

NGO

Imparting Literacy To Rural Women

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THE Non-Government organisations, NGOs by their short name, are quite new or may be confusing to our common people, though most of the people are in touch with one of them, some way or the other. However, the term NGO needs to be popularised with our people through actions. We have reasons to believe that 50% of the problems facing the country may be tackled by the NGOs' joint venture.

NGOS through the co-ordinated programmes can help to eradicate the menace of illiteracy among the people including women. However, there should be a recognition at national as well as international levels that NGOs have the capacity to face and solve a substantial number of promotional issues and problems in developing countries. Therefore, if NGOs want to develop the country of their own, it is not at all difficult for them to do something position without taking much trouble; because they have supports from international welfare agencies such as United Nations as well as national agencies.

The provision for NGOs are well spelled out in developing and developed countries' constitutions. They can play an important role in eradicating illiteracy among the women in rural areas of developing countries, particularly in Bangladesh. There are three kinds of organizations i.e. male, female and jointly for male and female. But my appeal would be to people irrespective of sex and class to come forward to offer literacy to the

nation as a whole. To achieve the goal, to receive the real effect-NGOS should take joint plans with productive projects regionally upto union level. The adopted policy should give clear directions, and calculated steps should be taken so that results come in the scheduled time.

Before going for planning, a blueprint should be drawn out on how to remove illiteracy from society particularly from among the women in Bangladesh. Education in Bangladesh, like many other aspects of our corporate life, has been heading for an uncharted destination. The ills of society has created such condition. The worst affected segment in this process is the primary level of education which is supposedly responsible for the major thrust towards a positive direction. Overnight growth of population has accelerated the need for a larger numbers of pre-primary and primary schools in the country. But it is not sufficient to impart a qualitative education, whose appeal does not last or work in the practical field.

Mass Literacy: Mass literacy, specially among women in the village would be our aim. The work would be done with planning, programming, budgeting and ultimately, im-

plementing in phases. There should be evaluation of actions. Report should be made phase by phase. Traditional stereotyped and unimplementable policy should not be adopted. I mean modern and easy going method should be applied so that the urge of necessity will touch the minds of people even womenfolk.

The topic, the role of NGOs in eradicating illiteracy from among the women, brings for the other questions what measures to be taken or would be justified only for womenfolk and there is the question, which group (male or female) would take initiative. Practically, we observe that female organizations are taking initiative only for the development of women, while it must be common responsibility of all organization (NGO) to take steps for extending education to both men and women. If necessary, special initiative should be taken for women.

If a mother is educated, the family can be considered as an educated family. So it is appreciable that the UNESCO in our country, like in other least developing countries, is taking interest in women literacy.

There are 40 far reaching recommendations for advancing the state of Asian Pacific Women which have

been endorsed by a working group of United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asian and the Pacific (ESCAP) in its regular session in Tokyo since in April, 1984. The recommendations drafted at a regional inter-government meeting in Tokyo, include the ratification of or accession to be International Convention of the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women by government in Asia and Pacific.

Equal rights for men and women has always been a goal of the United Nations, and it has worked through its commission on the status of women to attain that goal.

The commission, since its inception in 1946, has endeavoured to bring to light all the areas in which women do not have equality with men. Among other efforts there is a convention of UNO for the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women. This convention consists of 30 articles. Articles 1-16 deal with specific actions to be taken by State parties to the convention, while articles 17-30 describe the procedure for the implementation of the convention by the State parties to it.

Our discussion is based on articles 10 and 14. According to the commission, a woman should take the oppor-

tunity individually to educate herself about her rights. Once these are understood, a woman can promote for others. Women of our country could encourage schools to teach women's rights. They can also influence local papers to write and contribute to the movement for eradicating illiteracy from among the women in rural areas. Since there are all sorts of supports guaranteed by the Government of the countries of the region, NGOs can play a vital role with their welfare oriented voluntary activities. In the context of Bangladesh, since the field of action is the village, the working body should have to strive hard for the implementation of the adopted policies and programmes. To keep in front as symbol the adopted resolution of the convention, the action would be taken very seriously and enthusiastically.

The concept of education must be forced through the Mass media—radio, television, newspapers to give to clear sense to the people that vocational training, such as carpentering, stitching, Knitting cutting, making things which are considered as handicrafts, machinery operating in factories, should be given to the female group of people. The above mentioned learnings would be a productive measure for educating our village women.