

HSC Results No Cause For Celebration

When most of the eminent educationists of the country are concerned about the decline of educational standard in the country, our Education Minister Dr. Osman Farruk claims that the quality of education is on the ascendancy. He relies for his argument on the just published Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) and allied examination results. He has also based his conclusion on the last Secondary School Certificate examination results. True, both results have shown remarkable improvement compared to the previous few years. In terms of the percentage of pass and achieving the highest grade GPA-5 by the examinees, there have indeed been great gains. Yet the joyous mood should not hide the fact that more than 40 per cent candidates could not come out successful.

No point raising the eternal argument if the glass is more than half full or less than half empty. Number-wise the loss cannot be ignored: as many as 169,539 examinees failed. How can this be an occasion for celebration when after two years of study and at a huge cost of money and energy so many cannot acquire the minimum pass mark? Let us not bring into our consideration for the time being what happens to those who just manage to cross the HSC hurdle. Rather we, ask ourselves the question what happens to those who have obtained average grade points. Not many of them will even be considered for the university admission test and of those who will qualify for such tests, a large number will not make it to their choice subjects or departments. In this age of specialisation, this is perhaps the greatest defect and waste of our education system.

Although some colleges located in rural areas have achieved appreciable results—some waltzing into the best 10 of a few boards, it is too early to say the gap between the educational institutions of cities and villages is getting narrowed. Yet it is quite inspiring and let us hope the trend will continue in the days to come. At the same time one must not forget that from as many as 131 educational institutions—48 colleges and 83 madrashas, not a single examinee passed. It is known that the addition of the fourth subject's number was largely responsible for the students' higher score in the SSC examination. The same is likely to be true for the HSC results as well. No harm in it! But there is an unmistakable indication that the ministry has made a conscious choice for raising the percentage of pass at both SSC and HSC levels. After all, much transpires from the political decision a government takes in this regard.

As for the improved quality of education, the percentage of pass or for that matter the higher number of high achievers is no guide. We could not feel happier if the SSC and HSC results reflected better quality of education. The true test of quality comes when our students compete with students of our neighbouring countries as well as the developed countries. A few brilliant students from the Bangladesh University Engineering and Technology (BUET) have participated in the World Mathematics and Science Olympiad with credit. A team is also participating in the international robot fair. Otherwise, we have not much to show. Either in expressing the feeling or inventing things, our records are too poor to deserve any citation. Quality of education must focus on these areas if we really mean business.