

Admission ordeal

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Irregularities and uncertainties have become virtually a general rule in almost all the fields of education. But there is regularity at least about one thing and certainty as well, at least about one matter. The academic session at the school level begins regularly in January every year. And there is an unfailing certainty that there would be seat-crisis in the city schools, particularly the good ones.

While the regular beginning of the academic session is a welcome feature every one would like to continue forever, one would hope with equal fervour that the increasingly acute seat-crisis in city schools is overcome as soon as possible.

The annual admission ordeal in the 380 primary schools and 194 high schools of the capital for this year began late last week. Among the primary schools, 324 are government and 56 private; and among the high schools, 170 are private and 24 government. According to a decision of the Directorate of Education, admission test for the entry classes at I and V were held on Friday and Saturday respectively. Government schools, for other classes, and the private schools have set dates for admission tests at their own convenience.

More than usual rush for admission in the reputed city schools has been observed this year. The Holy Cross School released 5000 application forms against 100 seats. As many as 1734 candidates sat for admission tests for 205 seats in the Ideal School on Saturday. The Vikarunnessa Girls' School received 1800 application forms against 300 seats in Class I. In some schools, no seat was vacant in any class or in some classes. For example, in the Qamrunnessa Girls' High School, seats were available only in Class IV, VIII and IX.

The schools charged Taka 30 to Taka 60 for each application form or admission test. How fair is this practice is a question open to debate. The amount charged is apparently too high.

Some schools also realise 'donation' from the guardians of the students allowed to take admission. It is alleged that in many cases, not the merit of the candidates but the strength of the 'donation' decides the issue of admission. Does it not tantamount to extortion?

The pressure of admission has led to another malpractice. One would find makeshift bill-boards in front of many schools advertising 'admission-made-easy', even for class I.

The seat-crisis in the regular schools has also encouraged the business in kindergartens, 'pre-cadets' and 'playgroups' in the city.

It is, however, noted that there would have been no such serious crisis of seats if all the schools were uniform in standard of education or facilities offered. So what is required is to raise the standard of education of the bad institutions as priority number one and also to establish new schools, both government and private, ensuring good teaching standard.