

The Bangladesh Observer

তাৰিখ ... 04 MAY 1989 ...

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TV Literacy Programme

Sir,

As you say in your Editorial on "Mass Literacy Through Television" Published on April 26, in your daily, Bangladesh Television is woefully lagging behind in meaningful programmes designed to eradicate illiteracy. It is not that we lack qualified and dedicated producers or that there is a lack of talent that prevents BTV doing their share but a lack of foresight in planning of programmes to meet the need of the nation. We have no sense of purpose.

Many programmes are put on the screen in a haphazard stop gap manner just to fill the slot dictated by time, however I do believe the primary purpose of television is to entertain and I also believe it is possible to educate and entertain at the same time. Ingenious programme designed to eradicate illiteracy can most certainly be conducted but it must also be remembered that target audiences differ and programmers must keep that in mind. Adult literacy programmes need an entirely different approach to those meant for preschoolers or small children just as another approach is required for older children who have gone past the initial ability to learn.

Several programmes have been televised in the past dealing with education for small children albeit for English speaking children where the ingenious use of props and puppets keep the attention and television producers could learn and adapt from these to produce locally designed equivalents. The major problems as I see it is the problem of funding for such programmes are expensive to produce but if we can do it well we might also be able to tap into the market abroad for Bengali speaking immigrants in other nations starved for such services in their own tongue.

Programmes directed at adults could easily utilized day to day objects to illustrate the point being made in an enlightening and amusing manner and could easily be transmitted early evening, or even early morning, and replace the boring interview and discussion programmes that go over the heads of the majority of viewers and occupy most of the viewing timing to-day.

A case in point is the delightful programme of British television designed to teach spoken English to immigrants "Mind Your Language" which reaches the targeted audience in a humorous manner; something similar can be designed utilising the differing dialects to teach formal Bengali as a language. All that is required is imagination to attack full-on a problem that is not going to go away by itself.

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