



Kingdom of Bahrain

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Submission by Bahrain Teachers Society(BTA):

Discrimination in Education

Bahrain Teachers Society looks after teachers and profession rights, enhanced Teachers social and economical status, Support education and upgrading the Bahraini citizen.

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Background:

1. This simple report deals with some headlines talking about sectarian discrimination carried out by Bahraini authorities in the educational field, based on our observations during the period from 2012 to March 2016 (the date of writing this report).
2. Despite the fact that the second item of the first chapter of the National Action Charter stipulates the equality between citizens, justice and equal opportunities, and that all citizens are equal before the law in terms of rights and duties, without distinction of race, origin, language, religion or belief. However, the practices carried out by the authority on the ground don't demonstrate that, and they reflect a clear discrimination between the major two sects.

First: Discrimination in senior educational positions:

3. In the past five years, specifically since February 2011, the Ministry of Education in Bahrain has clearly increased the level of discrimination in the educational senior positions, and it is no longer distinguishable secret to one in the country. If we reviewed the top positions and the names which occupy them, we will see clearly the size of the widespread sectarian discrimination in the senior positions in Ministry of Education, and the shameless exclusion practiced against the vast majority of educational cadres who belong to the Shiite sect from decision-making positions, and the official ministry website gives a clear undeniable evidence.

Second: Discrimination in Curriculum:

4. The first item of Article III of the Education Law for the year 2005 states "establishing of the Islamic creed and its role in the integration of individual's personality, family cohesion, unity of the community and collaboration and to highlight the role of Islam as a comprehensive approach of life as it is valid for every time and place and its ability to cope with the requirements of life." Also, Article (7) (b) of the Constitution states that " The law regulates the various aspects of religious education and patriotism at different educational grades. It aims at strengthening the personality of the citizen and the pride of Arabism".
5. According to international reports, the Shiites make more than 65% of the demographic composition of the population of the Kingdom of Bahrain, and it is natural to have the majority of the students from Shiites in the country's schools, because their proportion is the largest among the total number of students in Bahrain. However, it is abnormal that the Shiite doctrine doesn't have any doctrinal or ideological presence in the Islamic education curricula and it doesn't have any historical presence in the history curriculum taught in Bahraini schools and universities by up to zero percent. Shiite students are forced to study the religious curriculum in accordance with the Sunni sects, and without having the right to express their opinions or their beliefs in some doctrinal and theological and historical issues, and if they try to clarify the opinion of their doctrine, they are accused of provoking sectarian strife and they are held accountable in a harsh way, and this practice is intended to separate the Shiite students ideologically, doctrinally, historically, culturally and psychologically from their Sunni classmates. As well as to ban systematically the Bahraini Sunni students from having access to Shiite culture, and that creates a kind of confusion inside students, between reality and what

they study. And Ministry of Education, deliberately, excluded the Shiite educational cadres from being involved in writing curriculum in all educational and university stages, such as Arabic language, English, science, mathematics, social studies and Islamic education. All the Ministry of Education practices in writing textbooks and the contents of Islamic and historical books indicate clearly the consolidation of the sectarian discrimination, which is criminalized by the international Covenants on human Rights. (Enclosed here with various textbooks and Islamic and historical books).

Third: Discrimination in Employment:

6. Item (a) in Article 13 of the Constitution stipulates "Every citizen has the right to work and to choose the type of work", and item (b) of the same article states " The State guarantees the provision of job opportunities for its citizens with fair working conditions." and item (a) of Article 16 of the Constitution states " Public jobs are a national service entrusted to their incumbents, and State employees shall target public benefit when performing their jobs. Foreigners shall not have positions in public jobs except in those cases specified by law."

7. Constitution Article

8. The Ministry of Education issued at the beginning of the academic year 2016/2017 reports indicate that there are 1573 unemployed educators (all from the Shiite sect), and in response to a parliamentary question, the Minister of Education said 3110 volunteers have been employed in the Ministry of Education despite the fact that they lack educational qualifications , and away from the employment criteria which is applied on the unemployed university graduated Shiite educators. At the same time, a statement by Education Ministry said it has hired expatriates, and they are now representing 20% of the total number of the employees in the educational sector, which has 23 thousand employees, and with nearly 1800 unemployed citizens with educational degrees.

