

Corrupt education officials hinder introduction of UPE

Times Report

The government plans to march another step towards the introduction of universal primary education (UPE) in the country during the current 1989-90 fiscal year. This is the terminal year of the Third Five-Year Plan which aims at bringing 70 per cent of children of the age group of six to ten years to schools.

The education sector which is getting the second highest allocation of Taka 970 crore in the revenue budget for 1989-90 has been given a development outlay of about Taka 360 crore for implementation of a total of 51 projects.

The Annual Development Programme document says for expediting the introduction of *universal primary education* three things would be emphasised in the next year. These are: enrolment of a maximum number of students in schools, reduction of the mid-session dropout rate and improvement of the quality of education at the level:

To achieve these objectives 1.4 crore sets of primary text books would be distributed to children free of cost and new class rooms constructed for a total of 695 schools. Besides about 1.99 lakh pairs of seat benches and 31.281 pairs of chair-table would be supplied to primary schools.

The ADP for 1989-90 also provides for the training of over 1.94 lakh teachers and education officials on educational administration and management. Apart from these, there would be rehabilitation projects financed by the European Economic Community, the World Bank and IDA would be implemented during the year.

Official statistics say, at present slightly more than 1.12 crore children are studying in the 44,853 primary schools in the country. The number of primary school-age children is estimated at about 1.5 crore. Out of the total children in schools 49,33,058 are girls. At present there are four teachers and 250 students per school on an average and the teacher-student ratio stands at 1:58. There are a total of 1,92,391 primary teachers including 33,909 female teachers.

However, even though the enrolment rate looks attractive the picture look grim if one take into consideration the dropout rate at different clas-

tests would be made for the purpose.

Elaborating he has said that candidates would apply for the posts to teachers to the Upazila Education Committees. The applications would be scrutinised by the District Education Committees, and then recruitment tests would be organised through the four education boards. On the basis of the test examinations upazilawise panels of teachers would be prepared and the

Upazila Education Committees would be free to make appointments from the respective panels.

The measure, it appears, is meant for doing away with the alleged malpractices in the appointment of teachers. Reports coming from different upazilas, however, also suggest that a section of corrupt education officials at the upazila level are blocking the flourishing of primary education by misusing the power to transfer and

monitor the efficiency of the teachers. The measures proposed to be taken to indirectly control the appointment of teachers for ensuring quality will undoubtedly have some positive effects. But if the government's objective of introduction of universal primary education in the country is to be achieved, all sorts of corruption in the running of the primary schools should effectively checked immediately, it is felt.