

PROSHIKA AT A GLANCE

(Upto December, 1993)

Year of Establishment	1976
Area Coverage:	
Number of Area Development Centres (ADCs)	
Rural	62
Urban	5
Total	67
Number of Villages	4602
Number of Unions	574
Number of Thanas	
Rural	79
Urban	12
Total	91
Number of Districts	
Number of Groups Formed	
Men	16,870
Women	18,404
Total	35,278
Number of Group Members	
Men	2,97,765
Women	2,83,630
Total	5,81,359
Total Number of Households	5,81,359
Total Number of Beneficiaries	34,88,154
Total Number of Workers	1,443
Number of Loans Provided to the Groups	
for Employment and Income Generating (EIG) Activities	41,500
Total Amount of Loan so far Disbursed for Groups' EIG Activities	Tk. 750 Million
Groups' Own Contribution for EIG Activities	Tk. 200 Million
Number of Participants Received Human Development and Practical Skills Training (Formal and Non-Formal)	1.1 Million
Number of Adult Literacy Centres so far Set up	7879
Number of Persons Provided with Functional Literacy Skill	1,41,567
Number of Non-Formal Primary Schools Established	121
Number of Trees Planted	26 Million
Number of House Constructed for the Poor	27,627
Number of Hand Tubewells Sunk	9255
Number of Low Cost Sanitary Latrine Distributed	69,795

A Laudable Experiment...

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taking place in Bangladesh: 1. Lack of access, ownership and control of productive resources; 2. A patriarchal social system which oppresses women; 3. Lack of participation in public institutions/access to public services; 4. Interlocked, imperfect and distorted market relations; 5. Mainstream development efforts benefiting a minority and bypassing the poor; and 6. Environmental degradation. All of these six reasons contribute to a society which is economically inequitable, unproductive and inefficient, socially unjust and discriminatory, environmentally unsustainable and politically undemocratic.

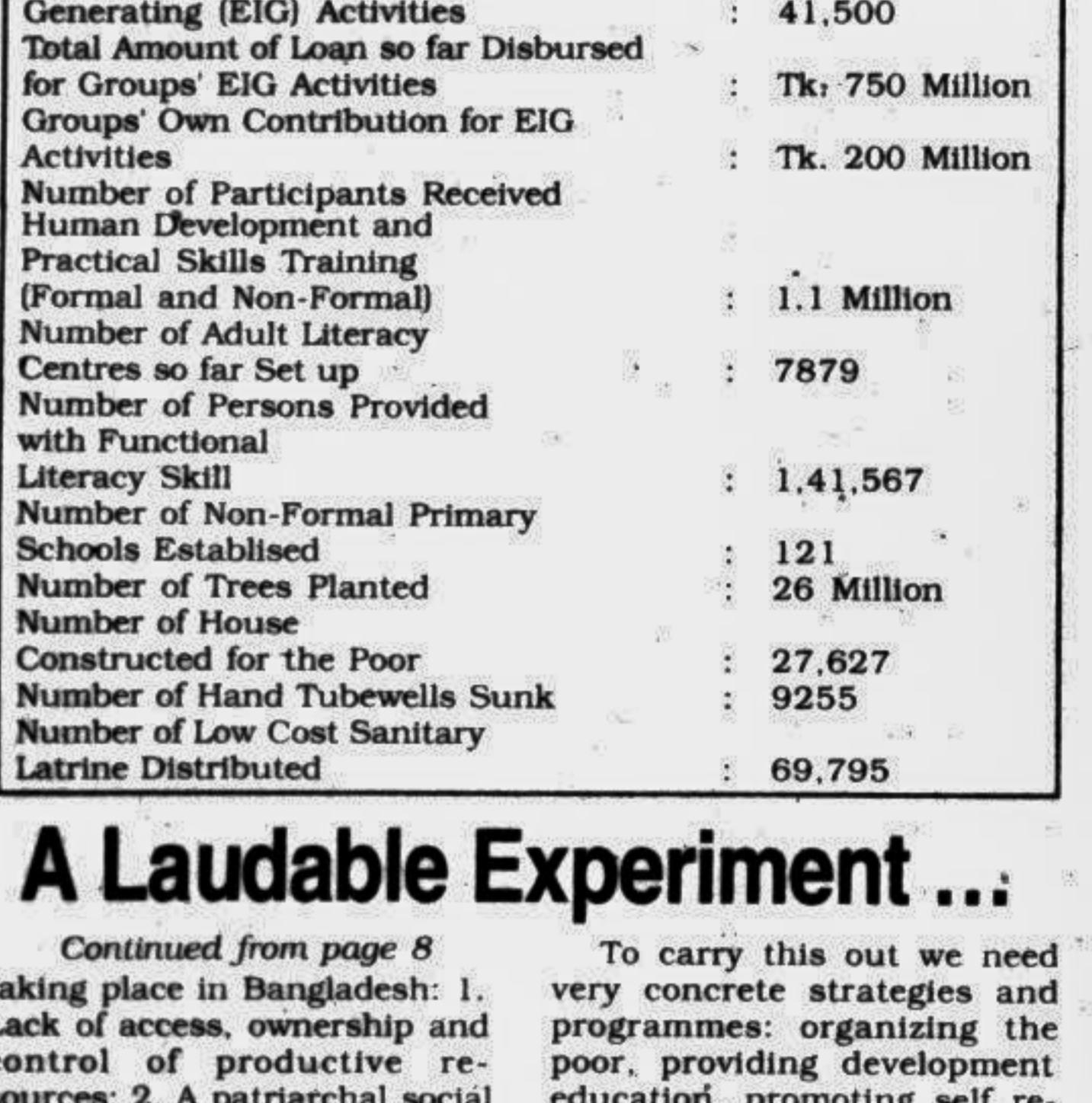
This society creates and maintains mass poverty. This poverty is expressed by hunger and malnutrition, unemployment and underemployment, illiteracy and high birth rates, fatalism, inarticulation and alienation. These are the symptoms. Manifestations are that all economic, social and political relations are vertical, such as powerful-powerless, dominant-dependent and patron-client.

