

## A question of education

THE three-day seminar on "Education for All" sponsored by UNESCO, UNICEF and the World Bank concluded in Dhaka last week. The conference adopted a number of important resolutions. A series of seminars will be held in eight countries before the international

conference to be held in Bangkok in March next. President Ershad inaugurating the Dhaka seminar, said that universal education was vitally linked to development processes in all third world nations.

But one is pained to note that there are over 100 crore people around the globe who have not been blessed with the light of knowledge and the number regrettably is mounting. President Ershad was honest in admitting that about two-thirds of the children of school going age in Bangladesh were working in fields and factories instead of going to school to earn their bread.

Wadi D. Haddad, Director, Bureau of the coordination of the operational activities of the UNESCO rightly pointed out that the lessons of the past three decades clearly indicated that the success of economic and socio-cultural developments was wholly dependent on the knowledge and the skill of the people.

There is ample scientific evidence

of the contribution of basic education to social and economic development. Primary education is known to have helped in improving the productivity of the workers and providing necessary skills for self-employment and entrepreneurship.

The scheme of universal free primary education in Bangladesh has often faltered leading one to question the efficacy of the plan. It has too frequently been altered but the ultimate results have remained the same. The scheme has not made any significant headway, to instil a sense of confidence.

There has to be a concerted drive to improve the situation in the education sector. It is not primary education alone that requires urgent attention. The whole gamut of education calls for a comprehensive scrutiny. This is vitally important for the nation. And let there be no let-up in the effort. Nothing would be more suicidal for the nation than ignoring the needs of education.