

Illiteracy rate rising by 2.3 pc

By A Staff Reporter

The illiterate population of Bangladesh has been rising at a rate of 2.3 per cent annually since 1961 and reached a peak of 608 crore in 1984.

The rate was rising among females and took a radical turn for the worse in 1981, a seminar on the role of women in combating illiteracy was told yesterday.

Dr. S.A. Chowdhury, Chief of Planning, Ministry of Education, told the seminar in his keynote speech that in the field of country's literacy education, the extent of work to be done appeared almost insurmountable.

"Considering the magnitude of the problem of illiteracy in Bangladesh" he said one can not conceive of its solution without making a total commitment for its eradication", he said.

Dr. Chowdhury said there were 5,51,40,700 illiterate population in 1981 (2,92,79,322 females or 53.09 per cent of total and 2,58,61,378 males or 46.90 per cent) which rose to 6,06,45,000 (3,28,03,000 females and 2,80,36,000 males).

In other words number of male illiterates rose by 21.75 lakh while those of females increased by 35.30 lakh in these three years, he said.

Dwelling on reasons for a radical turn in 1981, he said: It may logically be assumed

that in the absence of a massive programme which could have had a significant effect on the eradication of illiteracy the figures may have gone up.

Speaking on commitment to eradicate the illiteracy he said it needed an array of requirements involving policy and action which should accompany the programme in

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all its phases until its eventual solution is achieved.

This includes, among others, a strong commitment on the part of the Government as demonstrated in concrete terms by a clear and strong policy backed up by the provision of funds, the setting up of an effective administrative bureaucracy which will cut across the highest to the lowest

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