

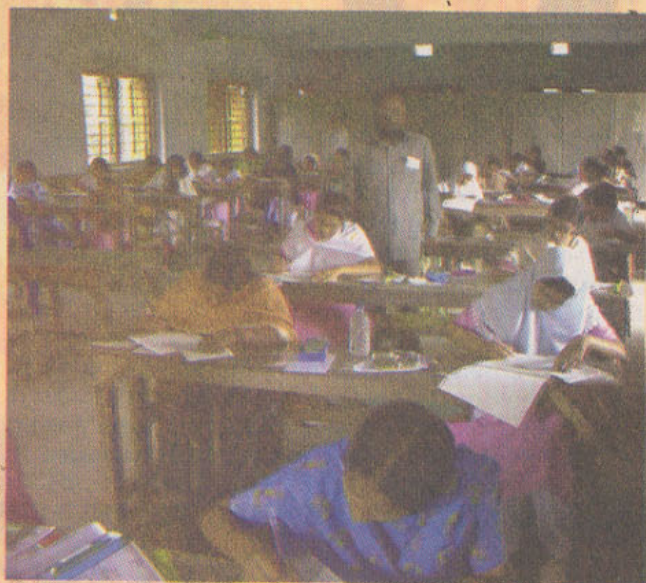
While speaking in the seminars everyone advocates a uniform primary education system, but when it comes to working out an educational policy we suddenly want to keep the existing discriminatory education system going.

Teachers are often forced to teach multiple subjects, which affects the quality of teaching.

refers to the total number of SSC candidates, which she says about a lakh less than that of last year's. The government circular asking school authorities to screen the weaker candidates through test exams and not to allow them to sit for the final has brought down the number of failed students and has also positively affected the results.

Then, of course, the much-hyped anti-cheating campaign led by the State Minister, has also contributed to this healthy pass rate to a certain extent. Abul Hashanat Faruk, Headmaster of Government Laboratory School, which bagged 148 Grade Point Average-5 and figured among the five top schools in terms of highest GPA score-makers, thanks to the government effort for curbing cheating that helped improve the situation. The State Minister's inspection spree in examination centres across the country in the last two years has certainly helped screen the students with the habit of cheating and made this year's dramatic increase in pass rate possible.

Both however emphasised that if such encouraging pass rates are to be maintained or even a higher rate is to be achieved the government will have to make sure that the stringent measures it has initiated do not slacken. But, amidst the hype and celebration one should not lose sight of the complete picture. The number of schools with 100 percent failure still stands at 537. It has come down from 1400 to 537 this year, it certainly is an improvement. Yet, when we take the whole system into account, the number of schools from where not a single candidate made it to the list of the much hyped 50 percent, still stands before us like a rampart. "The government should not only cancel MPOs (monthly pay orders) to those schools, but also



Cheating in the exams has come down but there are more issues to be addressed to bring in real change.

warn those which have less than 5% or 10% pass rates," Faruk suggests. Rowena advocates for regular inspection into both government and private schools to ensure that the teachers are attending classes regularly, following the lesson plan. And she thinks that the management activities need to be monitored as well. "We have even come to know of schools which have no students at all. And, during inspection the school authority hires students from the neighbouring schools to show off. A certain quarter of government