

HRD

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Quality Education for All

editor's note

Dear readers

The theme for this **HRD Communiqué** is the most debated one i.e. **"Quality Education for all"**. It is highly pertinent at this stage due to the fact that the present decade has been declared as the United Nations Literacy Decade (2003 - 2012)

The Quarterly HRD Communiqué also contains news, update on the programme activities and information about upcoming events and new training that are being carried out at NRSP - Institute of Rural Management.

Education is the most effective tool for Human Resource Development and literacy is the pre-requisite to make better use of the major sources of information and knowledge in today's world.

"Seek knowledge from cradle to grave" is a famous saying of Hazrat Ali. The Japanese in management follow the principle of "KAIZEN", which means improve continuously for ever.

In Pakistan the literacy situation is not very encouraging as after the lapse of almost half a century since its independence the literacy rate is still alarmingly low. Being illiterate is not an individual disability alone; it has societal implications as well.

Democratic institutions and values can hardly flourish in a society where half of the adult population is illiterate and most of the voters cannot access information and read a newspaper. The situation is particularly alarming for women and those living in rural areas.

Quality education is essential to success in an increasingly competitive, ever changing workplace. In order for citizens to be contributors to the state's economy, culture, social and religious communities, as well as the overall well being of the state, a sound education is necessary to provide the tools needed to make wise and informed decisions. No state can have a competitive workforce, prosperous economy, vibrant communities and active and involved citizens unless it has quality education to offer to its citizens.

Since its inception the governments in Pakistan have been endeavoring to eradicate illiteracy from the country and to provide quality education to its citizens. Various actors, both from private and public sectors are playing active roles in elimination of illiteracy and provision of QEFA.

We hope that we have been successful in creating awareness about the different aspects of quality education. For this purpose a number of articles and columns have been included in the current issue alongwith graphic clips and news about the theme.

NRSP - Institute of Rural Management



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by Nafeesa Mushtaq



education/training or for work

- A functional use of the second language (English)

“Education is not the filling of a bucket but the lighting of fire”

Education in its current form is concerned with the transmission of knowledge. It is a natural process that begins when a child is born and continues through out life but in the present age it cannot be allowed to remain a passive process but needs to be accelerated through utilization of all the resources at our disposal. Educational institutions promote this process and expand its dimensions in pursuit of national goals and objectives of education. But in our country that is still undergoing the process of development the literacy rate is distressingly low.

Illiteracy is not an individual disability alone, but has societal implications as well. No democratic values can flourish in a country if majority of its adult population is illiterate and hence cannot access information or read newspaper. So the judgment of these illiterate voters while electing members for either national or provincial assembly cannot be trusted.

Illiteracy not only causes dependence, it deprives people of the development of their fullest potential of participation in decision making at different levels; and ultimately results in oppression and exploitation.

Since its inception the governments in Pakistan have been endeavoring to eradicate illiteracy from the country and to provide quality education to its citizens. Although the overall literacy rate in the country has increased gradually, the absolute number of illiterates has swelled significantly from 20.25 million in 1951 to 48.8 million in 1998.

What is quality education

Quality education system produces students with the knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, and work habits needed to become productive and fulfilled citizens. It provides clear goals, high standards, good teachers and a well-organized curriculum. Quality education ensures:

- The acquisition of the basic skills of writing, reading and mathematics
- The development of sound moral character and good citizenship
- The acquisition of general knowledge about our country, about science and technology and our world
- An understanding of the fundamental disciplines of science, literature, geography, history and technology
- Aesthetic, social and cultural development
- Physical fitness
- The preparation of young people either for post-secondary

Objectives of quality education

The main purpose of imparting quality education is to produce an array of sensible and vigilant individuals capable of contributing to the overall development of the society in particular and that of the world in general. Contribution to the cause of development in a society demands a person to have a critical, analytical and rational thinking faculty along with the confidence to express his/her views freely.

Every individual is blessed with some inherent skills and abilities and there is a need to brush up and harness these potential qualities which is only possible through quality education which not only harnesses these skills but also enables a person to practically apply them.

Quality education does not necessarily aim at creating an entire crop of doctors, engineers, scientists and IT professionals because these make only a part of the society. So ignoring the rest of the society would be a serious blunder.

A healthy society requires the participation of all its members regardless of their sex or professional fields. So the goal of quality education should be to enable all, be they artisans, entrepreneurs, farmers, labourers or even those women who are not working ladies to play their role and be productive.

Quality education is aimed at producing graduates with competencies in critical and analytical thinking, teamwork, communication skills, problem solving, use of numbers, data and technology so that they have the knowledge and skills needed to be competitive in the global economy and to fully participate in a democratic system.

Quality education should focus more on the fight against poverty, enhancing diversity, sharing knowledge, innovation, sharing of knowledge and best practices, protecting common good and promoting experimentation.

Hurdles faced in the provision of quality education

Defective and inefficient system of education is the basic cause for our national failures in socio-economic and human development. Inadequacy of education system both qualitative and quantitative is adversely affecting our national life.

Lack of necessary facilities like libraries, laboratories etc particularly in rural areas is one of the major hurdles that is decelerating the promotion of quality education in rural areas. It is indeed a sad reflection on planners of education policies.

Another depressing fact is that most of the libraries these days have become storehouses of poorly preserved, moth-eaten collection of out-dated manuscripts of historical interest.

These should be preserved but at the same time there is an immediate need for updating the public libraries by providing them with latest editions of learning resources e.g. books, journals, periodicals and newspapers.

