and Post Secondary enrolment 159.

COMMENTS ON THE EDUCATION SYSTEM. UNESCO, PARIS (1982) Page 5:

"Quantitative Development." With an enrolment of 13,000 pupils in school, the performance of the St Kitts Nevis Education System is unusually high, compared with educational development in other countries. Ten years of compulsory Education covering over 11,00 pupils in 1980 - 1981, a post primary education (Forms 1 - 4) as large as primary Education Grades 1-7, a gross enrollment ratio of over 100 per cent for the age group 6 - 15 years, equal participation of girls and boys throughout the system, a similar enrolment ratio in rural as well as urban areas, a total enrolment equivalent to about 30 percent of the population, are outstanding quantitative achievements".

UNESCO (1982), re-echoing an earlier study done by Carrington, ranked St. Kitts as having one of the highest rates of literacy in the English speaking Caribbean.

The mid 1960s to the end of the 1970s, the Education System in St. Kitts and Nevis was a furore of change and innovation. Educational experts/consultants were swarming all over St. Kitts. They came from institutions and agencies in Britain, Canada, the United States and notably from the Campus territories of the University of the West Indies. For many of these pundits, St. Kitts and Nevis was not yet ready for the challenge of free secondary education for all. In fact the then political Opposition Party made that very issue a major plank in its election campaign.

To meet the inadequacies of a staffing situation, the Government appealed to Canada, England and the United States for assistance, and received promise of assistance for teaching in secondary schools, the teachers training college and the technical college for a total of 90 man

years, between the period 1965 to 1972. Some of the more significant forms of this assistance is summarised below.

- (a) Peace Corps (USA) 37 Man years.
- (b) CIDA (CANADA) 13 Man years
- (c) VSO (England) 38 Man Years
- (d) CUSO (CANADA) 7 Man years.

The above countries also assisted the St. Kitts and Nevis Government with scholarships, bursaries and counterpart training to the tune of several million dollars.

The following year, 1976, the Minister convened nation wide public meetings to solicit the views of the widest possible cross section of people. The results of these public forums were published in a booklet entitled "Proposals for Restructuring the Education System of St. Kitts", 1978. Some of those new recommendations were the lengthening of the school day; inclusion of moral education; the promotion of clubs and societies, the promotion of work experience programmes. The intended programme was to wean children from a curriculum which was traditionally narrow and uninspiring.

The Principle of Zoning. Through the principle of zoning, all students from a number of designated feeder Primary Schools, were automatically transferred to the nearest Comprehensive High School on attaining the age of 12 years. In practice "very bright" children at age eleven and in some special cases at ten plus were recommended for transfer. The measure necessitated a recommendation to the Department of Education. Such recommendations when supported by evidence of a high level of academic achievement on class tests and continuous assessment on written work in children' exercise book, always received the endorsement of the Department of Education.

### **III Measures Utilised To Improve The Academic Performance Of Students**

The relatively creditable performance of the St. Kitts Nevis students on the CXC and other Secondary Schools Examinations, cannot be attributed to any single factor, but rather a combination of various school and non school factors. Further without the evidence of hard research data, it is misleading to categorically state otherwise.

Between 1966 and 1992, the Governments stipulated that it was the parent's duty to purchase the exercise and text books used in schools. In 1993 the Government took the bold decision to pay students' fees for all overseas examination as well as to provide the Text Books through Project SELF (Students Educational Learning Facility)

To sum up so far, educational data depicted in the Appendices below, for over three decades spanning 1966 - 2000, have shown general proportionate increase in children attending secondary schools, and a corresponding decrease in Primary School Enrolment. It should be equally interesting to the reader to review very briefly some of the legislative and other reforms which buttress the macro innovation of those decades.

The question still remains how was such an innovation possible? The short answer is St. Kitts and Nevis was not lacking in political will to follow through on the innovation.

