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## Agents of change thru books

→ Anindya Saha



Mahatma Gandhi promoted the idea “Be the change you wish to see in the world”. Change doesn’t come about by chance – efforts are needed for that. Books can be a great channel for that change. By participating in events like Book Donation one lives up to this idea through sharing, serving and offering knowledge, and brings about the desired changes.

Kohinur Akhter, the Adviser of BRAC University Rural Development Club (BURDC), echoed this message at the programme ‘Book Donation and Open Discussion with Rural Community’ held at Gazipur Shadar, Dhaka, on 10 March.

A team of 30 students of BRAC University (BRACU), along with their advisers and faculty members, arranged the event in cooperation with BRAC of Gazipur Shadar region.

The aim was to provide a platform for rural underprivileged people to get access to the world of knowledge, promote literacy and celebrate reading. An enthusiastic crowd of around 200 villagers took part in the event.

Tanjila Haque, president of the club, summed up her experience this way, “The opportunity to meet such an excited crowd and to encourage book reading had made my day! I am proud to have been a part of the book donation event of BURDC”.

BURDC started the campaign on 4 March by urging all to donate books, which was met with a huge response not only from the students of BRACU, but also from its faculty members and officials.

Especially, Ishfaq Ilahi Choudhury, the Registrar of BRACU, and Professor Mamun Rashid, Director, BRAC Business School (BBS), helped the club build up a massive stock of books within a short period of time. The collection contained some of the greatest literary works of many renowned writers.

On 10 March when the book donation took place, BRAC arranged a social awareness drama which dealt with one of the blazing issues of Bangladesh, the menace of illegal migration of rural people to foreign soils. The drama showed how they suffer and become victimised after their illegal migration, with many of them coming back empty-handed and up to their neck in trouble.

After the drama, a quiz based on it was held. The winners were given books. The happiness of their heart after receiving the books reflected in their eyes. The excitement of the children getting books could be understood from their gestures of elation as they were unable to express emotions in words.

One of the parents of the children who were present at the venue said that no one really helped them before to awaken their thirst for knowledge and the children were rightly happy about having books.

Finally, after the discussion was over, BURDC donated 60 books to the library of the local primary school where the event took place.

“Book Donation and Open Discussion with the Rural Community” brought out the passion and spirit of the BURDC family about the underprivileged and often half-literate rural people and children. The event was a testimony that if the youth starts being pro-active in contributing to society, they can make a difference.