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Modern Education System

Sir,—I agree to one point of the views of the letter by your correspondent Sa'ad Moazzam Ali under the above caption published in your daily on June 22, '78: that standard of English teaching and English learning is very low and far from satisfactory in Bangladesh. The rest of the suggestions made in the letter is unrealistic in the present situation and irrelevant to the caption of the letter. He expressed a sense of nostalgia.

The system now being followed in Bangladesh is not a modern one. The method of teaching and the contents of syllabuses of English are as old conservative and traditional as was followed in the British period. No substantial change has been brought about in the overall method and system of education policy and no syllabuses have been prepared according to the needs of the nation. By including Dickens, Daniel Defoe, Milton, tales from Shakespeare's plays, Wordsworth, Shelley, Byron, Keats etc. in the syllabus, a modern system of education cannot be evolved. A competent teacher of English understands how futile and fantastic it is to want young learners of class IX, X, XI and XII with so poor 'Communication skill' in English language to understand prosody of Milton's Paradise Lost, to memorise a few lines from Shakespeare's plays, to appreciate a character from Dicken's novels and to express themselves to react to novels and plays on their own level while the desire to read more of good literature has not developed in them. In that case young learners are supposed to hate the difficult and archaic sentence patterns of these poets and dramatists. Experiences prove that even most of the University students cannot appreciate those great writers and reorganize their thoughts in standard English. They have to resort to 'Bazar Notes'. Therefore at secondary and higher secondary levels the great writers cannot be read. An appropriately graded syllabus should be introduced at each level and text books related to the needs and capabilities of the students should be prepared. An unrealistic syllabus aiming a over-production of arts graduates and under production of technicians must be discouraged.

Teachers directly involved in and concerned with teaching should prepare the teaching materials, exercises and teachers' notes etc. according to the needs of the students.

The standard of English learning has deteriorated not for excluding the great English writers from the syllabus but for a faulty syllabus and wrong methods of teaching English as a foreign language. To seek information about English teaching in Bangladesh a Task Force was appointed by the Ministry of Education on 27.10.75. The Task Force consist

ed of the local experts as well as the British Council Personnel and Mr. J. G. Mumme-Specialist in charge of English B.E.E R.I., Dacca.

In order to prepare a modern & balanced syllabus in English the different points of the problems are to be taken into account. According to the Task Force English teaching is a failure in Bangladesh. Now we must think—why do we learn English? The present syllabus should be based only on this point. It follows that the English syllabus should be in keep-