

Teacher Preparation and the Status of Teachers

IMPROVING the preparation and motivation of teachers is basic to improving an education system and enhancing the quality of education. Once of the major lessons learned over the years is that none of the reforms in education can be implemented unless the teachers are involved in their formulation and adequately prepared for their execution. A further conclusion is that the teachers, particularly those at the primary, secondary, and higher secondary levels, require professional preparation in addition to academic qualifications. Also important to note is that teacher preparation should be viewed as a continuing activity throughout a teacher's career.

A majority of the secondary teachers do not have a professional qualification and a large section have very weak academic backgrounds. In 1992, a sample survey of 170 secondary schools in five Thanas (sub-districts) revealed that 50% of the teachers are professionally trained graduates having at least a bachelor's degree and a degree or diploma in education; 25% are untrained graduates; and the remaining 25% are non-graduates including teachers of religious studies. At the higher secondary and tertiary levels and for madrasah education, a system of teacher training is yet to be introduced.

There are 22 secondary teacher training institutions including 11 Teachers' Training Colleges (TTCs), 9 Secondary Education and Science Development Centres (recently merged with 9 TTCs) for in-service training, 1 Institute of Education and Research (IER) at the University of Dhaka, and 1 Institute of Distance Education at the Bangladesh Open University. A recent development in teacher education has been making the TTCs affiliated colleges under the Bangladesh National University. Of the 11 TTCs, 10 are in the public sector and 1 is in the private sector. A study in 1992 (Secondary Education in Bangladesh: A Subsector Study) found that there were only 235 teacher educators in Bangladesh (141 in the TTCs, 54 in the SEDSCs and 40 in

the IER) and that there were only 3 teachers in the TTCs having doctoral degrees. In 1992-93, the numbers of students in the BED and MED courses of the IER and the TTCs were 4,597 (27.97% being female) and 552 (36.78% being female) respectively, while the IER and the TTCs offer a 10-month BED course, the Institute of Distance Education offers a 2-year programme. In 1992, the latter admitted 5,050 students to its 2-year BED course. Recently the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education has been provided with a training division (under a director) for attending to matters relating to teacher training.

Weak Areas. The particularly weak areas in teacher education are: (a) English, (b) mathematics, (c) science, (d) geography, and (e) educational research. The basic teacher training course (BED) has not changed its character for nearly nine decades. The in-service programme has remained weak and inadequate, and is yet to be firmly established. During 1986-92, a total of 21,035 secondary teachers attended in-service courses of studies at the 9 Secondary Education and Science Development Centres (SEDSCs), the duration of most of the courses being two weeks.

There is a growing concern among educators that apart from quantitative expansion, the teacher education subsector requires reforms aimed at qualitative changes. The following, among others, would be some of the possible and desirable interventions: new programmes, course system, strengthening in-service education, three year post HSC/BED, higher secondary teacher training, teacher training for non-graduates, management training of teachers for special education, teacher training in the private sector, departments of education in the universities, strengthening education research.

Status of Teachers

The need for recruiting to the teaching profession at all levels men and women of the highest abilities has been well recognized. It is also believed that the training of teachers

should be considered a matter of national importance. However, in matters of emoluments, the teachers of government and non-government institutions have been treated differently. This has resulted in occasional teacher strikes on the part of the non-government institutions. The issue of salary, salary subventions, and service conditions of teachers needs an in-depth examination is its entirety by a high-level committee. However, instead of a uniform pay scale for all teachers without regard to their qualifications, a policy of higher salary for higher qualifications can be thought of. Secondary teachers already in service can be encouraged to obtain higher degrees in education (MA/MEd) by allowing such teachers the pay scales admissible to colleges lecturers. Higher secondary and degree-level teachers having a professional diploma in education can be provided with advance increments in pay. To generate a sense of security among the teachers of non-government institutions, provisions need to be made for provident fund and retirement benefits. A trust fund for teachers of non-government institutions to which both the teachers and the Government will contribute can be created. (Such a fund, which was promised earlier, is yet to be made operational.) Teachers may also be given special awards for merit, and the achievements of outstanding teachers may be featured in the press and the news media. Steps need to be taken to operationalize a system of teacher registration/certification for all secondary-level teachers.

