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Moudud urges mass literacy movement

By A Staff Reporter

Prime Minister and Leader of the House Moudud Ahmed called for launching a social movement for mass literacy to attain the target of "education for all by 2000 AD".

Winding up the two-day discussion on the country's education policy in Jatiya Sangsad on Sunday, he stressed the need for a national consensus on the issue and participation by all irrespective of shades of opinion and political belief.

Apart from the Prime Minister, Education Minister Sheikh Shahidul Islam and the Leader of the Opposition A.S.M. Abdur Rab, Deputy Leader of the Opposition Ehsan Ali Khan, JSD(R) Members Mohammad Shahjahan and Mostafizur Rahman and JSD(S) group leader Shahjahan Siraj.

The Prime Minister said that

removal of illiteracy was one of the eight-point national programme of President Hussain Muhammad Ershad and to make the national programme a success, a combined thrust by all was necessary.

He said that during the two-day deliberations the Members of the Parliament had touched all the important aspects covering the education sector like examination system, sessions jam, effects of nationalisation, administrative lapses and corruption, restoration of conducive academic atmosphere on the campus.

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Moudud urges

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higher education system and autonomy to the universities.

The Prime Minister said that education and literacy were two different things. Mass literacy and higher education should be considered separately. "We should examine whether higher education should be selective", he said.

He said that production was not up to the expectation due to widespread illiteracy among our framers and industrial workers. "We must go for mass education".

Emphasising the need for female education, he said that they should be selected as 'target group'. An educated woman would be more interested in educating her children, he said.

SHAHIDUL ISLAM

Education Minister, Sheikh Shahidul Islam rejected the opposition plea for forming a new Education Commission and said that the report of the last Education Commission headed by Dr. Mofiz Ahmed should be implemented. He regretted that although 10 commissions had been formed since the Pakistan's days, the reports could not be implemented due to stiff opposition from the people. Adding he said, opposition to commission reports during Pakistan days was justifiable.

He said that the various education systems in vogue in the country should be made scientific keeping in view our resource constraints. The main problem in our primary education was huge number of drop-outs. The government had taken up a Taka 656.80 crore project to reduce the percentage of drop-outs by improving the conditions of the school buildings and providing them with trained teachers, better furniture and equipment. About 70 per cent of the country's school going children were now enrolled in different schools, he said.

The Education Minister said that in order to give higher education to the students, two more general universities-one at Sylhet and the other at Khulna would be set up. The area of operation of the Islamic University shifted to its original site at Shantidanga would be further expanded. It had been decided on princi-

ple that a medical university would be set up in the country, he said. Besides, he said, two affiliated universities would be set up and an open air university would also be opened to remove the sessions jam.

The minister said what the government aimed at was reducing the disparity in education between the rural and the urban areas. Stress was on female education and 50 per cent of primary teachers would be taken from women.

The Education Minister said that the salary support to secondary teachers which was now being sent in four instalments in a year would be made monthly instalments. Steps had been taken to remove corruption from the education sector, he said.

The Minister expressed his concern over the happenings in the country's universities and hinted that the ordinance of 1973 giving autonomy to these highest seats of learning might be 'updated'.

The Leader of the Opposition, Mr A S M Abdur Rab, suggested formation of a national education council and adoption of a national plan for achieving the target. He also suggested formation of a Parliamentary committee on education to assist the national council in its activities.

Mr Rab pleaded for introduction of compulsory military education so that the people could defend themselves as well as the country.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition Mr Ehsan Ali Khan (COP.Chapainwabganj) said ever since the independence of Bangladesh many commissions had been set up but unfortunately not a single decision of these commissions had so far been implemented.

Mr Shahjahan Siraj suggested an overall change in the education policy and the examination system. He called for formulating a pragmatic education policy which would fulfil country's requirement and not produce merely unemployed educated youths.