

031 Release not relief :A Case Study of Bogra Dustha Kalayan Sangstha
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a) Researcher's Identity

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b) Objectives

As outlined in its constitution the objectives of this organization are as follows:

- i. To provide shelter to the orphans, destitutes, beggars, gay girls and physically handicapped persons; to rehabilitate them through training in various cottage crafts and trades and to develop them morally and spiritually through education and religious teachings;
- ii. To provide food, clothing, medical care to these people during their stay in this organization;
- iii. To arrange sports, games and cultural programmes for recreation and physical fitness of the sheltered people of the organization;
- iv. To make necessary arrangement for taking up projects on agriculture, cottage industry and handicraft and to give training to the sheltered people of the organization in various income generating activities in order to make them productive;
- v. To publicise the objectives of the organization for fund raising from different sources such as donation, Zakat, Fitra, Sadka;
- vi. To keep contact with various government and non-government agencies for financial and other supports for the organization;
- vii. To run viable business unit to raise the income of the organization;
- viii. To take necessary loan from the bank or from the individual for proper functioning of the organization;

- ix. To made campaign against begging and eradicating it and, to find out philanthropic guardians (relatives or non-relatives) under whose support the trained inmates of the organization can be rehabilitated in different places suitable for them; and
- x. To employ necessary personnel to run the organization and to fix up terms and conditions of their appointment.

The study is primarily meant for those who are interested in the affairs of this kind of organizations. The activities of the organization can inspire others to take up similar programmes.

c) Executive summary

Bogra Dustha Kalayan Sangstha is a voluntary organization working for the welfare of destitute women and children. This was started in 1975 at the initiative of some local people of Bogra town to help the large number of flood victims who were coming to this town from different areas in search of food and shelter. In course of time, this organization took as innovative role to redress the sufferings of distressed people not through relief but through releasing the potentials by creating opportunities for training and other supporting services. The organization is run by a managing committee consisting of local people with financial help from the public and various government and non-government agencies. During the last few years of operation this has shown some visible results and has drawn the attention of people both from home and abroad. The present study is an attempt to get an overview of the organization. The findings have been summarized below:

1. The main objective of this organization is to rehabilitate the destitute women and children through training in various cottage crafts and trades and by providing education and moral teachings. The organization also provides food, clothing, housing and medical care to these women and children.
2. This has an annual budget of Tk. 6,10,000.00 for the calendar year 1983. The main sources of its finance are contributions from its members, zakat, subscriptions from the public, donation from various national and international agencies and income from various business uits.
3. Besides the managing committee, there are 29 supporting officers and staff to run the organization. A few of these personnel are deputed by the government, some are retired personnel working on a nominal allowance and others are paid employees. An amount of Tk. 50,000.00 is spent annually for salary and allowances for these personnel.

4. The organization at present runs 10 business-cum-training units to provide employment as well as training to the sheltered women and children. Some of these units have already started production by absorbing a good number of sheltered women and earning profit. Others are still working as training units.
5. For physical, moral and cultural development of the sheltered women and children it runs a medical unit, a school-cum-literacy centre and a music class. It also arranges religious teachings, physical training and games for the children.
6. There are 299 person; 166 adult women and 133 children living here by December 1982. These persons have come from as many as 11 districts of the country. The majority (49%) are from the district of Bogra. The duration of the stay varies from less than 1 year to 4 years.
7. 98% of these people are Muslims, two are Hindus and two of them do not know what their religions are.
8. Most of these people (94%) were illiterate when they came here. 52% can now sign their names, 21% are attending the primary school run by the organization and the remaining 27% who are still illiterate are either not in school going age or mentally retarded.
9. Of the 166 adult women; 21 (13%) are married and still have some contact with their husbands, 50 (30%) were married but currently have no contact with their husbands, 40 (24%) are still unmarried, 30 (18%) are divorced and 25 (15%) are widows.
10. It has been reported that about 35% of these women and children have been brought here from different parts of Bogra town where they were found either begging or engaged in various immoral activities. The rest have come on their own will. Many of the women who were engaged in immoral activities want to run away from this place.
11. From the case study of 10 sheltered women and children, it is found that none of them was born as destitute. They were not of course born with affluence but most of them had family life with some means of support. Most common causes of their destituteness are death of the main earning members in the family; father or husband, divorced by the husband, calamity in the family and conspiracy of the relatives.
12. All these persons after becoming destitutes have tried hard to find out jobs for livelihood. When they have failed, they have become either beggars or got involved in various unwanted and immoral activities.

