

SC Report

Committees to probe city schools performance

Let the inquiry cover schools across the country

THE ministry of education has decided to form three committees to probe the decline in the performance of some schools vis-à-vis the better performing ones in the nation's capital. The objective is a study of the reasons behind the decline of a number of institutions which earlier were well-known for their good academic performance. The authorities have noted that although the standard of teaching in some of these schools remains appreciable, it is the poor results of students that are of concern. Two of the committees will inquire into the question of how some schools have been faring between badly and average, while another will study the ways in which schools doing better have been able to maintain their academic reputation.

The move is surely to be welcomed, considering especially the clear fall in standards that has been noticed in the performance of schools over the years. Any measure which seeks to explore the ways and means by which a uniformity of standards can be brought into school education is commendable. However, there is also the question of why such measures, or such inquiries, should be a localised affair. The education authorities will be doing a far more effective and well-meaning job if they extend the scope of the inquiries to include schools all over the country. Obviously, a focus on schools in the urban areas has in turn led to a situation where falling standards in schools situated in the rural interior of the country have remained ignored. With a vast majority of the population inhabiting the villages of Bangladesh, it makes sense to argue that any study of conditions in schools, be they government or non-government, should take rural schools into cognisance as a first step toward bringing them in line with schools in the towns and cities. Ignoring such realities will be tantamount to promoting, unconsciously, a sense of elitism in school education where the predominance of urban schools cannot but cause a dent in the overall edifice of education.

In a broad sense, the education authorities should focus on some vital areas that call for positive and quick action. In the first instance, the politicisation that has come into the work of school committees must be rolled back if schools are to go back to playing their due role in the shaping of young minds. In the second, steps must be taken to place experienced, competent teachers in the schools in order to reclaim the tradition that in an earlier era was set by individuals for whom fulfillment came through purposeful teaching. Let us say again that the move by the authorities is a good one. But let it be made better through making it comprehensive and holistic.