

ANALYSIS OF DEBATES ON EDUCATION  
IN THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY  
(May - June, 1985)

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Sl.No.</u>	<u>Content</u>	<u>Page</u>
1.	INTRODUCTION.....	1
2.	LITERACY & SCHOOL EDUCATION.	2
3.	HIGHER EDUCATION.....	6
4.	FINANCING OF EDUCATION.....	8
5.	QUALITY OF EDUCATION.....	9
6.	MANAGEMENT OF EDUCATION.....	11
7.	STUDENTS WELFARE.....	12
8.	MISCELLANEOUS.....	12
9.	CONCLUSION.....	13

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INTRODUCTION

Various aspects of education attracted the attention of elected representatives of the National Assembly during its recent budget sessions held in May-June, 1985. Almost one-third members of the National Assembly raised issues, asked questions, offered comments and suggestions on various aspects of education. Proceedings of the National Assembly sessions, especially related to education, were reported by senior officers of the Ministry of Education. Replies to the questions asked by Members of the National Assembly were furnished by the Ministry of Education. In view of a large number of National representatives having, expressed their views and opinions on various issues, this document attempts to put them in a sequential and orderly manner and provide comments/analysis in the light of current policies of the government and actions being taken or proposed to be taken.

The various points/ issues emerging from the Assembly's proceedings have been clustered under various discrete areas and dealt with accordingly in the following sections:

## LITERACY AND SCHOOL EDUCATION

Under this heading the following major issues were highlighted:

- Improvement of literacy;
- Expansion of primary education;
- Removal of rural/urban disparities;
- Improvement of physical facilities, especially in rural areas;
- Improved supervision to ensure teachers regular attendance;
- Undesirability of two types of schools-English & Urdu Medium;
- Denationalization of nationalized schools;
- Control over the curriculum of private schools;
- Residential accommodation for teachers;
- Adequate training of teachers;
- Provision of facilities for physical education & sports;

## COMMENTS

The Sixth Five Year Plan seeks to improve the literacy level by means of a two pronged attack through accelerated expansion of primary education and by launching of a functional literacy programme. In view of the vital significance of younger age groups and the reality that they would give the maximum returns, the Sixth Five Year Plan proposes to cover 15 million persons (5 million male and 10 million female) of the age group 10-19 years under the programme of functional literacy. A literacy and Mass Education Co-mission has been set up by the Federal Government under the Ministry of Education for implementation of the programme.

As regards, expansion of primary education, it enjoys the highest priority of the Government. In order to remove disparities and ensure quality education in the rural areas, model primary schools with five teachers and five rooms have been proposed in the Action Plan of the Ministry of Education. Further, it is proposed to achieve participation rates of primary age group as 90 % for Boys and 60 % for Girls by the end of current plan. As far as quality improvement in the existing primary schools is concerned, an experiment was undertaken by the Ministry of Education to create a separate tier of learning coordinators for academic supervision under the Fourth Education Project aided by the World Bank. Though launched at a limited scale, the experiment yielded fruitful results. This system is likely to be expanded. Mosque schools are another innovational feature of the current education policy. The Government had great expectations of this experiment for the universalization of primary education. However, an objective assessment of this programme needs to be undertaken as this programme has not yet taken its desired shape.

The Government is making an all out effort firstly to expand facilities of primary education to the door step of the common man. However, quality cannot be sacrificed altogether. In order to achieve this, equitable dispersal of quality institutions is being done at primary and middle level. In particular Model Primary Schools and Model Middle Schools are being set up in rural areas.

Dual system of Education is largely growing due to private English Medium Schools. They are multiplying rapidly and are by and large being run on commercial lines. An objective review of government's policy regarding such institutions is very much required.

With respect to de-nationalization, it may be stated that all provincial governments have been authorised under relevant Martial Law Order to de-nationalize schools according to their discretion. Legislation regarding the registration of schools and related items is under consideration in some provinces whereas the ordinance has been promulgated in the Province of Sind. Here it may be mentioned that policy of de-nationalization is linked with the proliferation of private English medium schools and therefore has ~~been~~<sup>to be</sup> considered together. Care has to be taken that de-nationalization does not correspond with commercialization of the private institutions and profiteering.

