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12:00 AM, May 09, 2018 / LAST MODIFIED: 03:07 AM, May 09, 2018

Schools of 0

Students fail due to lack of qualified teachers



Three out of the four sixth graders are present in class at Nalbari Girls School in Dinajpur's Khansama upazila on Monday, but there is no teacher. Photo: Star

Star Report

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The school has a teacher-student ratio way above the national average; in fact, much above the international average as well. With five teachers for 114 students or 23 students for every teacher, the students should have been well groomed.

Its newly-built brick structure sits on a sprawling 107-decimal plot. Doesn't matter if its windows and doors are missing, or they had never been fitted. And it gets monthly government fund as salaries of its teachers.

Yet this year, not a single student passed the SSC exams from Nalbari Girls' School in Dinajpur, putting it in the bracket of the 109 educational institutions that saw zero pass rate.

The Daily Star visited five such schools and a madrasa in the last two days. All of them were found to have teacher-student ratio above the national average of one teacher for 42 students and international average of one for 30 students. All of them get government funds. Yet the result is a big nada.

Most of the students in the five schools flunked mathematics and English tests.

Teachers of the schools cited various reasons for the failure, but the guardians and other locals said one thing: teachers did not prepare the students well for the hurdle.

Take Uttar Moukarana AH High School as an example.

Established in 1970 as a junior high school, the institution in Maukarana village of Patuakhali Sadar has an adequate number of teachers, 16 to be precise, to teach around 200 students. The school has been enjoying the MPO (monthly pay order) facilities since 1984.

Yet, all the seven students who took part in the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) exam this year could not pass.

Headmaster Kazi Mahbub Alam put the blame on students, saying, "The examinees we got this year weren't good enough and attentive."

School founder Altaf Hossain said students passed the previous SSC exams, but this year the examinees performed badly

The Daily Star found only 40 students attending the classes from VI to X during a visit to the school on Monday.



A number of villagers alleged that the teachers were not sincere and did not impart lessons properly.

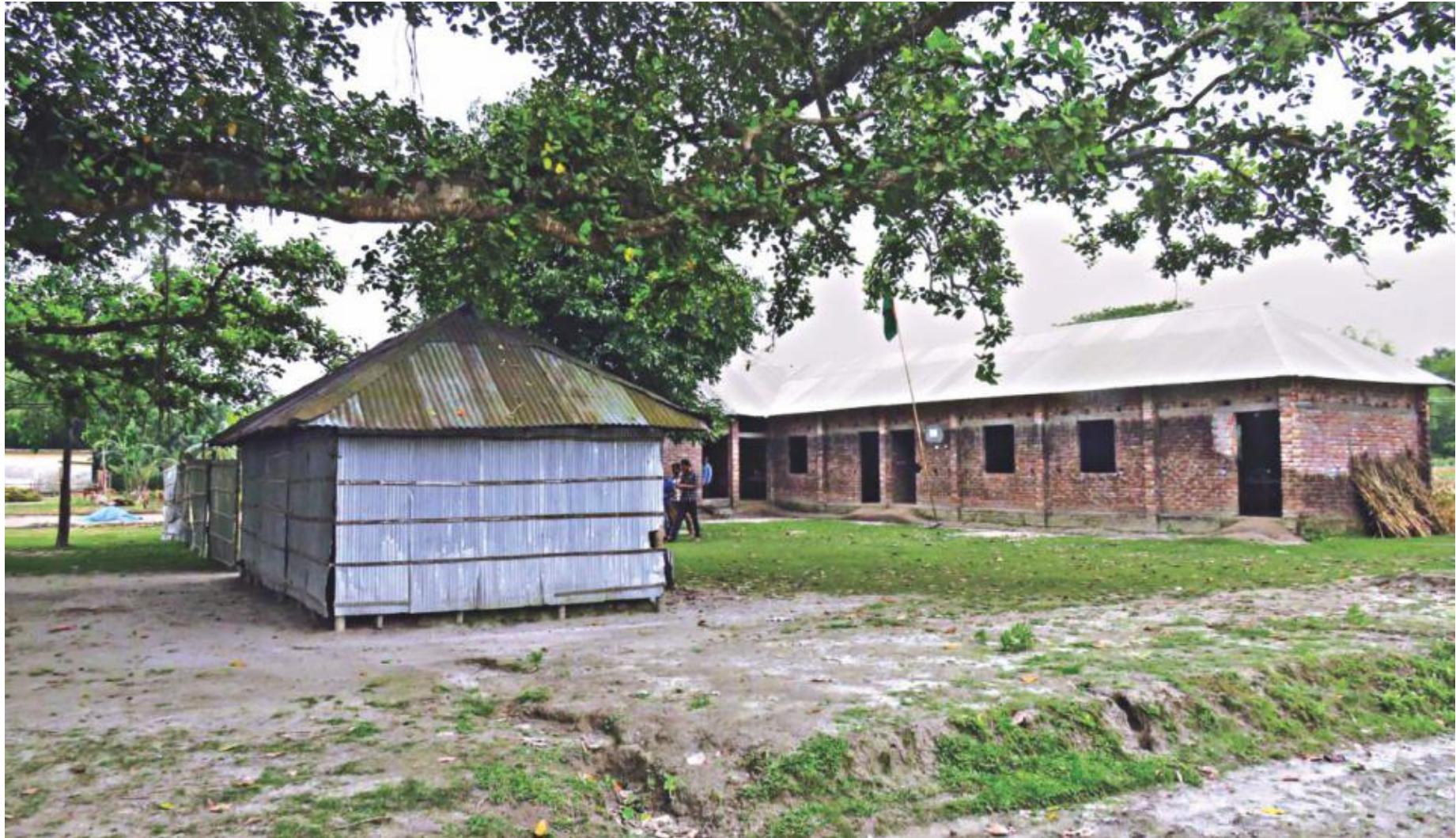
"It's totally the teacher's negligence. We often see teachers leaving school at the lunch time although they are supposed to teach the students until 4:00pm," said a villager, wishing not to be named.

