

**"A NATIONAL SYSTEM OF EDUCATION
AND EDUCATION OF TEACHERS"
A REVIEW OF DR. N. A. BALOCH'S RESEARCH WORK
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INTRODUCTION

It is a bit strange for a student to write a review on a research work of his teacher; but a real student is also the best critic of his most learned teacher, and can also appreciate it the best. My review is not the best; but the book I review before the audience is the best. Dr. Nabi Bakhsh Khan Baloch, the preceptor of my age, has written so many valuable books. But his latest book: *A National System of Education and Education of Teachers*, is rather the call of the hour.

To day the education system of Pakistan is in disarray. Suggestions come from all corners to reform it. How to reform the existing disarrayed system of education in Pakistan, Dr. Baloch can best tell. And he tells us where to start and what road to charter. He asks us to begin with meeting the need of the society. Explore conceptual possibilities for the reconstruction of the national education system, keeping in view the past educational tradition, the resolution of the first educational conference after emergence of Pakistan as an independent Muslim State: Islamic ideology, universal brotherhood, tolerance and justice, to form the base of the educational system in Pakistan. Dr. Baloch has pointed out significant features of Islam Education System, as well, including the financial support, control, examinations, curricula and its designing, academic freedom, community support, all borne out by history.

* *The review paper was read by Dr. Habibullah Siddiqui in the seminar – launching of the book by Muhammadmian Soomro Sahab, Chairman Senate of Pakistan, on 30.3.2004 in Pir Hussamuddin Auditorium, Institute of Sindhiology, University of Sindh, Jamshoro*

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URGENT CHANGES

Dr. Sahib is the most experienced and erudite living scholar in the field of education. He does not suggest that the existing system should be entirely overhauled. But points out only the policies and practices, which must be changed immediately. He is particular about the changes needed in the field of teacher education. Teacher indeed, is the hub of the wheel of education. Overall, the research scholar has focused attention on "those overall problems, policies and procedures, which have hindered the progress of education and which, therefore, call for urgent changes" (P.XVI).

RECONSTRUCTION

As regards reconstruction of the education system, he carries out a down – to – earth research and draws conclusions related to practical steps. He describes the foundations, explores the catalyst sources and determines the objectives of the national education system. He has given candid, lucid and tenable practical proposals for articulation of different stages of education, particularly of the primary and secondary education, teaching of languages, the responsibilities of the local bodies and the federal government. Obstacles in achieving the desired changes are spelt out; the lack of will, the lack of funds, lack of control – who is to lead, who is to bell the cat?

IMPROVEMENT

Improvement and out put depends upon professional competence. Dr. Baloch emphasizes that "the reconstruction of the national system of education and its operational success must depend upon the quality of the nation's teaching profession". He tells us that "securing properly trained teachers had been emphasized as a number one problem by the framers of every educational scheme (even) in British India". He emphasizes also the role of teachers as "nation builders" and the "historical demonstration of the power of the teaching profession". He tells us

the qualities of an acceptable teacher; "an educated person who grows educationally, capable of handling his professional work, adaptable and skilled in the art of human relations". He gives a good advice on the problems of recruitment and selection, guidance, placement and follow-up services regarding the required "educational force of teachers".

From chapter VII onwards, the learned author provides the roadmap of the "directional goals" for a "qualitative change", showing "the immediate next steps", for bringing about essential changes. These essential changes, according to him, "are needed simultaneously in the administrative system, in the programmes of instruction in the schools (i.e. the curriculum) and in the programmes of teacher education". He tells us that the quality of education "depends on qualitative teacher education and school administration". Undoubtedly the quality of education fell in our institutions concomitantly with mushroom growth of single-teacher primary schools, which opened flood gates of recruitment of teachers on considerations other than educational and professional, and the training of teachers became formality.

To begin from square one, we need to stop wrong recruitment, and improve the teacher education system. But it depends, as pointed out by Dr. Baloch, "upon the improvements made in the administrative policies and procedures".

