

SKILLED HUMAN RESOURCE Education for all may not meet target

Policy experts tell public lecture

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Schemes like "education for all" which only focuses on getting every child enrolled in schools may not lead to the creation of mature human resources, stated policy experts at a public lecture yesterday.

"The children lag behind in the secondary education level due to the quality of teaching. Children going to private secondary schools, which have a lot of governance problems, are some of the worst sufferers," said former adviser to a caretaker government Wahiduddin Mahmud.

International Growth Centre, and Institute of Governance Studies, Brac University jointly organised the lecture, "Beyond Education for All: Meeting the Human Resource Needs of Economic Development", in the capital's Brac Centre Inn.

Presence of different mediums of education, with some being of lower quality than others, is further aggravating the problem, remarked Brac University Vice-Chancellor Ainun Nishat. "The result is a semi-educated labour force," Mahmud added.

Further economic growth will require workers with higher education, said the experts.

"Bangladesh's economic growth so far has been driven by low-skilled labour. For further growth, we have to focus

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on skill development for which the education system must be prepared," urged Mahmud.

Higher education, such as in information technology, needs more focus so as to make human capital more capable, he recommended.

"Primary and secondary education get 80 percent of the resources (budgetary allocation for education) while higher education only gets 20 percent," revealed Mahmud.

When it comes to teachers, national universities, despite having the highest enrollment rates, are grossly understaffed, said Ainun Nishat. "Furthermore scope for continuing education must be created so that people can pick up even after dropping out," he added.

However, the quality of basic education too must be improved to make sure that children from insolvent households going to schools providing low quality education can compete in a merit-based enrollment system in higher education, stated the experts.