

17

The Bangladesh Times

HSC RESULTS

The results of this year's Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) examination of the four Boards of Intermediate and Secondary Education are obvious indicators of the state of education in the country and must have put on the alert those concerned with the future of the nation. The results brought joy to a few families for good performance of their wards but gave enough cause for dismay to the society. Imagine the shock wave that ran through the families of about a quarter of a million unsuccessful candidates who constituted more than three quarters of the total number that took the examination.

The percentage of unsuccessful candidates has jumped from 55 in 1988 to 75.16 this year. The drop in the success rate is attributed mainly to stricter measures against copying in the examinations. Though the situation prevailing in the educational arena and the concern of the authorities are well-known, there appears to be no reason to believe we are anywhere near the right answer to the challenge.

The efforts for finding out the causes for adoption of unfair means in examinations and removing them should on the one hand be intensified; on the other copying should be made more difficult and anything other than rewarding. One of the main reasons for which candidates resort to copying is poor preparation and teachers are largely responsible for that. Besides teachers' competence, there is the question of devotion. Like hospital doctors who give more attention to private practice and other professionals who busy themselves with consultancy at the cost of their main jobs, many teachers show strong preference for private coaching. As a result, classroom teaching is badly affected. The problem needs to be tackled on an urgent basis in the larger interest of education in the country.

That is not all. Serious thoughts should also be given to the system of examination. We may not be able to achieve much, except inflating the number of failures, by stricter vigilance in the examination halls. We have to think of other measures too. There are four Boards holding the examinations simultaneously. They may coordinate measures for preparation of question papers, holding examinations and tabulation. That may help prevent adoption of unfair means.

The number of questions in each paper may also be increased substantially and scores counted on the basis of the largest number of correct answers. This would reduce chances of the examinees mutually trying to help each other. The papers may also be so set that books and notes may be of no avail to one who has no grasp of the subject.

The pressure on institutions of higher learning would understandably be much less this year. Nevertheless the procedure for admission should be simplified so that candidates may not have to run unnecessarily from one institution to another with sets of testimonials, marksheets and photographs. Indeed admission to institutions of higher learning should be guided by a well-defined national policy.