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# Primary Education

The percentage of literacy in this country is one of the lowest in the world. This is due to inadequacy of educational facilities on the one hand and the relegation of the literate people into illiteracy due to non-availability of reading materials on the other. The process can only be reversed if the facilities are expanded and reading materials are made available. Among other measures, the development of curricula and preparation, publication and distribution of books may be all the more important. Those who know it will also emphasize the need for expansion of training programmes for teachers, who shoulder the responsibility of putting children on to the path of progress. And no one questions the validity of the dictum that education begins at home, which in Bangladesh, is loaded with problems that hinder education.

With a population of eighty million, Bangladesh may require around twenty million seats in her primary, secondary, and trade schools. The actual availability of such seats is far below the requirement. And the Ministry of Education, which runs about thirtysix thousand primary schools and far less number of secondary schools and trade schools, is faced with a herculean task of meeting the goals of literacy and of education. The task force that was engaged by the Ministry has reportedly drawn up programmes for establishment of ten thousand primary schools in the second five-year plan period. It has drawn up another programme for expansion of non-formal education, which will cover the illiterate masses.

The commendable feature of the programme will be distribution of books free of charge to the primary school-children. The same will have salutary effect if the overall distribution is made effective. Incidentally, the thrust of the programme should also be put on teacher training and construction of school buildings. The possibility of utilizing the retired personnel and students have to be explored for meeting the objectives of the programmes. The possibility of "each one teach one" should also be explored in this connection.