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Primary Education

The level of literacy in a country is largely determined by the availability of facilities for primary education. Attention is therefore given to the expansion of facilities for primary education in most of the countries. Such facilities include buildings, libraries and the teaching equipment. The teachers form the fulcrum of the entire system. They have to be trained, compensated and given benefits commensurate with their contribution. And their contribution has at least two dimensions—the upbringing of the child and the increase in the overall level of literacy in the country. Teachers have been considered as the source of inspiration for attainment of better qualities by their students and by the same token they lay the foundation of the society.

In Bangladesh primary schools are given priority attention. There are around forty thousand primary schools in this country. They are spread over the country in a way that meets the current demand for seats in the schools even in remote villages. More of schools have been sponsored by local people. And in a way a sense of urgency is felt by many of the people to put their children to school, the moment they find themselves in a relatively dependable position. Others wait for their turn to avail themselves of schooling facilities despite their inabilities. And the responsibility of expanding facilities, in the given context, naturally falls on the government and the latter is fully living up to it.

That being the context the Chief Martial Law Administrator, Lt. General H.M. Ershad was right in stating that the decentralization of administration will help proper expansion of schooling facilities. At the Thana level, the teachers and the schools will

get more attention from officials in charge of education. These officials will ensure proper supervision of work on expansion of facilities and the working of the schools including welfare of the teachers and the taught. The CMLA also dispelled the doubt in the mind of the teachers about the terms and conditions of their employment and asserted that primary school teachers would continue to be regular government servants with all rights and interests. His assertion would naturally be followed up by appropriate actions needed for bolstering the morale of the primary teachers.

As it is, primary education has to have quite a few things for its improvement. The existing schools need to be expanded and modernized. Teachers have to be trained. Children need to be given support. And above all the level of performance of students has to be upgraded. The need for better books, reading facilities and facilities for physical exercise is also felt keenly. Even in matters of transfer and posting of teachers there is room for improvement. That being so, one would suggest that mere resources deployed in this sub-sector could be more productively used. In specific reference to transfer of teachers the CMLA's on-the-spot orders to stop the transfer of primary school teachers are bound to allay anxieties. It is desirable among other things, that primary education remain above politics and teachers maintain their own political stance.

In this regard the teachers were wholly responsive to the gestures of the CMLA and assured him of their all-out cooperation in the development efforts initiated by the government.