### **IV Recommendations/Suggestions Of The Way Forward**

It would be difficult, if not impossible for the formal education sector to keep pace with the required changes that are occurring and will occur during the closing years of this decade and the early years of the twenty first century. The dynamism of change brought about by the scientific and technological revolution, will continue to challenge schools to frequently change their curriculum in order to provide relevant, challenging and meaningful delivery systems of education. Accordingly, some realistic educational objectives for the year 2000 would have to be considered. Inclusive of some such objectives are: -

1. To concentrate on the development of flexible, versatile and trainable people, particularly at the first two levels (the primary and secondary) of the formal education sector.
2. To orient the formal education sector, particularly at the post secondary level, for massive retraining and upgrading of skills.
3. To recognize the potential phenomenon of downgrading of skills, and skill redundancy which will be operational in the world of work and the necessity of preparing school leavers psychologically for such phenomenon.
4. To foster and enhance entrepreneurship among school leavers.
5. To foster greater creativity and an innovative spirit among school leavers.
6. To ensure that in built problem-solving exercises constitute an integral part of curriculum development activities at all levels of formal education
7. To recognize education as a life long process.
8. To familiarize students with the potential use of selected modern technology (computer etc.) as learning facilities.
9. To utilise the mass media as potential sources for both formal and non-formal education.
10. To ensure that all educational personnel are thoroughly acquainted with the legal framework in which their duties become operational.
11. To provide family life education programmes that impart skills in parenting and counselling.
12. To utilise the mass media to pre-empt further cultural alienation from our indigenous cultural preferences.
13. To promote greater awareness as well as partners between the formal education sector and private sector.
14. To promote a student population morally grounded in biblical principles.
15. To promote stronger linkages between school and industry.
16. To constitute and develop National Curriculum Board(s) and Curriculum Committee(s) with strong private sector involvement
17. To foster greater tolerance and understanding of peoples of different cultural backgrounds, particularly in respect to those who live amongst us.
18. To formulate and implement an appropriate programme of Gender Education for the promotion of equality of both sexes, and thus

circumvent the marginalisation of neither the Caribbean males or females.

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## APPENDICES

### TABLE I

#### ENROLMENT IN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN SELECTED YEARS 1964 TO 1976.

YEAR	PRIMARY	SECONDARY	*%	TOTAL
1964	15,460	1,653	(9.6%)	17,113
1966	15,801	1,220	(7.2%)	17,021
1968	13,770	1,933	(7.6%)	15,703
1970	12,174	2,956	(19.5%)	15,130

\*Indicates the percentage of children who attended secondary schools.

The data above shows a relatively small enrolment in secondary schools when compared with that of the Primary Schools. From 1946 to 1966, secondary enrollment had only moved from about 5% to 7.2% of the total school population. What would the percentage be in the next two or three decades?

### TABLE II

#### STAFFING SITUATION FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 1965-1966. STUDENTS PER TEACHER

YEAR	STUDENTS	TEACHERS	ALL TEACHERS	TRAINED TEACHERS
PRIMARY	14,801	399	39.6	146.3
SECONDARY	1,220	56	21.0	93.8
TOTAL	15,021	455	37.4	141.8

Source: Education Department of the 1960s

It is not difficult to conclude from the above data that the primary schools in St. Kitts suffered from large classes mainly staffed by untrained teachers. However, in spite of tremendous overcrowding and large numbers of untrained teachers. St. Kitts-Nevis managed to have a highly literate population.

### Table III

#### School Enrolment For The Decade 1971-1981

YEARS	PRIMARY 5-12 YEARS	ALL-AGE 13-17 YEARS	SECONDARY 11 and over	TOTAL
1971 – 1972	10,990	1,624	3,417	15,921
1972 – 1973	10,336	1,371	3,849	15,756
1973 – 1974	9,739	877	4,345	14,961
1974 – 1975	6,534	2,270	4,746	13,544
1978 – 1979	6,703	2,271	4,587	13,561
1979 – 1980	6,955	2,109	4,496	13,560
1980 – 1981	6,767	1,672	4,226	12,665
1981 – 1982	6,764	1,573	4,334	12,671

Source: UNESCO. PARIS (1982)

The data above depict an overall gradual decline in the total school population, which correlates strongly with the overall population decline. It is also noticeable that the enrolment in the All Age Schools declined in proportion to a corresponding increase of enrolment in the secondary schools.

