UPE, Mass Education, Campus Peace Common Election Pledges

by Mostafa Kamal Majumder

Achievement of universal free primary education and removal of illiteracy figured prominently in the election pledges of the major political parties in respect of the education sector.

With the elections over one can only wait and see how far the parties work to keep their commitments.

A survey of election manifestos of the major political parties show that the political leadership is keen on restoring congenial atmosphere in the educational arena and ending sessions-jam in the univer-

Some of the political parties have also pledged to introduce Bangla as the medium of instructions at all levels.

Let us look at the manifestos of the major parties. Bangladesh Nationalist Party which is almost certain to form government has in its manifesto circulated before the February 27 elections pledged to increase allocations to education and health sectors for ensuring manpower development.

BNP mantfesto calls for recasting the education system to create more facilities for

Can teach young minds

But what the teachers are

Though there are many

born teachers, there are

innumerable others who are

to be made. But is there any

formula or prescription which

can help one to be a good

teacher? If we dig deeper into

the essentials of teacher-

education we can boldly say

that teachers are not a special

breed. And there are many

special things one should

human beings. The first

criteria of a good teacher is a

good personality. To be really a

good teacher one should be a

good person. A flower becomes

a flower automatically. But for a

human being personal qualities

are to be developed, cultivated.

and achieved. Though the

inborn rationality is there

within every human being.

personal qualities such as

agreeable attitude, pleasing

Teachers are first of all

know to be a good teacher.

themselves." — anonymous

"No printed words.

What men should be

Nor spoken plea,

Not all the books

On all the shelves

students. Eradication of illiteracy, introduction of compulsory primary education, and integration of madrasah education with the mainstream of the society are among the commitments listed in it.

It also calls for realistic steps including holding of examinations on schedule to end sessions-jam in the universitics. Bangladesh Nationalist Party has also pledged to revive its 'mass education revolution' which was shelved following the March 24, 1982 coup.

Bangladesh Awami League in its manifesto has called for eradication of illiteracy in a planned way at the shortest possible time. It says education is not a facility but a basic right of each citizen. The party calls for implementing the policy of universal and compulsory free primary education.

It calls for creating equal opportunities of education for all citizens at all levels. The party has pledged to take steps so that poverty does not block the blooming of talents.

Awami League has pledged to establish technical and voca-

sympathetic nature, honesty

are to be developed through

day to day experience and

interaction with others. A

teacher helps the students in

their struggle of aquaring

skills, to unlock the door of

success. The skill, energy and

attitude of teachers are

invested for the growth and

ultimate aim of education is

the total development of the

learner by the unfolding of his

inborn potentiality. Teachers

should be aware of this fact

first and they should gain the

attitude and techniques for the

successful unfolding and

becoming of the students. The

influence of teachers upon the

mental makeup, life and

personality of the students is

limitless. Almost the total

future of a student depends.

We all know that the

development of their pupils.

dependable

manners.

educational institutions keeping in view the growing manpower needs for economic development, and refix salary and benefits to teachers to enable them lead honest and descent life.

The AL manifesto calls for upholding autonomy of universities to create a free atmosphere of learning, and to help complete academic sessions on schedule. It calls for making Bangla the medium of instructions at all levels.

Jatiya Party which has bagged the third highest number of seats in the new parliament has called for taking all out efforts to make the universal and compulsory free primary education programme a success, and to take special measures for expansion of women's education.

greater emphasis on vocational education alongside the prevailing system of general education, and for making higher education more planned.

JP's manifesto calls for

JP has also pledged to remove disparities in the education sector and to further

to a great extent, upon the

performance and personality of

one who shows him the right

the cherished destination.

path and guides him towards

more than any other thing. For

needs to be a dictionary of

good qualities. If that be so,

good teachers will be a rarity.

So we abandon the paragon

and accept the one who is a

good person and is greatly

am allowed to cross the limit.

the addiction for teaching is

something that is coveted by

all everywhere in the world.

Interest makes on dive deeper

into the heart of things.

