

EDucate!

A Quarterly on **E**ducation & **D**evelopment



EDUCATING
for

societal learning, critical consciousness, collectiveness,
wisdom, intellectualism, free thinking, hope, challenge,
liberation...

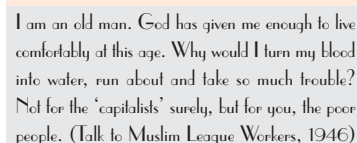
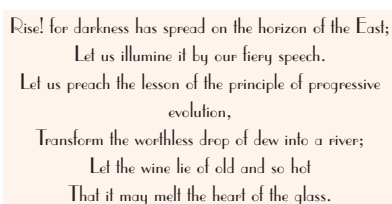
SOCIAL CHANGE

morality, transformation, humanization, righteousness,
courage, social equality, classlessness,
social justice...



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Contents of this magazine do not necessarily reflect the SEF policies.



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inside

Why EDucate

"Almost each day brings ever-grosser manifestations of abuse, exploitation, greed, violence, corruption, deprivation, conflict, exclusion, injustice, intolerance, an obsession with materialistic self-gratification counter-pointed by the indifference to the welfare of others, disregard for anything beyond the immediately present and an overall cheapening of human life...there is now a crisis in the moral fabric of society, a crisis of values".

(World Summit for Social Development, 1995)

Perhaps one can identify a host of reasons that have led to the gradual but steady tear in our country's moral fabric, ranging from self-serving to subservient behavior and loyalty to values and ideologies contradictory to our own. However, moving beyond the rhetoric of 'corruption and greed', one is compelled to examine whether there is an underlying factor, which might be at the core of this pathology. What causes disparity, decadence and an acute level of apathy? And more importantly, what can be done to create some element of hope?

Perchance there might be a means to an end by creating in people the capacity to comprehend and apply, but this can only be achieved through an educational process - a process that will allow detaching, deconstructing and delineating symptoms from the actual problems. Likewise, the souring issues indicated in the World Summit statement are often confused as the problems and suffer from symptomatic treatment hence failing to be eradicated from society.

Although we believe in the importance of education, our commitment to it continues to remain mere lip service because education has consistently failed to be a priority for all Pakistani statesmen and stateswomen alike and universal Primary Education has remained an elusive goal. Each successive stage of education is not only under-subscribed, operating at sub optimal levels, but also an illustration of gross wastage and inefficiencies where statistics have become clichéd manifestations of a deeper malaise of a construction and design gone wrong. However, one can learn from the results, or more appropriately, the lack of results of the past five decades, providing a foundation for the redesign of education.

However, having stated the above, these pressing concerns, questions and ideas must be challenged outside the current status quo, no task for the fainthearted. Despite the pervasiveness of our educational epidemic, one must attempt to engage in a process of transformation not reformation. The latter implies a mere improvement upon a faulty and weak foundation, whereas the former requires the construction of an entirely new system. What is required is no mere cosmetic solution rather a thorough analysis of the problem's core can only lead to the answer. While positive measures are being taken in the field of educational development, especially at the grass-root level, the majority of us, while aware that 'something is wrong with the system', fail to allow this awareness to transcend to a more diagnostic or critical level. We repeatedly fail to understand that education and development are not two separate issues but linked and co-dependent processes. We have instead adopted a reductionist approach by resorting to shortsighted, quick-fix solutions that end in futility. Whether by accident or pure luck, we belong to the privileged classes. While we are familiar with the general socioeconomic conditions of our country, we lack any real sense of consciousness of the magnitude and ramifications of this malaise. How else could there be 'an overall cheapening of human life', both in qualitative and quantitative terms?

Therefore EDucate! strives to pose a collective challenge to the status quo by engaging in intellectual discourse aimed at concerned individuals. It is geared towards raising a significant level of cognizance by delving into issues which adversely affect and detrimentally influence the ordinary lives of the 'unprivileged'. This educative process can create space for logical thinking and analytical reasoning,

paving the way for consciousness-raising measures. We have a collective obligation to discard our mental lethargy and complacency, and share the resources of our intellect. Since time has become the most valuable commodity, and given our daily concerns and frustrations, very few of us want to think of world hunger, national debt or other weighty issues. We do not think of these issues because they do not affect our lives directly. However, education and development on a broader scale do, although we might not realize it.

This magazine is a humble attempt to become part of various valiant efforts that have, and continue to, contribute to the struggle for redefining and humanizing a new educative process. By starting small and providing the groundwork for others to build on, we can restructure and then strengthen the process. In order to do justice to our effort, the first and foremost thing is to question the existing dehumanizing system of educational development.

In order to understand and change reality it is necessary to see the world from the perspective of those who experience it. This magazine is not aimed at the oppressed masses, since they have a clear idea of the injustices they have to face on a daily basis. Instead, you will find it deliberately taking sides, because human suffering cannot be treated in an objective, detached or neutral manner—particularly given the existing atmosphere of indifference. The daunting challenge of the existing social injustice, should not, in any way, deter us from becoming a part of the struggle against it. As humans and as part of the ailing system, we must contribute our bit, within our capacity towards the realization of this sacred goal. To encapsulate my thoughts, I would like to quote Margaret Mead *"Never doubt that a thoughtful group of citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."*



Sadia Nasir
Editor

Sindh Education Foundation

"To empower disadvantaged communities towards social change by creating and facilitating new approaches to learning and education".

The Sindh Education Foundation was established in 1992 to function as a semi-autonomous government organization. The SEF work towards the improvement of educational facilities in under-privileged and inaccessible areas of Sindh. The SEF works in strong collaboration with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), leading educational institutes and the Department of Education, Sindh to enunciate various educational schemes at the grass-root level. Since its inception, the Foundation has grown under the visionary leadership of Professor Anita Ghulam Ali, a distinguished educationist and currently the Provincial Minister for Education.

Our focal aim is to create firm public-private partnerships by mobilizing and involving communities at the grass-root level. The Foundation also provides financial and technical support to various organizations for the promotion of formal & non-formal educational services.

Foundation's Key Objectives



To evolve programs for raising the standard of education and improvement of literacy.



To conduct research or survey or hold workshops, conferences, symposium to study educational system, to identify the shortfalls and weaknesses of the system and to make suggestions or measures for its improvement.



To conduct workshops or short courses for training of teachers and other related staff to improve their working.



To provide financial help under soft terms and conditions.

Sindh Education Foundation has initiated several grass-root level educational schemes to encourage strong community participation and mobilization. In addition, SEF also conducts field-based research to identify weaknesses and undertake measures for continuous improvement of the education sector. Such research activities inculcate high level of quality and reflection in SEF's programmes. SEF holds a dynamic educational portfolio - its projects and programmes have been tested by various agencies and donors and are acknowledged regionally. These projects range from revitalization of government primary schools, adult literacy (women), reduction in hazardous child labor to strong level of parental involvement in the educational process.

Our Projects

Adopt-a-School Program

In 1997, Professor Anita Ghulam Ali conceptualized a revolutionary plan to revive the ailing government primary schools in the Province. She, as Managing Director SEF, initiated the Adopt-a-School Program that brought together key stakeholders (Department of Education, Parents, Teachers and Children) to work in close collaboration with the "adopters". Currently there are 120 schools adopted across Sindh. Keeping in consideration the success of the effort the program is being replicated countrywide.

The project successfully brings together the Department of Education, Sindh Education Foundation and the Adopters to revitalize government schools through coordination and mobilization of parents and the community. Adopters comprises of NGOs/CBOs, concerned individuals, international charity organizations and retired educationists as well as armed forces of Pakistan.

Community Supported Schools Program

This program is serving the most disadvantaged communities of Sindh i.e., District Malir, Sehwan, Larkana and certain part of Manchar Lake. Through this venture, SEF has established 100 schools. These schools are providing literacy opportunity to approximately 5000 children. The tuition fee range from Pakistani Rs. 5 to 15. Most schools consist of one teacher and have a room either constructed or arranged by the community. Recruitment of local teachers is not only having a positive affect on monthly household income but also results in high attendance rates of teachers as well as students.

Fellowship Schools Program

The FSS program is an innovative educational scheme that enables and empowers communities to manage and administer their own schools. Approximately 15,000 children are enrolled in these schools. The program was initiated in 1997 with SEF, in collaboration with two partner NGOs, established 20 schools. Department for International Development, British Council provided financial and technical support in successful implementation of these schools. Successful

implementation became the basis for establishment of 100 additional Fellowship schools in 1998. These schools have also succeeded in creating educational as well as job opportunities for approximately 500 females.

Women's Literacy and Empowerment Project

The Sindh Education Foundation has undertaken a project to study the issue of women literacy and empowerment with the objective of establishing Women Learning & Empowerment Centers in various remote areas of Sindh. These Centers will enable the women of remote areas to actively participate in socio-economic and socio-political activities.

Child Labor Education Program

In August 1999, SEF initiated a program to support working children in obtaining access to functional literacy. To meet the objectives of this project, SEF has established a Child Development Center (CDC) at Shershah, Karachi. CDC works as a catalyst to create enhanced awareness regarding child labor and relevant issues at all levels. The Center also offers several educational and recreational opportunities for children.

PTA Applied Research Study

Parents, regardless of ethnic group, socioeconomic status or educational background, are a key resource in their children's education. With this understanding, SEF launched an applied research project to study the progress of the Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) in 2 districts of Sindh. SEF hopes that the education policymakers will respond to the findings of this research study by redefining parental involvement in government schools.

Database of 1000 NGOs & CBOs

The Database Study on 1,000 NGOs (Non-governmental organizations) and CBOs (Community-based organizations) in 5 districts of Sindh was launched in December 1997. The main objective was to establish strong linkages between SEF and non-governmental organizations in the major districts of Sindh. Under this project a computerized database has been developed, which offers information services to various stakeholders regarding the status and operations of NGOs and CBOs.

About the Data Processing Research & Cell

"The 'untested feasible' is an untested thing, an unprecedented thing, something not yet clearly known and experienced, but dreamed of."

Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of Hope, 1994

The Challenge...

Across the world today, the distress signals are apparent: rapid increase in unemployment, poverty, malnutrition and crime, especially in the last fifty years. Yet, ironically, in the same time-span, the financial capital and technology in educational development has increased manifold as has the number of educational facilities and schools. Clearly, the utopia that these institutions promised is very far from being realized. Instead, they demand a serious questioning of the existing paradigm of educational development and its applicability to complex sociocultural situations. In order to fulfill this demand, we need to realize that the issue of educational development cannot be dealt with in isolation. We must first understand the critical links between education and development and analyze how one reinforces the other. This can only be achieved by creating multiple learning spaces for serious intellectual discourse.



"To create critical and intellectual spaces for reflection and action in order to conceive and implement transformatory ideas and innovative concepts of Educational Development".

The Opportunity...

The emergence of powerful new information and communication technologies, such as those based on the use of computers and multimedia, dramatically expand options for the developing world to leapfrogging in the areas of education and development at the individual, community, and societal level. Opportunities are also emerging for us to make better use of technologies that have been previously been underutilized in supporting communal learning and development processes. Today, new possibilities in information processing and communication networks are making the idea of a socially and economically just world increasingly viable. Alternate means to economic and social growth can only be translated into a reality if we, as a nation, are intellectually equipped to channel the resources for the betterment of the masses, if not, the technological revolution will become yet another tool of the elite of the society to control our lives...

