

Pakistan Coalition for Education

Discussion points ---media

No real consultation is possible if a document is drafted in English language. How have the policy makers consulted parents, teachers, students and common people of Pakistan by wider circulation of the draft having technical nature in a language? This policy is understood by a small minority of the country's population, including our parliamentarians--- whose children are not in public school system or we can say it is not their problem. Policy should be translated atleast in Urdu.

To be fair, parts of the document are well-written and well thought-out but there are some fundamental issues left unresolved and a new chapter added just a few days before publishing the policy on the net. It seems that the government refuses to learn from the blunders committed by Gen Ziaul Haq in the name of Islamisation--- the Shia-Sunni divide is rooted in the Islamiyat textbooks of Zia's period.

The commitment to provide quality education to every child should be given legal cover in the Constitution of Pakistan .Education is the fundamental right of every citizen without discrimination. Free & compulsory education up to secondary level is a constitutional obligation of the state. The state should not shy away from its obligation; basically to be able to invest in security and other areas. Therefore, the policy must affirm that it is the responsibility of the State to provide Free Quality Education up to high school level to all children in the country within the next 10 years.

The education policy should be inline with Rights Based Approach.

Inclusion of Civil Society in finalizing/revising the current draft of NEP, it should be discussed in Parliament--- in-camera session before it is tabled in the cabinet for approval - Government to set up mechanisms and time frames for effective implementation of policies and plans. Civil society should be a part of implementing and monitoring of those plans.

We demand that the government should address the priority issues- i.e. access and quality rather than continue with 'the subversion' by focusing on religion and ideology through education. In the same context chapter 4, on "Islamic Education" needs serious revisions. In Pakistan , more focus attention in policy actions are required towards girls' child education ,cases are evident from NWFP, Baluchistan , interior parts of Sindh and Punjab where the ratio of boys to girls is towards the lower side while female make-out 52% of total population

Focused policy action must be taken to respond to the needs of poor and excluded children. Public schools must upgrade their standards to provide free quality education, which is relevant to people's needs, to all children without discrimination, so that middle class parents do not have to chase private schools and the poor are left with no choice except madrassas for their children's education.

The increasing trend of privatizing education should be discouraged and such privatization should be made opened and transparent so that people know what is being decided about the future of their children