

IT EDUCATION/ SERVICES:

Over the last 3 years, efforts have been made to improve the quality of IT education and research in Bangladesh. At the tertiary level, all public and private universities have started producing computer science graduates through the introduction of computer science departments. Steps have been taken to implement computer education in secondary and higher secondary levels. The massive and strong participation by young people and their urge to become computer literate and develop professional competence are the most encouraging observations.

Government of Bangladesh and the IT Industry:

The Government of Bangladesh has declared IT industry as a priority sector. The following steps have been undertaken to develop this industry:

- Full exemption from income tax.
- Working capital loan from banks at preferential interest rates and with no collateral requirement.
- Duty and tax free import of computer hardware and software.

IT policy of Bangladesh/IT education goals and objectives:

- Improve the skill level of IT personnel already working in various fields.
- Establish and maintain professional standards of IT education and training.
- Human Resources Development:

One of the major weaknesses of Bangladesh in the IT field is the lack of trained manpower. The government has placed high priority on human resource development. At present, the annual output of graduates in the IT field is around 500. The target is to produce 10,000 programmers annually by the year 2002. There are about 24

universities offering undergraduate degree programmes in IT related fields. The polytechnics have also introduced 3 year diploma programmes in Computer Technology. In addition, a large number of educational and training institutes, many of them with linkages with foreign institutions, are also offering training courses.

Challenges:

- One of the major problems faced by these institutions is the shortage of trainers.
- The absence of adequate physical resources (eg, computer hardware and software) and weakness in course contents in the training institutions adversely affect the quality of output from these institutions. An accreditation system is planned to be introduced by the government soon.
- Absence of a modern/improved national information infrastructure.

IT Education in Bangladesh:

Schools and Colleges:

English medium 'O' level (private schools)-

- Computing studies subject offered to students of 'O' levels.
- Computer study is compulsory in the junior level starting from the grade 5 level.

Public education SSC and HSC (see 'Education System'- page 11 for details)

- Computer Science or computer study is offered as an optional subject at public schools and colleges.