

Legal measures must for mass literacy plan

By A Staff Reporter

Necessary legal measures to implement the plans for compulsory universal free primary education, and mass-literacy by 1985 were urged at the workshop on "removal of illiteracy from Bangladesh by 1985" on Wednesday.

The participants at the workshop demanded that an official announcement in this regard should come by February 21, and the laws to be enacted should come into force by March 26 this year.

The workshop also called for expansion of the National Mass-literacy Council with inclusion of representatives from related ministries and non-government organisation working in the field. The council would direct

the authorities concerned to implement the Government policies.

Meanwhile the formation of mass-literacy committees at district, thana, union and village levels representing the various organisations participating in the mass-literacy drive was emphasised. Such committees would be responsible for implementation of the programme in their respective areas.

The workshop underlined the need for adequate campaign through the mass media to popularise the mass-literacy drive among the people with a view to turning it into a national movement.

Other recommendations that were put forward included: speedy supply of primers and follow-up reading materials for learners, and establishment of village-level libraries for the purpose; establishment of an institute for research and evaluation of the programme etc; training of literacy workers at all levels; and necessary financial allocations to the non-gov-

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ernment organisations and agencies working for mass-literacy in the basis of their activities.

On Wednesday two papers were presented by Dr Mizanur Rahman Shelley, President National Advisory Council, Bangladesh Literacy Society, and Mr Nawajish Ali Khan of Bangladesh Television in the afternoon and the morning sessions respectively.

CO-ORDINATED EFFORTS

In his paper Dr Mizanur Rahman Shelley pointed out that the key to the successes of mass-literacy programmes in other developing countries like Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and Burma was the properly coordinated efforts of the youth and women communities and the non-government social welfare organisations.

Government programmes inspired rather than creating obstacles in the formation and existence of such organisations in those countries, he said.

He said that socio-economic development programmes in countries like Bangladesh were affected not only due to lack of economic and organisational strength, and proper management, but also because of the absence of sincerity. If sincerity was available at the political level, it was not seen in the upper echelon of the administrative machinery. Again sincere efforts at lower levels are often demolished at upper levels due either to political or group pressures, he said.

Dr Shelley called for utilising the services of the Jatiya Juba Sangstha, Jatiya Mohila Sangs-

tha, Boy Scouts Girls Guide, and other voluntary organisations and agencies for achieving mass-literacy in the country. He suggested that necessary changes in the relevant administrative structure and management should be brought about for the purpose.

Meanwhile, Dr Shelley advocated the case to extending financial support to the literacy workers on the basis of their activities. He said that the ministries of youth development, women affairs, social welfare, etc., could earmark a certain percentage of their development budget for mass-literacy.

He also suggested an organisational framework for strengthening the mass-literacy drive. There could be a national co-ordination council headed by the President with a number of sub-committees under it for performing specific tasks.

The afternoon session, presided over by Mr Azharul Haq of Planning Commission, was addressed by Dr Delwar Hossain and Messrs Khan Alaudin, A.K.M. Shahidullah, Matiur Rahman, Fahmida Hafiz, Asoke Chakrabarti, Hajera Khatun, Abdul Quddus, Abul Kassem, Sandwip, Md Osman Ghani and Jalaluddin among others.