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Steps to status of

State Minister for Women and Children affairs Mrs. Sarwari Rahman in Dhaka on Tuesday said the present BNP government had been taking genuine and effective steps to improve the status of women, reports BSS.

Efforts are also being taken to integrate women both at micro and macro levels in the social and administrative arena, the State Minister said while addressing as the chief guest a discussion.

The discussion was arranged in connection with the women's week, being organised by Ambassador of France Jean Michel Lacombe and his wife Myriam Lacombe as part of their welfare activities since their arrival in Bangladesh.

Renowned French Journalist and Writer on Women's Affairs Mrs. Menie Gregoire, now in Dhaka to take part in the programmes of the week, presented the keynote paper at the discussion on "evolution of women in the European countries and its consequences".

Leading feminist activists and female personalities working on welfare of women took part in the discussion, held under the auspices of the Centre for Scientific and Technological Information (CESTI) of Alliance Francaise.

Mrs. Parveen Ahmed, founder member of "Women for Women Research and Study Group" made an introduction of the discussion and worked as the moderator of the open discussion at the session.

Ambassador of France Jean Michel Lacombe and Director of Alliance Francaise Xavier Bares also spoke on the occasion.

Mrs. Sarwari Rahman said that realising the fact that education of women played a very important role for the advancement of women's condition and status, the government had adopted a number of measures specially for spreading education amongst women.

These, she said, included compulsory primary education, free education upto eighth grade for girls outside municipal areas, free education for girls,

an extension of credit
production programme for
women, settling up of working
hostels for low income women
job seekers as well as for working
women, day care centres for
children of poor working
women, special women's concern
programme to deal with
destitution, violence and legal
aid.

The State Minister, however, noted that despite the constitutional provisions and rights women in Bangladesh had not been able to enjoy desirable status in society.

She lauded the efforts made by Mrs. Menie Gregoire in establishing the rights of women in France.

Mrs. Rahman thanked the Ambassador of France and his wife for organising the women's week.

Mrs. Menie Gregoire said no society or country could attain real progress without the liberation of women and their accession to equality.

In her key-note paper she analysed the historical perspective of the struggle of French women in establishing their rights.