

Notes form the Editor

John Richards and Aidan R. Vining, professors at Simon Fraser University in Canada, write about weak performance of students and schools in primary education in Bangladesh in the lead article “Achieving Better Primary School Outcomes in a Context of Weak Education Governance.” They suggest governance measures to address the problem. Their ideas deserve serious consideration as the post-PEDP3 options are considered and in the context of the SDG2030 education targets.

An account of a special effort to improve secondary education performance in three clusters of 15 rural secondary schools with assistance from Volunteers Association for Bangladesh (VAB), a group of Bangladeshis residing in USA, is given by **Dr. Jasimuz Zaman** in “Rural Secondary Education: An Experiment in Quality Improvement.” The writer, a former professor of the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUED), who leads the initiative on behalf of VAB, shows what is possible with a dose of modest funding combined with some dedication and imagination.

Public examinations are inherently discriminatory for students because they are compelled to attend schools of greatly varying quality. The fairness of public examinations and their role in improving education are matters of continuing debate. Aspects of public examinations at primary and secondary levels are presented in two articles.

Mohammad Shahidul Islam, in “Dilemma of the high-stake public examination for primary education in Bangladesh: Can decentralization help?” proposes decentralization of the primary completion examination and more emphasis on school-level formative assessment as a way of changing the high-stake character of the primary school public examination and shifting the focus to teaching-learning from examinations.

The Bangladesh Examination Development Unit (BEDU) -- led by **Robiul Kabir Chowdhury, Jack Holbrook, Chowdhury Mufad Ahmed, Md. Ali Ahsan, and Ahmed Obaidus Sattar Bhuiya** -- discuss some of the weaknesses in the Higher Secondary Certificate Examination in “An analysis of 2015 examination results for selected subjects of three examination Boards.” They recommend standardization of marks across subjects and different examination Boards, regular item analysis, and improvement in setting papers and marking papers.