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National Education Management

The problem is not a new education policy or the implementation of one, but the proper running of what is in force. From that perspective, it is at bottom a question of management of national education which on present showing is a shambles judging not only by the fewer institutions than necessary but by the new provisions to be made for the number of education seekers now in the line, and managing the overall business a little better than so far.

Start with those in their schools, colleges and universities. Instead of talking big on theoretical lines about the ideal state to which it should be lifted or to talk of updating the curriculum etc. by inclusion of science and technology studies, the imperative of the moment is to take up the problems on the ground, identify them, and set about sorting them out one by one.

The problems are broadly divisible into two groups: objective and subjective. In other words, those external to actual places where education is directly delivered starting with the classroom plus those connected with work in them and the local management or administration. Books (their quality) class-running, teaching, number of teachers, quality of teachers and teaching, student numbers plus class discipline and so forth. It will not help only enumurating them as is done by education authorities from academics to the Minister concerned. On-ground steps taken to improve things alone will make sense. The habit of repeating the problems must be replaced by the resolute will to solve them.

The objective set of problems has of late extended to those of political influence and interference. Our earnest wish is: for God's sake, rethink and spare at least education from Secondary to University the incursion of politics. It has already half-ruined this national (human) resource on a scale that has reached almost criminal proportions. Emphasis on studying the subjects in the syllabus and acquiring knowledge for its intrinsic worth needs to be more forcefully i.e. massively laid and that not in routine public addresses only but by revised education-management imperatives in Ministry's administrative and institutional dispensations.

The next most pressing problem is the increasing number of education-seeking boys and girls. About 10 lakh S.S.C. examinees sitting for this year's examination is a measure of the increasing size from year to year. It has many sides to attend to: From admission to the next higher stage of education to room for them to rehabilitation of the failed lot and dropouts. They are at the moment left out in the cold, as if the administration has no responsibility to discharge on their account. They are left to their fate only to be condemned to social dust-bins. Money that could be spent on their (what we have called) rehabilitation are wasted on a good deal of unproductive cosmetic but expensive projects say and to ceremonial constructions for instance. The crores set apart to be spent on them can—and should—be devoted to educational reconstruction, rehabilitation and improvement in all their senses. Successive governments declare with great self-satisfaction that they have budgeted more funds for education than their predecessor or predecessors. But in actual fact, for a country like Bangladesh you cannot yet spend too much for education. It needs about ten times, annually, the amount that successive governments have so far spent on education. Think of countries like Sri Lanka, South Korea, even Iran, among others. We have failed miserably where others have succeeded and lived up to the responsibility they owe to their people.

There certainly is no boasting on the so-called 40-46 p.c. literacy including the ability to sign only one's name. For this basic tragic lack we are answerable to our people. It is never too late to start making up for

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