

PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION IN INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES

Govt assurance barely sees progress

Prothom Alo roundtable told

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With only a few days to go before the school year begins, the government assurance to provide pre-primary education to indigenous communities in their mother tongue from 2014 has barely seen any progress towards its implementation, discussants told a roundtable.

Neither have the writers been selected in due time nor have the contents of books and syllabi been selected and teachers from local communities been recruited, they said.

The Bangla daily Prothom Alo organised the roundtable, "Educating indigenous community children in native languages: Mainstreaming strategies", at its premises in the capital.

National Education Policy 2010 contained the assurance for the primary level but later the government selected the pre-primary level and reduced the number of languages to five, which are among the most widely used ones, they added.

National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) Chairman Safiqur Rahman said either the NCTB or the regional education boards could issue the textbooks and they were trying to make this happen as soon as possible.

Stressing more symposiums to make the implementation possible, he said, "We will also have to concentrate on ensuring that these children are able to adapt to the

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general language used in higher education."

Save the Children Adviser (education sector) Habibur Rahman advocated for recruiting and training teachers and developing elements of the languages.

Prof Prosanto Kumar Tripura said, "Many indigenous languages have been lost. So the initial efforts should be on preserving the

remaining ones. Inclusion of only five indigenous languages might discourage children of other communities."

Naba Bikram Kishore Tripura, secretary, Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) Affairs, said the government should take steps for the continuation of 332 village education centres in CHT as their funding from United Nations Development Programme will no longer continue from next year.