Thus, empowerment of the poor in social, economic and cultural terms can have a successful impact on poverty, as evidenced by our participatory human development strategy. We want to contribute to a vision of society that is economically productive and equitable, socially just; environmentally sustainable and genuinely democratic.

Now our mission is to conduct a long term extensive and intensive participatory sustainable development process through the empowerment of the people. The objectives emanating from this are to achieve structural poverty alleviation and environmental protection and regeneration, improvement in women's status and improved participation in public institutions together with improvement in human rights.



Hand pump for drinking water and irrigation for kitchen gardening.



Women preparing concrete slab latrines — for sanitation and income generation.

To carry this out we need very concrete strategies and programmes: organizing the poor, providing development education, promoting self reliance through employment and income generation activities, environmental regeneration and protection, universal education programme, health infrastructure building programmes, urban poor development programme, integrated multisector women's development programme, policy advocacy programme and the disaster preparedness and management programme.

QFA: Poverty alleviation should be the first priority.

DS: Would you suggest that the budget be recast in accordance with these priorities?

QFA: Yes. Because the development plans are not poor. The main concern is only with increasing GNP. Without a real attack on poverty, even GNP can be increased. Our national programme should be a poverty alleviation programme.

DS: You have identified that development education is important. What are the resource implications? Supposing the BNP government takes the Proshika agenda, are you saying that the Proshika agenda can be financed through an adjusted budget and, if not, where will the additional resources come from?

QFA: Allocation will not ensure resource delivery. For example we have more resources now for poverty alleviation. But we know that as in the past resources may be diverted to other sectors. The implementation capacity is not there. It is not only by allocating the resources that development will be ensured. What is needed is a very comprehensive programme and implementation process. Here the government, as anywhere, should not be in a direct im-

plementation role, but in a position to enable the private sector or the people's sector to do this. I will say that because NGOs have comparative advantage in poverty alleviation work, their capacity can be enlisted and the government can provide resources. NGOs need not all the time depend on foreign resources. For example, the whole credit management for poverty alleviation can be managed by NGOs. Primary education can be done in both quantity and quality by the NGOs.

DS: Ok, I have problem identification and I have an agenda. What then should we do as a nation?

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DS: So the schools should be decentralized?

QFA: Yes.

S: Denationalization should not be understood in a negative way. Instead of schools being run from Dhaka, they should be run locally, democratically, by the local people. It will be accountable to the local people and the government will provide the resources.

DS: If we can decentralize

the development crisis that we are in cannot be solved only by the government. Secondly, all around the world, governments are withdrawing from direct involvement from the economy and development and leaving it to the people's sector and the people's sector may contain both the private sector and civil society. The people's sector should take over the implementation and management of development, say as in education.

DS: Suppose we are in agreement that we should convince the government that their role is one of enabler and facilitator. What should we do?



Sanitization: A very high value added income generating enterprise for women.

education as an experiment, then other things can follow.

S: People will have participation in and control over management. So whether schools are being run properly or not does not depend on the report of an inspector who will visit once every five years. Every day people can inspect the school. In many other countries schools are run by local bodies and not by central government.

DS: So would you identify the way the government works as the number one issue of concern for rural development?

MK: Allocation is not enough. Involvement of NGOs is not enough but the participation of the whole of civil society through different institutions in the planning exercise itself is very important. Decentralization, together with more authority and resources should be given to local government.

DS: So the Ministry of Education's role should be that of facilitator, policy maker and standard setter.

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