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### Views

# Formal And Non-formal Education

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OUR general education from primary to university level is still too theoretical to need any mention. It is so theoretical that it has perhaps no relationship with life and living. Even in this system of formal education only about 30 per cent of the people receive education. They too remain, as mentioned above, divorced from the realities of life. The rest 70 per cent of the people are left to their fate. They hardly attain any skill to efficiently conduct the avocation of their lives; because non-formal education for these people has not been organised in the scale we need. In fact, it could not be organised as yet in a meaningful way. The net result is that development of human resources is too low to produce significant surplus for investment towards economic development of our country. Hence we are so poor. In order to break through this poverty we should summon all our intelligence and energy to ensure an educational revolution.

As education and training holds the golden key to economic development we should bring our system of education, both formal and non-formal, to closer examination so that we can develop our society in a real sense through objective education and training. If we can develop an effective system of education, both formal and non-formal, we would be able to land in a prosperous society sooner than expected.

The question is how to organise and build an effective formal and non-formal education system to cover the whole population from the point of view of vocational/function-

al, technical and higher/research education. The problem is gigantic. But we have to accept the challenge lest we as a nation should not stumble and fall victim to dependence on foreign aid in this regard as well.

The formal education from primary to university level should be related to objectives of life, science and technology. The curricula should be framed in such a way that students of primary level as well as higher level should not find any difficulty to settle down in the pursuit of productive activities when they leave education arena to enter practical life, irrespective of the fact that they get out with success or drop out. The idea is that neither any human resource should remain underutilised from the production point of view nor the expenditure incurred on the education of an individual by the guardian and the Government should go waste. In other words, whatever one learns formally should be precious little for earning one's living. This speaks of a total bias towards life-oriented education.

In the case of formal education, from infant class to the university level, the curricula should include the study on our surrounding and environment, art and music, creativity and productivity, life and living, man and material, flora and fauna, history and geography, society and social institution, economics and economic institution, culture and cultural institution, science and technological institution, and, above all, know-how of effective utilisation of

natural resources for our advancement. At the university level the emphasis should be laid on research education. All problems of the country should attract the problem-solving-attitude of the universities — be it scientific or technological, economic or political, sociological or cultural, environmental or ecological, productive or distributional, administrative or organisational etc. At the lower levels it should be functional education so that if a student drops out or leaves the educational institution, he becomes immediately a productive agent of society. Thus formal education from the primary to the university level will deal with art and craft, skill and expertise, science and technology for living a successful life, however small it may be. In other words, formal education should be organised with the conscious and definite purpose for increasing the quality of life of the educated of primary, secondary or higher levels.

Non-formal education has become equally important for Bangladesh in as much as more than 70 per cent people of the nation continue to remain outside the purview of formal education nay literacy. But this huge population has to be brought within the portal of some educational system namely non-formal in order to establish a humane and progressive society. This non-formal education system can be built through the establishment of Mahallah literacy, functional education and vocational training centre under the auspices of village organisation and patronage of

local and central Governments. The curricula of non-formal education should include, among other things, nutrition, health and sanitation; family planning; agriculture, pisciculture, horticulture, fisheries, poultry, live-stock, forestry; house, road culvert and bridge-making; irrigation and drainage; canal digging and utilisation of water resources; land levelling, shaping and reclamation; embankment and barrage-building; cottage industries etc. Thus non-formal education should be made production-oriented to make it appealing and remunerative.

The specialists of the country would frame the curricula, compose the text-books, and train the people who will teach in the village centres. A long-term, full-fledged and sustainable plan should be formulated to implement this gigantic project in phases.

As for financing the project, successful creation and mobilisation of local resources should implement the greater part of this project. The Government finance would only supplement the local finance. The Government would, however, have to organise the local people for creation of local resources and the incentives/subsidies now given to the rural people by the Government can be channelised through these centres to make it viable and set on a permanent footing.

The education system, formal and non-formal, should be effectively organised in order to build a nation based on humanism and social justice.