

Science and Technology for Development—I

A.N.M. Eusuf

G7

It has been established without doubt that in today's world a nation's socio-economic development depends to a large extent on its scientific and technological capabilities. By systematic and sustained application of science and technology in the development process the developed countries have been able to achieve a measure of success beyond the dream and imagination of the poor countries. Technology though a dream for the poor has become the master key for development. Without technology a nation can not survive. Technology is essential for economic development and social well being. Technology should be a way of life. Those who are tradition bound and cling to the past run the risk of being bypassed and left behind. Celebrated American Economist Nobel Laureate Robert Solow in a pioneering study in the fifties found that labour and capital accounted for only 12 percent of the development which took place in America during the first half of this century. The rest 88 percent was attributed to technological change. Europe and Japan have achieved dramatic growth by using the master key -Technology. The New Industrialised Countries (NIC) of Asia—South Korea, Taiwan, Hongkong, Singapore and Thailand—owe their rapid transformation to technological changes. One can perceive the relationship between technology and the process of social change. Over the years this relationship has become mutually reinforcing.

VIENNA PROGRAMME OF ACTION

A convention was held in Vienna in 1979 under the aegis of the United Nations to chalk

out a programme for development of science and technology in the developing countries. The Vienna Programme of Action (VPA), inter alia, envisaged the following :

- i) The developing countries should formulate National Science and Technology Policy;
- ii) Special emphasis should be given to human resource development and
- iii) In order to make a breakthrough in science and technology the developing countries should allocate at least 1% of GNP for research and development.

Bangladesh has been striving hard to meet the basic needs of food, clothing, shelter, health, education and the like for its people. To substantially raise the living standard throughout the country. To achieve these goals Bangladesh too must harness the potential of science and technology.

NATIONAL SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY POLICY

Towards this end the Government formulated a National Science and Technology Policy in 1986. The major elements of the policy are :

- i) Organise and co-ordinate all research and development work concerning science and technology in the country;
- ii) Careful selection of the problems facing the country in each vital sector, where solutions are likely to have a

significant impact on the economic and socio-cultural development of the country.

10 sectors for special efforts were identified as under :

- 1) Agriculture, Land, Livestock, Poultry, Forestry and Fisheries
 - 2) Flood Control, Water Resources, Land Reclamation and Deltaic Studies
 - 3) Health and Family Planning
 - 4) Energy
 - 5) Large Scale Industries including Engineering and Metal Industries
 - 6) Small Scale and Rural Industries
 - 7) Transportation
 - 8) Communications
 - 9) Housing and Public Works
 - 10) Scientific and Technological Education
- iii) Promotion of research and strengthening the competence and capabilities of research institutions including universities
 - iv) Establishment of Scientific and Research Institutions/Laboratories/Centres of Excellence where research of high quality can be carried out in selected areas of national importance.
 - v) Improvement of standard of scientific knowledge at all levels from the school to the university.
 - vi) Training of personnel and specialised scientific and