

Learning in waterlogged classroom

Jamalpur students suffer for last six years

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How is it possible to teach and learn in a classroom that's waterlogged? It's a question that has plagued staff and students at Bogabaid Government Primary School in Jamalpur municipality's Bogabaid village for the last six years. Of course the simple answer is: it's not possible.

"We have to make combined seating arrangements for pre-primary and class-I in the first shift," says head teacher Royena Begum, "and combine class-III and -IV in the second shift, while class-V shares the floor space with the teachers."

"Due to the cramped accommodation during the monsoon months, we can't take full-length classes and teach our 418 students properly."

"Not to mention that there is no scope for assembly or some co-curricular activities. Besides, the waterlogged classrooms carry risk of waterborne diseases and already we have had several children contract

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Inundated building of Bogabaid Govt Primary School in Jamalpur. In holding a class there. Due to poor drainage system, the building remains for a couple of months every year during the rains, hampering educational activities. The photos were taken recently.

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Learning

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typhoid for playing in the
dirty water," Royena said.

With an original tin-shed building, the school was founded in 1950 and nationalised in 1973. Later, in 2005, the authorities constructed another two-room building. Due to the lack of a drainage system, the four rooms in the original building remain waterlogged for about two and a half months from late June to early September every year since 2011.

According to the teaching staff, it is utterly impossible to conduct any academic or other activities in that building until it stops raining.

It is because of waterlogging that the classes spanning pre-primary to class-V are taught in two rooms of the other building in shifts, with 55-minute periods reduced to 37 minutes only in the morning shift and 40 minutes for class-IV and -V in the afternoon shift.

"We try our best to teach concentrated lessons," says assistant teacher Fahmida Yasmeen, "but it's not always possible to manage it well."

Assistant teacher Shaila Aktar echoed her view.

During a recent visit to the school, The Daily Star observed that the

the old building were up to knee-deep in water.

"We have repeatedly written to the authorities about the problem, but to no effect," says Royena Begum.

According to district primary education officer Abdul Alim, the issue has already been raised at the district's development coordination meeting presided over by Deputy Commissioner Shahabuddin Khan who directed Jamalpur's mayor to solve the problem by installing a proper drainage system at the school.

Until that occurs, teachers and students at Bogabaid Government Primary School will continue to grapple with how to manage the situation.