

RAUF ARIF analyses
the loopholes left in the
educational system

Missing the bull's eye

Education Nation 13.10.02

Despite tall claims and a lot of lip service, the military government has failed to improve the overall education scenario of the country during its last three years.

The major reasons for this failure were lesser budgetary allocation, lack of commitment and flawed implementation of the programmes. In Pakistan, people saw the implementation of seven education policies since its inception where literacy rate is still under 40 percent.

The key areas of the latest education policy (1998-2010) are to make the Quranic principles as an integral part of the curricula, and to upgrade the quality of higher education by bringing teaching, learning and research process in line with international standards.

The aims to ensure that all desirous of entering secondary education, get access to schools and to popularise information technology among children of all ages to prepare them to meet contemporary and future challenges.

In accordance with the Dakar Framework of Action, agreed by 184 countries of the world in April 2000 in Dakar (Senegal), Pakistan had committed to achieve EFA goals by the year 2015. The first draft of the National Plan of Action (NPA) for EFA (2000-2015) was ready by mid 2001 and was presented in the ministerial meeting of E-9 countries in Beijing (China) in August 2001. The Ministry of Education introduced Education Sector Reforms (ESR), with an aim to develop human resources in Pakistan as a prerequisite for global, progress and prosperity.

The major achievements of Education Ministry under ESR programme includes the formation of Compulsory Primary Education Act/ Ordinance which was promulgated in Punjab, Sindh, NWFP and Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT). Under this ESR presidential programme, 10,000 schools were rehabilitated during this period. The National Plan of Action (NPA) on Education For All (2001-2015) was prepared with 15-year EFA Strategic Plan for UPE and 86 per cent Adult Literacy. The

government managed to revise the curriculum and textbooks of basic Sciences, Computer Sciences, Social Sciences, and Languages from class I to XII. Under the ESR programme, Diploma in Education to upgrade teachers qualification to 12+1 1/2 years, replacing PTC and CT courses, was launched.

The Education ministry during last three years introduced part wise exams at Secondary level, 3550 master trainers and teachers were trained, for middle class schools, 2690 science kits were distributed, about 2000 NFBE schools were opened, and the scheme of studies was also revised to provide assistance for vocational courses.

The Ministry also launched a pilot project for production of Science Video Text books, with the collaboration of Allama Iqbal Open University. The targets of the ESR action plan (2001—2005) were to increase literacy rate from 49 percent to 60 percent, gross primary enrolment from 84 percent to 100 percent, secondary schools enrolment from 29.5 percent to 40 percent, higher education from 2.6 to 5 percent, Madrassahs mainstreaming from 148 to 8000 schools, etc.

The financial requirement for the above mentioned ESR Action Plan for 2001-2002 was 7.9 billion, for 2002-2003 – 27.2 billion, 2003-04 – 30.7 billion, and for 2004-05 – 34.2

billion. So the gross total amount was 100 billion rupees. There is low percentage of public expenditure on education which is only 2 percent of GNP.

According to the development budget for 2002-2003, the Development Expenditure is Rs 2603.728 million. The total ongoing projects are 120 while under process projects are 40 in number. Here it is important to be mentioned that Rs 3.574 billion were provided to provinces and districts under ESR programme during 2001-2002. Briefly, the requirements for ESR Action Plan 2001 — 2004/5, were Rs 93.24 billion, while the allocation was made in rupees 30.35 billion. So in this way the financial gap

reaches to Rs 62.89 billion. for now onward, it has been that the provincial/Area/District governments will provide funding for ESR programs.

Despite of all these efforts the Education Ministry, there are some significant flaws which cannot be ignored such as most of the educational institutions have no facilities, furniture, equipment, drinking water, electricity, toilet etc. In addition to lack of sustainability in educational policy and programmes introduced by the ministry, most of the ongoing projects are left incomplete which should have been completed within the duration of last three years.

The Education Minister Zobiaida Jalal failed to form a National Accreditation Council which ultimately resulted in the failure to maintain the quality education and mushroom growth of educational institutions which further worsened the situation.

The Ministry had given more attention to the construction of new schools but the issue of lack of commitment and motivation in teachers to deliver the service effectively and efficiently, is still there which is a great hurdle in achieving the educational goals. And no effective planning has been made to avert the situation. ■



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