

তারিখ 17 JUL 1986
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PRIMARY EDUCATION 17 JUL 1986

Government is reportedly going to open six hundred and nineteen primary schools and to repair seven hundred and fiftytwo all over the country in its second phase of the universal Primary Education Project.

This reads like a good news, apparently telling us of some improvement and addition to the existing strength of primaries. But if this is heartening information there are frustrating pictures to offset that. The pitiable condition of primary education is reflected in the frequency of reports appearing in the national dailies. Going through the dailies of last three or four days we'll see how our primary schools are faced with festering problems. Twentythree primary schools at Raipur are on the verge of closing down, five hundred primary schools at Jaipurhat are in a deplorable condition. Classes held under the open sky for fear of the roof coming down, scarcity of chairs, tables and benches and teaching aids, both qualitative and quantitative deficiency in respect of teachers—these are but a few examples of what have appeared

in the Press very recently.

The number of kindergartens is increasing in the country, particularly in the cities. They are growing apparently because the conventional schools including the government-run ones have so far failed to respond to the needs of the society. But the performance of KGs are sometimes even worse. Some kindergartens are not only opening libraries, tailoring shops and mini-presses to fit in with their flourishing business, they are also going to the extent of opening video cassette and other shops just adjacent to the schools owned by them.

How the opening of some six hundred and nineteen primary schools and repairing of seven hundred and fiftytwo is going to meet demands of the gigantic task the government has taken up when committing itself to the cause of universal literacy. The limited means we have and whatever else we can procure from outside should not be put to wrong investment. In fact we need to open thousands of primary schools each year and to provide the existing ones with more and more facilities. As long as this is not done, big investments in cadet colleges, residential schools and model schools can not be justified if the premise that government's assistance should reach the under-privileged first is accepted.