

elite seek admissions in universities abroad or join up equally exclusive centres of higher education in the country. Some of these like AKUH, GK, LUMS and others have rightly been described as export promotion zones for Pakistani human talent.

The fields to which they go are large and widespread, like medicine and technology, information and communication, management and accountancy and others to prepare themselves for all the plum jobs in multinational firms and the private sector, besides 'superior service' in the government.

As if this was not enough injustice, all the scholarships and education loans offered by the government, foreign missions and even the private trusts are cornered by off-springs of the military brass and the politicians, bureaucrats and men of big business. The reason is that such endowments are given not to encourage scholarship, but as a public relation exercise on the part of bureaucrats and businessmen who control charitable trusts.

For instance the SET programme pioneered by the late Nabhubal Haq to improve the quality of science education in Pakistan,

Three paths to nowhere

Edw. Qadir 25-5-05

failed miserably as the young scientists sent abroad for post-graduate and doctoral level studies returned home as ill-informed, as devoid of analytical ability and thinking process as they were when they had left. The reason was simple. The selection was not on merit, but on the basis of power and pelf.

The creation of socio-economic differences and an unjust social order on account of inheritance, unearned income and adoption of corrupt practices is one thing. To do so through the instrument of education is a totally different thing.

Education, which is considered a panacea for social ills and is normally expected to bridge the gap between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots', has actually resulted in the creation of two distinct socio-economic groups that show no signs of coming closer. The rich are getting richer, and the poor, poorer. No middle-class is emerging in Pakistan, unlike in neighbouring India and elsewhere in the world.

The solution may perhaps lie in creating a more challenging environment for the educated but deprived group, and also to build

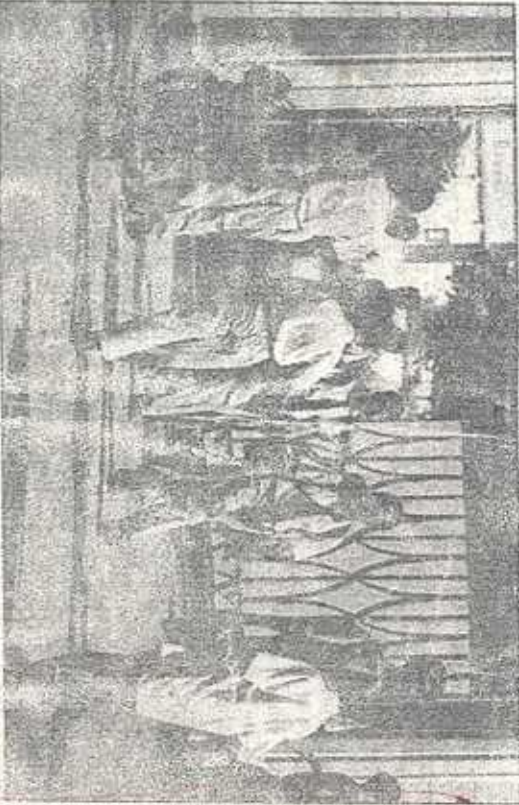
avenues for economic activity in agriculture, industry and the service sectors. If we do so, we may yet create a better social order though there appear no signs of this taking place in the foreseeable future.

As if this scenario was not morbid enough, in our country we have religious education running on parallel lines. The mental moulds that are formed through the old education are so incompatible that unless one or the other, or both, are changed, there is no possibility of their adjusting themselves to one another.

Some religious seminaries have also earned the bad name of churning out foot soldiers for ethnic strife at home and *ibadati* activities abroad. This is, of course, sad because seminaries have played a useful role in the past to provide education and knowledge to all segments of society, irrespective of socio-economic segmentation as at present.

As things stand today, even seminaries are further divided on several lines, the main ones being Hanafi, Deobandi, Hanafi Barelvi, Ahle Hadees, and the Fiqah-e-Jaffriya.

This has been the main reason for sectarian differences arising among the people that sometimes take a nasty turn, and have a deadly impact on the minds and actions of the people. If secular education system has created economic differences, the traditional system of edu-



CAREFREE DAYS: But what does the future have in store for them?

the traditional system of education, as it is followed presently, creates social-cultural differences.

What is required is to reform and re-organize the seminaries so that they can play their rightful role in society as was brought to the

the blazing political winds of independence. For the purpose of reform in the system it has to be decided whether religious institutions for training of those who have to perform the functions of religious education and guidance. In their present form, these institutions cannot fulfill the economic objectives of general schools, and can only be useful as vocational institutions. Admissions should be open only after a thorough test to find out which of the candidates have the inclination, disposition, capacity, temperament and character required to make them suitable for the important function of religious teaching and guidance. They should possess a natural inborn urge to find out and realize the eternal reality behind a changing world, and the will to devote themselves to the spiritual welfare of their fellow-beings. The government should provide adequate resources for seminaries so that the teachers may be given adequate emoluments. After acquiring due education, the students should be given the

consciousness of the Muslims by Maulana Shibli Nomani and other religious leaders in the past. It was to solve this problem that the Nadwat-ul-Elema and its educational institution, the Darul Uloom of Nadva, was founded. But this movement withered in