

HIGHER SECONDARY EDUCATION FACILITIES

Rural-urban disparities widen

Mohiuddin Alamgir

RURAL students' performance in HSC and equivalent examinations sharply deteriorated over the last five years compared to their urban compatriots.

The results declared on Sunday show that less than 50 per cent students of 1,236 institutions passed this year's Higher Secondary Certificate and equivalent exams and most of these institutions are in the rural areas, confirmed the education minister and chairmen of three boards of education.

This year, 10.62 lakh students appeared in the exams

from 8,294 institutions.

In 2011, less than 50 per cent students of 584 institutions could pass the exams and most of them were in the rural areas, according to the education ministry.

This year, the combined pass rate for higher secondary schools, madrassahs and technical institutes is 69.60 per cent, down from 75.08 per cent in 2011.

Not a single student from 35 institutions could pass the exams this year and most of them are in the rural areas.

In 2011, not a single student of 24 institutions could pass.

The gradual decline in

performance of students in the rural areas has been attributed to acute shortage of qualified teachers and inadequate library and laboratory facilities in their institutions.

Teachers blamed widening disparities in education opportunities and facilities between urban and rural areas for the deteriorating performance of the village pupils.

The rural students can not even think of affording coaching, private tuition or the guidance their urban compatriots get only because their guardians are better off, they said.

The rural students are gradually falling behind

their urban compatriots mainly because they get little guidance on how to tackle creative questions, they said.

In 2011, only 14 rural higher secondary colleges secured places among 80 top institutions across country covered by eight general education boards.

In 2012, the number of rural higher secondary colleges which secured places dropped to 11, in 2013 to 10 and in 2014 to eight.

From this year the education boards stopped publishing the list of top scoring institutions.

Former Dhaka University vice chancellor Emajuddin

Ahmed and professor emeritus Serajul Islam Choudhury blamed the widening gap in teaching facilities between rural and urban schools for the gradual deterioration in performance of the student in the neglected villages.

The picture only reflects the widening social and economical inequality, said Serajul Islam Choudhury.

The colleges in big cities have more teachers than they need while rural colleges are heavily under staffed, he said.

Campaign for Popular Education executive director Rahseda K Chowdhury

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attributed the deteriorating results of rural students to lack of infrastructure and competent teachers in their schools and colleges.

Education minister Nurul Islam Nahid admitted that most of the institutions from which less than 50 per cent of the students could pass the exams were in the rural areas. He said that the government was working to address the issue.