

Education In Kuwait

To handle the needs of this increasingly technological society, the Public Authority spares no effort to fulfil the country's goal of Kuwaitisation. Kuwait will require 34,000 graduate technicians in the coming five years while technical institutions can offer only 10,000 graduates. The Public Authority's efforts to satisfy the needs of the technological society are far-reaching. A plan has been made to link applied education and training with the market's (and society's) actual needs. The expansion of technical schools within the general education system will help to promote the appreciation of technical education as offering a promising future and a high status profession, and the Public Authority's endeavours are focused on this goal.

Apart from its key role in technical education and training through an enormously wide variety of specialisation programmes and courses, designed to cater for the country's needs, the Public Authority provides social, cultural and religious care for its students. To encourage Kuwaiti youth to join technical institutions, the Public Authority offers moral and financial incentives. Some colleges give monthly grants of KD 150 to its students who obtained GSSC, and accommodation is provided for Kuwaiti students living in distant places or socially disadvantaged.

In 1984/85 a total of 120 graduates of polytechnic institutions were granted scholarships by the Public Authority to pursue their academic studies abroad.

The number of students enrolled at Applied Education institutions is now 7423, of whom 3702 are females.

University and Higher Education

Kuwait professors in Kuwait University and other educational establishments have taken on the responsibility of shaping a national higher educational policy and strategy in collaboration with other concerned State authorities, to keep pace with the increasing number of Kuwaiti teachers.

For the first time Kuwait University has a key role to play in determining a comprehensive university education policy aimed at providing opportunities in the various higher educational fields, whether academic, professional, technical or vocational, in relation to individual student capabilities, national requirements and available facilities. For this purpose a specialised higher committee is currently conducting a study aimed at defining the higher education strategies and carrying out a thorough review of the existing university curricula, policies and regulatory by-laws.

Since its foundation in 1966 Kuwait University has made remarkable progress. Nineteen years ago Kuwait University opened with 418 students, 31 professors, and

three faculties. Today, the number of students has increased to 16,000 with a teaching staff of 877, of whom 28% are Kuwaitis. There are now nine faculties, in addition to the University College for Women and the College of Graduate Studies.

The University budget has also increased commensurately and in 1984 it reached KD 56 million underlining the State's keen interest in higher education.

University Activities :

In order to achieve its objective of producing Kuwaiti teachers, Kuwait University has sent 30 graduates abroad each year since 1967 to obtain their Ph. D. in various specialisations. The number of students on academic missions abroad rose to 224 in 1977, the highest ever recorded. There are currently 171 students on study courses abroad.

In 1966 only 22 foreign students of both sexes were granted scholarships at Kuwait University. This number rose, in 1984 of 444 of whom 113 were from Gulf and peninsular states and 331 from other countries.

Education in all faculties is free, as is transport to and from the various campuses whilst meals are subsidised. The main library is divided into 14 specialised branches with a total of over half a million volumes including 1,40,000 different titles.

The Library Department is noted for its Information Centre on Kuwait and the Arabian Gulf, and its manuscripts, as well as its audio-visual library which contains 35,000 references on film, video, microfilm and disc.

Kuwait University publishes seven journals : Journal of the Gulf and Arab Peninsula Studies, Journal of Social Science, A'faq (Horizons), Faculty of Arts Yearbook, Journal of Kuwait University, Arab Journal of Humanities, and Journal of the University Library. It also contributes to the publication of "Journal of Palestine Studies".

Kuwait University works on the system of obtaining credits. The minimum Secondary School average required for admission is 60% for Kuwaiti students, 70% for students from the South and the Arabian Peninsula and 80% for others. The minimum average for the faculties of Engineering and Medicine is 75% and 80% respectively, while final admission depends on the number of seats available.

In the first semester of the academic year 1985/86 the University admitted 2,532 students, bringing the total number of students to 15,990 of whom 8,931 were females against 7,059 males.

The largest faculty is that of Arts, which has 4,772 students, followed by the Faculty of Sciences, with

3,021. Next in order of size comes the Faculty of Education (2,477 students), the Faculty of Commerce (1,973 students), the Faculty of Engineering (1,314 students), the Faculty of Law (1,038 students), the Faculty of Sharia (862 students), the Faculty of Medicine (484 students), and finally the Faculty of Allied Medicine (363 students).

