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School education: which medium?

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In recent times, kindergartens and tutorials offering education in English medium have sprung up in Dhaka and other urban centres of the country. Parents in their zeal, to impart good education to their children are getting them admitted to these institutions paying high tuition fees. However, the parents often disregard the disadvantages they are putting their children into.

The course and curricula offered in these schools are mostly unrelated to the social background of the children. In the

end, these children become misfit with the bulk majority of the children around them.

Secondly, because of different systems of education which are followed in these schools, these children cannot compete effectively with the children of the public education system. Records of public examinations in the country, show this.

It has also been observed that average and below average students coming out of the tutorials may do better in life in certain respects, but above average and brighter children would do better through the public education system.

Parents who are eager for

good education of their children should keep these factors in their mind. It may be suggested that the English medium institutions should be transformed into Bangla medium ones and follow the curricula of the Boards. They may, however, maintain a strong English language course. This is one possible way the aspirations of the parents for admitting their children to 'good schools' can be fulfilled.

It is to be noted that the government primary schools in Bangladesh do not in most cases offer an attractive learning environment. That is why in urban areas, elementary schools in the shapes of kindergartens have sprung up. It is universally recognised that the purpose of elementary or kindergarten education is to develop the hidden faculties of the children. This development takes place mostly

through communication with the help of a language. And what language is better for communication than the mother tongue?

Education upto to HSC level in the country is in Bangla. At the universities, it is either Bangla or English. The education upto Bachelor degree level at the universities is bound to be given in Bangla within the next few years. But English will remain important as a second language, because in the universities even at bachelor degree level, students should be able to consult English books extensively.

The parents of today, therefore, want education of their wards with an accompanying emphasis on English, in order that children can pursue very effectively advanced studies at the university level.