



LITERACY PROMOTION AND SOUL WELFARE ORGANIZATION

Mr. Mohammad Naeem Ashraf
SOUL Welfare Organization,
Pakistan

Manila, Philippines
May 5-9, 1997

First of all, let me say I am pleased and honored to have been invited to make my humblest presentation concerning my NGO name SOUL Welfare Organization and her work in the field of literacy.

SOUL Welfare Organization of which I have the honor to be the secretary general is a non-governmental membership organization which represents a strata of society which comprises 60-70% of our society in Pakistan or you may also say in any third world country.

We are here to design or to check the possibility of designing new policies, techniques, to share the wider range of experiences of community workers, specialists, practitioners from all around the world; and then also make the arrangements or try to arrange the imposition of these policies through governments, NGOs, CBOs and other institutions so that the concept of sustainable development, empowerment of the people, capacity building and the most important I would like to emphasize is the Awareness of the community members that who they are? What they are for and what they can do if they try to do so.

The concept of Free Market System is creating a gradually increasing gap between the poor and the rich because it leads the nations towards the ideology of making the money to become rich and hence more powerful - - at any cost and without any care for the means. And also propagate that why should one country or nation share her wealth with others?

But we also know that the world has become a village and it is not possible to hid an incident from others due to the rapid developments that have been made in the field of communications during the last couple of decades. So what does it mean?

Let me say here that it means that if a very minor incident occur in a country side of Brazil or Ghana or Sri Lanka or Pakistan the whole world come to know about that within a very short period of time. So resultantly the whole world is effected, by the incident occurred in any part of the world, depending upon the importance or intensity of the incident, not only individually but on the whole psychologically and also environmentally because it arrest the attentions of thousands of dwellers and so what we are doing now is collecting awful and horrible data in our unconscious which we are to deliver or transfer to our forthcoming generations genetically and instinctively in the form of inheritance.

Having the same concept in our mind 6 years ago we decided that something should be done - - there should be a check which could - - if not protect completely but at least try to protect or save the community from the anticipated loss which is to be made due to the lack of awareness in the next centuries.

As far as we have experienced we conclude that **NO EDUCATION MEANS NO DEMOCRACY** and it has been also proved at the test of times, so the objectives of SOUL were based on the concept of awareness and empowerment through

education as education can provide the required short cut to a sustainable development and hence the highway towards a better and healthy world.

I hope that the detailed introduction of SOUL Welfare Organization would have been circulated to you and you may refer to it for further information about the structure of SOUL.

We started our work with the ideology that “WE SHALL WORK WITH THE PEOPLE NOT FOR THE PEOPLE” so that the general community members could get the skill to identify the root causes of their problems firstly, and then find long term and feasible solutions to these problems - - all with the help of awareness and by themselves, which is in our top most intentions.

I have also mentioned the literacy rate of our target areas in my paper which would have been circulated to you amongst other papers; you can see the educational facilities, circumstance and conditions in which we are working.

So at a very small level we started our first project concerning Education named **FREE COACHING CENTER**, to examine how many people are there who intend to be educated and hence get the better chances of living and also we tried that how these results can be improved.

So in the first year of this project, 1993, only 42 students were educated for three months by our executive and general members and so we had done something than to do nothing - - a step towards a more sustainable world without any wait for good and sufficient resources.

As adults play a vital role in a Combined Family system and it is inevitable to educate them if you want to educate a whole family, so that they should be skilled enough to earn a good and reasonable life standards.

So we had to include adults in our Free Coaching Center and in 1994 the basic skills of reading, writing and calculating were delivered to 36 adults amongst other regular students.

1995 brought new hopes for us as we got the sanguined response from Habitat II process and so the executive body decided to put a comparatively bigger step: **the commencement of H.W. Academy**, in which students were to taught throughout the year upto the high school level on a very small fee basis, a fee which could only cover the expenditures of the academy.

So the results were raised upto the 586 students from whom 86 got admission in the universities for the Bachelors degrees! A detailed report is also available on this project completed in 1996.

We are now trying to establish a school named. The Royal Girls High School, for the girls upto the high school level so that the women of tomorrow can be appropriately trained if we need a better world. A detailed report on this project is also available.

We are also trying to get some financial help and so look forward to some international donor agencies for our following projects:

Students Information Desk (SID)

A computerized network that would be built for students, on small covering charges basis, to provide the information about all the courses available in all Pakistani academic institutions and it will be linked with the rest of the world as well.

General Information Centre for all the community members which would assist them in their problems.

Justice Panel consisting of panel of lawyers which would help the community members in their legal difficulties and guide them appropriately. It would also defend the wretched community and human rights as well.

I, on behalf of my NGO and my community, will strongly advocate that the UNO and all its departments should give more importance to:

1. NGOs, CBOs, and other people centered organizations which involve the community members in the developmental process and work in their field of education, empowerment of people, capacity buildings;
2. Allocate some considerable scholarships by UNO, UNESCO, UNICEF. The Asian Development Bank, The World Bank and all other international donor agencies to the third world NGOs, CBOs and other people centered organizations if they contemplate for a better world;
3. Design and implement such policies in 3rd world countries which could give more chances of participation to the poor in decision making process at local and international levels concerning their political, sociological and economical systems;
4. Train and educate the people centered organizations' members in 3rd world countries so that they could serve their communities more effectively and deliver the same to them and hence a more peaceful and prosperous world - - a world which would be providing the equal chance of living to all the humanity;

5. Develop such policies regarding non formal education for the governments which would emphasize them for a true participation of the people centered organizations in educational issues;
6. Reduce the poverty level in the world because poverty means a situation in which an individual or a nation is deprived of the basic rights of life;
7. Allocate more funds to finance or support projects proposed by NGOs, CBOs and other people centered organizations;
8. Enforce the governments of 3rd world countries that the pressure of bureaucracy be released from the general peoples and their organizations.

We know that it would sound quite strange or perhaps funny for the developed nations that why they should share their resources with the developing countries, but we must not forget here that we are all involved in all these matters we are facing today, directly or indirectly, after all it is our forthcoming generations.

We know that the achievement of high objectives, to make this world more sustainable, peaceful, literate, empowered and justified require hardship, long term planning and also long time and we also mention that solution to most of the problems or difficulties we are facing today in 3rd world countries or even in developed countries can only be solved by a very simple and single lined formula or strategy which is: