

# School facilities in decline harm learning and equity

School supplies



EDUCATIONAL institutions should have increased facilities as they directly impact academic performance, well-being, attendance and the overall development of students. An increase in facilities in such institutions also helps to promote inclusivity and ensure a safe and healthy learning environment. Yet, facilities in educational institutions, especially the ones offering education from secondary to master's level, declined in 2024 compared with what they were in 2023. The Bangladesh Education Statistics 2024 shows that facilities such as the use of computers, science and digital laboratories, multimedia facilities, ramps, development plans, shaheed minars that stand in memory of the language movement of 1952, separate toilets for boys and girls and the use of solar panels to provide power supply have declined in a year. The 2024 report says that the number of secondary schools with multimedia facilities declined to 14,342 in 2024 from 15,024 in 2023. The number of colleges with multimedia facilities declined to 3,906 in 2024 from 3,978 in 2023. The number of madrassahs, excluding qawmi madrassahs that are not registered with the government, having computers dropped to 6,172 in 2024 from 7,797 in 2023.

Whilst essential facilities have declined in the institutions, the number of secondary schools with shaheed minar has declined to 65.33 per cent in 2024 from 66.07 per cent in 2023, the number of

colleges with shaheed minar to 67.51 per cent from 67.52 per cent and the number of such madrassahs to 17.37 per cent from 19.86 per cent. The statistics, which somewhat beat the logic, call out the government on establishing whether the monuments have collapsed on their own and not been erected again, whether they have been pulled down or whether new institutions have been founded without shaheed minar. Students in institutions with inadequate or decreased facilities often perform worse than their peers in well-equipped institutions. A non-conducive learning environment resulting from decreased facilities may lead to a lack of engagement of students in learning activities. A decrease in facilities such as toilets can directly impact student health and safety. Inadequate facilities that cause poor learning experiences can add to dropout rates. The quality of education that institutions plagued with inadequacy offer may suffer, leading to students who might fail to meet educational expectations. Education is not all about academics. It is beyond academics, involving other issues that are crucial for the well-rounded development of students. A decrease in facilities may also widen disparities between well-funded and under-resourced institutions and an increase in amenities in all institutions helps to ensure that students from diverse socio-economic backgrounds are supported.