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Education facilities to mentally retarded urged

FARIDPUR, Oct 3: The first regional conference of the Society for the Care and Education of Mentally Retarded, Bangladesh (SCEMRB) held here on Friday called for providing education facilities to the mentally retarded as part of government strategy to achieve universal education for all citizens by 2000 A.D. reports BSS.

The conference presided over by Alhaj Firozur Rahman President of Faridpur SCEMRB branch was attended by 21 representatives from SCEMRB branches in Khulna, Bagerhat, Kushtia, Bhola, Barisal, Jessore and Faridpur. The conference was inaugurated at the local "Asha School Bhaban" here by the Deputy Commissioner K.M. Nurul Huda as chief guest who in his speech hoped that the conference would help in creating mass awareness among the people and contribute to the welfare of the mentally retarded among others. The inaugural session was also addressed as special guests by D.P. Barua, President of SCEMRB, Dr. Gyasuddin Molla, Secretary General, SCEMRB and Advocate Mosharraf Hussain, Member of Parliament. Eighteen participants in the main working session lasting for nearly three hours under the chairmanship of D.P. Barua, President of the SCEMRB emphasised the rights of the mentally retarded for special education.

Ahmed Jamal, Joint Secretary of SCEMRB Faridpur branch presented the keynote paper on the problems in this field and suggestions for their education and training.

Speakers called for adequate support from the government for incorporating the rights of the mentally retarded in the programme for universal education for all, legislation in the Jatiya Sanghad to protect and promote the rights of the disabled including the mentally retarded, survey for iden-

tification of these disadvantaged group throughout the country, formulation of a special curriculum based on retardation of each individual and creation of mass awareness.

In his presidential speech D P Barua said that the rights of mentally retarded in the families and the society in all fields were being highlighted in the context of Un-sponsored International Year of the Family, 1994. He said, a national policy for the disabled including the mentally retarded is being formulated by the Social Welfare Ministry of the government with the participation of NGO's working in this field to ensure their rights in various fields.

Mr Barua said, the government strategy of education for all has in principle accepted the rights of the large number of disabled including the mentally retarded in the plan for universal education. He said the SCEMRB as the national interest organisation shall have to take responsibilities to work as a pressure group for realising the rights of the mentally retarded. Discussants in the workshop included Mosharraf Hussain MP, Mansurul Alam, Secretary, Barisal Branch, Dr Abdul Mannan, Secretary, Bhola Branch, Meer Shawkai Ali, Secretary, Bagerhat branch, Masuda Begum, Principal of Asha School of Faridpur, Prof Nargis Begum, Secretary of Jessore branch, Mohammad Shahjahan, Treasurer Faridpur branch, Advocate Tawhidur Rahman, Treasurer of Jessore branch, ASMA Akhtar Banu, teacher from Kushtia; Professor Nurul Islam, Treasurer of Khulna Branch SCEMRB Secretary General Dr Gyasuddin Molla, first Joint Secretary General, CDR (rtd) A. J. M. Hamed Hossain, Organising Secretary Sajeda Kabir, NEC members, MA Shafi Majumdar, Shahara Banu, Salam, M Faizullah and Mazharul Karim.