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Management Of Primary Education

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THE findings of the Second Five Year Plan (SFYP) document about the character of the management system of education in Bangladesh were as follows: the system was under administered; the Ministry of Education and its attached Department had changed little in size and structure although there had been substantial increase of the number of educational institutions at all levels; shortage of management personnel contributed to the decline of the quality of education and efficiency of the system; another weakness of the system was its high degree of centralization; it was found that matters of minor importance were referred to very senior officials while officials at mid-level as well as local level were not associated or involved in decision making process.

The crux of the problem, the document opined, was to rationalize management system of education and to ensure wider participation of the community in the management of education at all levels.

In the field of primary education, the establishment of a separate directorate for primary education was specifically recommended. This paper compares the existing management system of primary education in Bangladesh to the system that was prevalent on the eve of launching the SFYP so as to measure the targets attained and deficiencies removed over the years.

On the eve SFYP, management of primary education was vested in the Directorate of Public Instruction with a unit in the directorate and successive set up one below the other at the district, sub-division and Thana, responsible for the management of primary education. The total strength of the system upto Thana level stood at 879 with 1 ADPI and 1 special officer in the Directorate, and 19 District Inspectors of Schools at the district level, 72 Subdivisional Education Officers (SDEOS) at the Subdivisional level and 420 Thana Education Officers (TEOS) and 366 Assistant Thana Education Officers

(ATEOS) at the Thana level.

At the institutional level, the management of the School was entrusted to the head teacher advised by a school management Committee consisting of head teacher as ex-officio member-secretary and an elected member of the managing committee as Chairman of the Committee and other elected or nominated members representing various interests, such as founders, donor, benefactors, persons interested in education and teachers representative.

The system was criticised as being highly centralized and lacking in wider community participation. The span of control of the supervisory officers was very large thereby impeding the task of supervision.

The existing System of Management. In pursuance of the recommendation as contained in SFYP document a separate directorate of primary education with a Director-General as its head was created in 1981. At the moment the Directorate consists of 1 Director-General, 3 Directors one each for Administration, Planning and Training, 1 System Analyst for MIS Cell, 12 Deputy Director (of whom 4 are Divisional Deputy Directors), 16 Assistant Directors, and 13 Specialists. Education Officers/Statistician/Administrative Officer/ Research Officers/ Accounts Officer at the national level. The Central setup is supported by 64 district Primary Education Officers (DPEOS) and the same number of Assistant District Primary Education Officers (ADPEOS) at the district level, 482 Upazila Education Officers (UEOS) Thana Education Officers (TEOS) and 2000 Assistant Thana Education Officers (ATEOS) at the Upazila level. The total strength of the management system of primary education upto Upazila level to-day stands at 2656, the increase over 1980 being 1777 in absolute figure and in percentage 202%.

Function of the officers at different levels of the system were enumerated

and circulated. Delegation of powers to the officers of different levels has also been made. The AUEOS have been entrusted with the task of continuous professional supervision of Primary teachers. For this purpose, each upazila has been divided into clusters of schools and each AUEO remains in charge of 16-20 schools (One Cluster.)

Under the reorganized administrative setup aiming at decentralization of powers and functions to local bodies, management of primary education has been transferred to the Upazila Parishad with effect from August 1983. The Parishad is entrusted with the responsibilities of recruitment, placement and discipline of teachers. The services of UEO's and AUEO's have been placed with the Upazila Parishad. The Upazila Parishad is also responsible for planning, expansion and improvement of primary education of the area with the approval of the Government.

At the institutional level, there is a Managing Committee consisting of the head teacher of the school as ex-officio Member Secretary. The other members elected and nominated include the ward member of the union parishad or the commissioner of a Municipal Corporation or Pourashava, as the case may be, residing within the area where the primary school is situated, ex-officio, one person interested in education residing within the area where the primary school is situated, one woman of the area where the school is situated, one donor or philanthropist of the area where the primary schools is situated, one teacher of the nearest secondary school to be nominated by the concerned school authority, one representative of teachers of the primary school to be elected from among themselves. A chairman is elected from among the members.

Subject to directions issued by the Upazila Parishad or Municipal Corporations or Pourashavas, as the case

may be, a Managing Committee shall perform the following functions: (a) manage the affairs of the primary school; (b) supervise the functioning of primary school; (c) help execute the development schemes in respect of primary school; and (d) perform such other functions as may be assigned to it. Issues involved. The management system of primary education as it exists to-day compared to the system as it was in vogue on the eve of SFYP is an excellent example where cent percent planned targets have been attained. As planned in the SFYP, a separate directorate for the management of primary education has been established. The organization is rationally designed and adequately staffed. Nevertheless, the creation of an organization should not be considered an end in itself. Rather, it should be a means to attain the end i.e objectives of the organization.

Deficiencies

Although there is an improving trend, primary education still suffers from a number of deficiencies — wastage due to low enrolment, high drop-out and repetitions, low quality of teaching due to low level of motivation of teachers and officials engaged in the management of teaching — learning process and other issues arising out of the teacher absenteeism and irregularity and in effective role of the managing committee for improving the environment of the school. At the moment the school managing committee is virtually a moribund system with no control over teachers. The teachers being influential and local resident as well as a part of the bureaucracy, control of the managing Committee over the teachers is almost nil. Efficient management of the primary schools at the institutional level so as to improve their efficiency is one of the many issues that needs attention of the management for improving the conditions of Primary Schools.