

Educating The Workforce

Those developing countries that first invested in education have gone head of the pack. By doing so they have now an educated workforce that can compete with any in the world. Not so Bangladesh – for at least Pakistan – which neglected the need and is now suffering for this neglect. Not only this, but numerous media reports and studies have pointed to a declining standard in primary and secondary education to which the authorities paid no attention. As we know well, or should know, education is the most important tool we can hand our children in a struggle to carve a niche for themselves in an increasingly hostile world.

English and mathematics are probably the most important of the subjects being taught as they are needed if children are to gain a competitive edge for themselves in an increasingly globalised environment. The Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics says unplanned changes in curriculum and the introduction of a new curriculum without taking into account teachers' educational qualifications, a comparatively hard curriculum and the lack of competent teachers have resulted in poor performances at all levels. As it stands to reason, if the quality of education cannot be improved without improving the quality of teachers, therefore all schools should be required to arrange proper training programmes for their teachers to bring them up to date with teaching methods. This is particularly true for English and Mathematics teachers because most of the unsuccessful candidates in this year's examinations failed in these two subjects. But when we think about it, this should not have come as a surprise considering the state of English in the country and the reliance on calculators. In fact most children throughout the world are unable to do any calculation in their heads. This is because mental arithmetic has gone out of style.

In other words no matter how elated we may be over the large percentage of passes in the recent examination we must remember that so long as a student fails to get through the country's resources are being wasted. The problem before us is how to make certain that every examinee passes, and at a level. But that is not the end of the story because successful candidates cannot get places in colleges, a waste of effort too. This means that more colleges must be established staffed by well-qualified teachers who can make certain the basic educational qualifications are achieved as these students will form the bulk of the workforce. Only after this has been done