

# International Day for Illiteracy



**T**HE whole world celebrated the International Day for Illiteracy Eradication on September 8 every year according to the decision issued by the general assembly of UNESCO in its 14th meeting in 1966.

On this day, the international organisation appeals to the world's government, organisation, government and non-government establishments, in the name of human solidarity, to intensify efforts and exchange experiences and advice on the best options of combating illiteracy which is a barrier of the constructive role of development to realise a renaissance that leads to a cultural, social and constructional revival where the peoples of the world enjoy love and peace, and that the governments of the world's states have to set out plans and strategies that will lead to promptly combating illiteracy and its destructive impacts by transforming the principles of these strategies into procedural plans that will be put into action.

In response to this recommendation, the Sultanate regularly celebrates on these days to take part in celebrations of the Arab world and the international community on these occasions and takes up the opportunity to spread awareness among the Omani public on the problem of illiteracy and the danger it poses to the individual and the society, and also to highlight the efforts being exerted to combat it calling the people to benefit from the opportunities that the government has made available in all areas.

Moreover, in appreciation of the im-

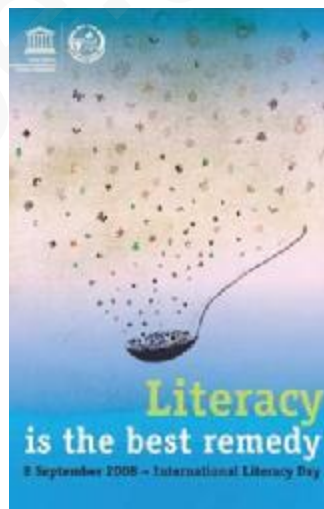
**Illiteracy is a complex social problem. Added to the fact that it is one of the major causes of backwardness, it is a social phenomenon that equally affects individuals and societies and forms a basic obstacle that hinders progress and obstructs human resources' capacities to effectively perform their roles in the process of development**

portance of these two occasions, the Ministry organises an annual celebration on 8th January to honour the teachers and staff of illiteracy eradication with extensive media coverage.

As for the International Day for illiteracy eradication, the occasion is celebrated through television, daily newspapers and other means of media. The event is also covered by the seminars, lecturers and press reports that are held in reverence of the occasion.

**Dear students,**

Let us learn more about illiteracy pro-



grammes in the Sultanate of Oman and the efforts of the Ministry of Education in this area.

Illiteracy is a complex social problem. Added to the fact that it is one of the major causes of backwardness, it is a social phenomenon that equally affects individuals and societies and forms a basic obstacle that hinders progress and obstructs human resources' capacities to effectively perform their roles in the process of development.

The negative impacts of illiteracy on development have attracted the concern of various levels of people regionally

and internationally. In our Arab World, that concern resulted in the unanimous agreement of the Arab countries to draft and approve "The Arab Strategy for Illiteracy Eradication" in the conference hosted by Baghdad in 1976.

The strategy specified the scope of the problem, the objectives, the stages of implementations, the principles and trends on which work would be based and the executive procedures of such principles.

The eradication of illiteracy was a primary target of the Government of the Sultanate of Oman. Since the start of the renaissance in 1970, the process of illiteracy eradication progressed side by side with the spread of education among the young.

As an activity, the eradication of illiteracy started in the academic year 1973/1974. At first, the time duration was (2) years after which learners were awarded the certificate of liberation from illiteracy, which was equivalent to successfully completing the 4th year of (general education). After that, the learners joined the adult education held in evening classes considering that the evening period suits the learners who are busy with work in the morning period.

In an effort to improve the services of illiteracy eradication, and due to the changes in the Omani study courses and in conformity with the United Nation's Convention on illiteracy eradication, the time duration of the stage of illiteracy eradication was extended in the

◆ *Continued on page 9*

year 2005/2006 to become (3) years after which the learners join the 7th class of general education in the educational centres designated for adult education.

