

78pc seats in govt TT colleges stay vacant

Easy-to-get certificates in pvt TT colleges lead to shortage of qualified teachers

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As much as 78 percent seats of the country's public teachers training (TT) colleges remain vacant, resulting in a shortage of qualified teachers and sub-standard education for the schoolchildren.

In the last three years, enrolment at 14 public TT colleges has fallen by 66 percent. This downward trend has given birth to growing concern over the fate of these institutions, which have a reputation for providing quality educa-

tion. Academicians observe rapid growth of private TT colleges and universities and their ill-practices, especially "selling" certificates, is mainly responsible for decreasing enrolment at public TT colleges.

A latest survey of Teaching Quality Improvement (TQI) project also points finger at the same cause.

According to the survey, 5,079 students enrolled at 14 public TT colleges in

Bachelor of Education (BEd)

course in 2004-05 session. But three years later, the enrolment rate has fallen by 66 percent and only 1,720 enrolled against 7,800 seats.

"The mushroom growth of private TT colleges is the main reason for the decreasing enrolment. Why would students come to us when anyone can easily collect certificates with good results from private TT colleges spending several thousand taka?" says Prof Taslima Begum, principal of Dhaka

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TT colleges

Declining enrolment trend at public TT colleges	
Years	The Number of enrolment
2004-05	5,079
2005-06	3,457
2006-07	2,774
2007-08	1,720

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TT College, the main public TT college in the country.

She adds that in spite of having large and well-maintained classrooms and quality practical training, students and teachers are reluctant to come to them.

Top officials of the education ministry also admit that trainees go to private institutions to avoid hard work and get some unfair advantages.

A committee of the education ministry conducted an investigation last year and identified several causes behind this situation. Mushrooming private colleges, easier scope of admission, flexibility in modes of class work, use of guide books and opening of outer campuses of some private universities are the main reasons, the committee observed.

Education Adviser Hossain Zillur Rahman said quality education cannot be ensured without qualified teachers and qualified teachers will not come without modern training.

"We have taken this issue seriously. The ministry will take stern action against the private colleges, which got affiliation from National University illegally or without fulfilling all criteria," he said.

He added that stern action will be taken against those public TT college teachers, who take classes in private institutions.

The teachers say BEd is a full-time course in public TT colleges and in-service trainees need to get leave or deputation from their schools.

"But the School Management Committees (SMC) don't grant the teachers leave. So they cannot come

to us and go to the private institutions for certificates," said Swapan Kumar Dhali, a teacher of Dhaka TT College.

Education Joint Secretary Shafiullah said the government issued a gazette in July this year formulating a policy that all MPO (Monthly Pay Order)-enlisted but untrained teachers must receive training from nearby public TT college.

"The trainees have to write and submit assignments in public colleges, while the private institutions don't require any such activities," said Abdur Razzaque, training specialist of National Academy for Educational Management (NAEM).

He said the public colleges hold class regularly from 8:30am to 4:30pm, whereas private colleges take classes only on Fridays and occasionally on other week days.

"Regular attendance is compulsory in public colleges, while the private TT colleges don't bother about it," said Kabirul Hasan, another training specialist of NAEM.

According to a survey by the education ministry, 19 TT colleges -- all public and five private -- are suitable to offer teachers' training courses, while the rest 95 institutions -- 89 colleges and six private universities -- have been branded unfit.

The education ministry committee recommended forming a "National Accreditation Council" for standardised teachers' training.

TQI Project Director Nazmul Islam said they have taken several initiatives so that teachers are encouraged to receive BEd training from public TTCs.

"Under TQI project, a teacher who will receive one-year BEd training will get Tk 10,000 per month and his or her mother institution will also get Tk 10,000 so that they can hire a part-time teacher," Nazmul told The Daily Star.

He also said minimum 1,200 hours class time should be followed in private colleges and universities.