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Agricultural Education In Bangladesh-II

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These Agri. Training Institutes are part and parcel of the Deptt. of Agricultural Extension and as such there is no separate cadre of teachers like that of Polytechnic/Vocational Training Institutes (under the Deptt. of Technical Education). As such, the standard of teaching of the ATI's cannot be accepted as satisfactory. The present course of ATI's cannot meet the requirement for producing a cadre of adequately trained sub-professional agricultural technicians for disseminating the modern agricultural technology to the millions of farmers of the country as well as to teach agriculture course in the Secondary schools.

Due to the deplorable situation of the Diploma level Agriculture Education and acute shortage of the 2-year certificate holders-in-agriculture and H.S.C. (Agri.) passed students, about 10,000 simple Matriculates or equivalents have been recruited to perform the job of Agri. Diploma holders in different agricultural and allied organisations.

The minimum requirement of Diploma-in-Agriculture in the country is about 50,000 in the immediate future for employment in Agricultural Extension, Research, Credit Administration, and allied organisations and as agricultural teachers of high schools and Vocational Agricultural Training Centres.

By employing untrained agricultural technicians the production level in the Agriculture sector can never be increased proportionately to the investment in terms of seed, fertilizer, irrigation, pesticides, improved

breeds of cattle, poultry, and fish seed etc. The duration of the sub-professional diploma level agriculture education (Agriculture, Forestry, Fishery, Horticulture, Animal Husbandary and Agriculture Engineering) should be 2 years after H.S.C. (Agriculture)/H.S.C. (Science) with Agriculture subjects instead of the proposed duration of 3 years after S.S.C.

It may be mentioned that the 3-year diploma-in-engineering course after S.S.C. offered in the Polytechnic Institutes comprises a good amount of basic science courses of Physics, Chemistry and Mathematics, somewhat similar to the H.S.C. (Science) course in those subjects. If 3-year course of Diploma-in-Agriculture is introduced in the existing ATI's or in newly established institutes, a huge investment is to be made in terms of physical infrastructure and appointment of teachers in basic sciences — Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Mathematics but a large number of H.S.C. (Science)/H.S.C. (Agri.) passed students are already available in the country for enrolment in the proposed 2-year Diploma-in-Agriculture course after H.S.C. (Agriculture) or H.S.C. (Science). Moreover, it will never be possible to open the door of higher agricultural education for the proposed 3-year Diploma in-Agriculture holders without teaching basic sciences (as it is done in 3-year Diploma-in-Engineering Course). It would be much more logical and cheaper to introduce the H.S.C. (Agri.) course in the general colleges as a preparatory course for the 2-year

Diploma-in-Agriculture curriculum.

It is proposed that at least 64 Junior Colleges of Agriculture (one in each districts) be established under the management of a Directorate of Agricultural Education under the Ministry of Education in line with the Directorate of Technical Education.

Out of the fourteen ATI's eight are to be upgraded as Junior Colleges of Agriculture, the Forest Institute at Sylhet is to be upgraded as Junior College of Forestry and the Forest College, Chittagong is to be renamed as Junior College of Forestry, the Veterinary Training Institutes attached to the Livestock Directorate are to be upgraded as Junior Colleges of Veterinary Technology and some of the Fisheries Training Institutes are to be upgraded as Junior Colleges of Fishery and all these Junior Colleges are to be transferred under the proposed Directorate of Agriculture Education, Ministry of Education. The remaining six ATI's and some of the Veterinary Training Institutes, Fishery Training Institutes and the Forestry Training Institute will be retained by the respective Department/Organisation to impart job-oriented inservice/refresher courses.

It has been recognised that due to lack of social status and recognition of the diploma holders in any branch of Technical Education in our society, many parents do not like to enroll their sons/daughters for the diploma level education. To overcome this problem, it is suggested to award the degrees of B. Tech. (Engg.), B. Tech. (Agri.), B. Tech. (Forestry), B. Tech. (horticulture), B. Tech. (vet. tech.) B.

Tech. (medical tech.), B. Tech. (textile tech.), B. Tech. (leather tech.), B. Tech. (food tech.), B. Tech. (nursing) from the respective universities in lieu of diploma certificates. Such a degree create social status for the sub-professional technical at least at par with B.Sc. (Pass) science graduates but they will receive higher pay-scale and emoluments than that of general science graduate. Such a system will also keep the door of higher technical education open for the 2-year Diploma/B. Tech. (Agri.) Certificate holders. It may be mentioned that, the Nur Khan Education Commission recommend to introduce B. Tech. (Bachelor of Technology) courses in all fields of technical education.

Chittagong University is awarding 2-year B.Sc. (Forestry) degree and 4-year B.Sc. (Hons) (Forestry) Degree after H.S.C. (Science). Two-year forest graduates are appointed as Forest Ranger (technician) in NNS 470-1135 and the 4 year B.Sc. (Hons) (Forestry) graduates are appointed as Asstt. Conservators of Forest and Research Officers in NNS 1650-3050 by the Forest Department, Ministry of Agriculture.

On completion of 5 years service, the meritorious Diploma-in-Agriculture/B. Tech. (Agri.) Technicians may be deputed to study in an agriculture college specially established to offer a 3-year condensed B.Sc. Ag. (Hons) Degree Course for employment in the Extension and allied services and teachers in high schools and intermediate colleges and junior colleges of agriculture.