

An exemplary organisation

I was in Karachi recently. It is always very pleasant for me to be there as it is my city. My mother, four brothers, one sister, two sisters-in-law, one niece and the grandson of my elder brother are all buried there. I received my college education there and worked there for three years before going to Berlin for higher education in 1961.

I have many very good, sincere friends in Karachi, most of them successful industrialists and great philanthropists. With their help, I was able to set up two state-of-the-art institutes there – the Dr A Q Khan Institute of Biotechnology and Genetic Engineering, now part of the University of Karachi, and the Institute of Behavioral Science, and the Dr A Q Khan Centre, now part of Dow University of Health Sciences. Both institutes are providing excellent services.

The businessmen of Karachi, especially those belonging to the Memon community, are great philanthropists and they are running many social welfare organizations. One of these shining stars is the Saylani Welfare Trust, headed by the young and highly efficient Bashir Bhai (Maulana Muhammad Bashir Farooqi). He is obsessed with the work he is doing and lives and breathes it day and night. I visited their offices and met him and his colleagues M Ghazzal (Head of IT), Zubair Ashrafi and Amjad Chamdie and was briefed on the work they were doing, especially in the new field of IT.

Last year, Saylani Trust spent Rs4 billion on its various activities, all donated by philanthropists. The trust is active from Karachi to Khyber and in both Pakistan and the U.S.A. They have more than 300 devoted workers.

Three of their important activities are supplying food, education and health services. Food is supplied to almost 80,000 people at different places while 12,000 families have been looked after for the last 12 years, which includes financial assistance. Utility bills, school fees, uniforms, books, everything is taken care of if the need arises. Around 700 to 800 girls have been provided with all the necessities for their marriages.

The main aim of the trust is to help people become self sufficient. They have a well-thought-out strategy to make people self supporting. They are helped with finding employment, and provided grants/loans to buy rickshaws, motorcycles, sewing machines, etc. More than 800 rickshaws and almost 1500 motor cycles have been provided to needy people. Interest-free loans are provided to set up small businesses.

The trust also has a housing division. They help poor people with donations/interest free loans to enable them to buy a small house to live in. Around 300 RCC houses were built in Sarjani Town and given to the poor and needy. They are currently building flats to give to the poor on long-term soft loans. Around 500 flats are under construction in Karachi and Hyderabad. When the present government announced its intention of constructing 10,000 houses for the poor, Saylani Trust immediately joined in with this noble work.

There is a severe shortage of potable water in the country and it is especially the poor who suffer most. Many casualties have occurred due to the scarcity of water. Saylani Trust has dug many wells and borings and been able to provide water to thousands of people. More than 50 water purification plants have been established and there are plans for setting up 1200 more.

Tharparkar has always been in the news due to drought, shortage of water and food and the deaths of a large number of babies. Saylani Trust has put up water purification plants there and established more than 100 schools with qualified teachers and the necessary infra-structure. In order to help the young generation, they have joined hands with Engro Coal Mining Company to start a mass IT training programme. After a test,

selected students were sent to Karachi, given good hostel facilities and provided with IT training at Saylani Headquarters. Hundreds of students have so far benefitted from this programme. All expenses are being borne by Saylani Trust and Engro.

Besides the above-mentioned ventures into education, the trust is supporting about 4,000 schools where poor students (dependents of poor Saylani-supported families) are receiving good educations. About 25,000 students study in such schools and Islamic academies. The trust provides uniforms and books as well as bearing other expenses. Students are also provided with basic religious courses. Seventy-five schools/madrasahs have been established by the trust and about 15,000 students are benefitting from their facilities.

Vocational training is an essential part of education to enable students to later earn a living. In cooperation with Crown Group, motorcycle repair and textile training courses are being run. Trainees are later helped in finding jobs and during their training their families are financially supported.

Medical facilities for the poor are sadly lacking in Pakistan and the trust is providing free medical facilities to more than half a million poor patients. Financial assistance is also provided for hospital treatment, operations and medicines from OPD facilities run by the trust. Medicare being beyond the means of even the middle class, the trust has established a state-of-the-art medical and diagnostic centre where the latest equipment is available to take care of patients.

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