

Kindergarten And English Medium Schools

One of the most recurring debates by both educationists and parents is about the quality of teaching in the many Kindergarten and English Medium schools in the city. The prevailing consensus is that except for a few it is generally below standard but rarely is a solution forthcoming. It is therefore, somewhat refreshing when an organisation — the Bangladesh Kindergarten Association — takes the "bull by the horns." It has called on the authorities to draft out new policy guidelines in consultation with them the present rules and regulations that govern the Kindergarten and English Medium schools are too complicated.

The Association blames the lack of a well-thought out policy for handicapping most of these schools though some do try to maintain an international standard. But these are few and far between for there are many more who either cannot or will not, and these give the others a bad name. Some make no bones over the fact that they are "in the business" only for making money and these surely, have to be weeded out.

Of more importance is the fact that, unless the present lackadaisical attitude by the authorities toward these schools is replaced by a more positive one, students flocking to schools in this sector are going to suffer.

The first requirement is a standard curriculum to be used in all schools. At present there is no such standard and children changing schools have to purchase school books anew. Many schools use a mixture of books—some prescribed by the Bangladesh Text Book Board and others in general use in English Medium schools abroad. Although some of these institutions consider Bengali to be of equal importance as English, there are many that do not. Selecting teachers with the right calibre is imperative if academic excellence is to be assured, but many schools fail on this count. But if a sound policy is what we want this can no longer be allowed.

The large number of contenders for seats in such schools is surely an indication of the value society places on them but, unless teaching can be made up to the standard these will fail to deliver bright products. In other words there must be a policy which allows only those schools capable of maintaining an international standard both in terms of curricula and teaching, to stay in business.