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A fourth of secondary schools under-performing

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A FOURTH of about 18.5 thousand secondary schools are performing either poorly or not at all, education officials said.

A yet-to-be-published report of a survey carried out on 18,470 out of the total 18,582 government and non-government secondary schools, according to the officials, shows that 4,210 institutions were either poorly performing or not performing at all.

Educationalists and experts, however, blamed mismanagement and political interference in student enrolment and teacher recruitment for this poor performance.

They said that schools were being set up for political gains and not considering whether schools needed to be set up in places.

As for reasons for the poor performance of the schools, economist Wahiduddin Mahmud said, 'Mismanagement and political interference in the establishment and management of the schools are the main reasons.'

He said that some recent surveys had showed that the management and supervision were better in the case of primary schools than in secondary schools.

Former caretaker government adviser Rasheda K Chowdhury said, 'Some politicians have taken renowned non-government schools as tools to make money. They take money for student admission and teacher recruitment.'

She added, 'Unfortunately, teachers have a role in making schools famous but politicians play a role to ruin the institutions.'

The evaluation report, Performance-Based Institutional Self-Assessment Summary 2012, says that it has surveyed all the 317 government schools and 38 of them are performing poorly.

Mazharul Hannan, a leader of non-government teachers' association, who has retired after teaching for 40 years, said, 'We have all along been fighting for the establishment of educational institutions based on needs but failed. Non-government schools, madrasahs and colleges are being set up on political considerations for money-making.'

He said that there were some schools that have neither the required number of students and nor teachers but the government was giving salary to the teaching and non-teaching staff. 'Such redundant institutions should be closed.'

Manzil A Millat, a leader of a schoolteachers' association, said, 'Teachers are recruited on political considerations and not based on

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A fourth of secondary schools

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their efficiency in and ability at teaching.'

The school performance survey was carried out under the Tk 800-crore Secondary Education Sector Development Project the government launched with Asian Development Bank loans.

The project is primarily aimed at reducing poverty by improving secondary education to match labour market.

The data were collected in between January and August with Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education officials in the field.

Md Noman Ur Rashid, director general of the secondary and higher education directorate, told New Age that the report would be made public soon.

He said that poor-performing and non-performing schools would be asked to improve the situation.

The report has placed 717 schools in the top-performing category, 6,402 in well-performing category, 7,140 in moderately-performing category, 3,941 in poorly-performing category and 269 in non-performing category.

The categories are based on seven criteria — teaching-learning environment, leadership of institution heads, management committee effectiveness, teachers' professionalism, student performance, co-curricular activities and guardian-teacher relationships.

Golam Mostafa, acting headteacher of Kalshi Adarsha High School at Mirpur in the capital, which has been ranked in the non-performing category for the second time after the evaluation was introduced in 2011, said, 'There is no regular headteacher in my school and the performance of students are not satisfactory.'

He added that the school could not have a regular headteacher because of political interference.