

Withdraw error-ridden textbooks

85 noted citizens ask government

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eighty-five eminent citizens of the country have strongly condemned the anomalies in this year's school textbooks and demanded withdrawal of the "error-ridden textbooks" immediately.

In a joint statement issued yesterday, they urged the authorities concerned to stop imparting lessons through these textbooks to protect the young learners from becoming "communal and conservative".

The citizens also demanded an investigation into the matter and punishment to the people responsible.

The demands came hard

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on the heels of a public outcry over some embarrassing blunders in school textbooks. Faced with a volley of criticism, the government made two officials of National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) officer on special duty (OSD) and suspended its artist-cum-designer. Two separate committees were formed to find out the errors and the people responsible for the mistakes.

The prominent citizens in the statement said the government's success in distributing textbooks to all students free of cost on the very first day of the year was indeed commendable.

But questions over the standard of the textbooks have been raised for the last several years. People are outraged by the printing mistakes and distortion of spelling, information and history of the textbooks distributed this year, they said.

Initially, attempts were

made to label the incidents as negligence of duty, but gradually the inside stories had started to surface, they added.

"The deliberate changes in the textbooks were the result of regression and fundamentalism.

"There is a dangerous spread of communal politics behind this, which has been evident over the last few years. This year's textbook is the manifestation of compromise of the government with the communal politics," the statement said.

In this year's textbooks, it said, three types of errors and distortion could be found: distortion of spelling and information, mistakes in formation of sentences, and instilling fundamental and communal attitudes into the textbooks.

The first and second errors are occurring due to a lack of proper planning and management, but the third one was made in a planned way, and those who did this are deliberately trying to turn the

country into a communal one, the statement added.

"On many occasions, the history of our Liberation War in our textbooks has been distorted. Textbooks are chosen as a weapon to implement ill political motives."

The statement said there is "politics behind the spread of communalism and single religion" in this year's textbooks.

"The defeated communal forces of 1971 have turned into a poisonous tree taking the advantage of the political spinelessness of the ruling class."

When Hefajat-e Islam and Charmonai Pir hail the government for preparing "error-ridden and communal textbooks", then it becomes clear how directionless the so-called ruling political parties are, they said.

"The future of the nation is paying a high price for this political bargain," they said, adding that communal thoughts are being implanted in the minds of the children.

They said the government was creating obstacles to the path which would lead the children to a world full of cultural activities. "Instead of inculcating morality in students' minds, division and communalism are being created."

The biggest evidence of how the government is defeated to fundamentalism is the exclusion of articles by writers like Rabindranath Tagore, Lalou Shah, Humayun Azad and Satyen Sen from the textbooks, they said.

The citizens strongly condemned the shameless politicisation being done in the textbooks.

The signatories to the statement include Ahmed Rafiq, Kamal Lohani, Jatin Sarkar, Prof Serajul Islam Choudhury, Prof Hasan Azizul Haque, Dr Ajoy Roy, Prof Dwijen Sharma, Abul Momen, Ramendu Majumdar, Nasir Uddin Yousuff, poet Asad Chowdhury, and Mamunur Rashid, among others.