Residential accommodation for teachers is definitely a welcome idea. However, the critical need is for female teachers in rural areas to which the government is paying due attention particularly through the World Bank aided Primary Education Project. In this connection it may be mentioned that attendants are also needed if accommodation is provided to female teachers for security and other reasons which will involve extra recurring expenditure. For male teachers, the provision of accommodation would entail reduction of their emoluments as no house rent allowance will be admissible to them. In certain cases,

this may be disincentive.

Availability of teachers both for primary and secondary schools is becoming a problem. It is already quite serious in Punjab in respect of male teachers. Training institutions for male teachers are functioning at about 20-30 per cent of the capacity. To meet the shortage of trained primary school teachers, untrained matriculates are being recruited as teachers. It is desirable that Provinces/Regions facing such a situation introduce a modified system of teachers training under which teachers may be placed for training after recruitment.

For the promotion of physical education, sports & games, the Ministry of Education is implementing a scheme which emphasizes promotion of low-cost indigenous games i.e. Kabaddi, wrestling (for boys) Net Ball and Table Tennis (for girls), Athletics, etc by providing physical facilities, i.e. play grounds, equipment, sports goods, to educational institutions; cash award to winner and runner ups @ Rs. 500/- and Rs. 300/- p.m. respectively; scholarship/stipend for outstanding students in sports/ Athletics. A scheme is also being developed to provide Rs. 5000/- per high school and Rs. 3000/- to every middle school for the provision of sports goods/equipment etc.

HIGHER EDUCATION

- Setting up of Intermediate Colleges for girls or alternatively starting intermediate classes in girls high schools;
- self financing of universities;
- Girls colleges may be given the status of universities if a women university is not being established;
- Autonomy of the universities and UGC's role;
- Admission of students from backward areas in engineering and medical colleges of foreign countries (USSR)
- Unemployment of educated youth as a consequence of retaining armed forces and civilian personnel after superannuation;

COMMENTS

Additional facilities of education at intermediate level will be provided in 88 new places during the Sixth Five Year Plan. The impact of addition will provide 84,000 additional seats at Inter level. The present policy is to open classes XI and XII in well established high schools, which is being pursued by the Government.

At present college education is open to all but a major problem which it has generated is of enormous failures resulting in a big crop of frustrated young men who managed to get into colleges but actually had very little aptitude for the subjects which they pursued.



Therefore, instead of allowing everybody to enter the portals of colleges, some screening may be done at the entry stage and higher education be made more selective. Only those who have aptitude and ability may be permitted to join a college or University. This would mean prescribing College Admission Tests for new entrants.

Institutions of higher education which at present charge a paltry fee and are a great drain on the exchequer, may be gradually made self financing as is the case of many countries of the world. This may mean costlier higher education and may restrict the entry of those who end up pursuing aimless education. However, provision should exist for giving financial assistance to those who are talented but not so well off monetarily.

A women university, with its seat at Islamabad has already been set up through Presidential Ordinance at the end of March. The University will have a number of affiliated and constituent colleges. The college of Home Economics at Lahore could be one of such colleges.

Universities already enjoy full autonomy. UGC only help them in properly assessing their financial needs both recurring and development and steering the same for approval of the Government. Functioning of the UGC can however be improved through better co-relation with the universities.

The migration of students for seeking admission in engineering and medical colleges was related to that of Baluchistan students in USSR institutions. The responsibility is of the provincial government to look into the problems. Baluchistan Education Department has been contacted for the purpose.

As far as employment of the graduates is concerned, the policy of retaining superannuated persons is already being reviewed. It may be mentioned that in Education new employment opportunities will be available to educated youth, in new primary schools to be opened during the Sixth Five Year Plan. 25,000 literacy centres are also being opened which will absorb much of the available young educated people. Government has also launched a scheme for awarding a stipend of Rs. 1000/00 per month for first class M.Sc. for a period of 3 years, or till they get employment, whichever is earlier.

#### FINANCING OF EDUCATION

- Iqra fund & its utilization;
- Budget provision for women university;
- Liberal allocations for education;
- Allocation of funds for research and development of high technology;

#### COMMENTS

Iqra fund has been set up by the Government for the promotion of education in the country. This step has

been taken to augment the resources being made available for education. The total allocations to education for the next year(1985-86) has been increased to Rs. 11981 million as compared to Rs. 9581 million during 1984-85.

Research in Universities is being encouraged through a variety of measures. These include setting up of centres of Excellence/Advanced Studies, Area Study Centres, Pakistan Study Centres and an Institute of Science and Technology.

