

Female education must for progress

DHAKA, Aug 8 (BSS): A workshop on the research study on "reducing school dropouts among girls at the primary level" was held here today with the objective of formulating a national policy to halt this trend from the country's educational arena.

Held at the National Institute of Education and Research, the workshop was inaugurated by Presidential Adviser on Compulsory Primary Education Al-haj Mohammad Mansur Ali Sarker.

Jointly sponsored by UNESCO and Bangladesh UNESCO Council, the inaugural session of the workshop was presided over by Education Secretary A.N.M. Eusuf while Dhaka University teacher Dr. Abdullah Faruq presented the keynote paper on the subject.

Among others, Secretary and Assistant Secretary respectively of the council Messrs Abdus Selim and Kabiruddin Ahmed and Director of National Academy for Primary Education (NAPE) Anwar Hossain also spoke at the inaugural session.

In his inaugural speech Mr. Mansur Ali said without educating the women, who constitute half of the country's total population the country could never expect an educated nation.

Referring to the keenness of the present government for expansion of education, Mr. Ali pointed out that the government had already declared primary education compulsory to be effective from January next. Besides, female education upto class eight in rural areas was made free, he said.

Mr. Mansur Ali said, for the first time the Government had taken the decision to implement compulsory education programme with country's own resources. Initially, Taka one hundred crore

was sanctioned for the purpose and if necessary more fund would be made available for executing this most vital national project.

Mr. Ali, however, pointed out that all uplift thrusts taken at national level would be frustrated unless we could check the population boom which poses a threat to all kinds of development initiatives.

In his presidential speech, Education Secretary A.N.M. Eusuf said for introducing scholarships among girl students in rural areas the World Bank had proposed a grant of 45 million dollars. In this sector Britain has also proposed a grant of five million dollars.

The report on which the work-

shop was held was a research study undertaken by the National Academy for Primary Education through a research team and sponsored by the UNESCO (Paris).

A group of eight prominent research fellows led by NAPE Director collected data from two deliberately selected upazilas out of 460 in the country, of them one was Dhamrai in Dhaka district which represents rural conditions and the other was sadar upazila of Mymensingh which represents urban conditions.

The objectives of the study, inter alia, were determining the magnitude of dropout among girls at primary level, its pattern and causes as well as the analysis of the data to suggest measures for reducing the dropout rate.