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## 12 lakh children being deprived of primary edn in 16 N dists

NATORE, Dec. 2:—Nearly 12 lakh children in 124 thanas of 16 northern districts of the country are being deprived of primary education due to lack of schools, reports UNB.

According to a survey revealed here recently, there is no government primary schools in 301 villages of Natore, 587 villages in Chapaina-

babganj, 245 villages in Rajshahi, 762 villages in Naogaon, 118 villages in Pabna, 626 villages in Sirajganj, 325 villages in Dinajpur.

The report said the 605 villages in Rangpur, 247 villages in Gaibandha, 120 villages in Joypurhat, 475 villages in Bogra, 885 villages in Thakurgaon, 421 villages in Panchagarh, 185 villages in Kurigram, 137 villages in Nilphamari and 73 villages in Lalmonirhat districts have no primary school.

The survey, conducted by the Social Welfare Department, showed that 12 lakh children of the villages could not avail the facilities of government's free and compulsory primary education for want of schools.

Official sources said there were some 42,31,000 school-going children, including 15,72,000 girls, in these areas.

At the beginning of the last academic year, they said, about 30,67,000 children were admitted to different primary schools. But 25 per cent of them later left their schools due to economic hardship of their families and negligence of the their guardians.

According to another survey conducted by a local NGO, poverty-stricken guardians were found more interested to send their children for odd jobs like maid servant, cowboys, day labourers and rickshawpulling instead of sending them to schools.

The Food for Education Programme taken up by the government failed to meet the demand of the school-going children in the areas, the report said.