

DHAKA THURSDAY JANUARY 10 1985

# Arts and Leisure

## Literacy For Women

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"This world is a man's cradle Rocked by a woman's hands".

These are the words of a woman who has eyes but she is blind to her own rights as God's divine creations. On our realization for knowledge for mankind why does the term Literacy for women come as a specific realization?

That is because women are the long oppressed and neglected sex. Socially, economically and politically they have been facing unjust degradation. They have been robbed of their rightful place beside their brethren men. Women have been played with as mere sex tools. That has lasted altogether too long.

Literacy for women means the voice of freedom. They have been under darkness for long. Literacy will show the path of light, it will open forth the door to a healthier and fruitful life.

An existence be it men or does Human being is measured by his acts. The myths concerning women for herth and home are no way a vocation anymore than slavery is to the slave. Let women come forth with the light of knowledge, to recognise her rights in this twentieth century of human competition of human intelligence. Knowledge is for God. Knowledge gives us the power to understand the mystery and meaning of the inner life and guard ourselves against falseness.

### PROPER UTILIZATION OF MANPOWER

Women have always been the scapegoats or any period of economic decline. Only 3% of the university chairs in Great Britain and 8.7% in France are held by women. According to a recent report of the European Parliament of

the EEC countries between 1970 and 1972 unemployment among men have doubled but with women its eight fold. In Denmark which ranks first in terms of female representation at all levels of government men outnumber women four to one.

The real way leading to the emancipation of women is their economic freedom. It depends largely in spread of education among women. Day by day women are becoming harder oppressed financially and socially. The women's target should be to interest themselves in bigger earning programmes to lessen economic hardships.

The participation of women is essential in the national development efforts in every country whether developed or developing. As a matter of fact any endeavour will remain incomplete that is almost half the population in any country. The first step for awakening the woman for participation in national development should be to make arrangements for making them literate in the general sense of the term.

In a country like Bangladesh women are more downtrodden. The overall percentage of literacy is about 22 % separate statistics for women will get the figure lower. In this country where the huge population growth is a real problem the utilization of manpower is definitely one of the prerequisites of national development. Providing the minimum of literacy and engaging the women in the national working force is better for the lessening of economic hardships. Even a knowledge of small technical-know-how could create job opportunities for women in small

and cottage industries. Very few women have independent income of their own. Therefore females in Bangladesh 64% have dependancy rate than the male which is 31%. In this regard Korea shows a better trend 36.2 per cent of the total working force are women. Most of them are simple labourers.

### LITERACY WOMEN AND THE FAMILY

"Mother dear, you're wonderful in everything you do. The happiness of family life depends so much on you?"

The family is an institution in fact the first step of building the society. Women as the sym-bolical term of "Mother" plays a great role inside the family physiologically, emotionally and intellectually. The mother maintains her family as she looks after the children and runs the household. It is again the housewife who determines the food to be distributed and accounts which must be balanced for a healthy and well-maintained family budget. Inside the family as the woman plays the role of a mother and housekeeper the need for a basic literacy is essential if one wants a happy and healthy family. The mother on her part should have a basic knowledge of food-value and the nutritional needs of her family members. She has a precise knowledge of the amount she could afford to spend in her different household accounts.

An illiterate mother is ignorant of the nutritional support of her family. The result of ill feeding may be unhealthy children, continuous ill health etc. The family budget of a illiterate women is

always not balanced, far from being a wise one.

### TOWARDS A BREAK THROUGH

The women who stay at home are easily trapped. Most lack the courage and know-how to break through. They stay in their cages, quiet and desperate working out unhappy compromises with their spouses very often battling for position or giving in and taking a beating. These working-class women are perhaps the most deprived large group of the society and the most estranged from what is vital in the world.

Yet when this veiled in house wife uses her intelligence and education she is far better off. When she gets out of the house takes on a job and independence. Finding a way into the outside world comes as a break, to the confined world. She learns to live, to come onto her own. Of course it's not an easy path. It means facing the usual female dilemma and the pull of dual roles, wife and money earner. Although it is a heavier load of responsibilities but its worth it. Jobs mean freedom, independence, excitement and a life of her own. It means freedom from economic or sex suppression. As the woman of home helps the male side by side financially she is on route to the equality for men and women as a working force. The mother who helps her family financially side by side as she runs the household helps the financial wheel run more smoothly, thus ensuring a better economy for the family and a prospective future.

Specially in Bangladesh where the population growth is a major hindrance on the path of development efforts the concept of a well planned family is hard to be spread among the illiterate people. These illiterate people are superstitious and ignorant. They have more children than they could provide for. The frequent child birth leads to health hazards for the mother and the child. Spread of literacy to a minimum standard is essential to make the family planning programmes effective specially in the rural sectors.

To be Continued