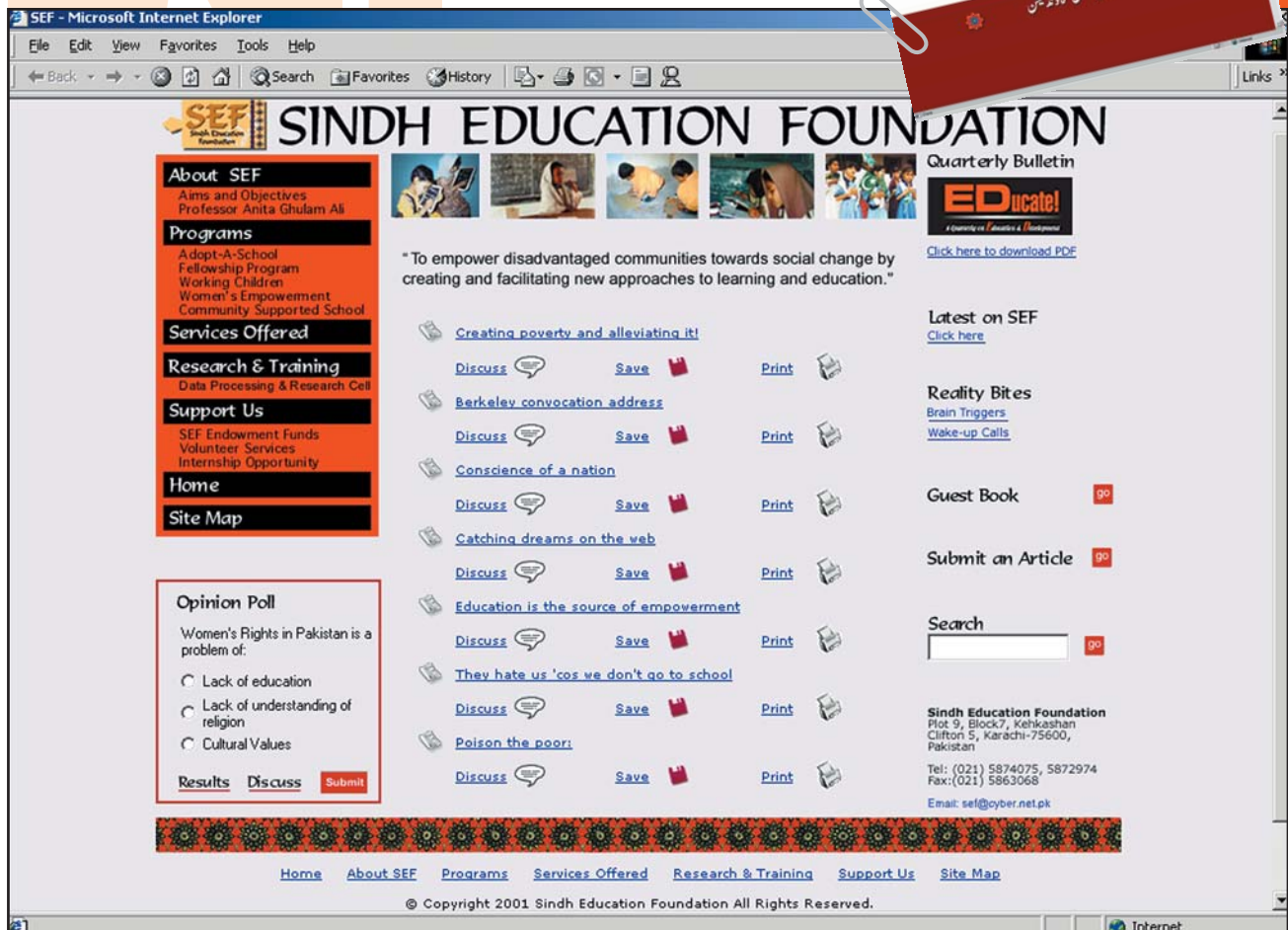
1 The Educational Research component of the DPRC is designed to inspire and communicate systematic research and thinking in social education and community participation. Its purpose is to foster the creation and exchange of ideas and research findings that will expand knowledge and understanding of the purposes, conditions and effects of community schooling and education about society, social relations and realities. Under this component, the DPRC will undertake qualitative and quantitative studies and consolidate the learnings for a large-scale reflection and expansion of successful educational innovations.

2 The Publication component of the DPRC will prepare and disseminate radical periodicals to stimulate a meaningful and constructive intellectual discourse amongst the masses. Through various publications, the DPRC hopes to create an environment of critical consciousness and liberatory education in which masses will be intellectually mobilized to engage in a collective movement for social transformation. Most publications are geared towards the student body of the country to help them realize the significance and strength of a critical pedagogy and radical education.

3 The Learning Web is a computerized data repository created to intellectually channel the information and knowledge available on the Information Superhighway i.e. The Internet. The SEF's official website is an integral component of the Learning Web. The Learning Web is a systematic effort to form strong linkages for local and global sharing and learning.

SEF's Website

www.sef.org.pk



The World Wide Web is becoming an extremely viable vehicle to reach people across geographical and intellectual boundaries. Information Technology certainly has the potential to be effectively utilized in the development sector for opening up opportunities for those who never had access to such information and means.

The Sindh Education Foundation's website is one such addition to the effort of engaging in a global intellectual discourse by rethinking and revisiting education and development practices and being a part of a collective innovative process.

The site is highly interactive and allows the visitors to voice their opinions and get engaged in constructive discussions with people all around the world on issues critical to the development and sustainability of our society.

Salient Features of the Website:

The SEF website, with its interactive components, promises to be a great resource of intellectually stirring information. The discussion forum aims to involve visitors in a serious intellectual discourse on carefully selected articles that stimulate critical thinking. The opinion poll is geared towards assimilating views on various national and global socio-development issues.

Objectives of the Website:

- ☑ To create awareness in the masses; this would include understanding of various educational and developmental schemes initiated by the SEF.
- ☑ To provide an opportunity for effective, timely and direct flow of information amongst those working in the dynamic and vast areas of education and development.
- ☑ To assist various organizations which represent the poor to communicate with government agencies and donors.

U R

On...



"I also **believe** that **Globalization** is another form of **Colonialism**, yet there are possibilities for countries like us. Also, one must understand the **circumstances** in which colonialism occurred. It is with all this in view that you can protect yourself against further **Exploitation**. One should be fair, balanced and most importantly **self-critical**. Only by constantly subjecting ourselves to self-criticism, will we be able to gain self-confidence that, in my opinion, is integral for a sustained **Social Change**."

SN: What do you think about the policies and actions of the present government in regards with educational development?

AGA: The present government has changed the general attitude towards the development of education standards and programs with reference to the province of Sindh. For example, if you look at the Annual Development Program budget allocation for education, it is a shade better than last year's and this must be considered in view of the financial crunch we are currently undergoing. The government is aware of the needs of educational development given the resources at its disposal.

SN: Since you were a student what are some of the major declines in the education system you have noticed?

The first thing is that unfair means in examinations have generally increased by leaps and bounds. Previously if there was a person who was cheating, he/she was singled out, nowadays students who do not cheat are the odd ones out. This has led to a serious breakdown of norms in education generally and an insensitivity to perform. Also, it has resulted in the demoralization of students who work hard and expect reward for their hard work.

SN: Do you think that the administration should be blamed, instead of just student's behavior patterns?

Yes, there is no doubt that there has been a slow but persistent decline in teachers' ethics as well, in a broader sense that is. To me whoever is involved and related to the education field, should be considered as a teacher. You do not have to be a professional educator to be a teacher or a senior administrator, to be a role model for the youth. In my opinion the ever-declining moral and ethical values amongst teachers have played a central role in this demise.

SN: We all hear of the weaknesses of the system, are there any strengths as well?

Certainly. For example, there is an enabling environment, which inspires us to continue to work with dedication. There is also an understanding towards working for common goals between various departments such as education; social welfare and most importantly, across the board there is a growing understanding now that we must work closely with the community to achieve, not only what is sustainable but also to create leadership and ownership by the community and for the community.



SN: Do you think that is really happening?

Yes. This morning there was a seminar about introducing the concept of health consciousness, in the same way as the anti-drug campaign and anti-smoking campaign. The environment awareness campaign has been very successful. All this is being done through education and is of concern to the government, which in turn is making various departments cooperate and assist each other in implementing these programs forcefully.

SN: There is a general stereotype or perhaps an idea, that the Department of Education is sidelined in terms of policy and allocations?

Yes, this has been and continues to be a common perception. During my term in this office, I have not felt it to be that bad. Instead, I feel it depends on how interested and how far the department puts itself out to become 'achievers'. That will help change this perception. The Department must work as an action oriented team.

SN: To what extent do you think the demise of the current educational system is related to a lack of intellectual thought process and discourse?

To a great extent, certainly. I remember that student debates in colleges and universities, compared to the time I was a student, took place on more delicate and sensitive issues. Student leadership and serious young intellectuals are in disarray, I find this very disturbing indeed.

SN: Why do you think it is missing, is it because of a general lack of indifference?

Yes definitely...students need to know that some one is listening to their concerns and they need to be prompted and encouraged to engage in such discussions.

SN: Under the paradigm of educational development, we see an overwhelming emphasis on implementation and practice and serious denouncement of intellectual discourse. What do you think could be the repercussions of such disparities?

Both practice and intellectual discourse need to go together. Basically, I think there is either more talk than action or just action and no talk, in both the public and private sector. I believe that there has to be a sort of understanding amongst the intellectuals and practitioners that we all have to work together towards a common goal, only criticizing will not help. We have to develop a culture of critique, which will allow the intellectuals and implementers to agree to find a common ground for understanding and collective efforts.

SN: You passed a very intriguing statement at a recent seminar, that even though teachers and educationists read the papers, they prefer the gossip columns rather than page 2, which is education related? Do you think this is because of severe intellectual inabilities that have settled in or have we collectively become indifferent?

I think that people do not want to face the truth and avoid uncomfortable situations, in both the public and private sector. The only thing they are really interested in is the promotion of their own needs and desires. Until we can get together to complement individual needs with collective demands, quality and dedication will elude people and the system.

SN: Do you think this is because we have become disillusioned and apathetic in general?

Yes, people who are easily daunted, because they have continuously suffered from

frustration, but then again what difference is there between the thinking of an educated person and anybody else's? So, you expect people to always be up and fighting, facilitating and trying to do what they can and not letting depression or disillusionments get the better of them.

SN: What do you think should be the definition of a free thinker and an intellectual?

Nobody should consider themselves an expert in any particular field. In education, I do not think a free thinker should restrict the expression within certain ideologies. The other important thing is that if there is something on which you are committed and on which you have certain strong opinions, one should articulate them at the time the debate or argument is raging, instead of expressing it years later. One needs to speak at the opportune moment.

SN: Now we are launching Educate! a quarterly magazine, radical in content and intellectual in approach. Do you think that the print media is strong enough to convey our message in the midst of an overwhelming onslaught of media and technology?

That is a real tough question to answer but I still believe that the written word is what really sustains one's intellectual appetite. Television is changing opinions and cultural values although they might impinge on people who do not have strength of character or who have not had the education in which moral, ethical and cultural values mean something. There is reason to believe that audiovisuals have effectively changed thought processes.

SN: Do you feel we have enough of such endeavors in terms of print material?

No, I think there needs to be much more. There has been a decline over the years.

SN: The magazine is clearly launching an intellectual challenge to unveil the myths of global efforts for education and development in the developing countries. What kind of response do you think will be generated by such an effort?

The response will be positive if people write sensibly and are knowledgeable. My advice is don't just be rhetorical; ask questions and provide solutions as well. If you do not have the solutions then, there is a need to discuss these things with people and Educate will hopefully provide that forum.

SN: There will be a section in the magazine titled "The Real Story of Development". This section will be an effort to reveal the historical atrocities based on empirical evidence. It will also critically review the existing colonial and imperialistic basis of current education and development practices. What is your opinion regarding such an effort?

I fully share your views on this. I also believe that globalization is another form of colonialism, yet there are possibilities for countries like us. Also, one must understand the circumstances in which colonialism occurred. It is with all this in view that you can protect yourself against further exploitation. One should be fair, balanced and most importantly self-critical. Only by constantly subjecting ourselves to self-criticism, will we be able to gain self-confidence that, in my opinion, is integral for a sustained social change.

SN: However being the Minister of Education, how do you think these issues will go down?

It should go down well. There is such a thing as self-pride and I think that many institutions are doing good work and we should be proud of

them. I believe that people are starved for stimulating information to the extent of 'perverse' and provocative opinions, so go ahead.

SN: We as younger people belonging to SEF, marvel at your dedication and energy and wonder what keeps you going given the obstacles you are faced with.

I never thought of that! I have so much faith in every person's potential to do something meaningful. Secondly, I am not disillusioned by failure; if you think something has failed, put it aside and go for it again. One needs to admit things and see them as they are. Perhaps the most basic and important thing is that one must enjoy his/her work, take pleasure in achievements big or small and face problems head on.