#### QUALITY OF EDUCATION

- Enactment of legislation to maintain the standards of education in the private sector;
- Improvement of standards within the country instead of sending students abroad;
- Lesser government control on the private educational institutions;
- Uniformity of the syllabi and fee structure;
- Improvement of the examination system by eliminating malpractices;

#### COMMENTS

Legislation for registration of the private schools is under consideration in the provinces of Punjab & Baluchistan and has taken effect in the provinces of Sind and NWFP. It is not possible to strictly enforce maintenance of standards of education in the private schools. However, through the aforementioned legislative measures, the registering authority may oversee the provision of suitable teaching staff and adequate

ancillary facilities in the educational institutions set up in the private sector.

As far as overall improvement of standards of education within the country is concerned, as already mentioned, Centres of Advanced Studies are being set up in universities for this purpose. Similarly 7 Centres of Excellence already established are also being strengthened to obviate need for sending large number of scholars abroad. For the improvement of quality of education, following steps are under way:

Establishment of Model Primary Schools and Model Middle Schools in each Union Council.

Provision of improved Science Education facilities at Middle and Secondary level.

Strengthening of University Departments and Centres of Excellence.

Better Curricula.

Extensive Teacher Training Programme.

Regarding the system of examinations, a number of reforms are being contemplated.

These involve procedural changes in the conduct of examinations,

effective check on the supervisory staff, their performance during the conduct of examination,

introduction of objective tests, and special training of paper setters,

certain amount of autonomy to the institutions in conduct of examinations, and

special remedial courses for the students, on the basis of diagnostic tests to discourage private tuitions.

MANAGEMENT OF EDUCATION

- Decentralization of education by increasing the role of provincial governments;
- Adequate arrangements for proper utilization of additional funds;
- Development schemes of universities take very long time for approval and longer for implementation;

COMMENTS

Provincial governments are already exercising sufficient autonomy in the development and maintenance of educational activities in their respective provinces. Matters of National Policy, Planning, Standards of Education, International liaison etc are dealt by the Federal government in consultation with the provinces.

Proper utilization of Funds is an area of great concern with the government. Numerous inter-provincial forums are at present functioning to constantly monitor the proper utilization of funds through regular meetings and feed back.

Development schemes for Universities are now expeditiously processed with the setting up of the DDWP which can sanction schemes upto Rs. 10 million. A large number of such schemes have been sanctioned.

To facilitate implementation, the Academy of Educational Planning and Management, is mounting special programmes for concenred personnel.

#### STUDENTS WELFARE

- Scholarships for poor, should also be available for farmers' children;
- Admission of the children of poor in good institutions on quota basis;
- Revival of Students unions;

#### COMMENTS

Regarding admission of students in good institutions, there is no discrimination in quality institutions established by the Government. Rich and poor are equally eligible. Government has also provided liberal scholarships to the poor children from underdeveloped areas for their education in Aitchison College, Cadet Colleges and other public schools. The seats are further being increased. As far as students unions are concenred, setting up of Students Councils is being examined in consultation with the provincial governments

#### MISCELLANEOUS

- High priority to primary, technical/vocational education in rural areas;
- Agricultural education in schools in order to evolve skills and production oriented programmes;
- Use of media for public education;
- High cost of imported textbooks;

COMMENTS

Priority is being given to primary, technical/vocational education in the rural areas. Increased allocations are being made under the Special Development Programme for Primary Education. Middle and High Technical Schools are proposed to be set up in each Tehsil and District respectively. As far as agriculture education in Schools is concerned, agro-technical subjects have been introduced in certain selected high schools. This programme is likely to be expanded depending on its success in the existing schools. The use of media for public education by the Allama Iqbal Open University is already being done. Opening of second T.V.channel will enhance media use. Use of radio and press is also being made. For the printing of foreign books, the government have set up a National Book Foundation which reproduces such textbooks for sale at a lower price.

CONCLUSION

From the foregoing it is evident that a substantial number of the distinguished members of the National Assembly has participated in the discussions of issues related to National Education development. Whereas all important aspects were brought to light, four main areas attracted relatively more concern and debate. They are: low literacy levels of the populace; meagre coverage of the relevant age groups in elementary level institutions; low quality/standards of education at all levels;

and operation of two different systems of schools i.e. English & Urdu medium. Although the government's policies and plans have taken due cognizance of shortcoming in these areas, it appears that the expectations of the public representatives are for more accelerated actions and enhanced efforts. While formulating future plans it will be worthwhile to consider these areas as priority areas.