Fourth: Discrimination in Promotions:

9. Item (b) of Article 16 of the Constitution states " Citizens are equal in employment in public positions according to the conditions specified by law", and Article 14 of the Civil Service Law, states that "an employee shall be promoted on the basis of efficiency by a decision from the Relevant Authority and with approval from civil service Bureau's approval, and the Bureau shall formulate a promotion system based on regulations and provided with rights for the promoted employee according to the executive regulation".

10. In every academic year, the Ministry of Education announces promotion competitions and hundreds of Shiite teachers apply for them. Many of them pass all the steps of the competitions, but they are deprived from being promoted without giving reasons, and if they asked the Ministry to exercise transparency in this area, their requests are ignored. This problem has been repeated over the last five years. When transparency is absent in promotions and employment in educational institutions, that indicates discrimination, and when teachers are transferred to lower positions that gives another indicator of discrimination, and no one can deny this fact. The Ministry's practices against Shiites are the clearest evidences for this kind of discrimination.

Fifth: Discrimination in Scholarships:

11. Item (1) of Article five of the Education Law states "to provide educational opportunities for everyone to develop his aptitudes, abilities and skills to achieve self-realization to develop his life and society," and item (10) of the same article states "to provide diversity of educational opportunities, according to the individual needs of variable students and taking care of outstanding and talented students and enrichment of their experience, and to take care of the slow learners and those with special needs by following up their progress and integrating the capable ones in education. " Attachment (1)

12. In 2011, for the first time since years, the Ministry of Education in Bahrain refused to publish the results of the distribution of university scholarships in the local newspaper, and only the selected students were allow to see the results, each student individually by entering the ID number, to the Ministry's website.

2011 is the year that witnessed the start of the political movement on February 14, and the bloody crackdown against it. This decision came as part of this campaign, but within a strategic vision based on the plot-Bandar's report, in an attempt to speed up all the plans that have been developed before 2006.

The plot lasted five years, and the result are thousands of students who have either caused financial fatigue to their parents, or had to emigrate or forced to study something they didn't want, and then failed, or faced study problems , or decided to suspend their studies entirely and their hopes for future became dark.

In this year 2015, the number of the students who did not get any of their first three desires, from the board of honor students, including the students whose GPA reached 99%, reached an insane, which sparked people furious! Some of them did not even get any scholarship and they were just offered an educational assistance of 400 dinars (\$ 1058) which does not cover 10% of their study cost in any university.

Fifth: Discrimination in Bahrain Training Institute:

13. Item (1) of Article (17) of the Civil Service Law states " An Employee may be transferred, delegated or assigned to official duties by a decision of the Relevant Authority and after the Bureau approval according to conditions prescribed by the Executive Regulations, Provided that such transfer or delegation shall not be to a position with a lower grade than the position currently occupied by the employee".

14. Ministry of Education has carried out a clear sectarian discrimination policy against the Shiite employees at Bahrain Training Institute (BTI) through the transfer of 70 Shiite employees to schools and replacing them by trained employees belonging to the respectful Sunni sect

15. As well as, the Ministry has marginalized the transferred employees in their new positions and stripped them of their jobs and tasks, in addition to taking provocative actions against them by management of the Institute through assigning a security guard to accompany them during their follow-up visits to the BTI buildings.

16. They have been excluded from promotions and job allowances, after excluding elite of staff with high academic qualifications. They have addressed the competent authorities to intervene to resolve their problems and end their suffering.

17. The employees have sent a letter of complaint to the Appeals Committee of the Ministry of Education, stressing that the transfer decision was contrary to Article 17 of Legislative Decree No. 48 of 2010 issuing the Civil Service Law, which stipulates that " An Employee may be transferred, delegated or seconded or assigned to missions by a decision of the Relevant Authority and after the Bureau approval in accordance with the conditions prescribed by the Executive Regulations, Provided that such transfer or delegation shall not be to a position of a grade lower than the grade of the position currently occupied by the employee" The employees considered the transfer decision to the new posts are lower than the jobs they were occupying in BTI, as well as they don't not fit their qualifications and years of experience".

