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For correct data

Admittedly, in a planned economy, statistical data are essential for correct planning. They provide the information and intelligence for drawing development plans and projects and for undertaking actual work for their successful implementation. Statistics is, therefore, considered to be a part of the very basis of, and a basic work for, development planning and programmes. It is also admitted, on all hands, that weak statistical services continue to be a great shortcoming of developing countries in matters of formulating economic strategies and framing programmes.

So, it is imperative that such weakness has got to be overcome as speedily as possible, if we are to attain economic progress in a planned way.

This matter, again, bears special significance and import in Bangladesh now when the country has been advancing bit by bit through the concluding Two-Year Plan and the imminent Second Five-Year Plan. Happily, the government is making all-out efforts to improve the country's statistical work and services. It is trying to mobilise internal and international resources and organisations in this direction. Already, some specific projects have been undertaken for the purpose, and encouraging results have also been achieved thereby. It is also expected that the just-approved UNDP aid of 5.3 million dollar, in addition to the previous assistance of 3.47 million dollar from the same source, for an on-going scheme of Bangladesh Government to strengthen its statistical services would help us bring about further improvements in this behalf. This statistical programme, which is to go ahead step by step throughout the SFYP, has also been specially designed to help fulfil two very important tasks, namely, the 1981 population census and the 1982 agricultural census. These are two fields of statistics in which we lag behind.

While we should believe that all concerned would contribute their best to make the aforesaid project and the two vital census of the new decade successful we would also suggest that it is time for us to take all possible measures to build up the institutional machinery and organisational network for collecting accurate statistics at regular frequency as also occasionally on our economic and social affairs. These, it may further be emphasised, have to grow as a perennial system of work so that our needs can be assessed and social and economic programmes are correctly evaluated. No patchwork or contingency measures can replace systematic statistical work. Of course, the drawbacks in a system cannot be removed nor can it be made ideal in a year or two, but there must be 'sustained' efforts on correct lines.

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