

2019

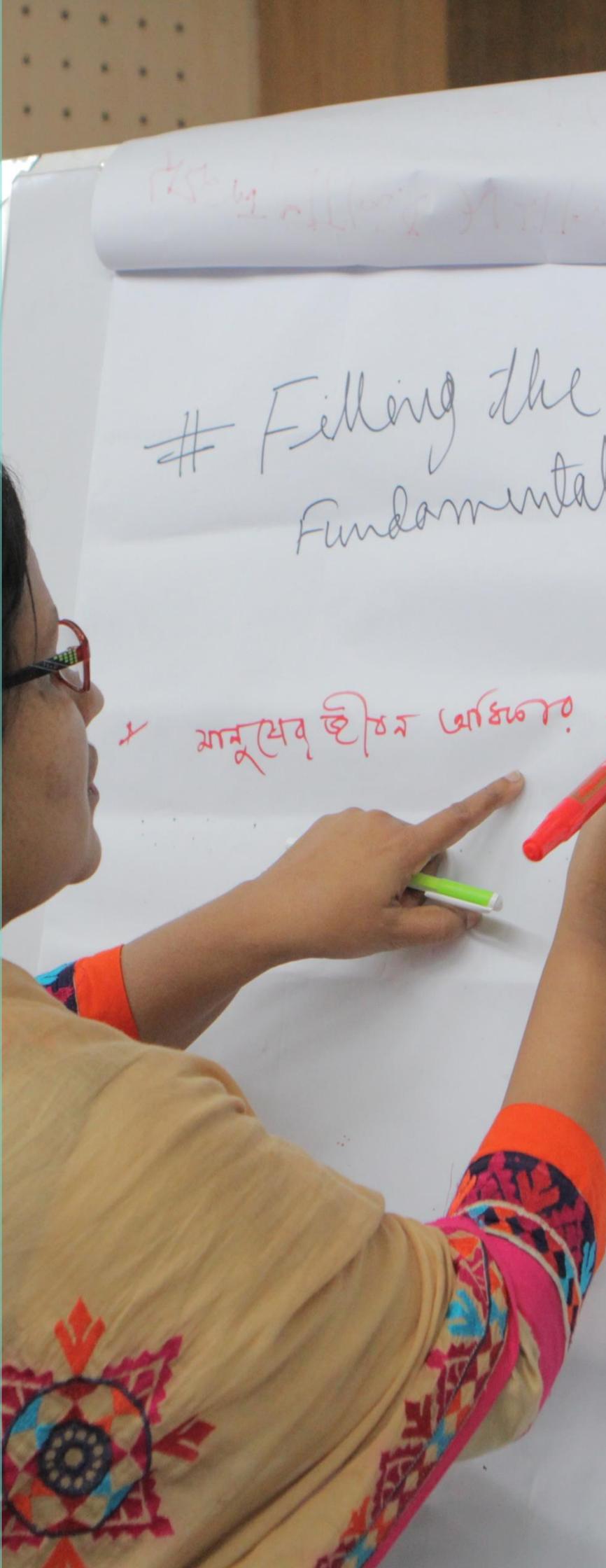
Annual Report



Human Rights Programme
United Nations Development Programme



HRDs played an important role to develop a National Guideline for Promotion and Protection of Rights of Human Rights Defenders in Bangladesh, an initiative of the National Human Rights Commission, supported by the Human Rights Programme (HRP), UNDP



Filling the
Fundamental

* মানুষ্য হীচন আধিকার!

KEY INTERVENTIONS OF HRP IN 2019



“We protect human rights” with this pledge the National Human Rights Commission observed the **Human Rights Day 2019**.



Basic understanding on human rights of **16128** students in schools’ level across 10 districts increased through a school-based campaign.



Awareness and advocacy campaigns on women rights resulted in an increase of knowledge, understanding and awareness of **56%** of women (16,197 women out of a total of 28,684) in 8 selected districts of HRP working areas in 2019.



Capacity building initiatives helped **129** Human Rights Defenders (male: 94 and female: 35) increase their level of knowledge and skills by 52% in 2019 on an average.



21 CSOs capacity has been enhanced and reached out to **2,39,845** people (male 1,32,898, female 1,06,586, third gender 361) in building awareness on human rights through advocacy and campaign at the grass root level.



268 youths have been provided with Youth Leadership Training and brought under a web-based network called ‘**Jubo Bangla**’. In addition, a number of **1781** of youths received training on human rights through CSOs who successfully oriented another **10,921** people in their respective community resulting in better access to services, and improved allocations of local government resources for them.



6 Coalitions consisting of **146** CSOs formed in 6 districts in 2019, implementing rights-based awareness programmes at the grassroots level.



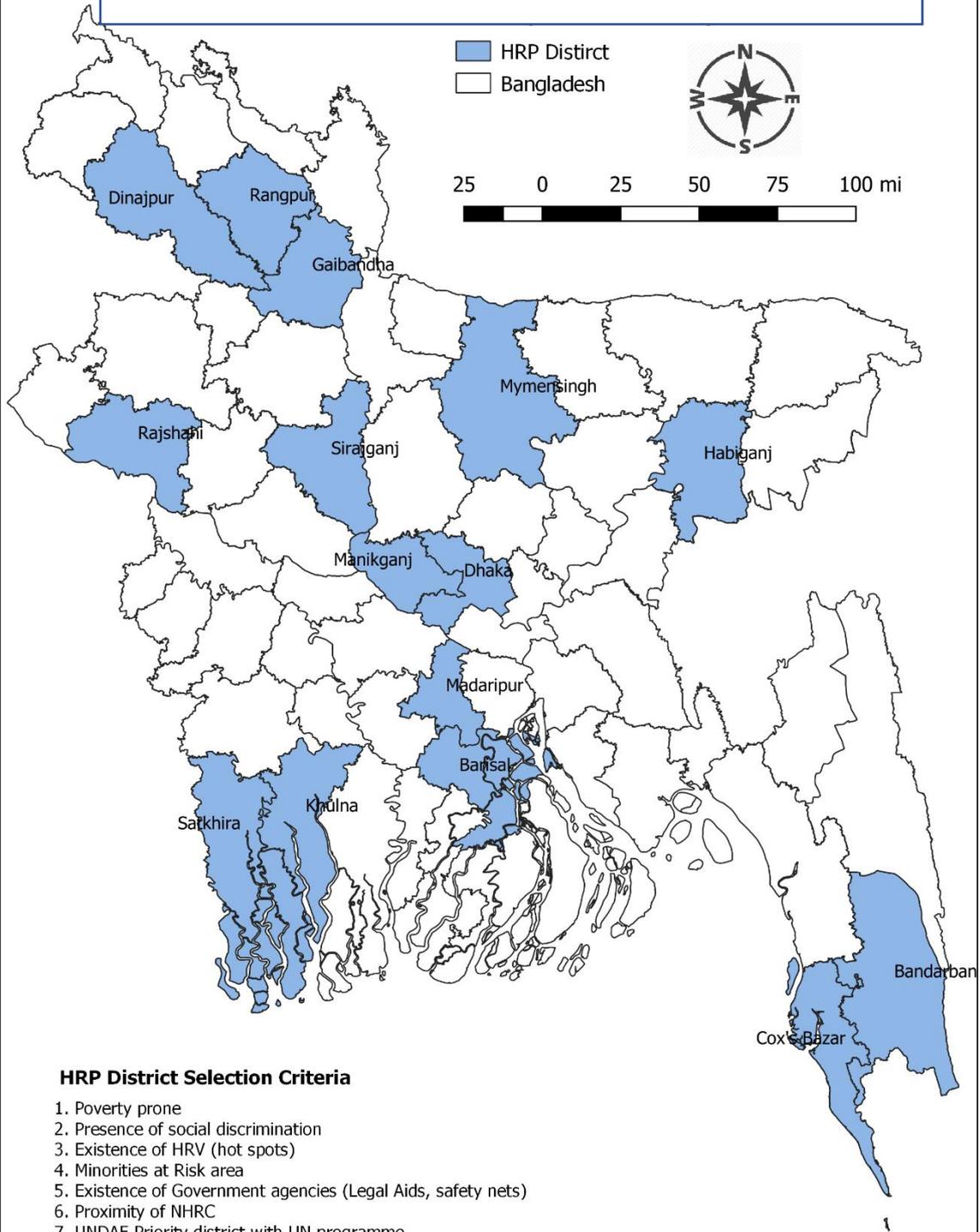
A total number of **227** (male 205, female 22) members of the law enforcing agencies (police) has been trained on human rights and policing in collaboration with the Detective Training School. Among them **83%** obtained satisfactory in the post test, which indicates a significant increase of understanding of human rights while **86%** opined that training is relevant and will help them to apply human rights standards.



In observance of Human Rights Day, NHRC organised awareness rallies in 8 divisions reaching out to public to bring more positive changes in the promotion and protection of human rights. Human Rights Day celebrations were conducted across all districts marking 2019 as a first for Human Rights Day celebration nationwide.

13% increase of complaints received by NHRCB. **52%** of the complaints resolved with an average of **58.2%** of its clients expressing satisfaction and **9%** were very satisfied.

GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE UNDER HUMAN RIGHTS PROGRAMME (HRP DISTRICT)



HRP District Selection Criteria

1. Poverty prone
2. Presence of social discrimination
3. Existence of HRV (hot spots)
4. Minorities at Risk area
5. Existence of Government agencies (Legal Aids, safety nets)
6. Proximity of NHRC
7. UNDAF Priority district with UN programme

NUMBER OF PEOPLE REACHED THROUGH HRP INTERVENTION



2,39,845

People made aware on human rights through campaign



1,06,586

Women (out of 2,39,845) have been made aware on human rights through campaign



61,920

Ethnic minority people engaged in advocacy campaign on human rights



3,125

Students gained knowledge on women & girl's rights through interactive and empathy trainings



2,906

Persons with disability made aware on human rights



2,118

Youths involved in transforming their leadership role to promote the rights of ethnic minorities



145

Children withdrawn from child labor by the intervention of the CSO coalition in Habiganj



35

Ethnic and excluded minority (male 18, female 17) representatives included in the local government standing committees in selected working areas of HRP



371,232

Audience reached for dissemination of human rights related information through Community Radios and Bangladesh Betar



129

HRDs capacity enhanced on monitoring and reporting on human rights issues



5,212,839+

People reached for dissemination of human rights related information through UNDP youtube channel, HRP fb page, electronic media & NHRC fb page

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACLAB	Alliance for Cooperation and Legal Aid Bangladesh
ASK	Ain O Salish Kendra
ATSEC	Action Against Trafficking & Sexual Exploitation of Children
AWP	Annual Work Plan
APF	Asia Pacific Forum
ASUS	Anagrasar Samaj Unnayan Songstha
BMSF	Bangladesh Manobadhikar Sangbadik Forum
B & HR	Business and Human Rights
BSAF	Bangladesh Shishu Adhikar Forum
CAT	Convention Against Torture
CBOs	Community Based Organizations
CHT	Chittagong Hill Tracts
CMMS	Center for Men and Masculinities Studies
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
CEDAW	The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CIRDAP	Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DYDF	Dhrubotara Youth Development Foundation
FBCCI	Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry
EPB	Export Promotion Bureau of Bangladesh
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FTM	Full-time Member
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HRs	Human Rights
HLD	High Level Dialogue
HRP	Human Rights Programme
HRV	Human Rights Violations
HRDs	Human Rights Defenders
IDEA	Institute of Development Affairs
INGO	International Non-Government Organization
ILO	International Labour Organization
IPDS	Indigenous Peoples Development Services
LDC	Least Developed countries
LEA	Law Enforcement Agency
LoA	Letter of Agreement
LVG	Low Value Grant
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MDO	Modern Development Organization
MoHA	Ministry of Home Affairs
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MOWCA	Ministry of Women and Children Affairs
NAP	National Action Plan
NCPCR	National Commission for Protection of Child Rights
NDP	National Development Programme
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NHRC	National Human Rights Commission
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
PAB	Programme Advisory Board
PWDs	Persons with Disabilities

PIC	Programme Implementation Committee
RDC	Research and Development Collective
RMG	Ready-Made Garment
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SMC	School Management Committee
SODESH	Society of Development and Education for Small Households
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
SME	Small & Medium Enterprise
SAHREE	Self-Help Association for Rural People Through Education & Entrepreneurship
TVPA	Trafficking Victims Protection Act's
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNGP	United Nations Guiding Principles
UNWG	United Nations Working Group
UNHRC	United Nations Human Rights Council
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
UP	Union Parisad
WB	World Bank
VAW	Violence Against Women
VOICE	Voices for Interactive Choice and Empowerment (VOICE)
WEF	World Economic Forum

1. HRP at a Glance

Country:	Bangladesh
Project Title:	Human Rights Programme
Implementing Agency:	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
Development Partners:	DANIDA, SIDA, SDC
Project Duration:	April 2016 – December 2020
Project Budget:	USD 10,597,570.00
Government Contribution:	N/A
UNDP Contribution:	USD 123,932.07
DANIDA Contribution:	USD 270,880.40
SIDA Contribution:	USD 4,227,605.00
SDC Contribution:	USD 2,586,291.62
Un-funded	USD 3,388,860.91
UNDP portfolio:	Democratic Governance
UNDAF Outcome	Output 2.2.: The Government has the capacity to carry out formal or quasi-formal, demand-driven and gender-sensitive reforms of the justice sector to provide more equal access to justice to women and men, especially those from marginalized groups
Strategic Plan Outcome	Applicable Output(s) from the UNDP Strategic Plan (2018-2021) : Output 2.2.3 (Governance) Capacities, functions and financing of rule of law and national human rights institutions and systems strengthened to expand access to justice and combat discrimination, with a focus on women and other marginalized groups and Output 2.6.1 (Gender) Capacities strengthened to raise awareness on and undertake legal, policy and institutional reforms to fight structural barriers to women's empowerment

Development and implementation of improved social policies and programmes focusing on good governance, reduction of structural inequalities and advancement of vulnerable individuals and groups are priorities for Bangladesh. In line with this, this Programme was designed to contribute towards strengthening the human rights architecture of Bangladesh. The five-year programme aims to encourage and support the human rights and justice institutions with a special focus on the NHRC as well as other relevant stakeholders to approach policy development, service delivery and decision-making from a proactive human rights perspective rather than reviewing situations, decisions or actions after the fact. It has a particular focus on working with vulnerable and marginalized groups, including women and girls, children and young people, ethnic and religious minorities, people with disabilities, Dalit and other minorities.

The programme is built around five outputs:

- ✓ Strengthened capacity of the National Human Rights Commission to deliver on its mandate;
- ✓ Enhanced capacity of civil society and community-based organizations to engage in human rights advocacy and awareness raising;
- ✓ Enhanced capacity of law enforcement agencies, in particular police, on human rights issues;
- ✓ Strengthened capacity of national stakeholders to better protect and promote women's rights; and
- ✓ Strengthened capacity of national stakeholders to better protect and promote the rights of ethnic minorities.

2. Introduction

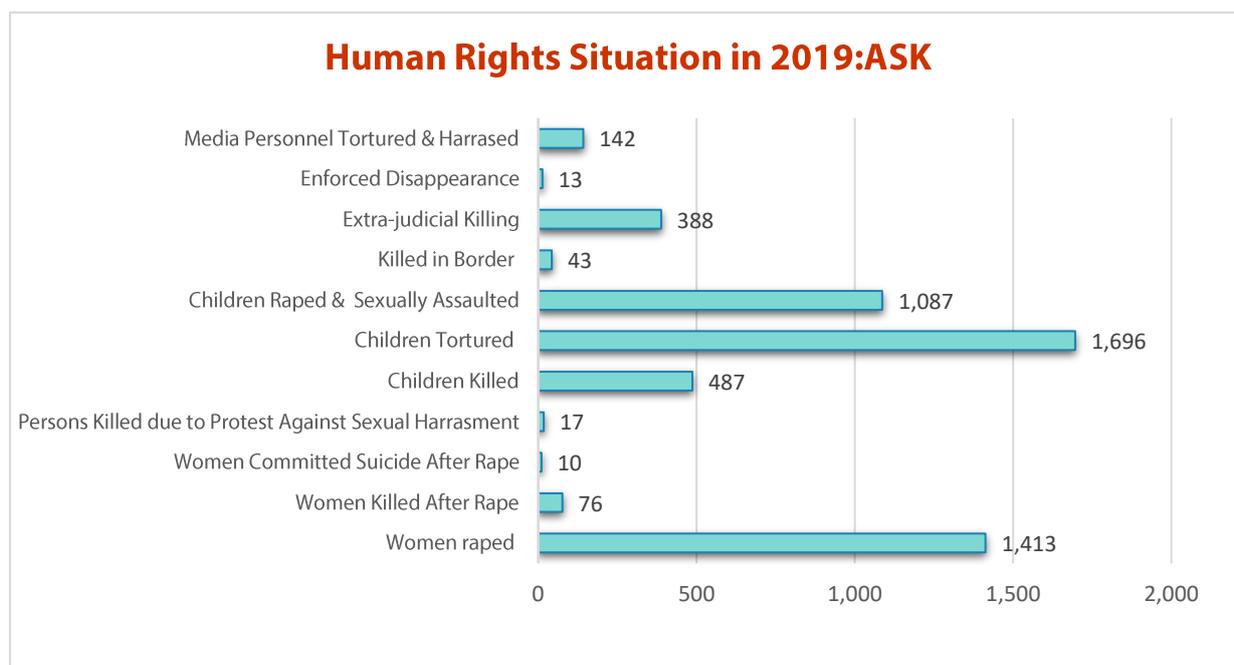
The year 2019 was an important year for Bangladesh, a key highlight includes the membership at the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC). While Bangladesh is succeeding in reducing poverty and enhancing growth, its civil and political rights situation came under criticism by national and international human rights activists and organizations.

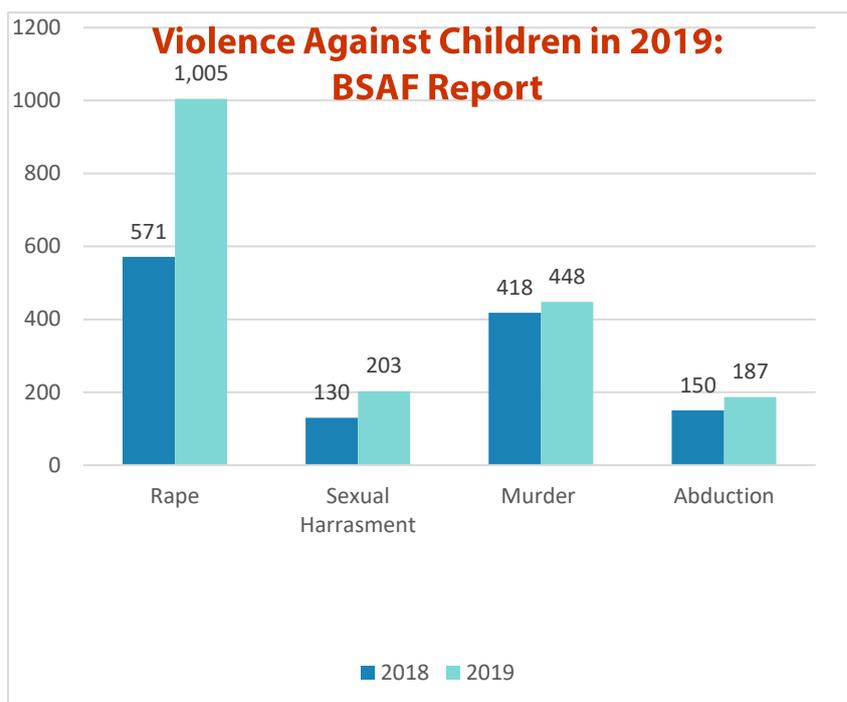
As per Global Gender Gap Report 2020 of the World Economic Forum (WEF) Bangladesh was placed at the 50th position out of 153 countries a decline from its 48th position in 2018. However, Bangladesh is the top country among the South-Asian countries a position it has maintained for the past years. It also submitted its initial report to the UN Committee Against Torture (CAT) after two decades ratifying the Convention.

Per reports from the World Bank poverty is reduced from 44.2% in 1991 to 14.8% after half-decade. Life expectancy, literacy rate and per capita food production have increased significantly which were supported by steady growth in GDP which averaged 6.5% in the last decade.

Rapid growth enabled Bangladesh to reach the lower middle-income country status in 2015 and in 2018, Bangladesh fulfilled all three eligibility criteria for graduation from the UN's Least Developed countries (LDC) list for the first time and it is on track for graduation in 2024, despite some challenges. As per the WB Report, there is a continuous economic growth at an over 7% rate, driven by manufacturing and construction, and bumper crop harvests on supply side while private consumption has remained strong, supported by strong remittance and rural income growth, on the demand side.

Despite progress, there were many incidents of human rights violations in Bangladesh in 2019 perpetrated by both state and non-state actors. The forms of human rights violations include rape, killing of women and children, extrajudicial killing, enforced disappearance, harassment of journalists, border killing, obstruction of peaceful political activities and so on. According to ASK, in 2019 the number of rape incidents nearly doubled than that of previous year while the right to freedom of expression was diminished.





Similarly, the child rights situation in Bangladesh in 2019 was far from good. According to a report of Bangladesh Shishu Adhikar Forum (one of the partner organizations of HRP) at least 1,005 children were raped in 2019¹, which is almost doubled compared to 2018. From 2015 to 2019 at least 3,136 children were raped but only 164 of the cases were resolved. As a result of impunity enjoyed by the perpetrators, the number of incidents of rape, sexual harassment, murder and abduction increased which implies that government requires to pay more attention and to take punitive action against the perpetrators as

well as to establish moral values in society.