Our primary education system suffered a set back after the implementation of the recommendations of the Commission on National Education, in 1961. The P.S.L.C. (Primary School Leaving Certificate) examination, at the end of 7 years schooling was abolished. The 5 – class primary school was of no use for sustainable literacy and further education. The education policy and the procedures changed altogether. The erstwhile, system ensured reinforcement of the system. In that context, Saen Dr. Nabi Bakhsh Khan Baloch has also suggested that, "since the teachers eventually occupy the administrative posts, the quality of education does, in a large measure, depend upon the quality of teacher education". But that is true about the secondary school teachers only. The primary school teacher enters the profession and

retires from active service remaining a primary teacher all along. Even the supervisory posts go mostly to secondary school teachers. The upward mobility, or the promotion system, of primary school teacher is essential for promoting the basic teachers towards professional growth and commitment to the job. Likewise a senior teacher and educational administrator would be the best choice for the post of Education Secretary; but the colonial legacy is continued to place a young civil service officer over and above the professionals like teachers, doctors, engineers etc. This practice needs be stopped. Dr. Baloch suggests reorganization of Education Department on lines more professionally outlined, "the specialized educational functions" should receive more attention of the Education Department than "the problems of personnel administration". Respectfully it may be added to this expert opinion that "the personnel administration" i.e. recruitment, posting and transfers preponderates in the Education Department because it is politically and bureaucratically preferable – Not only the administrative but the financial matters weight heavily upon the specialized educational function of the Education Department, which is the largest recruitment agency and draws heavy amounts for expenditure. Dr. Saheb has had his personal experience of the political aspect of educational dispensation as an education minister in an interim government; but he is too soft and gentle in discussing it in his research work as intensively as it is required.

Dr. Saheb has given many valuable suggestions, which deserve immediate attention. He suggests:

1. Reorganization of Education Department
2. Professional preparation of the administrators
3. Differentiating the school curriculum, i.e. diversification of courses to suit individual interests and aptitudes of pupils, together with vocational courses; "to prepare youth for the business of living" as he says and rightly too!
4. Freedom in designing curriculum/to design the curriculum
5. Replacing the Matriculation Examination by "High Schools Certificate" (examination). The certificate may be awarded by the Education Department on the recommendation of the high school authorities. It might revive the P.S.L.C. examination. The District High School, so designated, may hold the HSC

examinations. Yes, it is workable and worth an improvement upon the existing S.S.C. examination held by the BISEs

6. An organized Teacher Education Programme
7. Increasing the professional awards
8. Raising the level of education and the status of primary school teachers
9. Abolition of external examination and instituting a system of "final certificate" by the authorities of each training institution. It may offset the boards but the Department and the Universities would be the final certificate awarding authorities in relevant certification
10. Extended teacher education/training period beyond the existing one year Sir, it is not even one year's training. It varies from 6 to 9 months; there is no curriculum and text books in case of P.S.T., J.S.T. training. Take it from an insider; the existing teacher education programme is much inferior to the former teacher training programme. Even if we get back to square one, it would be an improvement. However, the expert suggestions offered by the learned research scholar, my teacher, Saen Dr. N. A. Baloch, are practicable in the present context. A component of education as subject may be introduced at the high school level and extended through intermediate and ultimately graduation in education followed by Masters and Doctorate in education. It would build a bull work of professional national education system, indeed!

Dr. Saheb has also discussed implementation bottlenecks; lack of national will and determination, suitable legislation, administrative leadership and the professional alertness and influence of the teaching profession – It may be supplemented by the lack of the knack of the job, the professional competence, which must be enhanced through merit based selections for running key – posts with comparative freedom of taking decisions and actions, without political interference and harassment of pressure groups in the society.

Dr. Saheb visualizes teachers as professional workers and community leaders. The college teachers, he says, are in a key position to start preparing their students for educational leadership – and a hopeful future he realizes for education in Pakistan. A strong public opinion, created by capable teachers, is the only

guarantee for the educational advancement of the country. That is the first and the last observation of the learned Saeen Dr. N. A. Baloch. God bless him!
