Seminar: Ensure education to children in K-P says speakers

PESHAWAR:
Speakers at a seminar on Wednesday observed that free and compulsory education should be provided to children between five to 16 years of age, as laid out in the article 25-A of the Constitution.

Titled “Parliamentarians Forum for Right to Education”, the seminar urged the provincial government to take appropriate measures and enforce a law to enable an education to millions of out-of-school children in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (K-P).

Minister for Higher Education Qazi Assad, who was also the chief guest on the occasion, said that the total amount required for implementation the law requires double the current developmental expenditure. “We need to consider the viability of the law enforcement since the implementation would take another 20 years and would require Rs138 billion,” he added.

He cited that the total budget for education in the province over the last five years was Rs294 billion. All things considered, he added the goal is unrealistic. “After implementation of this law, anyone can sue us for not imparting education as a fundamental right,” he added.

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Minister for Higher Education Qazi Assad

Provincial Information Minister Mian Iftikhar Hussain appreciated the 18th Amendment, saying that the ratio of learning a foreign language through
mother tongue is higher than though other languages. “We need to promote education in mother tongue,” the minister said.

He said that 44 meetings have been held to implement the 18th Amendment and the federation was still not willing to give education to provinces. Secretary Schools and Elementary Education, Hamayun Khan said the provincial assembly should address the issue on priority basis.

Unfortunately, he added, in the Human Development Index provided by Mahboobul Haq Foundation, the literacy rate of the country was exceedingly low. “We have been placed next to Somalia and Rwanda with regards to literacy and we are far behind the Sri Lanka and even India.”

Peshawar University Vice Chancellor Muhammad Rasul Jan said that a lot needs to be done in the education sector since it was affected by floods, militancy and disasters.

Arshad Saeed Khan, from UNESCO, highlighted the gaps in the education sector. He assured support to the cause of education in line with the provincial government.

Peshawar University Teachers Association (PUTA) President Jamil Ahmed expressed dissatisfaction over the low attendance of provincial assembly, at a crucial debate over children’s future. “We should come out from the onus of figures of Rs138 billion and help millions of children out of basic right to education,” he said.

The seminar was organised by PUTA in collaboration with UNESCO. 

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