

Compulsory Primary Education

Md. Shahiduzzaman (Shaheen)

KNOWLEDGE is power, 'knowledge is virtue' and education is light. We need virtue to build our national character and we need light to lead us to the good for which we achieved independence at the cost of a sea of blood. It is obvious that we can not achieve our objects without education.

To make the people responsible citizens and the country prosperous and capable of maintaining sovereignty — compulsory primary education is a must. Without compulsory primary education, mass opinion cannot be mobilized in favour of the development activities of the country. To make the country self-sufficient in all respects and to make the people happy, brisk development activities are planned. No development of Bangladesh is possible without the development of her agriculture. No development of agriculture, pisciculture and plantation is possible without knowledge of scientific and technical know-how. Again, no development of our country is possible without the control of 'population explosion'. The illiterate masses are still unaware of these problems. It is education that can make them understand the gravity of the situation and encourage them to apply technical know-how in agriculture and to adopt family planning. It is for all these that compulsory primary education is most necessary in Bangladesh.

But during the colonial rule of the British for a period of nearly two hundred years and subsequent 25 years at the Pakistani rule, no positive

steps were taken to educate the mass of our country. Hence nearly 80% of the total population of Bangladesh are still illiterate.

The late president Ziaur Rahman, declared his peaceful revolution in 1975 to rebuild the war-torn Bangladesh and to win for Bangladesh an honourable position in the comity of nations. The first phase of the revolution was aimed at the attainment of self-sufficiency in food and the second phase at educating the masses within the shortest possible time. He took several positive steps to remove illiteracy. Mass literacy was included in the syllabus of S.S.C. and H.S.C. Examinations. A scheme for training one teacher from a High School and one teacher from a college at the Education and Research centre, Dhaka, was taken. One A.D.C was also appointed in each district for the guidance and supervision of mass education programme. National information media took extensive programmes in respect of mass education. The present Government is also conscious of the problem of mass illiteracy and is making sincere efforts to overcome this problem. Primary education has been made compulsory.

We are a free nation. We like to live with honour and dignity. We do not like to grope in the darkness with the curse of illiteracy. Let us all go ahead with the blessings of Allah to materialise the dream of the martyrs to make our country strong and prosperous.

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