

## Schools fail to make the grade

*Holistic approach needed to plug lacunae*

**A** Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education survey, done by its Monitoring and Evaluation wing, paints quite the grim picture regarding the quality of education being provided in schools. Around half of all eighth graders lack competence in English with 46 percent lacking proficiency in mathematics. Worryingly, 45 percent of them even failed to gain satisfactory competence in Bangla. Without necessary proficiency in these fields, how can the nation builders of tomorrow succeed in overcoming their challenges? And how do we expect them to take the nation forward in a competitive global environment?

The report found sixth graders doing better, indicating a decrease in competence with age. Comparison between rural and urban students also revealed disparities with those in rural areas struggling against their urban counterparts. Girls too were found, disappointingly, to be lagging behind their male peers.

Educationists had previously protested flawed teaching systems, lack of skilled teachers, inadequate teaching and infrastructural facilities, and insufficient budget allocations, on numerous occasions. That the necessary attention to their concerns was not paid is evident by the survey findings. The fact that budgetary allocation to the education sector constituted only 1.8 percent of GDP in 2015-2016 is also disappointing, especially amidst the existing deficiencies.

Thus, in the interest of providing quality education to future leaders, the government should provide more support to the sector. Budgetary allocation should be increased to improve infrastructural facilities. Competency level of teachers should be improved through training and a holistic approach should be taken to improve the teaching system. Discrimination between male and female, urban and rural students must also be removed. //