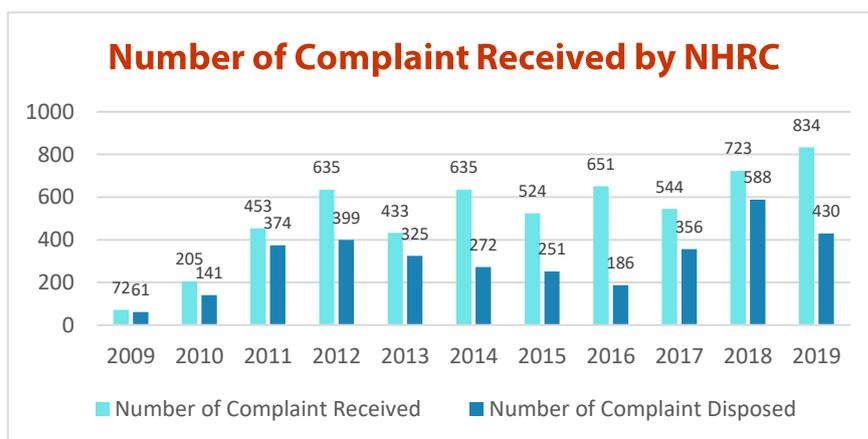
3. Key Results and Achievements

In 2019, HRP contributed in strengthening the capacity of key stakeholders engaged in promoting and protecting human rights including NHRCB, CSOs, CSO Coalitions, Academic Institutions, Law Enforcing Agencies (Police), HRDs, youth leaders, Bangladesh Betar, and Community Radios.

The key results achieved in 2019 are highlighted below:

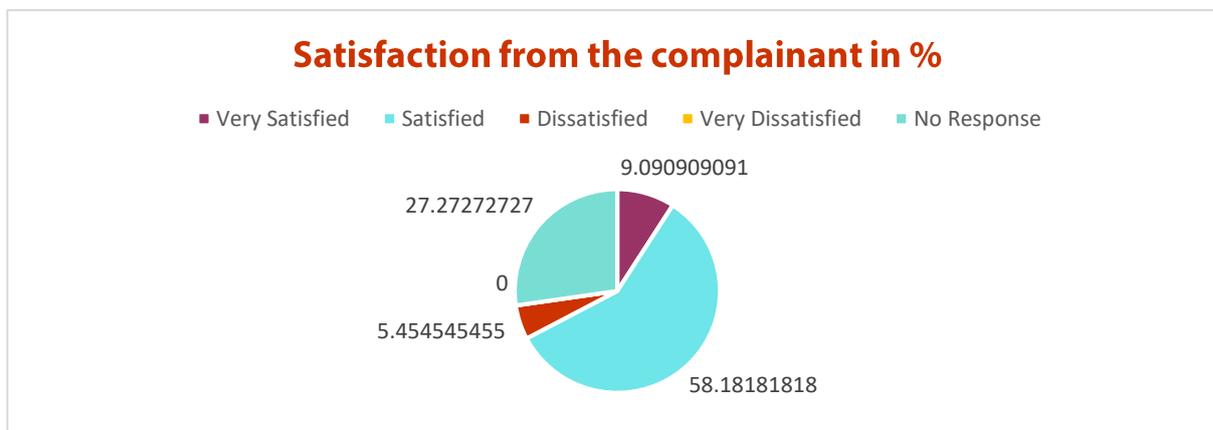
3.1. Improved efficiency of NHRC's service delivery

NHRCB has improved quality and outreach of its service delivery with an average of 58.2% of its clients expressing satisfaction, 9% were very satisfied and 5% dissatisfied. A digital complaint handling system able to receive and handle complaints online, currently in its operational stage aiming to replace NHRC's exiting paper-based complaint handling system. This system will be integrated into a completely digitalized office management system (e-filing system) and will link the human rights defenders allowing



¹ <https://www.thedailystar.net/backpage/child-rape-in-bangladesh-almost-doubled-last-year-1851460>

them to directly submit complaints on behalf of victims of human rights violations. The number of complaints resolved increased from 72 in 2010 to 834 in 2019.



3.2. Increased capacity of NHRC in Policy Formulation, Policy Advocacy, Peer to Peer Learning, Experience Sharing & Networking

- NHRC's capacity strengthened in policy formulation, policy level advocacy and lobbying with government to enact a specific legal framework on sexual harassment. NHRC analyzed and drafted a law on sexual harassment to be submitted to the government for enactment. Work will continue in 2020 with the participation of all stake holders including UN agencies
- A national guideline for HRDs engaging all stakeholders was adopted for the first time in the NHRC's history to promote and protect the rights of the HRDs which provides a basic standard to government stakeholders as well as NHRC to be followed during their interaction with HRDs.
- A platform and space generated to implement the regional strategy of Asia-Pacific on Business and Human Rights by promoting the development of National Action Plans(NAP) on business and human rights by initiating the discussion on at the National Dialogue on the UN Guiding Principles on Business & Human Rights, Workshop on UN Guiding Principles on Business & Human Rights and Consultations on Business and Human Rights: It's Links to SDGs & Application in Bangladesh.
- Knowledge and skills of NHRC officials on contemporary human rights issues have been increased and international linkages and networks of NHRCB strengthened through peer to peer leaning, participating to the international forums and exposure visits, such as the UN South Asia Forum on Business and Human Rights in New Delhi, India which aimed at raising awareness about business and human rights issues in South Asia and facilitating implementation of the UNGPs on Business and Human Rights, including through National Action Plans. ATSEC India, National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR), Delhi, NHRC India, Visit to Mathura District Jail, meeting with OHCHR in Geneva, UPR Info and other civil society groups working on human rights advocacy in Geneva
- Common human rights issues between the host communities in Cox's Bazar and Rohingyas have been addressed through bringing together representation of the NHRIs from Myanmar and Nepal, UN agencies, INGOs, NGOs, CSOs, development partners, human rights activists, senior government officials, international expert from India, and national experts, academicians, researchers and media personnel in a discussion by NHRCB in Dhaka.

- Networks and linkages of NHRCB with CSOs have been strengthened through building formal partnership and signing MOUs with grassroots CSOs for undertaking joint human rights actions at grassroots levels.

3.3. Capacity of HRDs built for better human rights monitoring and reporting

Capacity of 129 HRDs (male:94 & female:35) from 22 districts enhanced on monitoring and reporting human rights situation through trainings. The knowledge level of HRDs increased from 19% to 71% on an average. The HRDs submitted 10 reports to UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of HRDs which have influenced the UN Human Rights Committee Experts to raise concerns with the Government of Bangladesh. The HRDs also submitted 11 incidence reports to NHRC in 2019. Furthermore, the HRDs developed Offline platforms in 22 districts to extend coordination and networking.

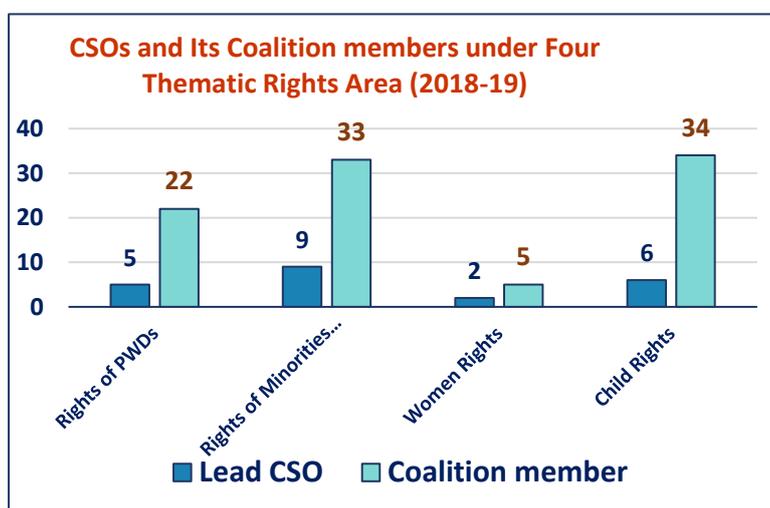
3.4. Increased accountability and higher impact through joint fact-finding missions

The accountability of local administration has been increased through joint fact-finding mission conducted by NHRC, RDC and Parliamentary Caucus on Indigenous People to investigate the human rights violation against indigenous communities and minorities in Srimongol Upazila of Moulavibazar; Kagojkuta village, Alampur union in Dhamrai upazila of Nogaon and Santal village, Shahebganj Bagda Farm, Gobindaganj Upazila, Gaibandha particularly to investigate land rights situation of the indigenous people and the minorities.

3.5. Improved coordination with civil society organizations functioning at national and local levels

Better links, coordination and networks between national and grassroots level CSOs and national stakeholders engaged in human rights sector have been established and strengthened which resulted in increased awareness on human rights in promoting human rights culture.

During 2018-2019, a total of 94 CSOs/CBOs under 22 CSOs Coalitions were involved in raising awareness and building the capacity of people who are left behind on issues related to rights of the minorities, women rights, child rights, rights of the gender diverse communities and persons with disabilities. . In 2019-2020, another 66 CSOs/CBOs led by 14 CSOs Coalitions have been engaged in human rights awareness raising focusing on freedom of expression alongwith above mentioned themes. In addition, 146 rights-based CSOs/CBOs have formed district level coalitions/platforms in 6 districts (i.e. Gaibandha, Satkhira, Sirajganj, Cox's Bazar, Habiganj and Mymensingh).



3.6. Youth Networks strengthened to advocate for human rights and raise awareness

Capacity of 2,118 indigenous and minority youths and their network at national, district and sub district level have been strengthened through leadership training making them able to get engaged in community-based campaigns, resulting in positive changes in their communities. Youth Leaders enabled 15,157 people to claim their rights and the peoples' knowledge level on human rights increased from 25.43% to 51.8% while 97 child marriages in the grass root level have been prevented by the Youth Leaders.

3.7. Increased knowledge of police officials on human rights through training sessions

Knowledge and understanding level of 227 police officials mostly Detectives, Constables/Sub-Inspector (Male- 205, Female-22) have been increased through trainings in collaboration with the Detective Training School using the approved training manual by the police. Among them 83% Police Officials obtained satisfactory result in the post test, which indicates that understanding level on Human Rights has been increased significantly while 86% says training is relevant and helps them to apply HRs standards during their filed operation.

3.8. Awareness and advocacy to promote a culture of human rights

- Training sessions, campaigns, workshops, seminars, rallies conducted by women rights based CSOs resulted in an increase of knowledge, understanding and awareness of 56% of women numbering 16,197 women out of a total of 28,684 in selected districts of HRP working areas in 2019.
- Awareness, knowledge and capacity of 1500 students between age groups 11-15 Years, (consisting 48% from a total of 3125 students) and 50 teachers in 50 schools across 3 districts (Gaibandha, Sirajganj, Cox's Bazar Districts) have been increased due to interactive and empathy trainings on women and girls' rights, including prevention of violence against women and girls. This resulted in substantial changes in perceptions and attitudes and basic understanding of human rights of students in 2019. Around 34% of students' (510 student) understanding on women and girl's rights increased from the baseline status (baseline: 48.8%). In addition, mass awareness campaigns conducted in schools for students aged 10-18 Years reached 16,182 students in HRP working areas.
- Awareness and capacity of total 61,920 population (35% of a total population of 177,932) of ethnic and excluded minority communities have been increased in 2019 in selected working areas due to advocacy campaigns and dialogues on human rights, resulting in inclusion of 35 (male: 18 and female:17) ethnic and excluded minority representatives in the local government standing committees, who are now actively raising rights issues/concerns of their respective communities. It also analyzed better access to services, improved allocations of local government resources to ethnic and indigenous communities and created stronger platforms to advocate for rights.

- Capacity of 21 CSOs enhanced who reached out to 2,39,845 (Male-1,32,898, Female-1,06,586, Third gender-361) direct beneficiaries to build awareness on human rights through advocacy and campaign at the grassroots level.



1,06,586



1,32,898



361

Direct beneficiaries connected to awareness programme on human rights

- Knowledge and leadership capacity of the 268 youth leaders, mostly from ethnic and religious minorities (152 males; 110 females; 6 third gender), connected with Jubo Bangla Online Youth Network, have been



268



5,341



5,580

268 Youth Leaders from ethnic and excluded communities were connected to local community through rights-based advocacy

increased through trainings on human rights advocacy and leadership. Youth-led rights advocacy has reached to 10,921 (female 5,341 & male 5,580) ethnic & excluded people and resulted in better access to services, improved allocations of local government resources to ethnic and excluded communities. Jubo Bangla has a total of 369 youth members. From this group 69 youth are linked with ethnic/local language-based rights-awareness

programmes of Bangladesh Betar (reaching 171,232 listeners) and community radio stations namely Radio NAF at Cox's Bazar; Radio Sarabela at Gaibandha and Radio Nalta at Satkhira (reached approximately 200,000 population, 62.5% in their catchment areas out of 3200,000 population).

- Media coverages of different events in print media (200,000+), electronic media (5,140,172+), social media (Facebook: 18532+, YouTube: 10,057, NHRC website:44,078) helped to reach out greater audience to build awareness on human rights. This is sustainable set up in the context of Bangladesh and broadcasting news and message regularly to reach out the wider people at the grassroots level.

3.9. Strengthening research capacity of indigenous and socially excluded people Action

HRP facilitated in carrying out a research titled "Selected Issues in Social Justice and Human Rights in Bangladesh". This research is a compilation of five micro-research the architects of which are nine students from different departments of Dhaka University supervised by the Department of Anthropology. The objective of such research was to explore different dimensions of rights and challenges of the ethnic and socially excluded groups on the country. The researchers carried out ethnographic fieldwork among the Munda and Mahalis of Northwest Bangladesh, the Khasis of Northeast Bangladesh, the Rabidas women of Dhaka city and displaced Rohingya women living in Rohingya camps in Cox's Bazar. The research findings suggest that for the marginalized groups, exercise of collective rights should equally be ensured along with application of individual rights. And hence, they deserve affirmative actions and/or positive discrimination in order to offset age old discrimination and disadvantages they are facing due to existing socio-politico-economic discourse.

A detail description of key activities undertaken by HRP in 2019 under each of its output is given as Annexure 1.

4. Budget planning

Budget planning is crucial to HRP like every other project. It was carried out following several guidelines and lessons learnt. HRP budgets are progressively able to

- Reduce tendencies to over or under budget
- Take contingencies into account when preparing budgets
- Pay heed to local context and needs
- Foresee details during organizing events and factors which may have a budget constraint

Involvement of vital stakeholders during the programme formulation process as well as in implementation stage was also helpful in budget planning. There were several consultations with project beneficiaries to identify the key issues and setting the action plans to address the issues. The programme and finance staff of UNDP and staff of NHRC, members of different CSOs working on women rights and child rights, human rights defenders and human rights organizations, law enforcement agencies and police authorities, organizations of ethnic minorities were consulted to identify the key issues and setting action plans to address the issues. The identified issues were then consolidated in order to crystalize the budget planning so that, realistic budget allocations could be ensured to address the key issues. The preliminary budget was prepared during the formulation of the project document. However, the budget plan was verified and finalized during the project planning workshop involving different stakeholders, such as representatives of government ministries, different CSOs, chairman, members and staff of NHRC and HRP staff. Further, the annual budget was reviewed and finalized by the Project Advisory Board (PAB).

5. Conflict analysis

5.1. Country Context

Bangladesh has an estimated 2019 population of 163.05 million² and it is a country of cultural and ethnic diversity with over 54 indigenous peoples speaking at least 35 languages, along with the majority Bengali population.³ While 89.1% are majority Muslims in Bangladesh there are 10% Hindus and 0.9% Buddhist & Christian as religious minorities.⁴ The majority ethnicity in Bangladesh is Bengali, comprising 98% of the total population. As per 2011 Census around 1.8% of the population belong to indigenous peoples amounting 1.6 million, though the actual figure is said to be higher than government account. Majority of the indigenous peoples live in plains of the north and southeast, as well as the Chittagong Hill Tracts.⁵

While, the first constitution of Bangladesh did not recognize any cultural or linguistic groups, in the 15th amendment of the constitution, adopted in 2011, people with distinct ethnic identities beyond the Bengali population are now mentioned though highlighting only on cultural aspects, ignoring their economic, political and land rights. Further, government has included the names of remaining indigenous peoples who were excluded from the Small Ethnic Groups Cultural Institutions Act of 2010. After series of consultation a committee within the Ministry of Cultural Affairs decided to include a total of 50 indigenous

² Bangladesh Population 2019, <http://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/bangladesh-population/>

³ <https://www.iwgia.org/en/bangladesh/3446-iw2019-bangladesh>

⁴ Bangladesh Population 2019, <http://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/bangladesh-population/>

⁵ <https://minorityrights.org/country/bangladesh/>

groups in the list of the Small Ethnic Groups Cultural Institutions Act. This recognition also provides pathways for indigenous peoples who were previously discriminated against when accessing government services.⁶

The religious minorities, particularly Hindus, have been suffering as a consequence of political events since 1947 and particularly they were targeted during the Bangladesh Liberation War resulting in persecution and human rights violations. The Hindu community experienced different type of persecution and oppression since 1947 and in the beginning of the new millennium at the hands of extremists.⁷ The current parliament has (14) representation of Hindu members compared to six in 1991, five in 1996, three in 2001 and ten in 2008, amounts 4% of the parliament.⁸

The CHT Accord of 1997 was a constructive agreement between indigenous peoples and the Government of Bangladesh intended to power decentralization along with special administrative system in the region. But till to date the major issues of the Accord, including making the CHT Land Commission functional, orchestrating a devolution of power and function to the CHT's institutions, preserving tribal area characteristics of the CHT region, demilitarisation, and the rehabilitation of internally displaced people, remain unsettled.⁹

In 2016, an Indigenous Santal community was attacked in Gaibandha district over a land dispute with an adjacent sugar mill factory. They were attacked by factory workers and law enforcement agencies when they attempted to restore 1,840-acre land, which was a part of their ancestral land. Local ruling party MPs were allegedly plotted with police to conduct arson on the houses of indigenous peoples in which 3 indigenous people were killed by firing by police and 2500 families were evicted. The Bangladesh High Court ordered Gaibandha's chief judicial magistrate to investigate police involvement in setting the fires.¹⁰

In 2019, the NGO Affairs Bureau asked some NGOs to drop the words "indigenous or adivasi" from the organisations' name. A December 18 letter signed by Shilu Ray -- assistant director of the Bureau -- asked the NGOs to implement the directive within a month. It says, "According to article 23 (ka) of the constitution of Bangladesh, no community has been identified as Adivasi. The letter also added that, "Considering the reality of the Chattogram Hill Tracts, the word adivasi/indigenous is also a threat to the national security

5.2. Some Underlying problems and Issue identified by HRP

HRP has defined several underlying problems/issues through different consultations with multi-ethnic/religious leaders that are contributing to ongoing tension, stress and conflicts in the society. The factors which lead to conflict in society include land disputes/land grabbing by vested interest groups, misinterpretation of religion, increase of mistrust among ethnic and religious minorities towards state authority and majority people, misunderstanding of religious norms and values of each other among religious groups, intolerance of differences of opinion, values and believes, expansion of a sense of insecurity, intentional rumor and hate speech using social media, e.g. Face Book postings, social fragmentation and inter-religious conflicts due to expansion of religious fundamentalism, expansion of drug users and business, increase of family disputes (related to dowry) and social instability and lack of visible application/enforcement of law that generates a sense of insecurity.

⁶ <https://www.iwgia.org/en/bangladesh/3446-iw2019-bangladesh>

⁷ <https://minorityrights.org/country/bangladesh/>

⁸ <https://minorityrights.org/country/bangladesh/>

⁹ <https://www.iwgia.org/en/bangladesh/3446-iw2019-bangladesh>

¹⁰ <https://minorityrights.org/minorities/adivasis/>

In 2019, there was no substantial change observed in the existing tensions, stress and conflict situation among the minorities in Bangladesh. It is fact that land is the main resort of life and livelihoods of a large section of ethnic and religious minorities in Bangladesh. The forest, which is part of life of the indigenous peoples, now is being taken away by the powerful actors.

5.3. Actors (Conflict Analysis) Mapping:

Possible symbols used in conflict mapping			
	Circle = parties involved in the situation. The size of the circle symbolized the power of the conflict party in relation to the conflict. The name is written in the circle.		Arrow = predominant direction of influence or activity.
	Straight line = close relationship		Zig zag line = discord, conflicting relationship
	Double line = Very good relationship, alliance		Crossed out line = broken relationship
	Dotted line = weak, informal or intermittent links		Half circles or quarter circle = external parties, third parties
	Rectangular boxes = issues, topics or things other than people and organizations		

The following figure is provided to clarify relationships between actors and to reflect on the “power” of various actors in the HRP priority districts. The mapping is done based on the symbols given in the above table. The figure examines the conflict in HRP priority districts to provide a macro perspective of the conflict in current situation as well as an analysis of the relationships between the actors, agencies and issues.

The figure demonstrates that, among the conflicting parties involved in the conflicting situation, the state agencies have the utmost power and influence as well as play a dominant role. Besides, the land grabbers, religious fanatics, local political leaders, law enforcement agencies play powerful roles in the conflicting situations. Also, as an inter-governmental organization, UNDP is also influential in terms of capacity building measures for the stakeholders as well as conflict resolution while as a national institution NHRC has mandate, authority and influence to deal with human rights violations and mitigation of conflicts. On the other hand, the ethnic minorities, religious minorities, excluded minorities, youths, CSOs and HRDs are less powerful and remain marginalized as well as vulnerable in the context of the conflicting situation.

