

Mathematics and English Influenced This Year's SSC Results

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THE first public examination in students' life came out on June 26 this year with the highest pass percentage and GPA-5 holders we have ever achieved. The results have created much enthusiasm in the country in general and educational arena in particular. At the same time results have provoked some questions as well. The results were published under the grading system introduced in 2001 and showed a tremendous boost with pass rate 70.41 in the general education boards and 72.18 in the combine general, madrasa and technical boards showing a lead of 13.82 percent from the last years' situation. This upward trend of our results brings a complacency to the people concerned in particular and all the countrymen in general. The following factors can be attributed to this year's upward trend.

Setting English and Mathematics questions with much care. Easy questions were set.

Showing liberalism to examine the scripts

Taking steps for ensuring due marks to respective students.

Steps to penalize the schools with poor performance

No serious political turmoil to stand in the way of students' normal functions and activities.

No political or local pressure to send the unruly, irregular and failed students in the test examination to public examination.

Students' and guardians' rising awareness toward education

No scope to take adopt unfair means in the examination has made the students more sincere and attentive to studies.

Emphasis and imparting training to teachers both in the government and non-government levels

The following features surface in this year's SSC results.

GPA-5 holders leap 13.88%

Pass rate increases 13.44% from last year

Pass percentage in Mathematics and English increased 10 percent in all the boards

Pass percentage increased but the number of students was 50 thousand less than the previous year.

Boys pass percentage 73.69 and girls 70.45

The number of zero percentage schools has decreased from 248 to 91

The number of hundred percent passed schools increased from 778 to 2272.

Science students marked a significant progress with 84.32 pass percentage, humanities 59.85

In the capital city the pass rate stand at 88.12

Education Advisor comments on the results, "The increase in pass rates continues gradually since 2001 which proves that education standard is improving." Last year three thousand and 763 students obtained 78 and 79 marks in Bengali, English, Mathematics, Higher Mathematics and Physics. This year it was instructed that those who would obtain such marks would be awarded full 80 marks to increase the number of GPA-5 holders. Low performing schools were given show cause notice first which was followed by cancellation of MPO and this step worked well to change the results, claimed by Education Adviser. Visually it demonstrates that the stand is improving but does it make room for us to be complacent? This global village gets tougher day by day where only quality, talks, quantity receive less important. Whereas, we have emphasized on quantity which hardly matches with the global trend.

Eminent educationalist Prof Serajul Islam said, "A germ has already entered our society. Education has turned into a commodity where investment gets priority. For this reason students of urban areas perform better in SSC." Last year CAMPE conducted a research which

revealed that 88 percent students of government school had private tuition whereas 78 percent non-government school students had private tuition. This symptom bears the germs of serious social diseases which we are carrying without feeling any pain proving our numbness to feel an urge to find out remedy. Educationists say, "Capitalism has engulfed the country's education system where students backed by solvent families achieve glorious results while rural students from poor families struggle to obtain even pass marks as their schools cannot provide quality education. Educationists say, "Capitalism has engulfed the country's education system where students backed by solvent families achieve glorious results while rural students from poor families struggle to obtain even pass marks as their schools cannot provide quality education." the non-uniformity lying in our education sector seriously surfaces through this year's SSC results.

Professor Zafar Iqbal has rightly said, "This year's results make it clear that education has now become accessible mainly to the rich and those living in the urban areas. Government's willingness is the only way to come out of this cycle. Of course, this disparity is widening every year but nobody seems to be bothered about it.

In spite of record-breaking results, this year around three lakh students failed and most of them are rural students and they have failed in English or mathematics or in both. Examiners were highly liberal this year to award marks, even then this huge figure failed in two major and important subjects. It was also alleged that twelve lakh students got registered in class nine whereas only six lakh appeared in the examinations in general education boards, the rest dropped out of the schools. Quite dismal picture, indeed. Chill penury and social disparity

compelled them to leave school. Who bothers about their fate and future?

Rural schools suffers serious dearth of English and Mathematics teachers resulting in very poor performance in the public examinations. BRAC has taken some pragmatic initiatives to address these issues. Training for English and Mathematics teachers, Remedial support for rural SSC candidates and RAISE (Remedial Assistance In Strengthening English) support for class ten students so that they can show better results in the test examinations and can be allowed in greater number to sit for public examinations. Special model tests are arranged under these Remedial and RAISE support as the village students cannot afford to take special tests in the coaching centres or with private tutors like urban students.

In BRAC training along with pedagogy the test items have been incorporated. Not only that, how to write different kinds of answers in the examinations are practically demonstrated in the training sessions so that the village teachers can have transparent idea to deal with different test items in their classroom situation. Teaching grammar communicatively is another significant phenomenon of BRAC training. In the government level also training has been taken as an essential part of teaching and many teachers have been trained under different government projects which helped give much positive impression on the public examinations. Both government and non-government interventions are the prime factors to narrow the gap between rural and urban education standard which is widening gradually. We cannot afford to deny the fact.

(The writer works as a specialist in the BRAC Education Programme, PACE and regularly writes on various national and international issues.)