

Pakistan's failure to meet educational standards poses grave threats

ISLAMABAD: According to the Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report 2016, universal primary education in Southern Asia will be achieved in 2051 universal lower secondary completion in 2062; and universal upper secondary completion in 2087.

The GEM Report 2016 was launched by United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) with collaboration with UNICEF. The report titled "Education for People and Planet: Creating Sustainable Future For All" states that that education has a huge potential to facilitate progress towards all the global sustainable development goals, but needs a major rethink if it is to live up to those expectations.

It was said in the report that Pakistan is home to 24 million of the world's 263 million children, adolescents and youth not attending school, which is a serious challenge to the country. According to the report, one in ten children will not be completing primary school in Pakistan by 2030 whereas the country is expected to achieve universal primary education in 2060, universal lower secondary education in 2070 and universal upper secondary education not until 2095.

The GEM Report 2016 suggests that in the majority of countries including Pakistan, education is the best indicator of climate change awareness, half of countries' curricula worldwide. To address some other sorts of issues, the report states that Pakistan needs to break with past trends if it is to maintain its global education commitments.

The education systems must provide people vital skills and knowledge that can find new solutions for environmental problems. Education systems need to nurture higher level skills to fulfill the needs of growing economies where jobs are being fast automated.

The report revealed that the global employment share of high skilled workers has increased by almost 40 percent since 1990, and is projected to have accounted for almost 20 percent of the workforce in 2015. Over the same period, the employment share of medium skilled workers decreased by almost 10 percent, while the share of low skilled workers rose correspondingly. These trends are projected to continue in coming years. However, it was hoped in the report that by 2020, the world could have 40 million fewer workers with tertiary degrees than demanded.

According to the assessments shared in the GEM Report, the global adult literacy rate was 85%, which means 758 million adults lacked any literacy skills. There were 91 literate women for every 100 literate men-and as few as 74 literate women for every 100 literate men in low income countries.

Presenting the key findings of the GEM Report 2016, Vibeke Jensen, UNESCO Representative to Pakistan said that the report looks at the multiple links and synergies between education in relation to SDG-4 and other sectors, such as health, nutrition, poverty alleviation, women's empowerment, environment, climate change and peace and security.

Speaking at the occasion, Baligh-ur-Rehman, Minister of State for Federal Education and Professional Training highlighted that GEM Report 2016 has got a new directive to review the progress of education under the 2030 Agenda. "The report not only looks into the education sector but also focuses on the relationship of education and other sustainable developments goals," Baligh said.

Through skilled human force, the production of enough food can be made possible for the growing world population, the report added.

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