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## Govt plans to meet shortage of teachers for mentally retarded

Education Minister Barrister Jamiruddin Sircar Friday said the government was trying to include education of the mentally retarded children under the programme education for all by the year 2000, reports BSS.

Inaugurating the 11th national conference of the Society for the Care and Education of Mentally Retarded, Bangladesh (SCEMRB) in Dhaka the Minister said the government would also consider setting up a cell for the education of the mentally retarded children in his ministry.

He expressed the confidence that illiteracy would be eradicated from the country by the year 2000 and sought cooperation of all including guardians, educationists, philanthropists and social workers to achieve this target.

Presided over by the President of SCEMRB, D.P. Barua, the inaugural function was held at the auditorium of the National Institute of Mentally Retarded (NIMR) at Eskaton. It was also addressed by former President of the SCEMRB Alamgir M A Kabir, former Minister M Azizul Huque, Acting Secretary-General of SCEMRB Jawaherul Islam Mamoon, Second Vice-President Advocate Sheikh Kamaluddin, First Vice-President Dr M Lutfur Rahman and Karl Johan Haanes, Advisor of

NFPU-Norwegian Association for Mentally Retarded based in Dhaka.

President Abdur Rahman Biswas and Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia in messages of congratulations wished success of the programme and urged formulation of suitable programmes for education of the mentally retarded.

Messages were also received from President of NFPU-the Norwegian Association for the Mentally Retarded which supports programmes of SCEMRB.

In his speech Barrister Jamiruddin Sircar said the government is conscious of the need for working out appropriate programmes for the education of mentally retarded as part of their rights to education.

He said the programme should also be undertaken to meet the shortage of trained teachers for the mentally retarded.

In his presidential speech Mr D.P. Barua strongly pleaded for incorporating the rights of mentally retarded in the programme "education for all by 2000" launched by the democratically elected government. Referring to the commitment of the government for universal primary education for the children and mass education for the adults, he urged opening of special education classes for the mentally retarded in all government primary schools.

In his address of welcome Mr. Alamgir M.A. Kabir suggested setting up of a cell for mentally retarded in the Ministry of Education and provide support to the SCEMRB in running its educational programmes.

Mr. Azizul Huq, a former Minister in his keynote paper at the conference strongly pleaded for launching awareness programme for establishing the rights of the mentally retarded. He urged practical measures for providing education to the mentally retarded on a wide scale and training a special type of teachers for them.

Referring to the decision of the world conference for education under the auspices of the United Nations, he said Bangladesh as a signatory to this declaration is committed to provide basic primary education to all including mentally retarded by 2000 A.D.

The concluding session of the conference in the afternoon held in the same venue was attended by Prof. Emajuddin Ahmed, Vice Chancellor of Dhaka University as chief guest and presided over by A.H.K. Morshed Chairman of Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies and a former Foreign Secretary.

During the two and half hour of the session, Prof. Nazimuddowla Chowdhury, an eminent Psychiatrist, Mr. Glas Kamal Chowdhury, President of BFUJ, Mr. Azizul Huq, a former Minister and representatives to branches of SCEMRB took part in the discussion.

Earlier the recommendations formulated in the SCEMRB workshop held on January 14 was read out in the session.