The figure demonstrates that, the law enforcement agencies, NHRC and local level political leaders have very close relationship with the State agencies while, the relationship between minority groups and state agencies is weak, informal and has only intermittent links. Also, there are gaps between law enforcing agencies and minority groups and HRDs. On the other hand, communal violence and land related disputes are linked with the land grabbing and religious fundamentalism. On the contrary, there are constant discord and disagreement of ethnic, excluded and religious minorities with land grabbers and religious fundamentalists whereas the land grabbers are often linked with the political leaders and political parties. Although, the HRDs, youths, CSOs and minorities are powerless, they have close affiliation with each other as well as with NHRC and UNDP. The violence against women are often associated with land grabbing and land disputes.

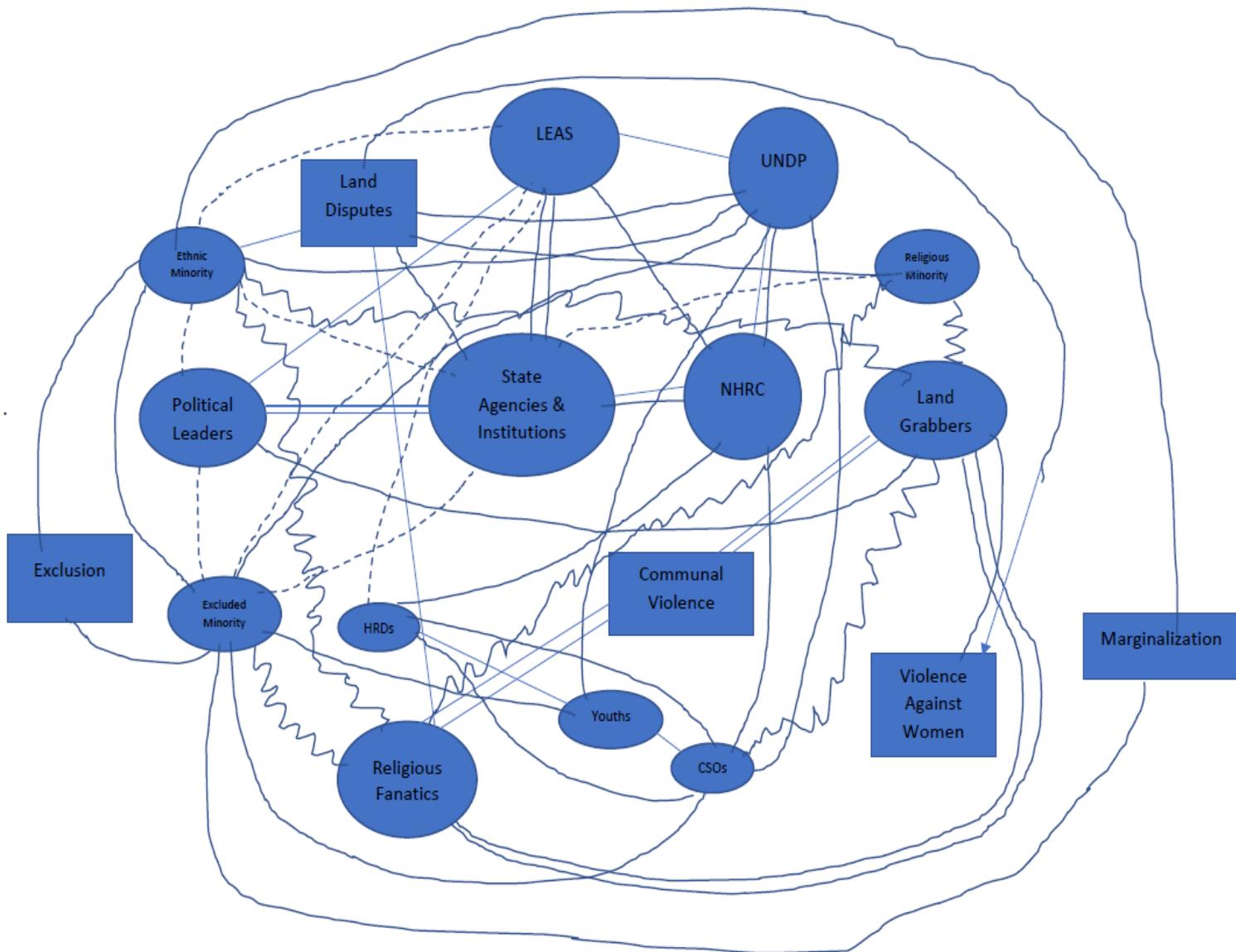


Figure: Actors (Conflict Analysis) Mapping: The Rights of Minorities

5.4. Intervention of HRP in Conflict Mitigation

However, HRP has been working with multiple institutions and actors in addressing the root causes of stress, and conflicting situation in the society. HRP has connected civil society organizations (CSOs) through applying joint-working approach under the challenge fund and LVGs support on the rights of minorities in specific areas of Bangladesh.

In 2018-2019 HRP provided grant support to 07 CSOs and CBOs working in Mymensingh, Gaibandha, Sirajganj, Dinajpur, Satkhira and national level to execute human rights actions for promotion and protection of the rights of ethnic minorities and excluded minorities, e.g. Dalits. HRP provided support to conduct several joint fact-finding missions with NHRC and Parliamentary Caucus on Indigenous People to investigate the human rights violation against indigenous communities at Gaibandha and Moulavibazar districts and facilitated in Policy dialogue for formation of a separate Land commission for plain land ethnic

minorities living in Bangladesh, coinciding the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples 2019 which helped to raise human rights concerns and challenges of the ethnic minorities and sensitized national parliament members. HRP provided capacity building trainings to minority youths, peace leaders, CSOs, HRDS on leadership and human rights to be able to conduct community-based awareness campaign and to act as a part of early warning system and supported to conduct research on the human rights situation of indigenous and other marginalized groups undertaken by Dept. of Anthropology, Dhaka University which will be used for policy advocacy for promotion of their rights. HRP organized several peace dialogues with peace leaders and local administration in Cox's Bazar in order to facilitate dialogue on promoting peace and special harmony.

In accordance with the social conflicts, local administration including police needs special attention to handle the fake messages and social media-based messaging that may create disturbance, provoke communal tensions and break existing social harmony. Also, more discussions on peace and social harmony at upazila, unions and village levels are required. Furthermore, development and activation of the Peace forum/platform through including Hindu, Christian, Buddhist and Muslim religious leaders at district, upazila and union level is an inevitable requirement in order to reduce conflict in the society.

6. Gender analysis

6.1. Country Context

Women empowerment in Bangladesh varies depending from sector to sector. Per UNDP's Gender Inequality Index 2018 Bangladesh ranked 129 out of 162 countries and 45.3% of adult women have reached at least secondary level of education compared to 49.2% of their male counterparts. Politically 20.3% women are holding seats in present parliament with 8% in Cabinet and women in the helm, including the current Prime Minister, Speaker and the Leader of Opposition

The situation of violence against women was alarming and the rates have increased compared to previous years. For example, in 2019, 1413 women were reportedly raped, 258 women were sexually harassed, 158 women experienced dowry related violence, as a result of domestic violence 218 women were murdered by their husbands.¹¹

Child marriage remains a big challenge with the country still considered as one of the highest to have reported incidents of child marriage. Government has taken several initiatives including enacting new law and rules, awareness raising campaign, creating community-based vigilance group, operating 109 national hotlines etc. to prevent child marriage.

Women in Bangladesh experience discrimination in claiming equal rights in personal laws specially in inheritance of property. It is noteworthy that recently the Hon'ble Prime Minister has called for protection of women's property rights in at least two occasions. She suggested to review the existing laws for necessary reform through replacing the word 'son' or 'daughter' with the word 'child' so that no matter what the gender of the child is, they can get a fair share of their parents' property. Migrant workers is yet another vulnerable segment of women facing violence. Many of them have returned home as a result of torture, abuse and exploitation. Digital space is contributing to has created a new scope for cybercrime including sexual harassment against women and young girls.

¹¹ <http://www.askbd.org/ask/>

6.2. Initiatives under Human Rights Programme

HRP has been working for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment. Gender equality has been a significant approach throughout the programme including addressing systematic discrimination against women and girls, following a bottom-up approach and empowering rights holders to claim their rights and sensitizing duty bearers to act on promotion of women's rights.

To keep the approach on track, a Gender Strategy was developed during the first year of the programme to maintain it as a key focus for entire programme period. In addition, UNDP has in place its gender marker to assess all its projects on annually. Per this assessment, HRP in 2019 was listed under GEN-2: 'Project to Promote Gender Equality as Significant Objective'.

Gender has been mainstreamed across the programme and every action has direct or indirect implications for addressing gender concerns and contributing to promote women's & girls' rights. Some instances from the year 2019 are given below:

6.3. NHRC- Trusted Advocate on Gender Equality

HRP has been supporting NHRC to develop a draft legislation to address sexual harassment for educational institutions and workplace engaging all relevant stakeholders relevant and organized several consultations with wider stakeholders. The process is still ongoing, and the formulation of legislation is expected to finalize very soon.

6.4. CSOs- Powerful Voices for Promoting Women's Rights

In the reporting period total 10 CSOs solely have undertaken women's rights and gender equality related activities in 8 districts- Dhaka, Sirajgonj, Cox's Bazar, Gaibandha, Hobiganj, Manikgonj, Mymensing and Khulna. To ensure that all the grants recipients under the project follow gender mainstreaming approach, HRP provided 'Gender and Diversity' training to all partner organizations. It should be mentioned that 16,197 women have become aware about their rights as a result of continuous advocacy and awareness raising intervention executed by the partner organizations. Till to date HRP supported 11 women headed organizations.

6.5. Police- Key Actor for Ensuring Protection of Women and Girls:

In the reporting period, the programme started providing human rights training to the field level police officials to make them more sensitized on human rights particularly during performing their duties. Since violence against women & girls rate is still very high and police plays a crucial role in the process of providing justice to the victim of violence in Bangladesh, a dedicated session has been incorporated on police's role to protect women, children and other excluded minority communities' rights with special focus on sensitivity during handling gender-based violence, children and other excluded minority- related cases in light with relevant legal framework (i.e. WCRPA 2000, Domestic Violence Act 2010, Children Act 2013). In 2019 training was provided to 228 police personnel, out of total participants only 22 were females, which was very small in numbers compared to male participants. HRP has requested to the Detective Training School (DTS) to nominate more female participants to receive the human rights training in future.

HRP will be signing a LOA with Police Staff College to conduct researches including one research focusing on Quality of Policing in Bangladesh: Life, Sacrifice and Commitment of Women Police, which aims to address practical challenges of women police in their professional life.

6.7. HRP's Lead Gender Component

Output 4 of the Programme is dedicated to strengthening the capacity of relevant stakeholders to better protect and promote women's rights and establish gender equality. In the reporting period some key actions were taken by HRP such as develop a draft legislation to address sexual harassment, raise awareness and campaign to eliminate gender-based violence and promote women's rights, observation of International Women's Day, provide capacity development training on gender and diversity, conduct research, observe 16 days of global campaign on violence against women including human rights day.

In order to tackle deeply rooted patriarchal mindset and toxic masculinity, HRP's effort to engage men and boys is one of the key programme strategies. It has implemented specialized campaign among the adolescent's school students for reducing gender-based violence and to bring sustainable and positive changes at knowledge and behavioral level. In 2019 this school-based campaign was conducted in 50 schools in 3 districts (Gaibandha, Sirajgonj and Cox'sBazar). 1500 students now have better understanding and attitude towards the rights of women and girls and are taking steps to prevent child marriage, protesting against sexual harassment, sharing playground with fellow female students, supporting their mothers in household works and raising voices over social inequalities.

In order to address the systematic discrimination, HRP conducted two research in collaboration with the Department of Law of University of Dhaka, titled "Social and Legal Implications of withdrawing the CEDAW reservations on the Bangladesh legal system and social norms," and "Lapses in the Legal Framework related to Informal Employment Sector with Specific Focus on Women". Another study titled "Good Practices and Possible Mechanisms to Address Gender Based Violence" was conducted in collaboration with Acid Survivors Foundation, a partner NGO of HRP.

In 2019 HRP observed the VAW weeks starting from 25th November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and continued till 10 December, the Human Rights Day. To observe VAW weeks HRP organized different programmes at national level e.g. broadcasted two short films 'Anura' on preventing child marriage and 'Joya' on challenges faces by working women highlighting barriers in their life, organized cultural festival for awareness raising on women's rights, supported to arrange an orange corner in governance fair and facilitated discussion in national youth forum.

Partner CSOs also observed the 16 days campaign in 10 districts (Sirajgonj, Gaibandha, Potuakhali, Khulna, Moulovi Bazar, Hobiganj, Gazipur, Sathkhira, Mymensing, Dinajpur) through organizing rally, human chain, symbolic hunger strike, workshop, consultation, dialogue etc. with commitment to stand against all forms for violence and exploitation against women and girls. The youth leaders trained by HRP also enthusiastically organized different campaigns at local level.

6.8. Gender and LNOB

To uphold SDGs core spirit: 'Leave No One Behind', HRP has been working to protect and promote human rights of ethnic minorities, Dalits and other excluded minority groups. In all interventions, gender has been considered as one of the core areas to focus. For example, under this output 268 youth leaders were trained and activated. Out of total trained youth leaders, 110 are females. HRP also trained 129 HRDs across the country. Out of total HRDs, 35 are females. Apart from this, in every meeting, discussion, training or Radio programme, gender issues are discussed with due importance. HRP is also very keen on the issue of third gender. To sensitize general public and policy makers on the inherent human rights of transgender community, HRP has been conducting awareness raising and advocacy programme. In 2019, HRP supported in publishing a glossary on third gender.

As reported in previous years, there is specific indicators in result and M&E framework of HRP. In outcome level, out of 10 indicators 2 are gender focused while in output level, out of 25 indicators there are 4 indicators related to gender. HRP always collects and document sex disaggregated data and in every reporting, ensures special focus on analyzing gender.

Mentionable that, from 2019 HRP has started analyzing country gender situation on monthly basis and has been sharing with all relevant stakeholders including donors and country office senior management.

7. Anti-corruption

Programme management and implementation can be a complex undertaking for any executing agency. A key requirement for effective execution and implementation is having a strong management system in place. The HRP is being implemented and managed through the Direct Execution (DEX) modality. UNDP in close consultation with the NHRC is executing the Programme and ensuring the efficient, transparent administration and management of the Programme fund. All policies and procedures including UNDP financial rules and regulations as well as the internal control frameworks are being applied for the implementation of the Programme (e.g. the procurement of goods and services, recruitment of project personnel etc.).

A PAB (Programme Advisory Board), co-chaired by the UNDP Country Director and Secretary of the NHRC has been formed to provide policy guidelines, review progress against targeted results, and ensure coordination with other national initiatives and development projects. PAB is the highest-level policy and oversight body for the Programme assurance which meets three times a year.

There is also a Programme Implementation Committee (PIC) that supports high quality implementation of the Programme. The PIC focus on ensuring provision of the necessary and critical support and services from the various stakeholders and development partners for effective implementation of the Programme. The PIC meets once every two months and the main implementation issues discussed are minuted and disseminated by the chair of the PIC.

The Programme has also engaged other partners to promote human rights in Bangladesh as and when necessary including, NGOs/CBOs, civil society, law enforcement agencies, local government institutions, women's networks, and ethnic minority community networks etc. A Board named Challenge Fund Board has been created to administer funding grants supporting CSO coalitions at the grassroots, divisional and national level to foster innovative human rights initiatives. The Challenge Fund Board is chaired by the UNDP Country Director or his delegated representative. The remainder of the board is made up of 2 members from NHRC and 2 CSO representatives selected via criteria developed by the PAB. The Board is fully managed and maintained by UNDP. Funding is granted following the various steps and processes of UNDP.

Being core partners in the PAB, PIC and Challenge Fund Board, the NHRC has strong decision-making powers while providing guidance to the Programme. The Commission is also involved in the day to day management of the Programme in conjunction with the Programme Management Team. However, for each output, UNDP consults the relevant institution for planning, implementation, approval etc. Such coordinating and management system are helping to prevent corruption and to ensure successful execution of the Programme.

8. Lessons learned and way forward

8.1. Lessons learned

- Including multiple stake holders in all levels of project administration and implementation ensures cross sectoral cooperation and coordination
- Capacity and stronger decision-making power of thematic committee ensures efficient implementation of the project as well as thematic committee action plans. The committees have proven to be an effective platform for multi stake holder debates and advocacy.
- The challenge fund is a successful tool to bring rural CSOs to the policy table linking them with NHRC and has facilitated the scope to work in partnership through MoU with NHRC. Mapping of good practices of CSOs related to human rights guides HRP to take a tailor-made approach in designing CSO capacity building initiatives under its call for grants (Challenge fund) CSOs are willing and eager to learn more on HRBA.
- Participation of members of the excluded minorities is vital in finding practical solutions to systemic problems compromising human rights
- The partnership with Bangladesh Betar and three community radios (Sarabela, Nalta, Naf) have enabled to reach a wider number of beneficiaries.
- Linking NHRC with international platforms including UN human rights mechanisms has enabled NHRC to be abreast of current trends on human rights.
- Youth engagement in community-based awareness initiatives and networking has generated interest among youth groups to better engage in human rights dialogues.
- HRDs have the potential to improve their reporting and monitoring if an enabling environment is created.

8.2. Way forward

As the next step, HRP will ;

- Continue efforts and supports to strengthen the better links, coordination and networks between CSOs at national and grassroots level and national stakeholders engaged in human right sector including NHRC
- Come up with strategies to involve relevant actors like NLASO, Supreme Court, Nari O Shishu Tribunalm etc.
- Continue to expand the youth network and support to establish links with other international and regional networks. Support effective engagement of youth leaders in community-based actions.
- Continue and extend its support to Bangladesh Betar and Community Radios to reach more beneficiaries
- continue its support to link NHRC to promote its work in international platforms including UN Human Rights mechanisms
- continue capacity development initiatives of youths and increase youth engagement in community-based awareness initiatives and networking on human rights
- involve more Parliamentary Caucus on different human rights issues to better advocate

9. Statement of expenditures and delivery (January 2019 to December 2019)

Certified financial report will be sent after 30th June 2020.

HUMAN RIGHTS PROGRAMME

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION [2019]

Annexure 1



Annexure 1

Description of 2019 Key Activities

The following section provides an elaborated description of key activities undertaken by HRP under each of its programme outputs during the year 2019.

Output 1: Strengthened capacity of the National Human Rights Commission to deliver on its mandate

1.1.1. Project Planning Workshop of HRP

A planning workshop was organized in February with NHRCB involving Chairperson, Commissioners, officials of NHRCB and members of HRP Team in order to share the Annual Work Plan (AWP) of HRP with the Thematic Committees of NHRC, learn in detailed about the Annual Work Plan of NHRC, align AWP's of HRP and NHRC and discuss on the lessons learns, challenges and find ways forward for smooth implementation of the AWP.

The key achievements and the lessons learned was shared during the workshop which include increased quality and outreach of NHRC's service delivery, development of digital complaint



handling system and enhanced capacity of NHRC in policy advocacy and reporting to the international human rights bodies so on.

Key Recommendations of the workshop are as follows:

- Take measures to amend the NHRC Act to strengthen its institutional capacity and come up with the proposed changes as per UPR Recommendations.
- Create staff motivation to reduce staff turnover:
 - I. Develop strategies tailored to staff's needs to develop staff motivation
 - II. Take measures to develop Career of staff: training on new skills, moving to higher job responsibilities, making a career change within the same organization,
 - III. Ensure dignity through giving due priority to the staff and develop appropriate Human Resource Policy for it
 - IV. Identify the needs of staff and formulate policy to respond to these
 - V. Create a conducive environment for work is much needed.
- Conduct needs assessment to unpack specific details and identify what are those specific areas on which staff need improvement.
- Increase number of staffs as much as needed through taking measures to amend the NHRC Act and rules.
- Provide training to NHRC permanent staff to build their skills and knowledge.
- Undertake capacity building activities on specific areas:
 - I. Research and analysis
 - II. international relation
 - III. Communication skills in English language Other areas
- Identify and add new areas in field of development e.g. climate change for NHRC.
- Fix the line of promotion: from AD to Secretary and develop modified organogram.
- Develop an effective strategy and build staff capacity for preserving institutional memory and knowledge transfer.
- Fix job description Deputy Director-Director-Director General and include on expertise in the job description.
- Take measures to make NHRC job attractive, modify or improve Recruitment Rules/ Service Rules and provide more clarity of the rules.
- Set key performance indicators in accordance with Annual Performance Agreement
- Ensure staff benefit in line with other government bodies and commissions in terms of pay scale and facilities.

During the workshop, the HRP and NHRC team provided several inputs, recommendations and feedbacks in order to strengthen the capacity of NHRC and its staff. Based on the inputs and feedback from the workshop several key issues and challenges were identified and an action plan for capacity development of NHRC was developed.

1.1.2. National Dialogue, Workshops and Consultations on the UN Guiding Principles on Business & Human Rights

NHRCB organized a national dialogue on the UNGPs on B & HRs in February in Dhaka spear headed by its dedicated thematic committee on Business and Human Rights which has several small interventions in this area. The objective of the dialogue was to understand the theoretical and historical roots of the UNGPs and the implementation of the UNGPs at a national and transnational

Sudipto Mukerjee, Resident Representative, a.i. UNDP Bangladesh highlighted the below points:

- Three sectors (private sector, government and business communities) are the key in addressing issues of business and human Rights.
- SDGs 2030 is an unique opportunity for Bangladesh to comply with aspiration of millions of people.
- Three Key concerns in addressing the UNGPs in Bangladesh are:
 - ✓ Working together on SDGs agendas
 - ✓ Extend cooperation with other communities as well as the international communities
 - ✓ Inclusion of all segments of people.

level, the practical functioning of the responsibility of corporations to conduct human rights due diligence: how businesses have the potential to directly and indirectly influence human rights practices and to have a pre-discussion before the Inaugural of South Asia Forum on Business & Human Rights to be held on 13-14 March in New Delhi, India.

