

Mass Literacy And Motivation

ILLITERACY is one of the most acute problems constantly telling upon our national economy while we are making strenuous struggle to make headway in all economic bases. The unlettered people constituting the majority of total population of a nation cannot contribute to national prosperity as they are in the dark of ideas, problems, virtues and of how the prevailing malaise of illiteracy works against the goals of society by preventing the proper growth of people and inhibiting the use of potentialities. The statistical reports on literacy campaign over the last two and a half decades shows that there has been a little progress by one per cent or below the rate the nation expected. A country wide effective and elaborate programme of motivation towards the necessity of literacy is an urgent need to achieve success in wiping out

illiteracy. It is now our tope most duty to enumerate the causes of failure in attaining the desired level of progress in the past. Lack of cooperation and coordination including guidelines for mass motivation may account for the failure in attaining considerable success in removing illiteracy which is now heavily clouding our national prestige in international forums.

Bangladesh means a land of rural areas where majority of the people fail to have the light of such a campaign. So to ensure eradication of illiteracy there should be a comprehensively planned programme which may be launched by welfare organisations and voluntary associations existing in our societies or some fresh committees may be set up at union level consisting of local teachers, members of Gram Sarkars, selected representatives, political and religious leaders as well as

local influential persons interested in education.

The motivation campaign towards its necessity should be geared up by utilising the energy of our youth force which has always been regarded as changing force of a nation. The history of the world reveals that it is the youths who can contribute much towards the overall change in every walk of life by breaking the shackles of ignorance, dead customary habits, misbeliefs and superstition. In the task to unfetter our unlettered and ignorant masses from the fetters of illiteracy the youths can play a vital role if they are organised and motivated towards the eradication of malaise of illiteracy. The trained youths and those to be trained under Youth Complex Programme should have certain guidelines in this regard to launch an effective campaign in their respective areas.

The literate and the youth learners can put in their best to teach at leisure time their unlettered neighbours of their equal age. The youths may be organised to launch a campaign in order to infuse in them the spirit that education is an integral part of human life and its absence is a curse causing a number of evils to our nation which is now faced with manifold problems.

The youths are usually seen to indulge in gossips in the afternoon when they can mix with their neighbours and make them aware of the unexceptionable necessity of literacy. The members of a youth club or association can regularly spare a little time in teaching their unlettered friends and relatives on compulsory basis. In this way each club or association can manage to teach a group consisting of about 50 unlettered persons at least for a definite period of some months together.

The rural youths through their own savings and uniting

efforts can volunteer their services to the unlettered villagers by imparting functional literacy including the knowledge of general health rules, production of vegetables, poultry farming and animal husbandry, maintenance of accounts relating to income and expenditures of household affairs. Thus the youths irrespective of their opinions, parties or political norms may put in their best to gear up the massive programmes of motivation.

Under irrigation schemes now operating in our rural areas there exists cooperative multi purpose societies each of which comprises a particular irrigation area being led by a scheme manager selected from among the cultivators. The farmers of each area may be made or agricultural appliances or necessary inputs on the basis of their achievement in the literacy drive. The manager may be directed to produce periodicals on the progress of the campaign and to meet once a month (continued on page 8)

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week to sort out the fresh problems confronting the progress of the drive and in case the success proves to be disastrous, the sanctions may be followed by delay or suspension. The departmental personnel in cooperation with the youths of the concerned area can play an active and leading part in this regard.

Both our village doctors and the imams of mosques can motivate our rural unlettered people regarding the importance and necessity of literacy in our national life as the general masses are usually being influenced by them. The village doctors while treating patients in their own locality can easily convince the people of the necessity of education for a nation to ensure good health, a disease free life and viable growth of economy. The unlettered rural people are fanatic and orthodox as well as very credulous having a great devotion for the imams of their own Mahalla or locality. In weekly congregation on Fridays in the Mosque they speak on the importance of learn-

ing with Quranic reference or with reference to Hadiths and that will certainly infuse in them the spirit of functional education. Even in addressing a religious conference our religious preceptors can speak on the importance of literacy in the light of religion to make them convinced that religion enjoins learning upon human beings and as such it is our obligation.

In rural areas teachers of primary and secondary schools and Madrasas in cooperation with the literate youths including freedom fighters, political workers, members of Gram Sarkars in their respective areas can hold seminars on the importance of literacy in our national life. In this connection the heads of all the aforesaid institutes may from time to time arrange to hold guardians' meeting aimed at strengthening motivation and fostering closer cooperation among the teachers, guardians and their wards.

The Swamirvar Sarkars can play a leading role in the task of motivation by compelling the villagers of their respective locality to participate in literacy drive under Food for Works Programme. The Gram Sarkars in cooperation with the local youths or the members of a club or any welfare organisation can make it a point of excuse that those who are illiterate and reluctant to receive functional literacy under crash on literacy scheme shall not be entitled to work and be deprived of all facilities provided by the

local government until they have the knowledge of the three R's.

The campaign will fail to ensure total success unless the womenfolk constituting half of our total population are awakened and organised to remove illiteracy. Each husband or each guardian of a family has a sacred duty to motivate their unlettered near and dear ones for their participation in the drive for removing illiteracy. The proposed national youth women organisation to be set up may be entrusted with the task of motivating our rural womenfolk. Provisions for representation of women in the Gram Sarkar bodies and different tiers of local government to support and motivate their fellow women for their voluntary participation in the literacy drive may go a long way in creating in them a profound sense of literacy.

It appears from statistical reports on Census in 1974 that only 3 million out of our total population are literate. A spontaneous service rendered by team can help the nation undergo an overall change in the field of literacy. Nothing can be done through individual efforts. We should all be serious about the problems and practicable measures to be taken up to wipe out the curse of illiteracy by launching a programme based on the point each one teach one.

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