

Community mobilisation for village uplift stressed

A three day Workshop on Community Education and Rural Development concluded at Meher Panchagram on Sunday, April 8. The Workshop, jointly organised by Bangladesh Association for Community Education and Swanirvar Bangladesh, was attended by 425 community education innovators, Swanirvar workers and women leaders of landless families from all over the country. Mr Noor Mohammad Mondal, Independence Day awardee for Family Planning was the chief guest and Mr Saifuddin Ahmed, Commissioner, Chittagong Division presided over the inaugural session, says an official source.

In the inaugural message Mr Azizul Haq, Minister for Agriculture welcomed the efforts of the organisers to hold the first Workshop of its kind in a rural setting. He emphasised the necessity of Community mobilisation for total village development and in this context to examine critically the various educational and village development programmes of Meher Panchagram.

Mr Saifuddin Ahmed, Commissioner, Chittagong Division, in his address, stressed the need for literacy and training of manpower for the development activities rather than emphasising brick-mortar construction only in education.

Dr Ellen Sattar, Director, Universal Primary Education Project, Mr MA Chashi, Special Secretary (Swanirvar), Mr M

Ferdous Khan, Director of BACE, Dr M Selim, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Education and Chairman, BACE and Dr MA Sattar, Secretary, Population Control and Family Planning Division presented papers on Universal Primary Education, Literacy through Swanirvar movement, Eradication of Illiteracy, Non-formal Education and Skills Training in the rural areas respectively. The papers were followed by group discussions.

Among others, the following are the main recommendations: introduction of universal primary education in two phases. First phase being upto class II with community support and by appointing preferably local female and part-time teachers; the education system should include non-formal components through civic training, technical skills for development activities Union Parishads, village organisations and schools should combine to eradicate illiteracy, a village-level self-governing organisation must be introduced for all-community education and rural development activities.

Dr M.R. Khan, in his concluding address said that Meher Panchagram has shown a pattern of development with equality in opportunity and improvement of standard of life for all through a total village cooperative system and this should be carefully examined for adoption in the respective village of the participants.