

অবিস 27 FEB 1982

পৃষ্ঠা... ৫... কলাম... ২...

Literacy And Education

That there is a vital distinction fixed between literacy and education is a point which hardly needs labouring. Education, people agree, embraces a wide range and goes beyond literacy. It includes the training of both mind and body in ways which have little to do with the ability to write and read. We assume generally that when a person goes through the processes which school and college impose on him, he bears, in addition to being able to read books and express himself in writing, also to discipline his impulses and instincts and to acquire styles of physical behaviour which should distinguish a barbarian from a civilized being.

But we in Bangladesh have of late grown conscious of a rather alarming phenomenon. The graduates from our schools and colleges appear in the main to equate education with mere literacy and to think that it is wrong to expect them to behave differently from the unfortunates whose circumstances do not allow them to attend any school. They betray the same lack of taste, the same vulgarity. The same fondness for loud music, the same fascination for cheap films, the same addiction to such other vices as we associate with plain illiteracy. Caught in an argument with a friend or a rival, they react with the same violence. If you tell them that their pattern of conduct ought to be different, the answer they give is that in a democratic society such distinctions between classes should be discouraged. Democracy is thus involved to justify rudeness, loudness, intolerance and much else which makes a mockery of the values which education is believed to foster.

But if those values are not promoted by the education we impart to the young, something has obviously gone wrong. A multitude of 'uneducated' graduates could scarcely advance the country. Book learning has to be supplemented by learning of a different kind in order that education may be meaningful.

The fault lies not with the young but with the adults whose responsibility it is to transmit the essential values of civilization from our generation to the next.

This is a matter which ought to receive the attention of teachers and education authorities immediately. Opening new schools, colleges and universities would be no use if the distinctions between literacy and education is forgotten.

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