

Feature

Education

Linking Education and Employment Closely

SSC and HSC results this year are a cause for celebration to many. There are some for whom passing in either of these examinations allow them to possess an added attraction matrimonially. Though this applies mostly to girls, some boys and men are concerned also. The young men are in business of their own with capital provided by an understanding parent out of that son's inheritance. The certificate marks the peak of their academic career. Others — they are usually aged and in the lower income group — have managed to secure those certificates to ensure a job in the immediate future or to maintain the employment that was running on a temporary basis.

It is those who wish to continue their studies who alarm those elders interested in such matters. These experts can only see an explosion in the number of educated unemployed. They feel that by 'urbanising' many rural students we are creating a white collar labour force, who will — and do — shrink from any other kind of work. Though agriculture is still a large employment sector, the prospects are not inviting except for the sole owner or entrepreneur. On the other side, those who have seen their concerns profitable for generations do not yet feel much need for trained or better skilled manpower. Only those sectors which have received the lure of foreign markets are beginning to think on these lines.

In the meantime our education system, already backlogged, is producing a steady stream of under graduates to post graduates, doctors, engineers and others who are said to be finding an almost impenetrable competitive job market at home. Overseas is a solution for many. Some go via the agencies, others have a relative abroad. A few can find financing from their parents. From Finland to Japan, from Malaysia to Australia — Bangladeshis are working abroad, often at manual labour, they avoided at home. It is lucrative in foreign lands because it prys so well and there is none of the neighbours to see.

In developed countries there are vocational and technical institutes, but unemployment has not disappeared. Only in Japan and Germany has the unemployment rate been low enough to be acceptable. Even then while Germany is weathering the turbulence of

absorbing East Germany, unemployment has soared. Now it is very slowly coming down. Germany's 'secret' is that manufacturing firms and commercial establishments have accepted the fact that their work force comes out of those who receive an education. Therefore, it is in their interest to ensure, first, that the pupil gets the chance to develop one's abilities, and, second, proper apprenticeship training is provided to build up a skilled craftsman. The first is

pend on a dedicated core of women teachers. The commercial and industrial sectors of the developing world will also have to share in the process of education — if they want workers appropriate to the present situation. One must always count one's blessings first. Countries like Bangladesh have given the women voting rights — ahead of many other well off states! Unlike Germany and Japan, there is a rich environment for

field, factories or elsewhere. This is highly deplorable. All religions firmly uphold the dignity of labour. In Germany and Japan hard times cause all the employees to share the plight. Employees now even carry out such manual tasks as sweeping floors and becoming salesmen. Our youth will have to accept that to get to their desired position 'I', they have to zig zag from the beginning 'a'.

Instead of the technical and vocational schools required, we have many private insti-

nance their own training programmes if they want to extend their markets worldwide with skilled workers making high quality products. The government's function should be only to monitor that required standard is maintained. There must not be involvement, causing further increase in bureaucratic service.

Here it should be noted that some critics bemoan the passing of the old bureaucrats who possessed great knowledge and experience. True but they can coach — as some already are — to carry on the best of their work experience. While it is a fact that the nouveau bureaucrats, in certain cases, lack the ability to keep the underserving in their place, in this computer age they can be slotted to positions that best suit their particular talents.

This may mean keeping them in a specific position for a long time or transferring them within a narrow field. But since this ensures the country receives the best they can give, there should be no outcry. As for the 'vacant' positions, this is a technocratic age. As in France, for example, let the able from the technocrats be given the opportunity to display their hidden admin is tractive talent. This is where the free movement of students from the technical, vocational and universities have their practical application: the experts or professionals can also have their stint at bureaucracy, which should in that case lose its cure current global un-savoury taint and retain its true lustre.

We must remember that if any individual or group succeeds in the improbable venture of removing all bureaucracy it will have to bring it back again, for it is a necessity. Some one has to run the administration. But the more participative it is, the lesser will be their number and we will be able to provide them with the facilities and pay deserving a high official. And the first step is to stop the production of those like lawyers and university graduates in such numbers.

