

## Dropout of girl students increases Efforts to promote female education being hampered

NATORE, Apr 9: Girl students have been increasingly dropping out of schools in the district hindering government's efforts to promote female education, reports UNB.

Teachers said poverty, early marriage and social inhibitions including superstition, were factors behind large scale school dropouts of girl students.

The government introduced stipends for female students in the district under Female Secondary Education Assistance Project (FSEAP) to attract girls to schools.

A student of class VI get Tk. 300 a year stipend while class VII and VIII student get Tk. 360 and class IX and X get Tk 920.

But instead of improving

enrollment of girl students, high schools in the district had less students this year than before. The situation in the town is also disgraceful, said a girl school teacher.

A survey conducted at Nobo-Bidhan Girls' School, a prominent non-government educational institution in the town, showed that about 200 girl students were enrolled in this school in 1992, only 54 of them appeared in the SSC examination this year.

M A Haque, headmaster of the school attributed the alarming dropout to early marriage and lack of social and economic security. He also said that the students of this school were mainly from poor families with conservative back-

ground, which encourages early marriage.

According to an official source, only 40 per cent of the 10,000 girl students enrolled at 45 different schools in Sadar thana of the district have been attending classes.

Opportunities for admission of girl students are also limited as there are only two girls' schools in Sadar thana of the district.

Moreover, there are allegations of corruption and irregularities in distribution of stipends which is discouraging poor parents to send their daughters to the schools.

As a result, the particular northern district is lagging far behind others in female education.