Interested teachers prepare

their lessons with utmost care.

They also have to go across the

Interest and love rather, if I

interested in teaching.

A person impresses one

strengthen the initiative to introduction of Bangla as the medium of instruction at all tegrate religious education with science education. It has also promised to take steps to

The Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) which has five scats in the present parliament has pledged to make increased allocations to Education and Health sectors by reducing expenditure on unproductive sectors to ensure human development.

The CPB manifesto calls for a crash programme for cradication of illiteracy, and increased emphasis to achieve universal primary education. It also calls for ending sessionsjam in the universities and solution of other problems of educational institutions.

Similar election pledges have also been made by Bangladesh Krishak Sramik Awamt League (BKSAL), Bangladesher Workers Party, Ganatantri Dal, Sramik Krishak Samajbadi Dal, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (Inu), Jatiya Samaj tantrik Dal (Rab), Zaker Party, National Democratic Party, Bangladesher Samajtantrik Dal and National Awami Party (M) among others.

Sex is Not a Dirty Word

out of school. He was without a job and there was no immediate prospect of him getting one because he had not passed any exams and at his age had not been trained for anything. He came from an upper class Fijian family living in the capital. Suva, and fortunately, did not immediately have to work for a

Elisapect (e is pronounced th), also 15, his classmate and sweetheart, had dropped out of school with him and was also unemployed. With nothing

much else to do. Jioti and Elisapeci spent a lot of their time together.

About three months later Elisapeci's mother visited Jioff's mother and told her that her daughter was preg nant. Jioff's parents visited Elisapect's family and pre sented tabua (whales teeth which is the highest token of Fijaian traditional ceremonial). drums of kerosine and food stuff seeking forgiveness in the Fijian traditional manner on the boy's part for the unplanned and unwanted pregnancy. This ceremony can be



Young students in the Philippines attend a sex education course. Photo: UNESCO.

a very expensive business. It was decided that Elisaptel and her family would look after the buby with Jioff's family beloing with its upkeep. The father and mother were not married because they were too young and it was decided they go their own ways. This had be come the norm and it was unusual, after the Pijian ecremonies, for a mother to sue to domestic court for maintenance for the child. Jtoff and Elisapeci were just two of many school-age children in Fitt who made the same mistake because sex education was not on their school curriculum.

Disturbing statistics

This situation changed in May, 1985, with the introduction of family Life Education, a joint project of Unesco and Fiji government funded by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). in Fift's

"The project has been very successful, and whenever I talk about it with parents they tell me it has been left out of schools for far too long," said project co-ordinator Mr Kaminielt Tagica.

The programme began as a result of rather disturbing disclosures made by the Fiji Medical Association in late 1984 about the increase in teenage pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases among teenagers, and other related social problems.

Figures given at the time by the Colonial War Memorial Hospital, Sava's main hospital, showed that of 7.093 births in its maternity department during the 18 months from January . 1982, to June. 1983, 952 or 13.4 per cent were mothers under 19 years of age. Of the 952 babies, 46.7 per cent were illegitimate. Of the 7,093 mothers under study. 4 per cent suffered from sexually transmitted diseases such as gonorrhoca and syphilis

Future figures, the authorities believed, would not be any better. Mr Tagica, a school teacher who has devoted most of his time to the project since he was appointed its co-ordinator in 1985, said factors associated with teenage pregnancies in Fiji pinpointed the lack of sex education.

Mr Tagica said from an carly age Fiji children, particularly Fijians and Indians, were not aware of what sex was all about since it was not taught in schools, and at home the sub-

icct was taboo.

subject."

"Thus it was not uncommon for these children to grow up thinking that sex was a dirty word and naturally this afjected them in the later stages of their lives, " he said. "A direct result of this is the inability or difficulty of young people of both sexes to communicate with each other on this

Spreading the knowledge

Mr Tagica said teenagers" lack of access to contraceptives was another stumbling

"How would Fijian teenagers possibly know how to use contraceptives if they don't know what they are or where to get them." he asked.

