

Little care in hasty textbook publishing

Low quality books come out with lots of errors as printers work round the clock

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Most of the textbooks for secondary level students are coming to the market with low quality printing and binding as publishers are doing their work haphazardly amid tremendous pressure by the taskforce on textbooks.

Apart from low quality printing and binding, missing of pages in many books makes it tough for the students to

read the books properly, according to market sources and guardians.

"Many pages of my home economics book are missing while some pages have been printed twice. I can't open my religion book properly due to poor binding. The print quality of my Bengali book is also poor," said Sadia Hossain Adrita, a class-VI student of Viqarunnisa Noon School and College.

Publishers said these types of problems remain in the new textbooks in the third phase of publishing books, as they have to do the work of printing and binding books round-the-clock due to pressure and do not get sufficient time to check the books again.

Binding textbooks is a long, lengthy and complicated process because publishers have to do the work manually.

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said a publisher wishing anonymity.

Despite knowing about these types of problems in the newly printed textbooks, the publishers are not getting time to check the books before marketing, he added.

Besides, officials of National Curriculum & Textbooks Board (NCTB) do not get time to check the printed textbooks before marketing, as they have to allow the publishers self-permission without checking due to tremendous pressure from the taskforce.

The taskforce members also admitted the fact and said there is no way of doing it as 42 days of the current academic year have already been passed and students are still facing textbook crisis.

"Something is better than nothing. We have issued two deadlines to publishers observing the tremendous crisis. Yes, students have to face troubles. But now they can continue their study after getting books," said Mirza Abdullah Baki, chief of the taskforce and additional director general of Rapid Action Battalion (RAB).

He said they will give an attention to check the problems in printing and binding as soon as the present situation improves.

However, publishers said textbooks crisis will not be ended even after publishing all NCTB-tendered 2.65 crore textbooks because the actual demand is estimated to be over five crore.

Students will have to read the textbooks with low quality printing and binding this year for this reason, they said.

Most of the publishers failed to market the required number of 2.65 crore textbooks last month under all the three phases, alleged NCTB Chairman Masir Uddin.

"When there will be no crisis of textbooks, we will take steps to ensure quality of binding and printing of books so that students will be encouraged," he told The Daily Star.

On February 5, the present government formed a taskforce for textbooks following recommendation by the education ministry in an effort to solve the textbooks crisis. The taskforce will also prepare a set of recommendations so that the textbooks crisis will not happen again in the next year.