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128 teacher posts vacant in Sandwip

54 primary schools damaged in '91 cyclone not yet repaired

From Our Correspondent

SANDWIP, May 15.—The primary education in the island is being hampered as schools are facing manifold problems.

Out of 547 posts, at least 128 posts of primary school teachers including 18 posts of headmasters have been lying vacant for a long time. Recruitment examination was held in 1987 and 1990 to appoint the teachers to fill up the vacant posts but nothing has been done as yet.

The dilapidated condition of most of the primary school buildings and inadequate furniture are also hampering the education of children.

Moreover, out of 103 schools, 45 school buildings were not repaired which have been damaged in the cyclone of 1991.

There are no tubewells and toilets in many schools causing suffering to the students.

Our Chaudanga correspondent states: Poverty stricken parents are reluctant to send their children to schools resulting decrease in the number of school-going children both in rural and urban areas. About one lakh children of Chaudanga district do not attend schools.

The children between the age of 9 and 12 have been engaged in different kinds of work like grazing of cattle, hotel and restaurant boys, vehicle cleaners and workers in biscuit factories. These children are compelled to take up these odd jobs to earn livelihood. Many of them

work as shoe cleaners and sell pan-bidi in trains and buses.

Most of the marginal and landless farmers of the district having 4 to 6 children live below poverty line. They do not send their children to schools due to poor pecuniary condition. Many of the students of both primary and high schools abandon their study resulting in increase in the number of drop-outs.

During harvesting season, the farm labourers along with their minor boys migrate to other districts in search of work to earn their bread.

The farmers of the district have been passing their days in financial hardship. Due to dull market and abnormal fall in price of jute paddy and wheat, the growers have been facing financial crisis.

Jute has no demand in the markets in home and abroad. Jute sells at Tk 150 to Tk 180 per maund. The growers said that 50 per cent of the total production of jute are lying unsold.

The fall in the prices of crops compelled the growers to lead a miserable life and they could not pay land development tax and bank loan. They could not buy text-books, and pay tuition fees of their wards.