A better education system

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IT was another dreary day at school and as the teacher's voice droned on and on I stared into space outside the window with my chin propped between my hands. Suddenly a building outside the window grabbed my attention. It was a school building. What made my jaws part and my eyebrows arch was the contrast between the classroom where I was sitting and the dark classrooms where students my age were sitting. Whereas our classroom had more than six lights illuminating the room, their classroom had none and looked dark and almost dingy. Our classroom had an AC and fans to maintain a comfortable temperature while their classroom was humid and uncomfortable. Three to four students were crammed on a single bench in their class, whereas in my classroom I had the privilege to slouch on my own seat. I don't know if it was the change in the teacher's voice or the school building I just saw, but I suddenly sat up and started paying attention in class. But the thought was still at the back of my head, how could someone learn anything in a classroom like that?

Unfortunately, the scene I saw outside the window is not the worst-case scenario. You just have to flip through the newspapers of the past few weeks and you will find numerous articles about how so-and-so school building is falling apart and injuring students and how students are forced to study in open air because they don't have a good school building. Moreover many public schools have so many students jam-packed in one classroom that the teacher is unable to give equal attention to everyone during class. Even in some schools, which do have a suitable study environment the courses taken by students involve memorizing stuff and spitting it out when jabbed in the ribs, and critical thinking, is not in their dictionary.

But then again when you point a finger at someone else, three others point at you. Those of us who have the privilege to have good education should not look at it as a mere privilege but as an enormous responsibility to help others. And since the talk of how education is the backbone of the society never becomes a cliché, let our first priority be to help our nation establish a better education system to grasp the best that future has to offer to us. So next time when you blow out the candles and someone cries out "Make a wish! Make a wish!" wish out loud, I want a better education system in Bangladesh. And I'm sure if you listen closely you will hear the winds of change echoing your words.

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Photo: Farhana Haque Jenny