

# Thoughts On Primary Education

-Md. Akhtar Hossain Mondal

**E**ducation is the backbone of a nation. But this backbone will remain ever crippled unless the basic or primary education is imparted by expert teachers with sincerity and endeavour in conformity with the needs and requirements of the nation. No nation can ever make its room in the civilized world nor can ensure prosperity without development in the field of education. It is education that enlightens the mentality of a man and develops his mental faculties. Educated population contributes more towards growth and development. There is no gain-saying the fact that primary education is the foundation of our education leading to the gateway of higher course of studies.

The system of our education suffers a lot of deep-rooted setbacks resulting from prolonged colonial administration for ages. Since the implementation of Lord Mackale's education policy to create clerks in this subcontinent, there has been no fundamental change of the system to impart mass oriented education in conformity with the changing needs and conditions of the nation. The prevailing problems are manifold and deterrent to our educational development and growth. These problems require quick solution to accelerate the pace of development activities in order to ensure overall national prosperity. The existing system of education should be restructured and reoriented in view of the national needs and circumstances.

Apart from the defects and setbacks resulting from long colonial rule, there are some obvious reasons for low standard as well as backwardness of our primary education. The problem of school accommodation is an acute one. In rural areas similar problems including inadequacy of fences sheds, benches, chairs and tables are also prevalent. In case the houses are blown up or damaged by storm, they are kept in the dilapidated condition for months together instead of taking immediate steps for repair, reconstruction or re-erection. As a result, teaching is badly hampered in these institutes which may constitute more than half of total primary educational centres.

Constant drop-out in large numbers is another acute problem which brings a great fall in the number of students expected to read in primary schools every year. Caning is one of the causes that accounts for drop out and it has certain adverse effect on mental or psychological growth of children. Scare of caning makes them play truant and remain absent from school for days together. Later their truancy or absence is backed by some other causes of which child labour is one. In rural areas many of the school going children are made by the guardians not to attend school but to engage themselves in the supporting activities in farming or in the vocations of their own. We cannot deny the fact that their work jeopardizes their growth and potentialities ultimately resulting in discouragement from the pursuit of studies. Besides,

most of those who drop out are financially so hard up or so poverty stricken that they find it more lucrative to strive for earning something to keep body and soul together than read which brings nothing in cash or kind or no instantaneous benefit at the end of the day. Compulsory primary education may be a direct step towards removal of this problem confronting our education at its rudimentary stage. In addition, compulsory system will remove illiteracy by ensuring basic education at desired level covering three R's. The present crash literacy programme is laudable and deserves continuation as the success of this campaign will save the nation from the curse of illiteracy and add to our national prestige in international forums.

It is admitted that implementation of compulsory primary education policy is difficult. Moreover, this will aggravate the persisting problems of accommodation, staff and other necessary teaching materials. So trained teaching personnel, school houses and other essential materials should be comprehensively increased in order to meet the requirements at a reasonable rate.

Sincerity and devotion to duty is a precondition for the performance of any job in the best possible manner. Teachers should be aware of the fact that mutual cooperation of teachers and guardians is an important factor to strengthen and improve our standard of education. The guardians should spontaneously come forward with their hands of cooperation which can draw up a line

of solution to the problem of truancy. Irregularity of the children in attending schools and in preparing their lessons and so on. Personnel lacking in qualities required, for imparting standard or qualitative teaching should not be assigned to perform this sacred duty.

For this, not only their appointment on selective basis is a necessary term but also their job should be made much more dignified with more emoluments and fringe benefits. In this context it deserves mention that transfer of teachers may help improve teaching as it will in no case allow a teacher to render his service to a school of his locality where he has to maintain social relation in many cases with an involvement in village politics.

It is observed that in most of the primary institutes the undeserving and unsuccessful students are promoted to the next higher classes irrespective of their performance in the annual examination. This sort of undue opportunity leads them to becoming less interested in studies with their failure in keeping pace with the standard of the next higher class they tend to adopt unfair means to gain school marks or for passing the examination without attaining the desired standard of knowledge. Abolition of such a system of promotion at primary levels will go a long way in achieving optimum standard of education. Needless to say that we need qualitative method of teaching. No quantitative method can improve our overall standard confronted with problems constantly telling upon its foundation.