

Education System of Japan

Honorable Ms. Sadia Rashid, Chancellor of Hamdard University,

Deans and Professors of Faculties,

Dear Students of Hamdard University,

Good Morning and Assalam Alaikum,

I am very pleased to be given the opportunity to speak on the Education System of Japan today.

(Overview of bilateral relations)

Before talking about the education system of Japan, I would like to touch upon the Japan-Pakistan Relationship. Japan and Pakistan have always had a friendly relation throughout the last 60 years. Japan and Pakistan established diplomatic relations in April 1952. Their Majesties the Emperor and Empress of Japan paid a visit to Pakistan in January 1962 as then Crown Prince and Princess. In November 1992, Their Imperial Highness Prince Akishino, the second son of the Emperor and Princess, visited Pakistan.

(Education System of Japan)

Now I will talk about the education system of Japan.

School year starts in April and ends in March in Japan. Elementary school lasts for six years (age is from 6 to 12 years old). and junior high school lasts for three years (age is from 13 to 15). The total of 9 years is the compulsory education in Japan. Public elementary and junior high schools usually require no admission exams, but private schools require admission exams. Junior high school graduates may continue their education to high schools or technological colleges (kosen), which, however, is not compulsory and therefore requires the passing of an admission exam to enter. High schools generally offer a three-year program. The high school curriculum includes such subjects as Japanese language, geography and history, civics, mathematics, science, health and physical education, art, English, home economics and information. Extra- curricular activities are also required.

There are several types of high schools: General academic high school and specialized high school that targets future employment in a specific job area such as business, industrial arts, agriculture, etc. Technological colleges in Japan offer a five-year program to students who wish to gain greater technology-related skills. The specialized areas of technological colleges include industry, merchant marine-related studies, electronic/information engineering and aviation. Graduates of technological colleges usually go directly into employment. High school graduates are entitled to take admission exams to junior colleges and universities. Junior colleges offer a two-year program, while universities offer a four-year program. Some graduates of high school go to specialized training colleges. The fields of study are such fields as nursing, mechanics, cooking, designer, computer programmer, etc. Junior college or technological college graduates may transfer to a four-year university course as a junior student. University graduates who wish to further study in their specialized area may choose to continue their education to graduate school. Master's programs offered at graduate schools are usually a two-year course.

As you may have noticed through the DVD on "The Life of Japanese Elementary School Children", the Japanese education system lays emphasis on cooperative behavior, group discipline, and conformity to standards. It served the country well in producing the skilled industrial work force that made Japan a global economic power in the 20th century. The success of the system is further reflected in the fact that the great majority of the Japanese people consider themselves middle class and see education as the road to prosperity for their children. So the parents in Japan are very keen on providing education to their children.

You could notice that there are many schools in Japan which teach specialized subjects. The graduates of these schools support the development of the nation in the area of each field such as science and technology in Japan.

Let me touch upon the foreign students who come to Japan for study. The number of foreign students at Japanese universities continues to increase, reaching over 140 thousand in 2010. About 97% of these students are from Asia.

For your information, there are programs such as the Japanese Government Scholarship and Invitation Program to visit Japan for 6 days for university students and high school students from SARRC countries including Pakistan. If you are interested in the scholarship or the invitation program, please look at the website of the Embassy of Japan in Islamabad.

(Prospect for Pakistan's development)

Pakistan is a country with great potential for development in the future. Pakistan has a large population of 180 million, the 6th largest in the world. This means there is a large market in Pakistan. And Pakistan is very near to the Middle East. So a large potential market lies not only in South Asia but also in the Middle East. The large manpower and natural resources such as copper and coal are also available. With these available resources and favorable conditions, Pakistan has a big potential for development in the future.

What I would like to stress here is that education is one of the most important factors for development of a nation. Japan has no natural resources but has only human resources, who are very well educated. Human resources of Japan have such qualities as sincerity, honesty, dedication, discipline, punctuality and consideration for others. These qualities are as important as technical skills. The media in the world reported very highly that at the time of the Great East Japan Earthquake of March 11, 2011, the people in Tohoku region of Japan were very much disciplined, helped others and lined up patiently for food allocation, etc. The Japanese people with these qualities rose from ashes of World War Two and are now rising again after the Great East Japan Earthquake.

Let me quote a figure of Japanese educational level. In Japan about 98% of junior high school graduates go on to high schools and about 48% of high school graduates go to universities and about 6% go to junior colleges and about 17% go to specialized technical colleges and if I add the students of 4th grade of technical colleges, the rate of high school graduates who go on to study in the higher level is about 80%.

In Pakistan too, the key for success in developing the country is education. Basic education for all and higher education, especially in the area of science and technology, is important for economic development.

I understand that many of the attendees today are the students of engineering science and medical science. So I would like to touch upon a little bit about that field. Japan has been providing ODA to Pakistan in such fields as health, sanitation, infrastructure, etc. as well as education. Japan places an importance on these sectors of basic human needs of the people. I hope you will contribute to the development of the country through the advancement of engineering science and medical science in Pakistan in the future for the better life of the Pakistani people.

(How to get information on Japan and Japanese culture)

I have brought some materials on Japan today. A magazine called "*Niponica*" is to introduce Japanese culture and "*Japan Information Bulletin*" is to introduce activities of the Embassy and the Consulate-General of Japan. Please pay a visit to Japan Information and Culture Center (JICC) of the Consulate-General of Japan. The JICC has a library, an exhibition hall and a reading room for Pakistani people to get to know about Japan. You can borrow books and DVDs on Japan by just becoming the member of the Library of JICC. We also organize various cultural events such as exhibitions, film shows, etc. at the Center.

And also please visit the Web-site of the Consulate-General of Japan, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan and also there is a Web-site called "*Web Japan*" where you can get information on Japan and the Japanese people. As for information on Japan's foreign policy, the Web-site called "*Discuss Japan - Japan Foreign Policy Forum*" is available. So please visit those Web-sites for your reference.

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