

Coaching business rampant despite ban

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Coaching business is going unabated across the country despite different restrictions slapped by the government against the practice over the years.

According to academics and guardians, many teachers, especially from the primary to the higher secondary levels, are engaged in coaching business. Even in many cases, they further said, force students to receive coaching.

Meanwhile, coaching centres have mushroomed across the country taking advantage of no government mechanism to check their unhindered growth.

Researchers and educationists said that this was a multi-dimensional problem, blaming the situation on poor salary of teachers, lack of subject-wise teachers, vacant positions of teachers, and short classroom periods.

Many coaching centres boost their operation ahead of different public examinations like Secondary School Certificate, Higher Secondary Certificate and equivalent examinations on a regular basis.

The government usually issues orders to prevent question paper leaks during such examinations.

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Most recently, on Sunday, the education ministry ordered the closure of all coaching centres ahead of Eid-ul-Fitr and to save electricity and fuel amid the Middle East war.

However, students and guardians of various Bangla- and English-medium schools in different areas, including Dhanmondi, Mirpur, Badda, and Banasree, in the capital said that till Thursday many coaching centres continued their operation.

They also alleged that many teachers were engaged in coaching business without being exposed.

Following the growing trend of coaching business, the then education ministry in June 2012 issued a circular to all schools, colleges, and madrassahs with a guideline asking them to 'stop teachers' from engaging in coaching business in educational institutions.

The guideline said that teachers at schools, colleges, and madrassahs would not be allowed to provide coaching and private tuition to students of their own institutions.

Besides, teachers are allowed to give tuition to not more than 10 students of other institutions – that, too, with permission from the heads of the institutions concerned, the guideline says.

But, according to the guideline, they can take extra classes for a fee in their respective schools based on requests from guardians.

The High Court in a verdict on February 7, 2019 upheld the government guideline banning 'coaching business' by teachers of government and private educational institutions across the country.

'Students go to coaching because they are not properly taught in the classroom,' BRAC University professor emeritus Manzoor Ahmed said.

He observed that blaming only teachers would not help solve this complex problem.

At the secondary level, schools face the crisis of subject-wise teachers while it is not possible for the teachers to cover the syllabuses in the classes due to their short periods, he said.

Manzoor served as the head of two consultation committees formed by the previous interim government to submit recommendations on improving quality of primary and secondary education.

Guardians, Manzoor further said, become compelled to send their children to coaching centres for completing syllabuses.

Dhaka University Institute of Education and Research teacher professor Dr Mohammad Ali Zinnah said that students would continue to go to the coaching centres if the educational institutions could not fill the gaps in teaching and remove their weaknesses.

Geographic Reference

According to him, especially higher secondary educational institutions cannot complete syllabuses due to shortage of classroom time. He also said, 'How useful would a rule be if you have formulated it while the problem continues to stay.'

The professor said that the salaries of teachers in the government schools were still poor while teachers of the non-government schools under the monthly pay order system received their salaries at intervals, which compelled them to engage in coaching business.

For example, he said, he had joined a meeting at Nilkhet High School on Monday at Nilkhet in the capital, which is under the management of Dhaka University authorities.

He revealed that the head teacher had sought to pay the salaries and the festival allowance to the teachers ahead of the Eid, but the school has a fund of only Tk40,000 against the demand for Tk3.5 lakh.

'Don't these teachers have Eid?' he asked, adding, 'If this is the situation in a school at the central point of the country, then imagine what is happening to the teachers in remote areas.'

He also said that educational institutions should hold extra classes to help weak students and therefore pay allowances to the teachers for such classes.

Mentioning the vacant posts of the head teachers at 32,000 government primary schools -- out of the total 65,620 schools -- and many non-government schools with acting head teachers, Manzoor said that it was not possible for the existing teachers even to hold extra classes for the weak students.

The draft Education Act, 2026, which was uploaded on the education ministry web site for public opinions on February 1 this year hurriedly just before the 13th Jatiya Sangsad elections on February 12, has a section on coaching centres that drew criticism from educationists.

It reads that after gradual discouragement, within three or five years of the enactment of this act, the government will take actions to close the establishment of coaching centres, activities of private tuition and publication of notebooks or guidebooks.

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According to the findings of a research conducted by the Campaign for Popular Education -- a coalition of non-governmental organisations -- which were revealed in March 2024, education expenses at the primary and secondary levels increased by 25 per cent and 51 per cent respectively in the first six months of 2023, mainly due to private tutoring and buying commercial guidebooks and notebooks.