

The tassel was worth the hassle

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After fifteen years of laughter, entertainment, teamwork, misery, and tears – I successfully graduated from one of Pakistan’s top schools. Indeed, the tassel was worth the hassle. I will always cherish the memories and valuable lessons I learnt at this institution that not only trains us academically but also grooms us socially and intellectually. On the day of my graduation ceremony every face was lit with a countenance of satisfaction and completion. My school is bustling a society where the parents and students are part of a greater fraternity dedicated to the academic, social, and intellectual progress of each individual.

On this delightful moment, some nostalgic gut-wrenching thoughts of the massacre of the angels in Peshawar arose in my mind – accompanied with that was an eerie yet relentless feeling of restlessness. Most of the one hundred and forty one infallibles would have been promoted to a higher grade and some of them would have graduated by then. Life moves on but the hearts are still heavy. The parents of martyrs lament and envy the satisfaction my parents were feeling while staring at me wearing a black cap and gown with nostalgic thoughts. However they had seen their own children in coffins, an ineffaceable memory. The brave heroes of the Peshawar Attack were not the only victims of extremism.

I also had the Second Daughter of the nation, the brave and valiant Malala in my mind. I had the poor and needy children of Pakistan who desperately thirst education but lack the resources and opportunities they desire. We ought to consider ourselves lucky that we are given all these golden opportunities to make a remarkable change in mitigating extremism, radicalism, fundamentalism, and anti-democratic elements in Pakistan. The

imperative transition demanded by Pakistan is in the education system. Pakistan's literacy rate is currently a 57 percent -half of those reported 'literate' do not fall in the norms of literacy in accordance to international standards.

Moreover, this statistic is lower than the literacy rates of India and Bangladesh. Education should be our first and most primary priority – with the rising of poverty in Pakistan, many parents have withdrawn their children from school. Change cannot be brought about unless people are educated – only then shall we see the graph of Pakistan's progress concave up with a positive derivative. As we graduate highschool most of us are going aboard for higher studies while other are continuing in Pakistan. We boldly make many proud promises to our families, friends and ourselves for financial progress.

Now is the time we should start making a promise to our motherland Pakistan – a promise to make Pakistan a better place, a place full of love, life and humanity free of ethnic, racial, religious, and lingual discrimination. Most importantly, we should strive in our flesh, blood, and bones to make it a place with not only Unity, Faith and Discipline but also the fundamental human rights given to us by the 18th century French Renaissance of freedom, honor, justice, equality, liberty, democracy, secularism, and social, industrial and intellectual progress.