

EDUCATION: For passion and purpose

ELITA KARIM

Gone are the days when children and young people were fed 'dreams' of being doctors and engineers. Revolutions have been taking place in each generation and eventually, the wind blew towards commerce and business. Today, there is probably a need for yet another revolution where the arts, health, culture, heritage, sports, people and so much more -- should be added to the official school curriculum.

There has of course been a huge development in the education sector in the last few decades. Not only has there been an increase in the number of female children going to school and finishing off with degrees, a number of alternative and non-formal learning centres and educational institutes have also changed the face of traditional learning in the country.

In his budget speech, Finance Minister AMA Muhith proposed an allocation of Tk 50,432 crore in the budget for 2017-18 fiscal year for the education sector, raising the allocation by around 14 percent from the outgoing fiscal year.

However, according to Korvi Rakshand, the allocation of the budget towards education could have been worked on better. "One third of the population in Bangladesh is youth. By 2030, the number will increase by about 70 percent," he says. "If we cannot prioritise the youth now, we won't have a better future for Bangladesh tomorrow."

Korvi is the Founder and Chairman of JAAGO Foundation, a school for the underprivileged. The Foundation aims for the betterment of the nation

through catering the educational needs of children from socially and economically disadvantaged background and empowering the youths along with inspiring volunteerism in Bangladesh. Its mission is to break the cycle of poverty through education and rebuilding our nation.

"Education is the backbone of a nation and this sector should be well taken care of for the sake of the development of any nation," says Korvi. "Even though the percentage is higher than the previous years, if we take a closer look, a large amount in the total allocation is for the non-developmental issues including salary, infrastructure etc. This would limit innovation, research, development, trainings and other important and effective tools."



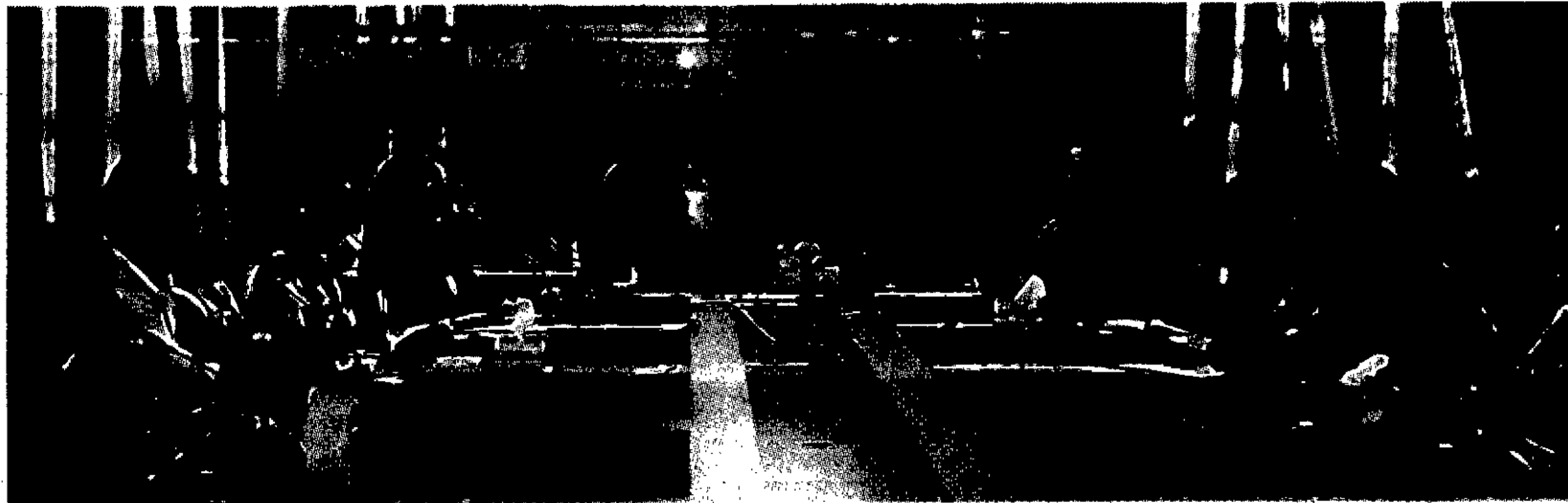
Korvi Rakshand

At a recent roundtable held at the Daily Star centre, students and youth leaders came together to talk about how the youth can be prioritised in the budget fiscal 2017-2018. One of the most concerning issues for the youth was the extra 15 percent vat to be included on purchases. "In most families, young people receive a small amount of pocket money," shares Korvi. "Some of them work after classes, mostly work as private tutors for younger kids and imposed vat on purchases mostly in the food industry would not only be difficult for the students to bear with, but also be difficult for young entrepreneurs to run their start ups."

There are a lot of issues holding the youth back, one of them being the

insane traffic an individual has to face every day. "In addition" adds Korvi, "most of the facilities, ministries and other urban developments are very much centralised in the capital. This proves to be very difficult for the young people living outside Dhaka. They are deprived of opportunities to create and usually do not have access the way young people in Dhaka do."

"The youth may be tomorrow's leaders, but they definitely are the driving force to move the 'today' and the 'present'," says Korvi. "Don't wait for tomorrow because you don't know what will happen tomorrow. What is your passion? What is the purpose behind it? Ask yourself these questions. Only then can you make positive changes for the country."



PHOTOS: STAR