

The Quality of Primary Education in Bangladesh

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In the constitution of the Peoples' Republic of Bangladesh the State has been entrusted with the responsibilities of establishing a uniform mass-oriented and universal system of education and removing illiteracy. It has also been given the responsibilities of relating education to the needs of the society and producing trained and well-motivated citizens to serve those needs. In this context, two things were noticed. (1) arrangements should be made to educate all the children. (2) the development and improvement of the quality of the different courses of Primary education should be ensured.

As per constitution, the government nationalized 36,165 primary schools for widening the extent of primary education in the country. The number of students was 7.76 million, the number of teachers being 1,55,742. But due to the shortage of fund and in the absence of proper administration the progress of primary education did not get any momentum. No effort was taken to increase the number of enrolments in the schools nor was there any attempt to check the dropouts therein. There was no sincere endeavour to improve the standard of primary education and no measure was taken for the development works of the school buildings.

There are 50,314 Primary schools in the country, of which 37,733 are government primary Schools and 12,741 are non-Government primary schools. Only 83% of the school-age population has been enrolled in the schools. The rate of drop-outs is 59%. 90% of the Government primary teachers are trained by PTI. But the cluster training of the teachers that follows the PTI training is not adequate for them. So their efficiency diminishes gradually. The trained teachers of 12,574 non-government primary schools are not many in number. As a result, it is not expected of them to be of great use in educating the children properly and retaining them in the schools. So it is necessary to introduce 'Refreshers' Course for the primary teachers after the PTI training. Necessary steps have already been adopted in this regard.

Next comes the question of syllabus and books. It is very important to write attractive books and make proper curriculum for the children, so that those will be readily acceptable to them. All sorts of complicated subjects and too much of scholarship should be avoided in the

publications of the text books of the primary education. The Government has already adopted different measures to improve the standard of the books at primary levels. The modern versions of some of the books have already been published.

In our country the number of primary schools and furnitures therein is not enough. Quality materials are not given in constructing school buildings, as a result of which they collapse quickly. The school buildings need repair and renovation at a regular basis. The Government has made arrangements for the renovation and reconstruction of 10,000 class rooms of the primary schools, 12,000 low-cost class rooms, the repair of 4,000 primary schools, establishment of 200 Satellite schools, and for the supply of furnitures to the schools through the General Education Projects.

It is expected that the standard of primary education in Bangladesh will be elevated if different necessary arrangements are made in this regard and implementation of different programmes related to it, is ensured.