SN: What are your expectations associated with this magazine?

I am praying that this will bring about a change in the thinking of our (especially younger) intellectuals who are or should be preparing themselves for public service. I am very enthusiastic and hope that this magazine will create necessary awareness regarding various global issues, which are integral for greater social consciousness, responsibility and most importantly social responsibility. I hope that through this magazine there is going to be a revival of formal and informal debates amongst various groups belonging to different ages. You know, I believe that meaningful and constructive public debates are very important for greater political sense. Also, my greatest hope is that the economically, politically and socially privileged will be driven to a greater sense of responsibility and will come forward and help the disadvantaged of the country.

SN: Lastly, we would like to thank you for your time and we would like to close this interview with your final message to the readers of this magazine.

My final word is 'millenniums pass, it is the moments that linger'. If you relate this to what I said earlier, you will realize why I am so conscious of the nature of Time.

Prof. Anita, it has been a pleasure and a great learning experience. Thank you so much...Sadia

Rethinking Development

Helena Norberg-Hodge has examined and critiqued conventional notions of development. A linguist by training, and a native of Sweden, she was educated in Europe and the United States. She first went to Ladakh in northwestern India in 1975. Three years later she founded the Ladakh Project, with the goal of providing Ladakhis with the means to make more informed choices about their own future. Her work has received wide support and recognition. She is Director of the International Society for Ecology and Culture in Berkeley, California. She is the author of *Ancient Futures: Learning from Ladakh*.



HELENA NORBERG-HODGE

You write, "Ladakh, or 'Little Tibet,' is a wildly beautiful desert land high up in the western Himalayas. It is a place of few resources and an extreme climate. Yet, for more than a thousand years, it has been home to a thriving culture. Traditions of frugality and cooperation, coupled with an intimate and location-specific knowledge of the environment, enabled the Ladakhis not only to survive, but to prosper. Everyone had enough to eat. Families and communities were strong. The status of women was high. Then came development." It sounds so evil. What's the problem?

The problem is that development has to be understood as a broad, systemic process whereby it is believed that we raise the standard of living and improve life on earth. In the West we have a view of development as being progress. Subconsciously it means that we're removing ourselves from nature.

There's a linear path taking us to outer space. I've seen that development, as it is introduced into a nature based, ancient culture like this Tibetan culture, which is what Ladakh is, does literally tear people apart from their own ecosystem and their own resources. It lifts them up into an urban lifestyle far removed from their own resources. It could be a nice idea, if it worked. Perhaps people would prefer to live in an urban setting, completely removed from the natural world. But the fact is that it doesn't work. This model of development was rooted in the West. It's profoundly eurocentric. If we look at our historical development, when we started on this experiment of removing ourselves from our connection with the natural world, perpetually urbanizing ourselves, our populations exploded as a consequence. But we had the whole world

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to conquer. We sent our peoples out across the world, from Australia to South America as the populations exploded. At the same time we set in motion an economic system in

which resources were coming our way and in which we were either forcing or educating people around the world to grow cash crops for us. This whole model is what is being exported in the name of development to the so-called Third World. They don't have any colonies, anywhere to spread themselves to when their populations explode. The whole process is directly responsible for

both the exploding population as well as the perpetual urbanization, lifting people away from the land into ever larger urban centers. So that Mexico City, Jakarta, Calcutta are a direct consequence of policies of planned change. I think we'd better hurry up and change those plans if we want to survive.

Do you see urbanization and development ipso facto negative?

I don't see them in theory as negative. What I see is that the actual fact, what is actually happening, is absolutely destructive. It tears down communities and natural systems and robs people of self-esteem. I've seen the psychological as well as the social and environmental costs of this type of urbanization and development. I know that it cannot be sustained, neither can the biological systems. We need to understand that the process is

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INTERVIEWED
by
David Barsamian
Boulder, Colorado,
November 30, 1992

reducing biological diversity as we speak. Inherent in this process is a destruction of biological diversity. Species are literally disappearing as we speak. We cannot live without that biodiversity. It's not so much a question of preference as of survival.

You focus extensively on Ladakh and your many years in residence there as a kind of paradigm. I'm wondering if it's not kind of artificial. Here's a very small, isolated land high up in the Himalayas, never colonized, a small population, 100,000 people, mostly Buddhist, fairly homogeneous. How can you extrapolate from that onto the rest of the world?

In my book and in my lectures I talk about Ladakh, and yet it really is about development. This development process is monocultural. It's inherently eurocentric. It is everywhere the same. What Ladakh provides is a baseline, something other, with which to compare the product of development. So in fact, what I'm writing about is the

A majority of Buddhists were living side by side with a minority of Muslims for five hundred years without ever engaging in any group conflict. Fifteen years after development arrived, they were literally ready to murder one another and engage in bloody conflict.

process of development which I have observed over eighteen years. I've seen the impact of development on male and female roles, on society and on human beings and also on natural systems. What Ladakh provides, because it's so remote and because it wasn't affected by colonialism, is a baseline, something that has not been affected by the process of development. It is very important that we realize that we have to go back to pre-colonialism to understand development. Colonialism is part and parcel of a process which then was later on called development. What it has been doing is pumping resources to the West, away from the so-called Third World.

There is a lot of discussion about human nature and what it is. You say that development is the root cause of environmental and social evils, not human nature. Who's ascribing the root cause of these problems to human nature?

I think that the vast majority of people today are doing that. It's coming from many different directions, even from many religions, even Buddhism, to some extent, although Christianity is more guilty of having perpetuated this sense of original sin. But even in Buddhism greed and ignorance are seen as part of the human condition.

The whole world is being made to feel inferior if they don't speak perfect English.

The majority of people on earth today tend, consciously or

unconsciously, to blame innate human greed and even innate human aggression as they see violence around them and the growing consumerism. What I've seen in Ladakh has shown me very clearly that we cannot generalize in that way. I suppose I can't either generalize and claim that everybody was like the Ladakhis, but I do know that some people on this earth were not guilty of the same sort of greed and aggression that we find everywhere in the world where development has come. What I saw and lived for many years in Ladakh were the people. It was a fact that you had a majority of Buddhists living side by side with a minority of Muslims for five hundred years without ever engaging in any group conflict. Fifteen years after development arrived, they were literally ready to murder one another and engage in bloody conflict. I observed, year by year, the changes that led to that. There is absolutely no doubt in my mind that this broad process, which we must understand very broadly to see what's happening, and narrowly focused experts simply cannot make the sort of connections that I'm doing. I

see the same thing in Bhutan, which is another little Himalayan kingdom where Hindus and Buddhists have lived peacefully for centuries. Again, after only a few decades of development, they're engaged in bloody conflict.

And you attribute that directly to development and consumerism?

Absolutely. But we should probably look more closely at what we, or I, mean by development. We have to realize that it's a fundamental change in world view away from one in which human life is seen as part of the natural world, part of a web of relationships, towards a world view which assumes that human life is separate from the natural world and also in a position to control and manipulate it to suit our own ends. On another level, it's a combination of science, technology and an economic paradigm which operate together to transform society. The assumption is that it's improving our quality of life and so-called "raising the standard of living."

That's the given.

Yes. And when one looks, as I do, at a society like the Ladakhi one--and I should add that it isn't just in Ladakh. I've lived in many different European cultures. I've seen Austria, for instance, where I studied twenty five years ago in a little town called Innsbruck, which at that time was a very lovely town or city in balance with its

surrounding environment: human-scale architecture, the air was clean, the mountains around were beautiful. That town now has sprawling suburbs, concrete boxes spreading into the valley. It's completely covered by a cloud of pollution from the increasing traffic. The environmental and social problems there are dramatically greater than what they were twenty five years ago. In addition, at the same time, the local economy there, just as in Ladakh, has been destroyed by development. It's almost impossible to find locally produced goods of any kind. What you find instead is a sort of supermarket economy of goods from all over the world, mass produced. Because they have to come from very far away, you have everything with double and triple wrappings, which of course greatly increases the problem with waste and rubbish. I've seen this process at different levels in other cultures. I grew up in Sweden, which is the socialist variant of industrialization, and there, too, the problems are the same. And they're increasing very rapidly. Even the health care system is about to collapse in Sweden. The economy there, as everywhere else, is bankrupt. It is high time that we rethink, look at these unconscious assumptions that we're making about progress. It's a question of redefining progress.

How does the collapsing Swedish health care system connect with development?

Directly. I should add that when we call it development, we tend to be thinking about the Third World. We tend to be aware that it's a product of planned change. But what's very sad is that the same process is continuing in the North or the developed world, but there we call it progress. We treat it like some sort of evolutionary force

Trying to remove you into another culture that is completely alien to who you are, creates a deep sense of self rejection and loss of self-worth and self-esteem. It's just heartbreaking to watch it.

Agriculture everywhere in the world is in crisis. In some cases the yields are significantly higher. But in fact they're also starting to drop. More significantly, the process of growing food is depleting soil and poisoning the drinking water, in many cases even poisoning the food.

beyond our control, that has nothing to do with us. We're not aware of the fact that our taxpayers' money is going towards developing us, and that development of us means forever more capital, energy intensive technologies, forever more and more specialization in terms of our educational system. That is supposed to be helping us to understand the world around us. But specialization has grown so narrow and so fragmented that no one is aware of the overall impact of what we're doing. In health care we're talking about the combination of specialization and ever more centralizing capital and energy intensive technologies. We're creating more and more high tech,

centralized medical care. It's very complex. The centralization is both in terms of knowledge and power but also a physical centralization pulling people into ever larger urban centers. That means that the G.P. doctor who was in the small town or village is no longer there. More and more for your health care you have to go to a superspecialist in a large urban center, a very large hospital. The dehumanization and the loss of real knowledge of how the whole body operates, how the psyche, psychological influence cannot be separated from physical functions, all of that is lost.

Human beings come to be seen as a machine. The quality of health care is going down, while our ability to manipulate particular organs and perform magic, high tech surgery is increasing. In terms of overall health the quality of care is going down. All the time it becomes more and more expensive and more and more difficult to provide health care to the vast majority of people.

You're very critical of modern education. You write that "it not only ignores local resources, but worse still, makes Ladakhi children think of themselves and their culture as inferior. They are robbed of their self-esteem." How does modern education rob Ladakhi children of their self-esteem?

On many different levels. We need to keep in mind that this is true everywhere, and it is a good example of why I'm saying that it is appropriate and relevant around the world. Just recently I overheard a Ladakhi teacher saying to her Ladakhi students, "Our best poet is Wordsworth. Now let's read some Somerset Maugham." The same thing is happening in Bali, Africa, South America. The fact is that Wordsworth is not their poet. The distance

between this English poet and Ladakh or Bhutan or Bali buries their own history and heritage. It's become so shameful that it isn't even visible. It's making their heritage and their resources invisible. It also robs them of self-esteem. Everything that they represent--and this is particularly true of earth-based or indigenous culture--is seen as primitive and backward. It inevitably is within this spectrum that we have created of progress, meaning away from nature, away from spontaneity, away from the uniqueness of individuals, of a particular culture and place. All the time towards a type of monocultural standardization which is inherently eurocentric.

Interestingly enough, it isn't just education itself, that is the schooling. At the same time the media operate to produce the same impact. Your sense of identity is being formed by stereotyped, very distant media images. All around the world they are literally Barbie doll and Rambo for little children. That Barbie doll bears no resemblance to who I am as a Ladakhi. Barbie doll is not who anybody is. So these distanced models are destructive for everybody, even in the West. No one can live up to those models.

Once we understand how destructive the present economic paradigm has become and also the very narrow pursuits of an overly specialized science and the highly centralized large-scale technologies that they produce, once we understand these interactions better it's quite clear what we need to do.

Anorexia and bulimia and a whole range of very serious disorders are directly related to this. So this alienation, trying to remove you into another culture that is completely alien to who you are, creates a deep sense of self rejection and loss of self-worth and self-esteem. It's just heartbreaking to watch it.