Instead of the stars of SSC and HSC examinations, the elite of vocational and technical schools should be feted by the mass media. And the first step here is the transformation of these systems to ones where the emphasis is on vocational and technical professions. That is if we want an end to campus violence, unemployment, lack of competitive ability in most of the world market and a poverty-stricken future.

The first is based on two foundations: a system, where one can go to the technical or vocational institutes or the university (and cross over from one to the other if needed!) and a teacher training system which attracts the brightest minds — by offering the highest salaries in the world with civil service status — who are put through as rigorous a practical session as the pupils they teach.

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Japan is not very different. The lesson for developing countries is to do the same starting right now. Countries like Kenya have already taken the primary step with schools for beginners sponsored by the community and the government. Middle aged women make up the teachers. In fact, the developed countries de-

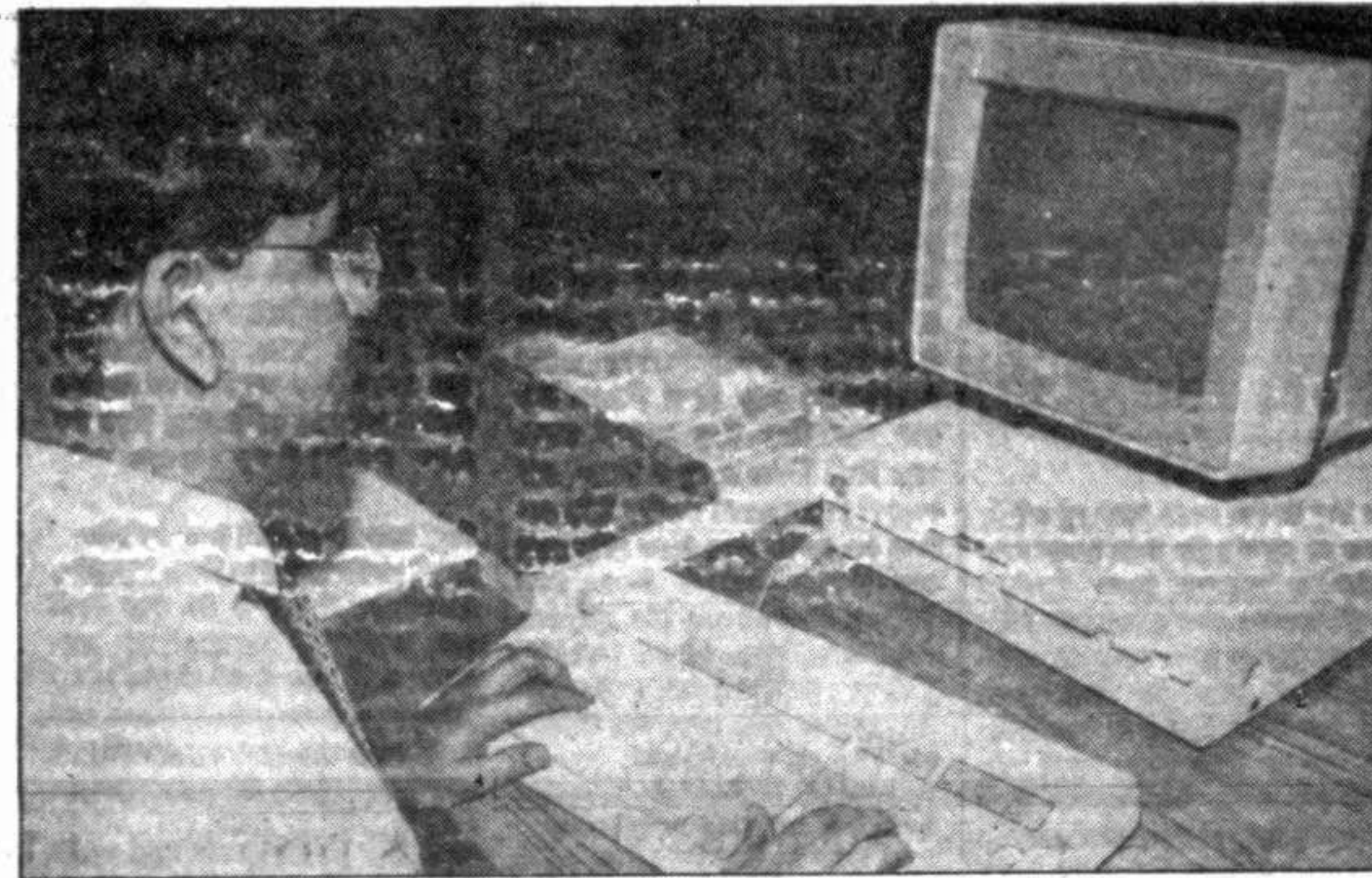
the flourishing of creativity and leadership. However, in the sub-continent, Bangladesh comes third in reference to recognition of the deserving inventors and other creative persons. India is first, Pakistan second. The chasms are deeply marked but they can be easily levelled.

