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President Hussain Muhammad Ershad speaking at the opening ceremony of the central office of Bangladesh Shikkhak Samity.

Mass literacy constitutional commitment: Ershad Education key to human resources development

President Hussain Muhammad Ershad on Monday inaugurated the Education Week saying that the fundamental provisions of the country's Constitution was commitment to mass literacy and universalisation of education, reports BSS.

He said there was no substitute for education in building a society and it was the key to the development of human resources. Education removes the curse of ignorance and illiteracy while it is looked upon as an indispensable part of the development process, he said.

President Ershad said keeping this in view education was given

top priority all over the world. In Islam, he pointed out, education has been ordained farz or mandatory for both men and women.

The inaugural function held at the auditorium of Bangladesh Shilpkala Academy was also addressed by Education Minister Sheikh Shahidul Islam and Education Secretary Hedayet Ahmed.

Vice President Justice A K M Nurul Islam, Speaker of Jatiya Sangsad Shamsul Huda Chowdhury, Prime Minister Moudud Ahmed, Ministers diplomats and high civil and military officials were among those who attended the function.

The President said as a result of its positive role in international affairs Bangladesh had been able to gain a special place of honour in recent times. "We have faced the devastation of one of the worst floods of this century and withstood the ravages of the cyclonic storm with considerable courage and fortitude" he said.

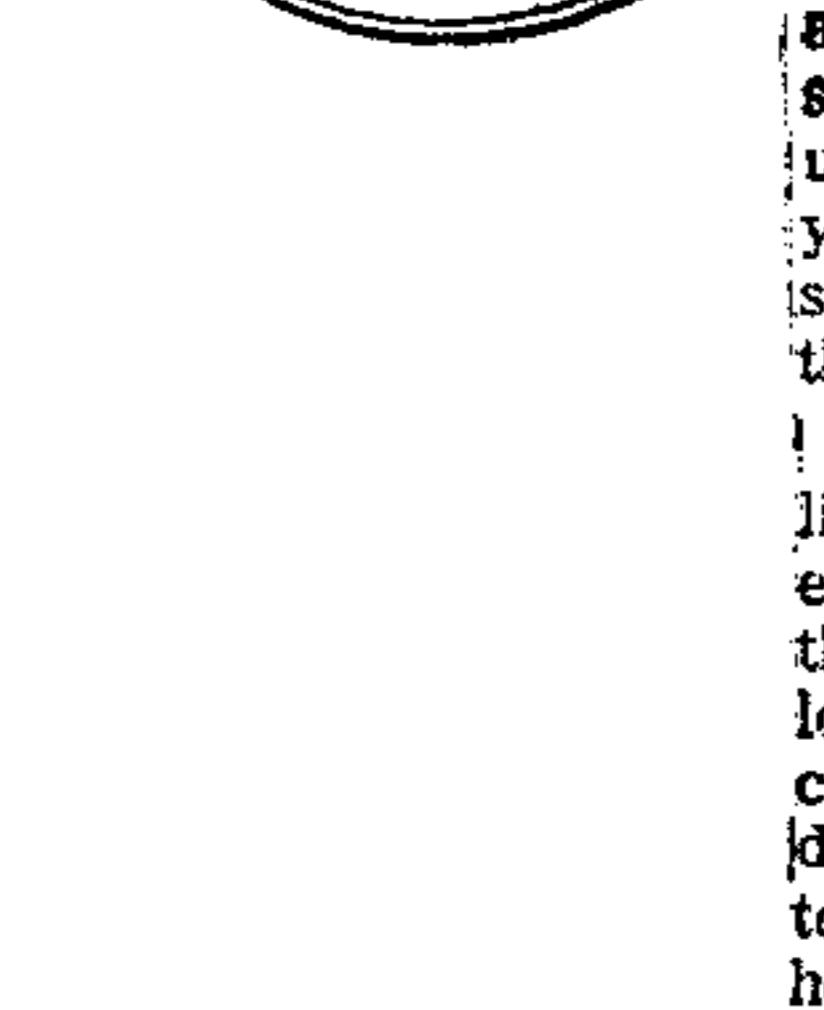
He said the nation had to uphold this spirit in all spheres of the national life and added: "If we can develop ourselves into an educated nation, only then, I think, we shall attain our goal."