In addition, the way that Western education robs people of self esteem is that this whole process is so alien that most students fail. When I say most, I mean ninety-eight percent fail. That means that overnight, when you introduce this Western schooling, you're turning whole cultures, whole peoples, into failures. The sense is that you are stupid, inadequate, backward. I have people in the villages in Ladakh now saying that they're like "asses," a Ladakhi expression that says you're really stupid, because they don't speak English. The whole world is being made to feel inferior if they don't speak perfect English.

Let's talk further about the globalization of the world economy. You're a peasant in Sumatra. You have a large family. You're living on your land. You grow rice and you're relatively self-sufficient. Along comes a trader, a merchant of sorts, and says, Look, if you grow coffee, I will quadruple your income and you'll be able to buy VCRs and get that tractor you want and a car for the kids and a lot of other great material acquisitions. Would you be attracted to that?

I think anyone would, and they would be stupid not to be. Again, the need to broaden out and see things from a social point of view, from a global point of view, what will be the end result if everyone behaves in this way. From the point of view of the individual it would be literally stupid to say, No, I'm not going to have any of this. But from the point of view of policy choices, what we choose both out of concern for our children, but even in terms of what we choose for ourselves a decade or two down the line,

that's a very different issue. There we will see that the present trends in industrial agriculture towards ever greater monoculture is going hand in hand with an increase in transport, so that the globalization of the economy now means that whereas, previously in Sumatra you would have had produce and agriculture producing everything you needed to survive so that all basic needs were being met, you find that industrial agriculture has shifted through all sorts of incentives, including an

investment in transport infrastructure, including an investment in very specialized scientific knowledge going hand in hand with the media, which then also comes in with advertising to advertise the new products that you should be buying. The end result is that agriculture everywhere in the world is in crisis. In some cases the yields are significantly higher. But in fact they're also starting to drop. More significantly, the process of growing food is depleting soil and poisoning the drinking water, in many cases even poisoning the food. So that an understanding of what's happening in agriculture and how it relates to transport and trade are among the top issues that need to be widely discussed today.

When you see that, if you're in America, apples or lamb or whatever from New Zealand or Chile outcompete local produce, you really have to stop to think for a minute: How is this possible? How can something that has traveled thousands and thousands of miles be able to compete with local produce? If we were paying the full price for that transport, the full price of fossil fuels, we would have very different agriculture and very different economic interactions. What we would find is that we would be trying everywhere, whether in Colorado or in Sumatra or in Ladakh, to produce as much as we could locally, while importing things that could not be produced locally.

So we would have some surplus in certain crops or products. That would make sense, to turn things around so that we produce what we could locally to reduce transport and trade for only those goods which cannot be produced locally. The problem is that as soon as you start talking about this many people think you're saying that

there should be no trade at all, which has never existed. Even in Ladakh there was trade. It was part of human life on earth since the beginning.

It's frightening to see how we're supporting the rich but we also have to remember that these development projects are actually creating the poverty and the wealth, widening the gap between rich and poor.

To think in terms of balance between trade and local production is going to be the only way of real economic recovery, the only way of preventing an increasing unemployment like we've never seen before. If we continue on the present path, the path at the moment of all governments, who are panicking because they almost without exception are bankrupt, and they see globalization as the solution. What they're doing is sacrificing their own labor force, natural systems, culture, community in this gigantic leap. It's as though there's some giant pie floating in the ocean that is suddenly going to solve everybody's problems. It cannot and it will not. This super-globalization can only happen the way it's conceived now with a super increase in transport, which is going to mean more pollution along with all sorts of other problems. So that is, as far as I'm concerned, the number one issue of the day.

Let's say you are the CEO of a major multinational corporation. Your job is clearly to maximize profits for your stockholders. What can I tell you that would persuade you to change your economic practices, which are so obviously destructive? It's not in your interest, and if you pursue those new practices, you're out of a job.

I could argue that even the CEO might act in a more enlightened way. But I would say that he's going to be the last one to listen to what I'm saying. However, governments should be listening. It is not in governments' interest, not of the state nor the vast majority of the citizens. There I hope that one would have an audience. Globalization is already at a level that means that governments are losing power. You cannot centralize economic power without centralizing political power. What we're doing now is very frightening. We're handing power over to multinational corporations that are absolutely beyond democratic control. They're invisible amoeba. They're forming, in effect, a new type of world government.

What impact do World Bank and IMF policies have on the South?

If you look at where the vast amount of money goes, it goes into this infrastructure. I hate to use such a long, ugly word describing a big and ugly reality at the moment. The present infrastructure is based on ever larger-scale energy installations, a massive world network, Western-style schools, Western-style hospitals and media and mass communications. Those are the basic elements of an infrastructure which these large agencies fund as a priority. What they do with that infrastructure is to

Something we haven't touched on enough with education was that we talked about how people's self-esteem is lost, but more important, perhaps, their self-reliance is also destroyed through education...during your entire schooling, you are robbed of the knowledge of how to survive with your own resources.

totally transform societies around the world in this Western, urban image. It all operates to lift people away from their own resources and from the land, whether they're local fishermen or nomads or farmers. Above all what we're talking about is the systematic destruction of the farmer. Remember that this is also being done while we're speaking. On the other hand, the same powers talk about the increase in population and the need for biotechnology to feed everybody. It's so frightening to me that so few people are talking about this and realizing what's going on. It's Orwellian, a terrible manipulation of what's actually happening. So systematically we destroy the small farmer and pull people into urban centers.

Something we haven't touched on enough with education was that we talked about how people's self-esteem is lost, but more important, perhaps, their self-reliance is also destroyed through education. So we put children in schools, whether in Ladakh or Sumatra, and give them a poor imitation of the same education that a child in New York gets. That means that first of all, during your entire schooling, you are robbed of the knowledge of how to survive with your own resources. You're not taught anything about how to grow barley in Ladakh at 12,000 feet, how to use yaks, how to make houses out of the mud that is available there. Not a word about any of the activities that you need to make yourselves self-reliant. Instead you're studying Wordsworth, mathematics and Western history. So when you finally graduate from that school you do not know how to survive in your own environment based on your own resources. You do know how to survive as a clerk or a specialist in an urban center, but those jobs are very few and far between. It's a prescription for unemployment, for larger and larger numbers. Also, interestingly enough, the more education you get, the further away it pulls you from your local resources and environment. So if you've just had some schooling, you might still stay on in your region. If you have more education, you've got to go to New Delhi. If you have even more education, it's off to the West. This is the brain drain, which again is a direct consequence of policy and planning.

Noam Chomsky describes these aid programs that are funneled through the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund and other agencies as a system in which the poor in the rich countries give money to the rich in the poor countries.

Exactly. And what we're doing is creating an elite in the poor countries which then supports the elite in our country. It's frightening to see how we're supporting the

rich but we also have to remember that these development projects are actually creating 'poverty' and 'wealth', and widening the gap between rich and poor. To really understand that process it's very instructive to go all the way back to the beginning, the baseline, the one that I found in Ladakh. So many of those changes started with colonialism.

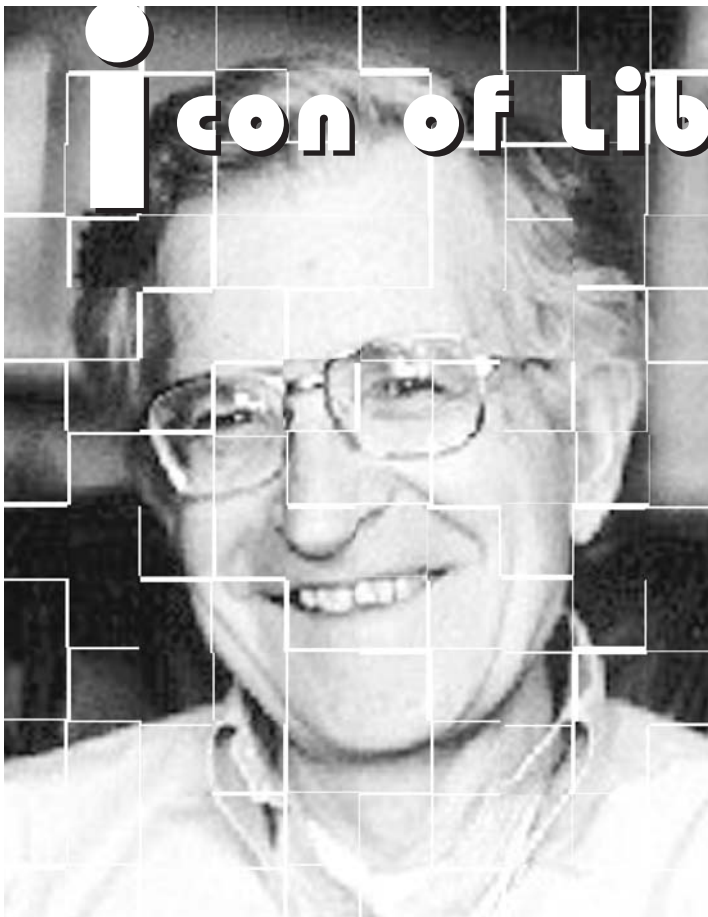
You've described a litany of problems plaguing Ladakh and the rest of the world. What can people do?

I think the number one thing we should do is to educate ourselves on these issues. We have an office in the U.S., and we're setting up study groups. If anyone wants to contact us, we will help to do that. "Study groups" is not the right word, they're more like communities of empowerment, people getting together in groups to look at these issues from the point of view not of themselves as individuals and, what can I do from today to tomorrow? but to look at these issues in a broader, more historical context. It is a different view on history, on progress, understanding progress in terms of our relationship to nature and to others. Once we understand how destructive the present economic paradigm has become and also the very narrow pursuits of an overly specialized science and the highly centralized large-scale technologies that they produce, once we understand these interactions better it's quite clear what we need to do. It includes things like the emerging links between producers and consumers that are starting to happen in many regions and communities in the world where, for instance, farmers' markets are being started. I know it sounds strange, but that's one of the most effective ways in which we can reverse the present trend towards a mass culture and a mass economy where people are so anonymous and also don't see the impact of their actions. We need to bring things home to a scale where we can see the impact of our actions. It's not some romantic idealism or unrealistic. In fact, another way to put what I'm saying is simply to lobby for fossil fuels costing the price that they should cost. That would immediately bring with it enormous benefits throughout the entire socioeconomic spectrum. But in order to understand that we have to do a bit of study first. At the moment, most people fear a rise in the price of fossil fuels because we as individuals are so dependent on them. I'm talking about policy changes that would be of benefit to all of us.

Note: Certain parts of this interview have not been included. Complete version is available



<http://www.zmag.org/zmag/articles/barhodge.htm>



Icon of Liberation...

Noam Chomsky

By: Mashhood Rizvi

Despair, poverty and human sufferings are increasingly becoming a part of the text of daily life. And yet underlying such pain and suffering are memories of conflict and resistance by individuals whose spirit remained bolstered by the imperatives of hope, justice and liberation. It is in this tension between a social reality plagued by oppression and the narratives of historical and contemporary struggles that the terrain of resistance is both produced and acted upon. This section is dedicated to those who have had the courage to take risks, to rise against injustice committed against anyone anywhere in the world and to fight for liberation of human values. This section also commends those who are struggling to embody similar values and qualities and who indeed create a sense of liberation for the oppressed of the world...

There have been some extraordinary times of deceit and falsehood in human history. Pharaoh Ramses blanketing the reality of absolute cruelty under the guise of his godliness, the forces of pathological greed, racist and fascist ideals emerging from 'the renaissance of the white continent' to plunder the world, are just a few examples of the deceit which have occurred in the name of advancing 'civilization'. The last fifty years have witnessed episodes of continued fraud and treachery and the ascendancy of bloodthirsty despotic forces, thinly veiled under the seductive slogans of development, modernization, globalization, democracy and peace.

The last fifty years have witnessed episodes of continued fraud and treachery and the ascendancy of bloodthirsty despotic forces, thinly veiled under the seductive slogans of development, modernization, globalization, democracy and peace.

In the current times, these forces are equipped with the sophisticated tools of global media and technological gimmickry. It is no longer a spectacle of injustice, which may spark a Moses to challenge and topple the brutal might of a heartless and soulless ruler. It takes a mind of almost divine inspiration to scythe through today's blatant lies and relentless propaganda. Fortunately, we have been blessed with one such 'greater man to restore us' in the person of Noam Chomsky.

