

Education And Productive Work - III

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In Japan, work experience courses are transacted by organising visits to Industries/factories. Local Govt. extends, facilities and equipment to schools for work experience which is also done in schools at their own initiative.

Australia places the students in actual work situations for 5 to 15 days through programmes, projects and initiatives which include clerical work, technical trades, sales or unskilled work in offices, workshops stores, and small factories etc. The programmes, however, differ from state of state according as the local need. The career education approach and further Education Colleges have been attached much importance throughout Australia.

VE is governed and implemented by the Carl D Parkin's Act, 1984 in USA and its goals are to improve and modernize VE to meet the needs of workforce and to promote economic growth and to assure quality VE programmes to targeted groups of students population. The aim is to prepare the students for work and for further education. In Georgia, VE prepares the students with marketable skills. State Governments Control educational matters in USA and in Georgia, too, the Department of Education, Atlanta Caters VE and training facilities for those schools where training facilities are not available.

In UK the TVE programme launched in September 1983 is a national programme for 14-18 age group students. The objective is to enable the youngsters to adapt to the changing occupational environment. The mode of operation is executive rather than legislative or advisory.

The vocational education emanates from Vocational Training Act (1969), Training Place Programme Act (1976) and Training Programme Act (1981) in FRG. The objectives are similar to that of USA excepting that they are achieved through two setting. Students willing to continue higher education after completion of grade 9 or 10 join Gymnasia. (Sr. School or The Grammar) others join either dual system or full time vocational schools. The Management varies from state to state.

With the promulgation of Fundamental law of Education after World War-II, compulsory education was extended from six to nine years and 6+3+3+4 system was introduced in Japan. Ministry of Education, Science and Culture determines the standard. At Upper Secondary Stage Japan has general and specialised curricula. The general systems keeps option for those who pursue higher education and the specialised courses are intended to provide vocational or other specialised education for those who choose a particular vocational area as their future career. These courses are categorized as: technical commercial, agricultural, fishing, domestic arts, fine arts etc.

Bangladesh Scene

We have 5+(3+2)+2 system in our primary and secondary education which is almost similar to the neigh-

bour countries in the region. As has been mentioned at the beginning, much emphasis has been laid upon vocational education in all educational reports. The most realistic view has been expressed in Dr. Quadrat-e-Khuda report (1974) and also proper guideline was given. But nothing, so far, has been done. The present curriculum at the primary level includes (1) Mother tongue, (2) Maths (3) Environmental studies, (4) Religious education and Arts and Crafts and Music; but none exposes our children to the world of work. At the secondary level Home Economics for females and Agric Science for males are made compulsory, both being bookish in nature and no arrangements is done for vocational subjects either as package programme or on project basis. At present, our general education system is completely devoid of any vocational element and vocational education has been confusedly integrated with technical education.

The vast student population from grade 3 to grade 12 within the age groups 7+ to 17+ is never exposed to any work experience. The enormous rate of drop-outs can be easily seen. In 1990 we started with 23,40,907 at grade-3 and we reach grade-10 with 3,87,833, which is one seventh and grade-11 with 5,68,461 which is one fourth the starting figure. Amazingly, the drops directly run to the labour market and give cue for employment without any experience or exposure of a kind of work.

The technical vocational education (TVE) has been intended for employment oriented purpose and has little or no flexibility for self employment opportunity. Employability again is related with the potentiality of job creation either in the private sector or in the public sector about which we are very much aware of the prevailing situation in Bangladesh.

About 120 million people reside on a small land mass of 147570 sq. km in Bangladesh. At an average per square kilometer population is 755 (11 March, 1991 census) having 1324.5 sq. metre of land per head and the population is growing at the rate of 2.17%. So the agricultural future is very dark and even now 8.7% people are landless. At present 70% people are engaged in agricultural work which is a part time occupation employment vast number of our people only for three of four months a year and the rest they are idle.

Universalisation of primary education in Bangladesh is putting excessive pressure on secondary education resulting in its expansion. Expansion not only occurs in enrolment but also in the number of schools. Almost all schools located in urban areas have already switched over to double-shift system due to high pressure. The annual rate of expansion in the number of schools is also not negligible.