13. Most of these women are happy now because in this organization, they can earn something through their work and they do not have to beg or depend on other's mercy for their livelihood any more.
14. Almost all of these women are trying their best to save as much as they can out of their small earnings for future security and for becoming self-reliant.
15. None of these women aspire for very high standard of living. They remain satisfied with the barest necessities for their survival. Food and cloth which they get from this organization is though very cheap quality, they consider these enough for them.
16. Most of these women who have children and do not intend to stay here permanently. They want to start a family life when the children will be grown up. Those who are comparatively young and still unmarried want to leave this organization if they can get marry and have family life. Only those women who are old and have none to look after them do not want to leave this place.
17. None of these women has been found who are unwilling to work and want to live on others as parasite. Almost all women in this organization who are capable of working have been engaged in various productive activities. Children who are at the school going age are attending school and trying to acquire skill through work in various units for becoming productive members of the society.
18. Though most of these women have learned to sign their names after coming to this organization, very few are interested in getting further education. They do not consider formal education so much useful for them and want to learn things which can help them to raise their income.

d) Conclusion

The present study is no way free from limitations. Most of the data have been taken either from office records or from verbal statements of the personnel of this organization. It has not been possible to prove the reliability of the data. During the case study it has been found that most of the women are very shy and can not say systematically everything about their life. A few have been reluctant to disclose many things about the personal life. It would also have been better if the financial records used for the study could be verified with relevant balance sheets and audit reports but this has not been possible for lack of necessary records and for some other constraints. In view of all these facts, it will not be fair to take any generalized statements or

recommendations on the basis of these findings. However, in conclusion the following remarks can be made.

The objective for which Bogra Dustha Kalayan Sangstha has been set up is great. It has taken a pioneering role to find out ways and means to rehabilitate that segment of population who have been deprived of the benefit of all development efforts made so far.

Because of a number of socio-economic factors the number of resourceless and destitutes are going on increasing every year in the country resulting heavy urban bound migration. These people want to work and live with their income. A number of agencies both the government and non-government have been working on this vital programme. The experiences of Bogra Dustha Kalayan Sangstha give them some insights for their work.

The organization has not yet been able to achieve financial viability. Its main source of income is voluntary contribution from various agencies and from the public. It should have a permanent source of income. Many of its business units have not yet been able to earn profit. The organization is growing and the cost of living is also increasing, resulting in its increasing expenditure every year. Without more income and financial assistance it is therefore difficult to keep this organization going. The government and other agencies should come forward to support this organization on more regular basis until it attains financial viability.

Most of its business units can be made economically viable if production can be increased and necessary marketing facilities can be developed. More attention from the public and various agencies in the form of more work order will be of great help for these units.

The accounts of the organization should be audited regularly. The audit report should be made public and if possible this should be published in the news paper, This would help to remove if there is any misgiving in any quarter about the utilization of its fund.

Lastly, it can be said that in the past many noble organizations like Bogra Dustha Kalayan Sangstha came into being but very few could survive. The most common reasons for their destruction were mishandling of fund, conflict of leadership, high handedness and lack of clear vision about the goal. Bogra Dustha Kalayan Sangstha may have to face the same destiny if necessary measures are not taken to keep it free from similar problems. It should be remembered that it needs very hard work and sustained efforts to build up an organization but to destroy the same it needs only a few moments.

