

# Pry edn unsatisfactory, rural-urban students' gap has widened

## Experts tell discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Experts at a discussion on 'Education scenario in Bangladesh' yesterday highlighted the problems of primary, secondary, college and tertiary level education in the country and placed some recommendations.

The general view is that the quality of education at the primary level is not satisfactory and the gap between the rural and urban students and English and Bangla medium has been widening, they added.

The experts stressed the need for academically well-qualified and dedicated teachers to achieve excellence in primary, secondary and tertiary level education.

At Dr Rashid Memorial Lecture-2008 at the Council Bhaban of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet), they further said that National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) has the monopoly

for producing the textbooks for primary and secondary level education which are very unattractive, adding that NCTB does not cost much to produce good quality attractive textbooks.

While presenting the keynote paper, former vice chancellor (VC) of Buet Dr Nooruddin Ahmed said quality of education at the primary level is not satisfactory due to unattractive and poor quality textbooks, lack of accountability among teachers, inadequate number of teachers in many schools, inadequate facilities for games and sports, infrastructural facilities and poor monitoring system.

In most towns and cities, there are English medium schools over which the government has almost no control except registration, he added.

It is also seen that teaching has been shifted from classrooms to the teachers' coaching centres, he said suggesting that all the schools, colleges and madrasas should have well-stocked open shelf libraries with competent staff and the educational institutions must be provided with adequate funds for maintaining modern, well-

equipped, functional laboratories for science and engineering subjects.

His recommendations also include compulsory IT education at least at the college level with computers and teachers, administration of educational institutions must not be politicised on party lines, rating system for both public and private universities should be introduced by University Grants Commission (UGC).

He also criticised the UGC for not establishing Accreditation Council for colleges and universities yet.

At the university level, large amount of money must be made available to upgrade the ancient laboratories and for setting up new ones for science, agriculture and engineering subjects.

"Significant research funds should be made available to the universities and if we provide appropriate funding in this sector, in next 10 to 15 years we will see changes in our higher education system," said Dr Nooruddin Ahmed.

Speaking as the chief guest, UGC Chairman Dr Nazrul Islam said division between Bangla and English medium has been increasing day by day and we are creating another elite class through the division.

"Most of the students studying in English medium schools go abroad and so we lose them. But they could have contributed a lot more, if they would stay in the country," he added.

World Bank for the first time has come up with a proposal to support university level research work, he said, adding that "But it is a loan and we must be sure of its cent percent proper utilisation. UGC is thinking about it and discussing with different bodies."

Buet VC Dr AMM Safiullah and engineer SR Osmani also spoke at the discussion.