Through his outstanding works, Chomsky has unraveled hidden portions of history and has consistently and courageously continued to speak the truth, especially to those in power. In this era of so-called democratization of values, globalization of cultures and economies, no one's writings have been more unsettling and disturbing than Noam Chomsky's. His incredible authority over almost all of the social sciences makes his writing indispensable. Such a breadth of knowledge makes it impossible to place him under any particular ideology or tradition; he seeks truth and spells it out without any fear of the consequences. Such courage is increasingly becoming a rare commodity; many have lapsed into despair (or their insights have become too painful). But Noam Chomsky refuses to give in. His quest for global justice continues in a relentless and uncompromising manner that is unparalleled in spirit and impact.

Chomsky was born on 7 December 1928. From the age of two, he spent ten years in Progressive Deweyite School

in Philadelphia, where there was a congenial emphasis on individual creativity and a strong stress on collective and shared learning. From there he moved on to a "regimented" and "stifling" high school, about which he claims to remember "virtually nothing". Thereafter, he attended the University of Pennsylvania where he met Zellig Harris, a leading linguist and political theorist, who had a profound influence on his life. He graduated in 1949, with an undergraduate thesis in Modern Hebrew that was later revised and extended as his Master's thesis. That same year he married Carol Schatz, a fellow student who has made a significant contribution to language and linguistics in her own right. He entered graduate school later the same year and in 1951 became a member of the Society of Fellows at Harvard, from where he moved to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in 1955. He has been there ever since, although a large part of each year is devoted to traveling around the world giving countless lectures and interviews.

Apart from his revolutionizing influence on linguistics, philosophy, and psychology, Chomsky has had a significant effect on a range of disciplines from anthropology to mathematics, education to literary criticism. His works in these areas have been systematically innovative and controversial - but then 'truth' and 'controversy' go hand-in-hand. Chomsky's intellectual struggle against imperial forces can easily be compared with the Palestinians' ongoing fight against brutal occupying forces. For the past four decades, he has been at war with the most powerful and dehumanizing colonial and imperial forces in the world. He has rejected almost all of the theories of human behavior that were clearly racist in nature and malicious in application. He, with supreme scientific analysis, challenged the nonscientific basis of such theories. He has revived the true spirit of human nature through his remarkable work on inherent human knowledge and capacity to live and function in a cooperative and collective manner. He has de-legitimized all legitimizing acts of brutality and oppression by providing irrefutable evidences of imperial atrocities.

Chomsky has accomplished all of this in a time when poverty and hunger are recognized as development; plundering of resources is seen as globalization; annihilation of cultural and moral values is perceived as modernization; oppression and subjugation come in the

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guise of liberty and democracy; and dehumanizing war crimes are accepted as peace efforts. He has taught us that such strategically manufactured acts of legitimization have stifled any meaningful challenges of these social evils. He believes that we live in a world that suffers from a strangulating control over people's minds and allows serious social illnesses to be accepted as societal norms. This, according to him, has been the biggest success of the imperial forces - the 're-colonization' of the world in the name of global justice, economic equality and universal peace. Chomsky argues that colonialism was exceedingly destructive, explicit in nature and overtly brutal in approach. However, Imperialism obliterates by exploiting or co-opting so that at the end of the day we (the oppressed) have only ourselves to blame for being weak, oppressed and mutilated.

It must be borne in mind that this article is neither a mindless homage nor a display of mere hero-worship. The task of paying homage to someone like Chomsky is daunting, and I am fully conscious of my severe intellectual limitations. Nevertheless, I am happy to admit that Chomsky is a hero of mine. It does not follow that I always agree with him, although if I did not agree with him on most issues, I almost certainly would not have written this piece. I believe that Chomsky has created a legacy that will be a source of empowerment to many who find themselves in the doldrums of disillusionment and despair. His work will act as an enlightening force for those who linger for a glimmer of hope. Most importantly, his lifelong struggle will keep the quest for global justice alive as long as global injustice prevails. I hope that this effort will compel the readers to explore the work and lifelong effort of Chomsky and to decide for themselves whether he actually is an advocate for truth.

The **Excluding** Processes of the ▶ School System ◀

Majid Rahnema

Excerpts from a lecture at Stanford University (16 April 1985), entitled: 'Education as Participation or Exclusion?'
The full text of the lecture was published in Spanish in El Gallo, Mexico, 25 August 1985.

The **school system**, introduced by **colonialism** in countries under their rule, was soon co-opted by the emerging nation-states. It became one of the most important **vehicles** of **development strategy**, being presented to the excluded as the answer to all the problems of their '**underdevelopment**', the redeeming genie which could henceforth save their children from **misery** and **shame...**

In reality, schools served other purposes. They acted as a rather efficient channel for sieving out, into the Power Establishment, their most ambitious customers. They sometimes did serve as a cultural medium for some exceptionally bright individuals who succeeded in taking advantage of the learning resources for liberating ends. Yet, as a whole, they fostered unprecedented processes of exclusion against the poor and the powerless, despite their claims to serve as a new instrument of democratization.

These excluding processes operated at a number of levels. In relation to the society at large, they destroyed all previously established systems of cultural reference. As the only recognized providers of education, they systematically discredited all previously established mechanisms that different cultures had created throughout their histories for fostering knowledge and culture. The old days described by Julius Nyerere, when 'every adult was a teacher', were over. Now, only those certified by the school system, according to its self-devised

criteria, had the right to teach; and only those whose abilities were recognized by the latter could be admitted to learn.

Education thus became a scarcity. And the same system which had created this scarcity was asked to deal with it. The management and the further production of this scarcity reinforced the new economic perception of reality, entailing a broad range of new exclusions. Literacy campaigns often turned out to be campaigns against the non-literate, rather than helping the oral populations to educate themselves and learn as they had always done.

For, on the one hand, the adoption of one or two official languages at the national level - either that of the former colonial ruler, or that of the larger dominant ethnic group - excluded all the vernacular and spoken languages that had hitherto served as the main instruments of learning. On the other hand, the absence or the scarcity of any useful printed material in such languages (these often being reduced to propaganda publications by the authorities) further marginalized the non-literate and the unschooled. On the whole, such campaigns ended up creating new classes of social drop-outs.

As to the imported 'modern' schools, they acted as yet another instrument of exclusion by allowing only a small minority of their clients to acquire social recognition. Besides their own army of drop-outs (2-10 per thousand students in the case of Guinea-Bissau), all adults, peasants, women, working people of all ages, and all other learners who, for some reason, could not afford to spend long periods of their life at school, were equally excluded.

Another aspect of the schools' excluding and divisive action has been extensively analyzed: the separation of students from their parents and their cultural milieu. The instilling in them, in homeopathic doses, of new alienating values, attitudes and goals, drives them gradually to reject or even despise their own cultural and personal identity. They acquire a false sense of superiority, which turns them away from manual work, from real life and from all unschooled people, whom they tend to perceive as ignorant and underdeveloped.

Thus, a 'cultural gap' develops fast between the newly schooled 'elites' and the rest of the population, a phenomenon that has been largely responsible for the well-publicized rural exodus. The most 'successful' students abandon their village folk and leave, often for good, first for the big cities, later for foreign lands, fostering the

process known as the 'brain drain'. As a result, the poor and the excluded pay the cost of an educational system that not only deprives them of any possibility of educating themselves but also severs them forever from some of the most potentially valuable elements of their community, from people who could have acted as their best teachers and friends in all matters concerning their liberation. As to the 'uprooted', they are set adrift, in many cases without ever being able to find new roots for themselves.

As such, the newly reformed 'national' school followed, in terms of its societal goals, the same as those assigned to the old colonial school. According to Albert Moumouni¹, then governor general of France in French Africa, had summed up these goals as follows:

"Political and economic interests have imposed a two-fold task on our work in education. On the one hand, we must train indigenous cadres to become our auxiliaries in every area and assure ourselves of a meticulously chosen elite. We must also educate the masses to bring them closer to us and transform their way of life. From the political standpoint we must make known our intention of bringing people to the French way of life; from the economic viewpoint we must train the producers and consumers of tomorrow."

This consistency of the producer/consumer approach to education, conceived as an instrumental commodity, is seen in all the 'educational strategies' inspired by the development discourse.

¹ Albert Moumouni, *Education in Africa*, trans. Phyllis Nauts, Praeger, New York; André Deutsch, London, 1968.

The schools fostered unprecedented processes of exclusion against the poor and the powerless, despite their claims to serve as a new instrument of democratization.

an illiterate's Declaration to the Literacy Preacher

**CHAPTER 1: THE
DAY DAWNS EVEN
IN THOSE PLACES
WHERE THE
ROOSTER DOES
NOT CROW**

By: Shri Dayal Chandra Soni


(First Published in 1996)

- 1.** Listen to me O' Preacher, Campaigner of Literacy and School Education! Listen to me O' Liberator, Benefactor of the downtrodden, poor illiterates and the uneducated.
- 2.** Since you have come to my village and my home as a guest, I welcome you and I very much appreciate your visiting me.
- 3.** I am grateful to you for the slogans you have shouted, the songs you have sung and the drums you have sounded to awaken me.
- 4.** I am also grateful to you for your having undertaken this journey on-foot, for your foregoing the comforts of the city to see me.
- 5.** I am again grateful to you for being so worried about me. I have given my full attention to all of your preachings.
- 6.** If I understand your basic mission, you believe that we are 'illiterate' and 'uneducated' -- a 'black spot' on the nation. And because of this, you are deeply ashamed of us.
- 7.** Up until today, you alone have spoken and I have been a silent and respectful listener of your sermons. But today, it is your turn to pay attention and listen to what I have to say.
- 8.** Please take note: I too write the alphabet but not on a slate or on a piece of paper as you do. I write my alphabet on the surface of the fertile soil of my fields -- my spade is my pen. The fruits of my alphabet quell your hunger. You gobble them up happily and without complaint.
- 9.** On the other hand, you hold a pen in place of a spade and dig your alphabet on paper. What is produced by this paper farming of yours is a mystery to me. Do you even know what grows there?
- 10.** You always maintain a clear and deliberate distance from the milk-yielding cows, she-buffaloes and she-goats, but at the same time you find it difficult to resist consuming dairy products such as milk, butter and curd.
- 11.** There is a marked difference between our life styles. While I am engaged in productive activities all day and night, you are engaged only in consuming what I produce. Yet I lead a more peaceful and content life, while you constantly complain and create trouble in society with your insatiable discontent.
- 12.** My activities and my interactions provide me with rich learning opportunities on a daily basis. On the other hand, you are unable to tread the path of education without direction and coercion from your classroom teachers.
- 13.** Whereas your education is restricted only to your books, my whole existence is a rich garden of learning.
- 14.** Your school is by no means a source of real learning. Your school is nothing but a trader in the commodity of education. The real source, or the mine for learning, is the WORK in which one is engaged and whose company I constantly live in.
- 15.** Since you are not aware of my educational achievements, let me tell you that I am a specialist in agriculture, I am an expert in dairy work and I am a scholar in my local dialect.
- 16.** My learning is apparent and authentic in itself. I do not worry about being awarded any certificates to prove this.
- 17.** Mother learning is not a captive in the prison of the schools. Nor is the basic knowledge of life contained in and restricted to the jumble of the alphabet and numerical figures.
- 18.** Like the all-pervasive God, learning is present in every atom of this universe. Learning is an unstoppable or ceaseless activity of devotion.
- 19.** Learning, in its infinite forms, is a universal phenomenon. The stereotyped, monotonous and uniform pattern of education in your school is not suitable for supporting the multiple faces of learning.
- 20.** Dawn and daybreak take place even where there is no cock to crow and announce the morning. In the same manner, learning too takes place and goes on freely even where you do not start and run a school.
- 21.** Yet I would not be so arrogant as to deny my need to further my education. But how can I agree to your claim of deserving to be my teacher? In my mind, you are not properly equipped to take on this role.

Look out for chapter 2 in the next edition...




Inspirations




Real learning gets to the heart of what it means to be human. Through learning we re-create ourselves. Through learning we become able to do something we were never able to do. Through learning, we re-perceive the world and our relationship to it. Through learning we extend our capacity to create, to be part of the generative process of life.

