

PROSHIKA: AN ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE

PROSHIKA- A Center for Human Development is now one of the largest Non-Government Development Organizations in Bangladesh. The acronym of PROSHIKA is understood as a combination of three Bengali words- *Proshikkhan* (training), *Shikhan* (education) and *Kaj* (action).

During liberation war Pakistani army destroyed the infrastructure and retarded the economic structure and production system. As a result, after war people faced socio-economic severe hardship. Industries remain closed and several millions people became jobless and suffered from social instability. To rescue poor people from these problems many international aid agencies started relief work in Bangladesh. Canadian University Services Overseas (CUSO) was one of them. The local staffs of CUSO with experiences of service delivery and mobilization formed an organization named "PROSHIKA" in 1976. After formation of PROSHIKA it has changed its development approach from relief delivery to community/group based development approach. Then started work on social economic and cultural empowerment of the poor both at rural and urban areas. PROSHIKA realized that without formation of peoples' organization it was not possible to bring change to the lives of poor. Organization is one of the means to unite people and develop their consciousness and make capable them so that they can take initiatives to change their poverty condition. People's organization is popularly known as group and in Bangla it is called samiti and the samiti finally has transformed to community infrastructure of poor. PROSHIKA equally emphasizes on both women and men's development. Therefore, separate groups are formed for male and female members. In course of time, their social and economic condition improved and most of them achieved self-reliance. They have developed leadership capacity, project management skills, communication skills, mobilization skills and get entrance in the product market, and participation in community and social functions.

As time passed, PROSHIKA undertook several social and economic developments programs in order to make the poor self-reliant. To do this PROSHIKA adopted two pronged strategy, namely economic and social empowerment. Due to lack of knowledge and skills the poor could not approach nor get entry to the government and non-government institutions which are responsible for serving people with different services and assistance. Through building poor peoples' organizations and imparting social development training PROSHIKA develops their capacity so that they can claim their due rights from the government's service delivery institutions as well as ensuring life security.

PROSHIKA Recovered from Disastrous Situation

An organizational stalemate had happened in 2009 due to maladministration operated by former chairman Qazi Faruque Ahmed. Keeping aside the development activities of PROSHIKA he formed a political party named "Oikya Bodha Nagorik Andolan" which was entirely antidevelopment process. As he directly involved in politics, the government of Bangladesh and donor community opposed his political intention and they refrained from giving donation to PROSHIKA for development work. As a result, all the programs become squeezed. To save PROSHIKA from these devastating actions of Qazi Faruque Ahmed the governing body of that period called an emergency meeting where he was also requested to attend but he did not attend. In this situation, majority members decided to suspend him from the post of Chairman. From that date he became former Chairman.

The body then appointed new Chief Executive and formed a management committee. In 2014 the new management committee took change of PROSHIKA and worked hard to bring PROSHIKA in a secured position. The present Chief Executive along with senior members of management developed some

effective policy and management strategies. Thus, today PROSHIKA has attained footings, developed some microcredit products, and introduced several social development programs. At present, all the programs are in well operation.

Legal Status

PROSHIKA is a registered development organization and working with the legitimate recognition. It has been registered with NGO Affairs Bureau, Joint stock Company, Microcredit Regulatory Authority of Bangladesh government. Besides, it has got registration from Narcotics Prevention Directorate.

PROSHIKA pays tax and VAT to the respective government's department regularly. So, as a registered organization PROSHIKA is implementing its development work all over Bangladesh.

Governance Systems

General Body is the highest body of PROSHIKA. At present, the body is consists of 23 members. This body elects the Governing Body through election process where including chairman, Vice-Chairman and Treasurer. It is elected for three years. The Annual General meeting of General Body held once in a year. The governing body and the general body govern PROSHIKA. The bodies are sole authority of controlling and decision making regarding organizational system operations. In every three months governing body's meeting is organized. The body reviews the progress and process of programs and evaluate the limitations if there any. It appoints the chief executive and decides if his duration of service should be extends or not. Likewise, it decides about promotion of deputy director-to-director position and if extension of service of deputy chief executive and director or not. Besides, it takes decision about strategic issues, which are critical for development of PROSHIKA. This body is comprised of eleven members and its duration is three years. After three years tenure new committee is formed.

