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—OBSERVER—

Tk 50 cr project for mass education

The Government has undertaken a Taka 49.78 crore project for reintroduction of non-formal education (mass education) programme throughout the country from this year, according to Education Ministry sources in Dhaka on Wednesday, reports BSS.

The three-year project will supplement the compulsory primary education programme that began on Wednesday to attain the objective of education for all by the turn of the century.

The mass education programme was introduced in the country by Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman. It was later abruptly abandoned by the government of former President Ershad. The present BNP Government has revived the programme.

The Bangladesh Government is giving Taka five crore to the Non-formal Education Programme (NEP) spanning from 1991-92 to 1993-94, Education Ministry sources said. Un-

ited Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) is contributing Taka 27 crore and 99.18 lakh to the project. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is financing Taka nine crore and 76.83 lakh while the rest of the fund will be explored from other donor agencies.

The purpose of the NEP is to strengthen adult literacy programme, introduce pre-primary level education system and bring back the drop-outs to the schools, the sources said.

The adult literacy programme is aimed at the illiterate people of the age group 15 to 35 years—and others above the age group. A total of 2240 adult literacy centres will be set up in 69 upazilas in the current year. These centres with 2240 teachers and 149 inspectors will cover 89,600 students.

In 1993, a total of 2760 more centres will be established in 69 other upazilas. The centres covering (See Page 10 Col.2)

3

Mass education

(From Page 1, Col.3)

1,10,400 students will have 2760 teachers and 184 inspectors.

The literacy centres will be housed in schools, madrashahs, clubs and out house of any residence subject to the convenience of the students, officials said adding that the teachers will be chosen from the trained Imams (religious leaders), school teachers, retired teachers or educated unemployed youths.

The Non-government Organisations will act as associates in the NEP, they said.

The pre-primary level education system will be "an attractive, inspiring and well-organised one" for the children of the age group four to five years. Officials said adding that the aim of this system is to ensure social and mental development of the children.

Seven hundred and fifty pre-primary education centres will be set up in the current year with 750 teachers and 50 inspectors covering 22,500 children. A total of 45,000 children will be covered by 1500 centres to be set up in 1993 with 1500 teachers and 100 inspectors.

The duration of this programme will be one year.

The NEP for the children of the age group six to 10 years is named "non-formal basic education". The drop-outs and those deprived of primary education of the age group are the target of this project.

Officials said, the two-year course will be equivalent to the grades one and two of the formal primary education.

A total of 45,000 students will be enrolled in the current year in 1500 centres with 1500 teachers and 100 inspectors while 3000 centres will

cover 90,000 students in 1992. These centres will have 3000 teachers and 200 inspectors.

Another Non-formal Education programme will be introduced for the unlettered children of the age group 11 to 14 years who feel embarrassed to sit with the juniors in the same class room for primary level education.

A total of 45,000 students are targetted in 1992 while the number of students in 1993 is estimated 90,000. A total of 1500 education centres will be set up in the current year with 1500 teachers and 100 inspectors while 3000 centres will be established in the next year with 3000 teachers and 200 inspectors. The duration of the programme will be two-year.

The Government is also thinking of introducing an one-year trade course for vocational training from 1994 for those who would successfully complete the course, officials said.