

Education In The 21st Century

A LARGE number of changes in the methodologies of education have been proposed in different countries of the world over the last four decades. Some of them have come into effect. In order to keep pace with the global trend and meet the challenges of the 21st century, the curriculum in Bangladesh has undergone significant modifications. Over the last two decades, considerable reformulation has taken place in the teaching-learning experiences at school level. However, curriculum development is a continuous process and in a real sense, it has still a long way to go in Bangladesh to ensure quality education.

Quality education is that education which develops insight, skill, knowledge attitude, patriotism values and human qualities in the learner. By achieving quality education a learner is able to employ himself in some works for his livelihood in the comparative environment. Quality education refers to the realization of curricular objectives in the national and global perspectives at a certain level.

In this context, We may have a glimpse of the number of schools, colleges, universities, madrasas and other educational institutes in the country in a nutshell as under: Non-govt Junior High Schools 3,002; Govt. Junior High Schools, Nil; Secondary Schools 10,253 (Govt Schools 317); Intermediate Colleges 1,669 (Govt colleges 9); Degree College with intermediate Sections 766 (Govt Colleges 251) Madrasas 6,913 (Dakhil 4,865 Alim 1020, Fazil 918, Kamil 110); Govt. Madrasas 3; Universities 27 (General 9, National University 1, Open University 1, Non-Govt Universities 16); BIT 4; Leather Technology College 1; Textile College 1; Polytechnic Institutes 20; Monotechnic Institutes 3; VTI 51; Govt. Commercial Institutes 16; Teachers Training Colleges 11; Technical Teachers Training Colleges 1; Physical Teachers Training Colleges 2; Private Teachers Training Colleges 2; Primary Teachers Training Institutes 54; Institute of Education and Research 1; Cadet Colleges 10; and Higher Secondary Teachers Training Institutes 5.

In the above mentioned education-

al institutes near about 2,75,000 teachers are employed. (Source: A paper presented by Dr. Md. Omar Farook Khan in BIAM in 20th April, 1998)

During the 5th Five Year Plan (1997-2002) the government has undertaken the development programmes of increasing the educational institutes in the following way: Secondary Schools from 13,255 to 16,686 with students from 63,30,000 to 89,68,000; Colleges from 1,669 to 1,850 with students from 12,60,000 to 15,71,000; Polytechnic Institutes 20 to 75 with Students from 2,600 to 43,800; Establish 6 new Universities of Science and Technology; Set up one Model School and one Model College in each district and increase infrastructural and academic facilities in the education sector. [Source: Dr Md. Omar Farook Khan, op cit]

In 1995, the mainstream of primary education in Bangladesh comprised 60,292 primary schools with 15.39 million students and 0.25 million teachers. By the year 2,000 primary school age population will be 19.70 million. [Source: Directorate of Primary Education, GOB Quarterly Monitoring Report on Primary Education 1995, P. 1]

From these information, we may say that the number of educational institutes in Bangladesh are increasing day by day. The literacy rate in the country is also increasing. The rate is now 53.38%. But the question whether is the rate of quality of education is increasing? The answer is 'No'. It is apparent that millions of educated young people do not have jobs. Perhaps the following reasons are responsible for that.

Copying in examination halls is a major hindrance to quality education from primary to the university level of education. This menace has spread all over the country like cancer.

Vested political interest over the students accompanied by student's unrest in the campus.

Educational administration in Bangladesh is characterized by excessive centralization of power and authority in the capital. Here it may be remembered that both the Qudrat-E-Khuda Commission Report of

1974 and Mofizuddin Ahmed Commission Report of 1988 recommended decentralization in the educational administration arena (Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh vol. 42 No 2 December 1997 PP 288, 294).

Poor academic supervision and poor administrative management encourage poor quality of education.

Students do not pursue knowledge and skill, rather they hanker after certificates and degree.

Quality of teaching is very poor. Most teachers lack dedication and commitment to the great cause of education. They lack in morality and values. Instead of giving classroom education they indulge themselves into private coaching.

Teachers are ill paid.

Physical facilities and teaching equipment are poor and outmoded.

Lack of congenial educational environment on the campus.

Very high teacher-student ratio.

Lack of cooperation and coordination among the Ministry of Education, Directorates and regional education offices.

Improper forecasting and planning and the absence of proper monitoring, evaluation and implementation of the plans.

To ensure quality of education in the 21st century in Bangladesh the following measures may be considered:

Curriculum is a vehicle of education. Our curriculum should be designed to meet the need of the day and to face the challenges of international competition. But the idea and decisions about curricula are of no use until they are properly implemented. And only knowledgeable, skillful and dedicated teachers can help implement a properly designed curriculum. For the purpose, the best products of the universities should be attracted in the field of education.

The backward looking colonial attitude of the administration and as well as of the people should be avoided and overcome.

More community involvement and community awareness should be made towards achieving the goal of extensive and high quality education.

All teachers should be trained up in pedagogy to the international standard.

Students should be kept away from the influence of political parties and hooligans.

Proper cooperation and coordination among the inter and intra-divisions of the Ministry of Education, Directorates, Boards and regional education offices should be ensured.

A comprehensive Education Code should be prepared and the new Code should encompass all aspects of education system as well as administration.

To recruit dedicated and committed teachers a Registration System should be introduced as is in other countries of the world.

Necessary steps should be taken to maintain low teacher-student ratio, Student should be imparted work-oriented education.

The faulty examination system should be improved and grading system should be introduced for evaluation of the students' performance.

Proper remuneration and incentive should be provided to teachers.

It is to be noted here that a lot of programmes of stipends and scholarships have been undertaken both in the public and private sectors to encourage education. As a result only the enrolment registers of the students are becoming bulky especially in the Secondary and Higher Secondary stage. As we prepare to embrace the 21st century we must be ready with proper plans, and adequate educational facilities to accommodate millions more of learners on the campus.

For the purpose of improving the quality of education, the quality of text books should also be improved.

To meet the challenges of the 21st century the quality of education in Bangladesh must be enhanced.

1. Dr. Md. Shamsul Hoque Mian, Officer-in-Charge (Commerce), Secondary and Higher Education Directorate, Dhaka.

2. S.I.A. Baten, SMDS, HSTTI, Mymensingh.

3. Mrs. Akterunnesa Khanam, Deputy Director, NAEM, Dhaka.