-Peter Senge




Why should workers agree to be slaves in a basically authoritarian structure? They should have control over it themselves. Why shouldn't communities have a dominant voice in running the institutions that affect their lives?

-Noam Chomsky




There is no such thing as a neutral educational process. Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate the integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity to it, or it becomes the practice of freedom - the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with the reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world.

-Paulo Freire




We are at war, and that war is not simply a hot debate between the capitalist camp and the socialist camp over which economic/political/social arrangement will have hegemony in the world. It's not just the battle over turf and who has the right to utilize resources for whom-so-ever's benefit. The war is also being fought over the truth: what is the truth about human nature, about the human potential?

-Toni Cade Bambara



I hope I never lose hope, but if that day comes and I'm sure that I have nothing to expect, nothing to believe in, and that the human condition is doomed to stupidity and crime, then I hope I will be honest enough to kill myself.

-Eduardo Galeano



Historical understanding teaches us to transform the seemingly fixed and internal in our lives into things that can be changed. It teaches...people that the structured surrounding them have been made and remade over and over. It teaches that we live in history.

-Gregory Kealey

The Lopsided Pace of Pakistan's Development

By Shagufta Alizai

How does one chart **Pakistan's development?**

From the fact that the **rich** have **2** cars in their driveways, that **supermarkets** in the big cities are well-stocked with **imported food** stuff and other consumer items; that we are now in the age of dishwashing liquids, aluminum foil-packs, milk-packs, yogurt in cartons, thirty-two flavors of ice-cream and the prospering fast food business. Additionally, there are the **imported washing machines, refrigerators, televisions and VCRs stashed away in a room in some village**, awaiting electrification of the area, to become of use to the proud owner - the Middle East worker. And last but not least, we have mastered nuclear technology.

If these examples are anything to go by, then I would be the first to concede that development has indeed taken place. For like many others, I too am benefiting from these advancements. What, however, is difficult to grasp and even more difficult to digest is the fact that even after fifty four years, this development seems superficial and progress remains a relative term.

What is not existent to this day (whether for reasons of resource constraints, outside pressures, lack of democratic processes, but primarily to my mind, short-sighted planning and administration), is a nation not blessed with a growing literacy rate, better health facilities,

equal employment opportunities, citizens sharing a sense of civic duty (simple things like standing in queue, not spitting on walls and throwing garbage outside our thousand-yard homes); in short, a nation which is not geared or prepared for advancement in all sectors. To this day, the roads and transport system can in no way be called even satisfactory. Cars like Honda Accords, Mercedes Benz and Toyota Crowns ply these roads, carrying officials of the administrative machinery of this country, who know how to use the taxpayers' money for luxury cars but do not know how to use it for planning a proper road system. One is constrained to say, were it not for our colonial past, we might not have had roads

at all. Of course, our gratitude must also be shown to Sher Shah Suri for giving us the Grand Truck Road. In the last ten years that I have traveled to various cities by road, I can honestly say that it has never been smooth sailing. The roads have all been in either repair or disrepair as far as I can remember.

Before I engage in further discussion, there is a priceless quotation from the Economic Survey 1984-1985, which I would like to reproduce. I must point out that the Economic Survey is supposed to provide an independent analysis of economic issues and does not necessarily represent the views of the

Government, although a government ministry publishes it. The quote reads "the key issue is whether society at large would be prepared to accept a major erosion in social morals and values in return for more health, education and material comforts (desirable and often necessary as they are). Obviously judged from our own spiritual and social values, the quality of life in Pakistan as it is, would on balance be considered vastly superior to that in non-Muslim countries, and would compare quite favorably to that in our brethren Muslim countries".

I will not attempt to dilate on whether better health and education means that moral and social values suffer, instead I would like to point out the horrifying fact that only 29 percent of Pakistan's entire population has access to a safe water supply. Here, I would like to give the example of an area outside Dera Ismail Khan (NWFP) where this lack of safe water has been the cause of a terrible disease: worms in the knees of people whose only source of water are the potholes full of rainwater.

In the educational area, literacy remains a mere 24 percent. Despite repeated assurances by policy-makers that health and education would be special target areas and the pace of change would be accelerated, progress still remains slow and even stunted. It appears that the planners have got caught in their own web. Although numerically speaking the number of colleges and universities have increased, but to what avail? The quality of education being imparted is creating far more harm than good. As someone remarked, "we seem to be mass-producing M.A.s and B.A.s with an end to becoming a Babu population". Does Pakistan not require more skill centers and polytechnics instead?

Therefore, it appears that we in Pakistan have allowed almost four decades of our national life to lapse and as yet have not evolved a process for speedier development.

"The key issue is whether society at large would be prepared to accept a major erosion in social morals and values in return for more health, education and material comforts".

Experimentation in the name of development has been allowed to go unchecked. Whereas allocations are announced with great fanfare, the general public must also be made aware of how these allocations are put to use and with what measure of success. If Pakistan is to develop, more than mere fund allocations and rosy-sounding schemes will be needed. Implementation can

take place only if Pakistan's population is fully equipped and its man-and-woman power is harnessed for developmental processes. A compulsory 'Service to the Nation' scheme must be formulated wherein every citizen lends a hand in bringing Pakistan to a smoother path of development, where the frills match progress in all vital sectors and it can be said that an educated Pakistani nation has now the right to enjoy the fruits of their hard-earned labor.

If, however, the developmental pace remains lopsided, where education and health for the few is the prerogative of the moneyed and the administration continues to fail in providing the balance, then even we, the first generation Pakistanis will meet our Maker without having seen any positive results. Our prayers, however, should be that the next generation of Pakistanis fare better. After all, why should they be asked to eat cake when it is bread that they want?

Creating Poverty & Alleviating it - *In one breath!*

By: Prof. Ms. Anita Ghulam Ali

'Children's involvement in football stitching in Sialkot has received considerable attention. US - based pressure groups, and European Trade Unions have played a particular role in highlighting the issue'. (Voices of children in Sialkot, Pakistan).

The West often masquerades its self-interest as an enlightened concern for the 'trials' of the Third World. As in the case of football stitching in Sialkot, the West's naked demonstration of a double-value system is like a guided missile strategy aimed at the hands, which rather than pressed together in an act of supplication, were engaged in honest labor. Pakistan, a Muslim, Asian, underdeveloped country, winning contracts to supply Tango, the official football of the World Cup? 34.6 million balls- 80 percent of the match balls!

The education of boys is 'desirable'. At last even the most disadvantaged, and those who live beyond the 'designated civilized areas' of the province of Sindh, will almost never have a negative attitude towards the suggestion that children should go to school. However, the next immediate concern is put forward as brutally frank. What advantage, what monetary gain, what job is ensured after the children have 'finished'? That is the Catch 22 situation faced by all who 'dare to go where angels fear to tread'. Our planners have envisaged primary education without the dynamics required for its application. In practice, five classes of primary education 'endow' you with the capability of recognizing letters of the alphabet, numerals and for the smarter youngster, the ability to write their names. Can something more be expected from basic education levels?

Perhaps not really, except if it is followed by training programs targeted at various needs of an area, related to skills required for activities that sustain livelihood. Only a unified system, linked in a manner that each level - Primary, Secondary, Higher Secondary - could be units that may be the terminal stage (of that unit) and for which every unit should include a variety of common

Third World youth are constantly in a state of frustration. Broken promises, deceptive value systems, and an absence of opportunities to exhibit their talent and / or in equal degree to vent their anger, is not a mood conducive to cool calculation or long term planning.

employable skills, for culling out practices that make education a means to an end. Philosophies and sermons about the 'value added' to life by education, do not assuage hunger or the desire for status.

Third World youth are constantly in a state of frustration. Broken promises, deceptive value systems, and an absence of opportunities to exhibit their talent and / or in equal degree to vent their anger, is not a mood conducive to cool calculation or long term planning. An appeal, then, to substitute their earnings from labor for school fees, would be met, quite justifiably with a quizzical expression and a volatile verbal retort! Still more irritating to the thinking Pakistani is the callousness of conventions, resolutions, and threats of sanctions against countries allowing child labor. In affluent countries (the 'enlightened' ones) children may not be employed in factories in the thousands. However, the norms of these 'superior' societies require the fledgling to start earning at almost the same age as the girls in the carpet industry in Baluchistan,

Pakistan. Baby sitting, mowing lawns, looking after senior citizens, waiting at bars, hotels, ice-cream parlours, delivering newspapers, doing odd jobs, delivering pizzas - jobs that are inherently hazardous, are considered ok. They are not considered 'exploitative' because in most cases the earnings bring in what is needed to buy what is required for a more interesting home and social life. Ironically, the contribution of every member of the family, in his/her own way, is presented with

pride as an opportunity to have a taste of life and empowerment in preparation for maturity and an independent status! Yet the same are cogent reasons for taking an educated view of child labor, where work is undertaken because of poverty and is a preparation for the fast growing young population to contribute to the national income.

It may appear from what has been written above that child labor is not considered undesirable - there can be nothing further from the truth because of the unenviable tribulations of children who work, at an age when they

should be experiencing things on which they can reflect later on in life and which form the basis of their attitude to and treatment of others. Crime amongst youth could be put down to a number of factors and certainly, in great measure, to how they have been dealt with. The close-knit family unit is less liable to nurture children who are callous, disinterested in the welfare of others and shirk social service. The child labor force in Pakistan includes at least 30 percent (of boys usually) who leave home to work in the big cities as rag pickers, coolies in bazaars, domestic servants, professional beggars or regular factory workers. It is this segment of the child labor force that is invariably persuaded, under threat by the mafia, to commit crime, peddle drugs and indulge in anti-social practices.

Since the concept of counselling is new in Pakistan, not finding favor in such an atmosphere, children and youth have no opportunity to bounce their ideas, opinions, thoughts, disagreements etc, with their immediate environment, with those whom they are in contact, and with conditions in general. Such information, or rather a lack of it, is a great loss to educators in particular and to those now examining the child labor issue. (Some interesting and moving comments can be found in the study done in Sialkot.)

Schools for children, in factories under the jurisdiction of the earmarked Industrial Trading Estates, in liaison with the Ministries of Labor and Industries (the Social Welfare Department has little to recommend it!) should of course be planned and managed by a board with sociologists, psychologists, experienced freethinking educators, and representatives of all agencies involved. It would help the board after the takeoff stage to have two representatives from the young laborers as well. I am aware that many who read this would get hiccups, jump out of their seats, or suggest. I take a long walk to

“Child labor and the whole gamut of issues must be seen dispassionately. Not pity for the poverty-stricken, but an all - encompassing strategy that addresses relevant conditions, makes maximum use of available human resources, and plans for the future”.

cool off! Unfortunately, it is this kind of closed window that has further polluted our youth and educators!

However, the writer has 28 years of experience in sharing planning and management of projects with young men in colleges. A most rewarding experience. Highly recommended.

To lure children, albeit as a personal decision, schools should be very different from the stereotype school. Academics should be based on communication - discussion and debate as an aid to learning- rather than lectures, books, etc. A greater part of the time, however, should preferably be spent on net/ basket ball practice, judo, karate, etc.

Recreation that combines physical energy and activity and that replenishes the normal functions of the vital organs. Even if some students come only for the recreation, there should be no bar on them for doing so. Hopefully, since they are spending time at ‘school’, they will wander in curiosity into classes as well. The knowledge that they are represented in the hierarchy will also encourage individuals to contribute, from time to time, to achieving the ultimate aims of the program.

Child labor and the whole gamut of issues must be seen dispassionately. There should not be pity for the poverty-stricken, but an all-encompassing strategy that addresses relevant conditions, makes maximum use of available human resources and plans for the future.

The human element must be given top priority: protection from hazards, maximizing skills and providing easy access to formal recognized education.

In conclusion, at this preliminary round of thoughts, the country is dependent on the strength of its people. This is its Achilles’ heel. Since we know this, what deters us from making it known that we know?

Development Diary

By: KT

"So what do you do, baita?" the quizzical aunty asks me.

"I work in development", I answer.

"What sort of development?"

"Social Development"

"Oh you mean social work, baita".

"No, I mean development of marginalized communities and low-income urban areas," I try to explain.

"Achha, like charity work na?" She seems confused now.

