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## Training with a difference

By F.K. Khan

**INDUSTRIAL** training school in Brahmanbaria has been a community effort from its inception. Technology is means for breakthrough to the poor. With this end in view, the school was founded in 1943 by local philanthropists, social workers and members of the public which imparts training to the under-privileged in black smithing, weaving and lathework. In 1950 the then East Pakistan Relief Department took over operation under whose jurisdiction it remained until 1955. That period marked its growth into a comprehensive technical institution. In 1971 during the war of liberation the buildings were completely gutted by fire. The school by then was out of use than a year later in 1972 with the help of local leaders and Government reconstruction was begun. Classes resumed using the ground floor in 1974. In 1975 the entire building was completed. The school now offers full training courses in the following fields:-

**Turning Section:** Fourteen boys are being trained in this well-equipped turning shop. Annually about a dozen students are passing out from this section and are being well placed in the trade. According to the Superintendent of the school they are able to reproduce any part from any model from simple nuts and bolts to more complicated machine and tract or parts provided the order is within the equipment scope. During the first three months the boys study theory and are trained for practical work. The course which runs for one year and one half years pays for itself in part through outside orders. A V. S. O. British Instructor is engaged in this turning section and rendering voluntary services to the trainees.

**WEAVING SECTION:** This section is currently dominated by women although the enrolment proportions vary. Currently a few women and men from low income backgrounds are enrolled. Each receives a monthly stipend of Tk. 10/00. After 2/3 months most trainees are able to produce one sari daily for which they receive an additional five take. Upon completing the course they have the option of working in the production centre. The 18 loom production centre has a large employee capacity. According to demand outside weavers are added. Sarees are produced for sale in the local market at reduced prices to benefit low income members of the community. The school takes a profit of Tk. 2/- from every sale to cover cost of operation.

**CARPENTRY SECTION:** A few boys from YMCA Boys' home as well from outside study furniture making for one year. Raw materials are provided by the school. The finished products are sold in the local market to subsidise the cost.

**TAILORING AND KNITTING:** Men and women of lower income groups are benefited by this section. The course runs for one year. After three or four months they are sufficiently proficient to accept orders for manufacture in the workshop class room. They charge Tk. 2/- per ounce for knitted goods of which price the institute keeps 20%. Classes in the operation of sewing, knitting and cutting machines are conducted by an well trained instructor from the Social Welfare Department and a Master tailor. At present about fifty persons are the beneficiaries from this section.

**RADIO MECHANISM:** Mr. Shamsuddin Ahmed and a group of well-trained instructors are available for this important section who believe that the scope for trained transistor mechanics in Bangladesh is unlimited. The course was resumed in 1970 after having closed since the liberation war. Twenty boys are enrolled; who pay an entrance fee of Tk. 50 and monthly tuition fee of Tk. 25 only. The equipment is limited but the learned instructor has devised a number of techniques to optimise the use of what is available who has created a functioning model of a transistor radio to teach schematics. He has produced a schematic diagram of the radio on a large board and wired a radio circuit above it on the same scale. Students associate the symbol with its working form. The Institute hopes to expand the section in near future. A total of seven instructors are engaged where Mr. Shamsuddin Ahmed has been with the school from the beginning.

**T.V. Mechanism:** The latest development is the introduction of T.V. mechanism in the curriculum of the Institute since 1977. At present 30 trainees are seeking education in this field and already 15 qualified from this branch and are well placed in their vocation. This section is being demonstrated by an experienced instructor with good reputation in his credit.

Although Technical Education Directorate, Social Welfare Department and Zilla Board are patronising the Institute, still its instructors seem to be inadequate to meet the increasing recurring expenditure of an expanding vocational institute having so many branches in the field of study. Qualified, experienced instructors are required to expand the school for which funds are lacking. Therefore kind and generous aid is urgently required to meet the demands and as such all concerned national and international organisations including private agencies attention have been invited to rear up the centre in mofussil town like Brahmanbaria in Bangladesh.