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## **THE PROBLEM OF SPIRITUAL AND MORAL UPBRINGING IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF GREAT BRITAIN**

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*In the article the problem of upbringing spiritual and moral values in the public schools of Great Britain is considered.*

**Keywords:** *spiritual values, public schools, Great Britain.*

"I record these achievements not because I wish to either decry the individuals concerned or criticize the schools they attended, far from it... It is undeniable that the individuals I have named are hugely talented and the schools they attended are premier league institutions, but the sheer scale, the breadth and the depth of private school dominance of our society points to a deep problem in our country," - announced Education secretary Michael Gove.

Education is not only a driver of the economy and a source of knowledge. It is also a pillar of society. Great Britain is one of the most developed countries in the world. We all know that the British are people of

high culture and many of them possess an outstanding mind. What makes them similar? National culture, heredity, traditions or may be education? The educational system in the UK can proudly call itself one of the most complicated in Europe. Education in Britain mirrors the country's social system: it's class-divided and selected.

In any educationally advanced country people would judge you by the validity or otherwise of what you had to say, rather than by your social, educational or career background. Yet in Britain as it is today it does matter disproportionately where you went to school.

Above 90 per cent of all children are educated in state-run primary and secondary schools, the remainder go to independent schools that rely on privately-paid tuition fees. Although the percentage of those privately educated may be a small fraction of the total, its importance is disproportionate to its size, for in later life, those educated at fee-paying schools dominate the sources of state power and authority in government, law, the armed forces and finance.

Education has been a controversial issue periodically since 1945, and subject to major changes as successive governments have tried to improve it. Government policy ( both Conservative and Labour ) has been bitterly criticized for providing a system which is either too elitist or insufficiently so, which is wasteful of human resources, which is insufficiently demanding of the nation's children, or which simply fails to compete with the education system of other industrialized countries.

The problem has been considered in numerous publications by different authors such as G. Walden, C. Chitty, D. McDowall and others.

Educational apartheid between state and private schools is the unmentionable reality of the British system: segregation, separate development and a tacit acceptance that the opportunities of one "race" of pupils will always be superior to those of another. This two-nation system may fail not only individual school children but the country as the whole. This part of the problem may be of certain interest to the readers.

The aim of the given paper is to describe the controversy surrounding educational system in Great Britain and to show some proposals of politicians and educationalists how to research this "no go" area in the British system of education.

Great Britain doesn't have a written constitution, so there no constitutional provision for education. This system of education is determined by the National Education Acts.

All children in the United Kingdom are required by law to receive full-time education. Schooling is compulsory for 12 years, for all children aged five to 16. For largely historical reasons, the school system is complicated, inconsistent and highly varied.

Generally speaking, children enter infant school, moving on to junior school (often in the same building) at the age of seven, and then on to secondary school at the age of 11.

There two types of secondary schools in the UK: state schools where education is free and private schools where you have to pay. Roughly 90 per cent of children receive their secondary education at "comprehensive" schools. A comprehensive school is a combination of grammar and secondary modern under one roof, so that all children could be continually assessed and given appropriate teaching. Between 1965 and 1980 almost all the old grammar and secondary modern schools were replaced, mainly by coeducational comprehensives. These largely take pupils without reference to ability or aptitude, providing a wide range of secondary education for all or most of the children in a district.

About 8 per cent of the school population attend independent fee-paying schools. This proportion may rise to almost 10 per cent. The recovery of private education in Britain is partly due to middle-class fears concerning comprehensive schools, but also to the mediocre quality possible in the state sector after decades of inadequate funding.

Around 550 most privileged and expensive independent schools are commonly known as public schools.

The only thing is that private schools in Britain are called ... public. Why? A long time ago when education was a privilege of the rich, the only schools where poor people could go funded by charities. As it was public money, the schools for the poor were called public schools. Logically, isn't it? However, in the course of history many public schools became very successful and turned into expensive private schools but the conservative British continued to call them public schools, to distinguish them from private schools run by individuals

Of the several hundred public schools, the most famous are "Clarendon Nine", so named after a commission of inquiry into education 1861. Their

status lies in a fatally attractive combination of social superiority and antiquity, as the dates their foundation indicate : Winchester (1382), Eton (1440), St Paul's (1509), Westminster (1560), The Merchant Taylor's (1561), Rugby (1567), Harrow (1571) and Charterhouse (1611).