In brief, the decade of the 1970s was a struggle to phase out completely the remaining All-Age School. The data at Tables 3:8 and 3:25 in the Situation Analysis for St. Kitts and Nevis become very instructive at this point. In the Period 1986 to 1995 the number of students transferred from the Grade Six of Primary to First Forms of the Secondary Schools are reflected below.

**TABLE IV**

**NO. OF STUDENTS TRANSFERRED FROM PRIMARY TO SECONDARY SCHOOLS FOR THE DECADE 1986 - 1995**

YEAR	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
1986	474	448	922
1987	482	475	957
1988	422	436	858
1989	442	421	863
1991	403	402	805
1992	458	403	861
1993	477	445	922
1994	472	434	906
1995	547	506	1,053

Two important comments should be made in relation to the data depicted in the Tables above and below. The Verchilds High school was opened in 1992 and in 1995 the only remaining All Age School in Saddlers was converted into a Primary School, and students from the top forms were transferred to the nearest secondary school.

**TABLE V**

**STATISTICS OF AGE: PRIMARY SCHOOLS: Government & Private**

AGE	GRADES																		
	KP		I		II		III		IV		V		VI		TOTALS				
	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	T		
Less than 4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1

4 years	119	119	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	119	120	239
5 years	344	340	84	96	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	428	436	864
6 years	55	39	331	324	81	80	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	467	444	911
7 years	1	0	74	36	357	310	85	106	1	1	0	0	0	0	518	453	971
8 years	0	0	0	2	87	62	393	334	96	103	1	0	0	0	577	501	1078
9 years	0	0	0	0	3	6	63	53	358	336	71	96	2	2	497	493	990
10 years	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	89	52	346	337	63	74	499	466	965
11 years	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	5	58	44	332	345	397	394	791
12 years	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	3	0	70	66	73	67	140
13 years	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	3	1	4
TOTALS	520	498	489	459	528	458	542	497	551	498	479	477	470	488	3579	3375	6954

Figure I: A Comparison of Tests of Standard Results for Grades 3 and 6

**TABLE VI****ENROLMENT IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS, BY ISLAND 1988 – 1998**

SCHOOLS	1987/88	1988/89	1989/90	1990/91	1991/92	1992/93	1993/94	1994/95	1995/96	1996/97	1997/98
Primary Schools											
St. Kitts											
No. of Schools	17	17	17	17	17	16	16	16	16	16	16
No. of Teachers	203	201	227	227	225	219	233	219	228	245	247
Students	5256	5159	5007	4923	4871	4762	4755	4577	4782	4817	4677
Teacher-Pupil Ratio	1:26	1:26	1:23	1:22	1:22	1:22	1:20	1:21	1:21	1:20	1:19
Nevis											
No. of Schools	8	8	8	8	8	7	7	7	7	7	7
No. of Teachers	60	60	68	68	66	69	70	70	70	71	73
Students	1201	1172	1189	1182	1187	1215	1202	1225	1225	1293	1280
Teacher-Pupil Ratio	1:20	1:20	1:18	1:17	1:17	1:18	1:17	1:18	1:18	1:18	1:18
Secondary Schools											
St. Kitts											
No. of Schools	4	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	5
No. of Teachers	201	198	209	210	209	236	228	246	268	282	263
Students	3153	3127	3105	3269	3372	3405	3385	3648	3781	3782	3656
Teacher-Pupil Ratio	1:16	1:16	1:15	1:16	1:16	1:14	1:15	1:15	1:14	1:13	1:14
Nevis											
No. of Schools	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
No. of Teachers	70	72	72	73	75	80	76	80	80	79	78

Students	962	919	916	879	879	851	851	893	893	918	892
Teacher-Pupil Ratio	1:14	1:13	1:13	1:12	1:12	1:11	1:11	1:11	1:11	1:12	1:11
Private Schools (All Age Groups)											
No. of Schools	n.a	n.a	7	7	8	n.a	8	8	8	9	8
No. of Teachers	n.a	n.a	54	68	67	n.a	76	58	60	60	68
Students	n.a	n.a	1337	1336	1323	n.a	1299	1260	1235	1029	1311
Teacher-Pupil Ratio	n.a	n.a	1:24	1:20	1:20	n.a	1:17	1:22	1:21	1:17	1:19

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