

## Vocational Training

Manpower is the most important resource of Bangladesh and, for that matter, for any nation. It has been called by some experts "the ultimate resource." The development of manpower is substantially dependent on facilities for vocational education which has been a consistent and identifiable element in the progress of mankind. It has certainly been a part of the foundation of man's creative and progressive development. In some ancient societies, the father was made responsible for providing trade instruction to his son. Throughout the middle ages, skills of craftsmanship continued to be passed from father to son. In modern times, however, facilities for vocational education and training have been extended in such a way that people have got access to them on a competitive basis (ideally, of course). A central tenet of vocational education is often expressed by the phrase "to fit one for useful employment". This implies an economic future for the individual which will be better than what he might have had without vocational education. Economic improvement leads towards a better standard of living for the individual, and this in turn becomes a gain for society as a whole. Vocational education has, therefore been thought of as a "wise business investment" both for the nation and for the individual.

It is thus not difficult to realise that vocational education promotes economic development for any society, and more so in Bangladesh which is somewhat poor in other resources needed for development. We do, however, suffer from deficiencies in manpower planning while we create facilities for vocational education. The prestigious high-level professional training in engineering, medicine and such other specialities which automatically attract young people are not properly matched by the less-attractive mid-level and lower-level cadres of technicians, paramedical personnel, etc. As a consequence, we have an imbalance in our manning schedule leading to less than an optimum utilisation of our high-level personnel with degrees from technical universities and colleges. The numbers of engineers and doctors that we have and are having every year are certainly inadequate for a large nation like ours. Yet, when it comes to employing those specialists, we have problems of various types; one of which is the imbalance of personnel as mentioned above. Consequently, these well-trained persons look for jobs abroad while the nation also needs the services of these people. Our doctors, engineers, agriculture experts, economists and other experts are found to do well abroad, while they find themselves as a sort of surplus personnel at home. While resource scarcity is an important cause of this situation, the absence of an adequate manpower planning is no less responsible for it.

We have only a small number of institutions for training nurses and paramedics, for lower-level technicians and agriculture and livestock personnel, and for all sorts of technical hands. A remedy is being offered not only by short-term training facilities created by the government's youth training programme, but also by private institutions of various types and standards inside and outside the national metropolis. The standard of training offered by them is hardly satisfactory. It is obvious that some controlling hand must be there for ensuring a proper standard of training in all these programmes and institutions. International assistance for this purpose may also be available if considered necessary. On account of the obvious demand for such personnel in the market at home and abroad, it would not be improper to suggest that we have the responsibility of ensuring that facilities for technical training for producing mid-level and lower level technicians in all fields of human activity are adequately provided. The streamlining of their standard is also equally imperative.