Until very recently public schools were single-sex, now some boys' public schools introduce girls as a civilizing influence. Public schools can be full boarding (pupils live there all academic year except for holidays), normal (pupils go home every day) and mixed (some pupils go home every weekend and some stay).

The public schools are very expensive, some of them charge up to 20.000 pounds a year. There are some grants for bright pupils as well but the places are few and the competition is very strong. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that only six per cent of the pupils in the UK can afford it, but sixty per cent of parents would probably send their children to fee-paying schools if they could afford to.

The other important criterion is that children have to belong to the right class as class system in Britain is still very important. Mostly, public education is a privilege of the upper classes.

Demand for public school education is now so great that many schools register pupils' name at birth or at least 2 years in advance.

In order to obtain a place at a public school, children must take a competitive examination, called "Common Entrance". In order to pass it, most children destined for a public school education attend a preparatory (or "prep") school until the age of 13 a state schools ( which are free) do not prepare children for this.

The British have some very rigid codes of behavior, notably the public-school code. The English gentleman in the conventional sense is mainly the product of his public school. In such schools the traditional aim is to develop "gentlemen" who are disciplined, loyal and decent, who "play the game", bear pain and discomfort with "stiff upper lip" and know how to use authority to get respect from those they rule.

Most boarding public schools have been concerned to develop in their pupils a strong sense of duty, obedience combined with ability to exercise authority, and a habit of suppressing private feelings.

The public schools demonstrate a combination of money and brains and guarantee a child a first-rate education. They teach children to work hard and to take a pride in their work; to pay attention to details; to have good manners;

to consider other people's feelings and to be self-disciplined and more demanding of themselves and to grow up into responsible adults who will contribute to the community.

The system of public education fosters a distinct culture, one based not only upon social superiority but also upon deference.

The schools have shown skills in adapting themselves to new values, with more attention to music and the arts as well as academic work as distinct from team games.

The public schools offer high quality facilities. The education is traditional. They have produced over the centuries many of British distinguished people. The main aim of schooling was to prepare young men to take up positions in the higher ranks of the army, the Church, to fill top-jobs in business, the legal profession, the civil service and politics. To meet this aim the emphasis was made on "character-building" and the development of "team spirit" (hence traditional importance of sports) rather than on academic achievement.

Nowadays the public schools are less and character- building, they are more concerned with examinations and universities, especially Oxford and Cambridge. But they still give their pupils a very sense of their mission and confidence.

The major public schools in the narrow sense are peculiar to Britain. More than any other part of the educational system, they distinguish Britain from other countries.

Such schools had (and still often have) a deep and lasting influence on their pupils, consequently, public-school leavers formed a closed group entry into which is difficult, the ruling elite, the core of the Establishment, "The Great and the Good".

The 20<sup>th</sup> century brought education and its possibilities for social advancement within everybody's reach, and new, state schools naturally tended to copy the features of the public schools. So today, in typically British fashion, learning for its own sake, rather than for any practical purpose is still been given a high value. As distinct from most other countries, a relatively stronger emphasis is on the quality of person that education produces rather than helping people to develop useful knowledge and skills. In other words, the general style of teaching is to develop understanding rather than acquiring factual knowledge and learning to apply this knowledge to specific tasks.

There are 2 arguments that qualify the merit of the public schools, apart from the criticism that they are socially divisive and breed an atmosphere of elitism and snobbery. Public schools give a better academic education than normally possible in state-funded schools. The other serious qualification regards the public school ethos which is deeply rooted in the traditions of the nation.

Britain will be unable to harness its real intellectual potential until it can break loose from a divisive culture that should belong in the past, and can create its future elite from nation's schoolchildren as a whole. In 1996 a radical Conservative politician George Walden argued for turning public schools into centres of excellence which would admit children solely on ability, regardless of wealth or social background with the help of the government funding. It would be a way of using the best of the private sector for the nation as a whole. It is just such an idea that Labour might find attractive, if it is able to tackle the more widespread and shortcomings of the state education system.

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*У статті розглядається проблема виховання моральних та духовних цінностей у публічних школах Великої Британії, які заклали основу духовних пріоритетів нації.*

**Ключові слова:** *духовні цінності, публічні школи, Велика Британія.*

*В статье рассматривается проблема воспитания духовных и моральных ценностей в публичных школах Великобритании, которые заложили основу духовных приоритетов нации.*

**Ключевые слова:** *духовные ценности, публичные школы, Великобритания.*

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