A good academic background and subject relevance are two important factors in improving classroom teaching in secondary schools. It would, therefore, be desirable to recruit initially well qualified persons although they may not have a degree or diploma in education. Such teachers may be deputed to a TTC after one year's teaching experience. The responsibility for recruitment of teachers of non-government secondary and higher secondary schools and madrasahs may be given to: (a) an

Education Improvement Trust that may be created as an autonomous body or (b) an Education Service Commission, or (c) District Selection Committees to be constituted by the proposed District Education Boards. The implications of the different alternative need to be closely examined by the Government. While an autonomous Education Improvement Trust or an Education Service Commission will result in shifting the decision-making point by a great distance and may create a feeling among the managing committees/governing bodies that their powers have been curtailed, a properly constituted District Selection Committee will remain half-way between the two extremes. The main purpose of an Education Improvement Trust or an Education Service Commission or a District Selection Committee, however, is to eliminate academically weak candidates in the first instance so that subsequent training becomes meaningful and leads to quality enhancement.

Summary of Major Recommendations

Based on the above ideas, a suggested plan of action for teacher education for secondary and higher secondary teachers is given below:

- Create a National Council for Teacher Education and Educational Research for co-ordinating teacher education programmes at all levels. The National Academy for Educational Management (NAEM) can act as secretariat of the Council.
- Ensure recruitment of well qualified secondary teachers (those having at least two second divisions from SSC to the bachelor's level) through District Selection Committees. In the case of government schools, recruitment can be made through Divisional Selection Boards as was done in the past. Depute the teachers recruited to a TTC or to the Institute of Distance Education after one year's service.
- Create a teacher education sub-cadre having a strength

of at least 1,200. Recruit the required additional teacher educators through a special BCS Examination so that delay in recruitment may be avoided.

- Those among the recruited teacher educators who do not have a degree or diploma in education may be deputed to the IER or to a TTC for the first degree in teacher education.
- Create departments of teacher education (3-year BED) in selected degree colleges as required. Post the newly recruited teacher educators (after completion of the BED course) to these colleges.
- Encourage the setting up of private TTCs in those districts which do not have a TTC.
- Increase the durations of BED and MED courses of the TTCs and the IER gradually — initially to 12 months and eventually to 18 months.
- While in the short term, the TTCs will offer BED to those as well as in-service courses, the teacher education departments of the colleges will offer 3-year post-HSC BED course. As the 3-year course becomes well established, the TTCs will gradually withdraw from the BED programme and concentrate on in-service education.
- The five higher secondary teacher training institutes to be created under the ADB-funded Higher Secondary Education Project can offer specially designed courses for the higher secondary teachers. The IER of the University of Dhaka can similarly offer a course on teaching methodology for teachers teaching at the degree level.
- With a large number of well qualified people entering the teaching profession, IER will focus its attention on MEd and PhD courses in education. Eventually IER will find it possible to discontinue its Diploma in Education (equivalent to BED) programme and offer higher courses only.

Courtesy: Post-Primary Education Sector Strategy Review.

How Children Learn?

by Farida Akhtar

SAMI is very good in explaining. He can give a detail description of the places he visited long ago. But Favel is very strong in doing things. He wants to learn everything by touching while Emu says, "You know I can just repeat things just after listening to once. I like lectures." Yes she likes to learn by listening.

This is not an exceptional condition. In every class we can find some children who learn by listening and have good auditory memory. Some of them can learn easily by seeing objects, pictures, diagrams graphs etc. They can clearly recall from their visual image. But for some children learn by doing things, touching objects and moving the body. According to the fact about the children, we teachers, parents, curriculum, and material developers, teachers' trainers, program evaluators must be aware about an individual's learning style.

Some Important Issues

- A very basic question is that "How one can teach children?" Our common sense tells us "In order to teach children one has to know how children learn!" Without knowing the learning style of children, how one can teach them. Every child learns differently, they have individual learning style which is unique like signature. If we know and aware about the issue only then we can arrange different types or modes of presentation for a single lesson to meet the needs of different children in a class.
- According to Professor Howard Gardner (Harvard University) we have seven different intelligences and these are: Verbal/Linguistic, Logical/Mathematics, Visual/Spatial, Musical/Rhythmic, Body/Kinesthetic, Interpersonal and Intrapersonal. One may be very strong in Logical/Mathematics, other can be in Body/Kinesthetic but they will have other six intelligences too.

