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Qualitative change in science education

DHAKA, Nov. 30 (BSS): The new approach in science teaching in the primary and secondary levels had brought about a qualitative change in science education in the country, Dr. M. Anwarul Huque, Deputy Project Director of Secondary Science Education Project, has said here.

He said the new approach, known as "Science-Technology-Society (STS)" approach, was aimed at teaching and learning science in its societal and technological context replacing the traditional emphasis on teaching and learning of concepts, principles and theories in isolation of real life context.

Presenting a paper on "science-technology-society approach in science education" at the just concluded national workshop on "improvement of

science education through museums, science clubs and science fairs" Dr. Huque, Coordinator of the eight-day workshop, said the basic elements of the STS approach had already found its way in the country's present school science education and syllabuses, and text books had been developed since early 80's.

He said the STS approach was an integrated system aimed at solving true-to-life problems through science education. The goals of science teaching had included, among other things, the aspect of promoting awareness, realisation and appreciation of the various benefits brought about by scientific and technical know-how in almost all spheres of modern living, he added.

The workshop, sponsored by UNESCO and organised jointly by the Secondary Science Education Project and the National Museum of Science and Technology (NMST), was attended

by 22 participants most of them basically teachers, students and researchers.

Dr. Huque said the STS approach already introduced in Australia and some South-East Asian countries, emphasised the development of concepts and the application of principles into practice in real life situations so as to make it more relevant to life and living of the society rather than only preparing for higher studies.

The number of institutions offering science education and enrolment of students had increased remarkably over the last few years and almost half of the total SSC examinees appear from science group, he pointed out.

Dr. Huque said at least 400 science clubs had been set up by mostly students in cities and district towns where the members devote to innovative activities relating to appropriate technology, survey of flora and fauna, development of low cost apparatus for science teaching and even launching commercially viable projects.

Another most important advantage of the STS approach is its applicability both in formal and non-formal systems of science education. So it not only integrates the formal and non-formal means but also facilitates reducing the gap between the two and supplementing the learning process of one another, he said.

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