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Plan for govt pry school in every village underway

Aini Elias

A plan is underway to set up government primary school in each village of the country as part of the present government's drive to eradicate illiteracy by the next ten years, sources the Ministry of Education informed.

The government is also planning to improve the standard of primary education by ensuring quality of teachers and resolving infrastructural problems, the sources added.

The eradication of illiteracy by the next ten years was the election promise of the ruling party Awami League which came to power following a general election held on June 12 last year.

Meanwhile, the government has constituted a high-powered committee headed by renowned educationist Dr Abdullah-Al-Muti Sharfuddin to work on the overall problems of the primary education sector and make recommendations to formulate a national policy on primary education.

At present, there are 37,710 government primary schools and 25,455 non-government primary schools in the country. Of the total non-government primary schools, 19,688 are registered with the Primary Education Directorate, while there are 5,771 non-registered primary schools.

The government now plans to spend more money for primary education on the basis of Dr Kudrat-E-Khuda Commission, Report which 23 years ago recommended that 60 per cent of the total education budget should go to the primary education sector.

Sources in the Education Ministry said that Taka 988 crore 19 lakh 78 thousand were allocated for primary education in the revenue budget for fiscal 1996-97, that amounted to 45 per cent of the total allocation for education sector.

Of the total allocation for primary education, about 550 crore Taka are spent on salaries of primary teachers and the rest is spent on salaries of employees. For repairing and maintenance of buildings of primary school an amount Taka 40 crore has been allocated.

The government has recently taken up plans to introduce a programme to evaluate the performance of the country's primary school teachers.

Sources also said, there is no effective system for evaluating the teachers performances at present and added that government had decided to introduce an evaluation procedure instead of the monitoring system.

At present there are more than
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2,38,839 primary school teachers in the country. Of them, 1,60,103 are government teachers and 78,736 are non-government primary teachers. There is no available statistics on the number of primary teachers working in the unregistered primary schools.

Recently, Prof Muzaffar Ahmed of Dhaka University in cooperation with the Centre for Policy Dialogue carried out a study on the primary education sector.

In his study, he suggested that if the "foundation of our education has to be made strong we need to pay attention to the quality of educators and teaching materials besides improving the physical environment for curricular and co-curricular activities with a more creative and innovative bias."

The study noted that enrolment, particularly the enrolment of female students had increased and the rate of drop-outs has fallen in the recent years.

But the standard of education could not be ensured as was desired under conventional standard, the study observed. It pointed out 50 per cent of the students achieved minimum competence securing only 30 per cent marks in all subjects.