



Transcripts of the interview of Dr. Muhammad Farooq Sattar, Federal Minister Overseas Pakistanis and Deputy Convener of MQM by Ms. Mehnaz Aziz, Chief Executive & Founding Director of Children's Global Network Pakistan (CGN-P) on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2012.

The following were the participants in the interview:

1. Dr. Muhammad Farooq Sattar, Federal Minister Overseas Pakistanis and Deputy Convener of MQM
2. Dr. Nadeem Ehsan, MNA and the Minister of State.
3. Ms. Mehnaz Aziz, Chief Executive & Founding Director, CGN-P

Ms. Mehnaz introduced herself and the work being undertaken by CGN-P over the last few years with special emphasis on the reforms being implemented by CGN-P. She explained that the interviews that she will be conducting of different political leadership on education reforms are part of the GEO Campaign on Education and in which she is one of the Board of Director's. These series of interviews with different political leadership main intent is to know of their perspectives and their ability to transform education reforms especially considering the elections are very close. Ms. Mehnaz told about the initiative being undertaken by the Punjab Government on education reforms like the establishment of the Punjab Compulsory Education Commission for the compliance of Article 25-A of the Constitution through the 18th Amendment. Article 25-A states that the State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of five to sixteen years in such manner as may be determined by "law".

**Q: Since the passage of the 18th Amendment and the imposition of Article 25-A, how would these kind of legislations would be able to evolve and make use of Commission's like the Punjab Compulsory Education Commission. Currently Pakistan is facing an education emergency and how can we effectively and efficiently utilize and implement Article 25-A keeping in mind the financing, political and legal implications. For example we have worked in Sindh, other than Karachi and Hyderabad, the whole of rural Sindh is facing an uncertain future with regards to education and are far behind lagging. How would you perceive this problem in implementing Article 25-A?**

Ans: The problem being faced by Sindh is very grave and alarming and needs proper attention soon. I would like to thank your organization for the excellent work you have carried out in Sindh especially as you mentioned in Karachi and we would facilitate you when required by you. With regards to the importance of education, our leader Altaf Bhai along with many other world leaders like Tony Blair & Winston Churchill have always stressed and given importance to Education as the number one priority for the prosperity of nations in the long run.

The problems faced in attaining sustainable democracy is similar to the education reforms which have been difficult to implement due to uncertainty



in the political and democratic process.

The following are the reasons of failure of effective education reforms in Rural Sindh:

1. The mindset of the feudal
2. Over Centralization of the provincial government( lack of powers to the local government)

Since the passage of the 18th Amendment, decentralization has been undertaken which is good and now education has become a provincial subject but the MQM feels that education reforms and its implementation at the provincial level cannot be addressed in its true spirit holistically unless the provincial government partners and consults with the local governments keeping in mind their problems which would be different district wise. Currently the role of the local government is not very clearly defined nor utilized effectively such as education, health & human resources which are the top priorities for us. There is no central policy nor any consultation with different stakeholders on how to address these problems. I feel that all Political Parties should present their respective party manifesto and the work they have carried out when they were in power and this would lead to accountability and transparency.

MQM despite not being given Ministries has always served the cause of education and the examples of our work undertaken by the two mayor's of MQM in Karachi City after the establishment of the Local Government in 2001. Both Naimatullah Khan and Mustafa Kamal have undertaken excellent work and initiatives for the people of Karachi which includes setting up world class colleges and implemented education reforms. Flaws were being rectified and Model Schools were being established to prevent discrimination within the society and similar schools were being set up in different parts of the city. Adopt a School initiative has been highly successful and as a result interventions have been well coordinated and implemented successfully as many NGO's have been involved along with other relevant stakeholders. Teacher training is very important and needs to be addressed as over the years there have been lack of these trainings. The use of Non Formal Schools should be encouraged and given recognition in terms of support and regulation as through these initiatives the concerned communities also are involved and it is highly effective.

The allocation of GDP on Education has to increase so resource mobilization to the provinces increases as a result but unfortunately education is not a priority at the moment for the current government.

**Q: Why is there Political Non Willingness in putting Education in the Political Agenda?**

Ans: As mentioned early on it is very difficult to change the feudal mindset and the problems of over centralization. The democracy of Pakistan has led to more power to the provinces but unfortunately our tribal/political/feudal mindset creates obstacles. Currently there are more than 342 Member of National Assembly and 104 Senators and more than 1,300 legislators for all 4 provinces.