To support the implementation of the UNGPs in Asia-Pacific, the UNDP Regional Hub has launched the initiative titled "Supporting Regional and National Partnerships for the implementation of the UN Guiding Principles on B & HRs in Asia-Pacific", which aims to increase state and business compliance with international human rights standards through awareness raising, advocacy, peer learning, and training.

This regional strategy will be implemented by developing a National Action Plans on Business and Human rights with the relevant stakeholders including UNDP, NHRC and CSOs in Bangladesh in order to translate the UNGPs on B & HRs into country-level action plans for implementation.

A video speech of Prof Surya Deva, Chairperson, UN Working Group on B & HRs, was demonstrated for the audience. He gave emphasis on the collective role of State and business community to achieve SDGs agendas in Bangladesh, mentioning that, business and human rights is a very broad area and it basically captures almost everything. In his view, the help of corporate world is inevitable in everything today, while at the same time human rights is equally important.

Sharmeela Rassoool, Chief Technical Advisor, HRP, UNDP Bangladesh presented summary of the day and highlighted the pin-point of the guests. This dialogue has created a space for different stakeholders and has paved a way to translate the UNGPs on B & HRs in Asia - Pacific into country-level action plans for implementation as well as created a platform and space to implement the regional strategy by promoting the development of NAP on B & HRs with the relevant stakeholders including UNDP, NHRC and CSOs in Bangladesh.

Livio Sarandrea, Team Leader of Business & Human Rights in Asia, Asia Pacific Regional Hub UNDP highlighted the following:

- Business operations have an impact on Human Rights, which might be positive and negative. UN always encourages the positive impact, such as decent jobs and working environment. Business can support health by making new medicines available and accessible. It can advance development by making new roads and water supplies to poor communities.
- The business has three-dimensional risk:
 - i) Operational;
 - ii) Reputational
 - iii) Legal risks. As reference: Facebook share falls 4.9% after the data leak.
- There is a need of value-based business policy and CSR risk analysis for addressing the risks. This will contribute to maximize positive impact of business and minimize the negative impact on people.
- It is also a success that Bangladesh Garment industries still offer women best working opportunity.
- India has already sought a National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights.
- It is true that working on UNGPs means working on the 2030 agendas.
- UNHRC adopted 31 principles as guiding principles on Business and Human Rights in 2011. UN principles are based on three pillars: Protect, Respect and Remedy

1.1.3. Workshop on UN Guiding Principles on Business & Human Rights:

In continuation of the intervention on B & HRs a workshop on UNGPs on B & HRs was organized in April 2019 at NHRCB conference room. Harpreet Kaur, Business & Human Rights Specialist, UNDP Asia & the Pacific presented an overview of the UNGPs on Business & Human Rights: Protect, Respect, Remedy Framework. Around 20 participants, including representatives from the Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of Industry, Trade Union Leader, NGOs, CSO, media, NHRCB Commissioners, Senior Officials and staff, and HRP staff attended the meeting.

1.1.4. Consultation Business and Human Rights: It's Links to SDGs & Application in Bangladesh:

NHRC organized an inter-ministerial consultation on B & HRs: It's Links to SDGs & Application in Bangladesh in June which brought together representatives from different ministries including Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of Labour and Employment.

Sharmeela Rassool, Chief Technical Advisor, HRP made a through presentation on business for sustainable growth through implementation of the UNGPs on B & HRs in Bangladesh.

Key points of the discussion are as follows:

- A system for promotion and protection of human rights in business related activities required since there is chance of violation of dignity and rights of poor and underprivileged people.
- CSR activities need to be monitored regularly so that human rights violation can be avoided.
- Promotion of business & human rights tasks need to be executed through the NAP based on the UNGPs.
- The private sector/ business entities can take responsibilities to implement SDGs relating to their business endeavour so that they can contribute.
- There is chance of human rights violation during the high growth of business investment. Therefore, NAP is needed to ensure human rights, a good lesson learned is from NAP zero draft in India.
- Comprehensive research required for understanding SDGs.
- Full budget is allocated in SDG related issues and activities. If budget allocation is requested on business and human rights relating to SDG in different ministries- the Ministry of Finance will be ready to allocate budget for this purpose.
- Minimum wage/bonus issue for the workers- may aspect of human rights violations towards RMG workers-Government should take action.
- Business is driving force for human development, but some illiterate businessmen regard the business for only the sake of business and disregard human rights.
- The initiatives, affirmative action has been taken by the Government/Ministry of Labour to promote the rights of workers.
 - Occupational health and safety issue including long 12 hours or more working hour for the workers should be addressed.
 - Lack of economic, social safety and security is prevailing because of daily labour:
 - no security of job or salary which needs to be also addressed.
- Businesses should have respect for nature, businesses/industries should find out solutions like recycling and need to be careful during their business activities so that human rights can be protected. Therefore, we should bring the private sector in this discussion;
- Vital issues relating to the informal sector including minimum wage structure and other employer-employee relations, their contractual rights need to be addressed
- Child labour is also crucial for the B & HR discussions which needs to be eliminated. The government has taken many initiatives,
- Implementation: For example, monitoring of the safety net to ensure that the vulnerable group is getting the actual benefit: what

however, there should be long term measures to eliminate the child labour to ensure sustainable development e.g. employment opportunities for the family members of those child engaged in labour.

mechanism could be introduced? One step is Bank account: but again, we will have to ensure that it reaches to the right people.

- The businesses should pay attention to the special needs of the female workers. If there is no toilet for women, their rights would be violated. Therefore, toilets facilities are required for women in factories. The treatment and behavior of factory authority toward women workers need to be monitored and reviewed so that dignity of female workers prevails.
- CSR activities need to be monitored regularly so that human rights violation can be avoided.

The NHRC is optimistic to take this discussion on a comprehensive tool for the promotion and protection of business and human rights to the higher level (cabinet) with the Government. This intervention is expected to contribute to the adoption of a NAP on B & HRs by the Government.

1.1.5. Consultation on Business & Human Rights in Chittagong and Sylhet

NHRCB organized regional consultations on B & HRs in Chittagong and Sylhet in July 2019. Private sector, local administration including the Deputy Commissioner, Chittagong, NGO and CSOs participated in the meeting.

Key issues discussed in the Consultation on Business & Human Rights: Chittagong:

- The key presentation focused on positive and negative impacts of business operations, business risks and UNGPs on B & HRs
- Monitoring mechanism should be strengthened to reduce wastage of industries to keep better environment.
- Food needs to be adulteration free and reasonable use of pesticide should be followed for the better health protection of people as well as for developing Economic Zone of Bangladesh in Chittagong
- Tobacco cultivation is increasing in Chittagong area through investment of tobacco companies which is alarming for environment and for cropping pattern. Though it is argued by the Tobacco companies that they are paying revenue to the government; however, it is now time to think that whether this is costing more to the Government in the health sector.
- We must conserve with the business entities/industries for ensuring human right of labourers of factory if we want to make Chittagong business hub. We need to conserve our environment at the same time for ensuring sustainability.
- Plastic pollution also increasing drastically due to poor management of the city corporation.
- MDGs were achieved, now we must focus to achieve SDGs in all aspects.
- Trade Union exists in many factories/companies/industries to fulfil their rights and facilities of the workers. But these trade unions do not necessarily represent or reflect the demands of the workers. The trade unions/collaborations should be strengthened.

- Business entities/people need to be involved more in this type of discussions for taking corrective actions.
- Ship breaking and the safety, security of the labourers is important. Human rights interactive committee including business sector, NGOs, and CSOs to be established to address the B & HRs issues.
- It is necessary to accumulate anthropological data and information and a thorough research related to B & HRs for producing accurate and credible data and information to engage the business sector.
- State should be cautious to promote business and adopt an action plan for promoting B & HRs and implement the action plan accordingly.
- Mega project grabs people's homestead and cultivated land which is a violation of human rights. There should be a provision to take NOC from Department of Environment and the NHRCB.
- FBCCI and other business forums should also be cautious and sensitive to the rights of the consumers.
- The rights of female workers i.e. equal pay and leave etc. and sexual harassment in working environment of RMG sector should be addressed.
- Industries should have effective wastage management plans through establishing affluent plant to reduce pollution. The High Court Directives should be followed, and location clearance certificate should be obtained for establishing industries.
- B & HRs should be promoted in every factory and industry to address the human rights issue in their respective factory and industry. There should be a monitoring mechanism.
- Effective implementation of law is very important to protect rights of labour and workers in RMG sectors and all industries.

Key issues discussed in the Consultation on Business & Human Rights: Sylhet :

- Negative news can hinder business. It was suggested to form a watchdog/monitoring committee involving different business sectors, media to implement business principles and law to ensure rights of the workers to strengthen compliance and monitoring mechanism to protect and promote human rights.
- Fish industry is polluting environment as they are using tannery waste as food for rapid growth of fish which also needs to be addressed. Stone lifting business is also damaging the environment.
- It was suggested to consider the wage rate of tea garden workers as they are getting very low wages (89 BDT per day). The issues also include minimum wages of the brick field labours.
- Non-judicial application of pesticide in agricultural field hamper the environment so the farmers are advised to apply judicial application of pesticide and fertilizers.
- Private sector representative suggested to maintain the quality of SME production as they are taking loan from Bank with high interest rate compared to mega businesses; however, they are not getting all the benefits the.
- To reinforce the monitoring system to conserve the waterbody as fishes are depleting from wastage of pesticide and industry in river and sea gradually.
- Needs to explore what the responsibility of global market is when cost of product is increased. And how we can engage them in the business and human rights dialogues.
- A compulsory life insurance of workers should be introduced, and it needs to include in the NAP of B & HR in Bangladesh. The minimum wage, compensations and remedy should be in place for the workers.
- Measures need to protect the environment of Sylhet from wastage of different factories and industries e.g. Sundarbans is being impaired from nearby factory and power plant.
- The consumers rights should be protected.

- There are many laws in Bangladesh for the establishment of new industries; however, these laws are not always effectively implemented.
- The NHRCB should lead the development of the NAP on B & HRs.

1.1.6. Consultation on Business and Human Rights with Youth Entrepreneurs

Key Recommendations:

- ✓ Creating platform for networking
- ✓ Awareness through digital platform
- ✓ Effective trade union
- ✓ Publish good practice and successful stories
- ✓ Employee community
- ✓ Introduce peace/ B & HR session for the final year students of universities to improve the knowledge level on area of HRs
- ✓ Internal policy in place
- ✓ After office time utility service switching off
- ✓ Security camera to prevent physical and sexual harassment.
- ✓ Security camera to prevent physical/sexual harassment.

HRP organized a workshop on B & HRs with the youth entrepreneurs in September where around 32 youth leaders participated. The objective was to discuss on the business-related human rights impacts including any actual or potential human rights violations that may arise from the business activities in the local context. Also, to realize what mechanisms are in place to address human rights violations in the context of business activities. The workshop provided an opportunity to discuss with the youth entrepreneurs about their responsibility to respect human rights. This requires taking adequate measures for the prevention, mitigation and where

appropriate remediation.

Participants were divided into three groups and each group made presentation on the findings. The participants provided the following findings:

	1. What are human rights risks associated with the youth enterprises?	2. What mechanism are in place to prevent or address human rights violations or abuses in the context of business activities?	3. How youth entrepreneurs can contribute to promote business-related human rights culture in their future interventions?
Group-1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Employees do not get overtime payment - Occupational Health and safety hazard - Compensation not paid - Child labour issue - Insurance is not given - Gender discrimination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UN declaration on HR - Constitutional safeguard 26-34 - Labour law - CAT Convention - Children Act 2013 - Digital Security Act 2018 - Dowry Prohibition Act - Judicial Mechanism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - After office time utility service switching off ensuring no unrecorded overtime - Installation of security camera to prevent physical/sexual harassment - Zero tolerance to policy against harassment - Force annual leave - Complaint handling platform - Awareness on legal and judicial mechanism through training

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of work life balance - Minority discrimination - Maternity and paternity leave issue - Lack of job security - Environmental issue 		
Group -2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Employee, employer, supplier, investor, consumer community Rights issues - Sexual harassment - Job security - Syndicate - Lawyers work for the employer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - State law - Compliance standard - Consumer law - Environment law - Cyber security law - National human rights organizations - Road transport law - Health and hygiene 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Compliance - Awareness (digital platform through apps/web/social media, fakebook chatbot et.) - Platform for raising voice where all stakeholders can join and shared the opinion by the govt., employee, employer, legal, law maker
Group -3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Risk of losing jobs/job insecurity - Harassment and discrimination - Pressure from dominant groups - Lack of access to proper information - Inequality and unfair access to govt. facilities - Bad business approaches - Unsafe workplace - Unfairness in women and children rights issue - Cheap labour with unfair employment - Tea garden, garment factory, ship making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Constitutional safeguards - Right to privacy - Freedom of speech - Freedom of movement - Freedom of assembly - Right to ownership - Digital Security Act. - The Protection of Consumers Rights. - Labour law - Safe Food Act 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Joint stakeholder approach - Creating better environment - Creating a culture of human rights in business sector - Closely working with NGOs and regulatory bodies - Ensuring corporate governance - Publishing journal/books or documentary to promote good practice among the corporate practice to motivate/replicate by others

A presentation was made on UNGPs on B & HRs: protect, respect, remedy framework and engagement of youth entrepreneurs. In the presentation, discussion on future endeavors took place along with a proposal for making a documentary with youth entrepreneurs and also giving them an opportunity to be part of the working group on business and human rights leading towards a NAP on the issue.

1.1.7. Peer to Peer leaning and experience sharing support for NHRC

Issues of Discussions

- How to strengthen collaboration with ATSEC in repatriating trafficked victims.
- How ATSEC has been engaged in executing repatriation process.
- How deputy high commission extending support to the trafficking victims and how it can be done more effectively
- Role of NCPCR in addressing Child Rights Issues.
- How they respond to any complaint and how they resolve.
- The role of Bangladesh High Commission in Badal Farazi's case.
- Present challenges and way forward.
- How NHRC India protects and promoted human rights.
- Complaint Management System of NHRC India.
- The condition of Bangladeshi detainees in Mathura Jail.
- How Bangladesh can help to the detainees.
- Counselling to the women and children who are detained over there.

NHRCB continued its peer to peer leaning and experience sharing by engaging and participating to the International forums and exposure visits. The UNWG and UNDP organized the Inaugural of UN South Asia Forum on Business and Human Rights on 14-15 March 2019 in New Delhi, India aiming at raising awareness about business and human rights issues in South Asia and facilitating implementation of the UNGPs and Human Rights, including through a National Action Plans.

Similarly, NHRCB conducted experience sharing visit to India, meeting with ATSEC India, Bangladesh Deputy High Commission, Kolkata, National Commission for Protection of

Child Rights (NCPCR), Delhi, Bangladesh High Commission, Delhi, NHRC India, and visited Mathura District Jail.

1.1.8. Study Sharing Meeting on Business & Human Rights

As a part of implementation of the B & HR Asia Project in Bangladesh HRP conducted a study titled 'Establishing Business Case on Business & Human Rights' to identify key human rights issues and assess their impact on current trend of FDI, to map the key stakeholders for B & HRs in Bangladesh and assess the level of their engagement with the B & HRs agenda. It also aims to review and assess the existing Bangladesh's legislative, judicial and non-judicial mechanisms available for ensuring remedy for victims of corporate human rights violations. B & HRs Asia Project further supported a study titled 'Economic Development versus Human Rights Abuses in Bangladesh: Shrimp



The highlights of the key findings are as follows:

- Constitution prohibits discrimination on the grounds of religion, race, caste, sex and place of birth
- Labour Act prohibits anti-union discrimination, but penalties are not sufficiently dissuasive maximum of 10,000 BDT
- Labour Act provides for equal pay for equal work, but Constitution recognizes equal rights in the public sector without mentioning the private sector
- Maternity benefits of 16 weeks, exceeded ILO recommended 14 weeks
- Only 34% of women being employed in contrast with 78 % of men in 2017
- Labour Act aligns with international labour standards of minimum age
- ILO Core Convention on Minimum Age (C138) is not ratified
- Total of children below 18 years old engaged in working activities at 3.45 million with 1.70 million being classified as child laborers
- Social security provisions do not fully reflect the level of protection granted in the ILO Social Security-minimum standards convention (C102), Bangladesh has not ratified it
- 87% of workers in Bangladesh were employed in the informal economy
- Indigenous people are not recognized by law and fall under the category of "tribes, minor races and ethnic sects and communities", to which only cultural protection is provided by the 2011 amendment of the Constitution
- The East Bengal State Acquisition and Tenancy Act (1950) forbids the transfer of lands owned by indigenous people to non-indigenous people in the plain lands without consent of government's district officers, but not implemented.
- Almost 500 acres of land grabbed from indigenous people in 2018 and about 11,000 acres were under threat to be grabbed by the government or private companies due to commercial plantations, tourist development and economic zones.
- World Investment Report gives us the picture that Bangladesh is the second largest FDI recipient in South Asia. FDI in Bangladesh went up by 67.94% in 2018. This brings positive optimism that FDI in Bangladesh will continue to grow. Bangladesh has been seen to be in the right track in attracting foreign investors whereas the investment flow across the world continue to decline.
- Effects of climate change in Bangladesh: sea level rise, cyclones, storm surges, salinity intrusion, heavy monsoon downpours, desertification, temperature increases, and extreme weather.
- Shrimp Industry is the Second Largest industry after Garments
- In the fiscal year 2013-14, Bangladesh earned \$545 million (source: EPB)
- In the fiscal year 2016-17, Bangladesh earned \$446 million (source: EPB)
- Adopting more comprehensive and specific law, policy and action plan to regulate shrimp culture and ensure proper implementation of the same
- Creating alternative employment opportunities and adopt social security policy
- Facilitate the substantive and procedural fairness in the justice delivery system.

Highlights of the recommendations from the participants:

- Ensuring maternity leave 6 months for private sector as determined for the private sector by the government (labour rights)
- Measures to identify the practical problems with the trade associations in practice to associate
- Increase minimum wage to \$200
- Measures to ensure more involvement with the chamber of commerce and business associations/more private sector
- Engage the buyers to ensure compliance
- Moral responsibility of businesses (ethical business) should be in place
- Link B & HRs agenda with SDGs which will contribute both
- On legislative framework and gaps: the influence of the business sector with the policy makers to have favorable laws and policies
- Comprehensive assessment of the whole scenario of the shrimp industry including issues of health , wage discrimination, leisure facilities
- Disaggregated data including the rejection of trade unions
- Measures to formulate a NAP for the implementation of the UNGPs in Bangladesh
- Some initiatives ongoing for putting in place a regulation for informal sectors which should be incorporated with the B & HRs initiative.

Culture in the South". The outline of the findings was presented in the study sharing meeting in October. The mapping identified the key stakeholders and their level of engagement, detail account of the status of protection of human rights regarding business activities. Furthermore, the studies defined the next steps and setting priorities for the B & HRs and HRP in Bangladesh.

Additionally, HRP has been collecting case studies on human rights due diligence and sustainability initiatives of the private sector, producing documentary outlining UNGPs for mass communication and interviews of the stakeholders as well as in the process of translating UNGPs in Bangla. The business and human rights initiative is largely contributing the thematic committee on B & HRs for taking the agenda forward. This is a way of engaging in dialogues in rights forums, making recommendations to the stakeholders including the Government and the private sector. HRP will involve the committee more on the issue in 2020 for translating the UNGPs at the domestic level including shaping a framework for involving the informal sector.

1.1.9. Support NHRC to organize Regional Conference on Combatting Trafficking

NHRC organized a discussion to address common human rights issues between host communities in Cox's Bazar and the Rohingyas titled 'Regional Conference: Combatting Trafficking: Repatriation of Victims of Trafficking' in April bringing together representation of the NHRLs from Myanmar and Nepal, UN agencies, INGOs, NGOs, CSOs, development partners, human rights activist, senior government officials, international expert from India, and national experts, academicians, researchers and media personnel in Dhaka. HRP has been implementing a part of C2RP which entails supporting NHRCB to establish a regional office in Cox's Bazar in 2018. The discussion was a part of this project.

The issue of trafficking has attracted substantial attention in recent years. Bangladesh is primarily a source country, but also to some extent a transit and destination for human trafficking victims. Rohingyas who have fled persecution from Myanmar become victims of human trafficking. Since the inception of the latest influx of Rohingyas, NHRCB has been up and pro-active in addressing human rights violations including human trafficking beyond boundaries.