One must be willing to accept responsibility, mainly parents and teachers. Only then can the problem of wandering students be solved as well as the unemployed. They are our children. They are our citizens. What are we doing for them? We have universities.

It is claimed by some that they are a 'vote securing' ploy. Others claim they create the educated unemployed who feel it 'beneath' them to toil in the

tutes or training centres for turning out professionals like typists, drivers and electricians. There are also many foreign language learning centres: English, Arabic, Japanese. While some of the trainees are absorbed at home, others try their fortunes abroad. Our industries and businesses gain little. We have a few technical centres set up at great expense through foreign co-operation. Their numbers cannot be increased to the amount needed unless the community and the manufacturing world take a hand.

One cannot rest wholly on 'hand outs' from other countries. Some development must be fuelled by our own earnings and profit. The garments industries, for instance, could fi-



Only 9,000 Students Enter Sri Lankan Colleges Each Year

Sri Lanka is taking steps to bridge the gap between the aspirations of her young people for higher education and the resources for making that dream come true.

Students from rich families are often sent abroad for higher education, thus, avoiding the crush. Those who stay can afford to enroll in more expensive and, thus, less crowded disciplines like com-

puter science and accountancy. The inability of thousands of semi-educated young persons to pursue a higher education, which leaves them with very unpromising job prospects and very little avenues for improving and advancing themselves, has been the greatest cause of social turmoil in Sri Lanka in recent years. The situation has left thousands of ambitious young people, particularly from rural areas, discontented and frustrated.

The AUCs represent a significant step in correcting the mismatch between the youth's educational aspirations and the opportunities actually available to them. An extension of the free education programme in Sri Lanka, the AUCs will not charge any fees. Initially, graduates will receive certificates and diplomas qualifying them for middle-level jobs. — Depthnews Asia

by Mallika Wanigasundara

The bulk of these students year only about 37,000 out of 150,000 students pass the examination which would qualify them for entry to universities and colleges, just some 9,000 of the successful examinees actually manage to enroll in post-secondary courses.

come from poor families as they seek places in government-owned schools and want to pursue cheaper, but crowded, academic programmes.

joined the Forum's activities. The group has been working steadily over the past nine months toward their main objective of enhancing the health, social, cultural, educational and economic status of adolescents in Bangladesh. In addition to group meetings, forum members divided into six subcommittees: IEC materials, Counselling, Field based issues, Curriculum, Training of Trainers (TOT) and Research. It was soon discovered that only a few organizations had

developed and used. After a comprehensive search, the committee produced a printed list of books and resources on AFLE available in Bangladesh. These materials may be found in the VHSS library or in the BPHC reference room. The committee worked to create a list of the materials that should be developed specifically for Bangladesh. The counselling committee soon discovered that few people have given much thought to counselling for adolescents.

done much work previously in the area of AFLE. The IEC subcommittee contacted many organizations and libraries in an attempt to locate any AFLE material that had already been

They also conducted a small survey of adolescent boys and girls to assess the knowledge of adolescent girls and boys about their physical changes and possible complications/

In April, the Forum decided to hold a two day workshop to formulate future action plans and make some decisions about the proposed AFLE curriculum. Accordingly, a suc-

Whose Life-time Mission is Teaching

Madan Mohan Goswami, retired headmaster of the Tarak Jogendra (TJ) High School at Elashin in Tangail, had a look at the 48 years of his career as a teacher and wished he had his life a little longer.