Social Development is very important and in order for effective and efficient decentralization around more than 100,000 Nazims/ Chancellors would need to be elected from the districts by the people of that particular district.

Any process of devolution has to finish at the local government to ensure community ownership and the local government has to be empowered at the district level to be able to perform its duties effectively and be held accountable.

Dr. Farooq Sattar invited Ms. Mehnaz Aziz to some schools in Hyderabad which had been made by the Nazim of Hyderabad but the Government of Sindh took those schools away from the local government as they were creating a wave of change.

Dr. Farooq Sattar further claimed that the curriculum has to be changed and it should be universal for everyone and gave example of how India has progressed with this system. The curriculum has to be updated as the destiny of the nation has to be clearly defined and explained as currently the link between the student and teacher is very poor.

Currently in Punjab, the teachers are obsessed with religion. Reform is needed in Madrassa to the main education system.

**Q: The role of Low Cost Private Schools? As they are currently more than 70,000 in Punjab. The success of Orangi Pilot Project? As currently the government is not accepting or giving recognition.**

Ans: Government partnership is important and regulate the stakeholders along with the private sector.

Madrassa's should be regulated by the following:

1. Registration of the Madrassa
2. Enrollment of the students
3. Universal Curriculum
4. Audit of the account

Private schools have played an important role in Karachi like TCF, Shehzad Roy & MBFatima School where teachers, infrastructure are better equipped as NGO's are able to provide.

Jehangir Tareen has set up 70 schools in Lodhran in collaboration in TCF. NGO's and other stakeholders should be also be involved in providing teacher training as its very important.

He suggested that all individuals should give compulsory community service 1-2 years after students finish their higher education as either involved in the army or in the social service s being implemented in many countries like Germany and South Korea and a law should be formulated for this to be implemented as it is a social need of the society and gives an opportunity to the citizen to give back to its country.



Ms. Mehnaz Aziz shared that many youngsters have worked as intern for her organization and later on have received Fullbright Scholarship.

Dr. Farooq Sattar would facilitate CGN-P in this regard for the recognition of their services as part of the National Life Initiative.

**Q. How would MQM be able to implement education reforms and in what time frame?**

Ans. It will take around 3-5 years. Focus will be on previous results, accountability of the action undertaken previously. Outline a very clear strategy and outline on education reforms through consultation with different stakeholders. They have to be clearly defined policies with vigorous monitoring mechanism. PTI and MQM have given their policies on reforms. MQM is the only party to present the 2012 shadow government. We would need to change the mindset of all political parties and present clearly defined vision. Mustafa Kamal as the Mayor of Karachi was very successfully in doing so in a very short span of time.

**Q. What would be wish list of any future MQM government?**

Ans. The following steps will be undertaken by MQM:

1. System treatment
2. Diagnosis of the problem (Long Term Policy)
3. Short term plan: Land Reforms Bill implementation as proposed by the Late Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto Shaheed for the provinces.
4. Micro Finance to simulate the economy and to prevent urban unemployment and provide corporate farming which would help and set up small medium enterprise.

The steps to be undertaken on education reforms are the following:

1. Allocation of the budget would increase
2. Standard Universal Single Curriculum
3. Continuous and Monitored Teacher Training
4. Community Support to be enlisted
5. Girls enrollment to be increased in the rural areas and steps to promote it.
6. decentralization of the local government till the district level
7. Compulsory Education for All.
8. Community Service Initiative (1-2 years Teaching or Army Service)
9. To give and promote preference to teachers as a profession as it has now become a taboo.

**Q. MQM over the years is very accountable and is against Feudalism. How can you ask your partner or allies to do the same?**



Ans. Multi Party alliance is essential and despite MQM not coming to power we work on National Agenda as that will prevent problems and remove differences within the partners. National Commitment is needed to avoid problems like economic and human resources which could impact education.

**Q. We work with different provinces and they only focus on their own respective provinces, how could we have national unity on education reforms?**

Ans. We all need to focus on the national picture to solve the problems. As we have a good working relationship with the Chief Minister Punjab Mian Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif as both focus on teacher training and the work being carried out by Punjab on education reforms is exemplary and MQM took our vision of the local governance to Punjab and they are impressed and we both have issue based working relationship.