

60,000 pry students scramble for 16,000 seats in port city

Chittagong Office

CHITTAGONG, Jan. 9:—The parents in Chittagong City have been facing a baffling situation in getting their children admitted to better schools. There are about 60,000 boys and girls of primary level scrambling for admission to good schools for the next academic session, it is reliably learnt.

The parents are now found queuing before all the good schools for admission forms and their "wards" are working over "sample" questions for admission test.

But the maximum seats in the port city's existing 96 primary schools are 16,000 according to survey that was based on the rush of students for admission to different nurseries, kindergartens and other schools in the city.

The so-called good schools are broadly divided into a handful of English medium and Bengali medium schools. The prominent of the English medium schools are Espahani Public Schools, BWA School, Cantonment Public School, Little Jewels Sun-shine Grammar School, St Marry, Ankur and Silver Belt School. The students from higher income brackets usually prefer English medium schools. There is also increasing rush for admission to some good Bengali medium schools. Only the lower middle class parents usually send their children to the government and City Corporation run schools.

Since this year's admission to most of these schools are still in the process, a missionary school here issued 500 forms for admission test for next session. Of the candidates, 175 were selected. Similarly another English medium school of average

fame in Nasirabad area received 1,300 applications for 90 seats in its Nursery and Class One. A Bengali-medium school considered to be one of the best here received nearly 4,000 applications for 150 seats in Class One. Again, a reputed government school has got 3,000 applications for about 100 seats in three junior classes.

To get their wards admitted to a better school, parents here engage influential school teachers as private tutors for their children. They believe that one can get one's child admitted to a reputed school if one pays handsome "donations" is also widespread. A Headmaster agreed that the tests, by virtue of which a handful of candidates were chosen out of thousands were hardly scientific. But the authorities of these schools are helpless in the face of an unmanageable number of candidates. The only way to ensure fair competition was to have more schools so that the pressure on them was evenly distributed.

The Principal of an English medium school dismissed the donation story as totally untrue. Those who failed to get their children admitted to these schools spread the canard, the Principal added.