According to the teachers of the school just 10km from Patuakhali town, only five of 11 examinees passed the SSC exams last year.

Experts and educationists, however, said a lack of qualified teachers at the secondary schools, particularly specialised in English and maths, is also to blame for this situation.

"We have seen a big qualitative difference between the teachers in urban and rural areas. Most of the [rural] schools do not have qualified teachers. That's why we see a fair pass rate in urban schools and poor pass rate in rural ones," said noted educationist Prof Siddiqur Rahman.





An outside view of Nalbari Girls School in Dinajpur's Khansama upazila. Two students sat for the SSC exams this year from this school, but neither of them came out successful. Only 11 students out of 114 attended the school on Monday. Guardians of students blamed teachers for the poor performance in the exams. Photo: Star

He said they found many rural schools with no specialised teachers in subjects like English and mathematics.

"Many students are simply made to memorise maths and English and that's why they perform badly in exams," he told The Daily Star.



Moreover, good teachers are not going to the rural areas, he added.

Prof Siddiqur, also former director of Education Research Institute of Dhaka University, said that to be a good teacher, he or she must have commitment for teaching, apart from having a degree and in-depth knowledge on specific subjects and knowledge on teaching methods.

"Unfortunately, this is absent in case of many teachers," he added.

Prof Siddiqur, a member of the national education policy formulation committee-2010, said they gave several recommendations, including a separate pay scale for teachers and formation of teachers' service commission for recruitment, but to no avail.

"WROTE WHAT TEACHERS TAUGHT ME"

Founded in 1993 at Nalbari, a remote village in Khansama upazila of Dinajpur, Nalbari Girls' School saw zero pass in 2016 as well.

The institution got listed for the MPO facilities in 1999 and it got approval for SSC exams in 2002. It has five teachers and 3 employees.

This year, two girls sat for the SSC exams, both failed.

"I wrote what my teachers taught me in school," one of them told this newspaper on Monday.

A number of parents said the quality of teaching in this school was not good at all and that's the reason most people avoid sending their kids to this school.

"The teachers do not teach them properly," said Abul Hossain of Nalbari.

Headmistress Kahanur Begum was not in school as she went on a six-month leave in November last year.

During a visit on Monday, this newspaper found only 11 students attending five classes. But the teachers claimed that they have 114 students, but they could not show any document to back their claim. They did not have any students' attendance



register even.

Horonath Roy, a teacher, blamed lack of teachers for the failure.

The institution opened high school section in 2002, but it was yet to get required teachers, he added.

Rabindra Narayan Bhattyachariya, school inspector of Dinajpur Board, said they would issue a show-cause notice upon the school authorities about the failure.

The authorities of Islampur High School and Venronbaria CSU Girls' High School, two old institutions in Jhalakathi district, cited not having high school teachers for the zero pass rates.

All the five students of Venronbaria CSU Girls' High School, established in 1961, failed in maths.

The school, which has five teachers for 80 students, opened its high school section (class VIII-X) this year.

"The junior teachers with less experience on subjects of higher classes taught the students," said Headmaster Hemayet Uddin, adding that they have not had maths teacher in the school for quite a while.

The reason the chairman of the school managing committee showed for the failure was astonishing. "All students failed because they did not study in the last two years. Moreover, the exam this year was conducted fairly and it had an impact on it," said Akkas Hossain, the chairman.

All 17 students of Islampur High School failed in mathematics.

"We are shocked. Such a result is beyond our imagination as we had hundred percent pass rate last year and the year before," said Khalilur Rahman, acting headmaster of the school that was established in 1985.

Five posts of teachers, including headmaster, lie vacant and this disrupted academic activities, said the teacher. There are eight teachers for 155 students.



The school has another problem. There is a dispute over the formation of its managing committee and the entire village got divided into two groups over the matter, which often hampered educational activities, teachers claimed.

This newspaper found another school in Bogra from where no students passed, but the school is different than others.

A total of 10 students of Darul Islam High School, a night school for underprivileged students, sat for the test and all failed in maths although the school has a teacher for this subject.

Jalal Uddin Molla, the maths teacher, said the students could not attend classes regularly and maths was not something that one can be taught in a few days.

Headmistress Muki Banu said, "All of the examinees work in places like automobile workshops, handicraft houses, and different shops during the day. They attend the school at night, but this year's preparation was poor."

A total of 17 examinees took part in the SSC exam last year and all of them passed, she said.

One of the students said, "It was not possible for me to attend classes regularly after working all day. That's why I failed."

But locals said the teachers failed to motivate the students.

Of the 109 educational institutions that have zero pass rate this year, 93 are madrasas.

[Our Dinajpur correspondent Kongkon Karmakar, Patuakhali correspondent Sohrab Hossain, Jhalakathi correspondent M Jahirul Islam Jewel, Bogra correspondent Mostafa Shabuj, and Brahmanbaria correspondent Mashuk Hridoy contributed to this report.]

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