

Tk 44 cr WB loan for non-formal edn project

The World Bank on Thursday announced the approval of a 10.5 million US dollars (about Taka 44 crore) loan for a non-formal education project in Bangladesh which will provide "second chance" education to 25 lakh illiterate adolescents and young adults between the ages 15 to 24 reports BSS.

Total cost of the project is 54 million US dollars. The credit will be provided by the International Development Association (IDA), the bank's concessional lending affiliate, according to a press release issued by the World Bank's resident mission in Dhaka.

The beneficiaries will be selected from 30 districts with the lowest literacy rates, which by implication are also likely to be the poorest districts and at least half of them will be women. Programmes like basic literacy, numeracy and life skills including nutrition, hygiene, family planning, civil rights and income generating activities will thus bring substantial pay-offs for the country in terms of increased economic productivity, the press release said.

The projects' objectives are: expand and improve nonformal education programmes to reach

an estimated 25 learners in the targeted group, strengthen institutional capacity to deliver programmes through Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) and the district administrations and help the government establish a nonformal education system that is capable of delivering effective largescale literacy programme at affordable costs.

The project will be parallel-financed by Asian Development Bank (ADB) as the lead agency. The press release said this is unique to the region and will put together the strengths of the two banks with ADB providing 26.7 million dollars. While Bangladesh Government will provide little less than twenty percent (10 million dollars), Swiss Development Corporation will extend 3.8 million dollars.

The government of Bangladesh has recognized the limitations of the formal school system to address the magnitude of illiteracy in the country and set ambitious targets to increase the literacy rate from 33 percent to 62 percent by the turn of the century through a massive national non-formal literacy programmes. Through this project the World Bank together with ADB will help realize this goal, the press release said.