Literacy Best Weapon against Extremism



NCHD organized a media forum on “Promotion of Literacy in Pakistan” in collaboration with Pakistan Association for Continuing and Adult Education (PACADE) on January 29, 2011 in Lahore. The participants include Chairperson NCHD Dr. Nafisa Shah, DG NCHD Mr. Zulfiqar Ahmad, and President PACADE Inayatullah Shah.

Speaking at the occasion, Dr. Nafisa Shah said that the country is facing emergency in social sector and it can only be averted by improving indicators of literacy. She termed literacy a best weapon against rising extremism, saying government, NGOs, society and media will have to work together to eliminate the menace of illiteracy from the country. Pakistan needed 200,000 literacy centers every year to achieve the MDGs and “Education For All” targets by 2015. “We will fail to meet the 21st century social and economic challenges as a nation that has a substantial segment of illiterate people,” she lamented.



Dr. Shah stressed that NCHD and the Media Forum for Literacy and “Education For All” (MFL-EFA) must collaborate and develop a strategy to highlight the issues pertaining to literacy and take this cause along as a movement to build a literate nation and bring country out of social and economic crisis. “Literacy is the best weapon against rising extremism,” she said.

The country was struggling with only 56 percent literacy rate and needed to raise it to 86 percent by 2015. “This huge task cannot be achieved by the government in isolation but with the joint efforts of the government, civil society and the media,” she said.

She told that the NCHD was supposed to set up 20,000 literacy centers across the country during the current financial year and has so far established 6,000 of them. She urged the provincial governments to play their role in increasing the literacy rate and meeting goals.

The Commission, she said, was trying to promote the concept of “Each One, Teach One” by involving students of universities and colleges in literacy campaigns. The provinces would be required under the 18th amendment to show more commitment towards the promotion of literacy.

NCHD Director General Zulfiqar Ahmad stressed the need to focus on enrolment, control dropout, and make more and more people literate. He said the NCHD, an autonomous body, had been declared lead agency in the field of literacy by the government.



PACADE President Mr. Inayatullah gave brief introduction of the Media Forum for Literacy and EFA, saying this new watchdog led by leading lights would help the government and other agencies a lot in their efforts for the promotion of literacy.

The event was attended by a large number of reporters from print and electronic media. Pointing out a shortcoming in the tenures of administrative secretaries at the Literacy and Non Formal Basic Education Department Punjab, it was suggested that the government should ensure appropriate stay of the administrative heads in the department to ensure continuation and proper implementation of policies.