

Note-book tangle

Times Report

The Bangladesh Book Publishers and Sellers Association has recently urged the government to repeal the law that prohibits the publication and sale of note books upto Class VIII.

The Association observed that the banning of note books upto Class VIII was obstructing the expansion of education and had created a big problem for the wards of poor guardians who cannot afford the services of private tutors.

The publishers and book sellers also noted that because of the existence of the law some unscrupulous businessmen were making easy money by selling illegal note books in the black market. Such note books, printed in the darkness of night, were full mistakes and only helping to misguide the pupils. The standard of education at the level was thus getting deteriorated.

The law banning the publication and sale of note books upto Class VIII was passed by the second parliament on March 23, 1980. The objective of the law was to make learners go through the texts for having broader knowledge, instead of just passing examinations by memorising answers of questions from note books. Before the passage of the law, there were also some instances of sellers not selling a text book if a buyer did not buy the note book along with it. It was also found that the note books often appeared to be higher in price compared to those of the text books.

The demand of the association, formulated at its annual

general meeting on October 19 is, of course, based on some hard realities. It is an open secret that despite the existence of the law, it has never been possible over the past seven years to eliminate note books for primary and lower secondary students from the markets. Note books for these levels has been available in the black market, at exorbitant prices though. The fact that such books are sold at exorbitant prices suggest the existence of demand for those

Most guardians of students enrolled in primary and lower secondary levels are illiterate themselves and cannot guide their wards to follow the books

The prevailing higher teacher-student ratio at these levels, and the alleged tendency of most teachers to concentrate on private tuition is making learning all the more difficult for wards of illiterate and poor guardians.

Before the passage of the law banning note books, there at least existed a measure of competition among the leading publishing houses to bring out quality note books for achieving better sales and profits. The publishers thus checked against printing of mistakes in the note books thus in a way helping those students who would get guidance neither from their guardians nor from

their school teachers.

The Book Publishers and Sellers Association in their meeting also decided to observe taken abstention from work to draw the attention of the government and the members of parliament to the problem.

The note books issue definitely deserves attention of the authorities concerned, because the law banning such books upto Class VIII can never prove to be equally good for all times to come. One can only hope that the authorities give adequate thought to the intention of framing of the 1980-law and that any new measure takes care of those good intentions.