Highlights of Discussions and Key Recommendations and Solutions:

- Strong political will is needed for addressing trafficking issues.
- Laws, Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act, 2012, need to be strictly enforced.
- According to Bangladesh Police statistics, 6,106 people were arrested in connection with human trafficking since 2013, but only 25 (0.4%) of them have been convicted. Bangladesh remained on the Tier 2 watch list of the US Department of State's annual Trafficking in Persons Report for the second consecutive year. Tier 2 refers to the governments of countries that do not fully meet the US Trafficking Victims Protection Act's (TVPA) minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking but are making significant efforts to bring themselves into compliance with those standards.
- Judiciary should also be aware and acquainted about the severity of the trafficking issue and thus contribute to the quick disposal of cases and bringing the perpetrators to justice which will ensure higher conviction rate and eventually lead to implementation of the law.
- The government enacted the Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act in 2012. The rules under this Act was also formulated in 2017. But the tribunal required by law to try cases filed under this Act, has not been established till date. It has been strongly suggested that the tribunal be established without further delay along with budget allocation.
- Repatriation process should be simplified.
- Accountability chain to be ensured in public prosecution and police investigation.
- Adequate shelter homes need to be established.
- Engagement of local community, youths, influential religious leaders need to be ensured.
- Strict monitoring by the Ministry of Home Affairs will prevent trafficking.
- Inter-ministerial coordination is required.
- Stronger coordination is needed between the countries.
- Discussions in the Parliament need to be initiated.
- State to investigate and punish accordingly the members of law enforcement agencies if found involved in trafficking.
- To minimize any gap in repatriation process, the capacity of concerned people/agencies need to be increased so that they have clear understanding of the situation.
- Safe migration is essential to combat trafficking. State and Non-state actors required to take preventive measures.
- Push back is the worst form of repatriation which should be highly discouraged.
- Victim compensation should be introduced and implemented to ensure human rights.
- After repatriation, sustainable reintegration plan needs to be taken to stop voluntary trafficking at later stage.
- Language is a big barrier for migration that may lead to trafficking. Hence skills and language training are inevitable.
- Specialized intervention needed to address region specific problems.
- Social stigma must be removed. Family or community must accept the repatriated victims specially women and girls. Therefore, stakeholders should work in awareness raising.
- Use of social media can bring positive results for wider dissemination of awareness programmes.
- If UNHCR guideline is followed to prevent trafficking, the problem can be tackled in a better way.
- Bangladeshi women and girls presently detained in different prisons and safe homes in India who need to be repatriated as soon as possible.
- Extradition treaty needs to be signed between sending and receiving countries including mutual legal assistance.
- Female victims in Saudi Arabia deserve special attention.
- To combat human trafficking people centric approach needs to be followed.
- Recruiting agencies need to be brought under strict monitoring and compliance.

As next steps NHRC has sent a DO letter on 8 May 2019 to the Register General of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh for organizing a workshop with the judiciary relating to trafficking. Different stakeholders including representation of the NHRIs from Myanmar and Nepal, UN agencies, INGOs, NGOs, CSOs, development partners, human rights activist, senior government officials, international expert from India, and national experts, academicians, researchers and media personnel were sensitized through the regional conference.

1.1.10. Seminar on SDGs: Climate Change & Human Rights

NHRCB organized a seminar titled “SDGs: Climate Change & Human Rights” in June which brought together representatives from different ministries, UN agencies, NGOs and media and created a space for discussion on the issue. NHRCB distributed talking book among few visually impaired students during this programme. A 1000 talking books that was invented by A2I, was produced by HRP with the view to support the no one should be left behind.

Md. Nazrul Islam, FTM, NHRCB delivered welcome speech in the beginning of the seminar while Prof Akhter Hussain, Member, NHRCB presented key notes. A video named ‘Shopno Joyer Gaan: Bangladesh SDG Activity’ was also screened.

Md. Abul Kalam Azad, Principal Coordinator, SDG Affairs, Prime Minister’s Office appreciated NHRCB’s interventions related to SDGs and human rights. He lauded NHRCB for its engagement on SDGs and displaying its linkages with human rights, civil and political rights, economic, social and

cultural rights and now expanding to environmental rights and climate.

Key Issues Raised by the Participants:

- Concern raised about the climate change impact on the PWDs in Bangladesh since it makes PWDs more vulnerable. The issues of climate change and disability can be introduced globally to address the rights of disability.
- Implementation is important rather than theoretical discussion and conducting COP21 and different seminar.
- There should be more initiatives to decrease saline intrusion, to increase mitigation and adaption and to convert river water to drinking water for decreasing scarcity of drinking water. The ministries need a coordinated effort.

Anisul Huq, MP, Hon’ble Minister, Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, highlighted the importance of addressing human rights in the context of climate change as well as SDGs. He stated that the relationship between protection of human rights and the protection of environment is inextricably connected. He gave emphasis on advocacy for integration of human rights-based approach in any climate change adaptation or mitigation measures, such as the promotion of alternative energy sources, forest conservation or

tree-planting projects, resettlement schemes and others.

A.K.M Mamunur Rashid, Climate Change Specialist, UNDP Bangladesh said that Climate Change is intrageneration justice and global justice which is important issue. He expressed concerns on potential effect of climate change on developing country in future despite their low carbon emission.

Dr. Md. Billal Hossain, Acting Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, stated that innovative initiatives on SDGs and climate change is critical for us. Climate Change is great threat for us. Our livelihoods indicator, according to law and justice (constitution), there is clearly mentioned about climate and right issues clear. Though Climate Change issues was not brought in 2010 but in Paris COP21 it was discussed, and they focused mitigation rather than adaptation because the developed countries produce more carbon.

Kazi Reazul Hoque, Chairperson, NHRCB stated that climate change impact is greater threat for coming generation. That's why it is very much essential to address it as soon as possible. Due to climate change, rivers are silted. As a result, flood is happening in all over the country in every year, he added. SDGs is mandatory for all regardless rich and developing country. As it is cross cutting issue, a lead ministry associated with other ministries should adopt a NAP to address climate change issues, he stated.

1.1.11. Interim Capacity Assessment of NHRCB

UNDP also continued its long-standing cooperation with APF and OHCHR in supporting NHRIs to conduct and implement Capacity Assessments. For which UNDP supported a Capacity Assessment of NHRCB in 2017 and a subsequent interim Capacity Assessment of NHRCB in 2019 to have a stock taking of implementation of the recommendations made in the previous assessment. This exercise was twofold, such as,

- a. Capacity Assessment (mid-term) of the National Human Rights Commission, Bangladesh.
- b. Proposed amendment to the National Human Rights Commission Act 2009.

A debriefing was arranged on 2 May 2019 at the NHRCB conference room with the participation of UN RC office, UN agencies, Development partners, CSOs & NGOs.

Highlights of the Key Findings

Priorities for NHRC action till end 2020

1. Revision of the NHRC Act 2009
2. Finalize and implement the recruitment rules
3. Approve and implement SOPs, especially those on complaints and investigations and on governance, and upgrade them to rules – set time for reports and enforce it; use of powers
4. Induct new Members following appointments - HLD
5. Recruit and induct (train) new staff – eight vacancies and 40 new positions to be filled
6. Undertake one thematic systemic inquiry
7. Support thematic committees so that they all become operational, meeting regularly with a work program that is implemented
8. Develop an NHRC wide training plan and program and individual career development plans for each officer or employee, in conjunction with annual PA, and report back and incorporation
9. Develop and implement a system for follow up, monitoring and reporting on implementation of NHRC recommendations
10. Develop comprehensive, NHRC-wide and section specific annual activity plans

11. Staff existing regional offices adequately and then open new regional offices, but only as adequate staffing becomes possible
12. Regularize staff salaries, allowances, terms and conditions on the basis of comparability with public service provisions
13. Build internal research and legal analysis capacity
14. Approve and implement the guidelines on human rights defenders
15. Senior focal points in ministries
16. Field work, especially prison monitoring

Priorities for HRP support to the NHRC until end 2020

1. Policy advocacy

Support below mentioned advocacy and reforms to draft new laws

- National Human Rights Commission Act – Amendment
- Sexual harassment
- Anti-discrimination law
- Minority rights Act
- HRD guidelines
- Child rights commission

2. Investigation and monitoring capacity of NHRC

- a. Improve the staff capacity on investigation and monitoring HR violations – providing trainings, workshops and needed tools
- b. Support NHRC to undertake systemic human rights violations – in at least two priority areas.
- c. Support NHRC to conduct a national inquiry
- d. Adoption of a single Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) on monitoring and reporting of human rights situation, complaint handling system, fact-finding and inquiry on the human rights violations.
- e. Digital Complaint Management System should be operationalized, and a new APPS be introduced to help with outreach

3. Support Thematic Committees

a. The number of the thematic committees should be reduced by merging some thematic sectors and making the committees effectively and operational. HRP will focus on

- Women rights,
- Dalit, Hijras and other Excluded Minorities.
- Business and Human Rights & CSR,
- Persons with disability and autism,
- Child Rights,
- Anti-trafficking and migration.

b. Support thematic committees to have in place an annual plan and empower committees to functions more effectively and engage with systemic advocacy including by conducting research and publication of thematic human rights issues.

4. International Reporting & Advocacy

- a. Establish/created focal person / desk/department to handle international affairs and international reporting.
- b. Staff capacity building for better coordination and follow up on treaty and charter-based reporting
- c. Data base with treaty/ charter-based reports and follow up tools.

5. Regional Offices of NHRCB should be Effectively Operationalized

- a. Regional offices should be equipped with trained and regular staff (not deputed from the Head Office.)
- b. 3 regional offices at the divisional level may be established with proper arrangement

6. Links with HRDs and CSOs

- a. Training for HRDs and CSOs to work as extended resources of NHRC in the field
- b. HRD and CSO data base with tools for proper follow up
- c. Facilitate joint fact-finding mission with NHRC

1.1.12. Capacity Building Training on Investigation Techniques, Tools & Reporting for NHRC Officials

HRP organized a capacity building training on Investigation Techniques, Tools & Reporting in April for the NHRCB Officials and staff including its regional staff. The whole day training involved discussion on the current practices of investigations of human rights violation and fact-finding. Then from the case studies a finding was made on what NHRCB was doing in appropriate manner and what could be done to make the investigation on human rights violations more effective.

1.1.13. Human Rights Day 2019 Celebration of NHRCB

NHRCB observed the Human Rights Day 2019 on 10th December in Dhaka upholding the theme of the day 'Youth Standing Up for Human Rights'. A theme song on human rights and a documentary on the accomplishment of human rights agenda in Bangladesh was screened. NHRCB also organized awareness rally in 8 divisions as a part of Human Rights Day celebration to reach mass people of the country. The celebration contributed in making recommendations in rights forum that is expected to bring some positive changes for the promotion & protection of human rights. The Human Rights Day event aimed to raise awareness among mass people and to recall the spirit of the UDHR. NHRCB brought together around 700 participants from government agencies, UN agencies, INGOs, NGOs, CSOs, development partners, human rights activist, national experts, academicians, researchers and media personnel so on.

H.E. Sheikh Hasina, MP, Hon'ble Prime Minister, of the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh attended the programme as the Chief Guest. She stated, it is natural that human rights would be violated repeatedly if the government tolerates any injustice and crime. Government would establish human rights in the country through ensuring the trial of all the incidents of human



মানবাধিকার দিবস ২০১৯

“মানবাধিকার সুরক্ষায় তারুণ্যের অভিযাত্রা”

প্রধান অতিথি : শেখ হাসিনা, এমপি

মাননীয় প্রধানমন্ত্রী

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

আয়োজনে মানবাধিকার কমিশন
১০ ডিসেম্বর ২০১৯

Human Rights Day 2019

“Youth standing up for the human rights”

Chief Guest : **Sheikh Hasina, MP**

Hon'ble Prime Minister
Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Organized by: **National Human Rights Commission**
10 December 2019



rights violations. She further added, “All we need most is to ensure the rule of law for establishing human rights. Criminals have to face punishment, no matter who they are... this is our decision, and we are working as per the decision. Drive against drugs, terrorism, militancy and corruption continued as these destroy a society. So, the resistance should come first from the society against these menaces... this is urgently needed to create awareness among the people. Government has enacted various human rights-related laws and amended many others while strengthening the NHRC.” Anisul Huq, Hon'ble Minister, Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, Nasima Begum, ndc, Chairman, NHRC, Mia Seppo, UN Resident Coordinator in Bangladesh and Kamal Uddin Ahmed, Full-time member, NHRC also spoke at the event.

A side event was also organized with the youths from ethnic and religious minorities who identified the existing challenges in their societies and made recommendations to the NHRC for taking actions. The highlights of the key issues and recommendations made by youth leaders are as follows:

- Youth leader from Rakhine community in Patuakhali mentioned that their population has declined from 50,000 to 4000. There is land grabbing problem experienced by the Rakhine community and lack of respect from mainstream people. It has been recommended to solve the land grabbing issue and retain the population as well as to organize regular consultation in the region.
- In the Sirajgong district (Sadar, Raiganj & Tarash Upazila) the prejudices,



misinterpretation of religious norms, social barriers and drug addictions is predominant. Lack of awareness about the child marriage issue and lack of work-oriented & technical education for the youths. Therefore, it is necessary to organize anti-terrorism and anti-drug campaign in the area. Measures should be taken to stop the child marriage and introduce work-oriented education system.

- In Mymensingh, Hajong community face a major challenge of extinction of their culture and language. They have problem with education and employment opportunities as well as problems relating to land grabbing. So, it has been recommended to address the issue relating to preserving the culture and language of this ethnic group, to allocate quota for the education and employment of youths as well as establish a separate Land Commission for the plain land ethnic minorities.
- The youth leader of Rabidas community from Gaibandha stated that their community is not listed in the ethnic group list gazette published by government. Discrimination against their community is rampant in the area. There is an issue relating to the old age & widow allowance collection. This community also faces problem relating to land grabbing and losing their ancestral lands. It has been recommended that 'Rabidas' community should be included in the gazette as ethnic group. The issue relating to the allowances for the elderly people and widow should be addressed. It has also been recommended to establish a separate Land Commission for the plain land ethnic groups.
- The Hijra/third gender people are deprived from education due to lack of awareness in the family and community. There is no protection for the sex-workers and their children. It has been recommended that there should be awareness programme and guarantee of education for sex workers' children. A monitoring mechanism is needed in the educational institutions for the protection of the sexual minorities.
- It is seen as an emerging challenge as the elderly people have special needs and require different care-giving services. In Bangladesh there is no social welfare system for the elderly people. However, few private initiatives have been taken. It has been recommended to adopt some policies and effectively implement those for the protection of the elderly people.

Highlights of the comments from the guests:

- ✓ The initiative of the NHRCB to listen to the youth leaders from different ethnic groups has been welcomed and it will bring some existing challenges in light and those should be picked up and addressed by the Commission.
- ✓ The inquiry from the NHRCB to the government should be scrutinized and addressed.
- ✓ Since human rights is for all, it should be addressed by NHRCB without any discrimination and the Commission should look carefully where the human rights violations taking place and should address those violations.

Output 2: Enhanced capacity of civil society and community-based organizations to engage in human rights advocacy and awareness raising.

During this period, the CSOs and CBOs have demonstrated enthusiasm and higher capacity to engage in human rights advocacy and awareness raising, evidenced through following activities:

4.2.1. Training for the CSOs coalition on Rights of the Ethnic and Excluded people

NDP and MDO organized a two-days long training for the CSOs coalition on the rights of the ethnic and excluded people aiming to increase knowledge and strengthen capacity of their staff members for successful implementation rights-based actions at Sirajganj district on 9-10 January 2019 under the Challenge Fund support. Total 24 participants (Male:22 and Female:6) of 13 CSOs participated in the training.

Following the training 13 CSOs in Sirajganj district have gained adequate knowledge and capacity to implement rights-based actions in advancing rights of the ethnic and excluded people.

The contents of this training highlighted on the following topics:

- Understanding of Human Rights: Concept, Principles and Standards (National, Regional and International)
- Rights of the Ethnic and Excluded People
- Rights of the persons with Disabilities
- Human Rights Actors and their Roles
- How to Monitor and Report Human Rights situation

4.2.2. Coordination and exchange learning events for the CSOs, Community Radios and Bangladesh Betar

HRP organized a coordination and exchange learning event for the CSOs, Community Radios and Bangladesh Betar under the challenge fund, LVGs and LOA support in February in Dhaka in order to share the progress and learning of CSOs on thematic rights issues. Total 45 participants (Male: 3 and Female:12) from 21 CSOs and three Community Radio Stations (i.e. Radio NAF, Radio Sarabela and Radio Nalta) and Bangladesh Betar attended the event.

Through the meeting, the participants jointly identified common challenges, ground realities and future capacity development issues to continue their rights-based initiatives in respective areas.

Key Highlights :

- ✓ Common Challenges, ground learning and capacity development issues ;
- ✓ M&E mechanisms: M&E status reporting;
- ✓ Treaty Body Reporting by CSOs;
- ✓ Communication and visibility of the CSOs;
- ✓ Going Digital: Story telling through short video;
- ✓ Gender Criteria in CSOs Reporting;
- ✓ CSOs Reporting (Financial and Progress Reporting)



Further, in July and October HRP organized two more coordination and exchange learning meetings for the CSOs and Bangladesh Betar) under the challenge fund, LVGs and LOA support in order to share the progress and learning of CSOs on thematic rights issues. Total 37 participants (male: 24, female: 11 and third gender: 2) from 18 CSOs and Bangladesh Betar attended in the former event while total 62 (male: 24, female: 11 and third gender 2) participants attended in the latter coordination event.

Through the coordination meeting, the CSOs identified common results, challenges, ways forwards to continue their rights-based actions in promotion and protection of rights of the thematic groups (i.e. minorities, women, Child, PWDs and Gender-diverse communities).

The event highlights the following issues:

- ✓ Exercise on CSOs Success/achievements on thematic rights issues
- ✓ How to analyse Core Human Rights Problem/issues
- ✓ Consideration of gender criteria in CSOs reporting
- ✓ How to strengthen coordination among local-national stakeholders?
- ✓ M&E status Reporting
- ✓ Contents and methods of fact-finding on HRV issues? Reporting on Fact-finding.
- ✓ Setting of strategy for sustainability of rights-based actions at grassroots level.

The CSOs and their coalition members identified the following success:

- A total 47 institute and 65 service providers have been well informed about human rights, child rights and child labor
- Total 145 ethnic & excluded minority and other population have become aware on their human rights
- 33 CLES functioning at union level for reducing child rights
- A total 324 CLESC members have become aware for reducing child labor
- A total 25 CSO including CPWC trained and capacitated for reducing child labor
- 111 Working children enrolled in school as a result of SMC initiative
- 1700 people have become aware on child rights and child safety issue
- 2677 students with increased awareness on child rights, child labor and child safety and protection
- 225 students have been involved as students HRDs
- 175 employers with increased awareness human rights and child rights
- 2 students with disability getting disability studentship from USW office
- 6 people with disability have received disability card
- Additional police super of Cox-Bazar ordered to setup disability desk at the police station
- Bus-mini bus owners' association are making disability pass card for person with disability in local transports;
- Hosting open day involvement of local level influential people increase visibility of CBO in Mymensingh & Sirajgonj (200 people)
- Paralegal training helps community to learn on human rights violation and how to deal with the case
- Persons with disabilities and communities have better understanding and awareness on human rights and the rights of the persons with the disability
- Capacity has been built to establish self-help group for the persons with disabilities and autistic persons to take united efforts
- School has been set up for disadvantaged and poor where 20 learners are reading and writing
- Total 40 women rights defenders group have been formed and 478 women have been involved
- Reduced haria (alcohol) uses in tea state area
- 3 women included in UP standing committee

4.2.3. Coordination and Capacity Development of CSOs Coalition on Human Rights Monitoring and Situation Reporting

HRP organized coordination and capacity development training of CSOs coalition on human rights monitoring and situation reporting in March in Dhaka in order to enhance coordination and capacity of the CSOs coalition at Gaibandha, Satkhira, Sirajganj and Cox's Bazar districts on human rights monitoring and situation reporting mechanisms.

Total 37 participants (male:30 and female:7) from the CSOs coalitions of five districts i.e. Satkhira, Sirajganj, Gaibandha, Habiganj and Cox's Bazar participated in the training. Kazi Reazul Hoque, Honorable Chairman, NHRCB attended as the Chief Guest in the closing session and appreciated the role of grassroots CSOs in promotion of human rights in grassroots levels.

Through the training, knowledge level of the members of five CSO coalitions have been increased sufficiently and they received information on human rights monitoring and reporting mechanisms to work together at grassroots levels.

Issues of discussion:

- Basic understanding, principles and standards of Human Rights
- Mapping of Human Rights situation at district level: Gaibandha, Sirajganj, Satkhira, Cox's Bazar, and Habiganj)
- Coordination and communication mechanisms for CSOs coalition at district level
- Human Rights situation Reporting at district level.
- Human Rights Monitoring at grassroots level;
- Consideration of gender and diversity in Human Rights Monitoring
- Develop an action plan and sustainability mechanisms for CSOs coalition at district level.



4.2.4. A Joint Discussion Meeting with HRDs, Peace leaders, CSOs and Youth Leaders at Gaibandha

HRP organized a joint discussion meeting with HRDs, peace leaders, CSOs and youth leaders at ABALAMBAN office, Gaibandha in March in order to assess the progress of rights-based initiatives, ground challenges and define the next steps. Total 24 participants (male:18 and female: 6) from HRDs, CSOs, peace forum and youth leaders group attended the discussion.

Through the meeting, the field coordination among HRDs, peace forum, CSOs and youth leaders was reinforced to work jointly for addressing human rights concerns at grassroots level.

4.2.5. Training for HRDs on Human Rights Monitoring and Reporting

HRP organized a training and refresher events for HRDs in April, divided in two sections in order to strengthen capacity of HRDs to perform better in promotion and protection of human rights at grassroots level.

The refreshers' training was organized in first day for HRDs which highlighted on UN Declaration for HRDs and Marrakesh Declaration. Total 17 participants (male:13 and female: 04) from different districts participated in the first section of the training on 29th April. Second section of training held from 29th to 30th April for new HRDs on defending, monitoring and reporting of human rights issues. Total 29 HRDs (male: 18 and female: 06) participated in this section.