The Family Life Education project funded by the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) and executed by Unesco, with the long term objective of helping to reduce the incidence of adolescent and unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases and psychological

care of this. According to Mr Tagica, the immediate objective of the project is to spread the knowledge and under standing of family life issues to 75 per cent of Fiji's more than 50,000 secondary school students by 1992, and by all indications it is well on the way of accomplishing this goal. with a marked decrease in teenage pregnancies already apparent.

stress, is designed to take

Currently the family life education programme is being taught to forms 3 and 4 students in 103 of Fijt's 141 high schools an work has already started in introducing the programme to forms 5 and 6 in these schools.

Mr. Tagica said teachers involved in the family life education project have been specially trained. Parents are also being trained in family life through workshops and at school parents and teachers association meetings Brochures and other instructional material have been developed to help reinforce the instructors.

We're getting there thanks to UNFPA, Unesco and the Fiji Government, and through the project we hope to establish a permanent school-home-community partnership in family tife education," Mr Tagica added. -Stan Ritova

Making of a Good Teacher

remove illiteracy.

Januar-e-Islami Bangladesh

has pledged to establish the is-

lamic University as a model of

Islami education system, affili-

ate the Aliah and Qaumi

madrasahs to the Islamic Uni-

versity to upgrade madrasah

education, give all Haftzia and

Furkania madrasahs the status

of primary schools, and to in-

troduce compulsory lessons on

ethics in all branches of edu-

cation to create honest citi-

Jamaat in its election mani

festo has pledged to introduce

vocational training at sec-

ondary level to enable learners

to take part in productive ac-

tivities, to include Islami phi-

losophy at all levels, and to

create all opportunities of reli-

gions education for non-Mus-

lim learners. Jamaat has also

called for establishing separate

schools, colleges, madrasahs

and universities for women. Its

manifesto calls for introduc-

tion of military training in ed-

ucational institutions and in-

Halima Khatun

A Trainer Speaks:

this reason quality of a teacher wide ocean of the learners mind and build an everlasting is very important. Many think lighthouse there. that to be a good teacher one

In daily business we work with tools. In teaching business we work young minds. To be a good workman the teacher should try to know the children as best as possible. Children are not just miniature adults. They have their own likes and dislikes. their own ways of doing things, their own patterns of ideas and emotion. Their family background, sibling relationship success and failure stories - gained through observation and association can give unique

E enjoy doing

things we do well. A

enjoys outwitting the

opposition as the ball moves

towards the goal. A graceful

dancer enjoys the movement,

rhythm and music of the

dance. A good reader is more

likely to reach for a newspaper

or a book than someone who

ing reader will avoid reading

even the most beautifully

illustrated story book. He or

she may try to understand the

gist of a story from the pic-

tures, but will be unable to en-

Many people believe that

the first steps towards reading

take place in a school, and that

the teacher has the primary

responsibility in guiding

them. This is not wholly true.

School reading books provide

some reading experience, but

they are meant to teach chil-

dren how to read, and cannot

be expected also to ensure that

the learner will derive lifelong

pleasure from reading. The

responsibility for creating life-

time readers is a broad one

shared by family, school, li-

braries, bookstores and the

child experiences much within

the family circle which can

lead to reading. Mother, fa-

ther, brothers, sisters, uncles,

aunts, grandparents and

friends of the family provide

the most important early ex-

periences on which it is possi-

ble to build concepts and atti-

tudes which create a success-

ful reader. The disposition of

the family towards ideas, to-

wards books and reading

establishes important values

which may stir even the

The infant in its mother's lap

who is read to - even if the

stories are not understood -

learns that reading is a com-

fortable experience and that

words and pictures must be

good. Later, when the stories

become pleasurable on a dif-

ferent level, this attitude will

continue. Most children also

It is never too early to start.

Even before school starts, a

joy it fully.

mass media.

youngest baby.

