

REPORT OF THE WORKSHOP ON DEMOCRACY OF THE YOUTH LEADERSHIP TRAINING PROGRAM

The six-day workshop on democracy, consisting of 32 contact hours, took place from February 16-21, 2009 in the premises of the Higher Education Commission, Hayatabad Peshawar. Mr. Wajahat Masood, resource person, conducted the workshop wherein a total of 30 participants attended the workshop. Mr. Nasir Ali, Ms. Amna Durrani, Ms. Shakeela of the Baacha Khan Trust Educational Foundation (BKTEF) facilitated the workshop. The first phase of the project i.e. Training of Trainers comprises modules on four different subjects i.e. Democracy, Peace and Development, Human Rights, and Leadership. A consolidated overview of the first workshop is as follows:

The resource person carried out a need analysis of the group on the very first day whereby the group came up with the following topics:

1. State and Government
2. Relativism vs. Universality
3. Importance of Democracy
4. State vs. Religion
5. Fundamentalism
6. Forms of Govt.
7. Islam and Democracy
8. Secularism
9. Dictatorship
10. Law & Constitution
11. Role of Political Parties
12. Public Opinion
13. Provincial Autonomy
14. Transparent Electoral System etc

The course was however tailored selecting topics on the basis of relevance and significance to contemporary situation. These included concept of State, Democracy, Fundamentalism, Secularism, Policy Formulation and Critical Thinking.

WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES

The module on "Political Concepts sought to:

1. Familiarize participants with basic concepts of Politics i.e. Democracy, Secularism and Fundamentalism.
2. Compare, contrast, and evaluate their understanding in the context of historical facts.
3. Highlight and imbed concept of democratic attitudes into day-to-day life.
4. Develop team spirit, consensus and presentation skills.

Day 1: February 16, 2009

Theme: Politics

After the introduction of the participants, a brainstorming session among the participants and the resource person took place to explore the understanding of the participants of the objectives of the programs. Needs assessment was carried out as well by group discussion and a multiple-choice handout about different political concepts. Main theme for day one was Politics, State and its elements and various forms. A reading literature was provided to the participants. The resource person elaborated on the content and questions were also invited for or against the ideas presented. The participants took part in the group discussion to clarify their understanding. This was followed by a group activity by forming groups of five members for discussing together the concept of politics and their outlook on improved governance. Each group extended presentation on their assignment.

Day 2: February 17, 2009

Theme: Democracy

A critical evaluation of democracy in its ideal and the form prevailing in developing countries, with particular reference to Pakistan was made. Manual on democracy, penned by the resource person himself was used as the resource material. The subtopics included the ideas of inclusion and exclusion. The methodology for instruction was lecture, question/answers, group work and presentations in which the participants sought to convey their understanding of what makes a good democratic state work.

Day 3: February 18, 2009

Theme: Secularism

The resource person Mr. Wajahat gave a comprehensive lecture on the concept of Secularism. Reading material was provided to the participants and group discussion took place. The participants worked in groups and presented before the class their understanding of the topic.

Day 4: February 19, 2009

Theme: Fundamentalism

The resource person tried to explore general understanding of the concept by taking participants' views. Different versions of the concept were elaborated and reading manual on "secularism" was used as resource material. After a thorough explanation of literal, contextual meaning to prevailing versions of fundamentalism all the participants were assigned individual assignments. The participants worked individually and came up with individual elaboration of the concept in class presentations.

Day 5: February 20, 2009

Theme: Policy Formulation

Day 5 was an interesting group discussion and exercise day on Policy Formulation. The resource person divided the whole class into five groups and assigned them different government portfolios to formulate policies. The exercise aimed at developing policy formulation techniques keeping in view ground situation.

Day 6: February 21, 2009

Theme: Critical Thinking

The concept of critical thinking was discussed on the closing day. In this regard various opinions, information; biased views/statements were analyzed in depth. A group activity followed on presentation and facilitation skills to give the participants a brainstorming idea of ways to conduct a training workshop. Each group discussed and prioritized training topics they considered important to be delivered in second phase of the training.

Training Outcomes

All the participants expressed their satisfaction on the quality of the workshop and they shared that their misconception and concerns regarding some very basic concepts were substantially addressed along with the understanding of a number of new concepts. The participants' demonstrated seriousness and responsibility in their discussions with the resource person and fellow participants and all of them enthusiastically participated in group and individual activities. Retention rate towards the end of the training program was 96%. While attendance and participation rate remained positively high. In the light of the set objectives, the training module successfully achieved the following outcomes:

- Conceptual clarity of the basic ideas taught
- Developed among the participants the ability to relate and analyze ideals of a successful political culture with practices in vogue, and ways to improve them.
- Conceptual clarity on new ideas of inclusion, critical thinking, and diversity and public reason developed.
- Significance and knowledge of imbedding democratic attitudes in daily life practices developed
- Ability to work with diverse group and to respect diversity through group activities and discussions developed.
- The training provided a platform for developing and improving upon their presentation and communication skills.

The second workshop on Peace and Development is scheduled from March 6 -9, 2009. Dr. Saba Gul Khattak of the SDPI is the resource person for the second workshop. Necessary logistical arrangements have been completed for the second workshop.