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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 of 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.

Education

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 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.

Private education

Over 100,000 pupils of both sexes attend private schools.

Private education began in 1967 to accommodate the needs of increasing numbers of multinational expatriates to educate their children in their own language. There are currently 72 Arab and foreign private schools in Kuwait including those for the Indian, the Pakistani, the American, the English, the Japanese, the French and the German communities.

There are about 60,000 pupils at the 42 Arab private schools and 40,000 pupils at the 30 foreign private schools.

It is noteworthy that the Kuwaiti government supports the Arab private schools to the tune of about KD 4 million a year in addition to the text-books which are given free to all pupils. Another form of government support is exemplified in the granting of land required for the construction of some schools.

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



Modern audio-aids in school libraries.

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In this field, great progress has been made by the Ministry of Education. In 1957 the illiteracy rate in Kuwait was 54.5%. By 1980 it had 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 enrol 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 are given financial incentives by the State.

School Libraries

It is a fact that interest in books starts in the school library and lasts throughout life. Kuwait was well aware of this fact. With the opening of any new school in Kuwait, whether Secondary, Intermediate, Primary or even Kindergarten, a school library should be included. Through 1,300,000 books which are found in Kindergartens, love of reading is instilled into children.

It is noteworthy to mention that during the past decade the number of school libraries has doubled to 522, containing over two and a half million books in the scholastic year 1984/85.

Kuwait pupils are also brought in touch with new experiences through the Audio-Visual aids available in school libraries. The introduction of the two-term system newly applied in the Kuwaiti schools requires pupils to do research and prepare reports on their own. School libraries are an invaluable asset in this regard.

Public Authority for Applied Education and Training

Established in 1982 as the third government organisation in Kuwait, the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training encompasses eight different Colleges and Training centres, namely:

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 Telecommunications Training Institute (22 sections), Shuaikh 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.

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 focussed 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 of KD 150, and accommodation is provided for Kuwaiti students living in distant places or socially disadvantaged.

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

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

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