Lack or inappropriate utilization of funds at institutional level also proves to be a hindrance in the promotion of the cause of QEFA.

Multiplicity of education systems

Multiplicity of educational systems is also one of the major hindrances in the promotion of QEFA. In Pakistan we have a variety of systems working here, resulting not in synergy but social division and conflict. For example we have English medium schools, Urdu medium schools, and religious *madrasas*.

Inappropriateness of curricula and pedagogy

The curricula and related pedagogy are usually inappropriate or at least inadequate for the set goals in many disciplines. Furthermore, there is no integrated system in which one step leads to the next to enable a student to develop a truly sound base for the discipline he or she is interested in. Moreover, even at the higher levels of education, there is no mechanism worth its name to help a student in gauging his or her potential or in deciding on a suitable academic career.

Suggestions for promoting the cause of QEFA

- Resources should be allocated generously for establishing such educational institutions in Pakistan where quality education is being imparted to students.
- Everyone should contribute time and efforts to this very important task.
- We need to close the quantitative as well as qualitative gaps.
- Moreover, in our education system greater emphasis should be laid on the character and capacity building of the students rather than just their academic qualification. After all, our nation needs individuals with wholesome personalities to contribute to its progress and prosperity.
- There is a need for a successful educational strategy planned and implemented while keeping in view all i.e. students, teachers, parents etc.
- A uniform system of education should be introduced gradually to eradicate the problems that multiplicity of systems creates.
- We should not cling to the out dated and ages old concept of QUALITY. Modern quality is about outputs, not inputs.
- Both public and private sector should collaborate in partnerships to promote the cause of QEFA.

The contributions of Ministry of Education in promoting literacy in Pakistan

Ministry of Education has included the Adult literacy Component in the Education Sector Reforms ESR (2001-2005) and in the National Action Plan (NAP) for EFA (2001-2015). These are very important measures taken by the ministry and deserve the support of public as well as the international community.

Conclusion

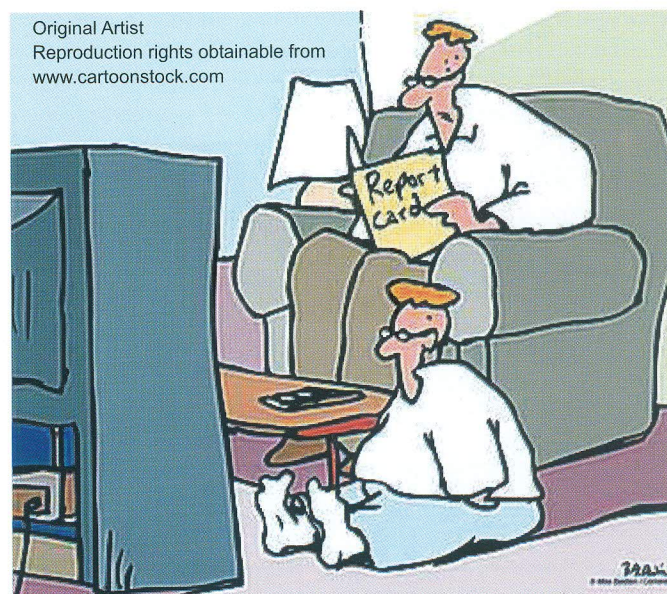
The secret of the progress of any developing nation lies in its urge for continuing

education and to catch up with the advances of science and technology of the developed nations. This urge should be there in the hearts of the students as they are the builders of the nation.

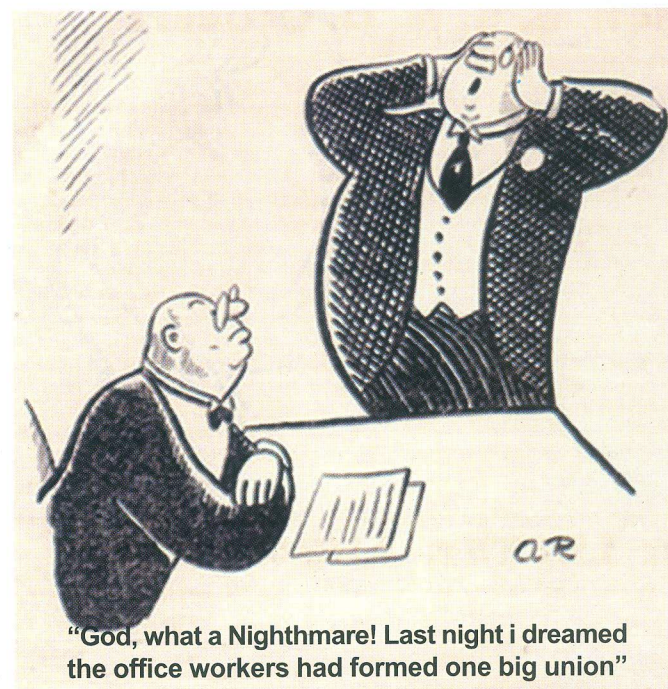
Mass literacy and basic education is considered a prerequisite for socio-economic development worldwide. In Pakistan numerous efforts have been made for the quantitative expansion of formal school education with the assumption that it will contribute to enhance the literacy rate. This assumption has not held true during the last five decades as the country still has a long way to go to achieve the goal of universal mass literacy.

Source:

1. *Human Development In South Asia 2002*
2. *Human Development Report 2000*
3. *Literacy Trends and Efforts in Pakistan*



“you need to work on three R’s, and they aren’t reload, replay and rewind”



“God, what a Nightmare! Last night i dreamed the office workers had formed one big union”