

Number of primary madrassah students falls

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THE number of primary students in all the registered madrassahs sunk to an unprecedented level in last five years.
The number of students fell particularly in Ibtedayi madrassah. Ibtedayi madrassah means primary madrassah.
During the same period, enrollment in primary schools and qoami madras-

sahs increased, said education officials.
While the number of students in ibtedayi madrassahs dropped by about three lakh since 2010 the number of primary school students increased by 33 lakh, show data of Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics and the Directorate of Primary Education.
As the government does not keep data of the unregis-

tered qoami madrassahs no official statistics is available about how many primary students study in these madrassahs.
Officials as well as madrassah teachers guess that the number of students in qoami madrassahs also increased during the period.
They said that after leaving ibtedayi madrassahs an unknown number of students took admission in
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primary schools and the qoami madrassahs.

Non availability of stipends for poor students in ibtedayi madrassahs encouraged the exodus from these madrassahs, said teachers and officials.

The government has no control over qoami madrassahs mostly run on donations from the community.

The other madrassahs are registered and get government funding.

The number of students in primary madrassahs dropped to 21.25 lakh in

2014 from 24.16 lakh in 2010, according to BANBEIS.

The number of students in primary increased to 1.83 crore in 2014 from 1.50 crore in 2010, according to the DPE's annual census reports.

The upshot is the number of primary completion examinees from the madrassahs also dropped during the period under review.

As many ibtedayi madrassahs were shut down in recent years as they get no assistance from the govern-

ment their students shifted to qoami madrassahs, said Bangladesh Independent Ibtedayi Teachers Association president Ruhul Amin.

Bangladesh Jami'atul Mudarreseen secretary general Sabbir Ahmed Momtaji, Bangladesh Madrassah Teachers Association general secretary Delwar Hosain, said that madrassah students don't get stipends like their compatriots in primary schools.

They said that generally, children from insolvent families and orphans shift to madrassahs after

dropping out of primary schools.

Bangladesh Madrassah Education Board chairman AKM Saif Ullah said that he was not aware that the number of students in ibtedayi madrasahs had declined in recent years.

He, however, did not rule out the possibility of some of the madrassahs students shifting to primary schools.

But, he said, no aliya stream of madrassah student would ever seek admission into qoami madrassahs.