

New literacy programme within this month

Staff Correspondent

The Ministry of Education will launch a fresh literacy programme for 35 lakh people in the 64 districts of the country within this month, an official source said.

The literacy programme will be conducted in four phases simultaneously, by the Non-Formal Primary Education. The programme aims at achieving 62 per cent adult literacy rate by the 2000. The project commenced its illiteracy eradication programme since 1996, after the completion of Integrated Non-Formal Education Project (INFEP).

Meanwhile under these projects 7,43,700 people were provided literacy and another 1,50,2240 are receiving training from the on-going literacy programme.

According to the annual report of the Directorate of the Non-Formal Education, the estimated cost of the project is Taka 1242 crore of which 40 per cent will be provided by the donors and the rest will be financed

by the government of Bangladesh. Report shows that, the cost of literacy for a single person is Taka 202 to 1846, depending on the time of the particular project.

The main objective of these projects is to provide literacy to the people aged between 15 and 45, to achieve 100 per cent literacy by 2006. The duration of the literacy course is 10-24 months now under implementation by the local NGOs and the local administration, which includes three months post literacy refreshers course.

Besides these sources said, Total Literacy Movement (TLM) programme is being implemented in different districts by locally registered literacy societies headed by the Deputy Commissioners. Under these movement, 12.5 lakh people have already been made literate and 4.6 lakh are receiving literacy training under the programme.

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Meanwhile, Lalmonirhat, Chuadanga and Magura districts have already been declared free from illiteracy. In addition to this, a high official source said 10 more districts would likely to be declared illiteracy free by the end of the next year (1999). The districts expected to be declared illiteracy free are Sylhet, Gaibandha, Netrokona, Rajshahi, Naogaon, Jamalpur, Joypurhat, Narail and Noakhali.

Referring to the more illiteracy free districts, Khondokar Shahidul Islam, Director General of the Directorate of Non Formal Education told this correspondent, if every thing goes well it will not be impossible to declare those districts free from illiteracy.

According to the report "Bangladesh 2020 published by the World Bank, the education sector is one of the components of the settings lagging behind the race for Development". It showed that the adult literacy rate was 47.3 per cent in 1995, which was not even twice the level of 1970. It was also less than half of the East Asian neighbours and international competitors like Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand.