

15pc budget allocation for edn sector demanded

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Educationists, researchers and education rights activists on Monday demanded minimum 15 per cent budgetary allocation for the education sector and 3 per cent share of the sector in the gross domestic product in the 2025-2026 financial year.

They also urged the government to develop a road map for increasing the budgetary allocation for the sector gradually to 20 per cent by 2030 for improving the quality of education.

They also sought adequate budget for teachers' training, increased salaries and benefits for teachers, increased amount of stipend and expanding mid-day meal for students, budgetary provision for dropout students and imposing an education levy.

At a pre-budget press conference, they also alleged that no discussion was held on reform of education during the period of the interim government that took office on August 8, 2024, and like before the education sector affairs were being carried out in a fragmented and isolated manner.

The Campaign for Popular Education organised the press conference in association with the Education Out Loud and the Global Partnership for Education at the CIRDAP auditorium in the capital Dhaka.

While presenting a paper titled 'Towards an Equitable Bangladesh: Education Budget - Our Proposal', CAMPE deputy director Mostafizur Rahman, quoting a newspaper report, said that in the FY 1973-1974 approximately 20.4 per cent of the total budget was allocated for education.

'Post-1975, the percentage of allocation for the education sector began to decline,' he said, adding that in recent years, while the total allocation for the sector increased, the percentage relative to the total budget and GDP saw decline and sometimes fluctuations.

The paper said that the allocation for education was 11.88 per cent of the total budget in FY25, 11.57 per cent in FY24, 12.01 per cent in FY23, 11.58 per cent in FY22, 11.69 per cent in FY21, 11.68 per cent in FY20, 11.41 per cent in FY19, 12.59 per cent in FY18 and 14.38 per cent in FY17.

The share of education in GDP was 1.69 per cent in FY25, 1.76 per cent in FY24, 1.83 per cent in FY23, 2.01 per cent in FY22, 2.09 per cent in FY21, 2.11 per cent in FY20, 2.09 per cent in FY19, 2.26 per cent in FY18 and 2.49 per cent in FY17.

As per a UNESCO Report in 2022, Bangladesh's average education expenditure as a percentage of GDP was the fifth-lowest among 41 least developed countries, Mostafizur added.

CAMPE executive director Rasheda K Choudhury said that education was not on the priority list of the policymakers or others.

Urging the government to keep education on the priority list, she also said that the government should allocate budget for education as a single sector instead of adding other ministries like science and technology to the sector for the allocation.

BRAC University professor emeritus Manzoor Ahmed said that huge discrimination was the main characteristic of the education sector in Bangladesh, in which only the privileged people got quality education.

Mentioning that the July mass uprising was against discrimination, he said that education was a carrier of discrimination and still it was using in that way.

'There are discussions on many reforms, but no commission was formed for education reform,' he said, adding, 'like before the sector's affairs are still being carried out in a fragmented and isolated manner.'

Centre for Policy Dialogue research director Khondaker Golam Moazzem said that the education ministry could not spend its entire budget allocation, which was a problem.

As per a CPD research, the education ministry could not spend 22 per cent of the budget announced in 2022, he said.

He also urged the government to allocate Tk 3,000 crore for the non-government organisations in the next budget for allowing these to continue their social activities specially their education-related programmes.