

# Pvt school teachers among the lowest paid

## Govt urged to regulate teachers' salaries at pvt schools

**Mushfique Wadud**

THE government should set a binding guideline on the salaries for teachers at privately-run schools and colleges which pay a lower amount to teachers but charge students high tuition fees, experts said.

They said that low salaries were resulting in a reduction in the quality of teachers and education as

well in these educational institutions.

A rickshaw 'puller even earns more than some teachers in some kindergarten schools,' said a teacher at Paradise International School at Mirpur in Dhaka.

The complaints of low salaries at private educational institutions came after the High Court earlier this month had asked the government to explain why

it should not take action against the schools which raised fees beyond the permissible limits.

While teachers of the schools, which receive a portion of their funds under the government's monthly pay order scheme, get a better pay, teachers at privately-run educational institutions receive much less.

'It is absolutely unfair on the part of the school man-

agements that they pay a teacher Tk 2,000 or Tk 5,000 as salary. How can a person teach in the classroom if he lives on such a low pay,' said Dhaka University professor emeritus Serajul Islam Choudhury.

'The schools and colleges which pay their teachers such low salaries cannot ensure quality education. How can these schools expect to have good teachers if they

do not offer good salaries.'

He urged the government to formulate a regulation on salaries of teachers in private schools.

Educationist Emazuddin Ahmed said that private schools and colleges did not have quality teachers simply because they did not offer good salaries. 'A skilled teacher must be paid good salary,' he said.

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## Pvt school teachers

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The school managements are engaged in such practices because they want to make big profits; they run the institutions for commercial purposes,' he added.

Siddiqui Rahman, professor of Dhaka University's Institute of Education and Research, said, 'Some university graduates may take up the profession of teaching for some time but quit it as soon as they get a better paid job,' he said.

He said that only a few private schools and colleges provide quality education while most of them were established simply for commercial purposes.

Salma Akhter, another professor at the Institute of Education and Research, said that the government should set guidelines on the salaries teachers at different levels in those institutions should receive.

'Salaries vary at private schools depending on their successes. While some schools pay a good salary, most of them offer a low salary structure,' she said.

She said that not only should private schools be regulated but the government should have a department to monitor whether they are going by the regulations.

In most of the countries in the world, though private schools enjoy freedom, they have to follow some kind of regulations. But in Bangladesh, in some cases, they can do whatever they wish to,' she said.

Teachers claim that school authorities are making huge profits by charging students high tuition fees while at the same time paying teachers low salaries.

'The gap between the salaries of the teachers and the profit these institutions make is huge,' said a teacher of an English medium school in the city's Dhanmondi area.

A teacher in the college section of the Northern University Laboratory School and College at Jatrabari gets Tk 7,000 as a monthly salary while in the school section the salary is even lower ranging between Tk 3,000 and Tk 5,500.

The college charges stu-

dents Tk 500 to Tk 600 per month as the tuition fee.

However, the college principal Abdul Hannan said that he did not think teachers' salaries at the college were low.

'The college is counting losses and if the salaries were hiked, the amount of loss would increase,' he said.

'I would ask you to sit with my accountant and you will find that we are not making profit,' he said.

In the Mirpur branch of MABS International School, teachers receive Tk 4,000 to Tk 5,000 as a monthly salary, with students being charged Tk 700 to Tk 900 as the monthly tuition fee.

The superintendent of the school, Mezanur Alam, told New Age that the school was incurring a loss so they could not pay teachers any higher salary.

When asked whether it was possible to get quality teachers with this low salary structure, he said, 'We try to manage good teachers within this limitation.'

In Cherry Blossoms Interna-

tional School, a junior teacher gets Tk 10,000 as monthly salary, with the school charging Tk 2,700 as the tuition fee.

Shaleha Kader, the principal of the school, said that the salary paid to teachers in her school was not low compared to other schools.

'It is not possible for us to increase the salaries considering the tuition fees we receive from students,' she said.

There are some kindergartens in the city where teachers get as low as Tk 1,500 to Tk 2,000 as monthly salaries.

Education secretary Kamal Abdul Naser Chowdhury said that if the government received specific allegations from the teachers, it would take steps against the school authorities.

'Why should the schools pay teachers a low salary when they are charging a high tuition fees from the students,' he said.

He, however, said government had no plan at the moment to formulate a regulation for the salary of the teachers of these schools.