

Illiteracy most urgent problem today

PARIS, Sept. 9: The struggle against illiteracy has become "one of the most urgent problems of four times" according to Mamadou Moktar M'Bow, the Director-General of UNESCO, reports AFP.

Speaking here yesterday on the occasion of international literacy day, he deplored the fact that, as soon as a society had a written language, being able to read and write should give some people "absolute power" over those who could not.

Mr. M'Bow said progress toward worldwide literacy had fallen far short of hopes. Although projections showed the percentage of illiterates among the world's population would drop from about one-third in 1970 to one-quarter in 1990, he said, the total number of people who could not read and write would actually be higher in 1990 than in 1970 due to the rising demographic curve.

088