

ional committee on education

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re the light of some obscure and ill-formulated objectives.

The policy makers and their patron-ministers have not understood that education is not about ide-

ministry of education uses as its bible, not only talks about 'citizenship in community, country and world', about 'ideological foundation of Pakistan', and so forth, but when

nal curriculum goals

Curriculum Goals' as outlined in the 'Curriculum Document Primary Education, class-integrated and subject based' (published by the National Bureau of Curriculum and Government of Pakistan, 1995).

education curriculum K-V are:

and development of the child.
Citizenship in community, country and world.
Development of the child which includes literacy in languages, numeracy in mathematics, learning in social studies, and inculcating values in Islamiat.
Attention to the needs of the child.
Learning skills.

education curriculum K-V are to develop in the child:

Building knowledge of Islamic values and by encouraging their use in thought and
Foundational foundations of Pakistan and to encourage patriotism and love for country and

Method and development of a range of basic skills and relevant content.
Their use and conservation.
Development and the interaction among the human population, plant and animals, and

Arts and cultural activities and festivals of all communities.
Health and the need for hygiene and sanitation.
Independence of the family and the community and their functioning.
Communication and transport as essential elements in development.
Participation in physical activities.
Encourage learning to become productive members of society.

ology and patriotism, but about intellectual stimulation, free inquiry, cognitive and emotional development, and the sheer joy of learning. The 'National Curriculum Goals' (see shaded box), which the

it does talk about, for example, 'intellectual development of the child', it does not explain how this is to come about. That only lip service is paid to objectives like 'intellectual development' is evident from the

fact that the textbooks written under the close supervision of the ministry of education (through the curriculum wing), and prescribed in all government-run schools, do anything but facilitate free inquiry and intellectual development.

Unfortunately, rather than being left to the professionals, education policies have become the responsibility of section officers. The policy-makers in the government have got themselves caught up in the vicious circle of a certain rhetoric and a medieval mind set. A look at any government school, at the teaching method in these schools and at the textbooks used by them gives a good indication of just how far removed from reality are those who run the ministry of education. They seem to have no idea of the educational needs of young children today and of the professional compulsions of managing schools.

In the background of this obsolete way of thinking and questionable premises, the publication of the *National Curriculum 2000 - A Conceptual Framework* was a refreshing departure. Apart from shifting the focus from sermons and indoctrination ('ideological foundation of Pakistan', 'patriotism', 'love for country and mankind'), the *National Curriculum 2000* focuses on the cognitive development of the child through such modern and professionally sound concepts as cognitive and emotional development. New concepts such as 'intellectual autonomy' of the child and 'less is more', are introduced in order to move away from rote learning and encourage curiosity, initiative and the development of analytical skills.

The concepts outlined in the *National Curriculum 2000* were then translated into textbooks. Several schools of Karachi got together and, so far, have developed and printed comprehensive textbooks for classes

I to III. Work on class IV textbook is underway. *Khel khilonay* for class I, *Meray dost* for II and *Sharartain* for class III, with their interesting text and colourful illustrations, along with their teachers guides, are being used in several elite schools, as well as in low-fee schools and 4 government schools. These new textbooks are a happy beginning in terms of showing how a programme of studies for the primary level is to be built on the basis of cognitive development and an enjoyable learning process.

The document is divided into two parts. The first part, the 'Context', deals briefly with 'Global context', 'Changing profile of education', and the 'Pakistan context'. The second part, called 'Conceptual framework of the learning process', is divided into three broad categories: 'Objectives'; 'Premise: How children learn'; and 'Method'.

In the learning process, the objectives are cognitive development, emotional development, social development and spiritual development of the child. The premise of the learning process is to give the child intellectual autonomy, facilitate his/her innate compulsion to learn, and the development of concepts through the child's immediate context. And, the method for doing this is integrated learning, the 'less is more' or learning how to learn way, and an analysis oriented examination system.

For the first time, this document spells out the objectives of learning within a modern context. It is hoped that this document will serve as a starting point towards making our schools meaningful learning places, and will receive the attention of the decision makers in the education ministry so that a beginning is made in terms of reforming the education sector and putting it in line with the demands of modern times. ■