

Dhaka Monday, April 1, 1985

Technical education

One of the many factors which hampers or slows down our efforts at speedy development is non-availability of enough well trained technical and skilled manpower. The scarcity has long been felt but adequate steps to create technicians and skilled workers in large numbers were hardly taken. Besides, a good section of whatever skilled manpower the country had, have gone abroad in search of fortunes. Even semi-skilled technical workers also are out of the country in huge numbers. This is besides the regular brain drain of scientists, researchers, innovators and other highly qualified persons a Third World nation like Bangladesh faces. The results are obvious. An acute shortage of technical manpower harms the cause of progress at all levels.

What should have been done to fill in the gap of skilled and technical workers created by manpower exports was to take planned measures to turn out new trained manpower. This has not been done too well. Some privately owned technical institutes sprang up in Dhaka and some other major cities taking the opportunity of the mad rush for going abroad. But these organisations have doubtful standards. They are only capable of producing an assortment of semi-skilled workers and are not in a position to cater to the national needs of technical manpower. The task is a big and crucial one and has to be performed under well-prepared state level programmes to expand the scope of technical education.

In this scenario it is heartening to note that the government plans to spend Taka 120 crore for secondary school science education during the Third Five Year Plan period. This may help resolve the crisis of technical and skilled manpower to a large extent. There is also a basic defect in our system of education. The much needed technical bias or orientation of the education has not been provided despite the tremendous requirement for it.

The emphasis of the system is still on enlarging the base of general education as much as possible. The approach in our context of socio-economic reality does not augur well for the future. The number of educated unemployed youths is escalating every year and the economy in no way can absorb them in any fruitful or productive occupation. On the other hand, a technically educated youth at least can hope for some kind of self-employment if he finds no ordinary opportunity for employment.