

It is heartening to know that both Federal and provincial governments are taking keen interest in education and making drastic changes to improve the standards. However one wonders where is it heading to, what is the aim and what is the system going to achieve.

In "The News" of 12th May, there was an item "PU to purge English Courses of 'un-Islamic contents', referred to major changes in the curriculum, specially of English language and this was to 'Islamise' the system. Dr. Shahbaz Arif is to work on this holy task. The words like 'rape', 'wine', 'Vodka' have to be obliterated as they corrupt the minds of our children and have an un-Islamic connotation. Why limit English only? Why not exclude 'Iqbal', 'Faiz', 'Ghalib' or that matter all Urdu poetry or these terms permissible when used in Urdu and Persian. One would like to suggest that

Education — a different view

Excerpt
The News 19.6.05

we should also ban all dictionaries and encyclopaedias because they not only contain all these 'Objectionable' words but also give their meanings and explanations in detail. After purging all our literature we are left with only two books, which we should recommend as texts in all colleges, and universities and they are the Railway Time Table and the Telephone Directory.

The policy makers and the parents who raise objections did not go through such rigorous 'Islamic Education' themselves. In the course of studies they read these terms many times over, have they become atheists, amoral or morally depraved? Surely, if reading English or Urdu literature did not turn them into sinners or amoral persons then these terms will also

not harm our children.

Islam is a great force and the religion if taught properly and not thrust down our throats will not allow our moral fabric to be shattered nor will reading any literature make us deviate from our values and right path. It appears that our education system wishes to turn our younger generation into narrow-minded bigots with extreme biases. Islam is a religion of peace and tolerance, can we not tolerate a harmless piece of poetry written years ago or do we have to find "ugly" meanings in beautiful things? Do our next generations have to be narrow-minded and develop only one facet of education namely - Islam.

There is a Hadith "Seek knowledge even if you have to go to China". It is certain that it

is not seeking knowledge about religion or understanding the "The Holy Quran" which was available in Arabia. China at that time offered knowledge in cultural development and science, then how can we close our eyes to the cultures of the world. A world, which now is a much smaller place than it ever was.

The educationists have to accept and inform the public about the fact that social changes are an integral part of development. Life is not static and continuous social development is a sign of a healthy society. By throwing out what we feel is 'undesirable' we are using the process of 'denial', a mechanism which is commonly seen in neurotics or maniacs. We cannot say that evil does not

exist by inhibiting our selves and closing our eyes. We do not want a hysteric or hypocritic society.

The parents and educationists have a harder task to inculcate the moral values and standards, which give the students the inner strength to make the right choices. These values are not imposed, they are ingrained. Islam has enough force to show the path, only our guides are themselves misguided and their reaction to everything is a panic reaction.

Education means development of character and mental power. It is not the job of educationists to succumb to the public demand. With their education and training they enjoy a status and authority, which puts them above the common public.

In a country like ours where education is a rare commodity and people make decisions on their whims the educationists have greater responsibility. They have to make curriculum for students at the same time convince the parents what is right for their children.

We need to develop a nation, which is intelligent, knowledgeable, and can question others and answer their queries. We have to develop technically, scientifically and we need inquiring minds. Ignorance gives rise to prejudices, which are at the root of all quarrels. Our aim is a better and a safer world. An understanding of different views and giving space to others is the basis of peaceful co-existence and democracy. There surely are enough intelligent people who understand these fundamental rules and will not let the nation down by following a particular class, who in spite of their best intentions are not able to provide correct guidance.

In a country like ours where education is a rare commodity and people make decisions on their whims the educationists have greater responsibility. They have to make curriculum for students at the same time convince the parents what is right for their children.