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# Youth seen as catalyst for social cl

By Mukhtar Alam

KARACHI, July 19: Speakers at a two-day workshop on Tuesday stressed the need for taking effective measures to eliminate the menace of bribery and corruption from all walks of life in the country.

They opined that the youth, as leaders of tomorrow, could be vital players in any drive aimed at changing the social attitude towards corruption and creating a vibrant civil society, which knows its rights and duties.

The workshop on "Youth in Governance" got under way at the Arts Auditorium of the University of Karachi, with Vice-Chancellor Dr Pirzada Qasim in chair.

About 170 students from 22 government and private universities and degree-awarding institutes of Sindh and Balochistan, and their teachers, are participating in the workshop.

Issues being addressed during the workshop include corruption, transparency, accountability, value of vote, national integrity, legislation, good governance, human rights and mobilizing the community.

Dr Pirzada, in his remarks, called for training the youth, as their role in the

development of society was undeniable, and they had a greater role to play against corruption.

"We must focus on our youth and seriously think how they can be engaged in positive things, because they have got every potential to change society, if once filled with national spirit," he added.

Making a presentation on "Legislation and Good Governance" at a formal session of the workshop, a former federal law minister, Barrister Shahida Jamil, said law was the main vehicle of modern governance that caused social engineering.

"Good social engineering; therefore, strengthens good governance, bringing good service delivery. While bad laws spoil the working of good machinery and the resultant social engineering can lead to great damages," she added.

In her deliberations, she referred to various crises and issues and noted that various announcements, decisions and legislations, which went in the interest of good governance, financial management, integrity of educational and health delivery systems, justice to people, had been frequently ignored.

She said that in view of the financial crises faced by the new Pakistani government during its inception, it had been resolved at the highest level then that ministers of government would not draw their salaries.

This was; however, unfortunately forgotten after the demise of the Quaid-i-Azam, whereafter the ministers started focusing on their salaries and perks, she added.

She said that corruption travelled from top to bottom and it could be rolled back in that order provided that law was not considered just a piece of paper.

Responding to a questioner, she said good governance was linked to democracy.

The workshop was jointly held by the Transparency International Pakistan (TIP), the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) and the Higher Education Commission (HEC), while the Swiss Agency for Cooperation and Development (SDC) funded the programme.

According to the project director of the Youth in Governance, Saad Rashid, of the TIP, said that partici-

pants coming from outstations had been facilitated with regard to travel and accommodation.

A similar workshop would be held for the students of Punjab and the NWFP regions in January in Lahore. This would be followed by a national convention at Islamabad some time after March 2006.

In his welcome address, Mr Rashid mentioned that as per the definition of the Transparency International, corruption was the abuse of entrusted powers for private gains.

The TI, an international non-governmental organization, devoted to combating corruption, brings civil society, business and governments together in a powerful global coalition.

He said the TIP under the SDC's sponsorship was working to create awareness against the evils of bribery and corruption.

The purpose of the Youth in Governance workshop was to equip youth with tools and skills to realize their rights and responsibilities, practice good governance and become active members of society, besides encouraging the youth to seek

accountability to address problems of good governance and corruption.

The Director of NAB, Sindh, Brig Javed Iqbal, referred to the historic speech of the Quaid-i-Azam, delivered to the first constituent assembly of Pakistan on August 11 who, he said, had identified corruption and bribery as major curses and had called for overcoming them on priority basis.

Brig Javed said corruption was a disease infecting every aspect of political, social and economic activity. "Unfortunately, now corruption is largely accepted as a norm and regarded as inevitable," he remarked.

He said one of the basic tools to fight corruption was to make all action of the state transparent.

"Be it politicians or bureaucrats, they employ secrecy to thwart the legal system against effectively curtailing corruption," he added, and pointed out that an external public pressure was, therefore, needed to fight and eliminate the menace.

He added that corruption in the judiciary, revenue, police and other law-enforcement agencies was of more concern.

# change

He claimed that the civil society of Pakistan had become complacent and that was why its members turned a blind eye to the corruption around them, feeling that there was nothing they could do.

"The money slipped to the public official for the issuance of a birth certificate, a driving license, the unofficial payment to get much needed medicine at a government hospital, to get a child admitted to a local government school, is an experience faced by most people," he added.

He urged all stakeholders to play their role in eroding corruption, and noted that the best way to reduce opportunities for corruption and economic crime was to take positive preventive action reinforced by the fear of detection and punishment.

Talking about measures taken by the NAB against corruption, Brig Javed said besides preventive measures, the bureau had also launched an awareness drive, focussing mainly on the youth.

"Youth are the key to a corruption-free Pakistan, not only because they are many in number but because they

are the ones who will face the consequences of corruption," he concluded.

A former VC of the University of Karachi and noted political scientist, Dr Manzooruddin Ahmad, said universities, which should be grounds of ideas, had now become the grounds of violence.

In a situation where the administrators of universities were appointed on political grounds, there was left little to expect for betterment, he added.

He held the youth and university students in high esteem and declared that they could still play a vital role in the development of the country and national spirit.

He pleaded for involving youth in the governance of universities as measures for restoring confidence in them, and observed that they had tremendous potential provided they were given the social and cultural environments for reconstruction of society.

The Consul General of Switzerland, Julius F. Anderegg, said good governance was a problem of the developed countries as well. Justice (Retd) Nasir Aslam Zahid said no change in society could take place until and unless people desired and acted for it.