

Mental development thru' motivation urged Illiteracy main cause to adolescent dropout

Staff Correspondent

Speakers at a seminar on Thursday identified illiteracy and indifferent attitude of parents towards the value of education as the major causes behind adolescent dropouts and non-enrollment. They stressed the need for mental development among the people particularly the poor through social motivation to stop adolescent dropout and gear up enrollment of children in schools.

Organised by the Centre for Mass Education in Science (CMSE), the inaugural session of the seminar entitled "Problems of and Programmes in education and livelihood skills for Adolescent Dropouts and Non-enrolled" was chaired by Secretary of Primary and Mass Education Division Dr. Saadat Husain. Executive Director of CMSE Dr. Muhammad Ibrahim delivered the address of welcome at the function held at BIM auditorium.

Addressing the seminar Dr. Saadat Husain said adolescent dropout and non-enrollment is now the vital problems in the education sector. He said government along with a number of NGOs was trying hard to stop adolescent dropout and increase enrollment of children to make the country completely illiteracy free by the year 2003.

The secretary informed that the percentage of gross enrollment was 96 while the net enrollment was 84 and the dropout rate was below 26 per cent in the primary level.

"The literacy rate is now 56 per cent in our country and it will be 60 per cent by the end of this year", he said adding that the literacy rate in Pakistan is only 38 per cent.

Mentioning the government's target to make the country illiteracy free by the year 2003, Dr. Husain said six districts - Lalmonirhat, Chuadanga, Rajshahi, Naogaon, Nilphamary and Kushtia have already been declared illiteracy free.

He identified low attendance of students in the school as the one

of the major hurdles in gearing up the literacy rate. "Enrollment is higher but only 45 to 65 per cent students attended to their classes regularly", he said and added that the low attendance ultimately leads to dropout.

The secretary said about 99 per cent teachers remain present in their schools but seemed to be in a hurry to get batch at home. "This sort of negligence by teachers is also responsible for some dropouts," he observed.

The day-long seminar, held in three sessions was addressed by Dr. Mahmudul Alam, Khandaker Shahidul Islam, Hassan Banu Daisy, Dr. M. Anwarul Haque, Kazi Afroz Jahan Ara, Sharmin Farhat Ubaid, Dr. Abdullah-Al-Mahmud, S.M. Hadiuzzaman, Dr. M.B. Zaman and Donald Becker. The first session was chaired by Dr. Saadat Husain while the second and third sessions by A.N.M. Yusuf and Kazi Rafiqul Alam.

The speakers said the adolescent dropouts and non-enrollment were high in poorer segment of the society, as most of them are illiterate and quite indifferent to the value of education. The gender discrimination of girls in the society is also another reason for adolescent dropouts, as many parents simply do not feel that the girls in the family should continue to go to school.

They put emphasis on the need for social motivation of the people, community participation and special initiatives for disadvantaged groups. The speakers underscored the need to ensure accountability and transparency of the teachers and all concerned.