

BHABADAH WATER STAGNATION

Children's education bears brunt

Tapos Kanti Das, back from Bhabadah, Jessore

WATER stagnation for over two months has dealt a heavy blow to children's education in Bhabadah areas of Jessore, with many still avoiding classes as they have to tread muddy and submerged stretches of roads to reach their educational institutions.

Many students lost their books or left their books and other study materials at marooned houses while taking shelter in others places and streets, which virtually kept them away from studies.

Schools started to reopen in early October but many students are yet to return from their shelters and subsequently take part in normal schooling, which will have long-term impact on the children's lives, guardians apprehended.

Moreover, many people who were rendered jobless by the water stagnation will find it hard to continue the studies of their children.

Examinees of Primary Education Completion, scheduled to begin on November 20, and Junior School Certificate exams, scheduled to

start on November 1, will bear the brunt of this nagging water stagnation.

Monirampur's Hatgachha Madhyapara Government Primary School Class V student Tanmay Bairagi's first-ever public exam PECE is knocking at the door.

His last minute preparation has been badly affected as their house is still in a bad shape because of the mud left behind by the water that receded recently.

His father Dayal Bairagi said he could not force Tanmay for study in such a situation when living a decent life is a challenge.

Tanmay's fellows are also facing more or less the same situation.

'We kept classes closed for over a month since mid-August and have now resumed them, constructing bamboo bridges from the nearby road to the classrooms. Attendance is now around 50 per cent,' said Bhadra Kanti Biswas, headmaster of Hatgachha primary school.

He added that examinees of public exams would be the worst victims of the situation. 'We are trying to cover the loss by taking extra classes.'

A total of 138 educational institutions of Monirampur, about 125 of Keshobpur and 75 of Abhaynagar in Jessore became waterlogged since mid-August when rain water became stagnant as the sluice gates at Bhabadah, a bordering point of Monirampur in Jessore and Dumuria in Khulna, could not flush out the water logged in adjacent 27 beels of the three upazilas.

As the beds of rivers — Shree Hari and Mukteshwari — became higher than the beds of adjacent beels due to silting up, the stagnant water could not be flushed out easily.

This year, about six lakh people of the three upazilas of Jessore became victims of water stagnation, which has been a problem for locals since early 90s.

SSC examinee Tanwi Biswas of Kulatia under Monirampur had to leave her home for two months to take shelter at village Mukterpur, around 10 kilometer from her house.

As the test examination began on October 16, she and her parents returned home, which is still surrounded by water.

Her school, Kulatia Girls

High School, is still surrounded by water and they have to use bamboo-bridge to go to school.

'The environment was not suitable for normal life, let alone study,' Tanwi said.

'As there is still water around our homesteads and roads to many schools are still under water at some points, parents are not allowing their children to go to schools,' said Golok Bairagi, a college teacher living at village Hatgachha in the upazila said.

He said that his cousin Jit Bairagi, a Class III student of their village's primary school, was still not allowed to go to school in fear of drowning.

The college teacher said that many people in his area were still on high roads and places by erecting temporary shanties while many village roads were badly damaged making the communications quite impossible.

Jessore deputy commissioner Md Humayun Kabir told New Age that educational activities of the schools had already started in all the affected areas and that the officials concerned informed him that the teachers were taking extra care for the students to cover the educational loss.