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Primary schools

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try was due to Government's emphasis on the universalization of primary education and eradication of illiteracy.

According to the Directorate of Primary Education, the Second Five Year Plan (SFYP 1980-85) marked the beginning of the Government's perspective plan for the period 1980-200 for UPE. Government included the development of primary education as a priority goal for the SFYP period. Strategy was built around school construction, provision of school furniture and learning materials, improvement of teachers' training, field supervision and educational management system.

During the Third Five Year Plan (TFYP 1985-90) a national UPE project was administered by the Directorate of Primary Education for the expansion and improvement of primary education by increasing enrolment, reducing dropout and strengthening of educational management.

Under the UPE project, the Directorate constructed 2,255 rural primary schools, 261 town primary schools and 133 metropolitan city schools by December 1988. Latrines and tube-wells were also set up at newly constructed schools.

Government is also supplying furniture and textbooks for the primary schools under UPE programme.

Meanwhile, the Government have nationalised 904 primary schools out of its targetted 1000 schools. Four teachers in each of the nationalised schools were also absorbed as Government primary teachers. Another three thousand teachers were recruited from primary schools to bring the teacher-student ratio at 1:60.

With a view to increasing literacy rate in the country, President H. M. Ershad in a recent meeting of National Economic Council emphasised the need for streamlining the primary education by taking steps to gear up primary education.

In spite of serious efforts from the Government side towards universalization of primary education, the progress is being hindered by procedural delay, outside interference and lack of sincerity.

The Ministry in a recent order stopped recruitment of primary teachers following irregularities at upazila level. Decision has now been taken to recruit teachers through tests at district level.

The policy for recruitment of 50 per cent female teachers could not be followed due to some other quota provision. The Directorate is to follow recruitment policy by taking into consideration of 30 per cent quota for freedom fighters and 20 per cent quota for the dependants of primary teachers.

According to a complaint made by 18 primary teachers

of Bahubal upazila in Habiganj, the Directorate refused to endorse their appointment letters after 18 months.

Some officials of Primary Education Directorate pointed out that senior level officials of the Directorate are deputed from college teachers for a short period. This lead to lack of integrity and initiative at the higher level, said some officials.

"Outside interference also affects our initiatives," said an official of the Directorate. He pointed out that Thana Education Officer of Gulshan and a school teacher of Mahakhali in the city were transferred following an allegation made by an influential leader of primary teachers. The teacher and the Education Officer were transferred without valid reason and proper procedure, he said.

Reports from the rural areas showed that absence of teachers from duty and insufficient supervision further affected the Government initiative for improvement of primary education.

Our Correspondent from Rajbari reported that Khan Khanapur Primary School was running without two teachers for long. Similar situation prevails at Barabak Bakpur Primary School in Rajbari upazila.

In some cases, some teachers were found busy with their private business outside their school during school hours in Rajbari, Pangsha, Baliakandi and neighbouring upazilas.

Enrolment in primary schools on the increase

By A Staff Reporter

Enrolment in primary schools is increasing every year and it may exceed the target of 70 per cent by 1990.

Under its Universal Primary Education programme the government has fixed the target to bring 1.16 crore children to primary schools by 1990.

According to official statistics 58 per cent of the children between six and ten years of age were enrolled in primary schools in 1985. In 1986, the

percentage was 64 and in 1987 it rose to 69.

In 1988, a total of 1.12 crore children were enrolled as against 1.60 crore school-age children in the country.

With the rise in enrolment, the number of girls enrolled in primary schools also continued to rise.

The ratio between boys and girls changed from 59:41 in 1985 to 57:43 in 1988. The ratio remained steady at 56:44 in the following years.

The ratio between male and female teachers changed with the recruitment of more female teachers. The ratio between male and female teachers was 92:8 in 1985 and in 1988 it rose to 82:18.

The recent improvement in primary education in the coun-

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