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Call to encourage women's participation in local govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a programme on Wednesday said that the growing participation of women in local government process can contribute not only to economic development but also to building the nation.

They stressed the need for running the local government more liberally for an effective local government.

They made the remarks at the national conference on Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC) Local Governance Project 'Sharique' at the Le Meridien Hotel in the city.

State Minister for Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives Moshir Rahman Ranga, Ambassador of Switzerland to Bangladesh Christian Fotsch and Indian eminent speaker on grassroots democracy and also former minister in India for the ministry of Panchayatraj Mani Shankar Aiyar spoke at the conference.

Addressing the programme, Ranga said that local government is functioning in five tiers and the incumbent government has strengthened local government following the rules and regulations.

"There are still several problems prevailing in our local government system and it will be okayed fully after couple of years," he said.

About the interference of Member of Parliament in the local government activities, he said that members of parliament and upazila chairman are now being helpful and not interfering in the basic activities of local government.

He also said that empowerment of women is taking shape with the growing number of women's participation in the local government.

Renowned speaker Mani Shankar said that role of women in the system of democracy and development is crucial where local government is an effective tool for ensuring women's participation in the system.

Citing an example of India, he said that 15 states of India have 50 percent reserved seats for the women in the local government system.

When it happens, there is an explosion of women's power and they will contribute extensively to the betterment of country's economy, he said.

Stressing the need for accountability of local representatives, he said that accountability of the elected public representatives strengthen the local government more intensely.

Swiss ambassador Fotsch said that the Switzerland government is committed to working in strengthening the local government and Sharique project is part of their commitment.

Secretary of Disaster Management and Relief ministry Md. Shah Kamal, Finance Ministry joint secretary Habibur Rahman presented two separate keynote papers in the conference.