

Educational problems and the commission

Times Report

The recent constitution of a National Education Commission by the government was an welcome news for most of those who are concerned with the education system of the country.

The Commission formally stated its functioning on May 9 by holding its first meeting at the National Institute of Educational Administration and Research (NIEAR).

Meanwhile, Education Minister Mr. Mahbubur Rahman has said that the commission would examine and evaluate the reports of the commissions and committees of the past, including that of the Kudrat-e-Khuda Commission and recommend how much of those be taken up for implementation under the present context.

It is to be noted here that it was on the basis of the Kudrat-e-Khuda Commission report that a National Curriculum and Syllabus Committee was formed in the mid seventies, and on the basis of its recommendations new text books were introduced from primary to the secondary level. The curricula were reshaped although certain changes were effected subsequently.

The Kudrat-e-Khuda Commission report, submitted in 1974, however, was never fully accepted. The reasons are better known to the educational planners and administrators. Of course no government ever has

any compulsion to accept the report of a commission constituted by it. The constitution of commissions, however, is still considered to be a reliable tool for the government to gather information of all sorts centring certain issue or issues.

The present commission headed by Dr. Maszuddin Ahmed has been constituted at a time when the education arena is passing through possibly the worst of crises. To cite a few of the pressing problems: 1. Sessions jam at the higher levels has gone to such an extent that students now find themselves over-aged when they get results of their Masters' degree examinations. 2. Unscheduled closure of the seats of higher learning, 3. Phenomenal increase in the demand for higher education and very limited expansion of facilities over the years, 4. continued increase in the number of educated unemployed. In the primary and the secondary levels 5. The average standard of education has gone beyond recognition, 6. The teacher-student relationship is possibly at its lowest ebb now, 7. Much-room growth of kindergartens and tutorial homes, and the practice of private tuition has spread like an epidemic even to the villages. 8. The gap between "standard" and other educational institutions has expanded to such an extent that many guardians now consider the ability to admit their wards to certain such preferred institutions to be a status symbol. 9. Alongside these developments achievement of universal free primary education still remains a far cry, and the primary school drop-out rate very high, 10 and despite many efforts of the past adult literacy drive is yet to take a good shape.

These are but a few of the problems. There remain the problem of physical facilities, and the production of quality text books. It is hoped that the commission would be able to evaluate all aspects of the problems facing the educational arena, and suggest measures both short term and long term to remove those for making the education system suited to the needs of an independent nation.