

10 million to get basic education during FFYP

A Times Special

About 10 million people of different age groups will be given basic education during the Fourth Five Year Plan (FFYP), according to reliable sources. These people will be brought under Mass Education Programme (MEP) to improve the overall literacy situation in the country.

Two categories, adolescents between 11 and 14 years and youths between 15 and 35 years will be brought under MEP. The number of adolescents has been set at 3 million as there will be opportunities for them for lateral entry into primary schools.

MEP is designed to provide support to development efforts.

The proposed measures to increase level of literacy in the country will be implemented through Upazila Parishad, NGOs and Mass Education Through Small Local Organizations (METSLO). Plans are also under consideration to include cooperatives, religious bodies and women's groups.

The Third Five Year Plan (TFYP), which ends in June this year, had the target to cover 2 million people. But only about 216 thousand were covered upto December 1989: 64 thousand through 27 Upazila Parishads, 96 thousand by NGOs and 56 thousand under METSLO project.

Poor performance of the literacy programme during the TFYP has raised questions about its effectiveness. People involved in the programme

claim disruption of the programme at different times over the years and a change in policy priorities were responsible for such a poor performance.

MEP was launched in 1980-81 during the Second Five Year Plan (SFYP), with the target to cover 40 million people by 1985. But it was discontinued in 1983 because of inherent weaknesses and poor performance, according to an evaluation made in 1982.

MEP was again included in FFYP and launched in 1987. Although the programme was officially inaugurated on 8 September 1987, the implementation started in February 1988. Since then, target fulfilment has eluded the planners.

Considering the low level of

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achievement of MEP, the government is considering emphasis on nonformal primary education during FFYP. MEP will continue to be a part of nonformal primary education, which will be implemented by both government and non-government organizations.

The government is also considering proposals to set up a Directorate of Non-formal Education and an Institute of Non-formal Education during the FFYP to implement MEP, according to sources in the Planning Commission.

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