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The Bangladesh Observer

Education In Rural Areas

Sir,

The government is trying hard to implement the scheme of compulsory education. It is a difficult task to give education to rural children whose parents are not educated and they expect their male children to earn as soon as possible. Many of the landless families send their children to towns with visiting families whose income permit them to feed a mouth in lieu of the child's labour, the parents get some money either as wage or as help for being financially poor.

The number of schools in rural areas is not sufficient for enrolling all children of school going age. The Feeder School, Satellite school might cater for the need for the small children. Recently it came out in the Bangladesh Observer that in Lalmonirhat NGO and GO are working together to eradicate illiteracy. The educated people of the locality are giving voluntary labour as a teacher and a room to give lessons to children and adults.

The winter season is more favourable to the literacy campaign as open-air-classes under a tree are held one may call it a poor service for the poor children. Without BRAC or similar NGO the people themselves can fight illiteracy if they really have for this a strong determination. With the help of the wealthy people of the community, the people can even set up permanent schools without waiting for the government to do so. If the government tries to establish one school in each of the 68,000 villages in Bangladesh it requires a huge sum of money. With its limited resource the state can proceed but slowly.

It was been noted that in Lalmonirhat all political activists are working to ending illiteracy. It is admirable how people can work unitedly for a chosen goal. A new concept was thrown in a BBC programme known as 'Communitarianism' which means the community works with a collective spirit and the rich as well as the poor are imbued with the spirit.

The idea of 'Communitarianism' thus unites the people. The patron-client relationship between the rich and the poor surely comes to an end. The establishment of the school is chosen carefully by the people so that the girls are not needed to stay at home for housework. Education is a human right but this is to be realised by all men and women especially those who have children.

The government must also play a role and prove itself to be a caring government. It is time to think how it can effectively perform this role.

Husnara Kamal, Professor, Dhaka University.

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