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Editorial

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Science education and SAARC

A THREE-day workshop on low cost scientific equipment under the auspices of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) ended in the city recently. For facilitating science education in member-countries the workshop adopted a number of recommendations including one for formation of equipment bank in each country. The representative from Pakistan said that for school and college teaching locally made instruments could be used while for university level sophisticated instruments could be made under collaborative research and development programme.

Science education is one of the priority areas in which the seven South Asian countries can fruitfully cooperate. Article 1(e) of the SAARC charter says that the objective of the Association shall be "to promote active collaboration and mutual assistance in the economic, social, cultural, technical and scientific fields." Sci-

ence education being one of the basic props of development, a way has to be found to improve the cost-benefit and efficiency of imparting science education in schools. Although Bangladesh has placed due emphasis on science education the odds are still great. Many schools in villages have ill-equipped laboratory or none at all. If we continue to depend on costly imports the equipment may never reach all these schools. Costly imports of equipment do not benefit the poor student as surely as they do the indenter. The Education Minister said that at present about 2000 schools of the country are being supplied scientific equipment and by next year supply will be reached to another 2000 schools. It is vitally necessary that every secondary school that teaches science should possess a reasonably equipped laboratory.

It should be stressed that laboratory equipment is a vital teaching aid but it does not teach. The human factor is of paramount importance. It has been observed that science teachers do not always have the necessary training and skill in stimulating among students an interest in science. Some teachers are not able to keep abreast of the modern methods of teaching science. In case of mathe-

matics also the content and methods are changing. Regional cooperation can go a long way toward improving the standard of teaching. Like equipment bank, every country in the region should also develop its pool of trained science teachers.