

Multimedia-based education needs proper monitoring

GOVERNMENT'S initiative to offer lessons for school children in multimedia classrooms is proving to be ineffective, which is totally antithetical to the vision of the incumbents of a 'Digital Bangladesh'. According to a monitoring report of the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education, as New Age reported on Wednesday, many schools suffer from out-of-order laptops and projectors which are essential accessories for running multimedia classroom initiatives. The report was produced based on the inspection of 35 schools and madrassahs of 12 upazilas. From the report, it was also evident that there is a lack of awareness among the headteachers about using multimedia classrooms. The school authorities manipulate the 'dashboard' reports as well and claim a higher number of multimedia classrooms than the actual number. Headteachers are also found misinforming about the number of classes taking place in the multimedia classrooms. In what follows, it will not be an overstatement to suggest that the government's much-talked-about programmes to modernise classrooms for school children are in reality in a poor shape and seriously lacking in proper monitoring.

The multimedia classroom initiative was introduced by the incumbents in 2012 with the aim to make an enjoyable environment in classrooms for both students and teachers. It was designed to achieve a more effective teaching and learning process as the multimedia classroom helps to visualise the lesson. To attain the expected goal, teachers need technical skills and knowledge to efficiently use the multimedia classrooms. Therefore, efforts of the incumbents to train 70,000 teachers in multimedia classroom and digital content creation is a promissory step. However, the findings of the monitoring report leave room for questions about the quality of this training. Not only the number of training sessions and their quality should be increased, but the trained teachers' performance should also be kept under continuous monitoring. For an effective use of the multimedia classroom, the government must address other pressing concerns like the lack of basic infrastructure in schools such as library and laboratory facilities. There are also reports that many school buildings in the country are falling apart and demand immediate maintenance and repairs. To make the multimedia classrooms effective, the government must look into these larger problems as well.

In this circumstance, the incumbents should take immediate actions to replace and repair the reported broken multimedia equipments as well as arrange adequate and quality training of teachers who are assigned to teach in the classrooms. Moreover, a better modified and effective monitoring tool should be designed to prevent manipulation of any sort of the 'dashboard' mechanism. To ensure an effective environment for multimedia learning, the government should simultaneously provide library, laboratory and other infrastructural support for schools in the country. Conscientious sections of society should meanwhile, raise their voice against any misuse of public money in the education sector.