

// Govt needs to shore up teacher recruitment

THE poor teacher shortage that is harming education in government colleges, as New Age reported on Tuesday, is disconcerting and what is doubly disconcerting is that the shortage of teachers is more acute in colleges in district towns and rural areas than it is in colleges in the capital and divisional headquarters. While the teacher shortage adds to an increasing teacher-student ratio in the government colleges — now standing at 1:145, which is deplorable in comparison with the national standard of one teacher for every 30 students — the shortage being more acute in district towns and rural areas also continues to add to the disparity in terms of the quality of education across the rural-urban divide. Even in primary schools, there is one teacher for every 40 students. As for instance, as the New Age report said, the teacher-student ratio in Beanibazar Government College stands at as high as 1:260. Such an acute shortage of teachers, which is primarily blamed on the lengthy recruitment procedure, especially taking place in the past four years, have run to a pass that now 3,475 teaching positions have fallen vacant in government colleges — there are 329 government colleges in the country — which provide higher secondary and tertiary education for 18.4 lakh students.

In such a grave situation, classroom teaching, especially in rural areas and district towns, have not been up to the mark, with the students, mostly pursuing courses for bachelor and master's degrees, being the worst sufferers and the teachers not being able to put in their best efforts in education. There are many colleges where teachers fail to complete the syllabus because of teacher shortage. It is true that there are excess teachers in some of the government colleges in the capital. But this is also true that there are many colleges where classes cannot be taken in the absence of teachers. One such college is Swarupkathi Government College where classes in the mathematics and zoology could not be held for three years as the departments have no teachers. Out of the 329 government colleges, principals of 212 colleges, mostly in rural areas, have informed higher authorities of the shortage of teachers plaguing education in their institutions. The education minister has also admitted to the shortage of teachers hampering education in government colleges across the country. In such a situation, it is imperative for the government to expedite the teacher recruitment process to the benefits of the students, and national education, and work out a plan so that such acute shortage never take place in the future.

The director general of secondary and higher education is reported to have said that the recruitment of about 1,000 teachers, by way of the 34th BCS examinations, was under way. But the situation that has arisen requires an early recruitment of more teachers to resolve the problem. Under the circumstances, the government is well advised to move in this direction even if it needs to hold special BCS intake for the recruitment of teachers in government colleges.