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Pry schools inadequate in Ctg **Students face problems to get admission**

Chittagong Office

CHITTAGONG, Jan. 18:—There are over 60,000 school goers in Chittagong city facing a baffling situation to get admitted to better schools this academic session. The parents of these primary school goers are now queuing for admission forms and their wards are simultaneously working over sample questions for admission tests.

These boys and girls of primary level have been scrambling here for admission into existing 160 primary schools all over the city. But these primary schools accommodate maximum 3,000 freshers. However, the real rush is primarily found for admission into a few good nurseries and kindergartens in the port city.

The so-called good schools are broadly divided into a handful of Bengali medium schools and English medium ones. The students from higher income group families usually prefer English medium schools despite their exorbitant tutor fees. Many of these affluent families here even sent their children overseas (preferably to India) for better education. Notwithstanding, the Bengali medium schools equally draw huge number of students.

A recent study showed that the Government and Chittagong City Corporation-run primary schools usually get students from lower middle-class parents. Their main consideration for going to these schools

obviously is low cost in education there.

Since this year's admission to most of these schools are still in process, a missioned kindergarten here issued four thousand forms for admission test. But the kindergarten will accept admission of 180 students. Similarly, another English medium school of average fame at Panchlaish received three thousand application forms for about 100 seats in its nursery and class one. A Bengali medium government school considered to be one of the best here received nearly five thousand applications for ninety seats in class one. Again a reputed government school at Nasirabad has got three thousand applications for 160 seats in three junior classes. Still the teachers at these government school find difficult to take class of the students sitting jammed in the room. Dr. Khastagir Girls High School is the glaring instance of having students beyond its sitting capacity.

The principal of Silver Belt Kindergarten, Mrs. Mahmuda Begum, summed up the feelings of the parents preferring English medium school for their children. These parents think, "English medium education offers greater career prospects". This, according to Mrs. Mahmuda, is a half truth. She said, "it is just a myth".

To get their wards admitted into a better school, parents here engage influential school teachers as private tutors for their children. Moreover, a section of parents believe that one can get one's child admitted to a prestigious school if one pays handsome donations. Their conviction is not at all unfounded. Some schools allegedly do accept donations as precondition of admission of students. However, one principal of a reputed English-medium school dismissed the donation story as totally untrue. The principal claimed that those who failed to get their children admitted to these schools spread this sort of canard.

A headmaster agreed that the tests by virtue of which a handful of candidates were chosen out of thousands were hardly scientific. But the authorities of these schools were helpless in the face of an unmanageable number of candidates. The only way to ensure fair competition was to have more schools so that the pressure on them could be evenly distributed.