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## Over 4.5 lakh poor students come under PMT programme to receive stipend

A total of 4,57,494 students have been brought under Proxy Means Testing (PMT) programme to provide stipend and tuition among the students of poor and ultra poor families of the country, reports BSS.

Secondary Education Quality and Access Enhancement Project (SEQAEP) has undertaken the programme at its 121 upazilas of the country to continue studies both of the boys and girls students at the secondary level.

Officials of the SEQAEP project said, the PMT programme has been imple-

mented in two phases. First phase has already been implemented from January 2009 to June 2009 at 60 upazila and another phase has begun in July, 2009 and it will end in December, 2009 at 61 upazilas.

A total of Taka 37,57,26,110 has been distributed among the qualified students of the programme. Of them, Taka 33,03,12,88 distributed among the students as stipend while Taka 4,54,13,310 lakh has been distributed as tuition, the sources added.

After a pioneering and highly successful gender-targeted Female Secondary

Stipend Programme, the government has now decided to introduce a poverty-targeted stipend programme to address large disparities across different income groups in secondary school access.

Director of the SEQAEP project Md Badiul Alam said, the PMT programme has been implemented in many European and South American countries including Italy and Brazil.

He said, Bangladesh has introduced the programme as first Asian country for ensuring participation of both male and female students of

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### 4 lakh students

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poor families at secondary level.

Badiul said, the government has taken decision to provide stipend and tuition to remove disparities among secondary level school students from different income groups, a move viewed as an effective tool to retain poor students in high schools and reduce dropouts.

He said, the government has been implementing various programmes including stipend programme for expansion of woman education across the country at secondary level.

The stipend programme had been introduced at secondary level in 1994.

Badiul said, woman participation has been increased significantly at secondary level due to introduction of the programme.

The rate of girls education was 23 percent in 1993, but it increased to 52.3 percent in 2007.

The SEQAEP sources said, no south Asian countries except Sri Lanka could attain the success in female education.