

'Let local units run primary schools'

BY OUR CORRESPONDENT

EDUCATION TASK FORCE REPORT

Bangalore, July 20: The task force on education headed by eminent scientist Dr Raja Ramanna has suggested decentralisation of management of primary schools by handing them over to taluk and gram panchayats.

The schools are presently managed by the department of public instruction in Bangalore. The task force has also suggested immediate appointment of 24,000 teachers in primary schools. In its inter-

im report on primary education submitted to chief minister S.M. Krishna, on Thursday, the task force says the local bodies should form separate committees to look after primary and secondary schools, and the government should provide extra grants for this purpose.

The chairman of the task force, Dr Raja Ramanna, told reporters on Thursday that the chief minis-

ter had assured him that the education department would be given 15 days to study the report and give its reactions.

The task force has urged the government to fill the existing 15,000 vacancies for primary school teachers and create 9,000 additional posts. "The temporary ban on appointment to these posts should be removed. And the districts of Gulbarga and Belgaum

should be given prominence in these appointments," Dr Ramanna said.

According to the scientist, intra-district transfers of teachers leads to unnecessarily large number of teachers in districts near Bangalore and vacancies in far off areas. "Transfers should be made between blocks and taluks instead of between districts," he said.

Welcoming the government's policy to reduce the grant for higher education by 15 per cent, the

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task force said this money should be spent on primary education. It also appreciated the government's decision to change the school timings. However, Dr Ramanna said the final decision on this could best be left to the panchayats.

The interim report suggested that the mid-day meal scheme should be managed by the panchayat institutions and teachers instead of the education department officers.

Other recommendations of the task force include starting schools where there are 15 or more students, arranging private transport facilities like bullock carts in areas with no schools, construction of exclusive toilets for girls and grants to appoint one sahayak or a supplementary teacher in rural schools.

Prof M.I. Savadatti, a member of the taskforce, was of the opinion that entrance test should be conducted for recruitment of primary school teachers, to improve the quality of teaching. He also asked the government to take immediate steps to increase the number of science teachers.