

# Qualified teacher shortage plagues primary education

Mohiuddin Alamgir

SHORTAGE of qualified teachers was on Wednesday identified as a major barrier obstructing quality education at primary schools. The debilitating problem was identified by parents, teachers and field level education officials at four brainstorming sessions provided by the National Conference on Primary Education Quality in the capital.

At Wednesday's brain

storming session participants expressed concern over teacher student ratio, unattractive class room teaching, shabby and dilapidated school buildings, shortage of tables and benches for students as serious problems facing primary schools across the country.

They underlined the need to reduce the teacher-student ratio to 1:30 by recruiting teachers.

They also emphasized that class room teaching

should be based on lessons of life rather than cramming.

The daylong conference was hosted by the primary and mass education ministry. Failure to recruit over the years caused 60,000 vacancies in primary school teachers nation wide highlights the gravity of the problem, according to available data.

Primary Education Directorate officials said about 27 per cent of the teachers in government run primary schools were yet to attend

year long course called Certificate in Education, in short C-in-Ed and out of 3,22,500 primary school teachers around 9,750 attended their 18-month Diploma in Primary Education, better known as DPED.

As a result 63, 500 government run primary schools are facing an acute crisis, said teachers.

Approximately, 60, 000 government run primary schools have no head

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teachers and assistant teachers for years, said DPE officials.

As DPED was introduced in 2015, the number of teachers who attended it is low, said DPE director general Md Alamgir.

Primary and Mass Education Minister Mostafizur Rahman called it unfortunate that quality of education provided at primary schools was far from the standard.

He said that class room teaching with total dedication and proper monitoring by officials could improve the standard of primary education.

He said that recruitment of 18,000 primary school teachers was underway.

He said that another 18,000 primary school teachers would be recruited soon.

The conference adopted a declaration which identified dedicated, qualified and skilled teachers as the precondition for ensuring quality education at primary schools.

Teachers and field level education officials said attendance in DP Ed and C-in-Ed should be pre conditions for getting primary school teachers jobs.

Teachers demanded immediate recruitments teachers to fill vacancies for which one teacher has to teach over 30 students in a class room.

They demanded that primary school teachers should be freed from the undesirable burden of information collection for the government including during censuses, election and at least 12 other duties so that they could pay uninterrupted attention to classroom teaching.

Parents demanded strict monitoring by the government to discourage private tuition and coaching by teachers.

Students demanded libraries, laboratories and multimedia facilities at primary schools.

They also demanded needed number of tables and benches and pointed out that

their shortage forces three students were compelled to share benches meant for two.

Manisha Roy, student from Sylhet said that primary schools should be neat and clean and provide free and fair academic atmosphere where the learners should be able to ask questions to teachers without fears to widen their knowledge.

She said that the current stress on cramming should go.

The conference declaration called for decentralization of education management, freeing school managing committees from politicization, introduction of Primary Education Cadre, resolving infrastructural problems, stopping primary schools teacher shortage and increasing teachers training facilities.

Primary and mass education ministry additional secretary Gias Uddin Ahmed assured that C in Edu and DPED would be made pre conditions for primary school teaching jobs.