



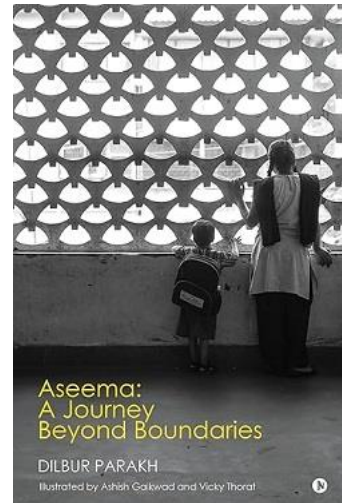
Book Review on Dilbur Parakh's 'Aseema: A Journey Beyond Boundaries' by Subhajit Bhadra

The book under review, *Aseema: A Journey Beyond Boundaries* written by the first-person narrator Dilbur Parakh, is both interesting, illuminating, and thought-provoking. It is essentially about the genesis and development of “Aseema” an NGO that has been rendering valuable services

to the underprivileged people of Mumbai through educational development. The book traces the journey of the author alongside the growth of her NGO, whose fundamental nature is philanthropic.

The author-narrator, despite being offered opportunities abroad with highly lucrative and enviable remuneration, rejected those offers and returned to India, particularly Mumbai, to fulfil her mission. She is a kind-hearted woman who can hardly tolerate the suffering of others. Initially, she was joined by two devoted co-workers who were equally dedicated to the cause from the inception of “Aseema.” They went from door to door to reach directionless children and provide them with hope for a better future. The NGO realised that only through the imparting of education and culture could impoverished children be brought into the mainstream, where a brighter future awaited them.

Most parents were initially reluctant to send their children to school, as they wanted their offspring to contribute to the family income. They had to be persuaded and reassured. Ultimately, “Aseema” began its journey with no more than ten students, who were taught in a small makeshift school. The author narrates how difficult it was for the members of “Aseema” to find a suitable location to establish a well-organised school. Malnutrition was a major challenge among the children; nevertheless, with limited resources, the organisation provided bananas and other fruits to the students. “Aseema” also had to struggle against social problems, encouraging parents to value education and



motivating fathers not to abuse their children while returning home intoxicated late at night.

Gradually, many organisations and individuals came forward to support “Aseema,” and the number of teachers increased. Initially, the teachers worked without salaries, but over time they began to receive remuneration. The growth of “Aseema” cannot be attributed solely to the author; rather, it became a flourishing NGO because of the financial and emotional support of numerous people who wished to see it prosper. The author describes how the noted actress and philanthropist Tina Ambani extended financial support to the organisation. She also recounts how the celebrity later distanced herself from the project and returned to her own sphere of interests.

“Aseema” began its initial work in Bandra West, and the author notes that the organisation formally came into existence on 4 November 1995. Its journey of strength, resilience, and positivity has now spanned nearly thirty years. This is by no means a small achievement. It became a reality because of dedication, hard work, intelligence, talent, and a deep commitment to social service, coupled with genuine love for children.

Today, “Aseema” can boast of serving more than 6,000 students. Many women from the poorer localities of Mumbai, when approached, openly expressed their desire to educate their children so that they would not become mere replicas of their parents. The book also contains a detailed account of Igatpuri, “a small town some sixty miles from Mumbai,” where the organisation sought to establish a residential school. The matter eventually reached the courts, and the members of “Aseema” fought a courageous battle against injustice and illiteracy.

The book under review is essentially a memoir of an institution—namely, the NGO “Aseema.” The focus remains firmly on the organisation, and the narrative consistently

highlights its struggle for survival and gradual development. Although numerous books on NGOs are available both online and offline, what makes the remarkable journey of “Aseema” memorable are the poignant yet inspiring stories of perseverance that have sustained it over the years.

This book deserves to be read by every social worker, teacher, and educationist. It should also be translated into many other languages so that its inspiring message may illuminate minds and awaken a renewed commitment to social responsibility and educational empowerment.

Title: Aseema: A Journey Beyond Boundaries

Author: Dilbur Parakh

Available: [Amazon](#)

Subhajit Bhadra

Subhajit is a gold medallist in M.A from Tezpur University. He is a freelance writer, poet, critic and translator. He has published a number of books including *The Masked Protagonist In Jewish American Fiction*, *The Man Who Stole The Crown*, *The Rising Sun*, a book of poems in Bengali and a translated work titled *Selected Stories of Arun Goswami*.

He has written a book on *History of English Literature*. He has also been published widely in Indian literature, a bi-monthly journal of Sahitya Akadami. At present, he is an assistant professor in the Department of English at Bongaigaon College, Bongaigaon, Assam.

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