

SSC Question Paper Leakage

The Secondary School Certificate (SSC) is the first major public examination that students in this country face. The sheer number of those who take the examination make it a national event. There may hardly be any family in the region that may not be affected one way or the other by the examination. But we have developed a tradition of mismanaging the examination. There hasn't been any such examination in recent years that has passed off smoothly.

The process of the examination starts with the registration of the candidates that takes place around the time the student gets promoted to class IX and the actual examination comes off two years later with enough time in between to correct things that might have gone wrong. Even then this year some 80 candidates failed to take the examination as they did not get the admit cards.

The most crucial stage of the examination runs for almost a month. Then comes the final phase, the results, in which we still retain the colonial characteristics. The more unfortunate events, however, surface during the days the examination takes place. In the first four days this year 6,347 candidates faced expulsion orders for what they call adoption of unfair means. And that may not be the end of the punitive actions against them.

A Chittagong report on the third day of the examination said all question papers of the SSC examination had been leaked out and were selling vigorously in the city and Mirersarai and Sitakunda. It also said that in addition to English and Bengali question papers, the Police Department has collected some question papers on Mathematics and Geography. Some 30 people including two police personnel were injured in a clash at one centre between the police and the outsiders. Six invigilators were also suspended for allegedly supplying copies to the candidates.

The Deputy Commissioner of Chittagong and Chittagong Education Board have set up enquiry committees to investigate into the question paper leakage.

A Sirajganj report says at least 11 people including a magistrate were injured when police and copy suppliers clashed. A transport of the Thana Nirbahi Officer was damaged in Jessore.

Some of the newspapers published the leaked question papers. The Education Board filed cases against the offending newspaper authorities. Among them the Editor of Comilla Barta is in prison for publishing the question paper of the Bengali first paper. The publisher and News Editor of the daily Karnafuli are on bail. The paper published most of the question papers in advance.

Meanwhile the government has warned any one found involved in leakage of question papers will be punished with a minimum of three years and a maximum of 10 years in jail. The court too have taken cognizance of some of the cases. The matter has thus become sub-judice and might warrant suspension of the process. But that may not be a practical proposition.

The examinations might, therefore, be continued and, after a thorough review, fresh ones held, if found necessary. But the security arrangements for printing of question papers certainly need to be looked into and the answer to large scale copyings may be found in the low teaching standards on the one hand and steep competition for admission in the higher institutions. All the same we must note the lesson: We are not capable of replicating even an annual routine programme. The national efficiency level was not this low even during the colonial days. There must be concerted efforts to raise it to a tolerable level.