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For A Rational Education Policy

Although there is a new education policy in the offing, before it is finalised, certain facets of our education system, both in the public and private sector, should be rationalised in keeping with today's needs. For example, it is not always recognised that weaknesses to be found in the present system are, to a great extent, the result of changes in attitudes. In fact it could be said that, ever since education came to be viewed as a constitutional right by the people, an event that took place immediately after independence in 1947 and again in 1971, it was translated in people's minds as the rightful burden of the state. What followed is that even those who had until then undertaken to provide education as a responsibility or moral duty, had a change of heart and no longer considered it their domain. In fact few people left today will willingly do anything to improve education or the state of literacy unless there is a profit to be made.

Having reneged on their duty to society, the number of schools founded by the philanthropists from the past have also passed into oblivion. In fact, education is no longer seen as something to be attained or something worthwhile and more and more it is being looked upon merely as a means to an end. Of course, we cannot deny that education is the one commodity no-one can take away from its owner and its intrinsic value remains high. But most view education as an investment which implies an expected return. In other words, we see the demise of the idea of education for its own sake, or learning for the sake of learning, as it takes on the garb of a commodity, just like any other for sale in the market.

Although successive regimes have tried at various times to address this problem, none can lay claim to anything more than limited success. The result of their failure is clear—the gap between the educated and illiterate is growing wider—therefore, if the new policy can rekindle an interest in education from its learning aspect and not only from the point of view of commercial benefits, it might one day be possible to close this gap. However, now that education is viewed as a commodity or, to put it another way, no longer the sole burden of state, the complexities within the system are crystal clear. There are entrepreneurs willing to provide education at a price but this is usually only for those falling within the accepted school-age group. There are pitifully few if any, who are willing to provide the same services for those who fall outside this range but are clearly in great need. As they cannot pay the high fees the private schools generally like to charge, where these people are likely to go for education is uncertain.

What is needed is either a return to the old ways where

01:00 BBC World News	01:00 Hey Ha Ho
01:30 World Focus: Window On Eu-	04:00 Hindi Feature Film (B/W)
02:00 BBC World News	
02:25 50 years of Independence- In-	
02:30 World Living: Travel Show-	
03:00 BBC World Newsdesk Inc.	
03:00 World Business Report/24	
06:00 Rewind VJ Sophiya	06:00 Bewitched
07:00 Turn On T [M] (Back to Back	11:00 Taak Shank
08:30 Rewind VJ Sophiya	11:30 Gaane Jaane Mane
09:30 Turn On T [M] (Back to Back	12:00 O Maria
01:30 By Demand VJ Trey	12:30 Premier
02:30 Liberty-First Day First Show	01:00 Aahat
02:30 Cine Matinee-Hindi Feature	01:30 The Young And The Restless
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