

Dhaka Friday, July 3, 1987

SSC results

The results of the Secondary School Certificate examination were announced by the four Boards of Education on Wednesday, and hopefully the successful students will join college before the year is out. But for a large number of boys and girls, nearly 40 per cent of those who appeared at the examination and who did not make the grade, it may be the end of their educational life. A great majority of them will drop out and some others may linger on without any effective result. The percentage of pass at the SSC level is a clear indication of the wastage, economic and otherwise, inherent in our education system. The national policy has been to promote primary and secondary education and to make them as broad-based as possible. But the large number of dropouts at the primary and secondary levels has so far offset the impact of the broadening of education.

It is apparent that the National Education Commission will have to find a way to reduce, if not completely eliminate, the wastage. One of the reasons for a high percentage of failure is the poor quality of education imparted by a large number of schools. It is not surprising that schools in rural areas generally fare badly in national level examinations in relation to the performances of urban schools unless of course there is a relaxation of vigilance during the examination.

In terms of facilities and quality of teaching, the village schools are obviously in a disadvantageous position. Their students, however talented they may be, start their academic career with inherent drawbacks. This difference in quality is also observable among schools in the cities. Some privately run city schools are better than others while the state schools have an edge over those which receive partial funding from the exchequer. The Cadet Colleges are again a class by themselves. Because of a wide divergence in the quality of education, a few schools are dominating the "merit list" of students every year. In the past, it was possible for a rural school to enter the honours list because the difference in standard was not so wide. A talented boy or girl could reach the top grade irrespective of the institution he or she attended.

Some urban students again have an economic advantage over others because of the social position of their parents. This is particularly significant at a time when students are depending so heavily on tuition at home. All these add up to explain why students belonging to some social strata are doing better than others. There seems to be a lack of equal opportunities which we must try to establish for social justice.

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