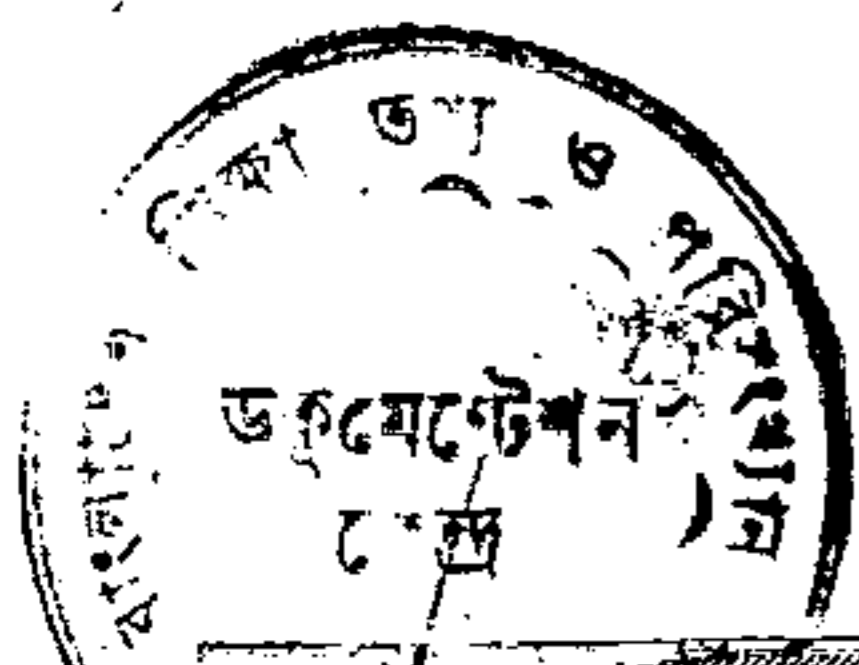


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Kindergartens : A second thought

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In metropolitan city of Dhaka there are 339 govt primary and 300 secondary schools (govt and non-govt combined). There are 1500 kindergartens besides these schools which provide education to 5 lakh students and try to ease the admission pressure to some extent.

But each kindergarten is very different from the other. There is no conformity among them in any respect. They have a different standard and charge different amount of tuition fee which varies from Tk. 50 to 500 per month depending on the location of the institutions and facilities provided by them.

Some of these kindergartens are housed in tin sheds too while others are in the posh areas. By using the foreign word "kindergarten" besides their name these institutions are able to draw a large number of student. The pressure in the govt. schools forces many others to seek such places whether they like it or not.

In spite of govt's rule that all book lists are to be approved by the govt never-

theless there is a great difference of standard. Most of such kindergartens have an appalling standard of education in comparison to the govt or other well known schools.

Some kindergartens are using books printed locally while the majority are using books printed in India. Most of these kindergartens are run by incompetent staff. The owners prefer to employ unqualified and untrained people as they can be given lower salary. Usually H.S.C. examinee or those who have completed their HSC are employed to do the teaching. Some also employ simple matriculates and one or two have also taken in persons who have read upto class VIII or IX.

To give a posh image a number of kindergartens are teaching Arabic on a compulsory basis from K.G class. Some teach mathematics in English too also.

These illqualified teachers have little knowledge of teaching or the patience to teach a child with care. They just ask the students to memorise words even sentences by heart without knowing the meaning.

In one such place a child of class one was learning words like "maternal uncle, maternal aunt, father-in-law, bridegroom" and so on from "My Picture Word Book" by heart and having great difficulty in pronouncing these words.

The common complaint of guardians who have children in the kindergartens is that all the teaching has to be done at home. A child is burdened with a lot of home work, even new chapters are dished out to be learnt at home without taking into consideration the fact that all mothers are not competent enough to teach their children. No effort is made to make a child learn the basic concepts. All attempts are made to finish a book as quickly as possible.

No such thing as discipline or moral ethics is taught here. Children are found using bad language or abusing each other openly.

A couple of years back the govt used to distribute books free of cost to the primary stage kindergarten students under the Universal Primary Education Scheme. This had helped to have a

uniform book list in all schools and a certain minimum level of standard too. But now such free distribution of books to the kindergarten students has stopped and the schools are free to select their own books as a result there is disparity in the standard too.

Moreover as the students of kindergartens are debarred from sitting for the primary scholarship exam they feel discriminated. There is no reason why these students should not be allowed to sit for the scholarship examination.

Without further loss of time all schools should be given the same set of books for the primary level and at the end of five classes all students should be given a change of sit for the scholarship exam after all at the end of ten years of schooling most of these students sit for the same HSC examination under Dhaka Board or other Boards of Intermediate and Secondary Education. So why this disparity now?