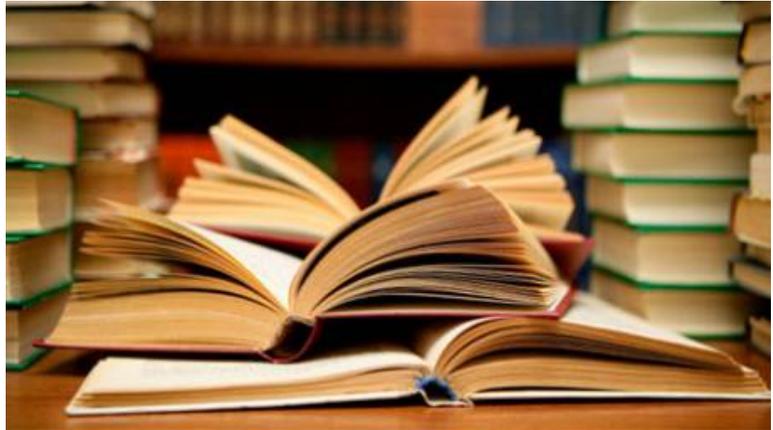


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‘All is set to launch PM’s literacy drive’

State minister for education says government accelerating its efforts to promote literacy and achieve MDGs

ISLAMABAD: State Minister for Education, Trainings and Standards in Higher Education Engineer Muhammad Balighur Rehman on Wednesday said the Prime Minister’s literacy drive would be launched soon in the country with a special focus on primary and adult education. Addressing at the launch of ‘Education For All Global Monitoring Report’ arranged by UNESCO at a local hotel, the minister said the present government had finalised the modalities to launch this drive and it would target enrolling and educating out-of-school children.



“Our country is lagging behind in the education sector and is not likely to achieve EFA goals, however, the present government is accelerating its efforts to promote literacy and achieve MDGs.” He said the government had prepared a national plan of action for education under which five million children would be enrolled in the next three years.

The minister said the government would gradually enhance spending on education from two per cent to four per cent.

He appreciated the efforts of UNESCO in preparing the ‘EFA Global Monitoring Report’ and said it would help the policy makers devise their plans accordingly.

On the occasion, Afghanistan’s Minister of Education Farooq Wardak said that increased investment in the education sector was a prerequisite and this report warned that “we have no time to wait and must place education on our top priority list”.

He said the people of Afghanistan had suffered the tyranny of violence, but still they were hopeful and ready to struggle to make themselves a strong nation.

UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education Director Gwang Jo Kim emphasised to motivate the teachers through giving them proper training and incentives so that they could stay in their profession.

He said that UNESCO was committed to working hard for ending the regional learning crisis. The EFA Global Monitoring Report revealed that a global learning crisis was costing governments \$129 billion a year.

Ten per cent of the global spending on primary education is reportedly being lost on poor quality education that is failing to ensure that children learn.

“This situation leaves one in four young people in the poor countries unable to read a single sentence, affecting one third of young women in South and West Asia.” This year’s report ‘Teaching and learning: Achieving quality for all’ warns that without attracting and adequately training enough teachers, the learning crisis will last for several generations and hit the disadvantaged the hardest. In South and West Asia, about 33 in 100 children of primary school age are learning the basics in reading.

On current trends, the report projects that it will take until 2072 for all the poorest young women in the developing countries to be literate, however, with the right policies in place, fast progress is possible. In Nepal, the literacy rate of the poorest young women tripled from 18 per cent in 2001 to 54 per cent in 2011.

To improve the quality of education, between 2011 and 2015, South and West Asia needs to recruit an additional 1 million teachers per year to reach a ratio of 32 pupils per teacher in the lower secondary education, the report said.

The report calculates that the cost of 250 million children around the world not learning the basics translates into a loss of an estimated \$129 billion.

In total, 37 countries are losing at least half the amount they spend on primary education because children are not learning.

By contrast, the report shows that ensuring an equal education for all can generate huge economic rewards, increasing a country’s gross domestic product per capita by 23 per cent over 40 years. If Pakistan were to halve inequality in access to education to the level of Vietnam, it would increase its economic growth by 1.7 percentage points, for example.

The report also highlights the need to address gender-based violence in schools, a major barrier to quality and equality in education.

Source: <http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/islamabad/30-Jan-2014/all-is-set-to-launch-pm-s-literacy-drive>