

Education In Crisis

The Education Week, 2001 has got off to a quiet start on Monday. This is rather surprising. When grand shows are put up to commemorate far less important events or occasions by government agencies, this low-key celebration of as important an event as the education week will give enough cause for many to raise their eyebrows. If this follows a thorough soul-searching by people in charge of the country's education, we can be rest assured that something positive will emerge from the deplorable situation our education is in. But if this is the result of the customary, indifference we notice all around us, any expression of optimism will simply be out of place.

Ground realities however hold little prospect for the country's education. At each stage of our education—primary, secondary and tertiary—problems galore and many of them are intractable and very difficult to overcome. Although the National Education Policy 2000 had been endorsed by the Jatiya Sangsad on Sunday, a day before the Education Week began, we have little hope that it will effectively deal with such problems. The three streams of education at the primary level are not likely to have a meeting point. In their rush to raise the percentage of the literate, the government and non-government agencies or organisations have severely compromised the question of quality. Today in larger part of the country formal education has been relegated to the status of non-formal learning.

Such yawning gap between standards of education is not only confined to the primary level, it pulls down the general standard of education at all levels. At the primary and secondary levels we have just one teacher for 51 students. One must not forget that in some schools this ratio of teacher-student can be 1:100 or even more. If the number is not all, take also into consideration the quality of teachers. If the poor teaching quality is not enough, add to it the professional aberration of the most loathsome kind and the picture becomes complete. Stories of teachers supplying copies to examinees, examiners contacting candidates for allowing the letter to rewrite examination papers in exchange for huge amount of money and such other malpractices have come to light at different times. Only recently a college teacher from Gazipur made good his escape with more than Taka one crore in the syndicate bank-style. However, there is some difference in that the so-called teacher cheated his colleagues in the college and also his students. Do such teachers have moral authority to teach the students? The shock and the subsequent loss

SHARIATPUR, Feb 1.—Over 1500 unlicensed medicine shops have been running in the town since the start of the year. They did not take any attempt to curb the unauthorised business.

From Our Correspondent

business at Shariatpur medicine shops run