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IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON
ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

Reports submitted by States parties to the Covenant, in
accordance with Council resolution 1988 (LX), concerning
rights covered by articles 13-15

Addendum

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN */

[11 November 1987]

*/ This document contains information relating to articles 13 and 14 of
the Covenant.

Right to education:

1. The educational system of the Islamic Republic of Iran consists of a one-year kindergarten, five-year primary school, three-year middle or guidance cycle and a four-year secondary academic school, as well as secondary vocational and technical education. The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and its relevant articles related to education, constitute the cornerstone for the educational goals and ideals and are the basis upon which the aims and the far-reaching policies of education are formulated. According to article 3, part 3 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, education, including physical education, is free for all at all levels of education, and higher education should be extended so as to be geared to the needs of the society. Moreover, article 30 of the Constitution indicates that the Government is responsible for providing free education for all up to the secondary education and to extend higher education opportunities for the development of the self-sufficiency of the country.

2. If we take a glance at the educational goals of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which have been formulated after the victory of the Islamic Revolution, we will find that the educational system of the Islamic Republic of Iran has paid careful consideration to the development of the human personality and individual, as well as social fundamental freedoms. Some of these goals, which specifically express these points, are as follows:

(a) Strengthening the beliefs of students in the dignity of humanity, its superior role, its freedom and its responsibility before God;

(b) Strengthening the spirit of investigation and innovation in students in the fields of science, technology and culture;

(c) Encouraging students to struggle against any kind of tyranny and domination and to secure political independence;

(d) Creating a feeling of participation in a continuous teaching and learning process in students.

3. Moreover, the content of school textbooks is designed in such a way to secure the achievement of the above-mentioned goals. For example, human rights, fundamental freedoms and equality of all before the law, have been discussed in social science textbooks of secondary schools. Furthermore, the Iranian pupils become familiar with the United Nations and its ideals and activities for the maintenance of peace through school textbooks.

Right to primary education:

4. Extension and development of primary education has priority in the educational system of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and the Ministry of Education, while providing educational facilities, has utilized different impetuses to raise the rate of enrolment in primary schools. For example, the abolishment of tuition after the victory of the Islamic Revolution is one of the measures which has been taken in order to encourage parents to enrol their children in school. According to statistics, the number of students enrolled in elementary schools increased from 4,314,415 in the academic year of 1977-78 to 6,788,323 in 1985-96.

5. In spite of the efforts made by the Ministry of Education to provide education for rural children, a considerable number of these children in remote and mountainous villages still do not have access to schooling. However, the Ministry of Education intends to put a new project into operation for the extension of primary education in rural areas. According to this project, in each rural region consisting of several villages, a central village will be selected from among the villages of the region. A central school will be established there and children from the surrounding villages will enrol in the central school.

Special education:

6. In the Islamic Republic of Iran, mentally retarded as well as gifted children are considered exceptional children. They receive special education which corresponds to their particular potential and abilities. Before the Islamic Revolution, there were only a few public and private schools for mentally retarded and handicapped children in Tehran and other major cities. Consequently, only a small number of exceptional children could attend these schools. Fortunately, following the abolishment of all private schools and educational institutions, the Government provides financial support for such schools. As the result of this policy the number of students in such schools has increased considerably. Along with the increase of the number of students in these schools, the quality of instruction has also been considerably improved.

Education of the refugees:

7. The Islamic Republic of Iran provides educational opportunities for a large group of Afghan refugees, Iraqi-Kurdish and other Iraqi ethnic groups who have left their homes and are living in Iran.

Free education:

8. As was mentioned previously, education in Iran at all levels is free and students are not charged for tuition. Furthermore, in the academic year of 1983-84, the Government passed a decree according to which the Ministry of Education was granted financial aid in order to purchase and distribute school stationery among the students in the rural areas. In addition to the distribution of school stationery, once a year the Government awards cloth and footwear to students who belong to low income families. It should be mentioned that school textbooks for primary, guidance cycle and secondary school students are sold at a very low price.

Factors and difficulties:

9. Some of the current difficulties of our educational system are as follows:

(a) Schooling has not yet been provided for all Iranian children, especially for the tribes and those who live in remote rural areas;

(b) The difficulty of dispatching teachers to those areas where the standard of life, from the point of view of welfare, is lower than other parts of the country;

(c) The immigration of people from the war regions due to the imposed war limits the opportunity of an adequate education for these immigrants;

(d) Finally, the shortage of qualified manpower in planning centres is one of the bottlenecks of education.

Right to secondary education:

10. The secondary education comprises a four-year formal schooling for adolescents from 14 to 17 years of age. Secondary education is basically divided into theoretical (academic) and technical vocational branches. After having successfully passed the requirements of the guidance cycle (grades 6-8) pupils can continue their studies in one of the many areas of theoretical or technical vocational areas.

