



30,000 more primary teachers needed

By A Staff Correspondent

The shortage of teachers and accommodation are the main constraints in increasing the enrolment in the primary schools of the country. There is shortage of 30 thousand teachers in the primary schools at the ratio of one teacher for 50 students.

During the Second Five-Year Plan the target of enrolment could not be achieved. The target was to enrol 1.17 crore students at the primary schools by the end of 1985 and the achievement was only 89 lakhs. The shortfall was to the extent of 28 lakhs.

The authorities claimed that the present enrolment strength is about 95 lakh. But during the five years from 1980 to 1986 the enrolment increased from 82.6 lakh to 89 lakh showing the rise to only 6.4 lakhs. But the strength has been shown at 95 lakhs having an increase of over six lakhs enrolment by one and a half years. This is not credible, says the experts. There are only 1.60 lakh teachers at the primary school having four teachers on an average for every school.

An outline of the second primary education project launched recently set the target to achieve 1.16 crore enrolment by the year 1990 from the level of 89 lakh in 1985. The other objective of the new project is to increase primary school enrolment particularly of girls from the present 60 per cent to 70 per cent of the 6-10 age group and to ensure that a great majority of those who enrolled in 1985 complete the five year primary cycle. Under the new project the integrated schools development programme will be followed in five annual cycles for the development of about 10656 schools in 416 upazilas and 26 thanas. The integrated development programme provides for a complete development package including civil works, site development, training, orientation, text books and learning materials to each primary school. The basic objective of this programmes is to link district primary education de-

velopment authority with the upazila administration.

Under the new programme, an amount of Tk. 512.67 crore has been allocated with 41.25 crore foreign exchange. Four international agencies IDA, UNICEF, SIDA and UNDP will provide an amount of 100 million US dollars. There is acute shortage of benches and chairs in the primary schools. Under the new project 396754 seat benches, 26911 chairs and 26911 tables will be

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provided to different primary schools to improve the accommodation of students. Besides, to encourage enrolment, the scheme provides for distribution free text books to all enrolled primary school children from Class 1 to Class V. The universalisation of primary education and the eradication of illiteracy are the two main objectives of the government's perspective plan for the period 1985-2000.

It is an undenying fact that our future generation must get proper education at least at the primary level. But uncoordinated efforts did not pay any dividends in the past and the performance was very poor as is evident from the achievements of the Second Five-Year Plan. The scheme has been taken up with the assistance from international agencies. The scheme will succeed only if it is implemented through proper coordination at the lower level.

The supervision through officials and unofficial channels should be geared up to see that the teachers attend the schools and take care of the students in the rural areas. The poor supervision sometime turns many of the schools useless for the kids.