"No, no, like implementing integrated rural development projects and self-awareness through participatory strategies." I flounder, even more confused.

Aunty opens her mouth to question some more, but then decides otherwise. "Do get in touch when you have your next fund-raiser. I would love to help out."

I give up.

Conversations like these have seemed to become the norm for people like myself working in this big bad world of "social development". Sometimes I feel that at least one out of the multitude of workshops and seminars that this area generates every month, should be on the art of explaining the profession to the ordinary person. I know at times even I wonder exactly what I "do". Like those numerous occasions when filling out the part in forms that says "occupation". Let's see, I could put down "trainer" (physical?), or "conference organizer", maybe "social mobilizer" (that's one no one will be able to figure out), or then maybe "report writer". Better yet, I could put down all of the above because that is certainly what I have had to "do" since joining this noble profession. It gets worse when you have to tick the box marked "other" in a list of recognized professions. I leave it empty most of the time.

So why is the world so oblivious to our kind? Is it because we have yet not managed to bring the cause of doing good for the under privileged out of the realm of charity balls and Edhi centres? Or is it because we a) like to lie low, b) need to get our PR act together, or c) are really not doing any "good" at all? Most of us who work in this field would rather like to think of this situation as one that is still very new in Pakistan and therefore not yet into the mainstream. ATM machines are still very new in Pakistan, but even those who don't have access to them know what they are. Others would say that because such activity is restricted to only the rural poor and urban slums, the more cosmopolitan population is not exposed to them. But aren't most urban slums located

immediately next to the posh residential or commercial areas of the city?

Whatever the reason may be, if Pakistan has decided to jump on the bandwagon of participatory development and self-help projects, then it must also let everyone know of it. Why must only the poor have to suffer such monotonous jargon? Don't they already have enough problems? And moreover, if we want to bridge the gap between the rich and the poor, shouldn't both groups be part of the deal? Take the above aunty for instance. She knew about fund-raisers and charities (probably for some struggling orphans or unfinished hospitals), but did she actually know what she was trying to raise funds for? Had she actually seen the conditions the orphans lived in, or what was needed to finish the hospital? That's the difference between social development and charity; we in the former actually get to "see" and experience what we are working for.

Living in oblivion is not good for any of us then. If I know what charity fund-raisers are meant for, then others should know what social development is too. Alright, maybe I am being too presumptuous, but let's face it, there are more people in need, of this kind of help than of the other kind. But to be realistic, both sides need to give way. We in social development have to realize that our own culture is inching perilously close to our urban fund-raising counterparts. Conferences and seminars in five-star hotels, study tours and training sessions in faraway countries, high-powered meetings with the World Bank and foreign officials, not to mention the weekly day-trips to Islamabad (and that too on an Rs. 8,000 plus air fare!). It seems that priorities are getting a little skewed in the name of sustainable development for the future of our children.

I don't really mind exchanges like the one with aunty, but it makes me wonder whether what I am doing is any different from what she does? At least she doesn't hide her intentions behind difficult jargon and dual-purpose visits to exotic locations (the shopping's really great too!). So what are we really doing, people? Let's think about it for a while and try to remain on Planet Earth rather than on Planet World Bank or Planet Gender and Participatory Techniques. Most of you reading this may not like what I have to say, but KT is now going to be in the business of speaking its mind. No hiding behind complicated terms. So watch out for the next installment of my diary. It may get you thinking again! I hope this has.



Wakeup Calls!!!

- Hunger afflicts one out of seven people on Earth.
- Over 80% of all illness in the developing world is directly or indirectly associated with poor water supply and sanitation. In Ethiopia only 1% of the people have safe water...Annually, one-sixth of all African children die before their first birthday.
- In the past decade alone, the estimated impact of armed conflict on children includes 2 million killed, 6 million seriously injured or permanently disabled, 12 million left homeless, more than 1 million orphaned or separated from their families, and 10 million psychologically traumatized.
- 855,000,000 people in the world are illiterate; one-sixth of humanity and two-thirds of women.
- Nearly a billion people will enter the 21st century unable to read a book or sign their names and two-thirds of them are women.
- Today, about 42 million people in Pakistan lack adequate income to purchase the food they need for a healthy life. The fact that about one-third of the population does not have access to food needed for adequate nutrition is manifested by the widespread incidence of malnutrition. In 1998, the estimated number of malnourished children was about 8 million. Nearly half of the children under five years of age are underweight.
- Every year, an estimated 40 million births go unregistered. That's one third of all babies born in the world.
- In the world economy, where defense expenditures total approximately \$781 billion a year, the \$7 billion more per year needed for education over the next decade remains an unmet challenge for the international community. By spending \$7 billion more each year for the next 10 years, (less than the amount people in the United States pay annually for cosmetics and Europeans for ice cream), the dream of educating all children could become a reality
- Only 56 per cent of boys and 44 per cent of girls enroll in primary school in the world's least developed countries
- In Latin America 90% of fertilizer is used for purposes other than producing basic food for local people.
- Even if the growth rate of the poor countries doubled, only 7 would close the gap with the rich nations in 100 years. Only 9 would reach that same level in at least 1000 years.
- 20% of the world's people own and consume 82.7% of the world's wealth
- The approximate number of people without sufficient food is 730 million; the amount of food that would eliminate world hunger, per annum (p.a.) is approximately 40 million tons; the amount of food aid p.a. is approximately 10 million tons; and the amount of grain fed to animals in the rich countries, p.a. is over 540 million tons.
- The income gap between the richest fifth of the world's people and the poorest fifth increased from 30 to 1 in 1960 to 74 to 1 in 1997.

Voice of the Voiceless

Opinions of the Oppressed

By: Muhammad Khan (Driver)

Muhammad Khan is an integral member of our team. Although not 'literate' in the conventional sense of the word or 'educated' by the standards of the privileged few, he has the brilliance and motivation to handle perhaps the most radical section of our magazine: 'Opinions of the Oppressed'.

For this issue we gathered opinions of men regarding
Female Education

1. Would you like your daughter to be educated?

2. Should a woman work after being educated?

3. Who would you rather educate, your son or your daughter?

The Results...

"Yes! If I could have it my way, I would even send her to college or at least educate her up till matric. She would then be able to run her house in a better manner and even get a job if she wanted to. I would want my daughter to be educated because a boy can earn through manual labor but a girl cannot. She needs to be educated in order to find a job."

-Qurban Ali, Chowkidar, Naushero-Feroze

"Yes! I would educate her at least till class eight. In our community women are not allowed to work, she is to do household chores only. I prefer educating my son as it will be beneficial for us."

-Akhtar, Kabariya, Multan

"Girls should be educated at least up till grade eight. Education will improve their morals and virtues and they will be able to run their household in a better manner. They will also be able to raise their children well. We do not let our daughters work therefore, I would prefer to educate my son so that he may become an officer (*Bara Afsar*)."

-Darakshan, Chowkidar, Kohistan

"Yes! We should educate girls at least till matric. But I regret to tell you that let alone my daughter, I cannot even afford to educate my son. I don't have the necessary resources in present times."

-Sultan Khan, Peshawar

"We should educate them only till primary level so that they can at least read and write letters. I would want my son to be educated."

-Dost Mohommad, Driver, Zila Mardan

"Girls must be educated because without education there is 'darkness' in the house. If educated, a girl can also work. I will educate my daughter as the son can learn some technical skills whereas, a girl cannot."

-Haji Muhamad Baloch, Driver, Dadu

"Girls should be educated till matric. It will be beneficial because they will be able to manage their households in a better manner. They will be able to raise their children well and education will also improve their morals. If required she can also work, perhaps be a teacher but not during my lifetime. When I die she can then work for her children. Nevertheless, I would like to educate my son."

-Liaquat Ali Khan, Driver, Sawabi Village

"We should educate our daughters but I cannot afford to do that. I have three sons and I'm sending one of them to school, the other two cannot be educated, as I do not have the resources."

-Noor Muhammad, Driver, Swat

"The world is progressing fast therefore, we should educate our daughters. It is also the need of time that we educate our children. Education will allow them to differentiate between right and wrong. Girls should be educated till matric level only. As you know at college level, both government and private, the environment is not suitable at all. I will not allow my daughter to work as mostly men are present in the work place. She should be trained to work at home as offices are male dominated, if it is a 'girls only' office then I will not have a problem. If I have to choose between educating my son or daughter, I would educate my son because men can work freely as opposed to women."

-Qari Allahbuksh, Tadrees-ul Quran, Raheemyar Khan

"Daughters should be educated! Educated to an extent that she is not dependent on anyone. Girls should also learn some skills such as embroidery and sewing in addition to education so that if needed they can be at home and earn a decent living. Girls should not go out and work with 'ghair mard' (strangers) because not only is it against our religion also if women working for mills, factories and offices are terminated the un-employed men who have difficulties finding a job will be easily employed.

I have a daughter and a son and I will educate my son as earning for a living is a man's responsibility. A man needs to be educated more than a woman. A woman's responsibility is to look after the house and raise the children. A woman's work is within the boundaries of the house whereas a man should deal with the outdoor chores."

-Muhammad Shibli Hasan, Salesman, Korangi

'Jalee Katee'

"There is no benefit of education! Do we have the resources to send our children to school? If a child doesn't do exceptionally well in school it leaves a bad impact on him, he cannot find a good job then and also refrains from doing manual labor. So what is to be done for a living? When he cannot earn, he becomes the cause of the destruction of society. The government does not care about our problems. The money that the government spends on education is of no use to us - it's useful to their own children in the shape of scholarships. They are all thieves! They eat our money! We don't even have money for our food and living- where in the world will we get the money for sending our children to schools? If the government provides free education along with free books even then we will think twice before sending our children to schools."

-The final blow from a Distressed Citizen

Death Trap "the parrot's training"



Rabindranath Tagore

Excerpted from: V. Bhatia (ed.) 1994. Rabindranath Tagore: Pioneer in Education.
New Delhi: Sahitya Chayan.

This story by Tagore eloquently explains what we suffer from in general: a myopic vision towards the concept of education and that also twisted with selfish motives. While addressing an issue, we intentionally lose sight of the actual problem and congratulate ourselves on resolving the unnecessary, irrelevant concerns. By reconstructing the boundary of a school, we believe we have achieved a prime goal while the academia of the same school stays in shambles. We applaud the slogans of development and progression, when in reality we are indeed nurturing the evil but have shamelessly shut our senses to the consequential deterioration . . .infact we are more than happy to be a part of it!

ONCE UPON A TIME THERE WAS a bird It was ignorant. It sang all right, but never recited scriptures. It hopped pretty frequently, but lacked manners.

Said the Raja to himself: 'Ignorance is costly in the long run. For fools consume as much food as their betters, and yet give nothing in return.'

He called his nephews to his presence and told them that the bird must have a sound schooling.

The pundits were summoned, and at once went to the root of the matter. They decided that the ignorance of birds was due to their natural habit of living in poor nests. Therefore, according to the pundits, the first thing necessary for this bird's education was a suitable cage.

The pundits had their rewards and went home happy.

A golden cage was built with gorgeous decorations. Crowds came to see it from all parts of the world. 'Culture, captured and caged!' exclaimed some, in a rapture of ecstasy, and burst into tears. Others remarked: 'Even if culture be missed, the cage will remain, to the end, a substantial fact. How fortunate for the bird!'

The goldsmith filled his bag with money and lost no tune in sailing homewards.

The pundit sat down to educate the bird. With proper deliberation he took his pinch of snuff: as he said: 'Textbooks can never be too many for our purpose!'

The nephews brought together an enormous crowd of scribes. They copied from books, and copied from copies, till the manuscripts were piled up to an unreachable height. Men murmured in amazement. 'Oh, the tower of culture, egregiously high! The end of it lost in the clouds!'

The scribes, with light hearts, hurried home, their pockets heavily laden.

The nephews were furiously busy keeping the cage in proper trim. As their constant scrubbing and polishing went on, the people said with satisfaction: 'This is progress indeed!'

Men were employed in large numbers and supervisors were still more numerous. These, with their cousins of all different degrees of distance, built a palace for themselves and lived there happily ever after.

