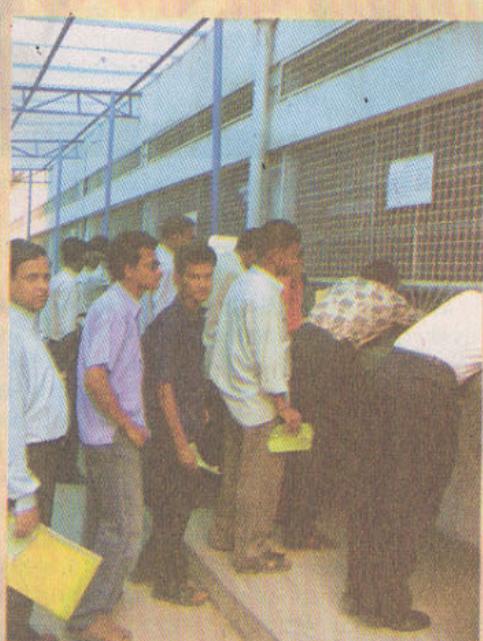


THESE problems aside, some basic questions concerning our education system have to be given attention. Even after 33 years since our independence we have been going by the education system worked out and imposed on us during two consecutive rules of the British and then the Pakistani occupiers. There are different streams at the primary level -- there are some 11 types of primary schools in the country. "The difference among the Kindergarten, government, non-government and madrasa-based educational institutions on the primary level only widens at the secondary level. And this has turned our education sector into a seemingly irredeemable chaos," points out Akmal Hossain, a professor in Dhaka University (DU).

"While speaking in the seminars everyone advocates a uniform primary education system, but when it comes

ing their first eight years of schooling.

Primary and secondary level studies are still largely based on rote learning and students in this system gradually become dependent on private tutors. "The greatest weakness of the system is that most of the so-called good students achieve good results if they can memorise a bundle of things. So, in the end, it all boils down to one thing, which is to taking recourse to private tutoring. "Good results are the fruit of the parents' financial ability to back their children with a regular contingent of private tutors," Hossain asserts. The system does not encourage anything other than rote learning, it hardly takes into account the growth of the intellectual faculty, let alone creativity. Rather it tends to limit the intellectual faculty. "Where would one get the stimulation or inspiration to exercise creativity when one can do very good following a very



to working out an educational policy we suddenly want to keep the existing discriminatory education system going", points out Hossain referring to the most recent education policy headed by ex-DU Vice Chancellor Moniruzzaman Mian. Though there have been some changes in the syllabi, especially in the secondary level text books, they are mostly hurriedly done and ill-planned, thus, fail to bring about the intended positive changes. "How could you suddenly switch over from grammar and translation-based language learning to communicative method when you are working with the same English teachers who are neither familiar with the method nor have received any training to put it into practice," Hossain argues. Besides, we have this tendency of toying with the class-9 and class-10 text books while forgetting that we are dealing with the same students who have come through a different way of learning dur-

streamlined method hinged upon lists of suggestions for exams and guide books?" he asks.

Quality education has become an exclusive property of the city-dweller, says Hossain. "If someone living in a village achieves good result, which happens very rarely, all of us get surprised, because we have long stopped expecting a student living in a village or even in a provincial town to figure among top ranking students. Our first priority should be a uniformed, singular, primary education system, which would be all-inclusive, irrespective of the students' financial capability or the place they live in," Hossain says.

Rejoicing over this year's 50% pass rate will not take us anywhere if we fail to bring in qualitative improvement of our unhealthy, poor, and almost dysfunctional education system.