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National consensus must be basis of education policy

Kazi Zafar Ahmed, former Education Minister who resigned Wednesday, said that the future education policy must be framed on the basis of a national consensus, reports BSS.

He said the proposed policy should not be one imposed on the people from above but framed on the basis of the national consensus which would make education "meaningful, democratic, non-discriminative and production-oriented".

The former Minister was speaking at the National Education Advisory Council's workshop at the Jatiyo Sansad Bhavan in Dacca on Thursday morning.

Kazi Zafar said if a national consensus on the proposed education policy cannot be achieved, it will fail to serve the purpose of framing a progressive education policy for the country acceptable to people from all walks of life.

He also expressed the hope that the proposed policy will be framed and announced within the stipulated schedule of three months period. It was a commitment to the people he added.

He said the draft education policy should be framed before the coming parliamentary election and the process of its implementation also be started as soon as it is announced.

The former Minister who was also Chairman of the National Education Advisory Council, said that primary education should be universal compulsory and free. He said the services of the primary school teachers should be governed by Services Rules under the Government.

Thursday's deliberations at the workshop discussed the pros and cons of draft on the proposed policy. Members of the National Education Advisory Council and representatives from different districts and institutions took part in the deliberations.

Mr. Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir, Deputy Commissioner of Jessore, while presenting proposals of his district, raised a controversy when he said that the institutions which have no positive contribution towards education but are only sustained at the cost of public money should be abolished and the money should be spent to improve primary education system.

Kazi Akram Hossain, a leader of Bangladesh Chhatra Union, while participating in the discussions said that bur-

caucracy should be abolished from the academic spheres and emphasised that the spirit of the country's freedom struggle should be incorporated in the proposed education policy.

He said social development—not individual development—should be the basic aim of the country's future education policy.

Kazi Fazlul Huq, General Secretary of Primary Teachers' Association, said that responsibility of the primary education should be vested with the national government not with the local bodies or union councils.

He said if local bodies were given the charge of primary education, it would lead to a situation under which primary education might not get enlightened guidance.

Dr. Anwarul Karim, Assistant Professor, Kushtia Government College, said that religious education should be incorporated in the overall education system of the country.

He said education should also be twined with production and economic activities and it should be ensured that folk culture and heritage become part of the future education system.

He also said that the proposed policy should also ensure economic security to the teachers.

Artist Qamrul Hasan emphasised that national culture and heritage should be preserved and developed through giving indigenous art and culture their due place in the education curricula.

The first working session of the workshop was presided over by Mr. Abdul Baten, State Minister for Education.