

## Need For Education And Good Health

The problem of raising a well-educated and healthy workforce increasingly haunts us as we go about our quest for economic growth. As there is no easy way to ensure the easy access to basic education and health care that is required, we sometimes find ourselves "frothing at the mouth" in our attempts to force a breakthrough. Today, the transition economies are much in the same boat with the exception they do have a foundation to fall back on for, in these former "command economies" the health and education sectors were among their finest achievements.

Today, things are very different, for within the more flexible environment of the ever-changing market, even these small beacons of success are beginning to break down to the extent that reform is urgently needed if the workers are ever to be able to develop the transferable and marketable skills they now require. In other words the need of the hour is for a better informed workforce capable of participating actively in the new society and able to take advantage of its benefits. Part of this will also call for a reform of the health care system so as to increase the life expectancy of the people and reduce the burden that disease and sickness is leaving behind. Although reform is the undisputed need, care must also be taken to see that the achievements of the old regime are not also lost in the shuffle.

As the primary purpose of an education system is to impart knowledge and skills, achieving these objectives may not be all that easy for it also involves a number of other no less important objectives like an equitable access to education and training; producing the types of educational activities that equip individuals economically, socially, and politically for the societies in which they live; running schools and other institutions as efficiently as possible; and financing education in ways that are both fair and efficient.

Important as these things certainly are in a modern society, the ability to transmit certain values to the people which will hold them in good stead throughout life is equally important. The education package that will result from these efforts although varying enormously between countries and cultures will, nevertheless, be made up of many common factors. For the developing countries, things are entirely different for they are not starting from the same base and they may need to start off with a programme which will give equal access to education. If this basic condition alongside the right to good health can be provided, these countries will have taken a positive step forward, for the main purpose in developing the human resource is to help the nation tap into the latent talent and skills of the people.

Shortage of skilled labour and a surplus of unskilled labour are still the bugbears of an undeveloped state that alleviating these two conditions are now top priority for nations. With the need to redefine our goals so that we can remove the gap which continues to persist between us and other states the first priority will be to increase the rate of investment we put aside for the purpose.