

# Bangladesh Saksharata Samity And Its Achievements

-Md. Osman Ghani,

**BANGLADESH** Saksharata Samity (Bangladesh Literacy Society) is a national level voluntary social welfare organisation registered with the Social Welfare Department Government of Bangladesh. It came into being on 23rd November, 1975. The registered central Office of the Society is now located at 5, Chameli Bagh Santinagar, Dacca.

Bangladesh Saksharata Samity (Bangladesh Literacy Society) mainly aims at (a) eradicating illiteracy from Bangladesh in cooperation with the Government of Bangladesh by establishing Night Literacy Schools in the existing Government and Non-Government Educational Institutions in the country and in other places suitable for the purpose being within the framework of its organizational set-up at the village/mahalla, union, thana and District levels etc., with the help of its organizational workers at those respective constitutional bases.

(b) Supplementing directly or indirectly the programme of the Government for controlling population boom which is considered number one problem of the country through the branch committee and by imparting literacy to the illiterates (adults and poor non-adults), health and population education etc. to the people through the branch based Literacy Schools/Centres.

(c) Establishing income generating projects in the branch areas on cooperative basis.

(d) Taking up integrated programme for literacy, family planning and income generations.

For proper execution of the programme, the society framed a syllabus with a course of study for six months, strictly in accordance with the Constitution of the Society.

The students are provided with literacy books written by Prof. Md. Osman Ghani, Secretary-General (also pencils and papers to the poor),

schools with lighting, teachers are paid Tk. 300.00 each for 5 hours service a day—2 hours in the literacy school and 3 hours in the free distribution of contraceptives to the clients of Family Planning supplied from the "Adult Education and Contraceptive Distribution Project" of the Society. Each Literacy School has two paid teachers who are nominated by the local 17-member branch committees from among themselves and appointed by the Project Director.

The General Fund of the Society received from the Social Welfare Deptt. (recurring) other Govt. Deptt. Private Donations etc. (non-recurring) help the Society develop the Society's Programme and expand its activities in the existing and on-going fields and other fields of the Programme.

### ACHIEVEMENTS:

The Society started with its programme of Literacy on 23rd Nov. '75 and one Literacy School at East Khilgaon Govt. Primary School, Dacca on 4th June, 1976. Upto November, 1978 it could run only 6 schools in 5 districts of the country and during that period of 3 years from those 6 schools only 579 students got literacy. The achievement was so due mainly to financial stringency.

From 1st December, 1978, the Society could launch the "Adult Education and Contraceptive Distribution Project" with a total of 33 Night Literacy Schools in 33 villages of Bangladesh. The project was launched with the help of Family Planning International Assistance (FPIA) which has its regional office at Dacca. The FPIA entered into an agreement with the Society to finance and give material help for implementing the Project for four years by the Society. The first year of the programme from December, 1st through November 30th is a 100-school programme. In accordance with the programme, from the March, 1979, the society opened

another new 33 schools in 33 villages and from July 1979, the Society opened another 24 schools in new 34 villages making the number of schools as 100. Now, the Society has 100 schools in 100 villages spreading over 19 districts of the country which are managed by 100 organizational village/mahalla/branches of the Society.

The Society has now 12,397 students in one hundred Literacy Schools. Upto May, 1979 the first batch from the first 33 schools appeared at an examination after the end of their course of study for six months and out of 4,534 students 3000 students got through and became literate within 1st six months of the project. New enrolments of students are made after examinations. Men, Women and poor children who cannot afford to go for formal education are enrolled and given admission in the Literacy Schools of the Society. In the meantime more 1000 students received literacy from new 34 schools started in 2nd phase i.e. in the month of March, 1979.

Under its above project, the Society also has now 35,266 pills and condom users. The pills condoms etc. are also supplied by the FPIA as commodity grant to the Society's project. It is expected that the total number of clients will be more than 40,000 exceeding the given target of 30,000 for the year ending on 30th November, 1979 and about 10,000 illiterate students would get literacy from the schools by the end of the year, 1979.

### FUTURE PROGRAMME:

**ONGOING PROJECT:** The Society expects to expand its ongoing project of "Adult Education & contraceptive Distribution" with new Night Literacy Schools in new village areas if necessary funds were available. The existing schools will be continuing with FPIA funds in the next year i.e., 1st December 1979 through 30th November 1980 and from the 3rd

year the Society will have to run itself 25% of the Schools on its own and in the 4th year all 100 schools.

The present book "Saksharata" of the project for the students is expected to be modified and developed if the expected help from the Govt. UNESCO and other sources were available. Meanwhile the UNESCO has agreed to finance the project with due approval of the Ministry of Education, Govt. of Bangladesh.

From next December, 1979 the Society will launch its programme of Fisheries under the project in 25 schools based villages.

The Society also expects to launch a self reliance programme in each branch village by building up local funds with a contribution of each and every member of the village @ Tk. 0.50 each from January, 1980 with which local cottage industries. Farms will be set up.

### FUND RAISING PROJECT:

The Society has already taken up a Fund Raising Project from October, 1979. Under this project the present 200 teachers of 100 schools in 19 districts of the country will donate to the general fund of the Society @ Tk. 10.00 each in the form of Trk Bond. The 19 Central Executive Council members and 1700 Branch Committee members of 100 branches of the Society are also expected to follow the suit.

If the Govt. charitable programmes viz., Relief, Test Relief, Free Medical Care, Rations etc. are integrated with the Literacy Programme, fruitful results can be expected.

The Govt. can help the programme more actively and effectively if the family planning workers at the village level are given to work with the Society's village level Branch Committees and the teachers who also are engaged in supplying contraceptive to their respective village couples.