

Teachers' due recognition in society govt's aim : Ershad

Far reaching plan for universal primary education

By A Staff Reporter

President and CMLA Lt. Gen. H.M. Ershad on Sunday announced a realistic and far reaching programme of the Government to impart literacy to the people, particularly in the 10-30-year age group, in the 37,000 villages where primary schools are located.

Amid applause, the President also announced that the villages and primary schools which would attain success in this regard, would be awarded.

President Ershad was inaugurating a two-day national convention on policy and plan for universalisation of primary education at the Shishu Academy auditorium. The inaugural function was also addressed by Education Minister Dr A. Majeed Khan and Education Secretary, Kazi Jalaluddin Ahmed.

A total of 580 participants from various disciplines including upazila nirbahi officers, teachers, school managing committee members, education department officials, representatives of NGOs, UP representatives, Government officials and representatives of international organisations are attending the convention.

President Ershad called upon members of the teaching profession and educated section to give a fresh pledge to eradicate

the curse of illiteracy from the society. "Many years have elapsed, but we could not make a breakthrough in the educating the masses", he said. He said "let all of us set a target that within the next four years we can say that 50 per cent of our population is literate".

President Ershad said that the children had the fundamental rights to receive education. "We have to restore the dreamful days for our children for the better future. This can only be possible by extensive expansion of education facilities for the children".

The President said that all the primary schools in the country were nationalised immediately after the independence without having any prior experience and preparations. In the First Five-Year Plan, target was set for the introduction of universal primary education and it was proposed that primary education

would be made compulsory to the 100 per cent children by 1979, he said and posed the question "what we could do in reality?" The rate of admission of the children into schools did not increase and, on the other hand, the number of drop-outs had increased, he said.

President Gen. Ershad said that the Government had taken the universal primary education as the main strategy for building a strong foundation of literacy in the country.

In this regard he said the universal education programme had been taken and was being implemented under the supervision of Ministry of Education. The objectives of the programme included creation of more facilities in the primary schools and increase the number of students particularly girl students improve the academic atmosphere in the educational institutions and check drop-outs and repetition introduction of im-

proved curriculum and text books and raise the qualitative standard of the primary education and minimise the unit cost of education.

The President said that the Government wanted to build up citizens equipped with religious and moral conscience and sense of beauty by integrating education with experience. He said that the Government had taken a number of measures with a view to implement these principles which included creation of better physical facilities in the schools free supply of books and equipment strengthening of school inspection and supervi-

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sion system appointment of necessary number of teachers in-service training for the teachers and turning the primary schools into community learning centres.

President Ershad said that the Government wanted to accord the teaching community their due recognition in the society. The Government he said was also making efforts to solve their financial problems. He said the Government's policy was to respect their hopes and aspirations. The teaching community should also be conscious of their responsibilities to the nation he said. He reminded them that only better financial benefits could not enhance their social position. They would have to earn it by their contribution and dedication to the cause of spreading education and setting up superior standard of morality.

The President said that the immediate goal of the Government was to complete education for five years of at least 50 per cent of the children who reached the age of six years in 1983 by 1987. He said that all out efforts should be made to contain the students who now got themselves admitted to schools, upto class five. He hoped that all concerned including teachers, guardians and opinion makers would perform their due roles in this regard. He said that if the goal of universal primary education over the next five years was achieved, then the level of universal education would be increased to class eight in the second phase.

MAJEED KHAN

BSS adds: Speaking on the occasion, the Education Minister Dr Abdul Majeed Khan said primary education is the foundation of education system of any country. Unless this base is strong, it will not be possible to build an active educated society as required by a nation, he said adding: keeping this in view, the Government has put emphasis on an education system which will be able to meet

the requirements of the country.

The Minister pointed out that although 56 per cent of the school-going children get themselves admitted into schools yet it is regrettable that out of them only 10 to 12 per cent can pass the fifth class. This huge wastage in the field of primary education cannot be tolerated any more, he added.

He said the objective of the present Government is to identify primary education as the basic education level and to build an "education movement" throughout the country to remove the curse of illiteracy from the society. The measures taken in this respect are the expansion and strengthening of primary education and to turn the primary schools as the community learning centres, he added.

The Minister said the Government has been taking some steps to materialise the programme of universal primary education which includes collection of accurate statistics on primary education, appointment of 12,000 primary teachers in vacant posts, regular professional training to education administrators, inspectors and teachers, adoption of a scientific primary education system, turning of all the primary schools into community learning centres and ensuring of proper primary education administration and management at upazila level.

He said the Government has been spending about Taka one hundred crore in respect of salary and other expenditure for primary school teachers. This huge expenditure will be meaningful if we can successfully implement the programme of universal primary education in the country, he added.