Executive Summary

As stated in the introduction the poor of both rural and urban areas are the target beneficiaries of PROSHIKA's programs. The objectives of development initiatives of PROSHIKA are to build people's organization, developing their skills, knowledge and make them out about importance of unity. Bangladesh is one of the poor countries of the world with more the 170 million people. Most of the people live in rural areas and urban slums. They share a little size of land and have no cultivable land. These peoples work in other people's farms and some are engaged in small scale business. Agriculture laborers are paid little through which they cannot live a decent life. With the aim of eradicating these conditions of poor PROSHIKA support them with small and medium size loan. PROSHIKA has organized a total of 42,809 groups. Among them 33,982 are female groups and 8,822 are male groups (as on July 2023). At the same period total group members were 525,879 and among them 409,955 female and 115,924 male.

Program Area (Geographical) Coverage

Presently, PROSHIKA is working in about 8,784 villages, 1,639 unions/wards, 266 upazila and 42 districts in the seven divisions of Bangladesh. Through its various programs, income and employment opportunities have been created for 525,879 people and more than 26 lakh family members have been involved in various development programs so far. Apart from this, the Social Forestry and Climate Change Risk Management Program of this organization have planted about 100 million trees for environmental protection. These achievements have been made possible through the implementation of many other social and economic development programs including People's Organization Building Programs, Financial Services Programs, Health Education, various income generating programs and

Integrated Farms, Social security Service Programs and Environmental Protection and Regeneration Programs, etc.

Program and Project

Earlier it was stated that PROSHIKA follows two prong strategies. Without development of capacity of poor people they cannot stand tall and achieve self-reliance. To ensure social and economic solvency, respect in community, to get access to financial institutions, service delivery mechanism, PROSHIKA implements several economic and social development programs.

Financial Development Services Programs

To be successful in alleviating poverty, the first necessary step is to increase income, create employment opportunities for the poor and prevent their income erosion. For this purpose, PROSHIKA provides various financial services to its group members. Financial services programs include 1. Microfinance Activities; 2. PROSHIKA Savings Scheme; and 3. Loan Loss Compensation Scheme (Loan Insurance).

Collaborative Projects

At present, PROSHIKA is implementing three collaborative projects in urban and sub-urban area and in the southern region of Bangladesh. The projects are 'SuFL' which is being implemented in the southern region of Bangladesh. The second one is called 'Roof Top Gardening'. It is implementing in Dhaka North and Dhaka South City Corporation, Narayanganj, and Gazipur City corporations. The third one is 'Semi-urban Gardening' implementing in surrounding semiurban area of Dhaka City Corporation.

Integrated Agriculture Farm

There are two integrated agriculture farms in PROSHIKA. One is situated in Satkania Upazilla of Chattragram district and the other one is in Rangpur district. There are different productive units such as potato production, wheat production, fish culture, vegetable production, poultry and hatchery farm, cow rearing etc. These farms were established with the aim of achieving economic self-reliance and employment generation.

Income Generating Activities

PROSHIKA has taken necessary steps including financial assistance as well as skill development training, technical and marketing assistance to make the poor self-reliant. Programs are Water Filter Manufacturing and Marketing Program and Honey Production and Marketing Program.

Social Security Services Programs

To alleviate people from poverty, not only economic empowerment is enough, but also awareness and capacity building on various social and environmental issues are required. So, PROSHIKA is implementing various social and natural resource development activities for its group members. These include: training in various subjects, expanded social and human development programs, health programs, social forestry programs, women development and empowerment program, anti-drug Campaign program, etc.