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## Technical Education

Human effort is by far the most important determinant of all development. Development of capabilities of man through education and training is crucial to any development effort. Education today has to be considered from utilitarian point of view. It recently figured prominently in the 'basic needs basket' as well.

The importance of this fact has been underscored by Education Minister Mr. Abdul Majeed Khan in his address to the principals of engineering colleges, polytechnic institutes and other technical institutions in Dhaka on Monday.

Educational development in the country in the past has been more or less an expansion of the traditional system to meet the exigencies. It has created a paradoxical shortage-surplus problem. There is a shortage of labour with skills but a surplus of persons with liberal education for whom opportunities for employment either in the country or abroad are very limited. Technical education offers opportunities for self-employment and bright prospects for employment both at home and abroad. In this context introduction of second shift in the polytechnic institutes providing educational facilities to additional 4000 students annually is praiseworthy. This can ensure maximum possible utilisation of our scarce resources without additional expenditure.

The Minister also stressed the need for integrating education, work experience and income in developmental activities. In other words, education has to be job-oriented. The country needs it more and more than ever before.

The existing gap between jobs in different fields and the availability of trained manpower has to be bridged. The same has to be done with a sense of urgency and for the sake of advancing the cause of development.

The investment in the education sector is not at the level of other developed countries. There is reason for resource constraints. Moreover, the output for per Taka investment in education has not been all that productive. And that is because of the prevalence of an educational system handed down to us by colonial authorities. In the process one finds an unending queue of educated unemployed youths, side by side with vacancies whose requirements are not met by job seekers. There is an obvious wastage of resources in the shape of facilities and academic courses while properly educated and skilled personnel continue to be in short supply.

No one would like that a country like Bangladesh should allow resources to be wrongly utilized. Policy-makers and planners also would like that every taka invested in the education sector directly contributes to the graduation of youths who fit in jobs that are available in farms and factories as well as offices and commercial establishments. It is common knowledge that without such linkage between investment and output, developmental efforts become ineffective. And in a country like Bangladesh which has a labour surplus economy one may hardly allow such things to continue.

That being so, one may hope that the Planning Commission will concentrate on the development of educational system as a part of the socio-economic infrastructure. It is hoped that in future development of physical facilities for all levels of technical education will be supplemented by proper manning, library and instructional equipment. And such facilities at different institutions including the universities would be utilized fully for the purpose of producing skilled manpower as per short and long-term needs of the country.