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Compulsory primary education as movement urged

Ershad pledges 50 pc literacy

DHAKA, May 20 (BSS): President Hussain Muhammad Ershad today called for creating a social and national movement to achieve the objective of making the compulsory primary education and free education up to class eight for girls in the rural areas a success.

President Ershad said he wanted to see that illiteracy was removed from the society and at least 50 per cent of the country's population become educated by the end of his tenure as President if he was elected for another term in the next Presidential polls.

He said it was a commitment of his government to the nation to remove the curse of illiteracy from the society and in order to achieve the objective it was necessary to integrate all the educated people with this process.

The President, who is the Chief Adviser to the National Education Advisory Council, was speaking at the first meeting of the Council held at the committee room of the Interna-

tional Conference Centre (ICC) here.

Prime Minister Kazi Zafar Ahmed, who is the Chairman of the Council, also spoke on the occasion while a good number of members participated in the discussions which considered various steps for making the programme of compulsory primary education a success. Adviser to the President on Primary Education Mansur Ali Sarkar was present.

The President said the formation of the National Education Advisory Council was a significant step in the national life. He said with a view to achieving the objective of "education for all by the year 2000" his government had taken two

important decisions—introduction of compulsory free primary education and free education for girls upto class eight outside municipal areas.

He said in the past many commissions were formed on education and they prepared many reports but the literacy rate did not cross more than 22 to 25 per cent. He said keeping this reality in view, we did not want any programme which could not be implemented. We want cooperation and suggestion of all to make the limited programme taken to remove illiteracy a success.

President Ershad said there was only ten years left to start the year 2000. We all must work hard to accomplish the task of 50 years in 10 years time, he said adding, otherwise we would not be able to attain the capability to enter the coming century.

He referred to Japan where there were no education or technology and said but it introduced compulsory primary education in 1960 and we could see the result. Today, he said, Japan was one of the leading countries of the world in all fields.

The President said the gigan-
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