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Equal opportunities, human development and private universities

FOR social and economic progress Bangladesh needs to educate its population to create human resource. Human resource plays a key role in national development. Equal opportunity for education, irrespective of the individuals' economic or social status, can ensure best utilisation of the nation's talent.

There is no justification for denying the insolvent but meritorious students the opportunity to higher studies. A nation that does it only deprives it of the service of the meritorious. Merit is not dependent on economic status or station in life of an individual. The standard of education needs improvement at primary, secondary, as well as higher

No country can achieve progress by neglecting human resource development, writes M. Azizur Rahman

levels. The public as well as the private universities have to do more to create opportunities for the insolvent but meritorious students. Stipends, free studentship or lower tuition fees for the less solvent but meritorious would benefit the nation more than the individuals who would get it.

Per capita income is no yardstick for judging a nation's level of development. It depends more on equitable distribution of resources and availability of equal opportunities in a particular country or society. As education plays a key role in the development of a country, its edu-

cational institutions from the primary to the university level have the responsibility to produce human resources. The system must provide equal opportunities to students across the country irrespective of their economic standing. The meritorious but insolvent students deserve extra support. A nation would only deprive itself of the service of the meritorious by keeping them out.

The meritorious students from the solvent families, who do not qualify to get admission into public universities, has an alternative in private universities.

The private universities do reduce the pressure on government exchequer as well as on the public universities. The government should spend a part of its revenue earnings for the advancement of students from less solvent families. It would, at least, partially ensure distributive justice.

Though the private universities are run with the tuition fees, they allow up to 25 per cent of the students to study free of tuition fees or at lower fees. It benefits the less solvent. The private universities also provide stipends to less-solvent students. On this head,

each private university spends, on an average, between Taka ten to twenty million a year. The opportunities should be expanded to provide the opportunities of higher education to more of them.

The private universities, already providing market oriented modern education free from politics and session jams, can give the nation more.

Both the public and private universities should create greater opportunities of tuition free studies or provide stipends for the meritorious but less solvent learners.

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