

Literacy Drive

The overall development of a country depends, among other things, on the level of literacy in general and education of the effective manpower in particular. The higher the literacy rate the better is the prospect of finding right man for the right job. And the skill and efficiency of the manpower is directly increased if educational facilities are extended. For the sake of augmenting the quality of human being social reformers often insist on removing the problem of illiteracy in the shortest possible time. They urge the policy-makers to give higher priority to education in general as well as removal of illiteracy in particular and that for ushering in an era of change.

Authorities in this country under the guidance of late President Ziaur Rahman have realized the need for literacy and adopted measures for removal of illiteracy by 1985. These measures include publication of books for adult literacy, the distribution of such books to places where literacy drive has been initiated, the training of trainers and teachers for literacy programmes and the expansion of facilities in schools and madrasas in the rural areas. Measures have even been taken to enlist support of voluntary organizations for the drive for removal of illiteracy in different parts of the country. It is reported that these measures have yielded good results and some villages have been rid of the curse of illiteracy while the programmes have enabled quite a large number of the people to learn the 3Rs.

Such a success story comes also from Rangpur where over six hundred thousand people have become literate in the past year or so. Computed in terms of the total population the neo-literates, form around ten per cent and naturally add to the literacy rate of the people in that district. By implication these people would be better equipped to learn their own trade and to adopt improved methods of cultivation and other activities in the rural sector. They will find themselves better poised

for developmental activities, which have already reached their doorsteps. Literate people will be able to do their own work well and to interact effectively with extension agents, official authorities as well as the traders and middlemen. In other words literate masses will see the benefits of development more quickly and participate therein with added zeal.

It is obvious that literacy drive should be brought to all places including the urban slums, industrial zones and port areas where a bulk of the illiterate live. These people have come out of their villages and have joined the rank of workers in the secondary and tertiary sectors of the economy. It is needless to say that these workers should also attain literacy as early as one would be able to learn the letters. They need to learn their trade both through formal and practical training. Once they are made literate they would be able to upgrade their skill and thereby earn more. As such, it is necessary to expand literacy programmes to all these areas on a priority basis. The amount of resources needed would be enormous and the industrial and business units should therefore be persuaded to contribute voluntarily to literacy programme.

Though not spelt out in so many words, literacy programme may be expanded with voluntary participation and contribution by well meaning and rich people. Programmes initiated voluntarily should get immediate support from official agencies. In this connection it would be fair that authorities concerned develop systems of control and supervision for effective use of resources. Private initiative should also be brought within the fold of supervision and control. In addition, the current use of resources for expanding specialized educational institutions should be controlled, if overall balance is to be obtained. Literacy is a programme that will give light to the multitude who form the back-bone of the society and every effort should be made to make it a success.