

UNB Report

The economy is unlikely to get the thrust needed to become a middle-income country by 2021 unless the government adopts a policy to spend more for ensuring quality education as well as stretching the scope of technical education in the country, noted educationists observed.

They also stress expanding the bracket of compulsory education up to class X for keeping the process of producing educated, skilled manpower rolling at a pace to fulfill the requirement of the growing economy.

They observed that Bangladesh is in a good shape in some indicators to emerge as a middle-income nation but it will not be a sustainable one without creating skilled manpower.

In its election manifesto in 2008, the ruling Awami League had pledged to make Bangladesh a middle-income country by 2021, and it pledged during the 10th parliamentary polls to make the country a developed one by 2041.

Prof Emeritus of Dhaka University Serajul Islam Choudhury said the government must increase the expenditure in education to fulfill the goals.

The budgetary allocation should be no less than 6 percent of the country's GDP which is now only two percent, he said adding that there is no alternative to educated and skilled manpower for the desired progress.

Priority should be given to expansion of technical education for producing skilled manpower and the focus should be on making it accessible to students as early as they pass the primary level so that the meritorious students could be attracted, he said.

Besides, Prof Serajul Islam noted, the quality of education must also improve.

Stressing the need for improving the teaching standards for skill development, he said the government must increase the salary and uplift the dignity of teachers.

Education expert Prof Siddiqur Rahman said the country's education system must be overhauled to make available the skilled manpower needed to move to a middle-income economy soon.

"There's no alternative to education to create skilled manpower for achieving the status of a middle-income nation and a developed country respectively," he said.

Siddiqur, a professor of the Institute of Research and Education (IER) at Dhaka University, recommended introducing time-befitting education curricula and examination system with a focus on technology use in the classroom.

He also suggested making the education compulsory up to class VIII and class X in phases and improving the efficiency of teachers through training programs.

"The salaries of teachers must increase to attract meritorious people to the profession as it's not possible to build a good nation without good teachers. On top of it, all the educational institutes must be provided with scientific equipment to make the education more pragmatic," he said.

Prof Siddiqur called for introducing stipends for poor students alongside ensuring punitive measures against guardians for their failure to send the children to schools.

Prof Syed Manzoorul Islam of English Department at the Dhaka University said, "The government can establish a pool of experienced people for the development of human resources. They'll suggest the government in which sector it can invest for the human resource development."

He emphasized learning language, particularly English, that will help many people to get overseas jobs.

Primary and Mass Education Secretary Kazi Akhtar Hossain told that the government has an extensive plan for the expansion of education with a view to creating skilled manpower in the country.