

20/2/85

Textile Education

—A.K.M. Musharraf Husain

BANGLADESH is a country of 90 million people. It is the most thickly populated country in the world. It occupies the 8th position in the world in its population size which is increasing at the rate of 2.8% per annum. For clothing this ever increasing mass of people, leaving aside the prospect of earning valuable foreign exchange through setting up export oriented textile industries, the necessity of developing its present textile industries does not need any emphasis. But mere increasing the number (capacity of the industry is not enough. It requires a trained competent workforce from the level of skilled workers to the level of efficient managers, to run the industries effectively, to develop appropriate technology and thus help the country to attain self-sufficiency in all spheres of textiles and earn valuable foreign exchange through export of textiles and skilled manpower. Knowledge in the technology is thus the focal point and is the most essential thing for the development of the industry. This is usually disseminated through teaching/training in educational institutions and training centres. Training is considered as an extension to education.

At present there are 35 academic and specialized training institutes and centres for textiles in the country. The department of textiles under the Ministry of Textiles runs 32 institutions as follows:— (a) Six District Weaving Schools, one in each of the districts of Tangail, Pabna, Dinajpur, Chittagong, Noakhali and Barisal; (b) 17 Peripatetic Weaving Schools—spreading all over the country, mostly in handloom concentrated areas; (c) 5 Jute/Wool Textile Weaving Demonstration parties; and (d) 4 Coir Weaving Demonstration parties. The Department of Textiles has upgraded the six district weaving schools to Textile Institutes to offer 2-year Certificate courses

in Textiles to S.S.C's while the rest 26 institutes award one year Artisan Courses on Coir, Jute, and other specialised Textiles to Class VIII passed ones. The Department of Textiles also has undertaken the task of upgrading 4 peripatetic weaving schools of Kushtia, Dacca, Raishahi and Mymensingh districts to Textile Institutes to award 2-year Certificate course in its SFYP. It has also kept provision to raise the status of the Dacca and the Raishahi Textile Institutes eventually to Diploma Awarding Institutes. To run the silk industries, the Sericulture Board under the Ministry of Textiles produces requisite skilled workforce by running the Silk and Lac Institute at Raishahi, while the BTMC under the same Ministry established the Textile Industries Development Centre at Dacca by imparting technical training for new entrants and upgrading the skill of existing supervisory personnel of the BTMC and runs it through UNIDO experts, under UNIDO assistants. Lastly, the College of Textile Technology at Tejgaon Dacca the only seat of learning for higher education in Textile which was upgraded from Diploma awarding institute (formerly the Bangladesh Textile Institute) to Degree level one (B.Sc. Degree in Textile Technology), in the year 1979 is run by the Directorate of Technical Education, under the Ministry of Education.

In Bangladesh textile (Jute, Cotton and other fibres combined) obviously tops the list in respect of personnel engaged in any field of Engineering Technology etc. besides agriculture. The handloom sector alone employs more than 8 lac people while the BTMC, BJMC, Sericulture Board, Handloom Board, Department of Textiles Directorate of Jute, Department of Jute Goods Inspection, specialized textile mills and powerloom factories under private sector employ about another 4 lac

people.

The technical personnel engaged in the public and private sector textile industry may be categorised into four groups as follows:—

- (a) Technologists/Technicians—Comprising from the level of designers, quality controllers, shift-in-charges to the level of Managers/General Managers.
- (b) Supervisors/Foremen.
- (c) Jobbers/Fitters.
- (d) Machine operators or workers, and accordingly training needs are usually assessed and facilities provided.

An idea of persons needing training in different textile sectors (BJMC, BTMC, BHB, BSB and private Mills Factories) can be formed from that existing in the BTMC (according to the estimate made by Mr. Jack Woolfenden, BTMC Training Centre Adviser in March 1980) is given as below.

Categories needing training :

- Technologists/Technicians
- Supervisors/Foremen
- Jobbers/Fitters
- Operatives

Foremen for all kinds of textile mills including jute and silk. Even then, on-the-job training is required for these people as textile machinery are very versatile today and it is not possible for one to be master of all makes/types of machines which perform even the same function. The training centres similar to the textile industries development centre may look at this aspect of training of Key Personnel of industries i.e. starting with supervisors, foremen, and fitters including jobbers and other craft level employees. Currently the textile industry in Bangladesh is deficient of and in desperate need of junior and middle management personnel to the amount of about 2300 (1300 in cotton textile and about 1000 in jute textile industries). Considering replacement requirements and growth requi-

Total needing training

Technologists/Technicians	2338
Supervisors/Foremen	2378
Jobbers/Fitters	2688
Operatives	25500
Total	32904

It may be pointed out that at the moment, BJMC employs more personnel than the BTMC. Many mills have their own learner scheme to train new workers to replenish the turnover due to death, retirement, dismissal, disability etc. Schools like these maintained by the Department of Textiles look after this aspect of training of operatives or workers besides building a skilled force of jobbers and fitters. It has already been mentioned that the Department of Textiles has already upgraded some district Weaving Schools to award 2-year certificate course. A carefully thought out programme and its proper implementation may bring success in this very important aspect of building skilled manpower—Jobbers/Fitters and Supervisors/

Foremen the figure in cotton textile sector could reach nearly 2500 in five years with a correspondingly drastic fall off in production and a worsening of the quality of textiles produced. A very gloomy and dismal picture in the cotton textile side is already in the sight of the people who think sincerely about the country's economic and development conditions. At present the BTMC employs about 2338 technologists/technicians & the BJMC about 2500. Out of these there are about 80% textile diploma/degree holders only working in the above two corporations. The rest of the 4338 technical jobs are being held by non-qualified technical persons. Besides this, a considerable number of technical posts are

College of Textile Technology. The Degree programme is no doubt very vital and ought to have been started at least 10 years ago but the abolishment/discontinuation of the Diploma course in Textile is suicidal for the country. Each course has its own objective. The diploma level education is required to produce technicians—the junior management personnel in the textile industry who are the backbone of the textile industries while the degree level education in textile is required to produce textile technologists/engineers/scientists for middle and senior level management personnel in the textile industry and personnel who would be able to plan, devise, invent, develop and contribute towards the growth of textile industry of a country. If the junior level people produced by Diploma level education are the backbone, the degree level technologists are the head or brain of textile industry of a country. Usually the requirement ratio between the diploma level and the degree level technicians/technologists is 6:1 in any country in the textile industry.

In view of the pressing demand of textile education research training and retraining for running the existing textile industries effectively and profitably and developing the country's textile industries for contributing effectively to building Bangladesh economy stronger and firmer we must ponder the whole aspect of textile education research and training and bringing discipline or streamlining the education system in its entirety. Chaos and indiscipline in the education system, lack of co-ordination in the