"Life seems to be too short to do many things, yet undone," said Goswami, "One should have at least 50 years' time to do a service to the teaching job."



Madan Mohan Goswami

Goswami, widely known as 'Master Mashai' throughout southern Tangail district, made this comment betraying his unflinching devotion to the profession.

The 71-year-old teacher, wearing homespun 'dhoti' and the brahmin's holy thread across the shoulder, looked frail and meditated as he was sitting outside his residence in the village of Hinganagar.

This saintly teacher devoted his life to searching out meritorious students and improvement of the TJ school — a breeding ground of many a talent from southern Tangail.

The long list of his former students include eight PhDs, scores of doctors, engineers and high government officials. When he took up a teacher's career before the 1947 partition of India, the rate of liter-

poor farmers and share-croppers.

Master Mashai used to roam about villages in search of boys who had merit but gave up studies because of poverty.

The parents wanted their boys work as farm-hand and were reluctant to send their kids to school.

Madan Mohan Goswami used to arrange studies of these students in the TJ school free of cost and, in case, helped their parents with money from his personal fund.

Sometimes, he even brought the poor parents draught cows so that they could release the boys from the daily farming job in the field.

"I always entertained an idea that there were many meritorious boys in the rural areas but they could not shine in life for lack of encourage-

ment and financial support from their parents," he said. "I wanted to help them out."

Master Mashai was born in 1921 at Hinganagar. Son of late Lalimohan Goswami, he completed his matriculation from the Manikganj High School in 1938 and took his BA and the BA degrees from the Sadat College in Karatia, Tangail.

After completion of the bachelor degree, Madan Mohan Goswami joined the TJ High School in July 1945 as a teacher in both English and Bengali.

Recalling early years of his teaching career, he says, "During 1947 the school was seriously affected as a result of migration of the Hindu teachers and the sponsors of the school. Out of the 12 teachers, seven migrated to India. But I remained here with a hope that better days of the school will come."

He recalled that during this period there was serious crisis of qualified Muslim teachers to replace the experienced ones who had gone to live in India. The number of educated Muslims was too short while many were unwilling to take up the career of a teacher.

He was appointed headmaster of the TJ High School in 1951.

Towards the close of 1950s, the SSC result of the school remarkably improved with an average pass of 80 per cent.

The number of students of the school also rose to 950 in 1986 from 175 during the 50s.

One student of the school Durga Prashad Biswas stood first in the Metric examination of the East Bengal Education Board in 1949.

To increase literacy among the women of the locality, Master Mashai helped one of his former students, an engineer by profession, M Nasim Ahmed to set up a high school for the girls at Elashin.

But the career of a teacher never ends in his lifetime.

Now retired from the school since October 1, 1986, Madan Mohan Goswami still teaches at a local college, to spend his freetime.

A small hut in front of his Hinganagar home is still full of humming of the students — the disciples of Master Mashai, who arrive or disappear through the winding road to the distant villages.

'They are the Best Teachers'

by Meg Gardinier

ally and spiritually degrading forms of exploitation, can be rehabilitated in painful and controversial. When you speak of the constant trauma of girls 14 and 15 servicing 30 customers a night, 30 nights a month," says Ron O'Grady, Coordinator of End Child Prostitution in Asian Tourism (ECPAT), "you cannot speak of rehabilitation."

The question of whether a child who has been sold or forced into prostitution, one of the most physically, emotionally and spiritually degrading forms of exploitation, can be rehabilitated is painful and controversial.

'Rehabilitation is not synonymous with healing,' says Florence Bruce, Project Coordinator of the International Catholic Child Bureau (ICCB). 'There are always traces of psychological and social wounds. But if rehabilitation means leaving prostitution for a better life, it can happen.'

