

Education, Science And Culture in Islamic Iran

ONE of the primary aims of the Islamic Revolution was indeed to remove foreign influence from all social strata. To this end, a movement was started in Universities and higher education centres which later came to be known as the "Cultural Revolution". In this context, text-books were reviewed and inappropriate and impractical subjects deleted, while those in line with advanced world technology were added. Islamic subjects were introduced and at the same time, Western-oriented ones, foreign to the spirit of Islam, were removed from the educational scene. All foreign lecturers and those Iranian ones who were unfamiliar or incompatible with Islamic values were replaced by experience and devoted Iranians.

In order to make higher education accessible to all enthusiastic and willing individuals, an Islamic open University was established which soon spread country-wide. At present, in addition to regular students who study at Universities and higher education centres in Iran, thousands of others study technical and scientific subjects in the open University. High standards on the one hand and the particular nature of this scientific education on the other, has made it model throughout the world. It should be noted that in addition to Iranian students, a considerable number of non-Iranian enrol annually at different Universities in Iran. At present, there are many who are engaged in serious studies at theological centres among which is the famous Theological Centre of Qom. Such centres are very active in providing Islamic studies. The introduction of some changes in school and high school text-books and curriculum has also had a positive effect in upgrading the level of knowledge among Iranian youth and teenagers and in nurturing talents. It can be seen, therefore, that the "Cultural Revolution" was not confined to the universities. This introduction of new schools and high school text-books is enough proof for this. The number of text-books published in 1987, were twice as many as that of the period preceding the Islamic Revolution. Only 100 million school and high school text-books have been published and distributed in the year 1987.

Rigorous efforts have been made in eradicating illiteracy throughout the country and these continue ceaselessly. To this end, illiteracy-campaign centres, embraced by an institution which sprang from the very heart of the revolution, have established classrooms in factories and in the far-flung regions and villages of the country. In short, classrooms have been set up wherever possible and those illiterates have been encouraged to learn reading and writing. Figures indicate that 167,764 classrooms have been set up during the post-revolutionary era in which more than three million illiterates have participated.

The general education system of the country is divided into six stages i.e. pre-primary, primary, guidance cycle, secondary, technical vocational and higher education. During last

school year the total number of students upto secondary stage rose to 11,500,000 while a total 55,000 students participated in the pre-university examination. Besides the total number of new enrolments in the medical colleges reached to 6500 during the same period.

In 1985-86 school year the total number of enrolments in 24 Universities and 90 institutions of higher education of the country reached to 151495, while the total number of graduates were 19944 in the same period. Comparing those statistics with the year before there would be 4% increase in enrolments and 55.4% in graduates. In addition to ordinary universities of Iran, where co-education is practical, mention should also be made of al-Zahra University, which is reserved to girl students. In the year 1987, there were 3881 students studying in this university.

SCIENCE :

Due to the open atmosphere created in post-revolutionary Iran and to constant encouragement by the leadership and the authorities, Iran nowadays witnesses the invention, manufacture and designing of sophisticated machinery, high precision technical instruments and the realisation of many major projects by Iranian master of technology, a fact unprecedented in pre-revolutionary times when such affairs were left to foreign experts only. As an example, a highly advanced jetty was designed and manufactured in Iran, in order to facilitate oil export. It later came to be known world-wide as the floating jetty. The invention of an aorta retractor has introduced a new phase in open heart surgery. The device, registered as the "Esmat Retractor", named after its inventor, won an international gold medal and production has already started with a view to exporting soon.

Moreover, capping of damaged oil wells in Persian Gulf waters scored a big success for the Islamic Republic. From the wells, bombed by the enemy planes, a considerable amount of oil was spilling daily in the waters. It was worth noting that some foreign companies offered to cap the wells for millions of dollars but Iranian experts employing their own methods at minimum cost, halted the eruption of oil and finally capped the wells. As a result, further pollution of water which had endangered marine life, was prevented.

The invention of computerized error-detectors for fighter planes, hitherto introduced only in few advanced countries, the discovery of highly important oil formulas and the production of such oil derivative, formerly purchased from abroad at huge expense, the introduction of new methods in kidney surgery and hundreds of other examples can be considered as a sign of scientific and technological upheaval marked after the Islamic Revolution. If before, such technical jobs were reserved for foreign manpower, mainly American, today the Iranian have shown that

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they can do without any foreign assistance and are operating sophisticated machinery even better and at a minimum cost.

CULTURE :

After the revolution's victory, we witness a strong emphasis being placed on morality, spirituality and religion and flourishing of the Islamic Culture. Through the press, radio, television, publications, films, congregational prayers, healthy sports and other channels, people came to better understand the dictates of Islam.

Iran has set a unique example in restructuring her film industry based on Islamic values and ideas. Since the victory of Islamic Revolution more than 350 full-length cinematographic films have been produced in the country. These films not only admired by the Iranian people they also got recognition in the international fields. During past years Iranian films participated in film festivals held in Canada, West Germany, Moscow and Syria and got various awards. Iranian actor Jamshed Mashaekhi was awarded as the best male star in the first Non-Aligned Film Festival held in Pengyoung from 1st to 14th September, 1987.