A child who is a slow, halt-

stumbles over every world.

good football player

information to the teacher. In order to know the

students the teachers should meet the parents or guardians often. Through discussion with parents teacher can gain much insight into the character and mind of a student. Valuable information from the family about students can solve many problems that thicken the air of the classroom very often.

In many novels and stories we encounter teacher characters of tyrannical nature None likes those. Love for the students is a must for a teachers. Unless we care and love we cannot give and make them learn. Students have limitations. They may not possess agrecable traits. Their behaviour may not be liked by us. They may be poor, unclean or whatsover. But we must not forget that we cannot send them back empty handed. We

some skill some knowledge. some attitude and first of all a bit of love and affection. Affection is the grease that keeps the tools in working condition. Here our tools are our students. So love for students is a must for teachers. If we look back and think

must give them something.

about the great teachers of the world, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Jesus Christ Prophet Mohammed (sm) Lord Budha, Pestalotse, Maria Montesory. Their love for pupils flood our mind with gratitude and reverence. We know love is a rare thing, still we prescribe this for students by teachers. And that should be impartial. Every student should feel that teachers loves him or her more than others in the class.

The teacher who loves, gets love and reverence from the

may read from their books and

talk about them. An older child

or a parent may start a sen-

tence or a paragraph and have

psychology, specially child and adolescent psychology is very essential. Psychology may not be his preferred area or area of specialization. But basic principles of psychology. motivation, drive, want. attention memory along with theories of learning can be a ready reference for classroom teacher. Knowledge of psychology in general and educational psychology in particular can guide and teachers immensely. For this reason courses on teacher education include psychology as a compulsory subject.

children. For a successful

teacher knowledge of

History of education is also an important addition the teachers shelf. History can guide a teacher more easily than any other discipline. Pages of history porfiling different land marks in the field of education work as eye opener for any professional teacher and make him a good performer in the classroom.

Dr. Halima Khatun, Director, Institute of Education and Research, Dhaka University is an eminent child litterateur of Bangladesh.

Like a parent, a teacher

who reads to the class from a

book which he or she has en-

joyed - even though it may be

above the class's reading level

- plants seeds for future adult

reading. Not only is an exam-

ple being set, but the

teacher's enthusiasm may be

infectious, and the student's

curiosity aroused. Poetry par-

ticularly lends itself to being

Encourage writing

kinds of reading materials, so

there are many ways to read.

Reading a recipe is different

from reading a news item in

the paper. For most children,

stories are the commonest

and most enjoyable kind of

reading. Even here, however .

different reading approaches

are the norm. Some children

will race through a story to

find out what happened.

Others may use the plot as a

launching pad for imaginative

thinking and acting. Such

children may become creative

Just as there are many

read aloud.

One can take a book almost anywhere.

What to do When Patois Ruins Nation's Grammar?

topic far removed from pressing local nomic problems and world events has lately been absorbing Jamaicans-the question of the use of vernacular speech, or patois. Should the local dialect be encouraged or should people be taught to use correct English?

Since independence came to the Caribbean in the Sixties there has been a movement to let the people discover the roots of their ancestors and to foster interest in their background. The speech of the

masses plays a big part in this. In Jamaica politicians increasingly appeal to people by speaking in the easily understood vernacular. Young Jamaicans have become indoctrinated into that language, learned at mother's

knee. The result is that for years now students of the university of the West Indies, at the end of their three-years courses, have not been able to write English, the language in which their examinations are set.

To remedy this the university instituted a compulsory course in the use of English which all students had to pass at the end of their first year. If they did not pass they could not get a degree.

The number failing the exam at first attempt was so high the university authorities and the public were astonished and distressed. This situation provoked a discussion in the pages of the country's main newspaper The Daily Gleaner. It has been absorbing almost the entire country.

The vernacular patots or patwah, as the nationalists call it, has been called "the nation's language" by the distinguished poet Edward Kamau Braithwaite. But conservatives, especially employers, say it should be suppressed. They deplore the fact that many people applying for jobs cannot

communicate in English. Young people seem destined to have a hard time

communicating with the outside world at a time when data processing is expected to carn millions of dollars from overseas investors.

