

Removal Of Illiteracy

Illiteracy is a curse. It keeps people in darkness about ideas and virtues. It works against all that go in the name of civilization. It prevents the proper growth of people and inhibits the use of potentialities. No matter what avocation an illiterate person takes, his performance remains below the standard of a literate man. Even in matters of inner virtues, illiterates have limited chance of demonstrating them, unless they are led by intuitive impulses towards doing good. The good and the virtuous are also those who learn from the superiors and the society often through the beneficial effects of literacy. Literacy often leads people to enlightenment and as such it is always sought for.

That being so, the prevailing malaise of illiteracy has worked against the goals of the society. It has hindered progress by keeping the contribution of the larger bulk of the people rather limited. It is imperative to wipe out the curse of illiteracy within the shortest possible time. And that is what is aimed at during the current Second Five-Year Plan. The task of educating the majority of the people is stupendous. It needs a movement and, of course, a clear sense of direction. Obviously, the present government has clearly defined its goals vis-à-vis mass literacy. And an army of four lakh teachers has been deployed to work as the vanguard of a million-strong mass literacy squad. Their target is to reach everyone of the illiterate and make him learn the three R's. The move is definitely commendable.

As it is, the mass literacy programme initiated on the occasion of the 'Ekushey' February, has received a good response. Over eight million people have already been enrolled in the mass-literacy centres opened in the country. These people have been striving

hard to get away from the curse of illiteracy. They will work as the pioneers and others are also expected to follow suit. Their efforts—more so the efforts of the mass literacy squad—are bound to create an impact in the social scene. And in the coming years these literate people—working as workers, artisans, farmers, technicians and tradesmen—are expected to contribute more to the national economy. The official allocation for this project will bear fruits by and by. The enthusiasm with which people have taken it up will also lead to voluntary contributions from the local people thereby making the support for the programme more broad-based.

It is known that a central monitoring cell attached to the office of the Prime Minister is working round the clock for making the adjustments needed as forging with the ultimate goals. A huge machinery has been installed with the creation of a Directorate of Mass Education within the Ministry. The fund for the programme is reportedly being drawn from the exchequer as well as from private contributions and international agencies. The compilation of books as well as printing and distribution thereof has been taken up with added zeal. Arrangements have been made to distribute those books through the post offices with a view to ensuring availability and preventing manipulations by interested tradesmen. All these are expected to have good impact on the programme. Future programmes for production of reading materials will facilitate retention of literacy by the adults and the children. In all fairness the programmes deserve support and as reported, the same is coming from the masses and the well-meaning in the society.