

Education In An Increasingly Technical Environment

The Prime Minister said, and very rightly, that only education holds the means for transforming a backward community into a useful and potentially profitable human resource. Taken in this light, the proposal to spend Tk 10,585 crore during the next Five Year Plan period is welcome. Among other recommendations for raising the standard of education are: improving teachers' training; job-oriented education; and strengthening the universities. The sooner these can be implemented the better. However all such proposals should be seen within the concept of the need to further privatise education.

The government will be faced with the need to shift the burden of the cost of education to the parents and guardians if standards are to be raised. The absence of up-to-date scientific learning is to blame in part for the present decline in education and, as things stand, the government cannot afford its cost. It is this neglect that has resulted in the inability of most of our children to keep up with the outside world. This is all the more distressing now that technology is at last catching up with us and people are beginning to comprehend its value as a time-saver. This means there is a need to expand the course of study in the polytechnics and in all other seats of secondary and higher learning so as to be able to keep up with the courses offered in the advanced countries. This calls for innovation and sometimes experimentation if this can help us to find just the formula we need.

When we say this we are of course referring to the child populace as a whole and not the handful of privileged children who already have access to today's technical wonders. Most well-to-do the importance of investing in modern education relevant to a fast-developing highly technical environment. But those who are seriously planning their children's future have learned the futility of looking for a government school that meets the requirements. The nation's education system has long ago "gone under" as the result of increased financial stringency.

Although planning the nation's educational policy is more complex than ever, this cannot absolve the country's educational planners from what was clearly their responsibilities. Time and time again the need for upgrading education has been mooted in various socio-political forums yet this vital sector has received less attention than any other, with the result that things have gone from bad to worse. Economic pressures from increased debt liabilities and the uncertainty of sources of revenue are also to blame for cutbacks in spending on education but this is not the sole cause. We all know that education is the one means by which we can prepare the country for facing the challenges that lie ahead.