

In need of a correction course in education management

AS IT has happened all these years, secondary schools located in rural areas, this year too, failed even to come near their urban counterparts, according to the results of the Secondary School Certification examinations that were published on Saturday. Only five rural schools have earned places in the list of top 80 secondary schools, prepared taking 10 of the best schools from each of the eight general education boards. This has happened, as it did in the past, despite the fact that, as New Age reported on Sunday, 77 per cent of the country's secondary schools are located in rural areas. While this keeps happening every year, governments, especially the current Awami League government, for the duration of its two consecutive tenures in office, spanning seven years or so, have always boasted of having narrowed, or even removed, the disparity in education that exists between rural and urban areas.

This all points to the government's flawed education management. While more than two-thirds of the secondary schools are in rural areas, the emphasis appears to have been on the schools in urban areas, in terms of the teacher-student ratio, the quality of teachers, classroom teaching and, in cases of science education, laboratory facilities. Poor or lack of oversight on schools in rural areas could be another point for the government to think about. Educationalists and educationists, interviewed in the New Age report, however, attributed this success of urban schools to the guardians as they, because of living in urban areas and being better poised financially, could spend more on the schooling of their children. This again points to another aspect that the quality of schooling has generally declined and the students whose guardians could shelve out more money on their schooling fare better in their education. If it is true, it is then time for the government to rethink its national education management so that issues could be sorted out before they decline further.

The education minister, at the briefing where he announced the SCC and equivalent examinations results, further, said that he was planning not to prepare any list of such best secondary educational institutions from the next year. This could also be construed as a step to stop people coming to know which schools are doing better, across the rural-urban divide or within urban or rural areas. Under the circumstances, it is time that the government did some soul-searching and found out why rural schools, despite being greater in number, fail to do better in public examinations and effectively tried to narrow, or even remove, the disparity in education between rural and urban areas.