

Half of govt pry schools across Bangladesh without head teachers

Shahin Akhter  15 July, 2025, 13:21



Professor Muhammad Yunus attend a meeting on Monday. | Press Release photo

Almost half of the government primary schools across the country are running without the head teachers, causing grave concern among academicians and researchers who fear that the situation is harming both the academic environment and overall management of these institutions.

The absence of head teachers in these schools is causing learning losses and transfer of students to other educational institutions, including madrassahs, they have said. It has led to the deterioration of the quality of primary education and stalling of different plans, they observe.



To solve the crisis, chief adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus has ordered immediate appointments to the vacant positions in these schools.

At a meeting held on Monday afternoon, he also asked for giving special emphasis on the required skills of the candidates in selecting the new head teachers, said a press release issued by the chief adviser's press wing on Tuesday.

Having mentioned some criteria, including years' of experience for the appointments, the chief adviser said that young candidates should also be considered.

Professor Yunus also gave directive to complete the appointment procedure in coordination with Bangladesh Public Service Commission.

Primary and mass education adviser Professor Bidhan Ranjan Roy Podder informed the Monday meeting that at present the posts of the head teachers were vacant in 32,000 government primary schools.

As per the 2023 Annual Primary School Census, there are 65,567 government primary schools which means 48.8 per cent or around half of these schools are running without any head teachers.

Professor Mohammad Ali Zinnah at Dhaka University's Institute of Education and Research said that the role of the head teachers was crucial in imparting primary education which was the foundation of education.

'A family loses its order without a guardian, so does a primary school when it does not have a head teacher. All the tasks of teaching, planning and improving the quality of education become extremely difficult for that school,' he said.

Professor Zinnah said that for long the positions of the head teachers remained vacant, while many schools were struggling amid a serious shortage of other teaching staff.

‘Without a head teacher, every activity in a school suffers—from academic to co-curricular activities, monitoring and coordination activities ensuring physical, mental and intellectual development of the students,’ he said.

Eventually, he continued, a primary school’s academic and other development-based activities stall causing the students to leave.

Many students were transferring to madrassahs from primary schools nowadays, the professor mentioned.

Mostafizur Rahaman, deputy director (research and advocacy) of Campaign for Popular Education, CAMPE in short, an advocacy and campaign coalition in Bangladesh, said that with an acting official a school could not be run for long.

When an assistant teacher is tasked with a head teacher’s responsibilities as their acting duty, they cannot properly carry out their academic and other responsibilities, he says, adding that it causes learning loss.

‘It directly impacts the overall school environment and learning process,’ he said.

Not having head teachers also affects the school management, including implementation of government orders, DU Professor Zinnah points out, saying that it is because head teachers act as member secretaries of the managing and governing bodies of their schools.

‘When it requires taking decisions, whether individually or jointly, or in executing office orders, the absence of head teachers causes serious problem,’ he added.

CAMPE researcher Mostafizur said that skills of head teachers in government primary schools had always been a concern.

‘A specific bachelor’s degree course with honours on the subject should be introduced only for all aspirant teachers,’ he said, remarking that producing so many teachers by the DU Institute of Education and Research alone was not possible.

In the short run, he continued, leadership training for the head teachers after recruitment and before posting was crucial.

At the Monday meeting Professor Yunus gave further directive to bring change in the teacher's transfer guidelines with a clear procedure for transfer.

He also said that at least one female architect should be in the committee while constructing a school building for building women-friendly infrastructure.

'Regarding constructing school buildings, relevant committees should have at least one woman architect so that the infrastructure becomes women-friendly. Specific emphasis has to be given on generating ideas and plans and their implementation as well in terms of ensuring facilities for women —keeping all facilities for them,' the chief adviser said. He also stressed ensuring internet connection and gradually building multimedia classrooms in all primary schools.

Primary and mass education ministry adviser Bidhan Chandra said that the main aim of improving the quality of education was not achieved despite huge spending in infrastructure development in the primary education sector.

He also said that assessment found that head teachers' skills played a critical role in imparting quality education and maintaining a sound relationship between the head teachers and colleagues.

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