

# Science edn on the decline

*HSC-SSC science examinees drop, schools lack labs*

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THE number of students studying science in the Secondary School Certificate and Higher Secondary Certificate examinations has been on the decline over the last decade.

BANBIES and inter-education board subcommittee estimate that from 2004 to 2015 the number of HSC science students dropped from 25 per cent to 17 per cent, while the corresponding figure for SSC is 34 per cent to 28 per cent.

Educationists and officials attribute the decline to the absence of laboratories, qualified teachers, parental attitudes and educational costs.

BANBIES estimate 40 per cent of secondary schools and 27 per cent of colleges in the country do not have laboratories.

Bangladesh Freedom Foundation in 2011 found that 65 per cent secondary school students said their schools had no separate laboratories while 58 per cent said their labs did not

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have necessary equipment, during a study. The National Curriculum and Textbook Board in 2011 found 55 per cent secondary students and 73 per cent higher secondary students complaining of absence of necessary equipment in their school labs.

'This is not a good sign,' said Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology vice chancellor Khaleda Ekram.

'Science education is expensive,' said BUET's Computer Science and Engineer-

ing professor M Kaykobad, 'it requires well-equipped labs, trained demonstrators, practical classes and latest journals. This could be a reason for the reduction in the number of students.'

Educationists further said nowadays parents encourage their children to study business studies. Students opt for BBA because of better job prospects. Meanwhile, poor families in rural areas find the study of science expensive.

'We do not have good science teachers, so the number of students reading science

is declining,' said Kaykobad, 'as a result, we do not have enough scientific intellect and IT professionals, forcing us to lag far behind many scientific knowledge-based societies.'

The education minister Nurul Islam Nahid said that government is already taken some steps to encourage science education in the country.

The Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education is working on a project to set up science labs at about 2,000 district and upazila level schools to encourage science education.

DSHE director planning Mohammad Jahangir Hosain said six schools from each upazila of 29 districts, four schools from each upazila of 29 districts and three schools from each upazila of six districts would get modern science labs.

Schools that are situated in 6 kilometer radius of upazila headquarters, those that have had 70 per cent pass rate in science in SSC exams in the last three years, and have at least 300 students with 15 of them in science, would be given these science labs.