11. One of the goals pursued by the Government following the victory of the Revolution is to make education more equitable and accessible to the deprived and oppressed strata of the Iranian society. At present, parallel to efforts to formulate regulations for more widespread participation of the people in education, we have begun to establish "Model Secondary Schools" in deprived areas. In these schools, students from lower income families are admitted and can benefit from a better education.

Extension of technical and vocational education:

12. In order to extend technical and vocational education throughout the country, the Ministry of Education has adopted two different policies. One is the classical one, which should be carried out by the Ministry of Education through constructing technical schools, procuring the necessary equipment and training the technical instructors. The other one is the policy of making use of the potential technical manpower and equipment currently existing in the society through establishing technical schools near factories. Due to these policies the number of technical schools has increased by more than 50 per cent since the victory of the Islamic Revolution.

Combining work and education in secondary schools:

13. Interaction between work and education, directing students into productive activities, is another measure aimed at making technical and vocational education more accessible to youths. According to this project, which is called KAD project, the male students, guided by their teachers, leave their schools once a week to work in industrial establishments, factories, workshops and laboratories. Female students also take such courses as health, childcare, principles of nutrition, safety at home, sewing, cooking, embroidery and other artistic activities in their own schools. The main objective sought in this policy is to make students familiar with various aspects of professional activities.

Free secondary education:

14. According to the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, secondary education, like other levels of education is free for all.

Factors and difficulties:

15. All of the difficulties which were discussed in primary education also exist in the secondary level of our educational system. In addition to those restrictions, it should be mentioned that shortage of qualified secondary teachers and inadequate instructional facilities are some of the other obstacles which hinder the realization of making secondary education available and accessible to everyone.

Right to higher education:

16. According to the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Government is responsible to utilize all its possibilities in developing higher education to the extent of self-sufficiency of the country in science, technology, industry, agriculture and other similar areas.

The policy of developing higher education:

17. The development policy of the higher education of the former régime of Iran was based on two principles. One was the uncontrolled development and establishment of higher education institutions, and the other was sending ever greater numbers of students to foreign countries, without having any special formulated programme. As a result of this policy, a large group of university graduates were unemployed, or were unable to find a job relevant to their knowledge and specialization.

18. Following the victory of the Islamic Revolution, the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution was established. In order to clarify the educational policy of the country, including higher education, almost all of the higher education institutions, which were offering neither a high level of academic quality and nor had any relevance to the societal needs of the country, came under the jurisdiction of the Government. Furthermore, a free university with many branches throughout the country was established in 1984 in order to make higher education more accessible to those who live in the small cities of the country. Due to the above-mentioned policies, the number of university students has increased from 117,148 in 1982-83 to about 171,000 in 1986-87.

Factors and difficulties:

19. Although the number of students admitted to universities has doubled in recent years, only 30 per cent of the students who graduate from the various branches of the secondary schools are able to continue their higher education and the remaining 70 per cent do not have access to higher education. This is mainly due to the shortage of qualified university professors and to financial restrictions.

Right to fundamental education:

20. After the victory of the Islamic Revolution, Imam Khomeini, the leader of the Islamic Revolution and founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran, called upon the nation to eradicate illiteracy throughout the country. Following this message, a large number of literate young people voluntarily participated in literacy classes in order to teach the illiterates. Later on the Literacy Movement, whose responsibility is to combat illiteracy, was established, headed by the representative of Imam Khomeini.

21. From the beginning of the movement in 1980 until 1986, approximately 5,850,000 illiterate persons have been taught in 360,452 classes. Most of these literacy classes have been held in rural areas.

22. In addition, several hundred night secondary schools are also in operation throughout the country for adults who for various reasons were unable to continue their regular studies.

Development of the school system:

23. Following the victory of the Islamic Revolution, educational establishments have been subjected to fundamental qualitative and quantitative changes. In spite of many difficulties we inherited from the former régime, the Iranian people have been able to re-establish their educational content according to the spiritual culture of Islam which is accepted by almost all the people of Iran. Considering this important fact, we have taken many legislative and practical measures, some of which we shall discuss in brief:

(a) Preparation of educational publications:

In order to develop the minds of children and teenagers, to broaden their information and knowledge, and to reinforce what is taught in textbooks, a series of educational magazines entitled "Roshd" (Growth) are published monthly by the Ministry of Education. These magazines are available at schools for students at a very low price.

(b) Preparation of instructional aids, materials and laboratory facilities:

With the co-operation of the Bureau of Instructional Aids of the Ministry of Education, and the Instructional Aids Industry, materials such as laboratory instruments, films and slides related to the content of the textbooks are prepared and distributed throughout the country.

(c) Preparing reading materials:

The Centre for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults and the Bureau of Instructional Aids, affiliated with the Ministry of Education, have the responsibility of preparing useful, suitable books for children. These books are available at school libraries all over the country.