Whatever may be its other deficiencies, the world is never in want of faultfinders; and they went about saying that every creature remotely connected with the cage flourished beyond words, excepting only the bird.

When this remark reached the Raja's ears, he summoned his nephews before him and said: 'My dear nephews, what is this that we hear?'

The nephews said in answer: 'Sire, let the testimony of the goldsmiths and the pundits, the scribes and the supervisors be taken, if the truth is to be known. Food is scarce with the faultfinders, and that is why their tongues have gained in sharpness.'

The explanation was so luminously satisfactory that the Raja decorated each one of his nephews with his own rare jewels.

The Raja at length, being desirous of seeing with his own eyes how his Education Department busied itself with the little bird, made his appearance one day at the great Hall of Learning.

From the gate rose the sounds of conch-shells and gongs, horns, bugles and trumpets, cymbals, drums and kettledrums, tomtoms, tambourines, flutes, fifes, barrel-organs and bagpipes. The pundits began chanting mantras with their topmost voices, while the goldsmiths, scribes, supervisors, and their numberless cousins of all different degrees of distance, loudly raised a round of cheers.

The nephews smiled and said: 'Sire, what do you think of it all?'

The Raja said: 'It does seem so fearfully like a sound principle of Education!'

Mightily pleased, the Raja was about to remount his elephant, when the faultfinder, from behind some bush, cried out: 'Maharaja, have you seen the bird?'

'Indeed, I have not!' exclaimed the Raja. 'I completely forgot about the bird.'

Turning back, he asked the pundits about the method they followed in instructing the bird. It was shown to him. He was immensely impressed. The method was so stupendous that the bird looked ridiculously unimportant in comparison. The Raja was satisfied that there was no flaw in the arrangements. As for any complaint from the bird itself, that simply could not be expected. Its throat was so completely choked with the leaves from the books that it could neither whistle nor whisper. It sent a thrill through one's body to watch the process.

This time, while remounting his elephant, the Raja ordered his State ear-puller to give a thorough good pull at both the ears of the fault-finder.

The bird thus crawled on, duly and properly, to the safest verge of inanity. In fact, its progress was satisfactory in the extreme. Nevertheless, Nature occasionally triumphed over training, and when the morning light peeped into the bird's cage it sometimes fluttered its wings in a reprehensible manner. And, though it is hard to believe, it pitifully pecked at its bars with its feeble beak.

'What impertinence!' growled the kotwal.

The blacksmith, with his forge and hammer, took his place in the Raja's Department of Education. Oh, what resounding blows! The iron chain was soon completed, and the bird's wings were clipped.

The Raja's brothers-in-law looked black, and shook their heads, saying: 'These birds not only lack good sense, but also gratitude!'

With text-book in one hand and baton in the other, the pundits gave the poor bird what may fitly be called lessons!

The kotwal was honoured with a title for his watchfulness, and the blacksmith for his skill in forging chains.

The bird died.

Nobody had the least notion how long ago this had happened. The fault-finder was the first man to spread the rumor.

The Raja called his nephews and asked them, 'My dear nephews, what is this that we hear?'

The nephews said: 'Sire, the bird's education has been completed.'

'Does it hop?' the Raja enquired.

'Never!' said the nephews.

'Does it fly?'

'No.'

'Bring me the bird,' said the Raja.

The bird was brought to him, guarded by the kotwal and the sepoys and the sowars. The Raja poked its body with his finger. Only its inner stuffing of book-leaves rustled.

Outside the window, the murmur of the spring breeze amongst the newly budded asoka leaves made the April morning wistful.

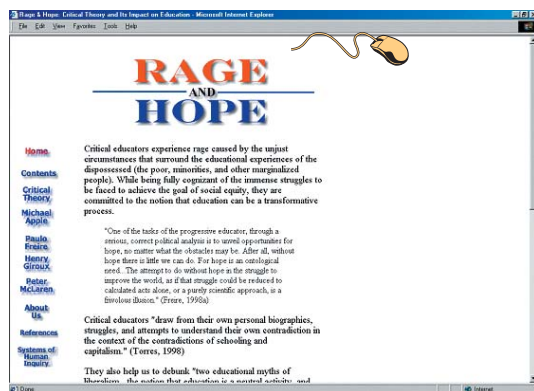
Societal Learning

Websites for a
BETTER
world

If you are looking for information which has previously been unavailable, guarded and hidden...then...visit...



This website contains articles and book excerpts that offer a critical view of how 'seemingly' compassionate social and economic policies have resulted in absolute destruction of the 'third world' nations. It also shows how global media is strategically being used as a social control mechanism for sustaining such policies. The site critically analyzes controversial and sensitive issues and provides detailed elaboration in a fact-based manner. Viewers are presented with an opportunity to become better informed about the hidden agendas behind slogans of global democracy and economic globalization. The site also contains an archive of articles and excerpts of famous authors ranging from Noam Chomsky to Egbal Ahmad.



This website voices the opinions of critical educators who use their personal biographies in order to liberate our thoughts by understanding the atrocities of modern education. The website serves as a forum for educators who are strongly committed to the notion that education

can be a transformative and learning process. The site describes the work and struggles of critical theorists such as Paulo Freire, Peter McLaren and Henry Giroux, who have taken such educational studies to the forefront of today's debates.

ZNet
www.zmag.org



ZNET is a classic example of The Internet being effectively used as a tool for social change. One might be overwhelmed by the variety and quantity of information presented, but the site is wonderfully well organized and easily navigable. ZNet is one of the best resource for understanding historical as well as current social and political crises and issues. The site also offers intellectual and radical insights of leading commentators on politics, education, economics etc.

In addition, the site also contains inspirational statements and quotes in its well organized 'Quotes Center'. It has a separate 'Cartoon' section where various cartoonists have contributed by illustrating the existing inequalities, arrogant policies of various institutes etc., in a very unique manner. By placing its balance sheet the organizers have displayed supreme level of transparency and commitment towards social change.

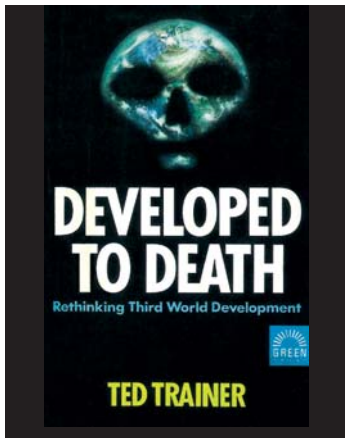
Societal Learning

Societal Learning

Books for a
BETTER
world

Developed to Death

Rethinking Third World Development



By: Ted Trainer

What is currently happening in the field of development? Is the Third World really developing? These are critical questions which need immediate explanations and answers. We all know that things are far from being satisfactory, but there is considerable

doubt and confusion as to what precisely is wrong and what ought to be done?

This book presents an overview and interpretation of the current development situation. Its main concern is to suggest a perspective which enables us to evaluate the existing development scene.

The author outlines ways in which the Third World can 'actually' develop. The book strongly proposes a strong sense of responsibility amongst the 'First World' countries to those who are less privileged. The author establishes some facts such as "Global justice must precede global peace; the rich must move over" and "The Third World living standards can only improve if the First World consumes less".

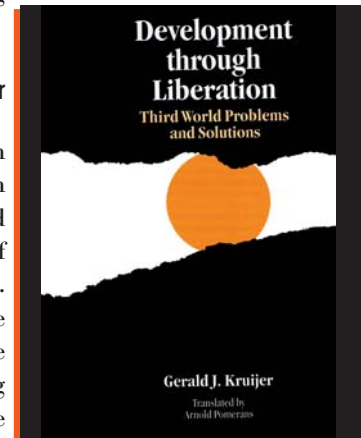
The book gives a devastating yet constructive critique of what today's economists and politicians say and think about development and how certain viable solutions can be implemented.

Development through Liberation

Third World Problems and Solutions

By: Gerald J. Kruijer

Most books on development are written in a detached and 'objective' language of Western social science. This book stands at the opposite end of the spectrum, simply stating that to understand the poverty of the Third World, one must adopt the perspective of the people who actually experience it.



Through the usage of real life accounts ranging from the slum districts of Sao Paulo to the villages of West Africa, the author has developed a 'science of liberation' which is systematically and purposefully biased to the needs and interests of the poor and to turn scientific effort (which he defines as systematic fact-finding and logical discourse) into a tool for their liberation. Kruijer argues that social-scientific concepts often serve simply as a neutral smokescreen for the underlying realities of power and exploitation. Underdevelopment, he challenges, looks very different from the viewpoint of the poor people of the Third World, and it is their perspective that throws a much clearer light on the true character of global, economic and political relationships and the failures of so many past endeavors attempting to combat poverty and starvation.

The book aims to unravel, at every level, the reality that oppresses the poor-materially and spiritually, and to point to organizational, institutional and consciousness-raising measures that have been, or could be taken, to liberate them.

Final Analysis

We have a Problem...

The Education & Development 'industries', created during the past four decades to respond to a global commitment for alleviating poverty and seeking global equality, are in a state of disarray. The landscape is littered with evidence of the failures of development efforts. The largest multilateral and bilateral assistance agencies have responded to this failure by focusing once again on accelerating economic growth. They claim that if adequate growth rates can be sustained, the poor will be swept along with the tide of rising income and will 'somehow' have access to all necessities of life. This argument is reassuring, but it reflects a more hopeful myth than a pragmatic reality. The reality is that the poor are caught in the cycle of flood and drought, desertification, communal violence, unrestrained population growth, wretched educational facilities and the ebbing employment and income generation opportunities. Education & Development have become big businesses, preoccupied more with their own growth and incentives than with the people both were originally created to serve.

It is becoming evident that the hope for dealing with the global education and development crisis rests not with these industries, but with the great social movements of contemporary societies such as peace and social justice. It rests with people who are driven by a strong social commitment rather than by the budgetary imperatives of huge global bureaucracies. It rests in particular with the more forward public and private institutes of the South that find themselves immersed in the political, educational, environmental, and economic struggles of the poor with whom they work and who lack the luxury of closing their eyes to the real nature of the problem. Yet the South remains dependent on Northern donors whose funding policies and procedures are grounded in old myths about development and the processes by which it is achieved.

A Need for Change...

The need for change has become increasingly evident. Yet our ability to take corrective action continues to be inhibited by an interlocking set of interests that are sustained and legitimized by a development vision based on flawed assumptions about our natural and social reality. In order to overturn this inability, we at the Sindh Education Foundation, through EDucate! strive to be a part of past, present and future efforts aimed at establishing an intellectual basis for us to realize that the critical issue of this century is not economic growth; it is social transformation. We believe that our collective

future depends on achieving a complete transformation of our institutions, our technology, our values and our behaviors consistent with our ecological and social realities. The future editions of EDucate! will hopefully provoke readers to rethink and acknowledge that real transformatory efforts must address three basic needs of our local, national, regional and global society:

Social Justice: Current Education & Development practices support an extreme imbalance between over and under consumers of the world's resources. This imbalance is simply unacceptable by any standards of human values.

Sustainability: Existing Education & Development practices support increases in economic output that depend on the unsustainable depletion of the world's resources. Such temporary gains of so-called development represent theft by one generation of the birthright of future generations.

Inclusiveness: The present Education & Development practices systematically deprive sustainable segments of the population of the opportunity to make recognized contributions to the well-being of society. These practices breed alienation and social conflict.

Future editions of EDucate! will focus on these issues from a social and human perspective. The content of EDucate! will not be restricted to issues of Education and Development in Pakistan but will strive to highlight and discuss global concerns and translate those into local social realities. It should be borne in mind that EDucate! is not a despairing effort but should be conceived as a ray of optimism and hope even in the not-so-hopeful scenario. Its philosophy is not based on any ideology or social system neither is it projecting any - its essentials are humanity and social justice. And, its purpose is definitely not to attack any institution or individual. The entire effort can be summed up in Noam Chomsky's words, "I would like to believe that people have an instinct for freedom, that they really want to control their own affairs. They don't want to be pushed around, ordered, oppressed, etc., and they want a chance to do things that make sense, like constructive work in a way they control, or maybe control together with others. I don't know any way to prove this. It's really a hope about what human beings are like, a hope that if social structures change sufficiently, those aspects of human nature will be realized."...I also hope so...



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