

## Thinking Allowed...

## THE SLUMBERING NATION

By HASINA SAJUN

Whatever the new Government does or does not, one thing it has certainly done. It has awakened the slumbering nation! The present Government too might be at a disadvantage because of this awakening, but then it must put up with it as the price of its victory.

The masses must have all they have been promised, so they are getting everything, and if you and I suffer in the process.. it is all in a good cause.

So the long awaited education policy has been making news. People running educational institutions and parents are in a dither. What now? How come they are taking active part! They are actually thinking of effects.

For all these years the parent did not raise his or her voice. Repeated requests to parents to take part in discussions and voicing their opinion were met with no response. When the Government announced a couple of years back to have six-day school week, not a single parent raised any objection, though the parents of children going to good responsible educational institutes knew that their child was receiving adequate attention in a five-day week, and the parents who thought their children's schools were no good should have known that quality of education cannot improve by the addition of one more day.

A staff who was not putting its best into teaching because of circumstances or lack of facilities or whatever goes into making a sub-standard educational institute, can hardly improve if the one day in the week which they could devote to their domestic, community and social duties too had to be sacrificed.

Every right thinking citizen would like to see universal education. Each one of us would like to see free education to the needy. But not an education

which provides one with a degree, not an enlightened mind.

Why should the quality of the student be blamed to his teacher. The quality of a person depends far more on his home environment. The parents like to shift the entire responsibility of the moulding of the personality of the student on to the teacher.

## PERSONAL EXAMPLE

The parents thus first shirk their responsibility. By example the parents first set the values. Codes of behaviour, morals, all of which are not conveyed by sermon to one's children and the young. They are communicated by personal example and behaviour.

If the parents give up time from their activities, to sincerely convey to their offsprings that they are interested in them, their ideas, their ideologies, their activities, if the parents do not say we love you, but prove this love, then we would not have the kind of incidents on our recreation sites, like the Hawkes Bay incident.

Nobody is absolving the teacher of his or her responsibility, but the fact remains the home environment has much to do with the moulding of the individual. Have the parents whose children are exposed to the mass of imported ideas ever been to the night clubs usually popular with the young smart set..? They would be shocked to see youngsters in their teens, in dark, smoke filled rooms dancing cheek to cheek, from head to foot. Sitting and smouching in darker corners in the company of other youngsters. The girls dressed in mini blouses exposing bare backs...

One wonders if the parents of such children knowingly allow their children to frequent these places or are not aware of how, when or where their children are spending Saturday nights

in the early hours of the morning..!

The students who take over, without adequate reason, educational institutions, students who drive around aimlessly in fast cars, with time to kill.. whistling at girls, passing remarks, at them without provocation, youngsters who hit and run, knowing full well their money can save them from tricky situations, who is to blame for them?

## MILITARY TRAINING

With more cooks, bearers and family, they must do something to pass time. Best favour you can do for them is one year's compulsory military training and a year's National Service Corps. That would certainly give them a sense of direction and participation. Basically the kids are all good, they are ready to work, to do something useful, but cannot create the opportunities.

All right! So you think mentioning this is useless, after all these are not our majority. Why talk of a small percentage of our people. So then why talk of the education policy, for it may adversely affect a small percentage too. After all the majority go to those educational institutions which are called private.. but which do not cater to the elite but in which more than fifty per cent are only money making institutions, without giving any education worth the name at the cost of the teacher and parent.

The education policy, like the others, will benefit our large majority. Students, and teachers alike. When one thinks of the inadequate checks, sub-standard education, lack of funds given in time to be of proper used tape recommendations for teaching posts to be given to wrong personnel recommendations coming from the inspectors and their category, one wonders to think how

the Government will handle all the institutions and their economic burdens.

In Karachi there are only 9 Government colleges as against 40 private colleges. (From which you take off the few you can count on your finger tips which are missionary or non-profit, or catering to the elite.) And if the Government run colleges still cannot pay their teachers salary in time, if there is a long drawn out procedure to take a single decision, that too involving only common sense, how will the Government manage?

Out of 700 people attending the Education Conference, two people made any attempts to give concrete memorandums. One gentleman from Lahore and Anita Gulamali. Therefore, I decided to ask Anita how she thought or knew the Government was going about nationalisation of schools.

Firstly, she said, the Government is ready to receive recommendations, suggestions and ideas on the education policy and is ready to modify policy, if necessary.

Secondly, she thinks, besides increasing the quota for education the Government will ensure the proper utilisation of the existing funds, which were not being properly utilised. The wastage, if checked, will provide a big sum. There are funds for books, laboratories, furniture, and funds pertaining to scholarships which have been lost due to bad management and default.

Of course, she sees and has pointed out the loopholes in the policy. She has warned the Government on issues that will arise in the implementation of policies. Of course she foresees a downward trend in education before it can rise again. But she believes firmly that nothing short of the steps taken by the Government at present would have lasting effects, and fulfil the promise to the nation.