

NLD Statement 76/2000:

National League for Democracy
No: (97/B), West Shwegonedine Road
Bahan Township, Rangoon

Statement 76(5/00) (translation)

1. Impositions of unjust fees causing hardship to students and parents has been reported to us by a letter from a parent.

2. The facts stated in the letter are:-

- At No 6, Basic Education Middle School, in No 10 Ward, Hlaing township, entrance fees for primary students is Kyats 10,000 because of a deficit of funds allotted by government for a new school building. Government's contribution was only Kyats 35 lakhs and the estimated cost is Kyats 90 lakhs.

- This exorbitant demand at a time when the cost of living has inflated is making the people angry and disgruntled..

- For people who make money by dishonest means, this is not a problem, but for honest to goodness hard working people, this is beyond their means.

- So much publicity has been given on TV and the media about the country's riches and natural resources and the modern advances and developments. But nothing is being done for the education, health and social welfare of the people. Education of children has become the total responsibility of parents which means that education is for the rich and not the poor. "Fry the nga-yin fish in its own fat" is the appropriate Burmese saying.

- In addition to this, collections are taken up for several causes, some of which are for the headmaster who will be transferred, school mugs, brooms, water pots, students festival (three tickets per festival and two festivals compulsory). Parents are often called upon to perform social welfare odd jobs. The system of class teachers has given rise to private tuition with exorbitant fees, which is not affordable by many parents resulting in poor results for their children. Thus "money for education" system has been created.

- In a nut shell, the author of that letter asks "what is happening to all the country's above ground, under ground, above water and under water wealth?" The masses have no share in the benefits. Parents have to educate their children at great expense.

3. At the present time, ordinary citizens are experiencing great hardship because education is associated with money. Those in authority and their cohorts who have access to lots of money are not experiencing these hardships. For them everything seems to be working well.

4. This inequality and wealth associated education foreshadows a dark future for the youth and the generation to come. Lip service only is being paid to nurturing the youth while havoc and destruction for the future is being practiced.

5. Genuine education cannot be achieved while avarice and greed pervades the system. It is all talk and superficial. "Quickly brought to the boil to swell the rice" describes the kind of education that exists today.

6. We believe and remind the authorities that education makes a person. His future, and his worth are dependent on his education. A policy with equal opportunities for all at minimum cost to them must be created and genuinely and honestly adhered to.

Central Executive Committee
National League for Democracy

Rangoon
30 May 2000