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Meeting the community, collectively

IT SHOULD be a record of sorts: getting more than 40 NGOs together, cutting across different disciplines, and providing them a platform to network.



For that was precisely what NGO Sindhanai - was all about. A fair/get-together where voluntary organisations could meet each other and simultaneously tell the rest of the world about what they are doing.

“NGO Sindhanai had two dimensions,” says Ms. Vidya Shankar, of Relief Foundation, which organised the seminar. “First, the meeting brought people together across disciplines and led to closer interaction between the NGOs and other agencies, including the government, corporate sector and media,” she adds. According to her, there are a number of NGOs involved in service, throughout the city and the State, but the networking among them was practically non-existent.

Though a lot of work is being done independently by them, the lack of interaction did handicap them to a certain extent. “If there was a link among the NGOs then, it would be easy to lead people who need help to the right persons. A lot of time, energy and expense will be saved this way,” she says. At present, is a lot of duplication of tasks and, in the process, a huge amount of funds which could be put to better use is being wasted, she says.

Second, the seminar gave the public an opportunity to find out about and interact with a wide spectrum of NGOs at a single place. The two-day event was inaugurated by the Corporation Commissioner, Dr. J. Radhakrishnan, who apparently was impressed by the fact that somebody had actually managed to bring a large group of NGOs together.

Among the events that were scheduled for NGO Sindhanai included interactive debates, discussions among participating NGOs, skits, plays and

NGOs. In addition, the NGOs had put up stalls, describing their work and their beneficiaries. The stalls also had on sale a number of products made by the beneficiaries and other items made as part of the fund-raising drive.

Some of the NGOs who participated were the Indian Council for Child Welfare, CRY (working for children), CRY, YRG Care (AIDS), Gremaltes (rehabilitation of leprosy afflicted), Aasha, The Banyan (mentally ill) and Indev.org, a British Council website.

The point hereafter, is to sustain the link and build upon it for better co-operation and more efficient service to the public and needy groups. To keep up the spirit, Relief Foundation has planned for a strong and permanent body to keep these NGOs together. A periodical newsletter is also on the cards.

Relief Foundation (4916241), is a two-year old organisation formed by a group of adoptive parents interested in helping and rehabilitating institutionalised children and children in distress.

By Ramya Kannan

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