### The Start of the Activity of Illiteracy Eradication in the Sultanate:

The progression of illiteracy eradication in the Sultanate started in the year 1973/1974 when a group of sections were opened for teaching illiterates in a number of schools of general education. The next step was the ministerial decision No (302) in 1975 issuing the illiteracy eradication system.

The system was amended in 1981 (appendix 1) to conform with the Omani educational philosophy that is based on the equality between citizens in rights, duties and equal opportunities for all, young and adults.

The system defined the illiterate as being, "Any individual above the age of (10) who is not enrolled in any educational institution, and has not reached the level of employment in reading and writing in Arabic, mathematics and other areas of knowledge".

The system also specified the minimum level of employment as being the ability to read correctly and to understand, the ability to write a correct paragraph, expressing oneself clearly in writing, the ability to read and write numbers, and the ability to carry out the basic arithmetical calculations required by an individual in their daily life.

### Illiteracy Eradication's Study Plans and Curricula

The current study plan of illiteracy eradication lasts (3) academic years. Each year consists of (7.5) months.



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In the first year, the plan consists of (15) periods a week for male learners and (16) for females (including one period of family education taught to females only). In the second year (18) periods are taught to male learners and (19) to females, while the third year's plan consists of (25) periods taught to all male and female learners.

The time allotted for the period is (40) minutes. In the first and second years (4) basic subjects, are taught with a separate book for each subject while in the

third year (6) subjects are taught, also with a separate book for each.

### The Qualitative Expansion in the Programmes of Illiteracy Eradication

In addition to opening classes for the learners at the illiteracy eradication centres, the Ministry carried out a number of illiteracy eradication programmes that target certain categories of the society, and regardless of the targeted category, those liberated from illiteracy are provided with a set of books named, "The Adults' Library". These books cover various cultural areas and are intended to motivate those liberated from illiteracy to pursue further free reading.

- The Adults' Library
- Occupational Programmes for the Firemen at Seeb and Salalah Airport.
- Occupational Programmes for Agricultural Workers.
- Programme of Teaching Arabic to Non-Arabic Speakers.
- The TV programme for Teaching Reading and Writing
- Special Programmes for Educating Women
- Eradicating the Illiteracy of those with Special Cases
- Eradicating the Illiteracy of Those with Special Needs
- The Yields of the Illiteracy Eradica-



tion Efforts

- The "Literate Village" Project

### Co-operation with Arab and International Organisations

Channels of relationship between the Ministry of Education and the Arab and international organisation have always been extended since the Sultanate officially joined them. The organisations referred to are the following:

- The United Nations' Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco).
- The Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Iesco)
- The Arab League, Educational and Cultural Organization (Alecso)
- The United Nations' International Children's Emergency Fund (Unicef)
- The Arab Educational Office of the Gulf States, which is an Arab Gulf organisation that operates within the member states to serve educational goals.

The efforts of the ministry in this concern targeted benefiting from these organisations in all fields that support educational and cultural activities at the level of education, generally, and at the level of technically and physically supporting illiteracy eradication in particular. Some of the most significant contributions that have been realised in this area are:

- The continued support in the exchange and enrichment of experiences with all that is novel and beneficial through exchanging visits and holding seminars and workshops inside and outside the Sultanate.
- Offering material support in the area of rewriting the illiteracy eradication curricula and dispatching specialised experts to benefit from their experiences in offering consultation services in the fields of new projects and programmes.
- Contributing to the family education projects.
- Providing the activity with the periodicals, magazines and publications that reflect the regional and international experiences and practices.
- Contributing to the production of a documentary film that tracks the progression of illiteracy eradications and highlights the efforts that have been exerted in this field.
- Contributing to the implementation of the training courses for the staff of illiteracy eradication.
- The areas of co-operation were not restricted to those organisations. The efforts exerted comprised promoting the same aspects with brotherly and friendly countries through signing several agreements aiming to serve all educational areas.