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Primary education

A two-year training course, replacing the existing one-year one, for primary school teachers is being introduced in all the 49 primary training institutes (PTI) of the country next September. The National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC), which is already preparing the syllabi for the two-year programme, has been asked to finalise it by coming August. Details about the examination and other related affairs are also being worked out. Of the total students under the new programme, 50 per cent will be deputed primary teachers and the rest outsiders. The minimum qualification for admission into the two-year course will be a second division in Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examination, instead of HSC pass for males and SSC for females in the one-year course. It may be noted that the Education Commission of 1974 and the National Syllabi and Curricula Development Committee of 1975-78 also recommended the extension of the course from one to two years and its recognition as being equivalent to HSC, as the one-year certificate-in-education course has long been found inadequate by all concerned. But the authorities earlier did not go for introducing the two-year curricula programme. The government has now decided to do this in the shortest possible time.

Indubitably, the decision for upgrading primary teachers' training programme will be hailed by all. It aims at bringing about an improved and uniform education and training for the teachers, and providing further opportunities for their career advancement. It is also designed to attract more and more talented people to the profession of primary teaching and to raise the quality of primary education by developing their educational standard and teaching skills and also by linking the primary training programme with avenues for higher education. Henceforth, the PTI-trained teachers will be deemed to have the requisite qualification for access to higher education in the field of teaching, in addition to their primary school jobs. This piece of decision again will greatly advance the cause of primary education and the profession of teachers.

We believe all the agencies and officials concerned and the primary teachers themselves would take up materialisation of the new programme with right earnest, so that it can achieve its basic objective of strengthening primary teaching in the country and providing the teachers with higher training and educational experiences. Let us also hope that our primary education will march ahead now onward with steady strides.