Other supporters of correct English refer to its beauty, and one "Down with patois" voice was that of novelist John Hearne, who lectures at the university's Caribbean Communications Centre.

He called the vernacular "a barefoot language"- only to confess in a teller to The Gleaner a week or two later that he had set his students a piece from Edmund Wilson's To the Finland Station and asked them to put it into

To Hearne's great surprise the entire class produced ereditable and understandable "translations."

The university's department of education argued that at basic school and primary school instruction should be given in the vernacular and only at a later stage should correct English be used.

The Road to Reading story. The child is showing appreciation and learning has taken place from the story.

Playing with words

Exposure to language - just talking to a baby - is important. As children grow, they usually enjoy word play and world games which help them show their mastery over world. The whole family can join in the fun of playing games with words. Active teaching of basic concepts and attitudes is also the responsibility of a parent. Learning to recognize . name and differentiate bea younger child try to finish it appropriately. The resulting discussion (or argument) is a useful way of developing vocabulary and social skills and learning about language structure. After setting the stage for activity, perhaps the most im-

reading and other intellectual portant contribution a parent can make to readers in the family is to make sure that books and other materials are available for them. This does not necessarily mean buying

by Ralph C. Staiger

mentary, but it is an important building block, as are many other concepts and experiences about which a child will be expected to know and eventually read.

tween colours may seem rudi-

A mother or father who reads a story to a child may entice the child to enjoy more difficult tales. By listening to their parents reading aloud from books too difficult for to read themselves. young learners find out how complex stories take shape and how words are used. Their understanding of what books can be is enhanced, and when they later encounter these stories in their own reading, they are meeting old friends. Reading to children should continue long after they have

begun to read for themselves. There is evidence that even in the most depressed economic conditions, whether a child becomes a reader or not depends upon a role model in the family to provide an example. Parents who read themselves are likely to have children who read. Parents who discuss what they have read and invite their children's contributions to the conversation are directly influencing their children's reading development. The role model's enjoyment helps make a reader for the future.

enjoy the comfort of hearing All of this takes time. But it is well worth the investment. A the same familiar stories over and over. Sometimes they daily period for family reading gleefully finish sentences. This may take several forms. Instead of the parent doing all does not mean that it is no the reading, several children longer necessary to read that

books or journals, but may involve going to the library, borrowing books from friends and neighbours or making available books from other sources.

The electronic media play an important role, too for films, radio and television can help build the world of ideas which a reader needs. Television and radio can often be useful instruments for discussing plots and the use of language, and for evaluating the worth of a specific programme collectively. The media can stimulate children to read more about a subject. If children spend an inordinate amount of time mindlessly watching felevision, it is sometimes necessary to limit the amount of viewing time and to help them decide which programmes to watch. Television is a source of learning about many things. It should be used with co-opera-

tive judgement. Schools are responsible for sharpening the reading abilities of young people, but they cannot be expected to per form the entire task of shaping perceptual skills, providing experiences and motivating each pupil for a lifetime of reading. Teachers can do much to create an atmosphere in which learning will not be a dreaded memory. If a sharp-tongued | teacher ridicules a poor reader, the other puptls soon join in. This is inexcusable. It may teach the victim to avoid reading for

artists. All children should be encouraged to create. Their early attempts to write should be encouraged, for a writer is likely to become a reader. Adults should remember that spelling words is an acquired skill. More literal-minded youngsters use reading primarily to gather and deal with information, although they many also enjoy an imaginative story. Helping to build vocabulary and suggesting how information can be located and used may be the most profitable ways of helping such children. Librarians know how to use reference works and can almost always show the information-gatherer where to

Children's interests and attention spans vary; some maintain regard for what is read, even if the story is from adult materials which the parent enjoys and would like to share. When it becomes obvious that the child is no longer paying attention, it is time to move to bocks which are closer to the child's level of interest. The parent's obvious interest and enjoyment are eloquent, however, whether the materials are easy or diffi-

(Courtesy: Unesco Courier)