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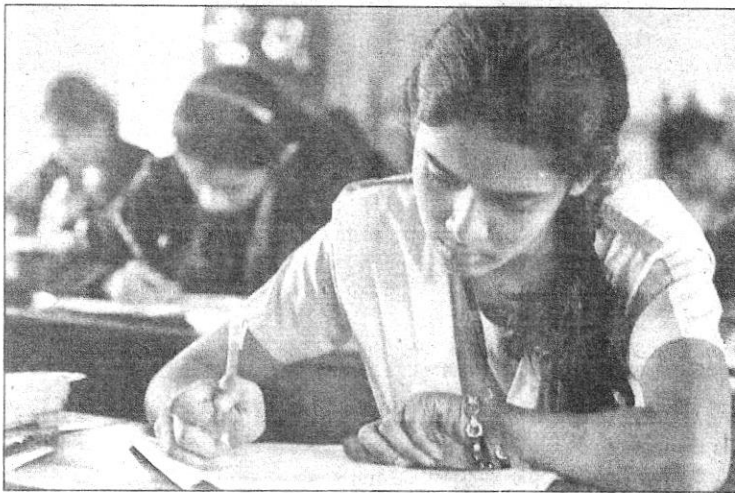
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Rethinking policy on secondary and higher secondary education

THE objective of education is to develop human life comprehensively. It can be said elaborately that the objective of education is to form a constructive and virtuous society showing respect to law and judiciary system, being devoted to society, being inclined to religion and increasing social morality and eradicating crime from society. A constructive society needs knowledgeable and skilled citizens. They are expected to ensure the development and prospect of society through standard management and diligence. They are also expected to earn foreign currencies by increasing export. In addition, they will lead the country to be a prosperous one. The education system has to be rearranged to build such type of citizens. The children will acquire good command of Bangla, English and of respective subjects following the reformed curriculum and syllabus. Thus, they will be able to prepare themselves to face the challenge of ongoing reality. The reformation of the principle of education i.e. curriculum is the foremost necessity to fulfil this objective.

Different medium of instructions are used in secondary and higher secondary education in our country. For instance; firstly, teaching using only Bangla as a medium of instruction; secondly, English as a medium of instruction following foreign national curriculum; thirdly, English as a medium of instruction in English medium institutions following foreign curriculum, and fourthly, teaching Dhakhil as well as Alim gives stress on Arabic language. But considering real perspective, to build productive citizens, we need to ensure that they have a good command of Bangla and English languages. At the same time, subject-based knowledge, especially Mathematics, Science, Business Administration and Computer Science, is also necessary while obtaining degrees at secondary and higher secondary levels. But because of using different languages as medium of teaching at secondary and higher secondary levels, we cannot cope with the reality and our secondary and higher secondary education cannot reach the international standard. Bangla is our mother tongue, so we have to acquire a good command of Bangla. Since English is an international language, we have to master English too. If we do not have a good command of English language, we will remain ignorant of the results of research activities of the developed world. Besides, if learners' proper foundation of English language is not built at the secondary and higher secondary levels, they will have to face an adverse situation while pursuing higher education. Because, the greater portion of the knowledge achieved so far is

As the first step of restructuring the curriculum, an individual research program has to be undertaken under the proper guidance of IER (Institute of Education and Research) of Dhaka University. Through the activities of this research project the curriculum of secondary and higher secondary levels has to be restructured in such a way that it fits the ongoing demand of society and receives the social acceptance as well



contributed by the English-speaking people. Naturally, this knowledge has been kept in books written in English language. So, learning English is inevitable. In this age of globalisation, English has to be learnt to know the development activities of human beings. In many countries English language has occupied the second place after mother language. Considering the importance of English, guardians in our country are naturally inclined to educate their children through English medium. However, there are lots of weaknesses in the syllabus of English medium schools. In the syllabus, importance is given only on English language. As a result, the learners remain weak in the contents of subjects. Being weak in the contents of the subjects, the learners, though they have studied in English medium, cannot get them admitted to medical and engineering colleges. Even, it becomes difficult for them to get the chance of getting any good subject at public universities. So, not having got the opportunity of studying higher education, many of such learners are dropping out. Studying in English medium is very expensive. Only solvent families can afford it. Those who study in English medium cannot acquire good conception of our social culture. As a result, some negative cultures creep into the mind of those learners.

Bangla is the mother tongue of all the people of Bangladesh. There are only two languages in Bangladesh, one is the mother tongue Bangla and the other is the international language English. The problem highlighted here is that achieving many things by teaching with English as a medium of instruction, it seems that we are not achieving anything. Considering the importance of Bangla language, it is a must to restructure the education system.

In Bangladesh, the degrees in SSC and HSC are conferred on students after teaching them with Bangla as a medium of instruction. The students, who learnt through this system of education, can acquire thorough knowledge of the contents of subjects. It may be said that in respect of subject-based knowledge, our students are very near to the international standard. The students, who study in Bangla medium schools, remain very weak in English. This is a negative side of Bangla medium schools. But in Bangladesh, though English is used as a second language, the use of English language is so common that different local and foreign offices use English language extensively for carrying on their official jobs. Besides, so far as the real necessity is concerned, only exporting commodities are not enough for Bangladesh. In addition, we have to export manpower to keep a hold of

the facilities for earning foreign currencies. The weakness in English language, however, hinders the export of manpower. Bangladesh is an import oriented country. We need to import many essential commodities, including medicine. So, before importing, the price of items belonging to different countries has to be assessed. Therefore, it is a must to know English in order to gain success in respect of importing quality commodities in affordable prices. Likewise, there is no alternative to learning English with a view to exporting our products to the international markets. Moreover, the knowledge of English language helps increase our exports and keep a hold of international markets. It means that the English syllabus of secondary and higher secondary levels of Bangla medium has to be restructured to eliminate learners' weakness in English. The learners who obtain the Alim and Dhakhil degrees, which are equivalent to secondary and higher secondary levels, remain weak in Bangla, English, and Mathematics and in subject-based knowledge. These educated fellows can neither manage any good jobs, nor do any profitable standard business. Most of them become social burden. To get rid of this social burden, the Madrasa education syllabus has to be restructured. The subjects namely Bangla, English, Mathematics, Science etc have to be incorporated properly in the syllabus. Finally, such a curriculum has to be structured which is fit for fulfilling the demand of job markets at home and abroad. Eliminating these shortcomings, a curriculum has to be restructured in such a way that learners can master their mother tongue Bangla, international language English and acquire different subject-based knowledge. As the first step of restructuring the curriculum, an individual research program has to be undertaken under the proper guidance of IER (Institute of Education and Research) of Dhaka University. Through the activities of this research project the curriculum of secondary and higher secondary levels has to be restructured in such a way that it fits the ongoing demand of society and receives the social acceptance as well. As a result, the learners of secondary and higher secondary levels will be able to follow an acceptable general and common curriculum for their studies. Only then, the aims and objectives of the new curriculum will be fulfilled. As a result, the learners will acquire necessary skills. So, they will not be considered our social burden. Instead, they will be converted into skilled manpower.

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