Who is good in Body/Kinesthetic she will achieve more if she can get the chance to learn by using her body (doing touching, moving). Pictures, objects, charts, maps, graphs, diagrams etc can help a child to learn easily who is a Visual/Spatial child.

Our brain has two sides that work in harmony. The right brain is called The Creative Brain and left is called The Academic Brain. The right brain gives emphasis on — Rhyme, Rhythm, Music, Pictures, Imagination and Patterns. The left brain emphasizes on Language, Logic, Numbers, Mathematics, Sequence and Words. In order to use both sides of our brain, we have to have activities for children at school by which they can use both left and right sides of their brain.

In teaching learning process four steps are important: these are Motivation (why), Presentation (What), Practice (How and Application/Creativity (What if). These four steps come like a wheel. We can explain the wheel in this way: For learning, a child must know "why I am going to learn it?" That means, she must be motivated to learn it. The next step is to present the lesson. After presentation children must practice it. But presentation and practice must follow different modes like visual, auditory and haptic (doing touching, moving). After practicing, a child must have the scope to apply the knowledge or to create anything out of newly acquired knowledge. After these four steps again comes "Why".

"You can remember any piece of information if it is associated to something you already know or remember." Harry Lorayne and Jerry Lucas (The memory book). In order to follow this, we have to find out learner's present level of knowledge about any particular topic.

There are various methods to find out that level. If we are interested for sustainable education, we have to be aware about the process of remembering.

Learners have to know — how we remember, new technique of remembering, when recall is effective, how we can reduce threat for any book and make it friendly, effective technique of making notes etc.

Some Arguments on the issues:

Child Right Argument: Every child has the right to develop according to his/her full potentials. It is possible only when we will create student friendly learning atmosphere considering individual learning style.

Economic Argument: Student friendly learning atmosphere can give guarantee for — reducing dropout, better school performance, sustainable education, application of knowledge in real life situations, creating new things etc. That means, it guarantees the meaningful and better utilization of money.

Development Argument: When learners are able to apply their newly acquired knowledge in different areas of life, it makes a great difference in respect of overall developments. It can have a positive impact on health, personal hygiene, environment, psycho-social life etc.

Our magic brain has enormous potentials. But for most of us our performance does not match with it. Same happens with the children too. For children we have to be aware about the fact and have to create such an learning environment where: — learning can be equally effective, enjoyable and acceptable to all children and — children's performance can match with their potentials.



Give them a chance. Courtesy: Shishu Digarto

The Evaluation System and Public Examinations

THE education system has been excessively examination-oriented. Teaching to tests has been a very common practice. The public examinations do not appropriately reflect the broad curricular objectives and specific learning outcomes. An analysis of the public examinations reveals that they hardly measure learning outcomes related to reasoning, application of knowledge, and communication skills.

While within the system of education public examinations have been over-emphasized, the responsibility of secondary schools in ensuring continuous and comprehensive internal assessment of pupils has been grossly neglected. Classroom teachers in general and an overwhelming majority of examiners and paper-setters lack training in the methods and techniques of educational measurement and evaluation. Objective tests as partially introduced in selected subjects at the SSC level leave a lot more to be desired and improved. Each year failures at the SSC and HSC Examinations are in the region of 40% and 55% respectively. This involves a wastage which has not yet agitated the public mind. The system of letter grading (A, B, C, etc.), advocated by various reports, is yet to be introduced.

Facilities for computerisation of the results of public examinations are in the process of development. The four Boards of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BISEs), which conduct public examinations at the end of grades 10 and 12 respectively, do not have the services of professionals with expertise in examination-related matters. Professionalizing the BISEs has appeared as an important need. To achieve the goal, the following measures need to be taken.

- Identify the required professional positions of each BISE and determine the requirements — academic and professional — of each position. MOE will advertise the positions.
- Set up a high-level committee to shortlist candidates fulfilling the requirements.
- MOE will fill the positions from among the short-

listed candidates. A national testing service to be set up (see paragraph 5 below) will arrange appropriate courses of studies, within or outside the country, for the selected candidates, who will be required to stay in their respective positions (unless promoted to higher positions) for a period of at least five years.

