

Self-reliance And Education

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Self-reliance as a cult has been more in the air for the last one and half decades or so than in practice. It has also been more an idea than one translated into a policy. Further, it has been heard and seen articulated by national leaders or their administrative counterparts in the special context of food production as much as economic growth. None of these however have yet been an achieved goal. We have talked about it more than we have worked along the precise lines to achieve it as a concrete factor of progress in the basic or ancillary national sectors.

The first step in progress is, to repeat a cliché, education and in education however there are steps and stages. The first step is upto the end of the primary course and the next one is the post-primary upto class VIII. Thenceforward it progresses till the end of the Secondary School Certificate session end that closes the primary and the post-primary period and course of education. Our focus in this article is the planning or replanning this segment of education with a view to fostering the cult of self-reliance. Considered as a problem this part of educational development is one with its problems not yet as thoroughly examined as they should be.

The first among these problems is not so much of enrolment as the primary stage but that of drop-outs around class V well into class VIII onwards till the final S.S.C. examination. Drop-outs in pre-S.S.C. examinations include quite sizeable numbers of those children who cannot continue school beyond either the primary stage, or those failing in the primary school examination plus those whose parents cannot continue financing the education of the children beyond any point up the line to the S.S.C. stage. Roughly they constitute two-thirds of the total enrolled children, it would be more rather than less a precise statistical count.

This is a national problem and has been discussed by our educationists or experts or planners in education seminars held from time to time in the city, but the ideas and suggestions offered them have mostly remained confined either in the learned papers read or the learned gathering of the educated elite participating in these forums.

This early state of educational rearing of children could as well be timed for them to be initiated into lines of training which will eventually turn them into self-reliant young or adult individuals: Up to the primary stage i.e. after the simple education has enabled them to read and understand things, say, from after class VIII or even earlier, they can be enrolled or re-enrolled as trainees in as many vocations as there are trades in a rapidly technically developing world. The vocations may range from weaving to carpentry to smithery to firming of fish, poultry, flower, fruit and what not rechemical training such as is related to electricity, radio, TV and a number of other modern small and bigish technologies for which a syllabus is to be formulated by education planning experts.

The advantage is that they would be suitable for employment in public and private concerns in technical jobs and, failing to find one, they could start a workshop on a small or more-than small scale on their own. Needless to say as technically trained hands they will in greater demand for employment abroad. It may be noted that in an expanding overseas labour market Bangladeshi's representation is just marginal compared with India's or the Koreans or Japanese and others. Ours are mostly untrained boys and naturally get doomed to do mostly menial jobs.

Our purpose is to suggest a possible pragmatic line along with primary, post-primary and secondary education be restructured to foster self-reliance among them through

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