Referring to the new awareness that had been generated in

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Mass literacy

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all walks of the national life President Ershad said as a result of untiring efforts of last seven years "We have been able to instill a sense of self-confidence in the heart of the people."

He said with a view to fulfilling the pledge made by his government for national development the country needed a well-developed system of education. In this context he said a few significant decisions had been taken in order to attaining this broad objective, he said.

DECISIONS

Elaborating the decisions, he said, these are:

(a) Enhancement of the subsidised pay and allowances for teachers and other employees of non-government educational institutions and formulation of policies relating to these matters.

(b) Reformation of the examination system by introducing objective questions at the Secondary School Certificate level.

(c) Introduction of approved text books for English medium schools and thereby bringing about a modification in keeping with our national heritage, culture and religion.

(d) Improvement of the standard of education by framing rules and regulations for recognition and affiliation of educational institutions.

(e) Taking necessary alternative measures for development of education instead of nationalisation of educational institutions.

(f) Establishment of an Inter-Education Board Co-ordination Council.

(g) Adoption of definite measures for selection of examination centres and conduct of examinations.

(h) Prescribing more than one textbook at the secondary level.

(i) Making religious studies education compulsory at the Secondary School Certificate Examination.

(j) Introduction of English as a compulsory subject from Class-I to Class-XII.

(k) Discouraging private coaching with a view to improving class room teaching.

President Ershad said the Government had attached due emphasis to education along with other development activities for improvement of our national life. With this end in view allocation was enhanced for education sector was Taka 285.91 crore was allocated for the education sector in 1982-83 fiscal year and it had increased to Taka 1156.86 crore in current (1988-89) year, he said.

Explaining the Government

programme for implementation of its commitment "Education for all by the Year 2000", the President said 51 development and reformation projects were taken up in the field of education. For implementation of these projects by 1990 the Government had allocated Taka 1170 crore under the third five year plan.

The President said the gap in

the standard of education prevailing in the urban and rural areas was narrowed down. He said initiatives were taken to raise

the number of female teachers

to 50 per cent in the primary schools and efforts were being

made to increase the enrolment

of female students at the same

level.

HISTORIC RESPONSIBILITY

President Ershad said the Gov-

ernment had carried out a his-

toric responsibility by making

the highest allocation for edu-

cation sector in the current budg-

et. As a result he said opportunity in

the education sector had increased

manifold. The respected mem-

bers of the teaching community

were now enjoying increased fa-

cilities and a new horizon of pos-

sibilities was opened before our

students who are future leaders

of the country he said.

Stressing the need for utilising

education for the welfare of so-

ciety the President said poverty

and backwardness could be re-

moved through a life oriented

education system. In this connec-

tion, he quoted an advice of

Shaikh Saadi to his pupils say-

ing, "If you fail to implement in

your practical life what you have

learnt you are not truly educat-

ed". With this objective he said

the campus should be made free

from terrorism which itself is

destructive. To ensure a welfare

oriented education system befit-

ting an independent nation, teach-

ers, students, guardians, educa-

tional administrators and all poli-

tical affiliations irrespective of their

political affiliations must be consci-

ous of their collective responsi-

bilities he added.

The President hoped that the

teachers, educational administra-

tors and all other concerned peo-

ple would review the problems

prevailing in our education sys-

tem during the education week

and make recommendations for

improvement. Referring to a se-

minar on "Education Environ-

ment and Examination System"

the President said reforms in our

examination system have become

unfair means at the examination

centres. "If we cannot stop this

we are bound to face a bleak

future" he said.

Later the President inaugurat-

ed an "educational exhibition"

where 20 stalls by different edu-

cational organisations were open-

ed.