

Awarding The Ever Increasing Academic Excellence

Written by Kesete Ghebrehiwet



It has been a widespread concern of the general public that with the evermore increase of prize winners, the award for academic excellence might somehow diminish both in quality and quantity. Contrary to these expectations, however, Zagre Award- 2010 once again proved the fact that the yet on rise academic excellence would still be rewarded in doubles.

Last Tuesday 14th September a number of people flocked to the expo grounds where the academic excellence award ceremony was held. The multitude of people that include 1,044 awardees, parents, invited guests, government officials and dignitaries once again, after the closing of the Eritrea festival 2010, filled the expo ground to attend the prizes awarding ceremony.

A number of outstanding students have been in eager anticipation to receive the Zagre Award. Semir Mohammed Jabir was an average student until he completed his junior school. Partaking in the general national examination enabled him to draw experiences from the outstanding students who scored good results in the exam. He then developed a sense of comp



etitiveness in the secondary school which eventually rewarded him as a prize winner. Hence, he became one among the Zagre awardees of the 2009-2010 academic year scoring full marks in the secondary school matriculation exam. He said that he was very confident that he would score full marks even before the completion of the 12th grade at Warsay Yekealo Secondary School.

The awarding ceremony was an occasion that highlighted the overall state of the educational institutions that have been gradually flourishing in different parts of the country. Despite the noticeable disparity of educational facilities, some schools have shown impressive progress. This proves that though influenced by external factors, excellence mainly depends on the constructive attitudes to overcome challenges. Therefore, despite the deficits of educational materials they faced 12 secondary schools from the rural areas of the country were awarded for the impressive achievement they registered on the increase of the number of awardees.

Among those who scored full marks were members of the defense forces. Since his participation in the matriculation exam in 1996, a member of the defense force Asmerom Ghebrehbrhan has been away from education for more than ten years. Making intensive

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preparations and scoring full marks, he earned a notable prize becoming one among the 253 awardees of this year. Tuesday evening, students who scored three and above in the matriculation exam received certificates as well as monetary and other prizes. Moreover, students who scored 3.0 and 3.2 received monetary prizes of 4,000 Nakfa and those who scored 3.4 received 6,000 Nakfa from the Minister of Education, Mr. Semere Rusom.

Laptop computers were common prizes among the students with 3.6, 3.8, and 4.0 results. Students with full marks received laptop computers and a special award with the inscription of their respective names, and additional prizes from the hands of President Isaias Afewerki. Likewise, special watches with the inscription “Zagre Presidential Award” were also common to all the 1,144 students. This indeed indicates the rise of the Zagre award in terms of quality and quantity. Once laptop computers were only awarded to students with full marks, the scope has now included students with 3.8 and also 3.6 marks.



Among the parents of the awardees Mr. Suleman Seid from Afabet said that the government has alleviated parents' responsibilities through providing tuition free education. Otherwise he pointed out that as parents they might have been forced to shoulder double responsibilities of paying for education besides other parental care. As regards his son he said that he was confident enough that his son would score full marks as he used to score outstanding results in his earlier educational pursuit. He also made all the necessary support to set him free from other activities so that he can pursue his education at ease.

Minster Semere said that the government views education as a cornerstone for the nation's overall development drive. Thus the investment on education includes setting up IT laboratories, research centers, science laboratories, libraries, as well as vocational training centers. Highlighting that smooth transmission of knowledge mainly depends on teacher's qualification and viable curriculum both of which are imperative pillars for the enhancement of educational excellence, the minister said that the accomplishments registered so far have been indications that the journey is on the right track towards establishing viable educational system. He furthermore elaborated that equal distribution of educational access to the point of satisfactory level and also implementing learner centered curriculum can not be realized all at once but rather seek much more concerted efforts.

President Isaias Afewerki congratulated those who worked round the clock to make such academic excellence a reality. He further emphasized that the occasion would still remind the need for redoubled endeavors through equal distribution of resources and infrastructure

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facilities across the nation. Following the award ceremony, the awardees were photographed with the president.