

## Towards Social Literacy

Why is social literacy so elusive? The first reason is the national governments' lack of a desired level of seriousness in the matter. They put all this seriousness into getting tangible results and are unfailingly charmed by the prospects of achieving spectaculars. How much money have our banks advanced to uncertain trading and industrial enterprises in the 27 years of independence? Tens of thousands of crores. Not one Taka has gone to setting up a primary. Why are banks barred to educational enterprise? Is education bad business?

Reason two. The way less than committed governments keep the literacy business all to themselves. They seem to have deliberately avoided encouraging private and social enterprise to take up the thing in any significant manner, causing a strange malady in the society — the malady of un-involvement, a kind of couldn't-care-less sweeping over the land in the matter of literacy and basic education. Government ineptness in handling allocations for education has lined the pockets of building contractors, education managerial personnel and history's worst corrupted educators. Education is now seen as a hundred per cent government enterprise, social initiatives being reduced to irrelevance.

Reason three. The political parties' historical treatment of the mission to spread education as a taboo.

Education Minister ASHK Sadeque the other day spoke confidently of reaching 95 per cent literacy by 2005. By government alone and without righting those three problems? No chance. The greatest educator is man's urge to survive. That primarily has improved our literacy record. But left only to itself, it will take an awful lot of unaffordable time.