(d) Expansion of schools and construction of new school buildings:

Despite the imposed war and various difficulties arising from it, the Ministry of Education has done its best to build new schools and also to reconstruct old ones, providing sports fields, libraries and laboratories. The Organization of Mobilization and Re-construction of Schools affiliated with the Ministry of Education has actively taken responsibility in this regard. As a result, 4,553 new school buildings have been constructed in the past two years. It should be noted that the new schools have been built mostly in rural areas and deprived regions.

Fellowship system and education grants:

24. It should be mentioned that there is no form of discrimination in the educational system of the Islamic Republic of Iran which could lead to the unequal accessibility of different social groups to education. At the present time, the Government only awards fellowship to a small number of students who could obtain a high level of achievement in the academic competitions, such as mathematics. Furthermore, each school has a Parents-Teachers Association, which is composed of the representatives of parents and the teachers. These associations provide clothing and school supplies for the needy students, through the collection of the people's donations.

Improvement of the material conditions of teaching staff:

25. In the Islamic Republic of Iran, teachers are recruited as provisional employees for the first two years of their service. After this period, if they meet all the teaching requirements, they will be employed permanently.

26. The salary of teachers increases after each two-year interval. In addition to that, after every four to six years of work the rank of teachers will be promoted. Due to this promotion, their salary will also increase in accordance to their expenses. All the teachers have a three-month summer holiday with full pay. Furthermore, all teachers can take advantage of retirement after 25 to 30 years of service, or after 15 years if they choose, with a Government pension.

27. All women teachers have three-month paid maternity leave. All of the teachers who are employees of the Ministry of Education are ensured against diseases and accidents. They pay a percentage of their monthly salary as an insurance fee and in case of necessity they pay only a small amount of money for medical services.

28. All the teachers of each educational region can organize a housing co-operative society and ask the Government to provide land and loans to them. Furthermore, the consumption co-operative societies are also organized in order to provide teachers' food, materials and other necessary housewares at moderate prices.

29. Teachers who serve in small towns and rural areas, compared with those who serve in the capital or major cities, receive some distance and living condition allowances.

30. The young teachers who plan to marry can borrow money from the loan funds without interest. Leave without pay is a way that teachers who want to leave work for one or two years can benefit.

31. Every academic year, educational regions select outstanding teachers from among their teachers, and appreciate them on Teachers Day (2 May) and give them rewards, including cash rewards. On Teachers Day, schools also provide gifts for all of their teachers. Teachers who travel abroad, like other Government employees, can purchase their plane ticket with a 40 per cent discount.

32. Finally, the Government pays all of its employees, including teachers, a yearly bonus equivalent to one month's salary. The teaching hours of each teacher is 24 hours per week. If the length of a teacher's service reaches 20 years, the teaching hours will decrease to 18 per week.

In-service training of teachers:

33. In order to make teachers familiar with the new methods of teaching as well as the newly-compiled school textbooks the office of In-service Training, which is a branch of the Ministry of Education, is responsible for providing in-service training programmes for teachers. According to statistics every year close to 17,413 teachers pass on-the-job training courses.

Continuous education of teachers:

34. In order to make higher education accessible to a large number of Iranians, an open university, which is called the Free Islamic University, was established in 1984. This university, which has campuses throughout the country, provides a good opportunity for school teachers to continue their studies in the field of education or other fields relevant to the subject matters which they teach in schools.

35. Furthermore, all the teachers can participate in the University Entrance Examination of other universities and in case of admission to the branches which are required by the Ministry of Education, they can teach only 12 hours per week in schools, meanwhile receiving their entire salary.

Teachers' participation in the formulation of educational plans:

36. Within the Ministry of Education there is an organization which is called the Organization of Research and Educational Planning. This institution is responsible for preparing curriculum and compiling school textbooks from pre-primary to secondary school and for two-year teacher training centres. Research groups which are working in the Research and Curriculum Bureau of this organization, have a constant communication with school teachers, and invite the representatives of teachers to participate in developing and designing curriculum as well as compiling school textbooks.

Right to choice of school:

37. In order to provide equal educational opportunities, all private schools have been abolished since 1979, and almost all of the schools are run by the Ministry of Education. It should be noted that religious minorities have their own schools and have the right to send their children to the schools which belong to the religious minorities.

Liberty to establish and direct educational institutions:

38. Individuals and groups can establish non-profit primary and secondary schools with the permission of the Ministry of Education and utilize the educational programmes of the State schools. Individuals and groups are also permitted to establish educational institutions for the purpose of teaching foreign languages, technical skills and compensative courses for the university applicants. These courses prepare university applicants for taking the university entrance examination.

Principle of education: Free of charge to all:

39. Education in the Islamic Republic of Iran is not compulsory, but the Government is responsible to provide educational opportunities for all. Furthermore, according to the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, education at all levels is free of charge for all. As previously mentioned, abolishing school tuition is one of the major measures which has been taken since the victory of the Islamic Revolution in order to encourage people to send their children to school.
