# Standardising the System

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The education sector in Bangladesh is in trouble. Education is expensive but far from being satisfactory in terms of standards. The rate of dropout of the students at the primary and secondary level is ever increasing. Students do not get quality education in the universities and face unavoidable session jams, especially in many public universities. On the other hand the secondary students are forced to do coaching, since many teachers do not concentrate in the classrooms.

Roughly three streams of education mainstream Bangla medium, English medium and Madrassah-- exist side by side in Bangladesh. However, there are many sub-streams, especially at the primary level. A study says there are 11 existing education systems at the primary level. There is a huge gap between these streams in terms of expense, standard and approach. The existence of the three different education systems are producing citizens who have no common outlook and are contributing to social fragmentation and mutual hostility.

Addressing the existing problems, during the last 38 years since the Independence of the country, so far seven education policies have been formulated, however, none of them have been properly implemented.

Educationists in the country have observed that the existing education system is backward and substandard. They demand an institutional reform in the education sector by making it more inclusive and by improving the standard in general.

The current government has already formed yet another 16 member committee headed by National Professor Kabir Chowdhury to formulate a new policy. The committee is expected to submit the policy within the next couple of months.

Based on the education policy formulated in 2000, which was a reflection of the Qudrat-e-Khuda Education Commission, the committee will incorporate other thoughts to form a global standard policy," the Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid tells The Star, "We have started to work on the education policy so that we get sufficient time to implement the policy. It's more important to execute a policy rather than just spending time for forming new policies."

The Education Ministry, in fact, is focusing on incorporating the existent policies to form a uniform policy. At the same time it is emphasising on vocational training and to take to stem the dropout rates that currently plague the system.

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The Education minister admits that the standard of education has decreased, moreover, higher education is beyond the reach of the common people. "Just for money many poor children are deprived of any education. On the other hand, there are some privileged children who go to schools paying thousands of takas in tuition fees per month. Is it logical? I expect to introduce equivalent schooling system all over the country."

"All the children in the country must have the same schooling. We have to improve the standard at the main stream Bangla medium by improving curriculum and quality of teachers. At the same time the Madrassas and English medium schools in the country must incorporate more subjects on our history, language and culture," the minister adds.

Initially, this year, the ministry has made some attempts at bringing about changes in the curriculum of mainstream Bangla medium schools. "This year the confusing information in our history included in the textbooks will be changed. In the near future, we are going to update the curriculum according to recommendations made by local experts"

"Doing that we plan to emphasise on technology