Pledge to remove illiteracy

By A Staff Correspondent

International Literacy Day was observed throughout the country on Friday with a pledge to remove the scourge of illiteracy from the society through concerted efforts of people as well as of the Government.

Various socio-cultural organisations in the city and elsewhere in the country on this occasion held seminars and symposia highlighting the significance of the day.

Bangladesh Literacy Society organised a meeting at the auditorium of the Bangladesh Insurance Academy.

Mr. S.A. Bari A.T., Minister for Manpower Development and Social Welfare attended the meeting as chief guest while it was presided over by Mr. Obaidul Huq Editor of the Bangladesh Observer. Among others who addressed the meeting were, Dr. Mizanur Rahman Shelly Director of Social Welfare, Mr. Abdur Rashid Chowdhury Secretary, Bangladesh National Commission for UNESCO, Mr. Anthony E. Drexler, Regional Director of Family Planning International Assistance for south and South-West Asia, Mr. Osman Ghani Secretary General of the Society. Mr. Shafiqul Islam Khan, Sheikh Rezaul Karim and Principal Hamida Ali.

Addressing the meeting, Mr. S.A. Bari A.T. urged the people to help remove illiteracy and cooperate with the Government to implement various programmes.

He said that the Government has attached utmost importance for the removal of illiteracy from the society. Referring to the 19-point programmes of President Ziaur Rahman the Minister said that removal of illiteracy was one of the 19-point programmes. He expressed his pleasure at the formation of a "National mass literacy coun-

cil" recently which aimed at removing the curse of illiteracy within next five years in phases.

He was critical of the various social and political organisations which did not have any programme on removal of illiteracy and on social welfare project. He regretted that though there were innumerable political organisations in the country there was scarcity of honest social workers.

Mr. Obaidul Huq, Editor, Bangladesh Observer, in his presidential speech said that the total welfare of the society would not be possible untill the curse of illiteracy was removed. No development programme could be implemented unless the people were educated he added. Mr. Obaidul Huq who is also the chief patron of the Sakkharata Samity said that education was the main infrastructure of development. He said that the nation which had made progress in education, had also achieved prosperity in other spheres of national life. He urged the people to contribute their individual mite to make the people literate.

Dr. Mizanur Rahman Shelly emphasised the need for joint efforts of the Government and the people in removing illiteracy from the society. He also said that production-oriented education was needed.

Mr. Anthony E. Drexler said that literacy and family planning were complementary. According to him, experience in both developed and developing countries had shown that increase in literacy was followed by decline in the size of family.

He said that the Family Planning International Assistance had developed a project with the Bangladesh Sakkharata Samity where

Illiteracy

literacy would make the people aware of and generate demand for family planning services to be met by the society.

Mr. Drexler urged the voluntary agencies in Bangladesh to play an effective role in combating population explosion—the basic problem now facing by Bangladesh.

Mr. Abdur Rashid Chowdhury said that illiteracy is a a curse of the society. Literacy helps people to be conscious about their duties and can participate in the various development activities, he added.

Mr. Osman Ghani Secretary General of the Samity placed the report of the activities of the samity since its inception. He deplored that the financial stringency of the samity had been obstructing its activities and projects. He urged the concerned departments of the Government to extend financial help to the samity for implementing its various literacy projects.