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Admission into schools

The right to education is one of the basic rights of citizens: it is the obligation of the state to arrange for proper education to its people. The government is soon going to introduce a centrally computerised system of admission into government schools. The idea is to take admission strictly according to merit but it is fraught with certain risk as is correctly pointed out in your second editorial dated December 3, 1989: "A centralised examination would entail a far greater problem of secrecy with regard to question papers at a time when the authorities are hard put to it to prevent leakage of S.S.C. and H.S.C. question papers."

Admission to schools, especially in Dhaka, has become a nightmare of the guardians. Admission Tests have practically turned into Elimination Tests! The school will admit the pupils, and the teachers would work hard to prepare them as good students; this was once the system; and now you have to be very brilliant to qualify for admission into schools. The reason, prima facie, is that the schools are vastly outnumbered by the students seeking admission. In the private schools, admissions are done on acceptance of grants. The private schools' state grants should, therefore, be reduced to the extent the "donations" are accepted. Every year the Government Audit Team should examine this "Donation Fund" of the schools to be satisfied that the donations are wholly, necessarily and exclusively utilised for the purpose of development of the school. This alone can justify this acceptance of donation while admitting students.

The British set up Zilla Schools in every district and these were the model of a school in the district. In the newly created Zillas, similar Zilla Schools, one for

boys and another for girls, ought to be set up. Other private schools will follow the pattern of these schools. Before the abolition of Zamindari system the landlords used to contribute lavishly to the schools and colleges. A very large number of our old schools and colleges would bear testimony to this fact. Education now seems to be confined in Dhaka. In the outlying parts of the country, the schools and colleges are not really going well. Boys schooled in mofussil areas of the days gone by have travelled up to Oxford, Cambridge, Harvard Universities and have earned laurels. Can a school boy now

of far-flung areas of Bangladesh be up to that mark? He is out of the current of a higher and contributory life. People are rushing to Dhaka not only to ply rickshaws but also to get education. When shall we have such schooling as the poor parents would not require engaging private tutors? Easy admission to schools and no need of private tutors are indeed the way to disseminate education to our people.

In 1947, the then East Pakistan, now Bangladesh, had only 5 government colleges and all other colleges of the country were in the private sector. Education then went on smoothly. The united efforts of the private and the public sector in setting up new schools and colleges can ease the situation of unending queues and "Elimination Tests" staged every year.

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