At the closing session, Kazi Reazul Hoque, Honorable Chairman, NHRC, Bangladesh attended as the chief guest and expressed his special remarks for the HRDs. Total 42 HRDs (male:31 and female:11) have become well informed about the UN Declaration for HRDs and Marrakesh Declaration; HRDs have identified their risks and challenges in defending and monitoring of human rights at grassroots level. Mentionable that, as of June 2019, HRP trained total 129 HRDs (male: 94 and female:35)

In addition, another training programme for HRDs was organized on defending, monitoring and reporting of human rights issues in September in order to strengthen knowledge and capacity of HRDs

Issues of discussion

Conceptual sessions:

- ✓ The Role of HRDs in line with UN Declaration and Marrakesh Declaration;
- ✓ Understanding of Human Rights, principles and standards
- ✓ Distinguish Crime from Human Rights Violation.
- ✓ Human Rights Monitoring and Reporting
- ✓ How to submit a Complaints to NHRC and the Role of NHRC to deal with Complaints;
- ✓ Gender sensitivity in handling human rights violation perpetrated on women

Technical session:

Working sessions for developing a national guideline for HRDs:

- Promotion and advocacy;
- Protection of HRDs (including WHRDs)
- Develop an Action Plan for HRDs

to perform better in promotion and protection of human rights at grassroots level. Total 39 HRDs (male:23 and female:16) participated in two-days long training.

Through the training, knowledge and understanding of 39 HRDs on human rights have been increased and they have become more sensible and proactive to respond for the incidents of human rights violations as well as enable to raise human rights concerns and submit the report to respective institutions/authorities.

Topic of discussion:

- ✓ Understanding of Human Rights: Basic concept, principles, standards
- ✓ Basic differences between Crime and Human Rights Violation. How to submit a Complaints on HRV cases to NHRC or relevant authorities;
- ✓ Working session: Human Rights problems/concerns at grassroots level
- ✓ How to monitor and report on Human Rights situation/incidences?
- ✓ Gender sensitivity in handling HRV perpetrated on women;
- ✓ Role of HRDs in promotion of peace and resolution of conflicts at grassroots level
- ✓ Develop an action plan for HRDs

4.2.6. Consultation Workshop on National Guideline for HRDs

HRP organized a consultation workshop on National Guideline for HRDs at NHRC conference room, Dhaka in June. Total 53 participants took part in this consultation event and expressed their opinions and feedback on the draft guideline for the HRDs.

Based on the feedback and suggestion of national stakeholders including HRDs, the national guideline for HRDs was finalized and submitted to NHRCB for further actions including adoption and implementation.

4.2.7. Quarterly Meetings of CSOs Coalitions at Cox's Bazar, Gaibandha, Habiganj, Satkhira, Sirajganj and Mymensingh Districts

HRP has successfully organized 02 quarterly meetings of CSOs coalitions at Cox's Bazar, Gaibandha, Habiganj, Satkhira, Sirajganj and Mymensingh districts in order to reinforce coordination of rights based CSOs at district level and extract information on human rights issues for producing a human rights situation report.



Total 146 rights based CSOs/CBOs (i.e. Cox’s Bazar: 31, Sirajganj:17, Habiganj:22, Gaibandha:25; Satkhira:26 and Mymensingh:25) have been connected with the coalition and working together for monitoring and reporting on human rights situation in respective districts. 146 coalition members (CSOs/CBOs) demonstrated their interest and commitment to act together for monitoring and reporting on human rights situation in context of their district. The CSOs coalition at Sirajganj district successfully produced a human rights situation report.

4.2.8. LVGs support to 14 CSOs/CSOs coalitions

HRP provided small grants support to 14 CSOs/CSOs coalitions under LVGs (3 CSOs) and Challenge Fund support mechanism (11 CSOs) in 2019. The selected CSOs/CSOs coalition were as follows:

Name	Support mechanism	Grants (in USD)
1. SoMaste	LVG	19,521
2. VOICE	LVG	18,835
3. BMSF	LVG	17,733
4. Voice of South Bangladesh	CF (LOT-1)	9,940
5. ACLAB	CF (LOT-2)	18,557
6. ABALAMBAN	CF (LOT-2)	18,918
7. ASUS	CF (LOT-2)	18,651
8. IDEA	CF (LOT-2)	19,408
9. Mukti Nari O Shishu Unnayan Sangstha	CF (LOT-2)	19351
10. IPDS	CF (LOT-2)	19,143
11. BNADHU	CF (LOT-2)	19,888
12. ASK	CF (LOT-2)	19,697
13. DALIT	CF (LOT-2)	18,929
14. Shetu Bangladesh	CF (LOT-2)	18,314
Total =		256,887

Of the total grants support, 22% is allocated for the thematic area of freedom of expression and media rights advocacy issues under the LVGs and remaining 78% is allocated for five thematic rights issues i.e. 1. Civil and Political rights, 2. Rights of the minorities; 3. Women rights, and 4. child rights) under the Challenge Fund. Total 14 CSOs along with their 46 CBOs/CSOs (as coalition members) are now connected with small grants support initiatives for better promotion and protection of the rights of marginalized groups in 10 HRP priority districts.

4.2.9. Orientation of newly selected CSOs and their coalition members



HRP organized an orientation meeting for newly selected CSOs and their coalition members in November in Dhaka to orient the CSOs about the requirement of procedures (technical, administrative and financial) in implementation of UNDP funded project.

Total 51 participants (male:36, female: 8 and third gender: 7) attended in this orientation meeting.

Topics of discussion

- Mapping of CSOs Results, Implementation areas and their Target population (direct and indirect)
- M&E Planning, setting of indicators and Results reporting
- Gender dimensions and ethnicity in data/information collection and reporting;
- Budget monitoring, Financial Reporting and UN Operational Proceedings;
- Progress Reporting mechanism (Financial and Narrative)
- Strengthening coordination with other stakeholders and actors.

The newly selected 14 CSOs and their coalition members expressed their commitments and desires to work together on specific thematic rights issues. 03 CSOs i.e. Voice; BMSF and SoMASTE have taken specific responsibility to improve freedom of expression and media rights in 10 HRP priority districts .

4.2.10. Day-long Orientation Event for Coalition Members of BSAF



HRP organized a day-long orientation meeting for coalition members of the Bangladesh Shishu Adhikar Forum (BSAF) in December in Dhaka in order to improve knowledge and understanding of CSOs/CBOs and reinforce their coordination in monitoring and reporting of human rights situation in context of respective districts. Total 15 Participants (male: 9 and female: 6) from 9 CSOs attended the event.

HRP organized a day-long orientation meeting for coalition members of the Bangladesh Shishu Adhikar Forum (BSAF) in December in Dhaka in order to improve knowledge and understanding

Issues of discussion:

- ✓ Human Rights: Basic concept, principles and standards. Significance of HRs approach in fact-finding;
- ✓ Fact-finding mission - incidents of human rights violations;
- ✓ Monitoring and reporting of human rights situation.

Through the meeting, capacities of BSAF coalition members in 8 districts have been strengthened to conduct fact-finding, monitoring and reporting of the incidents of human rights violation at grassroots level.

Output 3: Enhanced capacity of law enforcement agencies, in particular police, on human rights issues

During this period, HRP and NHRCB worked together to enhance capacity of law enforcement agencies. Some of the activities are as follows:

4.3.1. Consultation between police, local administration, CSOs, HRDs and media



With support of HRP, NHRCB organized a consultation between police, local administration, CSOs, HRDs and media to enhance the coordination among key actors to promote and protect human rights of local communities.

With this objective NHRC initiated the dialogue to define the role of key stakeholders and to take forward the human rights issues and concerns. Total 100 participants (male: 87 and female: 13) attended the event.

Key highlights of the event:

1. Everyone has responsibility to promote human rights. Police is the main duty bearer to protect human rights of every person though they need cooperation and support from everyone.
2. Chairperson of NHRC mentioned that police's role on counter terrorism is remarkable. They have been very successful to tackle the threat of terrorisms and violent extremists.
3. NHRC has given a guideline on Anti-Drug Operation to the Ministry of Home Affairs regarding how to uphold human rights standard during the anti-drugs operation which is available in NHRC website.
4. Bangladesh police has great role and contribution to the UN peace keeping mission and one of the top contributors across the globe. Bangladesh police's role is now globally recognized and praised in managing conflict, promoting peace and upholding human rights. So, they must play equally positive role in Bangladesh as well. There are some allegations of human rights violations against police. Police must play more pro-active role so that their image always remain good at national and international level.
5. UN established and works on 3 pillars: Peace, Development and Human Rights. Police has significant role on human rights. In global platform Bangladesh has been recognized as role model in many ways including achieving MDGs and promoting women's rights. Bangladesh also wants to be champion in achieving SDGs by 2030 and is on right track to achieve SDGs.
6. Police is the face of Justice. Whenever there is any problem at any level, people first come to them with enormous hope. So, they must act accordingly particularly when it is related to vulnerable peoples including women & children. Police should be more sensitized to deal with women and girls.
7. Justice system runs in Bangladesh by three- tier system-: 1. Salish, 2. Village Court, 3. Formal court system. Police is one of the key players in the formal court system from very beginning of a case.
8. In response to the CEDAW reservations and NHRC's advocacy role to withdraw the reservations, Chairperson of NHRC said that they have raised their concern and recommended to withdraw the reservation during the UN CEDAW committee meeting in 2015. NHRC played same role during UPR review in 2017 also. NHRC has been also lobbying with government with proper justification to withdraw the CEDAW reservation without any delay.
9. There is internal disciplinary system in every office. If someone breaks the discipline, punishment should be given for destroying institution's image.
10. One senior police officer gave committed to uphold human rights for all.
11. Police department is the only agency which provides support 24/7 unlike other service providing institutes.
12. All service providing organizations should work in a coordinated way.
13. Corruptions and drugs must be eradicated from every level to uphold the human rights.
14. UDHR 1948 is the core document of human rights which has been translated in more than 100 languages across the globe. The spirit of UDHR should be upheld in every country.

4.3.2. Mapping existing coordination mechanism between police and other actors

In order to promote and protect human rights some other stakeholders have also been executing different human rights actions engaging law enforcing agencies including police. Coordination between police and other human rights stakeholders at national and local level needs to be strengthened to avoid overlapping and repetition. Ensuring smooth coordination would strengthen capacity of all stakeholders and ensure utmost utilization of resources.



With this backdrop HRP initiated a meeting to map existing coordination mechanism between police and other actors i.e CSOs, CBOs, development partner, academia, media etc. who are already involved in human rights related interventions law enforcing agencies, particularly police. One national consultant has developed a draft mapping report with a directory on the above-mentioned subject.

Objectives of the meeting:

- Mapping of existing state and non-state actors in Bangladesh.
- Developing a directory relating to human rights violation and role of law enforcing agency

Key recommendations:

- Child protection helpline (1098) has been established under Ministry of Social Welfare to call and get service which can be added in the report.
- Police stations should establish children affairs desks
- It is inevitable to give special focus on child rights mechanism.
- Function and weakness of the child rights mechanism needs to be described in the report.
- Lack of coordination and duplication exist among non-state actors in national and local level. In-terms of sustainability GoB should take responsibility and make clarify about new laws and their implementation;
- The issues and coordination mechanism for PWD can be highlighted in the report;
- The functions of JOY mobile apps, regional trauma center and district wise service list can be added in the mapping report.
- Acid control committee can be added which is missing in the report.
- Functions of media can be added as non-actors as they are playing vital role in human rights violation issues in some cases.
- Lesson learned of different actors needs to be included.
- Human rights interventions are mostly project based, so GoB should provide fund support to continue the projects in terms of sustainability while this issue can be added as challenge for the organizations in the report.
- Many state and non-state actors are working in Bangladesh in the national and local level on human right issues. So, it is essential to assess their quality of service, strength, weakness and limitations and to mention it in the report individually.
- GoB should allocate ADB budget to the organizations (CSOs/NGOs) to continue project-based interventions.
- Monitoring and challenges need to be identified.
- Critical analysis on role of state and non-state actors needs to be included in the report
- Capacity building measures for local level police, more involvement of police and establishment of help desk in local level is essential.
- Some NGOs like Bangladesh Human Rights Commission needs to be omitted from this study because of NHRC has received lots of allegation against them.

to redress the violations.

- Reviewing and analyzing existing referral and coordination mechanisms to provide best services to victim of human rights violation.

Based on the recommendations received in the workshop held on 21 March 2019, the consultant has incorporated, updated and submitted the final draft report on the mapping of existing coordination mechanisms between police and other human rights stakeholders at national and local level.

4.3.3. Innovation Training for Police in Collaboration with Police Staff College



As a follow up of the consultation on human rights training for law enforcing agency held in July 2018 in Dhaka, a 5 days innovation training was organized by HRP in April in collaboration with Police Staff College, Mirpur, Dhaka. The training was organized to explore the possibility of using innovation in training and to use innovative techniques to enhance training efficiency and methodologies which may be used in regular and specialized trainings conducted by police training institutions. The empathy training was facilitated by A2I project of UNDP. Total 20 police officers (Male-17, Female- 3) from 10 districts participated in

this 5-day training. The participants conducted a half day visit to other government service offices and another half day visit to own office to observe the real picture- as general citizen (hiding their entity). During the training, 4 innovation ideas were generated, 3 ideas were related to improvement of their training curriculum/management and 01 idea was for better service of their participants) which will be piloted in their Training Institutes.

Authority will provide support for piloting and implementing these innovation ideas. They can replicate these innovations to all training institutes and best innovations and innovators can be awarded.

4.3.4. LoA with Police Staff College

HRP has initiated to sign a LoA with Police Staff College for conducting 3 researches titled 1. "Role of Police Prosecutors from lower Courts and its Impacts on Criminal Justice System (CJS) in Bangladesh: An assessment", 2. "Combating Road Accident: Role of Traffic Police and Stakeholders," 3. "Quality of Policing in Bangladesh: Life, sacrifice and Commitment of Women Police" and for organizing seminars and workshops on human rights issues engaging high level police personnel.

4.3.5. Seminar on Rule of Law and Role of Police

On the occasion of a high-level visit of Justice Tun Zaki bin Mohamed Azmi, Former Chief Justice of Malaysia and Current Chief Justice of Dubai International Financial Centre Court, UNDP organized

workshops, dialogues and seminars with Judges from Supreme Court, Senior Legal Practitioner, Prosecutors and other justice actors on voluminous case management; basic principle on commercial laws and international practices and assessing and understanding the court and case administration system.

In this backdrop HRP organized a seminar for senior police officials titled 'Rule of Law and Role of Police' on 3rd November 2019 at Police Staff College Bangladesh, Dhaka.



Key recommendations:

- To establish rule of law, maintaining case management is very important.
- Approach of empathy needs to be introduced in BD judicial system
- To uphold rule of law police, lawyers, prosecutors, doctors need to play more coordinated role.
- Before granting bail, name and address should be verified to ensure proper investigation.
- Bangladesh police should learn some good practices from Malaysia and Dubai police.
- Police should act lawfully within its legal boundary spelled out in different legal framework starting from constitutions

Objectives of the Seminar were:

- To discuss on 'Rule of Law and Role of Police' resourced by Justice Tun Zaki bin Mohamed Azmi, Former Chief Justice of Malaysia and Current Chief Justice of Dubai International Financial Centre Court.
- Stocktaking to contribute for next level of Human Rights and Justice Programming in Bangladesh.
- Understand how similar jurisdictions to Bangladesh are working (Malaysian perspective)

Total 43 mid and senior level of police officers (male:35, female:8) actively participated in the seminar.

4.3.6. Human Rights Training for Police



HRP provided trainings on human rights to police personnel (total :228, male: 206, female: 22) in 05 different batches particularly to those who are working at field level to strengthen their conceptual understanding and enhance sensitization on basic human rights compliances in September, November and December in Dhaka.

It is mentionable that, as suggested by police authority, HRP developed a training manual on human rights for the field level police officers. Based on that manual, the trainings were provided covering the areas of UN human rights standards, human rights and code of conduct of LEAs, UN guiding principles, role of police to promote and protect human rights including women, child and other excluded minorities rights in Bangladesh.

Detective Training School under CID of Bangladesh Police has been organizing five days long human rights course on regular basis.

HRP organized the training on core human rights for the police officials including for Inspector, Sub-Inspector, Sargent etc.

in order to strengthen conceptual understanding and knowledge of field level police officials on human rights, to enhance sensitization and awareness of police, to enhance collaboration and continue partnership between police and UNDP.



Content of the training are as follows:

1. Human Rights Frameworks:

- International- UN Charter, UDHR and UN HR Systems.
- National- Constitution, Laws, Policies, Institutions.

2. Application of human rights by LEAs:

- UN code of conduct for Law Enforcement Officials 1979.
- Constitution and criminal justice system of Bangladesh.
- Violation of human rights by police during performing their professional duties.

3. Police's role to protect women, children and other excluded minorities' rights:

- Sensitivity during handling gender-based violence, children and other excluded minorities related cases in light with relevant legal framework (i.e. WCRPA 2000, Domestic Violence Act 2010, Children Act 2013)

4. Role of NHRC in promoting and protecting human rights and links with police's role in public relation and social work.

After evaluation of the training following results found related to knowledge level changes of the participants:

- Basic standards of Human Rights-93%
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)-51%
- Gender based violence -98%
- Cases related to human rights violation can be sent to National Human Rights Commission-95%

Overall Comments of the participants:

- Great initiative
- Very good training for the police, it will help to apply in our daily activities
- Training duration need to increase at least 3 days
- I have learned about rights of helpless person in the world as well as my rights
- Training should be continued, it would be easy to share and implement human rights issue with other colleges
- We must achieve human rights for everyone specially for woman and children
- When they get chance to serve vulnerable people, they feel that police profession is a great job.

4.3.7. Technical Support to C2RP in Human Rights Training

C2RP project of UNDP based in Cox's Bazar organized human rights training for police, who are working in Cox's Bazar district. HRP provided technical support to C2RP particularly for developing content, outline and providing facilitators from HRP team and linking with some external resource persons to facilitate few sessions. After arranging the training C2RP invited HRP colleagues to facilitate sessions in the mentioned training. Upon nomination from the HRP management HRP staff

facilitated training session on 22-23 October and 30 October-1 November 2019 at Ukhiya, Cox's Bazar.

Key Recommendations:

- Human rights training should be provided to all field level police rotationally in every district.
- Number of female police participation should be increased more.
- There should be follow up training with same group to know how they are applying their earned knowledge in their work.
- Considering the Rohingya context in Cox's Bazar, a separate session can be added on humanitarian crisis, Rohingya issues and international standards about Stateless peoples.

Output 4: Strengthened capacity of national stakeholders to better protect and promote women's rights;

During this period HRP and NHRC undertook several activities to strengthen capacities of national stakeholders to better protect and promote women's rights. Details of activities are as follows:

4.4.1. Consultation Meeting on Combating Sexual Harassment and Way forward



HRP has been providing technical support to women's rights thematic committee of NHRCB in advocacy to enact a specific legal framework on sexual harassment. As part of that HRP has been providing technical support to analyze and draft a piece of legislation on sexual harassment.

In this continuation a consultation meeting on combating sexual harassment and finding way forward was organized in February at CIRDAP, Auditorium, Dhaka by NHRC with the support of HRP. Total 100 participants (male: 42 and female: 58) took part in the meeting.

The objectives of the consultation were:

1. To present NHRC draft of the sexual harassment law.
2. To discuss and analyze the draft law with the relevant key actors
3. To gather comments and recommendations on the draft SH law.
4. To sensitize the key policy makers on the importance to enact a legal framework to address sexual harassment.

Key Points in Open Discussion and Recommendations:

Kazi Reazul Hoque, Hon'ble Chairman, NHRCB moderated open discussion session. The following recommendations were made by the participants of the consultation:

- Honorable High Court has delivered a landmark judgment in 2009 focusing on workplace and educational institutes. Now it is the proper time to find out way forward and should include every public places and transports. Meanwhile it is important to monitor the implementation of the high court guideline particularly forming SH committee in every educational institute and workplaces as well raising awareness on it.
- ILO convention 108 highlighted to address all kind of workplace violence. Issue of sexual harassment at workplaces needs to be tackled.
- In Bangladesh 36 laws are related to women's rights but there is no specific law to cover sexual harassment in workplaces, educational institute and public places, which needs to be addressed.
- Upcoming sexual harassment law must address all kinds of sexual harassment.
- Representative from gender platform said that they submitted a draft law to Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs.
- Representative of Girls Child Advocacy Forum, a platform of 186 organizations said that they also prepared a separate draft law and submitted to Parliamentary Standing Committee. But now a new parliament has formed, and they have plan to start dialogue with committee soon.
- Every organization should have their own gender policy and sexual harassment policy.
- It is inevitable to form an anti-sexual harassment committee to prevent sexual abuse and hate speech in Mosque. Each institute needs to prepare the guideline on sexual harassment and follow the existing law until the revised one is approved.
- One of the participants added that the issues of PWDs should be added, whenever the comprehensive law revised.
- The presentative from UCEP Bangladesh added that online harassment is happening in different cases and it should be addressed. In this connection, public relation department and home ministry may play vital role to reduce this type of harassment as well as implementation of law is necessary in this regard.
- One participant suggested that it also needs to address human rights of sex workers as they are harassed and threatened in many ways.
- One participant suggested that appropriate and comprehensive law needs to be designed and implemented accordingly. She also described that financial punishment is very much effective than physical punishment.
- Advocate Ms. Laily told that it is necessary to do research on sexual harassment to find out the reason of increasing sexual harassment in Bangladesh.
- It is necessary to conduct analysis on why sexual harassment is increasing in the country. They suggested to list down the potential actors and develop a network/ or platform led by NHRC.
- It essential to address migrant workers' sexual harassment in recipient countries and to take necessary action collaborating with Government of Bangladesh.
- One presentative from Dhaka University added that women are harassed in not only in Bus transportation but also on the over-bridge or under bridge and other places which are less secured.
- Filing lawyer of this particular writ petition Advocate Fawzia Karim stated that 19 respondents were the parties for this Public interest litigation (PIL). She suggested a contempt case can be filed against the respondent of not complying the honorable high court guidelines.
- Every Ministry should take initiatives in local level awareness programme to combat sexual harassment from their own initiatives.
- Comprehensive efforts to be continued to combat sexual harassment by the CSOs/NGOs and other sectors in national and grass root level. The guideline on sexual harassment to be implemented until the comprehensive law is approved. A big forum would be organized to share draft law to collect inputs from them and to create greater awareness.