The senior positions of the BISEs (Chairman, Secretary, Controller of Examinations, etc.) are usually filled on the basis of seniority from among members of the Bangladesh Education Cadre without regard to their leadership qualities or expertise and the requirements of their respective positions. As a result, it becomes difficult to improve the quality of education and examinations at the secondary and higher secondary levels. The policy of filling the senior positions of the BISEs requires re-thinking. Persons appointed to these positions should be required to complete satisfactorily an intensive programme of in-service education related to curricula, student assessment, and academic supervision before taking up their positions. The ordinances creating the four BISEs need to be amended so that inter-BISE transfers become possible.

The need for establishing a national testing service for providing leadership in developing tests of various kinds and carrying out research in the area of evaluation has long been felt. While the national testing service will pay particular attention to developing and standardising tests in different subjects at the secondary and higher secondary levels, it can also produce aptitude, diagnostic, and personality tests and rating scales for various purposes. At a later stage, it can be entrusted with the task of preparing recruitment examinations and admission tests for professional studies. The training of teachers in test construction and analyzing the results of tests will be an important function of the national testing service. It can also initiate a staff development programme at an advanced level. It would be highly desirable to establish a linkage between the

national testing service and the BISEs so that the quality of examinations can be improved on a continuing basis. Among other functions, the national testing service will publish a quarterly journal on educational evaluation techniques of secondary teachers.

In view of the fact that some of the developed countries do not have a system of external public examinations, there has arisen a concern for de-emphasizing public examinations in Bangladesh. The Bangladesh National Education Commission (1988) recommended abolition of the SSC Examination. Also a suggestion has emerged that to enable those who fail a public examination or drop out of school/college to re-enter formal education, a system of subject-wise examination passes, using letter grades, can be initiated.

Allowing selected institutions maintaining a high level of academic standard and discipline to award their own certificates will set in motion a much desired de-emphasizing of public examinations. Students who would not wish to move into further or higher education may not be required to sit public examinations. Such students will, at the end of their courses of study, have a transcript given by their respective institutions. The importance of public examinations can be further reduced if the award of certificates is based partly on the performance of the students in public examinations (75%) and partly on results of quarterly or half-yearly internal tests given by the educational institutions (25%).

As an increasingly large number of teachers are trained each year in preparing tests, the weight to be given to internal examinations may be increased further to 50%. The process of giving greater weight to internal tests will continue until the end of the Fifth Plan, the abolishing of public examinations (particularly the SSC Examinations) may be considered. As a basis for internal evaluation, all educational institutions may be required to maintain a cumulative record in respect of each student. A better assessment of a student's capabilities will be possible if

his/her official transcript given by the concerned examining body and the cumulative record given by concerned institution are made available to the employer.

The provision of a uniform academic programme consisting of the same courses of studies, the same textbooks, and the same examination for all pupils, irrespective of their mental abilities, is not consistent with the current thinking in education and psychology. The gifted pupils need to be given challenging courses, and the retarded should not be threatened with traumatic academic tasks. It would perhaps be worthwhile to prepare curricula, textbooks, and examinations keeping three ability levels in view: the gifted, the average, and the retarded.

In the United States, some 1.8 million gifted students are enrolled in special education programmes and in China, there are key schools for highly talented pupils selected through nationwide tests. In Bangladesh, the cadet colleges can be converted into schools for the gifted, all expenses of those who cannot afford to pay being paid for by the public exchequer.

It is realized that the evaluation system cannot be radically changed at a time. It would perhaps be desirable to set up one pace-setting BISE which would experiment with new ideas and techniques of evaluation before adopting large-scale changes. Other boards can gradually follow the lead of the pace-setting board. As a step toward de-emphasizing public examinations, selected reputed institutions may be allowed to award their own certificates or diplomas as has already been done in the case of the BITS.

Furthermore, examination reforms need to be introduced in the madrasah stream and at all post-secondary levels. Appropriate task forces can be set up for the purpose. While at the higher levels, the possibility of selective "open book" examinations can be explored, the time required for publishing the results should be reduced, as far as possible, at all levels. Curriculum planning, textbook development, teacher training, and student assessment have usually been

thought of as independent functions or tasks. There is a growing realization that a mechanism can be established linking them in a meaningful chain.

Summary of Major Recommendations

To summarize, the following are the major interventions proposed for improve the evaluation systems:

- professionalizing the BISEs;
- creating a national testing service which will train teachers in test construction on a continuing basis;
- establishing a system of subjectwise examination passes;
- creating a pace-setting BISE to experiment with new methods of evaluation;
- allowing selected institutions to award their own certificates or diplomas;
- basing the award of certificates partly on performance at public examinations (75%) and partly on internal evaluation by the institutions (25%) with greater weight being given gradually to internal evaluation as teachers are trained in test construction; and
- developing a cumulative record in respect of each student by the concerned.

