

Changes in secondary level education proposed

A final draft report on secondary education in Bangladesh has recommended for bringing the higher secondary level, (grades 11 and 12) under the purview of the secondary education level which presently comprises grades 9 and 10, reports BSS.

The final draft report on secondary education was prepared by a study team consisting of an international consultant and five national consultants.

The report suggested that the junior secondary level (grades 6 to 8) should be treated as an integral part of basic education. Extensive efforts are needed to raise the transition rate from grade 5 to grade 6 from the present level of 55 per cent with a view to reinforcing the basic literacy, numeracy and life skills gained by the

pupils at the primary level, it said.

The draft report was presented at a national seminar in Dhaka on Sunday morning to discuss the findings and recommendations in the secondary education reforms.

Education Minister Barrister Jamiruddin Sircar inaugurated the day-long seminar which was attended by teachers and academics.

The Education Secretary, Mr. Shafiqul Alam, presided over the inaugural session while Dr. F.K. Chowdhury, Prof M. Ennas Mian and Dr. A.K. Jalaluddin spoke on the occasion.

The first phase of work of the study team began on April 1, this year and the study report was discussed by the education ministry on October 13.

The major purposes of the study was to assess the current status of secondary education in Bangladesh and to develop a set of policy recommendations for the reform of secondary education.

The study involved six major areas, namely planning, management and financing of education, curriculum and textbook development, academic supervision and inspection, teacher education, examination system, and participation of girls in secondary education.

On the examination reforms, the final draft report suggested to form a high-powered National Curriculum Council (NCC). The National Curriculum and Text Board (NCTB) should be responsible not only for producing textbooks but also for coordinating development and production of supplementary reading materials, reference literatures and teachers' guides for all subjects and all grades, the report said.

The report also suggested to discontinue the policy of tracking of pupils of grades 9 and 10 into science and social science to strengthen the general education of all pupils upto an accepted level.

For strengthening teacher education, the report called for creating a permanent national council for Teacher Education (NCTE) by bringing the teacher training institutions under a unified academic umbrella.

It also suggested that three year integrated courses leading to the first degree in education should be introduced in the universities and selected degree colleges to improve the quality of teacher education.

The report, while suggesting on girls participation in higher education.

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tion said that hostel accommodation and institutional transport facilities for female pupils and teachers should be provided. Appointment of female teachers to the extent of at least 33 per cent in the coeducational schools and 66 per cent in the girls schools should be made, the report said. It also suggested for induction of women members in the managing committees of schools, and a special scheme for stipends and scholarships for secondary and higher secondary girls.

The draft report also suggested for upgrading 10 per cent of the existing primary schools of the upper primary junior secondary level, developing 50 per cent of the existing 2000 junior high schools to become self supporting and viable through increased enrolment, retention, of pupils and improved quality of education.

The study suggested 30 major interventions and an operational mechanism for their implementation which would involve an estimated

expenditure of about 315 million US dollar over a seven year period (1993-2000).

Inaugurating the seminar, the Education Minister said the Government had taken up some steps for the development of education in the country. He said steps had been taken to involve women in the field of education so that they could contribute to the national development.

Referring to the setting up of open university, Barrister Sircar said the people would reap its benefit. About private university, he said this would facilitate more accommodation of students who wanted to pursue higher studies and would also reduce session jam.

The minister called for giving more emphasis on teaching of English so that the students could communicate with others in the developed world. He also stressed the need for technical education saying it should be incorporated with secondary education.

The seminar was divided into three sessions which was chaired by Prof. Muhammad Shamsul Huq, Kazi Raquibuddin Ahmed and Mr. Shafiqul Alam.

The study team, headed by Dr. A.K. Jalaluddin, comprised A.H.M. Karim, Salam Akter, M. Eltasuddin, M.A. Jabbar and Najmunessa Mahtab.

The final report is expected to be ready by the end of December this year, seminar sources said.