18. The Ministry of Education has implemented some of the decisions and actions on the Shiite employees for expressing their opinions, which is guaranteed by the Constitution, the National Action Charter and international covenants and treaties signed by the Kingdom of Bahrain, which reflected negatively on the Institute's training programs, and the employees' job situation is still continuing since 2011.

Attachments:

Attachment (1)

19. Jalila Abduljalil Hassan shared the 11th ranking in the Bahraini government schools with three other students who achieved high scores reached 99.2%. She will not be able to study medicine, although the ministry has given three of her colleagues who had the same GPA scholarships to study medicine at the Arabian Gulf University and the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland.

20. Jalila has cried a lot! Not because she did not expect being deprived of the scholarship, but because it is the second case of its kind in her family. Two years ago, her sister was deprived of having medicine scholarship, and her family had to teach her at their expense. Now her family can't afford to pay her as well. Thus accumulates injustice even within the same family!

Unlike the outstanding student Fatima Mohammed Ali, whose story has been published in a detailed report, her partner who came in the seventeenth ranking on the board of honor, Zainab Mohamed Mahdi didn't get a medicine scholarship too. Mustafa, the son of the detainee Mohammed Ali Radhi, one of the 14 imprisoned political leaders, was sent to prison at the beginning! We published how he surrendered himself to the police station carrying a certificate of excellence, in order to serve the rest of his jail punishment (revenge), after being convicted of "gathering" and sentenced to three months in jail. Mustafa chose to enter the prison last Ramadan, in order to keep the remaining hope of catching up with university study.

The outstanding student Mustafa achieved 98.8%, and he was a candidate for the Crown Prince's scholarships. He was oppressed twice: once when he entered prison with a certificate of excellence, and later when the Ministry didn't offer him his first desire (the study of medicine), although he was ranked seventh in Bahrain and despite allocating 11 Medicine scholarships for the male students of the government schools! The situation wasn't different

in private schools: two of the highest outstanding students in private schools who got 99.9%, did not get their first desires, the study of Medicine. Figures, vacancies, and educational standards confirm that they are eligible for the scholarships of Medicine, which have been offered to three students whose grades are: 94%, 93%, 90%! In another case, a Student whose grade reached 97.7% did not get her first desire to study engineering, while her colleague whose grade 94% received that scholarship.

A survey conducted by an independent body confirms that about 77% of the Shiite students, whose scores exceeded 95%, haven't received their study desires in scholarships! Ironically, in this year in particular, the Education Ministry expressed its pride of granting each outstanding student his/her first desire.

What's more, the most fortunate student was in the scientific path (physics & mathematics). He filled out the scholarships form and selected the 12 options available, and then he received his last desire to study "tourism"! While the scholarships vacancies show there are vacancies in the relevant disciplines that he wanted to study.

A cable from Wikileaks has revealed how Bahraini students are sent to study in GCC states, in Saudi Arabia, for example: the Embassy of Manama has addressed the Saudi Foreign Ministry recommending a candidate to receive a scholarship, because he is a student belonging to a well-known Sunni family!

A comparative study reveals that 2015 is the highest within 5 years in the percentage of sectarian discrimination in the distribution of outstanding students' scholarships.

21. The study has revealed that the year 2015 witnessed the highest level of discrimination in scholarships on a sectarian basis, based on a comparative study prepared by the team which covers the five previous years, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015. The team, in their study, stressed that the escalating discrimination applied by the authority against the talented and outstanding students is a stab in the future of the country and its builders. And if the discrimination is practiced against outstanding students, how about other young people of Bahrain who are discriminated against in jobs, educational opportunities, promotion, professional development and in all services.

The team noted that it conducted a comparative study on students whose cumulative scores ranging from 95% -99% in the past five academic years for the distribution of scholarships desires of study. The study has revealed the presence of huge sectarian discrimination.

22. First, in the academic year 2011 / 2012 the study was conducted on 166 male and female students. The results were as follows:

Depriving 21% of the outstanding students of the scholarships
18% of the students received their first desires
4% of them got their second desires
7% of them received their 3rd desire
Depriving 49% of them from their first three desires
Depriving 1% of them from any scholarship

23. Second: In the academic year 2012 / 2013, the study was conducted on 101 male and female students. The results were as follows:

Depriving 25% of the students from getting any scholarships
7% of the students got their first desires
3% of the students got their second desires
9% of the students got their third desires
54% of the students were deprived of their first three desires

24. Third: In the academic year 2013 / 2014, the study was conducted on 108 male and female students. The results were as follows:

Depriving 10% of the students from getting any scholarships
30% of the students got their first three desires
60% of the students were deprived of their first three desires

25. Fourth: In the academic year 2014 / 2015, the study was conducted on 109 male and female students. The results were as follows:

Depriving 8% of the students from getting any scholarships
17% of the students got their first desires
6% of the students got their second desires
8% of the students got their third desires
61% of the students were deprived of their first three desires

26. Fifth: In the academic year 2015 / 2016, the study was conducted on 146 male and female students whose final scores percentage ranging from 95% to 99.2% . The results were as follows:

Depriving 33.6% of the students from getting any scholarships
17.8% of the students got their first desires
0.7% of the students got their second desires
4.1% of the students got their third desires
77.4% of the students were deprived of their first three desires

27. The study shows that the academic year 2015/2016 witnessed the greatest discrimination during the past five academic years with respect to distributing the study scholarships, and it shows that the sectarian discrimination has deprived 630 students from any scholarships, and deprived 387 students from their first three desires during the past three academic years.

28. A study was conducted in 2015 showed that 34% of the outstanding students were deprived of scholarships. It included 146 students whose scores percentage exceeds 95%. 82% of the students were deprived of their first desires. The study questioned about 228 announced scholarships in medical specializations under deprivation of many students of their desires to study these disciplines .

Attachment (2)

29. The following are some of the measures taken by the Ministry of Education against Shiite employees and without warning: On February 9, 2014 and during the exit of many Shiite

employees from the Bahrain Training Institute, they were stopped by a security guard and told them it was last day at the institute, as there was a decision of the Ministry of Education transferred them to a school, without allowing them to take personal belongings in their offices, in addition to some of the documents and money of the student. And one of them was on an official holiday, and his tasks were assigned to an Asian as well as his Office PIN number was changed, and surprisingly they assigned a number of trainees to replace the former employees, estimated by 70 employees. Another employee said that "the trainees have access to privileges and salary increase, in spite of a lack of competence and experience, and the BTI structure is unknown.

30. A third employee said "I was working in the English Department, but I was transferred to a new and marginalized section for more than two years. In addition, my new office doesn't have a window or air conditioning, and I feel like being in a prison which caused me diseases.

31. She continued " the ministry's decision came to transfer me to a school in the post of administrative technician, but the assigned tasks do not match the job title, as well as our status in the Ministry of Education is unclear, as there is no attendance and leave system, and the ministry has no data for our assessment which puts psychological pressure on the employees.

32. On the other hand, a fourth employee criticized the Ministry of Education. She said "Instead of honoring me for the years of experience that I own and that exceed four consecutive years in the training and the employment of university graduates project in Ministry of Labour and my loyalty in serving my homeland, as she worked in two government authorities and made her best. She has been awarded the degree of excellence by three different directors, but the ministry did not take this into account, and transferred her to a school to kill my experience in the field of accounting.

33. She continued "When I went to receive the decision from the Human Resources Department at the Ministry of Education in Manama, I refused to the job title, a computer technician in a school, but they told me that I had to see the Head of planning and manpower at the Human Resources department, and the later informed me that he would look into my grade, and the existing vacancies in any school, regardless of qualification or residence, knowing that my specialty is incompatible with the nature of the new assigned job ".

34. She added that "after having years of experience in the field of accounting and preparation of financial statements and closing accounts of the project each year, she ended up with a limited job in school to write reports and install programs in computers".