

# Proper education, delayed marriage can ensure women's empowerment

## Speakers tell seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Proper education and delayed marriage of adolescent girls can ensure the empowerment of women, speakers at a seminar said yesterday.

Early marriage, which is still common in rural areas, increases the risk of mortality among both the infants and women, adversely affecting the overall development of the country, they pointed out.

The Centre for Mass Education in Science (CMES), a voluntary organisation, in association with Manusher Jonno Foundation organised the daylong seminar on 'The role of adolescents and local support groups for the empowerment of adolescent girls' at the Russian Cultural Centre in the city.

Dr Yasmin Siddiqua, senior manager, client service, AC Nielsen Bangladesh Ltd, said early marriage for girls increases the risks of health problems and deprives the country of economic development.

On the other hand, delayed

marriage might play an important role in population control, she added.

Dr Yasmin called for incorporating life skills course for girls into the national curriculum and raising awareness both at family and community levels to mainstream rural women.

Hosneara Khondker, programme officer of Inter-Cooperation, suggested ensuring coordination among the NGOs, voluntary and private organisations to empower the adolescent girls.

Talking to reporters, Dr Muhammad Ibrahim, executive director of CMES, said the seminar is aimed at informing the support groups of the role and problems of adolescent girls in rural areas.

The girls from rural areas got an opportunity to have their say and the supporting section of the society became aware of the real condition of rural girls, he said.

Dr Ibrahim chaired the second session of the seminar on 'Economic self-reliance for adolescents

and young women in rural areas.'

The first session on 'Advocacy for the empowerment of adolescent girls and young women in rural area' was presided over by Shaheen Anam, executive director of Manusher Jonno Foundation.

Dr Ahmadullah Miah, director, research, Dhaka Ahsania Mission, presided over the third session on 'Advanced adolescents and change makers in social leadership'.

Adolescent girls and youths from Chittagong, Rajshahi, Dinajpur, Tangail and Barguna took part in the seminar.

An exhibition of mushroom products, honey, candle, soap, garments, compost, earthen products and folding tools produced by adolescent boys and girls was also held.

"CMES attempts to empower the adolescents and youths by providing education and imparting income generation skills under its basic and advanced school programmes," Ateshin, CMES senior programme organiser, told The Daily Star.