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## The Educated Swindlers

A considerable amount of public money has been swindled by a section of private college teachers with the connivance of a segment of dishonest and corrupt officials of the secondary education directorate. This has been going on for the last seven years with about fifteen hundred million (Taka 1.5 billion) taka being defalcated in the name of five thousand teachers of eight hundred private colleges of the country. The Bangla daily *Prothom Alo* on Thursday disclosed this sensational information. The chief of the directorate has, however, informed the paper that some cases of defalcation have been detected and salaries and allowances of teachers of the institutions concerned have been withheld.

It is really alarming to note that in eight hundred private intermediate colleges across the country around Taka twenty million has been drawn illegally in the name of additional teachers and officials for the last seven years. The swindling reached such a proportion that many principals in the intermediate colleges have been unlawfully drawing salaries similar to the slab for principals of degree colleges.

This racketeering has been going on unabated and still the DG's office is waiting for specific cases to act against the malaise. According to the 1993 order any private educational institution has to be registered with the government to be entitled to a grant. The government rules also stipulate that up to 26 teachers and officials of a private college can be financially subsidised. But the paper reports that twenty-seven institutions of the country have drawn money for more than double the number with the help of a section of swindlers at the education directorate. While many of the new private intermediate colleges opened to facilitate higher education for the students of the attached schools are trying very hard to be registered with the directorate for intermediate aids and subsidies, the already recognised ones are making hay taking advantage of the laxity of the directorate.

The black hand of corruption has entered the educational arena vitiating its atmosphere and causing a rapid erosion of moral values in the society. If teachers, however small their number may be, can steal public money then there is hardly anything to be optimistic about the future of this nation.