

Secondary School Supervision Problems And Remedies

—Md. Riazul Islam

THE chief aim of school supervision is to provide necessary leadership, assistance, stimulation and advice to the teachers for their continuous professional development. This is for securing improvement of instruction in schools with a view to realizing its goals in an effective way. But if we look at the prevailing situation of secondary schools in Bangladesh, we see that every year a large number of students are repeating classes, leaving schools as drop-outs and failing at the Secondary School Certificate (S.S.C.) examinations. Moreover, there is a tendency to take unfair means at the examinations. The main cause of these is that many teachers are failing miserably to demonstrate appropriate teaching behaviour in their job leaving the students to fail in acquiring necessary curricular knowledge, skills and competence. We need to solve it. Here, we should emphasis on the need of raising the present professional ability of our secondary school teachers and developing it infinitely.

This will definitely meet growing societal demand relating to education and we will be able to achieve our secondary school goals in a better way. It clearly implies that we must improve our present system of secondary school supervision by identifying and solving its problems. This will ensure continuous professional development of our secondary school teachers.

In Bangladesh, the secondary stage of education includes lower secondary, secondary and higher secondary education. This study limits its discussion to the system of school supervision encompassing lower secondary and secondary schools. However, for higher secondary institutions there is no system for instructional supervision in Bangladesh.

Besides, the present study emphasizes on identifying the major problems of the system of secondary school supervision of Bangladesh and its solution. It does not deal with the problems relating to the professional preparation of the supervisory personnel, use of supervisory methods and attitude of the teachers.

In the present organizational set up of education in Bangladesh, the

Ministry of Education formulates the basic policy guidelines for secondary education and looks if those are implemented properly. Administration and supervision of secondary schools is the responsibility of the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education. At the central office of the directorate at Dhaka there is a Director-General, a few Directors, Deputy Directors, Assistant Directors, other officers and supporting staff.

For effective administration and supervision of secondary education in the country it has 8 Zonal office. In each of its Zonal office there is Deputy Director, 1 School Inspector, 1 School Inspectress, 1 Assistant School Inspectress, other administrative officers and supporting staff. Besides, under each Zonal Directorate there are District Education Offices. Each District Education office headed by a District Education Officer (DEO) who is assisted by Assistant District Education Officer (ADEO) and other supporting staff. The main jobs of the Zonal office are to coordinate the efforts of the District Education offices in administering and supervising the schools and supervise a few schools. At the field level, the District Education office do the actual work of administration and supervision of secondary schools.

In the present system there are a few major problems which are standing in the way of improvement of learning environment in schools. It is not contributing properly towards professional development of teachers in schools. The major problems are as follows:

a) As inherited from the British system, the conceptual framework of school supervision in Bangladesh is nothing but administrative inspection of instructional activities of the schools. This is administrative or executive way of organizational behaviour. Here, supervisor vis-a-vis education officer checks the school affair to see if those are conducted according to set orders, rules or codes. He fixes faults and directs for correction.

However, through the job, too, the supervisor or education officer can offer necessary leadership, advice,

guidance and stimulation for the professional growth of the teachers. This is what is done by the supervisory personnel in supervising the secondary schools in Bangladesh. The basic nature of the job is administrative and not supervisory. The rudiments of supervisory activities found in the job is nothing but supervisory way of behaviour by the administrator or executive. An administrator or executive possesses formal authority (authority of position and authority of legitimacy). He may use functional authority (authority due to professional competence, experience and human relations skill) to influence people but the sub-ordinates know that he has right to demand compliance as he is the master for hiring and firing. So an administration or executive cannot provide real advisory service to teachers for improving instruction.

Teachers pay much heed in showing compliance behaviour to him. They teach according to the pet model of the supervisory person/education officer. They are afraid to express their shortcomings and weaknesses relating to teaching and do not seek help for their remedy. Moreover, the people responsible for supervising secondary schools in Bangladesh also do jobs like (i) assessment and allocation of Government recurring and non-recurring grants for schools and (ii) matters relating to awarding renewal and withdrawal of recognition of schools.

These are, in fact, administrative jobs and not of instructional supervision. Further the job titles of the supervisory personnel are either inspector of schools or education officer and not school supervisor/consultant/advisor. These are the job titles of the line officers and not of staff personnel.

Here, for comparison, we look to the system of educational administration and supervision of the U.K., Japan and the U.S. A. In the educational organization of the local Education Authority (LRA) of England, Education Officer is the job title of the executive officers and the job title of the supervisory personnel is adviser/organizer. In the Municipal and prefectural boards of Education in

Japan the people doing the job of school supervision are Teacher consultants (Shido shuji). In the organization of the State Boards of Education in the USA the job title of the people offering supervisory assistance the teachers in schools is supervisor. They work cooperatively with the teachers as 'staff' and not as 'line'. They are not responsible for any executive job. They extend their authority through professional competence, personal qualities and human relations skill. They work only in the area of developing professional expertise of teachers with a view to improving instruction in schools. Thus the people responsible for supervising the secondary schools in Bangladesh are in fact administrator. It is not possible for them to provide pure supervisory service to teachers to facilitate improvement of instruction. It needs to be corrected.

b) Zonal Inspectors of Schools and District Education Officers, however, render some supervisory service to secondary schools in Bangladesh. They are generalists, work in the wide areas of improving instruction and are not recruited according to the needs of subject areas. Of course, we need general supervisors to coordinate among the various instructional activities of schools. It helps to realize the overall goals of education in school. But in our secondary schools there are a number of curricular subjects. Each subject is different from the others with distinct teaching needs. Thus the teachers need support also in their subject area. This necessitates the services of subject specialists, i.e. special supervisors. These special supervisors help the teachers to overcome specific instructional problems in the subject area. They help the teachers to realise the aims relating to teaching of specific subjects. Our system is completely devoid of such supervisors. But if we want improvement in the entire gamut of instruction we need to employ special supervisors. The developed and some developing countries of the world have special supervisors in their system. Thus, lack of subject experts in our supervisory system is a major problem. (To be continued).