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Participate in mass literacy programme

By A Staff Reporter

President Ziaur Rahman on Friday called upon each and every educated citizens of the country to participate in mass literacy programme by voluntarily educating his illiterate neighbours.

The President said, 16 out of every hundred people in the country were educated and removal of illiteracy would not be a problem if they actively took part in the programme.

He was inaugurating a book on literacy brought out by the Bangladesh Literacy Society on the occasion of its national congress at Engineers Institute.

President Ziaur Rahman said that the government had launched the illiteracy eradication programme because it was difficult to ensure the overall progress and prosperity of the country by keeping the vast majority of the population illiterate. The government alone, however, could not shoulder the responsibility, he said.

The President said that mere teaching of alphabets was not the end of the mass literacy programme. The programme was aimed at attaining functional literacy to enable each and every citizen to increase his individual income by adopting improved method of cultivation and undertaking fish culture, poultry farming and other productive activities.

He said that the cultivators have to be educated if the agricultural revolution was to succeed. They should know proper application of fertilisers and be able to do elementary arithmetic and write letters.

The President said that the government had undertaken to establish 'Swanirvar Gram Sarkars' in the villages with some specific ends in view. The Gram Sarkar would be responsible for raising food production with a view to doubling the output

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Literacy drive

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in the shortest possible time, educating the illiterates of the respective villages and for implementing the population control and family planning programme.

Emphasising the need for containing the present rate of population growth he said that no development programme would be able to remove the country's ills if the population was not kept under a manageable limit. We should attain zero rate of population growth by popularising the idea that two children, boys or girls, were enough, he said.

Earlier inaugurating the national congress of the society, Prime Minister Shah Azizur Rahman called for voluntary services of the educated people for removal of illiteracy from the country. He said that such objectives could not be achieved by enacting laws because "morality can not be enforced".

Citing the example of Sri Lanka the Prime Minister said, it was the educated section of the community who did the most for raising the percentage of literacy to 95 in that country.

He said agrarian revolution, technological revolution and educational revolution were not newly coined terms but constitutional obligations of the government which were not fulfilled by past governments.

He said that the canal digging programme was launched for fulfilling such obligations.

He said that the programme had already shown positive results and wheat production was up by seven lakh tons this year.

The Prime Minister said that the mass literacy campaign, however, was yet to gain such momentum as the canal digging programme. He said that the government wanted to introduce such a system of education in the country so that even a drop-out from the primary school could become more useful to his family.