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Vocational Institutes

In the context of the development needs of the country and the bright prospect of earning sizeable foreign exchange through skilled manpower export the necessity of vocational training institutes cannot be overemphasised. Government's education policy is being reformed to meet these needs. Prime Minister Shah Azizur Rahman who is also in charge of the Ministry of Education has spelt out the Government's programme of setting up technical and vocational training institutes in different parts of the country in a planned way. Deputy Prime Minister, Mr. S. A. Bari A. T., has on several occasions stressed the need for creating skilled manpower and, for that purpose, the urgency for imparting technical and vocational training to the youths of the country. And as it creates self-employment opportunities, the Bureau of Manpower has a financing scheme to promote opportunities for such training.

The question is what type of technical and vocational training should be imparted to the youths to meet our domestic and manpower export requirements has to be identified and accordingly elaborate plans of setting up institutes have to be drawn up and appropriate curriculum for the purpose introduced. The curriculum has to be uniformly followed by these institutes both in the public and private sectors —with a view to imparting standard vocational training to the students. Any haphazard growth of vocational training institutes without any strict binding upon them to follow definite criteria in matters of training, teachers and teaching aids would create problem in the future.

A report by our staff correspondent on the mushroom growth of vocational institutes published yesterday appears to be disconcerting. It has pointed out that more than 100 private vocational institutes have mushroomed in the metropolis and other parts of the country. But

most of these institutes are reportedly not equipped with teachers and teaching aids required for practical training. The report has also pointed out that a good number of persons having certificates of skill issued by the private vocational institutes had to come back from abroad because they presumably showed lack of skill in their fields of work there. This has thus impaired the prestige of the country. Most of these institutes, according to the report, charge exorbitant fees under the cover of extra charges ranging from Taka 500.00 to Taka 3000.00.

The reason for the growth of these ill-equipped institutes is the rush of our unemployed youths who, failing to get themselves admitted elsewhere, crowd these institutions with a hope to receive certain technical training. For, the skill they expect to gain out of this training they help them get jobs abroad. But the report presents the picture of a sordid situation. However, since there is not sufficient number of government vocational institutes, it is felt that private institutes should be encouraged to come up with the fulfilment of conditions necessary for imparting the required technical training in a proper way. Simultaneously, setting up of adequate number of government vocational institutes at subdivisional level could check unplanned growth of privately-run ill-equipped institutes. Government should conduct a survey of such institutes, not for the purpose of closing them but for adopting a policy of legalising these institutions within a given time on fulfilment of necessary criteria like qualified teachers, training equipment and pursuance of a uniform curriculum. It is felt that the Bangladesh Technical Education Board has a great role to play in standardising vocational education in the country for greater interests of the nation.