

Poverty, shortage of schools, teachers main reasons

Thousands of children deprived of primary education

From Our Correspondent

NILPHAMARI, June 19:—The Universal Primary Education Programme has been facing set-back affecting the normal academic atmosphere in the district. There are 792 primary schools in the district of which 471 are government and the rest 321 are non-government.

About 90 posts of teachers have been lying vacant for a long time in six thanas of the district. About 65 posts of head masters and the 25 posts of assistant teachers have been lying vacant.

The quota of teachers in government primary schools is not maintained properly. Some schools with a large number of students have been facing shortage of teachers while many schools with requisite number of students have excess teachers.

About 41,514 children of the district are denied primary education due to shortage of schools, necessary education appliances and poverty of guardians.

A survey carried by the District Primary Education Office shows that the number of school going children in the district is 2,23,046 of whom 1,81,532 children are prosecuting study in 471 government and 321 non-government primary schools and 41,514 are not going to schools.

Hundreds of children failed to enrol themselves in schools due to economic hardship of their guardians, the survey said.

The teachers' attendance is satisfactory in the school situated by the side of the highway or in a place connected with good roads with zila and thana headquarters. But the situation is reverse in the schools located in the remote areas with bad communication, where inspecting personnel hardly visit.

There are two thana education officers out of six thanas in the district. Teachers are not methodical to make the lesson interesting. Many teachers impart lessons to the students ignoring the blackboard work and teaching aids. They do not give home tasks to the students. As a result the students lose interest in study.

Irregularity of teachers

Guardians alleged that teachers negotiating with one another remain absent though their attendance is shown regularly in the registers. Late arrival of teachers is another problem and routine is not maintained properly.

Absence of subject-wise recruitment of teachers is another factor responsible for the deterioration of standard of education. In many schools, teachers are not capable of teaching English and Arithmetic to students. As a result, the students in

those subjects are promoted to the next higher classes with weak basic foundation. Many school buildings have become unfit for use. Teachers do not hold classes in these dilapidated school buildings.

Accommodation crisis prevails in almost all the schools but it is acute in non-government primary schools which have been founded at the local initiative and did not get any financial support from the government. The pupils of these schools sit on the kutchha floor.

Paucity of drinking water

Scarcity of drinking water in these educational institutions has been prevailing as most of the tubewells in the schools are either out of order or their heads have been stolen away.

Absence of proper sanitation in these educational institutions is another impediment. The pupils and teachers are to go the nearby houses or by the side of the canals in response to the call of nature.

Almost all the primary schools have no playground and proper sports facilities. The students are deprived of sports facilities.

There is no practice on extracurricular activities in many schools. As a result, the talents of the students cannot be developed. In different competitions they are found below standard.

Ishurdi

A report from Ishurdi adds: About two lakh children in nine thanas of Pabna district are deprived of primary education due to poverty and inadequate number of schools.

The District Primary Education Office sources said that there were about 120000 male students and 94000 female students in government and non-government schools. About 15000 children in pourashava area are deprived of education.

Besides, 2000 children are receiving education from 16 Kindergarten schools in Pabna proper. On the other hand, 19,463 children are receiving education from 24 primary schools of Pabna poura area.

The survey reveals that 18000 children are deprived of primary education at Himaipur and Maligasa, out of 72 union parishad of the district. About 90 per cent guardians cannot afford educational expenses and their children are engaged in different odd jobs to earn livelihood.

There are about 865 primary schools in 1992 villages of Pabna district. About 75 non-government primary schools in nine thanas remained closed during the last five years as they did not get registration from the concerned authorities.

Schools not repaired

According to official source, there are 2867 male and 527 female

teachers of primary schools of nine thanas of the district while over 51 posts of primary school teachers are lying vacant. Out of 51 posts, two are vacant at Bhangura, two in Ishwardi, three in Faridpur, six in Sujanagar, seven in Chatmohor, eight in Pabna Sadar, ten in Bera and 13 in Santhia thana.

The shortage of benches, black boards and other educational appliances is hampering education in the schools. Roofs of many schools damaged in the storm are yet to be repaired.

Bandarban

Our Bandarban correspondent reports: Literacy rate in the Bandarban district is poor as about two lakh people are unable to read and write their names.

In the remote areas of the district, there are no primary schools and children receive elementary education in the Pallitool attached to the Buddhists Monasteries.

According to a recent BMBA survey report, only 6.1 per cent females in Thanchi Thana are literate. There are many obstacles which stand in the way of education.

A vast area of the district is covered with dense forest and remains uninhabited. The remaining portion of the district is sparsely populated and it is very difficult to build schools.

Communication problem

Besides, communication is undeveloped. Though there are some primary schools, the progress of education is very slow as the number of students on roll and attendance is poor in these schools.

Most of the government primary schools have one or two teachers who teach upto Class II or III. The Universal Primary Education Programme has not been launched in remote areas of the district due to lack of proper direction and weak management.

According to the Bandarban district education office source, there are 13,000 students on roll in the schools of 7 thanas of the district, while the number of primary schools is 235 of which 189 are government and 43 are non-government and Pallitool and rest the three are UNICEF assisted residential primary schools.

The people of the district urged the government to take measures to improve the condition of the district and it is suggested that more primary schools should be setup under the UNICEF assistance supervision by the Bandarban District Local Government Council (BHDLGC).

The Chairman of Bandarban Dis-

trict Local Government Council (BHDLGC) Mr. Sa Ching Prue Jerry said that peace is the precondition for achieving prosperity for the people living in Chittagong Hill region. He was addressing a meeting as chief guest at Rowangchhari Primary School premises organised by the Tribal Welfare and Peace Committee.

The Chairman stressed the need for motivating people in establishing peace and thereby expedite development in hill region.

He also called upon the committee members to go to people and make them aware of local problems. Mouza Headman Mr. Maung Hla Ching presided over the meeting.

Chapai-Nawabganj

UNB reports from Chapai-Nawabganj: The non-government secondary schools and madrashas of the district are beset with various problems hampering smooth education.

Most of the institutions have been facing shortage of teachers, benches, accommodation, inadequate library facilities and science laboratories.

There are 176 schools and madrashas in five thanas of the district of which 102 are high, 26 junior high schools and 48 dakhil madrashas of which 19 and 3 are for girls respectively.

Over 50,000 students including 17,270 females are prosecuting their studies in these institutions. At least 1807 teachers have been engaged to teach the students. Of the institutions, 120 have no pucca buildings. The kutchha school houses are mostly situated in Barendra and char areas and there are no science laboratories in 72 institutions.

Lack of latrines and urinals in more than 100 schools put the students particularly the female ones into great difficulties.

The government provides only 25 per cent of the total expenses of these institutions of the district, it is learnt.

Maulvibazar

Our Maulvibazar correspondent adds: The Damia Abdha Government Primary School under Sadar thana was damaged in the cyclonic storm which swept over the area last year has not yet been repaired or reconstructed hindering education of 198 students of the school. Classes of the school are being held in a shop at Abdha Bazar which is also small.

Considering the situation local people expect that early renovation of the school is urgently needed to ensure better education of their children.