In spite of severe screening and attempted restriction at the end of secondary/upper secondary stage there is a sharp increase in higher education. Due to excessive pressure from the school graduates quality of higher education is diminishing.

The number of educated unemployed is increasing every year at geometric rate. The larger percentage of these unemployed are school leavers (non secondary, secondary and upper secondary). The kinds of education that these educated youth have received in schools and colleges have enabled them to be neither productive individuals nor worthy of self and wage employment. This is not only creating frustration in the youth but the sense of insecurity for the future, wherever prevalent, leads to social tension, disorder, indiscipline and unrest.

In the context of irrelevant general education programme which is leading the youth to unproductive life, unemployment, insecure future, frustration and unrest; the political leadership, the policy makers, the planners, the administrators and the community at large are realizing the essentiality of vocational education. The vocational education programme is now viewed as the only alternative to solve the unemployment problem of educated young people as well as to relieve socio-economic tension. Vocationally educated youths are often disciplined and never sit idle but engage themselves in some productive work.

The need is urgently felt to check unnecessary flooding into the academic stream and subsequent unemployment. Hence it is essential to divert a sizeable segment of student population to the vocational stream.

Now-a-days traditional course (Home Science based) are given to girl students. This puts restriction on their choice and debar them from going to other technology based courses. It is an established trend that girls are interested in non traditional courses. So they are to be offered non traditional technology based courses in greater variety.

More than seventy per cent of our population live in village and, as mentioned earlier, agricultural activities can engage the rural youths only for a few months. Moreover traditional agric courses can hardly interest them. Always there is demand for some technology and in this context a variety of courses each with a set of multiple skills which will keep them engaged through out the year. This will generate economic activities as well as free rural people from tension and check rural urban migration.

Due to sharp fall in white-collar job opportunity, both the Government as well as society feel the need for freeing the people from the course of unemployment. So there is an increasing awareness and interest in the entrepreneurship development and self employment which are being promoted by the Government.

Curriculum

The national objectives set for vocational education will dictate the curricular design, national frame work and weightage given to various components such as general education, occupation free core vocational competencies and vocation-specific theory and practice. The procedure for curricular development involves the following issues:

-how to balance between general

education and vocational elements both in vocation neutral and vocation specific VEPs.

-What should be the procedure for curricular development?

—It is the concern of the Board that will follow its usual procedure, set up academic curricular committee and thereby develop vocational curriculum.

Employers, representatives, R & D organisations, schools and public should be involved in curricular development activity.

Teachers should have both academic as well as job experience. Job experience teachers may be hired from local industries/institutions as a part time/secondment basis. The following may be the issues:

Management of VE

—employing qualified full time teachers and providing them in service training.

—utilizing the services of part time faculty drawn from professional industrial establishment or institutions.

—Training of both full-time and part-time teachers.

—Retention of teachers.

Work education will form a core subject of our general educational system now. The weightage to be given to this may range from 10 to 12 per cent of time at the primary and lower secondary levels. At the upper secondary level where work education leads to the development of employment skills in specific vocations vocational theories and practices may occupy 50 to 70 per cent of curricular time.

Work in general education in primary and lower secondary stages should form a core component along with others like maths, language social studies etc. It should be relevant to the emerging needs and strive to solve problems through application of science and technology. Manipulation skills should get preference and programmes should be extended to community services to bring school closer to the community.

General education curriculum should incorporate in its structure a compulsory component of occupation neutral transferrable skill which will constitute 20% of the curricular time.

In 1985, seven Bangladeshi young men came to me in a Rome hotel with a request to send some dollars to Bangladesh through me, a request which I couldn't comply with. Anyway, I was introduced to these young men by another Bangladeshi national working there for FAO. I came to learn that all of these young men were university-post graduates. Four of them were working in houses as house boys and three of them were working in grocer's shop. Amazingly, what is the use of university degrees to them! I think, by now, the papers imprinted degrees on them, have been lost or rot. So we don't need such degrees any more than can't give employment and that is a sheer wastage of time, energy and resource. And how long can we afford this wastage?

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