

Reforms delivering significant results in education sector

Reforms being carried out in the education sector has started delivering good results, gradually retrieving the country's one of the most vital arenas, from the augean stables left by the past governments, reports BSS.

As the present caretaker government has started implementing effective steps to ensure peaceful atmosphere in the education sector, a ray of hope is now being sighted in this field dubbed until last year as a den of irregularities and indiscipline due to politicization, coterie system and widespread corruption done by the past governments.

An official handout said here today that the past governments hindered the process of standard education through various irregularities including distortion of history in the Ministry of Education, which topped the list of worst corrupt institutions in the TIB report in 2005.

It said the main hindrances in the way of establishing good governance were favoritism, corruption, lobbying in the process of posting and promotion, illegal influence, lack of transparency and interference in the normal working process.

Under the present caretaker government, it added, the ministry has been emphasizing on quality, merit and efficiency in recruitment and promotion to ensure good governance.

Giving an example in this regard, the handout said a total of 16 employees were recruited in the revenue sector in September last after fulfilling all formalities including written examination and viva voce in a complete transparent way.

"In the past, we saw negative reports in newspapers about different organs including the

Now the right persons are being posted in the important positions through proper evaluation of information and data about them to uphold transparency and accountability in this field.

Chairman of National Curriculum and Text Book Board, Director General of Secondary and Higher Secondary Directorate, Chairman of Bangladesh Technical Education Board, Chairman of Jessore Secondary and Higher Secondary Education Board and Principal of Eden College were appointed by following this process, which will also continue in future.

As part of the process of reform, the present government has undertaken effective steps to restore disciplined environment also in the secondary and higher secondary education system.

Besides, the government has given due importance on raising

oriented policies, under which the posts of chairman and members of managing committees of schools and colleges have been banned for political figures.

"Besides, the government has announced and order to relax 30 percent quota for the women in the non-government institutions," it said adding, the 12-month B Ed training course has been divided into nine-month and three-month courses to raise standard of education in the secondary level.

The government has ensured the provision for monthly additional allowance of Taka 350 for each teacher, completing the three-month training course. Non-government (English medium) schools registration rule-2007 has also been formulated to ensure discipline and good governance, the handout said.

To ensure proper and planned examination at the national level, the government has decided to hold SSC and HSC examinations on February 1 and April 1 respectively with their results out on May 10 and July 10 every year from 2010.

"Specific guidelines were already given to select centres, appoint examiners and giving numbers in practical examination at the HSC level from 2007," the handout said. The last year's SSC, Dhakhil, SSC(voc), HSC, Alim, Fazil, Kamil, HSC(Business Management) and HSC(voc) examinations were held in a copying-free environment and their results were out within the quickest possible time.

The government has also taken actions including cancellation of MPOs against the institutions, which scored zero-result in these examinations, and the teachers-employees who collaborated in adopting unfair means in examinations.

The teachers' registration examinations were held smoothly under the NTRCA laws and rules, formulated to ensure appointment of teachers of desired standard in private schools and uni-

versities. Results of those examinations were published quickly under the OMR system.

One of the major reforms carried out by the Education Ministry last one year was incorporation of the true history of the War of Liberation in the textbooks of the primary and secondary levels.

Bangla books of class one, class three and class five, and social science books of class three, class four and class five under the National Curriculum and Textbook Board have been amended. In the same way, at the secondary level, Bangla books from classes six to nine, social science books of classes eight and nine, and civics and history books of class nine have been amended.

Besides, a total of 3.13 crore books have been printed for the primary level, 1.86 crore for ebteyee level and 1.73 crore for secondary level this year. Measures have been taken for the first time this year to reach books to the students in the beginning of the year.

A full-fledged database has been prepared by updating personal data-sheets of all officials of BCS (Education). At the same time, institution-based databases have been made for 291 government colleges /training institutes/commercial institutes and alia madrasas. Besides, a draft policy for transfer and promotion has been formulated, the handout said.

Setting up of private universities added an important chapter in the field of higher education but mushroom growth of such institutions with commercial attitude has created an anarchic and disorderly situation in the education arena. The present government has been able to halt this anarchic situation.

According to the handout, 'search committee' has been formed with eminent academics to bring accountability in the appointment of vice-chancellors, pro-vice-chancellors and treasurers of public universities. Initia-

tives have been taken to enact 'Private University Ordinance, 2007' to bring discipline in such institutions.

However, names of 56 illegal institutions of higher education were published to make the people aware of those. Laws relating to constitution of Accreditation Council, 2007 for private universities have been included in clause 30 of the Private University Ordinance 2007. Islamic University (Amendment) Act, 2007 has been sent to the Cabinet Division for the final approval of the council of advisers.

The University Grants Commission (UGC) is playing the main role in issuing guidance for the universities. But the UGC could not play its role in promoting higher education in the past due to appointment of party men, nepotism, corruption and irregularities.

The government has reconstituted the UGC by appointing efficient and non-partisan academics, now making various efforts to ensure quality in higher education, the handout said.

As the cyclone Sidr badly damaged more than 1500 educational institutions in 12 coastal districts, the government allocated Taka 45 crore on an urgent basis for their rebuilding and repair. Besides, monitoring has been strengthened to resumes classes in these institutions.

Besides, the government waived fees of SSC and HSC examinees in these 12 affected side by side with providing momentary help to the students to buy books as they had lost their houses during the Sidr attacks.

"This step was appreciated by all," the handout said adding, such trend of reforms in the education sector must continue for further development in this sector during the current century.