

BBS survey finds functional literacy rate 53.7

Staff Correspondent

THE functional literacy rate is 53.7 per cent for the population in the ranges of 11-45 years, according to a survey the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics conducted.

The Literacy Assessment Survey 2011 report published on Sunday showed that 65.6 per cent people from urban areas are functionally literate while the figure for rural areas is 50.5 per cent.

According to the BBS, being functionally literate means having the ability to read and write sentences, possessing skills of four basic rules of arithmetic, and the ability to use of the skills in life.

According to the survey, the country's 38.4 per cent people are non-literate and 8 per cent are semi-literate.

The planning minister, AK Khandker, launched the report in a programme in the BBS auditorium in Dhaka.

The survey found that female functional literacy rate remained lower than that of the male.

The rate of female literacy, used in the survey to mean the functional literacy, is 50.2 per cent while male literacy rate is 56.9 per cent, the survey showed.

Barisal division gained the top position with 61.9

per cent functional literacy and Sylhet division has the lowest literacy rate of 42.2 per cent.

The literacy rate in Khulna division is 56.2 per cent, in Chittagong division is 54.3 per cent, in Rajshahi division is 53.1 per cent, and in Dhaka division is 51.5 per cent, the survey found.

According to the Literacy Assessment Survey 2008, the literacy rate was 49.7 for the population aged 11 years and above and the rate was 48.8 for the population aged 15 years and above.

Mohammad Abdul Kadir Miah, focal point officer of the survey, said that functional literacy rate of the population was increasing.

He said that generally literacy rate was determined on the basis of self reporting where people of 7 years and above say whether they can write. People having the ability of writing a letter in any language are termed literate.

The first literacy assessment survey in 2008 was conducted following the general method to find out literacy rate when literacy rate for people aged 11 years and above was 49.7 per cent. The trend shows that functional literacy is increasing, he said.

But in the current sur-

vey, the BBS used the definition proposed by UNESCO which says that literacy is the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts.

The BBS carried out a test on 100 marks on 37,522 male and 35,682 female and those who got above 50 marks are considered literate, who scored 0-24.99 are considered non-literate and the people scored 24.99-49.99 are termed semi-literate.

The non-literate are people not having the ability to decode the alphabet, recognise words, numbers and count money or objects while semi-literate are those having ability to recognise and write some words, to count objects and numbers at a very basic level.

The survey showed that country's 40.3 per cent people are functionally literate at an advanced level while 13.3 per cent are literate at the initial level.

Former caretaker government adviser Rasheda K Chowdhury, Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation chairman Qazi Kholiquzzaman Ahmad and acting BBS director general Mizanur Rahman, among others, attended.