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KG schools: less education

By Firoz Ahmed

Schooling of a child in a kindergarten in Dhaka city now-a-days costs on an average about Taka 2500 per month.

Besides high rates of tuition and other fees the kindergartens charge admission fees ranging from Taka 800 to Taka 2,000. In some cases a guardian has to pay a sumptuous amount as 'donation' to his preferred kindergarten for admission of his kid.

While the government primary schools offer education upto class five without any tuition fee and the students get books free of cost the tuition fees in kindergartens vary from Taka 200 to Taka 600 a month. Besides the kindergarten

boys and girls have to buy a large number of books and khatas from their institutions or outside at high prices.

Besides, guardians have to spend another amount of Taka 1000 or 1500 a month for a private tutor to comply with the suggestion. Some kindergartens have 'school vans' to carry students. Most of the parents take the advantage of the transport facility at fixed charges which range between Taka 150 and Taka 300 a month.

Some kindergartens extract extra fees like tiffin fees, electricity charges, sports fees and even construction fees. Despite all these the kindergartens

cannot ensure complete education for students. Teachers there often suggest "appropriate home care" for the children studying there.

The kindergartens, most of them with foreign names, attract students with the promise of quality education, particularly the knowledge of English. But many of the kindergartens lack teaching staff with adequate qualification and education training. Housewives of the upper middle class society with poor education and less commitment constitute a considerable part of the teaching staff in many kindergartens.

Guardians of some kindergarten students said they wondered why their wards need pri-

vate coaching when they are spending so much money in the schools. The father of a student said he was worried that his son was learning only some isolated English words but not the English language in its totality. He said, "we are perhaps paying more to the kindergartens than getting from them".

The government primary schools do not have any transport facilities. Guardians escort their kids to and from the schools. They have to spend an amount for private coaching of their kids. But pressure of private coaching on students of government primary schools is less than that on the kindergarten students because of

more money

the wide difference in volume and quality of syllabi.

The syllabi of the kindergartens also include the lessons taught at the government primary schools. But the primary school syllabus constitutes only about one third of the curricula of the kindergartens.

The kindergartens put emphasis on English. The English syllabi include fairy tales, dramas and novels by noted authors in simplified forms and grammatical exercise.

A service holder woman talking to the Times said she has sent her daughter to a kindergarten because she wants her ward to learn English. She said it is good that

the students in kindergartens are advanced than those in primary schools but feared if the additional pressure on tender boys and girls might create any adverse effect on them.

A business firm executive in Motijheel said the standard of education in kindergartens is much higher than that in government primary schools. Then why should I not send my son to a kindergarten whatever amount it costs me? he posed a question.

But a Dhaka university students said the government should not allow two systems of education to grow. He said primary schools should be made attractive

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and there should be strict measures to prevent the kindergartens from being alienated from our cultural and traditions. He said many of the 3,200 kindergartens in the country have been opened with a business motive.