

## Thoughts On Education

Education is always uppermost in people's minds especially in these days where admissions into the school of choice has become such a hurdle. Such people generally opt for the English medium schools or tutorials of good repute.

One is constrained to ask why there has been a perceptible shift away from the "good" schools of the past, most of which had to change to Bengali medium soon after liberation, to these privately run institutions which are mostly housed in private buildings unsuited to be used as schools. What is it that drives people to take this route when trying to give their children a good education?

People no longer seem to believe in the traditional approach to teaching that is still in vogue in this country. Many would take this a step further and say the traditional way of learning has more shortcomings than advantage and in such an atmosphere, there is little scope for students to either exercise their minds or take an active role in the learning process.

That the old system does not fulfil the basic need of education — which in our opinion is to teach a child how to think — it is natural for parents and guardians to look for something else. In fact this has been the trend all over the world which has resulted in a remarkable change in outlook for both parents and teachers. Unfortunately, this revolution in education has by and large, been missed by the majority of the schools in Bangladesh. Although most of today's educators believe the teaching/learning process must be approached in a well planned manner; if at all something productive is to come out of it, only a few of our schools have adopted the modern methods of teaching. Yet research has shown that students in the forward looking schools are more receptive to learning.

Any good teacher will know it is only by following a systematic approach to teaching will learning become not only easier but more thorough. This is why teachers in the better schools are required to prepare lesson plans in advance, incorporating his/her decisions on how fast the learning process can be taken in any given class. Each lesson must have a set of learning objectives, a number of learning activities and a set criterion for evaluation to be successful and it is this attention to detail that sets one school apart from another.

Although it may not be apparent, we do tend to cling to the past and as a result often reject the new, even when we know in our minds they are better. The preparation and grading of papers have become stuck in the mud and the method of marking may even be considered to be antique. That this too needs overhauling is not understood here, yet elsewhere in the world this too has undergone a quiet change. Words like 'describe,' 'explain,' 'know,' 'understand' etc. which lead to different interpretation are now avoided, and other words like 'list five,' 'solve' 'recite x number of lines' have replaced them.

Modern educators believe that this 'quantification' is essential if papers are to be marked objectively and fairly and the fondness we have for the traditional "essay type" questions, often the most difficult to grade, are out. In other words, any ambiguity in the classroom must be avoided if the child of today is to be the all round success he or she needs to be in the modern world.

THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER