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93 pc children now going to schools : PM Education given top priority for all round national uplift

By A Staff Reporter

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia on Saturday underlined the prime importance of education to ensure poverty alleviation, employment generation and healthcare for the people.

The Prime Minister was addressing as chief guest at the reception of meritorious students of Higher Secondary and Alim Examinations 1995 at Osmany Memorial Auditorium in the city on Saturday afternoon.

Addressing the gathering of meritorious students, their teachers, officials of the Education Ministry and Directorate, the Prime Minister said considering the top-most priority of the education, the present government has earmarked the highest allocations to education in all last five national budgets for paving the allround development of country's educational arena. She said that education is the prime instrument to develop the nation.

The Prime Minister asked the talented students to prepare themselves to take up the challenges of future leadership of the nation in every fields from science and technology to economics, from social science to religious affairs.

She advised them to build up themselves in such a way so that their contributions in every fields including arts, culture, science and technology could bring laurels for them and the nation from across the

globe.

She advised the talented students to continue their devotion in the studies in future for more achievements.

She said, "Many undiscovered mysteries in the fathomless seas, unexplored huge resources under the earth and infinite sky above us are awaiting the touch of the hands of your knowledge.

"Knowledge is such a wealth which no one can, snatch from anybody," Begum Zia told them.

Begum Khaleda Zia said that the measures that have been taken so far in the country's educational arena are not sufficient enough according to the needs. She underscored the need for harmonization of the national education with most modern education system of the world narrowing down the differences between them.

She sought the cooperation of all students, teachers and guardians for achieving success in this regard.

The Prime Minister gave a long list of development works accomplished in education sector by her government in about last five years and said that primary education had already been made compulsory across the country and food for education programme had also been introduced to ensure education of the children of poor families.

She said as a result now 93 per cent school-going aged children are attending educational institutions while some areas of the country have already made free from illiteracy.

Begum Zia said that the rate of literacy has rose to 38 per cent which was only 26 per cent in 1990. She expressed her op-

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timism by saying that if we can maintain the present trend of raising literacy rate then the country will be free from illiteracy by the year 2000.

Begum Zia said that mobile schooling system has been introduced in the country's far-flung areas.

The Prime Minister referred to the measures initiated by her government for the welfare of the teaching community within the country's resource constraints and said the contributions of the teachers are very significant in developing a skilled human resources in the country.

Realising the importance of religious education in the society, the present government has undertaken a massive programme of expansion of Madrasa education and its re-organisation in the country, Begum Zia said.

She said the advancement of Madrasa education was initiated during the period of Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman and the present government is undertaking the implementation of the programme to revise Madrasa education syllabus, introduction of computer uses in public examinations and coordination of madrasa education with technical and general education system.

She said that social science, general science, agriculture and technical courses have been inculcated in the madrasa education.

Begum Zia further said that her government has undertaken to build a training institute for madrasa teachers in Dhaka with a view to impart time-appropriate training to madrasa teachers. Besides, a separate directorate for madrasa education is under active consideration of the government, she added that when completed, the long cherished expectations of the madrasa teachers will be fulfilled.

The Prime Minister mentioned that construction, reconstruction or rehabilitation of schools, colleges and madrasas have been done so that students can study smoothly.

The Prime Minister said that her government brought reforms in the curricula and courses of schools and colleges to keep up with the fast changing social demands.

The reforms made, she said, also to achieve the objective of developing a youth force well-equipped with modern knowledge of science and technology so that they could have gainful employment or go for self-employment.

She further said that vocational and business administration course have been introduced in the secondary education level. Moreover, study of agriculture and computer science have been inculcated in the secondary and

higher secondary education syllabus, she added.

This will help the students for self-employment generation and the scope for jobs abroad for them will also be widened, Begum Zia maintained.

The Prime Minister said that an adequate allocation of funds had been made for development of universities and advancement of higher education in Bangladesh.

To solve the admission problem in the educational institutions for higher education, she said, a system had been introduced to admit students on the basis of the results of public examinations.

The Prime Minister said that Honours and Masters courses in different subjects had been introduced in 40 old and new colleges while permission had been given for setting up nine universities in the private sector.

To facilitate higher education within the country, a number of private medical colleges have been functioning in the country at present, Begum Zia said.

Later the Prime Minister handed over certificates and prizes to 342 meritorious students for their outstanding performances in the last HSC and Alim examinations held under five education boards.

Education Minister Barrister Jamiruddin Sircar and Education Secretary Ershadul Huq also spoke on the occasion.

Ministers, former members of parliament, senior government officials, academicians and guardians were present at the reception accorded to the talented students.