Between 1969 and 1985 a total of 14,801 students graduated from Kuwait University of which 8,617 were women. The University sent 136 graduates abroad to pursue higher studies during 1984/85.

Apart from the formal faculties, there are four educational centres affiliated to the University.

1. The Community Service and Further Education Centre, which seeks to improve the educational, cultural and technical knowledge of extra-mural students, who require no particular qualifications to enrol.
2. The Language Centre, where courses in English, French and Arabic are given to persons keen to learn these languages.
3. The Computer Centre.
4. The Evaluation and Measurement Centre.

SCHOOL attendance is compulsory for all children between the ages of six and fourteen, i.e. the primary and intermediate stages.

Formal education is free and monthly grants are given to students by many schools and educational institutions to encourage them to continue their education.

Today over half a million students or 30% of the total population are enrolled at Kuwait's schools and various centres of education.

The three government bodies responsible for providing education services in Kuwait are :

1. The Ministry of Education which is responsible for the supervision of public and private education up to the twelfth grade, and for scholarships granted to non-government officials.
2. Kuwait University which is responsible for higher academic education.
3. Public Authority for Applied Education and Training which is responsible for vocational tuition at applied education institutes and training centres.

Formal Government Education

Education policies and objectives are currently under review.

At present the schooling system in Kuwait is divided into three stages of four years each : primary, intermediate and secondary. The starting age at the primary schools is six, but the Ministry of Education provides a free pre-school service through its kindergartens for Kuwaiti children be-

DHAKA WEDNI



Two students learning to handle computers in the Commercial Institute.

between the ages of four and six. In the scholastic year 1984/85 there were 351,000 pupils in government schools, of whom 183,000 were males and 168,000 females.

Because the education service in Kuwait is free, the Ministry of Education's budget has risen to KD 265 million or 7.4% of the total State expenditure, which amounts to KD 688 per pupil.

Adult Education and Eradication of Illiteracy

The country's concern with dissemination of education and culture is not limited to school students only. For a quarter of a century Kuwait has given special attention to the eradication of illiteracy and further education of adults who were either deprived of schooling or were unable to continue it.

In this field, great progress has been made by the Ministry of Education. In 1957 the illiteracy rate Kuwait was 54.5%. By 1980 it has decreased to 28.9% and it is expected to go down to 25% when the 1985 census details are issued.

There are 108 illiteracy eradication centres of which 56 are for males servicing 26,474 students, and 52 are for females, attended by 15,013 students, giving a combined total of 41,487 students (October 1985 census).

Instruction adopted in the illiteracy eradication centres is in line with the general educational system applied in the country. Students can learn to read up to the secondary stage which qualifies them to enroll at the University.

In a comprehensive national drive to wipe out illiteracy in the country, a law was enacted in 1981 stipulating compulsory illiteracy eradication which was immediately put into force.

To encourage students of both sexes receiving their education in these centres the most successful

Public Authority for Applied Education and Training

Established in 1982 as the third government organisation responsible for education in Kuwait, the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training encompasses eight different colleges and training centres, namely : The Teachers Training Institute (for both sexes and with 10 various sections and specialisations), The Health Institute (5 sections), The Commercial Institute (for both sexes, 9 sections), The Institute of Applied Technology (20 sections), The Civil Aviation Institute (16 sections), The Tele-communications Training Institute (22 sections), Shuwaikh Industrial Training Centre (12 sections), The Water and Electricity Training Centre (9 sections). These institutions provide many types of technical education and training. Apart from full-time training, they offer a number of in-service courses which have recently been extended to cover oil companies' employees.

The government places great emphasis on expansion and development of technical education, encouraging Kuwaiti students to enrol at these technical institutions. This policy on the part of the government stems from the new approach of less reliance on oil revenues as the sole source of the country's national income. This can be achieved by creating alternative resources. Skilled national manpower in various specialisations has become essential to achieve this goal. It is true that Kuwaitis, like all other Gulf nationals, used not to appreciate fully the importance of technical education as a prerequisite of modern society as the majority used to prefer clerical work.