

Krishti Katha

Electronic Newsletter for Progressive Culture and Development-Established in 1997

Year-4, Vol-1, Issue-1- January-2000

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Editorial

International Year of Volunteer is going to be observed 2001 world wide. Bangladesh is not apart from this great events. In the mean time an international seminar has been held in Dhaka from 2-3 November the second IYV Workshop for Asia and the Pacific. It has brought together about 15 countries to discuss the formation of national committees.

The year 2001 was the challenging year for Krishti Katha as well as its mother organization Forum for Culture and Human Development (FCHD). As the dedicated organization to promote progressive culture and development the organization was suffering from many fold problems i.e. shortage of competent volunteers, staff and necessary fund. That was why, Krishti Katha and Joratali both electronic newsletters were not published in time. FCHD has designed many programmes to implement through partner organisations during the year 2001. Most of the programmes have already started smoothly. We hope KristiKatha will bring out regularly during this years.

Send your article for Krishti Katha:

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Not more than two pages.

S.M. Razzak Obtained Ph.D

on

Socio Cultural Communication in Development

Sultan Muhammad Razzak obtained Ph.D from Ansted University, British Virgin Islands of United Kingdom. His Ph.D Thesis was on *Socio Cultural Communication in Development*. Supervised by, Professor. Dr. Ian Choong and Professor Tan Bak Huak and specially advised by Dr. Sir Roger BN Haw of Ansted University.

Presently, Dr. Razzak is associate with different national and international development organizations and Universities. He has been working to involve theatre as well as other socio cultural components to be the vital part of ongoing development since 1980.

He wrote more than thousand lyrics, 30 plays and so many articles on culture and contemporary development. He also a renowned Cultural organizer at rural level intending to involve and revitalize people's cultural elements in to the development sector. He introduced electronic newsletters "KrishtiKatha" in 1996 from Bangladesh to promote worldwide progressive culture for development.

Dr. S.M. Razzak is Executive Director of Forum for Culture and Human Development (FCHD).

A Song on

SOLIDARITY OF GLOBAL VOLUNTEERS

Volunteer, volunteer...

Raise your hands volunteer

Knocking the centuries first year

Proclaim before the globe again

Nothing the end but begin

Yours year... yours year... yours year

Though hiss the seas with blackish hood

All devouring cyclones mood

Raging war ices and fire

But your hands still so upper

Volunteer, volunteer...

Keep your hands so up volunteer

Knocking centuries first year
Volunteer, all the years in future
Yours year... yours year... yours year

Let's win the century with love and care
Let's peace on the earth free of war
Let's globe for share and care
Make a chain on planate all over
Keep your hands raise volunteer
Knocking centuries first year
Volunteer, all the years in future
Yours year... yours year... yours year
Volunteer, volunteer...

Lyric written by: Sultan Muhammad Razzak

Date: 11 October 2000

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VOLUNTEERISM IN BANGLADESH

Golam Rabbany Hiru

Historical Background.

The territory constituting Bangladesh was under the Muslim rule for over five and a half centuries from 1201 to 1757. Subsequently, it was under the subjugation of the British after the defect of the last sovereign ruler, Nawab Sirajuddowla, at the Battle of Plassey on the fateful day of June 23, 1757. The British ruled over the entire Indian Sub-continent including this territory for nearly 190 years from 1757 to 1947. During that period Bangladesh was a part of the British Indian provinces of Bengal and Assam. With the termination of the British rule in August, 1947 the Sub-continent was partitioned into India and Pakistan. Bangladesh were then a part of Pakistan and were Known as East Pakistan. It remained so, for about 24 years from August 14, 1947 to March 25, 1971. It appeared on the World map as an independent and sovereign State on December 16, 1971 following the victory at the War of Liberation from March 25 to December 16, 1971.

2. Location:

Bangladesh lies in the north eastern part of South Asia and is bounded by India on the west and the north, by India and Myanmar on the east and by the Bay of Bengal on the South. The area of the country is 55,598 sq. miles or 143,999 sq. k.m.

3. Population and People:

KK-January 2001

Bangladesh have been a melting pot of peoples culture for a very long time. Peoples from Myanmar and the Himalaya, Dravidians and the invading Aryans made up the first blend of people here. With the arrival of the Mughals, people from all over the Islamic world settled here.

The population of Bangladesh is close to 120 million, making it the most densely populated country in the world, with the exception of several city-states (like Singapore, Malta and Hongkong).

4. Society and Conduct:

Centuries of isolation, even when foreign powers ruled, have produced people, customs and values that are typically Bengali in nature. At the heart of things, people are warm, hospitable and exceedingly helpful. If you as foreigner find yourself in a join, don't be surprised by the Bangladeshis who will go out of their way to help you. For many it is a duty to assist a guest in their country.

5. Traditional

More than 80% of the population live in rural villages. Even for the city dwellers, there is a strong connection to the 'home village'. Most earn their living from the land, either by farming their own, which is becoming less common as the population increases, or by working for some one else. Rural lives are bounded by dependency : on the elders of the family, on the employer or village patron, or on some other authority figure. Loyalty to the group is an essential culture value.