The context of sexual harassment in Bangladesh has been analyzed and the ground work for legal framework has been prepared. The meeting concluded that, NHRC would form a working group and engage all relevant stakeholders to the process of compiling, preparing and submitting draft law on sexual harassment and a DO letter will be sent to all relevant agencies to form two groups led by NHRC.

Follow up:

As a follow up of the meeting held in February, a consultation on role of stakeholders in combating sexual harassment and also to prepare a draft legislation held at NHRC Conference Room in April. In this meeting a compiled draft based on the 5 drafts prepared and presented by NHRC.

Major recommendations:

- The law to address sexual harassment should be very specific focusing on honorable High Court guideline.
- If the public place is included in this law, then it is necessary to think how complaint committee will cover the public places.
- Monitoring mechanisms need to be added to implement the law.
- It should be clear that whether or not the institution will be responsible to provide compensation and how the compensation will be realized.
- It is necessary to clarify for a public university whether a central committee is sufficient or committee in every department need to be established.
- If public place is included, then what will be the protection mechanisms.
- Appeal court should be specific.
- Role of prosecutors to implement this law should be specific.
- Ministry of women should be guardian of this law and the ministry's capacity should be strengthened.
- Gender sensitization training for police is required.
- Awareness raising on SH and High Court guidelines is required.
- It is necessary to clarify whether this law should be gender neutral or not.
- It is necessary to revisit that do we need a new law or reform of existing law to address SH.
- Sexual reproductive health education among adolescents particularly among boys is needed
- Upcoming SH law should be PWDs friendly.
- NHRC can send a reminder letter to 19 respondents to implement the law.
- Sex workers and third gender communities should get protection of SH law.

Later on, a new draft has been prepared and handed over to NHRC for their comments and inputs as well as to proceed for policy advocacy. The draft is expected to upload in NHRC website for collecting comments from peoples. After that it will be updated and submitted to government.

4.4.2. Celebration of IWD by Partner CSOs

Partner CSOs of HRP including CMMS, ACLAB, IDEA, Aporajita, Udayan, Arjon in Sirajgong, Gaibandha, Cox's Bazar, Sathkhira, Sylhet organized number of events to observe IWD 2019. The CSOs organized rallies and discussion meeting, broadcasting special episode through community radio, campaign on women's rights, essay competition at schools on women's rights and women's education, rally and discussion at Upazila level, girls' friendly cricket match, discussion and human rights education orientation workshop, workshop on involving father in care work so on.

School based campaign



Community activism and cricket matches organized by schools' students in the schools. The cricket match reached around 1000 community people which was organized to make women's participation visible in an innovative way and to make them think about equability between men and women in order to build a society where women and girls can flourish with their full potentials. The Cricket Match was followed by discussion on human rights

issues.

BraveMen Campaign celebrated the international women's day 2019 through various programs by the students. Few notable initiatives include making posters and sticking them on the transportation vehicles, wishing balloons- where the students wrote their wishes and flew them away, lighting candles, promising to respect and believing in gender equality by singing the national anthem, poster painting, rallies etc. so on. 24 of the 50 selected schools celebrated the day through these programs. The programs were not only intended to celebrate the women's day but also spread awareness among the local community about gender equality, taking a stand against gender-based violence, acid terrorism, child marriage so on.

4.4.3. Project based support to CSOs on raising awareness on women's and girls' rights

HRP provided grant support to DYDF and NDP to implement project based activities on raising awareness on women's and girls' rights in Charland of Sirajgonj titled "Strengthening Child Rights through Youth (SCRY) in Underprivileged Community living on Charland of Sirajgonj" and "Community Empowerment in Combating Violence Against Women in Char Area (CEC-VAW) Project" respectively for 6 months.



Major achievement of DYDF & NDP :

Achievements of DYDF:

- School Campaign & Child Rights Movement strengthened,
- Youth Club Formed, Activation on Women Empowerment,
- Advocacy and related works: Policy advocacy with local government so on.

Achievements of NDP:

- Two Youth Forum have been formed for protection VAW and social awareness.
- Two School students Forum have been formed for awareness rising and to create an equal relation between girls and boys through developing their leadership.
- 150 Couple have got message on domestic violence from PRIA couple group meeting
- 500 people have participated "International VAW protection Day" and they can put role play to create , promote and publicity awareness on VAW and Gender equity issues.
- Local Government and stakeholder were engaged to create project goal and objective
- 450 people have participated "International Women's Day "who had no prior knowledge about this day before. Women also participated sports competition with pleasure.
- They can put role play to create, promote and publicity awareness on VAW and gender equity issues.
- Union NNPC formed, and they are taking responsibility for protesting violence against women.
- In Char Area people have got the various types of Law relate message especially violence against women and got legal supports.

4.4.4. Workshop on Gender Based Violence and Women Safety in Public Places by CRI

With support of HRP, CRI organized a 3 days long workshop titled 'Gender Based Violence and Women Safety in Public Places' in order to create community-level awareness in Bangladesh, specifically targeting the youth population in April. Alongside this initiative, the parties involved may collaborate in a project to carry out further actions, which will be finalized based on the outcome of the workshop. The key recommendations of the workshop are as follows:

- (i) Deepening a shared understanding on the scenario behind "Gender Based Violence and Sexual Harassment" among Young Bangla youth network.
- (ii) Inculcating a plan for a long-term engagement with youth at educational institutions to address behavioural changes on gender equitable attitudes & perceptions, particularly among boys and young men;
- (iii) Design an issue based, short-term, and youth led campaign to build public awareness by engaging media, opinion leaders and representatives from national society, particularly on "women safety at public places";
- (iv) Devising a plan for policy advocacy on the issue, "women safety at public places".

Through the workshop, a draft of 18 months campaign plan to address gender-based violence was developed by the youths.

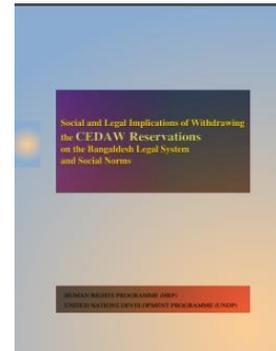
4.4.5. Research on Women's Rights Issues

HRP conducted two researches in collaboration with the Department of Law of University of Dhaka on following titled "Social and legal implications of withdrawing the CEDAW reservations on Bangladesh legal system and social norms" and "Lapses in the legal framework related to informal employment sector with specific focus on women". To share the two research findings with relevant stakeholders and to initiate dialogue and discussion for policy advocacy based on the findings of the study a workshop was organized in June in Dhaka.

Prof. Dr. Shahnaz Huda, Prof. of Law, University of Dhaka and Dr. Rumana Islam, Prof. of Law, University of Dhaka presented research findings on "Social and legal implications of withdrawing the CEDAW reservations on Bangladesh legal system and social norms" while Dr. Md. Nazrul Islam, Prof. of Law, University of Dhaka, presented research findings on "Lapses in the legal framework related to informal employment sector with specific focus on women"

Comments from guests:

Ayesha Khanom, President, Bangladesh Mahila Parishad stated that, UN-CEDAW definition of reservation should be clear in report so that general audience can understand easily and can relate with personal life. It is necessary to take under consideration of Articles-2 and 16 (1C) within time frame and monitoring mechanism should be clear and precise. She also suggested to prepare evidence-based report with rationale. She suggested to review the law of Muslim Countries related to discrimination of women and empowerment and to include relevant information in research report. The Country has mandate to achieve the goal of SDG and CEDAW reservations should be eliminated as soon as possible.



Professor Dr. Sumaiya Khair, Dhaka University, opined that the state has its mechanism to address CEDAW, but implementation has not been executed properly, so it needs to find a way out for the proper compliance mechanism soon.

Zakia K. Hasan, DIPTO Foundation, suggested to avoid duplication of information in the report. CEDAW has its obligation with logic and Article-2 and 16 (1C) can be ratified easily by the GoB. Research Team

can investigate more through discussion with civil society forums and other relevant forums or entities. CEDAW can be implemented applying appropriate mechanism and maintaining accountability.

Fawzia Khondker suggested that research report should be prepared considering social and legal aspects. She also requested to dispatch the report to all level even to root level implementing partners. She also stated that academicians and researchers need to work together to find out the real scenario and obstacles to withdraw CEDAW reservation. Research report should be prepared on behalf of Bangladesh, which reflects the real scenario of the country.

Krishna Chanda, National Program Coordinator, GIZ-BD, suggested to review 3rd and 4th CEDAW report submitted to find out the relevant information of CEDAW reservation withdrawal. She also



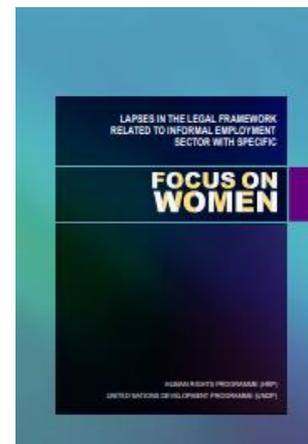
added that CEDAW analytical report of Muslim Countries needs to be reviewed and side by side comparative analysis can be done considering socio economic condition of Bangladesh.

Farhana Sattar, Journalist, The Daily Sun Bangladesh told that it is inevitable to assess the dowry and marital relationship in terms of discrimination against women and needs to ensure women's rights and inheritance of paternal property. It is necessary to monitor the progress of women empowerment status in rural areas.

Tasreen Binta , Solidarity Center told that women domestic helpers are deprived more in Bangladesh, policy is there but it is necessary to have a law and its implementation to reduce the violence.

Sumaiya Islam, Executive Director, BNSK told that migrant workers are victim of violence abroad. The state should take action and enact law to reduce violence. There should be comparative analysis between male and female perception on withdrawing CEDAW reservation. She also suggested to include measures on how to protect domestic workers from trafficking, abusing and other types of harassments in the report.

Md. Anwar Ullah, Additional Director General, Department of Labour suggested to add comparison between workers of formal and informal sectors and how to address or link with legal framework and formal sectors.



Sheikh Rafiqul Islam, Additional Secretary, MOWCA stated that in 1984 Bangladesh ratified CEDAW with four reservations concerning article 2, article 13 (a), article 16 paragraph 1 (c) and (f) . Out of four two reservations were withdrawn though there are still some obstacles to implement and to promote women empowerment related issues. GoB and MOWCA has been trying to establish equal rights of man and women through implementing CEDAW.

Kazi Reazul Haque, Hon'ble Chairperson, NHRC and the chief guest of the meeting highlighted that it's high time to withdraw reservations from two articles of the CEDAW as the present government is bringing about some sweeping changes in empowering women. He added that human rights are being violated in informal sectors more in Bangladesh. Since women form over 90 % of the production workers in garment sectors, so the state should ensure healthy working environment without fear, harassment and abuse for women.

The two research reports have been finalized and published for wider dissemination. Based on the recommendations on two reports policy advocacy plan will be developed. A total 64 Participants (male:17 and female:47) were present from different GoB sectors, NGOs, Private sectors and other sectors in the workshop.

4.4.6. Capacity Development Training on Gender & Diversity for the Partners CSOs and Peace Leaders

Training on gender and diversity for the partners CSOs working at national and local level

HRP organized two days long capacity development training on gender and diversity for the partner CSOs working at national and local level particularly in 15 districts of HRP project areas in July. The objective of the training was increasing the awareness, sensitization and capacity on gender and diversity under the project CSOs are implementing with support of HRP. 2 representatives from each partners CSOs took part in the training from Dhaka and 15 other districts of HRP project areas. In the training total 37 participants (male:21 and female:16) took part.



Mentionable that, the HRP has a strategic focus to work with national stakeholders including CSOs to raise human rights awareness and promote a human rights culture in Bangladesh. As gender is a cross cutting issue, sensitization on gender is very important to ensure gender mainstreaming and reaching the targeted indicator through the CSOs actions on the ground.

Training Contents :

- Concepts of gender (Gender Role, Gender relations, Equity and Equality)
- Patriarchies - Class, Caste, Gender and Patriarchy – interfaced, Power - unfolding and understanding, Different identities we live with.
- Human Rights and Women Rights
- Violence on women: Different kinds of violence. Causes and consequences of violence
- Legal/institutional mechanisms, to combat VAW (National Women Development Policy, CEDAW)
- Empowerment of women
- Diversity, gender and discrimination
- Gender Sensitivity
- NHRC: its role in promoting human rights with special reference to women's rights

The participants demonstrated satisfactory results in post-test compare to pre-test. The result was divided in four categories of range with highest category is 80-100 % marks while lowest range is 10-39% marks.

In pre-test most of the participants (52%) obtained score within the range of 10-39% marks and 42% obtained within 40-59% range of marks while 6% was within 60-79% marks. On the contrary, in post-test, most of the participants (48%) obtained result within the range of 60-79% marks whilst 42% participants obtained 40-59% marks. However, 9% participants obtained 80% and above marks. Through the training, 37 representatives of partner CSOs representatives have gained better understanding on gender, diversity and gender-based violence issues.

Training on Gender and Diversity for Peace Leaders

HRP also organized a two-day long training on gender and diversity in August in Dhaka for peace leaders who are active in district level with the support of HRP. The objective of the training was to strengthen capacity and increase sensitization of local level peace leaders representing 3 peace platforms in Gaibandha, Satkhira and Cox's Bazar on gender equality and diversity. Total 35 peace leaders (male:27, female:8) participated in the training. Mentionable that, HRP has been working to promote local harmony and maintaining peace for community members including women. Thus, having conceptual understanding and knowledge on women's rights, gender equality and empowerment is crucial for relevant stakeholders particularly for peace leaders because of their important role in the society.

In Pre-test, most of the participants (65%) obtained score within the range of 10-39% marks and 29% obtained within 40-59% range of marks while 6% obtained within 60-79% marks. On the contrary, in Post-test, most of the participants (26%) obtained result within the range of 60-79% marks, whilst 32% participants obtained 40-59% marks and 39% participants also obtained lowest score 15-39% range of marks. However, very few (3%) participants obtained 80% and above marks in post-test.

4.4.7. Training on Gender Sensitivity and Promoting Women's Rights for Youths



HRP organized a training on gender sensitivity, promoting women's rights and youth's role to combat sexual & gender-based violence for youth in September in Dhaka. The training was organized in order to build conceptual understanding and knowledge of youths on gender, women's rights and SGBV, enhance capacity and sensitization of youth and to define their role on combating SGBV and prepare a youth's action plan on SGBV. Total 42 youth participants (male: 42 and female: 25) from various districts of Bangladesh participated in

the training. As a result of the training youths have developed a one-year long campaign plan including combating sexual harassment and ensuring women safety in public places. The campaign plan will be implemented in 2020 in eight divisions engaging youth from Jubo Bangla and Young Bangla youth platforms. Currently, youth are protesting gender-based violence and working to promote girls' rights in their respective areas.

Currently in Bangladesh 45% of total population are youths. Government has adopted the National Youth Policy 2017 with the mission to ensure fulfillment of youth potential and youth empowerment in every sphere of life. HRP has been working with this promising group specially

representatives from multi ethnic and excluded minorities to create human rights culture in Bangladesh.

4.4.8. Production of Short Films on Women's Rights



HRP produced two short film titled “Joya”, focusing on challenges of women including harassment and sexual harassment in workplace and “Anura”, focusing on child marriage issue. During the VAW weeks HRP broadcasted these two short films ‘Anura’ on Child marriage and ‘Joya’ on professional women’s challenges in family life, public places and offices premises including sexual harassment. The two films broadcasted by two TV channel- Ekattor TV and Somoy TV from 25th November- 5th December.

4.4.9. Observing the 16 Days Campaign on Elimination of Violence against Women and Girls. elimination of violence against women

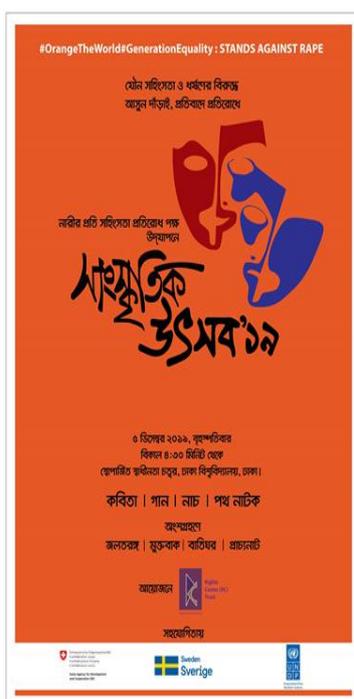


HRPs interventions to observe Human Rights Day started from 25th November- International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and continued till 10 December, Human Rights Day. This year the theme of the 16 days campaign was: “Orange the World: Generation Equality Stands against Rape!” Like previous years, HRP undertook multiple activities to observe the 16 days VAW campaign.

Some of the activities were implemented by its partner organizations and some of the events organized by HRP itself. 16 days campaign on VAW was observed in order to raise awareness on the global campaign on elimination of violence against women particularly on rape and other forms of sexual violence, to analyze the recent increasing trend of sexual harassment, violence and rape in Bangladesh, inform the mass people about NHRC and others key actors’ roles to eliminate gender-based violence with special focus on rape and exhibit the symbolic link between VAW and Human Rights Day as well as raise awareness on women’s and girls’ rights.

Details of the interventions were as follows:

- ✓ **26 November:** lessons learnt workshop was organized on Brave Men Campaign, a training programme implemented in 50 schools in 3 districts- Gaibandha, Sirajgonj and Cox's Bazar at Commerce Faculty Auditorium of Dhaka University. The objectives of the workshop was to share about positive changes among adolescents on perceptions, attitudes and behavior on women's rights, GBV & SRHR issues and to share 3 research report titled a) "Does Participating in Household Chores prevent GBV," b) "Why Do Participants Of BraveMen Campaign Think Differently About Rohingya?", C) "Gender based Violence in school setting: Searching for preventive mechanisms".



- ✓ **2nd December:** An orange corner was organized as a part of massive campaign for good governance. The space provided an opportunity to the participants of the conference to express their ideas and recommendations to curb VAW.
- ✓ **4th December:** a daylong youth led event was organized on role of youth in promoting human rights, mitigate gender-based violence and its links to achieve SDGs in Sirajganj. Total 60 youth (male:25 and female: 35) attended the event.
- ✓ **4th December:** Aporajita, a women's rights focused CSOs organized a consultation on prevention of domestic violence at Surma Tea Garden, Habigonj. Total 68 participants (male:27 and female 41) attended the event.
- ✓ **5th December:** A cultural festival was organized to raise awareness and enhance sensitization on eliminating discrimination, abuse and violence against women and girls. The event took place at TSC, Dhaka University. It consisted of a discussion followed by a cultural event including group dance, group songs, recitation of poems and drama.

Output 5: Strengthened capacity of national stakeholders to better protect and promote the rights of ethnic minorities.

During this period HRP and NHRC implemented several activities to strengthened capacity of national stakeholders to better protect and promote the rights of ethnic minorities. The activities are as follows:

4.5.1. Technical Support to Youth Leaders in Broadcasting of Radio Programmes

HRP provided technical support to connect 19 youth leaders (male:14 and female:5) from ethnic and excluded groups with Bangladesh Betar and facilitated training session to align the scripting and broadcasting of radio programmes on the rights of ethnic and excluded minorities.

Bangladesh Betar is assigned to integrate the voice of youths from ethnic and excluded minorities in the mainstream media and would air 112 radio programmes in its commercial service with support from HRP. Through this initiative, 10 potential youth leaders were well connected with script writing, performance and broadcasting of radio programming at Bangladesh Betar, Dhaka.

On 13 February 2019, HRP successfully connected total 19 ethnic and excluded group's youth leaders with the celebration of World Radio Day on the theme of 2019: Dialogue, Tolerance and Peace. The

Highlights of the training:

- Human rights and rights of the indigenous and excluded groups;
- Radio programming process and designing;
- Programme presentation, interviewing, production of an issue-based documentary;
- Selection of contents (highlighting rights of ethnic and excluded groups);
- Production of radio Magazine programming;
- Demonstration of radio programmes designed and performed by the youth leaders.

Radio programmes Broadcasted:

1. Challenges of Hajong Community in higher education;
2. Challenges of Poverty in Garo community;
3. Crisis in Hajong cultures;
4. Crisis in Garo language and culture;
5. Dowry problems in Dalits communities;
6. Problems of drug addiction in Santal community and way forward;
7. Problems of drug addiction in Mahato community and way forward;
8. Land rights crisis in Khasi community;
9. Discrimination against the Dalits communities.

youth leaders took part in the rally, stall display, public interactions and distribution of leaflets on ethnic rights-based radio programming. Furthermore, Bangladesh Betar developed 9 radio programmes (20 minutes/Programme) by engaging youth leaders and HRDs from the ethnic and excluded minority groups. As of June 2019, Bangladesh Betar broadcasted all these programmes with 52 segments through Dhaka and its 5 regional centers (Rangpur, Rajshahi, Khulna, Barishal and Sylhet). The radio programmes directly reached to 150,000 population (direct listeners) at Dhaka and its five regional areas.

