

Teachers' Responsibilities

Much depends on both the quality and the effective role of the teachers. It is certainly possible to have, within a relatively short period, a fine and even an impressive assembly of educational tools and teaching aids, and the commissioning of adequate educational infrastructure, including well appointed class rooms and rich libraries and laboratories, may not prove to be difficult either. These surely would go a long way to improve the educational standard of a country, but these alone, by themselves, are not likely to emerge as any positive guarantee of such improvement and of the achievement of the desired educational targets. It is only the teachers who, in the eventual analysis, can ensure true and unqualified educational progress and can open up before the students significant visions of a meaningful future. President Ziaur Rahman's speech last month on the occasion of a conference of the college teachers clearly reflects the awareness of government of the crucial importance of the role that must be played by the teachers in a developing society. The President assured the teachers that government would take all possible measures to take care of their problems and asked them to commit themselves fully to the task of building an able and worthwhile nation and to rise to the dignity of their noble profession.

The President made it clear that the foremost duty of the teachers was to improve the standard of education. This is no easy job, especially in a country like Bangladesh where the education sector suffers from many and varied limitations. To take, for example, the case of Primary education, it would be necessary to have a minimum of more than one lakh trained teachers if each primary school in the country is to have at least one trained teacher on its staff. The forty-seven primary training institutes, which now function in the country, would clearly take a very long time before these are able to meet the above requirement. The problem in the fields of secondary and higher education is no less acute. On top of it, it is necessary to organise from time to time refresher courses for the teachers

who have not been exposed to the latest thinking in the techniques of education. Government has recently introduced freshly written text books in the lower classes of the primary section, and it has plans to extend in near future programmes of such introduction to other classes as well. Such a situation would necessarily demand positive efforts for the training of the teachers on whom would rest the responsibility of initiating the students to these new books. Government has been trying over the last couple of years to effect major expansion of the education sector. And massive development programmes have for the first time been undertaken in the various related areas. The need for proper teacher training has also received its due importance in these programmes. Programmes of this nature, we are confident, would continue to be expanded and intensified, but it is easy to see that it would take quite some time for these programmes to reach and cover all teachers. The teachers must therefore in the meantime try to extend the frontiers of their knowledge on their own initiative and also to broaden their vision. That the educators must constantly educate themselves first is a principle which needs to be widely accepted by teachers all over the world and in the developing countries in particular.

The President had also taken the occasion to call upon the teachers to actively participate in the developmental programmes of the country. Teachers cannot afford to remain isolated from the development process, for it is they who have the responsibility of creating in their students and, through them, in the people an unqualified awareness of the need for development and of the contribution which each one of us must necessarily make to the development endeavours. As government goes ahead with its numerous programmes for bringing about a positive improvement in the standard of education, the teachers themselves must come forward to make clear attempts to both help the improvement of such a standard and give rise in the minds of the people to the vision of a better and brighter future.