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Need for achieving primary education target stressed

Speakers at a discussion on Thursday underscored the need for uplift of the socio-economic condition of the people to achieve the goal of compulsory primary education programme, reports BSS.

The discussion on "introduction of universal primary education in Bangladesh", was held at the United Nations Information Centre in Dhaka under the auspices of Bangladesh United Nations Association (BUNA).

Eminent scientist and BUNA President Prof Innas Ali presided over the discussion while renowned educationist Dr. Abdullah Al-Muti Sarfuddin presented the key-note speech.

University Grants Commission Chairman Prof. Shamsul Haq, Dr. Neelima Ibrahim, Dr. Mohammad Moniruzzaman, Director of ADAB, Mrs. Rashida Chowdhury, UNDP Programme Organiser Mrs. Melia Ali and BUNA Secretary General Syed Ahmed Hossain also spoke on the occasion.

The speakers hailed the Government for introduction of compulsory primary education in the country. At the same time, they observed that the programme could not be made success by mere slogans. "It needs correct and practical approach to attain the objective", they added.

Dr. Inhas Ali said social and political stability was essential to make a complex and difficult programme like primary education a success.

Mr. Innas Ali said that the duration of compulsory primary education should be of eight years instead of five years. "It is not possible to impart meaningful knowledge in five years-the duration should be at least eight years," he added.

Mr. Ali said that school education should be totally based on employable skill so that people could be turned into human resources.

He said that the children could not be taken to schools by promulgating laws for using force. They can be attracted through motivation and incentives, he added. In this connection Mr. Ali said that the Government may raise a "special fund" from where the poor parents of school going children can be given some subsidies.

Dr. Al-Muti Sarfuddin suggested an uniform system of education in primary level. The proposal for introduction of three languages-Bengali, English and Arabic in primary level is not only illogical or meaningless but also contrary to the country's constitutional provisions, he added.

Dr. Sarfuddin said that from Dhanmondi to Uttara, hundreds of schools had been set up for implementing primary education programme. These schools, mostly bearing English names, are inclined to adopt the children with western way of life. "We have to be cautious while going ahead with the implementation of compulsory primary education programme," he added.

Giving a statistical break-up of the existing educational institutions of the country Dr. Sarfuddin said that instead of Government and private primary schools, a uniform system of education should also be at the maktabs, madrasas and kindergarten schools to streamline the country's primary education system.

He suggested that the ratio of female teachers in primary levels should be increased so that the responsibility of building the new generation could be given to the mothers.

Prof. Shamsul Haq expressed his optimism over the success of primary education programme. "This time, I think that the Government is sincere and determined to make the programme a real success," he added.