Also, on 24 June 2019, Bangladesh Betar organized a refreshers' training for 24 youth leaders from ethnic and excluded minority groups. As part of this event, the youth

leaders identified the key rights issues in their community and developed 6 scripts for recording and broadcasting. After the refreshers' training, Bangladesh Betar distributed the certificate to 24 youth leaders as recognition of their efforts in developing ethnic rights education programmes.

Three (3) community radio stations also continued their efforts in developing scripts, recording of voices by engaging youth leaders and broadcasting of rights education programmes in their coverage areas. As of June 2019, total 43 youth leaders from ethnic and excluded minorities were connected with the process of three community radio stations Radio NAF (18), Radio Sarabela (13) and Radio Nalta (12).

4.5.2. Fact Finding Mission of RDC & Parliamentary Caucus at Srimongol Upazala, Moulavibazar District & Dhamrai Upazila, Nogaon District

RDC and Parliamentary Caucus on Indigenous Peoples and Minorities conducted a joint fact-finding mission with support of HRP on 20-21 March at indigenous villages Sreemangal Upazala, Moulavibazar District in order to investigate the human rights situation of Kando, Tanti, Bonarji, Shabor, Kurmi, Bhuyan, Ganjo communities.

The fact: Insights

During the fact finding mission, it was found that, the rights of indigenous peoples of Datta Bosti village under Shindu Khan Union of Sreemangal district violated by the Julekha Nagar Tea garden authority. The local inhabitants have been living on their ancestral lands and have been producing different types of crops and fruits on their lands for generations for their livelihoods. However, the Julekha Nagar Tea Garden authority started to destroy the fruits and timber trees and crops on 2 December 2014 through deploying their gangs of thugs. Till 2017, the perpetrators destroyed tens of thousands of fruit and timber trees as well as homes of the inhabitants, worth total 4 crore 25 lacs 44 thousand taka. Also, in 2018, the perpetrators destroyed numerous newly planted fruit trees which worth around 1 crore taka and electric pillars to deprive the inhabitants from electric facilities.

The tea garden authority also destroyed house of Father James Kiron Rozrio, a religious clergy, through deploying elephants including a library on liberation war of Bangladesh built by him. Moreover, the Tea Garden authority sent him to jail through filling false charges in order to harass him. The local inhabitants continuously being harassed through false charges filed by the perpetrators.

Members of Fact Finding Mission:

- 1) Mr. Fazle Hossain Badsha MP, Convener, Parliamentary Caucus on Indigenous Peoples and Minorities
- 2) Prof. Dr. Mesbah Kamal, Technocrat Member, IPM
- 3) Gloria Jharna Sarker MP
- 4) Kajal Debnath, Community Representative, IPM
- 5) Ms. Zannat-e-Ferdousi, General Secretary, RDC and Technocrat Member, IMP
- 6) Mr. Ashadullah Sharker, Senior Researcher, RDC
- 7) Mr. Mong Sing Neo, Representative UNDP
- 8) Mr. Pari Chingtham, Program Officer, RDC

The fact-finding team met with victims of Lakhai Chhora, owner of Julekha Nagar Tea Garden, acting Deputy Commissioner (DC), the Executive Magistrate of Moulavi Bazar and Superintendent of Police (SP) of Moulavi Bazar. The team arranged a media conference at Moulavi Bazar Press Club where the mission team members spoke to the press about the real fact and requested the journalists to write in favour of the indigenous people, the real owner of the land.

Furthermore, on 27 March RDC and the Caucus conducted another emergency fact-finding mission in order to investigate an incident of vandalization and arson on 40 house indigenous and Bengali people by land grabbers led by a local political leader at government Khas Land of Kagojkuta village of Alompur union under Dhamrai upazila of Nogaon District. As an emergency response, a team of six members visited the incidence spot to investigate the issue to notice the District Administration so that immediate measures can be taken.

4.5.3. Technical support to organise a peace dialogue with peace leaders and local administration in Cox's Bazar

In February HRP provided technical support to organise a peace dialogue with peace leaders and local administration in Cox's Bazar in order to facilitate dialogue on promoting peace and special harmony with multi-ethnic/religious leaders and local administration at Cox's Bazar. Mr. Kazi Reazul Hoque, honorable Chairman, NHRC and Md. Kamal Hossain, DC, Cox's Bazar attended the event as Chief Guest and Chair accordingly. Total 45 participants from multi-ethnic/religious groups, HRDs and local administration attended the event.

Suggestions:

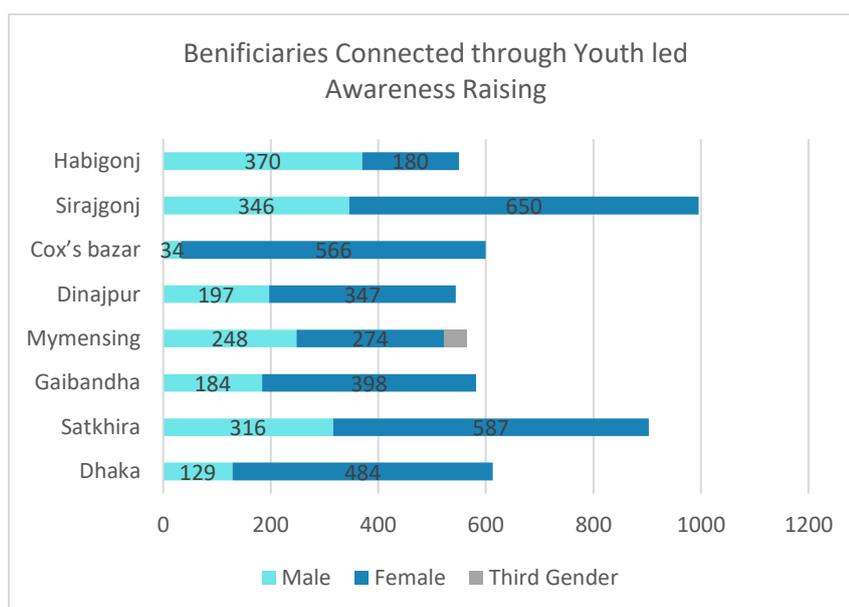
- Local administration including police needs special attention to handle the fake messages/Facebook-based messaging that may create disturbance and break existing social harmony;
- More discussions on peace and social harmony at upazila, unions and village levels are required;
- Develop and activate the Peace Forum/platform through including Hindu, Christian, Buddha and Muslim religious leaders at district, upazila and union level;
- Special dialogue on social peace and harmony at national level is needed.

4.5.4. Celebration of "Baha Porob" of Santal Community

Local Santal community organized a cultural sensitization programme named "Baha Porob," at Gobindaganj, Gaibandha in March in collaboration with ABALAMBAN under the Challenge Fund support of UNDP. More than 1000 people of the Santal community along with local Bengali people participated in the festival. Besides villagers, various Santali cultural groups and artists performed different cultural events. The program was presided over by Philemon Basak, president of the celebration committee while Monowar Hossain Chowdhury MP, Gaibandha-4 was present as the chief guest and municipal Mayor Ataur Rahman was present there as the special guest.

4.5.5. Human Rights awareness initiatives of the CSOs Engaging Youths

HRP undertook initiatives to connect youth leaders with actions of CSOs to uphold human rights awareness of the ethnic and excluded communities in HRP priority districts¹. Initially, HRP organized a day long orientation for the 11 youth leaders (male:6, female:5) and 8 CSOs² on facilitation of human rights sessions and then developed their action plans for 10 days long awareness campaign in 8 districts from 10 to 20 April



2019. Through this awareness raising campaign, the youth leaders conducted total 160 sessions and successfully reached to following beneficiaries:

District	No. of Participants			
	Male	Female	Third Gender	Total
Dhaka	129	484	0	613
Satkhira	316	587	0	903
Gaibandha	184	398	0	582
Mymensing	248	274	42	564
Dinajpur	197	347	0	544
Cox's bazar	34	566	0	600
Sirajgonj	346	650	0	996
Habigonj	370	180	0	550
Total =	1824	3486	42	5352

As a part of this awareness sessions, the youth leaders evaluated (pre and post session) the knowledge and perception of participants on human rights issue and found a significant improvement. Through the awareness campaign, members of ethnic and excluded groups have become more aware and informed about their rights and entitlements through 10 days long awareness campaign at eight districts.

4.5.6. Connecting Youth Leaders with Community & School Based Human Rights Education and Awareness Initiatives

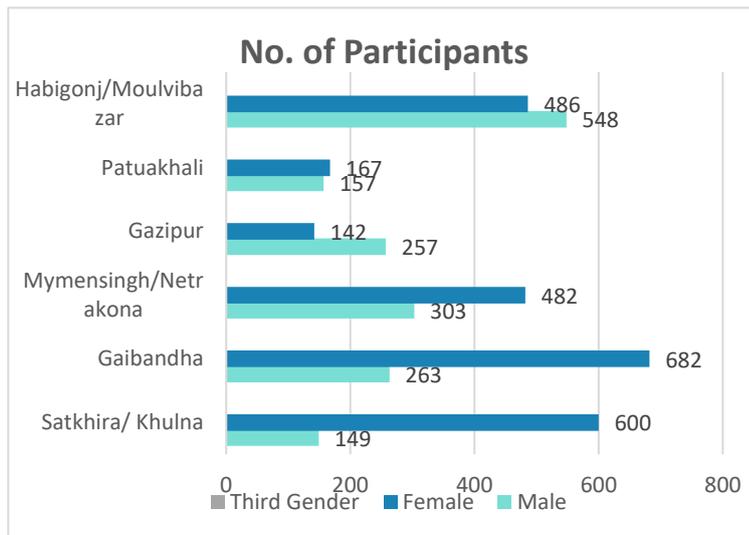
¹ HRP priority districts: Dinajpur, Gaibandha, Sirajgonj, Cox's Bazar, Dhaka, Mymensingh, Habiganj and Satkhira districts

² CSOs = PRIP Trust, SHAREE, ACLAB, ABALAMBAN, NDP, BANDHU, Aporajita, SHYAHA.



HRP undertook another initiative to connect youth leaders with human rights awareness raising of the CSOs on the rights of ethnic and excluded communities in HRP priority districts³. Primarily, HRP organized a day long orientation for 10 youth leaders (male:2, female:8) on contents and facilitation on human rights sessions in 8 selected districts. The 8-day long human rights awareness

campaign was held on 20-28 November. Through this awareness raising campaign, the youth leaders conducted total 160 sessions and successfully reached to following beneficiaries:



As part of this awareness sessions, the youth leaders evaluated (pre and post session) the knowledge and perception of people on Human Rights issue that shows a significant

improvement in human rights perception. Also, on 14-25 September 2019, HRP provided support to PRIP Trust, a partner CSO at 4 upazilas of Dinajpur district and raised human rights awareness among 3667 people.

4.5.7. Training for Youth Leaders on Human Rights, leadership and youth empowerment

HRP organized 02 batches of training for youth leaders on human rights, leadership and youth empowerment issues in June in Dhaka in order to enhance knowledge and leadership capacity of the youth leaders. Total 57 youth leaders (male:27 and female: 26 and third gender:4) participated in this training.

Through the training, youth leaders have gained adequate knowledge and their leadership capacity has been strengthened to lead their own community in addressing their human rights problems.

Also, in April HRP organized a day long orientation on planning and facilitation of awareness sessions at community level held at NHRC conference room, Dhaka. Total 11 youth leaders and 10 representatives of CSOs (Male:14 and Female :5 and third gender:2) participated in this session. Youth leaders and CSOs jointly developed area specific action plan for awareness raising.

³ HRP priority districts: Dinajpur, Gaibandha, Sirajganj, Cox's Bazar, Dhaka, Mymensingh, Habiganj and Satkhira districts

Furthermore, in June HRP organized another day long orientation for the youth leaders at NHRC conference room, Dhaka. Total 12 youth leaders (male:8 and female:4) participated in this orientation session. The session facilitated by Mr. Iftaker Hasan, Project Manager, Mighty Egg. Through the training, 12 youth leaders gained sufficient knowledge and information on handling of website information along with updating information, stories and opportunities in the website named 'jubobangla'.

4.5.8. Training for youth leaders titled 'Youth for Human Rights and Social Change'

In December HRP organized a training programme for youth leaders titled "Youth for Human Rights and Social Change" in Dhaka, aiming to enhance knowledge and leadership capacity of the youth leaders from ethnic and excluded minorities. Total 57 youth leaders (male:29, female: 25 and LGBT:3) from diverse groups participated in this training.



Following the training, 57 Youth leaders nominated by the 18 CSOs in 10 HRP priority districts expressed their satisfaction and gave commitments to sensitize grass roots people in claiming their rights.

4.5.9. Orientation for youth leaders on "Promotion of Peace and Human Rights"

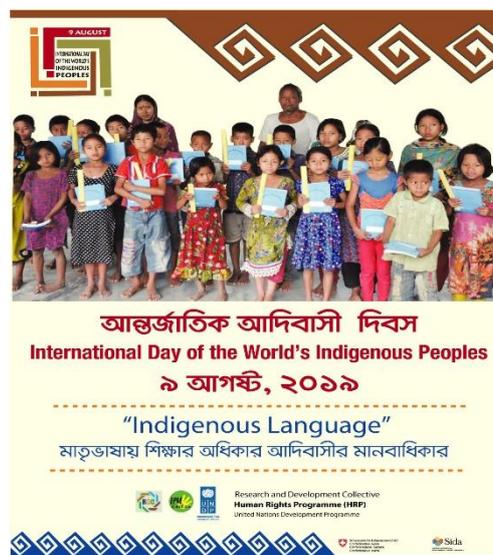
In August HRP organized a day long orientation for youth leaders titled "Promotion of Peace and Human Rights" in Dhaka. Total 114 (male:68 and female: 46) youth leaders from 15 ethnic and excluded minority groups participated in this orientation. The orientation highlighted on the following:

- ✓ Human Rights: concept, principles and standards
- ✓ Rights of the indigenous and excluded people
- ✓ Role of Youth leaders for social change
- ✓ Peace and its significance in conflicting society
- ✓ Managing social tension and conflicts.

4.5.10. Celebration of International Day of the World's Indigenous Day 2019

In August HRP celebrated the International Day of the World's Indigenous Day 2019 in collaboration with the Parliamentary Caucus on IPs and Minority and RDC. This year's theme: 'Indigenous Languages' was the focus of celebration in order to sensitize national authorities and stakeholders to be more responsive in promoting rights of the indigenous people.

Total 197 participants (male:161 and female: 36) including MPs and rights activists took part in the event. The day celebration was inaugurated by Mr. R.A.M Obaidul Muktadir Chowdhury, MP, Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Civil Aviation and Tourism Ministry) and Chaired by Mr. Fazle Hossain Badshah, MP, Convener, Parliamentary Caucus on Indigenous People and Minorities.



The main session started with presentation of two key note papers on indigenous culture and land rights, presented by Mr. Sanjeeb Drong, General Secretary, Bangladesh Adivashi Forum and Ms. Zannat-E-Ferdousi, General Secretary, RDC accordingly. Ms. Aroma Dutta, MP, Mr. Rana Das Gupta, President, Hindu Buddha Christian Oikyo Parishad, Mr. Rana Das Gupta, President, Hindu Buddha Christian Oikyo Parishad, Mr. Shahriar Kabir, Writer and Journalist, Chairperson, Forum for Secular Bangladesh and Trail of War Criminals of 1971, Mr. Rabindranath Soren, General Secretary, Jatio Adivashi Parishad and Ms. Namita Chakma, Vice President, National Coalition for Indigenous Peoples were present as discussants.

In the meeting, the discussants expressed their opinion and way forward for better protection of the rights of indigenous people in Bangladesh. The honorable parliament members and human rights activists emphasized on the necessity for approval of BEMRA and separate land commission for plain land for better protection of land and cultural rights of the indigenous people in plain land.

4.5.12. National Youth Convention



In December, HRP organized a National Youth Congress in collaboration with Dhruvotara Youth Development Foundation (DYDF) in Dhaka. The Former Governor of Bangladesh Bank Dr. Atiur Rahman inaugurated the youth congress. Honorable Parliament Member Mr. Ashim Kumar Ukil MP, Convener of Citizen's Platform for SDG's Dr. Debapriya, UNDP Representative Ms. Sharmeela Rasool were present as special guests in opening session.

The Youth Congress 2019 gave a call to youth leaders across the country intending to reinforce collaboration, networking and support. Around 700 youths joined from across the country. Four

thematic sessions were conducted by engaging youth leaders and expert groups, which are as follows:

1. SDG & Climate,
2. National Youth Policy Implementation,
3. Rights & Gender Advocacy, and
4. Industrial Revolution & Entrepreneurship.

Total 520 youth leaders (male:324, female: 145 and LGBT: 51) from 42 districts of Bangladesh participated in this National Youth Congress.

In the closing session, Honorable Planning minister Mr. MA Mannan MP joined as the chair, while former adviser of Caretaker Government Rasheda K Chowdhury, PKSF Chairman Qazi Kholikuzzaman, Director General of Department of Youth Mr. Faruk, UNDP Representative Mr. Shankor Paul joined as panel speaker. Executive Director of DYDF presented Youth Declaration to all and guests have expressed their views and raised some proposals for betterment of youth generation. The National Youth Congress successfully made a Youth Declaration that might be included in the upcoming National Youth Action Plan of Bangladesh.

4.5.13. Launching of Research Book

In September, HRP and the Department of Anthropology, Dhaka University successfully launched a comprehensive research book titled "Selected Issues in Social Justice and Human Rights in Bangladesh" at Senate Bhaban, University of Dhaka. The objectives of book launching were to share the research findings and sensitize the national institutions and stakeholders on the rights and inclusion of ethnic and excluded communities in Bangladesh".

The book combines five micro-researches titled "Right to Land and Natural Resources : Livelihood Strategies among the Khasi in Northeast Bangladesh", "Waterfront and Justice : Water Security among the Mahalis of Northwest Bangladesh", "Systematic Discrimination in Education: The Marginalization of Munda in Barind Region of Bangladesh", "Social Protection and Safety Net Programme: Accessibility of Rabidas Women Living in Dhaka City" and "Violence and Human Rights: Testimonies of Rohingya Women in Bangladesh."

4.5.14. Consultation on the Review of Existing Laws and Policies Related to Land Rights of the Minorities

In November HRP organized a stakeholder's consultation on the review of existing laws and policies related to land rights of the ethnic and religious minorities in Bangladesh. Initially, the consultant Professor Dr. Abdullah Al Faruque, Department of Law, University of Chittagong shared the findings on the review of existing laws and policies related to land rights of the minorities.

The consultation suggested the following recommendations:

Recommendations for Implementation of the Return of the Vested Properties Act 2001:

Implementation of the Vested Property Act 2001 demands a rigorous effort of the government. For ensuring return of the vested properties to the original owners requires concerted efforts of the judiciary, district commissioners, the Ministry of Law and Justice Affairs and land administration.

1. Obtaining data regarding the number of applications filed before the tribunal and number of disposed of applications is important for monitoring the implementation of the Act. Therefore, the government can form a monitoring committee to look into the following matters for the implementation of the Act:
 - (a) To ascertain the number of applications submitted to the tribunal
 - (b) To identify how many applications have been disposed of;
 - (c) To ascertain how many appeal applications have been disposed of;
 - (d) To ensure how many judgements have been implemented by the DC in each district.
2. Mutation of the properties listed in B of the Act should be done by the government. However, if any original handover/transfer process of the property was properly done, there is no problem.
3. There is a lack of proper initiative from the side of government to re-settle the issue even after the promulgation of Vested Property Return Act, 2001 as amended in 2011.
4. Government could make a list of such settled cases with its own initiatives. That would reduce the burden over the Committee or Tribunal established for the return of VP. At the same time, it would also help the respective VP owners from entering into the red tape of government procedure.
5. DCs should return the vested properties to the original owners or heirs of the original owners as per the judgement of the tribunal or the Appellate Tribunal after verifying National Identity Card.

Recommendations regarding Protection of the land rights of the ethnic minorities of the Plain Land:

1. A separate Land Settlement Commission should be set up for the ethnic minority in the plain lands for making arrangement for restitution of lands to them. An independent Land Commission for the Plain land indigenous people is sine-quo-non. For having a land commission, right based organizations, plain land ethnic minority organizations, and civil society groups need to be proactive.
2. The eco-park projects in different areas where ethnic minority community reside should be cancelled
3. A comprehensive law should be adopted to protect land rights, cultural heritage and traditional livelihood of the ethnic minority communities of the plain land. Such law should make provisions for protection of land rights of the ethnic minority communities and for this purpose, the proposed law should contain provisions for their demarcation of land boundary, recognize their title to such land and completely prohibit transfer of their lands to the Bengali people. Such law should also elaborate their rights in line with international standards and norms.
4. Massive legal aid support and actions should be provided to restore their lands and provisions should be made for fair and adequate compensation to be given to them in circumstances where it is not possible to restore their land.
5. Both Land ministry and BBS should prepare a list of properties which have been lost or vested property.
6. Forced eviction of ethnic minority peoples from their ancestral lands and land confiscation in the name of reserved forest, military bases, national/eco-parks, tourist attractions, development projects and government establishments on their ancestral lands should be stopped immediately.
7. Traditional land rights including individual and collective rights of ethnic minority peoples envisaged in the UNDRIP should be respected.
8. A special officer for aboriginal people should be appointed at every land office of the Upazila level to implement section 97 of the East Bengal State Acquisition and Tenancy Act of 1950 and to prevent land grabbing of the ethnic minorities of the plain land.

The findings and recommended actions of the law review will have significant contribution to initiate policy advocacy for reformation of existing laws related to land rights of the minorities in Bangladesh.