At the core of this group is the extended family which forms the basis of social and economic life in Bangladesh and remains a cornerstone despite the shift towards nuclear families, a product of growing urbanization. The head of the household assumes much of the responsibility and provides for parents, children and other relatives.

6. Government and Politics:

Bangladesh are a constitutional republic with a multiparty parliamentary democracy in which elections by secret ballot are held on the basis of universal suffrage. The theoretical head of state is the president and the executive head is the Prime Minister. In theory all the politicians volunteer their time and money for politics as the Government

doesn't patronize the political parties but the reality is different.

7. Religion:

The Muslims, who make up 87%, Hindus constitute about 12%, Buddhists and Christian are 1% of the total population.

Cultural and Traditional Aspects of Volunteering:

Traditionally we hold a culture of volunteerism, what we consider today as volunteerism is actually the basic practices of our culture. In the past, helping others needed no definition nor new terminology. It was considered as part of life. For example, we have a common belief that after the death of a person, or s/he will be judged by the creator according to their life-time activities and will be determined whether s/he would go to heaven or hell.

Besides these, there were other forms of volunteering, such as, within the circle of the community, there are specific practices called *Shahaja* - in which friends and members of the family aid one another during special events, such as wedding, funeral or birthday. We have another word "*Shamaj Shebok*" they are the individuals originally intended to help the poor, widows and who could not afford to take care of themselves. The community would help the individuals who were less fortunate and could not afford even the basic necessities of life. Even in the time of any disaster, the community people act first to help the victims and they play a key role in facing the disaster.

9. Definition of Volunteering

Traditional concept of volunteering was limited to altruistic or philanthropic human service. People practiced mercy thoughts religiously. Services have characteristics of free will, no immediate financial or materialistic rewards, and benefiting people beyond one's own relatives or close friends. People being served are poor and usually include the elderly without offspring, orphans, disabled, widows and travelers.

Bangladesh is an agricultural society a long time, there are many different forms of mutual helps in this sector. These type of volunteering, commons in

every society, are now challenged to be called as volunteering, in a strict sense of no financial rewards.

There are other types of volunteering too. Scouts, Girls Guide, BNCC, Ansar, VDP, Red Crescent Volunteer, Local Youth Clubs and few other organized volunteer organization.

The group allied for democratic movement such as labour movement, economic justice, environmental conservation, anti-corruption, women rights, Peace and Human Rights movement, consumer rights and unified advocacy groups distinguish themselves as activists rather than to be called as volunteer.

You know, we have a large number of NGOs working in Bangladesh and playing a significant role Development of the country. Some of them are pioneer in the world for Micro-credit and in Non-formal Education sector, such as Grameen Bank, BRAC, Proshika, ASA etc. The world largest NGO also situated in Bangladesh. All these organization were initiated voluntarily, registered as voluntary organizations, now known as NGOs.

However, the definition of volunteering is yet to be resolved. Volunteering means different things to different people but most of the people consider volunteering the service given by an individual without any financial or materialistic gain/reward.

10. Challenges for Volunteering

Volunteering is coming under pressure from the forces of globalization. In the current context of our modern society, it seems that the 'voluntary vision and philanthropic mission' has been losing ground to a selfish psychology of the new international economic order of market economy. The unhealthy competition of meeting the realities of demand and supply focussed market needs, a number of serious deficiencies have emerged in the societal functioning. And in the opinion of many, it is these deficiencies that are hindering a timely positive change in society towards ensuring human rights, justice, equity, peace, good governance and volunteering.

To mention a few of such deficiencies, moral degradation, corruption, violence, abuse, lust for

personal gain, etc. are top of the list. With a careful observation, one may find that all these deficiencies has direct linkage with a state of lacking in basic human virtues both at individual and institutional levels. All these created a negative impact on volunteering. □

The paper is presented at the Regional Workshop on the International Year of Volunteer 200

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Grant Opportunity

Second Call for Proposal THE ASIA URBS PROGRAMME

- Deadlines for Application:

First deadline for application: 15 February

Second deadline for application: 15 June

- Funds Available

Over 9 Million euros are available for this Second call for Proposal to fund a maximum of 29 Development of Information -sharing Projects, and 30 studies. This would mean about

50% more funds committed for projects than under the First Call for Proposal.

• **Who may apply ?**

Local Government from the European Union (EU) and South and South East Asia are invited to the Asia Urbs Programme for grants to implement their urban projects. Applications will be considered for funding if the project proposal is supported by a partnership of at least three local governments: at least two from the EU and at least one from South /South East Asia (as listed below).

<u>South/South East Asia</u>	<u>European Union</u>
Bangladesh	Austria
Bhutan	Belgium
Brunei Darussalam	Denmark
Cambodia	Finland
India	France
Indonesia	Germany
Lao PDR	Greece
Singapore	Irelands
Malaysia	Italy
Maldives	Luxembourg
Nepal	Netherlands
Pakistan	Portugal
Philippines	Spain
Sri Lanka	Sweden
Thailand	United Kingdom
Vietnam	

- More Information

For more details and application guidelines please contact the Asia Urbs Secretariat or visit the websites below.

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Published by: Forum for Culture and Human Development (FCHD), 823/A, Khilgaon, Dhaka-1219, Bangladesh