

Books In Bangla

When a delegation of students and teachers from Sir A.F. Rahman Hall of Dhaka University met Lt. Gen. H.M. Ershad, Chief Martial Law Administrator, on Thursday, they drew the attention of the CMLA to, among other things, the prevailing dearth of text-books in Bangla for higher studies. The CMLA hoped that scholars would come forward to write such books and that their publication would not be a problem. This reflects his concern for the advancement of knowledge and his love for the language we speak. Those who are faced with the problem that inadequacy of text-books in Bangla at higher levels of education poses would appreciate this concern, and so would others who would like to see Bangla truly elevated to the position it deserves.

The fact, however, remains—and it is a sad fact—that in spite of all our commitment to Bangla, our mother-tongue, and in spite of the sacrifices made for the language, Bangla still remains largely neglected in many a sphere, including higher education. Whether or not it is possible to impart higher education in Bangla is a question that has been settled long ago and need not be reopened. Text-books have been written in Bangla for students going to universities, both in the field of science and in other fields, and some of these have proved to be truly valuable. Since this is so, the only question that now remains to be asked is whether or not adequate efforts have been made to use this language in the way in which it should have been to provide text-books to students attending universities and other institutions of higher learning.

The government recently appointed a committee to examine the extent to which Bangla has actually been used as the medium of instruction at higher levels of education and to identify problems, if any, that stand in the way of wider use of the language.

acted upon without any loss of time.

The minimum number of basic text-books in Bangla required for pursuit of higher studies is believed to be around twelve hundred. The Bangla Academy has produced some, but the number of text-books published by the Academy so far is far less than the number required. The universities are not known to have taken much of an initiative in this field. The publishers in the private sector are shy, and would probably continue to be so, since the publication industry seems, in general, to be slack and since publication of text-books is an expensive affair. If a study is undertaken to examine how many of the text-books so far published in Bangla have actually been prescribed as texts in the universities and other institutions of higher learning, the findings may prove to be rather interesting. There is, after all, no point in having text-books written and published in Bangla if these are not made use of.

Two things must be ensured. First, there must be a regular flow of text-books written in Bangla and these should be made available to the students in time. Producing a thousand or so text-books over a period of, say, three years should not be difficult if things are well planned and the plan efficiently executed. Secondly, the books to be produced first should be the basic texts, and their quality should be guaranteed. This can be done either by translating standard texts from other languages or, better still, by producing original texts, reflecting, wherever possible, the situation prevailing in Bangladesh.

It may be worthwhile to consider if the responsibility can be given to a single agency. This can be ensured in two ways. Either a new organization may be set up or the task may be given to an existing organization. Creating a new organization may be expensive. Since the development

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