

Sustainable socio-economic uplift aimed at

15 non-formal pry. schools set up by JMF in Rangamati

From Our Correspondent

RANGAMATI, July 7:—Many children of indigenous communities are being deprived of primary education in the remote hilly villages in the absence of sufficient number of primary schools.

These under-privileged children, who belong to the poor families, are seldom admitted to the government primary schools because their access to the educational institution is difficult. The kids almost drop out after completing pre-primary education at Non-Formal Primary Education Centre (NFPEC) which are located at a distance of about five to six kilometres from their houses on foot. Though the government has

taken initiatives to spread primary education to the hilly region, there are still many areas of Chittagong Hill Tract (CHT) remained out of primary schools.

Shukarchhari is a village where there is no problem of primary school but the simple idea changed when a group of journalists visited the village recently. There is no primary school in the village. They are deprived of primary education.

Jhum Metta Foundation (JMF), a local non-government development organisation which runs a Buddhist monk, has absolutely changed the concepts. JMF so far has set up 15 non-formal primary

education centres (NFPEC) supported by BRAC in sadar, Naniadhar, Barkal and Kawkhali upazilas. About 450 children attending the schools. One of a NFPEC at Shukarchhari under Sadar Upazila was visited by a group of journalists.

The kids of villages are receiving pre-primary education from the NFPEC. They come to school everyday.

"We in group come to our school in the morning and learn our lessons. Our teacher learn songs and dance during class period", said Sukhimoy Chakma and Jostna Chakma, both are students of class IV JMF run NFPEC.

Kanika Chakma, only teacher of the centre, told me that she learns songs and dance, lesson about health and cleanliness along with regular classes.

Education within family environment

Expressing her satisfaction, Kanika said that now I am getting Tk 1475 as monthly salary. I can provide education to my village kids within the family environment, she added.

At present 450 kids are receiving pre-primary education in different JMF run NFPEC. After successful completion of pre-primary education the students are admitted into government primary schools, said Shubhadarshi Bhikkhu, founder of JMF. He also narrated to the journalists some problems of schools.

JMF is also distributing nutritious biscuits provided by World Food Programme (WFP) to the students ensuring nutrition amongst the children under the Food for Education Programme (FEP).

There are 6960 students in 437 para centres in five upzilas of Bilaichhari, Sadar, Rajasthali and Jurachhari which cover the programme. JMF is also conducting a micro-credit programme for the poor people to make them financially solvent since 2005.

Shubhadarshi Bhikkhu, a monk who is a founder and an executive director of JMF said that our nation could not be developed socio-economically until sustainable development is ensured.

In a quarry, he said religion is fully separate thing and we can't sit idle holding with the rules of religion as many of our people are being starved in the global food crisis. To serve the human is a part of religion, he added.