Keeping alive the hope that it can happen are thousands of field workers in every country where child prostitution exists, committed individuals working year after year, often silently and against high odds of failure (in most cases as high as 80%). They work with children who are suicidal, listless and resistant. One young adolescent girl, when asked by Good Shepherd Sister Michelle Lopez for her single greatest wish, replied, 'I wish I had never been born.'

In 1991 ICCB published *The Sexual Exploitation of Children: Field Responses*, a compendium describing 50 projects in four continents as a testament to these efforts, and as a service and inspiration to others. Established to provide alternatives for children forced or lured into prostitution, these programmes provide vocational skills, medical and legal services, education and the spiritual dignity of the child. 'Creating relationships and communication has proved more important in the long term than the provision of services and programmes,' says Florence Bruce, report editor.

Representing a small sampling of the work being done in the field, the publication provides a descriptive account of each project, including the number and type of children

assisted, activities, evaluation and resources. A few of their experiences and testimonies follow.

The Childhood for Children Project is a residential child-care programme of the PREDA Human Development Centre located in Olanpago, the Philippines. The project was initiated in 1989 in response to the growing number of poor children who had been abused by tourists or by US sailors from the nearby military base.

Directors of the programme, Father Shay Cullen and Mr Alex Hermoso, explain the struggles involved in caring for children who have been so profoundly exploited: 'It is difficult to enter the world of the street child, and we can only do so by listening to them. They carry the burdens of having been abused. They are the best teachers.'

The Domestic Workers Movement in Bombay, India, reaches out to 12,000 domestic workers, 4,000 of whom are children aged 9-18. The programme provides vocational training, health care and education, psychological support and leadership training.

Says Sister Jeannine Devos, project director: 'They come to our programme forced by hunger or in search of a job. There are tens of thousands of them. They are "the girl" or "the servant" or "the prostitute". Yet they do have names of their own. And their own stories. Beautiful stories and stories sorrowful, pitiful and heart-rending. Sharing with them, I experience them as a gift. They change us.'

Sister Michelle Lopez is a Good Shepherd Sister from the Fountain of Good Life Centre, in Pattaya, Thailand, which tries to build up both the girls' self-esteem and sense of self-worth as well as offering education and training in skills. She says: 'Children who come to our programme have dropped out of school and enter prostitution to pay off their parents' debts, when they send home money earned from prostitution, the girls get a sense of affirmation because they have been able to help their parents. The girls often tell me, "My body is bad, my soul is good..." It is true that we have had our failures. But I have observed that children who experience unconditional acceptance, respect, patience and trust stand a better chance of making it on their own.'

—*Third World Network Features*
About the writer: Meg Gardinier is director of ICCB, USA.

Nine affiliated university colleges (AUCs) are being established in the country's nine provinces to provide college education particularly for the less privileged, many of whom are currently being left out of Sri Lanka's higher educational system.

AUCs will help provide the Sri Lankan economy with qualified persons who have completed vocationally-oriented courses. They are expected to help ease the discontent and frustration of thousands of young Sri Lankans, particularly from rural areas, who are unable to land good jobs for lack of higher education and skills training.

Statistics compiled by the Principal Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) show that despite Sri Lanka's impressive adult literacy rate of 88.6 per cent, only 377 out of its every 100,000 inhabitants (less than one per cent) were enrolled in a higher education institution as of 1986.

This compares poorly with several other Asian countries. For instance, higher education enrollment for South Korea was 3,671 per 100,000 (the highest in the Asia-Pacific region) as of 1987; 3,580 per 100,000 in the Philippines as of 1985; 776 per 100,000 in India as of 1979; and 469 per 100,000 in Pakistan as of 1986.

The higher rates for India and Pakistan are particularly interesting as these two South Asian neighbours of Sri Lanka's have adult literacy rates of only 48.3 per cent and 34.9 per cent, respectively. Even Nepal, which registered a 25.6 per cent adult literacy rate for 1990, had an enrollment figure of 414 per 100,000 inhabitants as of 1985.

In Sri Lanka, thousands of young people qualified to enter college are unable to do so for lack of places. Although every



done much work previously in the area of AFLE. The IEC subcommittee contacted many organizations and libraries in an attempt to locate any AFLE material that had already been