Courtesy: Post-Primary Education Sector Strategy Review '94.

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Education Briefs

Literacy Day on the Air ...

ON International Literacy Day, 8 September 1994, UNESCO, in cooperation with the International Reading Association, Sprint and France Telecom, is organizing a two-hour international teleconference. The multichannel satellite event will feature panels organized in Washington and Paris on the following themes: family literacy and non-formal education; formal education; and education for the future.

Expats Return to Beirut University

by Mounir B Abboud

AFTER more than a decade of civil war raging outside its campus, the American University of Beirut (AUB) is abuzz again. But she is thankful the fighting is over.

One of the more encouraging signs is the arrival of new foreign faculty members, mostly teachers in arts and sciences. "It is an interesting time to be in Lebanon," says Dr Robert Betts. He wants to witness the changes as the country regains stability.

And he is glad to be here, not only because as a teacher he gets to travel around Lebanon but also because he finds Lebanese food and wine excellent.

He is also happy with the AUB library which provides rich regional research resources. Unfortunately, he says, "library facilities appear unchanged since the late 1960s. The stacks still look the same and the system has not yet been computerised."

Dr Betts speaks some Arabic, having studied the language for three years. But he is surprised to hear students conversing in what sounds like native English. He says that most of his students have good levels of English and that he is impressed with the number of students who express interest in class and who are eager to get good grades.

One of the latest faculty appointments, Dr Patricia Nabti is actually no stranger to AUB. She has spent a year here as an undergraduate in an exchange programme in 1968-1969. She returned this year as a professor in cultural anthropology in the department of Social and Behavioural Sciences.

Dr Nabti likes being in Lebanon where "positive changes happen daily." She is not shocked or surprised by the

tremendous destruction of the war, since she and her family had visited the country five times between 1975 and 1987. But she is thankful the fighting is over.

An American-Lebanese, Dr Nabti came to Lebanon hoping to make a positive contribution to the progress and reconstruction of her adopted country. Dr Nabti says she has had a strong sense of commitment to the AUB since she studied here as an undergraduate and is very enthusiastic about being a member of its faculty.

Dr Nadia Maria El-Cheikh is a Syrian with a Columbian citizenship who graduated from AUB in 1985 with a degree in history. After almost seven years away Dr El-Cheikh is glad to see the History Department maintain its high standards. She also notes that the number of graduate students is increasing.

She has returned to AUB not only for emotional ties but so she can take advantage of the AUB library for research. It was an effort for Dr El-Cheikh to readjust to Lebanon, but she is happy with her decision to come back.

She says that after a period of transition, she has been able to carve a new place for herself — with a new position — in an old place. She finds teaching a AUB a pleasant surprise and she is happy with her students' abilities.

Dr Lenod Klushin is a Russian who is in Lebanon and the Middle East for the first time. He joins AUB as a professor in the Physics Department. He says he came to Lebanon because he was curious about what he would find here after more than 17 years of civil war. So far he likes it here.

Dr Klushin likes the campus very much but was disappointed when he did not find any cedar trees. He still has mixed feelings about the destruction he sees around him but seeks comfort from the beautiful view of the Mediterranean.

Dr Paul Bassin is British of Indian origin. He teaches organic chemistry. He is trying to adjust to this new environment and says that he finds it a pleasant experience. It may take him a while before he gets to know the place and the people, he admits.

He says that students are students wherever they are. However, he thinks it will be a while before he gets used to the American system of education practiced at AUB which is very different from the British. He finds it very hard to get from place to place in Beirut because public transportation is not reliable and there are always traffic jams. In his free time, he enjoys the few English speaking programmes on TV, but hopes to learn to speak Arabic soon.

Dr Collins Morrison is another British from Scotland who teaches chemistry. He says he has never taught before since all his work has been in research. He chose AUB because he hoped to gain experience of the American system of education, and it was also an opportunity to do research.

But the most challenging aspect is adjusting to and learning about another country. When he thought of the Arab world, it was in terms of pyramids and guided tours of Arabian Nights and picturesque romantic Arabia. It was difficult for him to imagine Lebanon in terms of war. So far, he also likes it here.

— Depthnews Asia