

## **THE WAY I SEE EXCHANGE PROGRAMMES**

by

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Think of exchange programmes and all manner of thoughts cloud your mind – a facilitative mood for the spread of the Federation worldwide, a sprouting of networks aimed at solidifying positions, mobilizing people and an increase in cultural and intellectual exchange.

A feeling of the presence of one another in the activities of individuals, groups and nations comes out clearly during the exchange visits. The aura of not being alone but part of something else pervades the poor's world.

Yet despite this integration, there is an uneven participation in the exchange programmes of the people in the Federation whether between a village and another, a village and a district or a country and another.

Though exchange offers something different from what the Federation has offered in the past, the worst tragedy lies in ignorance. This, coupled with the fact that most people are scared to learn new things depicts a Federation that thrives on half-baked information.

However, it is my conviction that exchange programmes can be used to express the most crucial issues while working towards the realization of universal truths, thereby affecting in fundamental ways the thoughts and behavioural processes of current and future generations.

Since the Federation is always in constant flux-variant, multiple, dynamic and ever-changing – responding to internal and external forces, exchange visits invoke a process of social – economic engineering in which such practices are redefined in view of the current understanding of fundamental rights of peoples and relations between them.

Such social-economic engineering, when spearheaded by the poor can be of tremendous importance. The vivacity, diversity and plurality in the Federation demand of us to reflect on the accumulated treasure of human experience and knowledge.

Exchange visits give people in the Federation the opportunity to celebrate a multiplicity of visions, I their particularity, as well as universality.

Looked at from a different perspective, this helps the poor to link up more closely with their counterparts, having been born and bred in similar circumstance.

Exchange visits, at whatever levels, enable those directly involved to reach remote rural villages and inaccessible, choked up slums.

This creates an important re-orientation period for them thereby giving an opportunity within which to interact with the problems in their lives.

In a way this insists that the Federation belongs in the village square. On a similar note community based groups have almost overnight, become community based resource persons, linking remote villages with progressive ideas on democracy, development and globalization, thanks to exchange programmes.

Close ties with the poor thought exchange has enabled the Federation to not only be at once relevant and acceptable but also be at the forefront of spearheading change and shaping traditional social values and practices such as corruption and bad governance.

However, the biggest challenge in this is scholarship and documentation. A lot of work has been done and much ground covered, but there is little reference material on exchange.

The advantages of having this information documented cannot be gainsaid. Therefore, sponsors should open up resource centres to encourage ways of information exchange and growth.

A clear picture of history, trends and development in this field would be a pointer for other interested parties. But as things stand now, the lack of professionalism allows for quacks and charlatans in this field.

Therefore, the bow needs redirection, the arrow needs re-sharpening, and the hunter needs retraining if the game is to benefit anyone.