

Some directions

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teachers' guides) have been printed by the Book Group, and are being used by 136 schools all over Pakistan.

Because these books are sponsored by the corporate sector and by participating schools, they are sold to low-fee schools at highly subsidized and affordable prices. To the four government schools, which are in the management of the Book Group, these books are supplied free of cost. In a small way, this is one step in bridging the gap between the rich and the poor students. The important thing about these books, apart from being colourful, attractive, and well-printed, is the fact

Punjab.

4. Working with government schools:

On the assumption that what ails the government schools is not so much shortage of money but the absence of a vision for change and a political will to reform the education sector, the Book Group requested the department of education of the government of Sindh, to allow the handing over the management of two government schools in the urban area and two in rural Sindh to it. The management of the Government Junior Model Girls Primary School, Clifton, (morning and afternoon shifts), and the Talib Khan Baloch Primary and Qaiser Khan Baloch Middle schools (Mirpur Sakro) were handed over to the Book Group.

By reinforcing good management, providing modern books for some subjects, by training the teachers, and by generally improving the school environment (no corporal punishment, introduction of art and music as new subjects, provision of a library) this intervention demonstrated that with a concerted effort, and equipped with professional wherewithal, government schools can be changed considerably for the better.

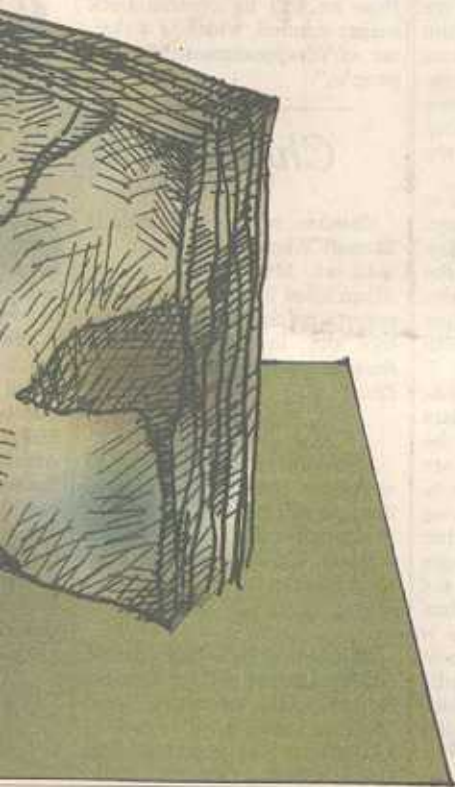
5. Education Reform Committee (ERC)

In an effort to initiate a process of reform in the public sector schools, in 2000 a proposal was sent to the Governor of Sindh, requesting him to establish the Education Reform Committee (ERC). The members of the proposed committee were: Tasneem A. Siddiqui (Director-General, Sindh Katchi Abadi Authority, GoS), Nasra Wazir Ali, administrator of Nasra School, Sister Zinia Pinto, former Principal of St. Joseph's College, and former chairperson of the Catholic Board, A. K. Khatri, principal of Gulaman-i-Abbas School in Lyari, Shahpur Jamal, Principal of Bay View Academy, Sami Mustafa, principal of the CAS School and chairman of the Book Group.

The ERC had proposed to the governor, Mohammadmian Soomro, that all government schools in what was then Karachi's District South should be brought under the management of the ERC. The ERC would work closely with the department of education and would make specific recommendations for improving the management of the schools in the district. It would also, in close consultation with the department, make policy changes in the government schools, provide modern textbooks, and intervene professionally to improve the learning culture of government schools.

No decision was taken by the outgoing Governor. Since the ERC has not asked for any funds for implementing its reform agenda, it is hoped that the new governor, the government of Sindh and the city government will look at the proposal favourably, so that a process of reform in the education sector may be initiated. ■

Illustration by Abro



that they represent a paradigm shift in children's literature and in what we teach in schools. Away from sermonizing, they talk about things and issues that interest children, that fire their imagination, and stimulate them to think.

The Human Rights Education Programme has also published a set of delightful books, which make both interesting reading and which promote a participatory learning process in creating awareness among students regarding human rights, and more specifically, regarding children's rights. The OUP has printed full sets for each class, from classes I to XI. Their Urdu series is being used by a large number of schools in different parts of the country. Similarly the PMSP published a set of Urdu books, new titles as well as reprinting of good existing titles, which were supplied free of cost to children in the middle schools in the