E-textbook evades students

NCTB fails to upload e-textbooks for four years

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NATIONAL Curriculum and Textbook Board has failed for the fourth consecutive year to provide the electronic version of textbooks introduced to ease the teaching method and make education entertaining.

The board last uploaded the e-books of primary and secondary levels at www.ebook.gov.bd in 2013 although the government is supposed to upload the books, which undergo changes in content every year, at the beginning of each academic year starting in January.

The electronic version of this year's books was not available at NCTB's website www.nctb.gov.bd till Monday while the board is also responsible for uploading the e-books at www.ebook.gov.bd.

Expressing his dismay, Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology computer science and engineering professor Mohammad Kaykobad observed that uploading e-version was an easy job.

'Someone's failure to upload the e-book is sheer irresponsibility,' he thinks.

"This failure proves that there is no long-term plan for uploading the e-books for easy access of everybody,' he says.

NCTB secretary Imrul Hasan said that they could not upload the e-books as their site was in the process of being connected to the national web portal. 'We will be able to upload the books at our website by the end of January.'

He said that Access to Information (A2I) Project of Prime Minister's Office and National Curriculum and Textbook Board were tasked with creating e-book version of the primary level and secondary level textbooks in collaboration with the UNDP and the books were first uploaded in 2011 at www.ebook.gov.bd.

'We could not upload the books after 2013 as the work of creating e-books could not be completed within the deadlines,' he said, adding,

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'We are working to create the e-book of the textbooks to upload them on website but cannot give you the time frame by which the task will be completed.'

The government in 2011 uploaded e-books of 33 primary level and 73 secondary level textbooks at its websites and the sites had been linked to almost all important office's websites.

Prime minister Sheikh Hasina while launching the e-book on April 24, 2011 had said the government was working to increase the use of technology in classrooms to present difficult topics in easier methods to the students.

'Technology will ease the teaching method and make education entertaining,' she said.

The prime minister had then said that use of multimedia and audio-visual equipment must be increased in classrooms.

She was critical of parents as they nowadays put unnecessary pressure on their children to do best results in the examinations.

'Nowadays competition has gone into the parents; it does not remain among the students,' she had said.

Hasina had also said that by putting pressure on children, parents in fact were causing sufferings to children.

'Parents must understand that every child will not have the same talent or capacity and all children will not have the same talent in the same area,' she had observed.

She had directed the ministries concerned to introduce text curriculum considering the age and capacity of the kids.

'They (children) now read so many books at their budding stage. Text curriculum should be prepared in such a way so that children can read with comfort,' she said.

Hasina had said e-book would be a big boost to provide textbooks for the children of expatriate Bangladeshis.

'The e-book will provide textbooks for every child of Bangladeshi expatriate across the world,' she hoped.

NCTB officials and guardians have said e-textbooks were helpful for students, teachers, guardians and researchers as they had free access to the books beside the print version.

'E-book is helpful for guardians as they can have a look at the books when the print version is not available,' said Jahid Imran, father of a Class III student of Malibagh area. 'Sometime the quality of print version is so bad that e-book is a big relief.'

These e-books are readable on digital devices like computer, e-book readers and mobile phones.

It is also very helpful for expatriate Bangladeshi students to take preparation for primary completion, Junior Secondary Certificate and Secondary School Certificate examinations from abroad.