

FOUR MONTHS INTO NEW ACADEMIC YEAR

Most of high schools yet to get guidelines about SQ method

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Four months into the new academic year, around 10 lakh class IX students have yet to have studies on the go as authorities have neither printed textbooks nor trained up most teachers as per the announced Structured Question (SQ) method.

Most of the high schools also have not got guidelines on how to set questions for examinations, evaluate the answer sheets and impart lessons in classes.

Once introduced, the present class IX students would be the first batch to sit for the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examinations 2010 under SQ method.

The method is appreciated by academicians, teachers, guardians and students, but they all slate the government's failure to take necessary preparations.

The education ministry is now confused over introducing the method due to lack of preparations and strong protests from teachers, students and guardians.

"The final decision of introducing the SQ method from this year in class IX or later or in class VI in phases will come after holding

talks with academicians, guardians and teachers," said Education Adviser Dr Hossain Zillur Rahman.

Meanwhile, the education ministry has formed a seven-member review committee and asked it to submit its recommendations by today. The government will take a decision following the recommendations, said sources.

"The new method is good but the government is taking too much time to introduce it," said renowned academician Prof Jafar Iqbal, who is also a member of the review committee.

Students across the country are now in the dark as they don't know yet whether their first term exams set to start from April 30 would be held under SQ system.

Teachers say it is impossible to hold the first term examinations under the SQ method now as they don't know how to prepare such questions.

"We are not arranging classes under new method because our teachers are receiving training. The government should have completed the training programme by last year," said Prof Rafiq Afroz, principal of Ispahani Girls' School and College.

A section of top officials of the education ministry, Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education popularly known as Shikkha Bhaban and National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) are trying to implement the method this year.

Sources in the ministry allege in that case the officials would get an opportunity to grab a big share of the Tk 793-crore fund.

Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Bangladesh government have jointly funded Tk 793 crore for introducing the method under Secondary Education Sector Development (SESD) project.

But only several crore taka has been spent for a two-day training programme for only 10 percent or 88,000 teachers. Besides, no money has been spent yet for printing new textbooks.

Students, guardians and teachers are now waiting for the recommendations of the review committee comprised of Education Joint Secretary Nazrul Islam Khan, Prof Abdullah Abu Sayeed, Prof Jafar Iqbal, Prof Maniruzzaman Miah, Dr M Ibrahim, Manzur Ahmed Khandakar and Shakhawat Ali.