

Not forming edn reform commission a 'national failure'

Says Centre for Policy Dialogue



The government's failure to form an education reform commission, despite setting up 11 other reform bodies, is a form of national failure, said Debapriya Bhattacharya, distinguished fellow of the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), yesterday.

Debapriya, who also serves as the convener of the Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh, made the remarks at a media briefing titled "Technical and Vocational Education in Bangladesh: Current Situation and Reform Thinking," held at the CPD office in the capital's Dhanmondi.



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"The most sensitive question is why the government did not set up an education reform commission," he said.

"Education is not just a technical matter. It includes values, worldviews, and perspectives on humanity, the world, and the nation. It also carries historical awareness. These issues have become

especially important during this transitional time and have sometimes become points of contention," said Debapriya.

He said although the government claims to fight inequality and was born out of student and youth movements, it has not initiated education sector reforms.

To address this, Debapriya said CPD had proposed forming a high-level reform committee to the education adviser in March, aiming to overhaul the technical education sector and align it with market demands.

"However, no such body has been formed yet," he added.

He said a skilled technical workforce could drive employment in Bangladesh. However, a disproportionate focus on general education, inadequate planning, and weak monitoring have hindered the potential of technical and vocational education.

Referring to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), he said ensuring wider and fairer access to quality technical education by 2030 is a key target. However, Bangladesh is falling behind.

"If education commissions had been formed and functioned properly, the state of technical education would be much better today," he said.

He added that countries like South Korea, Japan, and India have transformed their economies through strong technical and vocational education systems -- something Bangladesh has yet to replicate.

Debapriya said despite the number of technical graduates each year, many are not ready for the job market due to outdated training equipment and curriculum mismatches.

As a result, many local graduates remain unemployed while foreign workers secure jobs in Bangladesh, he added.

He also called for changing the negative perception of technical education, where technical graduates are often undervalued compared to those with general degrees like BBA.

Speaking at the event, CPD's distinguished fellow Prof Mustafizur Rahman said Bangladesh's socio-economic progress depends on a greater focus on applied and technical education.

Highlighting the need for skilled workers and mid-level professionals before the country's LDC graduation, he stressed the importance of strengthening public-private partnerships and aligning vocational training with actual job market needs.

"To progress in the 21st century, Bangladesh must address these challenges urgently and systematically," he said.

Other CPD officials also attended the event.