

# Basic literacy project makes no headway

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A FIVE-YEAR government project on providing basic literacy and life skills to 45 lakh adults and adolescents involving NGOs by 2018 failed to make any headway.

The government could not even select the NGOs or complete other preparations in two years.

In February 2014, the government began implementation of the Tk 453 crore project to provide basic literacy and life skills to people in

the 15- 45 age bracket.

The preparatory work entrusted to the Bureau of Non-Formal Education include recruitment of 1.50 lakh teachers, printing 50 lakh reading materials, said officials.

According to official estimates 35 lakh people above 15, that is 35 per cent of them are still unlettered.

The government took the basic literacy project in the backdrop of the failure of its plan to eradicate illiteracy

*Continued on page 2 Col. 5*

## Basic literacy project

*Continued from page 1*  
 from the country by 2014.

Experts blamed inefficiency and official indifference for the immensely important project clocking so slowly.

Denying the allegation, project director Shafiqul Islam said that they had been waiting for the approval of the revised project which was rejected recently.

All the preparations would be completed soon to implement the project by the 2018 deadline, he said.

Fully funded by the government the Basic Literacy Project would cover 250 upazilas in 264 districts, said officials.

Originally set to be implemented in four phases,

the project envisaged opening 75,000 non formal learning centres in 250 upazillas to impart basic literacy and life skills to males and females in the 15-45 age group.

The project is designed to enable 45 lakh marginalized people living in remote areas in pursuing further education and gather livelihood skills to make them productive citizens, said officials.

Ethnic groups, people living in slums and the hard core poor would be selected on priority, they said.

The project requires the government to select 250 NGOs as partners in providing basis literacy to the target groups.

For each learning centre two teachers-one male and one female would be recruited from local communities.

Male teachers would teach the male learners while the female teachers would attend to the female learners.

Teachers have to have passed the SSC Exam.

A supervisor will be recruited for each cluster comprising of 20 learning centres.

Officials said 50 lakh primers for adult literacy named Amader Chetona: Part-1 and Part-2, and manuals would be used for providing basic literacy to the target groups.

None of the preparatory

work could be completed until now, admitted a high official of the Bureau of Non-Formal Education.

But the project director said, 'We will soon hold exam to recruit teachers.'

Campaign for Popular Education executive director Rasheda K Choudhury blamed inefficiency for the failure to complete the preparatory work on the schedule.

There should be permanent community learning centres and holistic approach for the eradication of illiteracy, said BRAC University professor emeritus Manzoor Ahmed, who works on literacy issues. 11