

2019

Annual Report



Human Rights Programme
United Nations Development Programme



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC



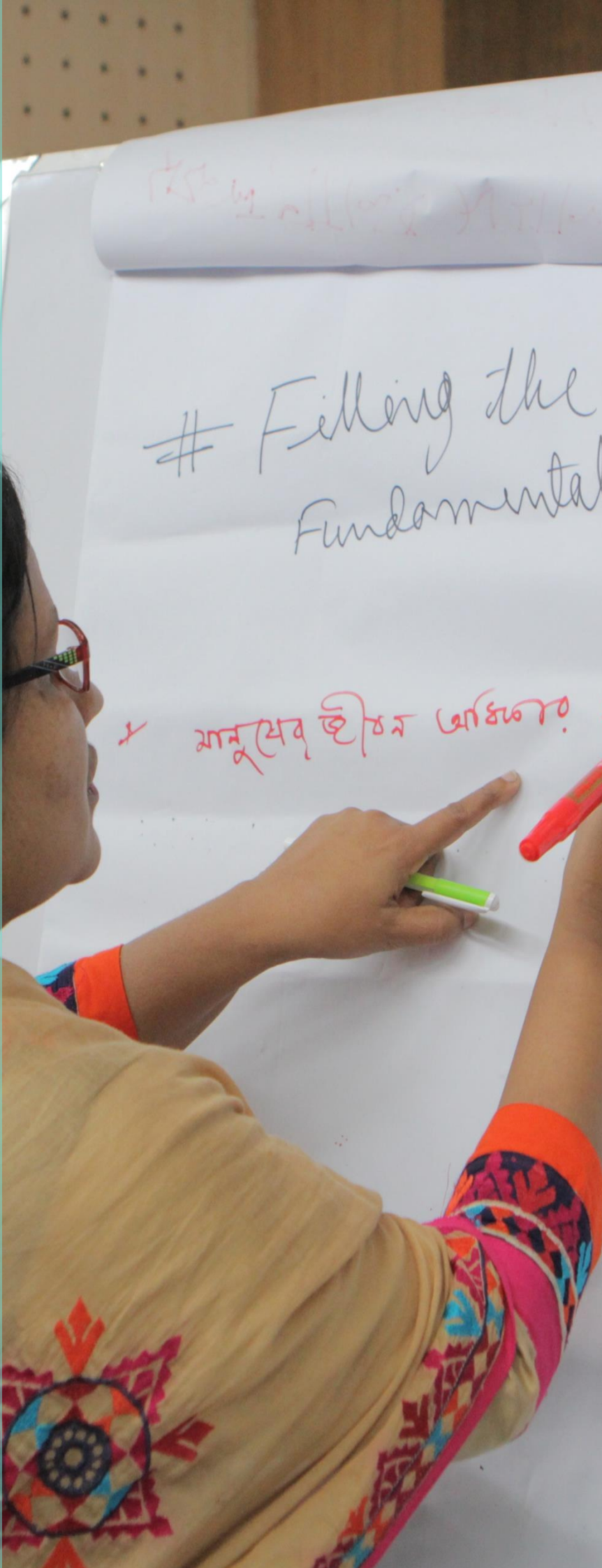
Sweden
Sverige



Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.



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

মানুষের মৌলিক অধিকার!

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.



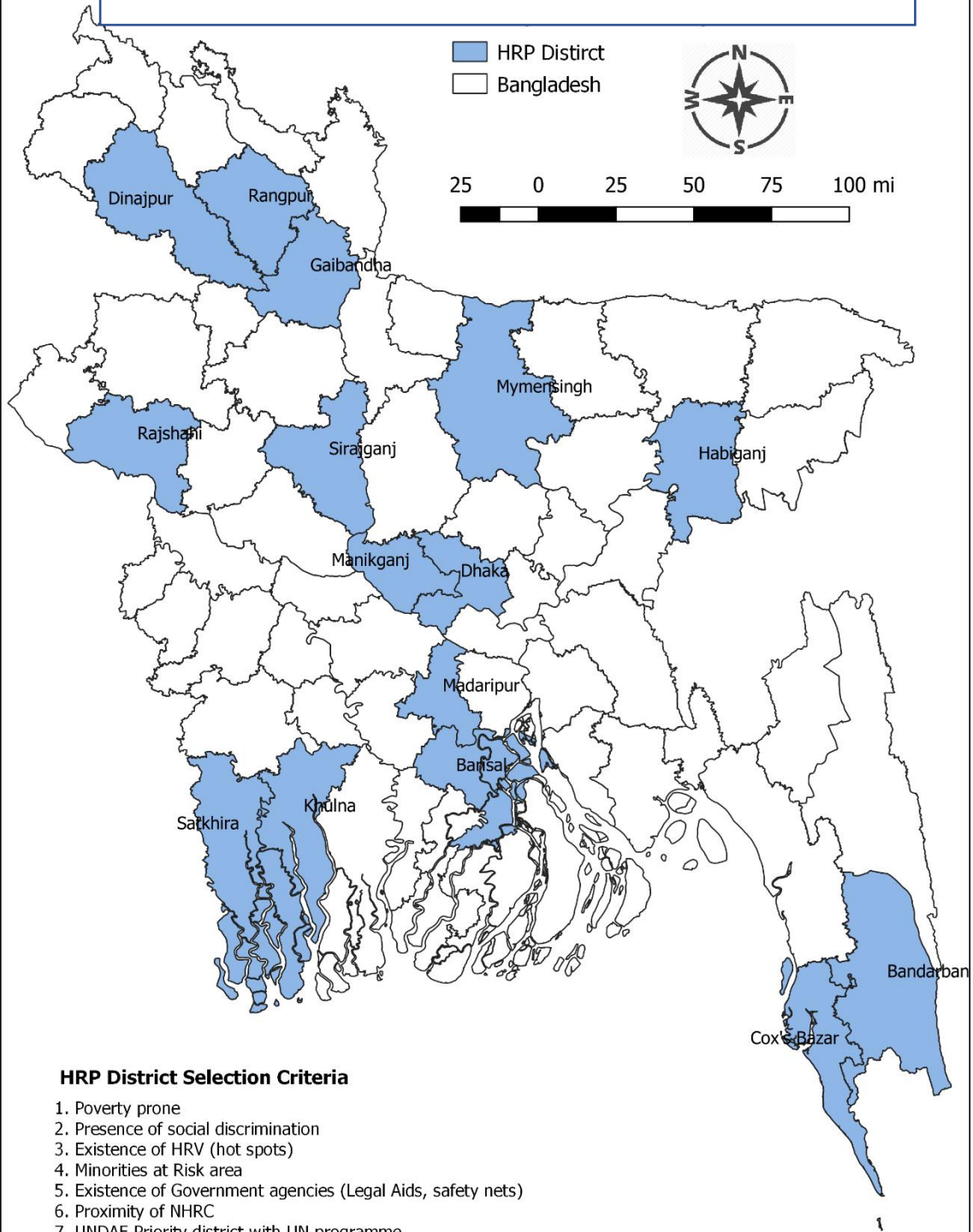
A total number of **227** (male 205, female 22) members of the law enforcing agencies (police) has been trained on human rights and policing in collaboration with the Detective Training School. Among them **83%** obtained satisfactory in the post test, which indicates a significant increase of understanding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

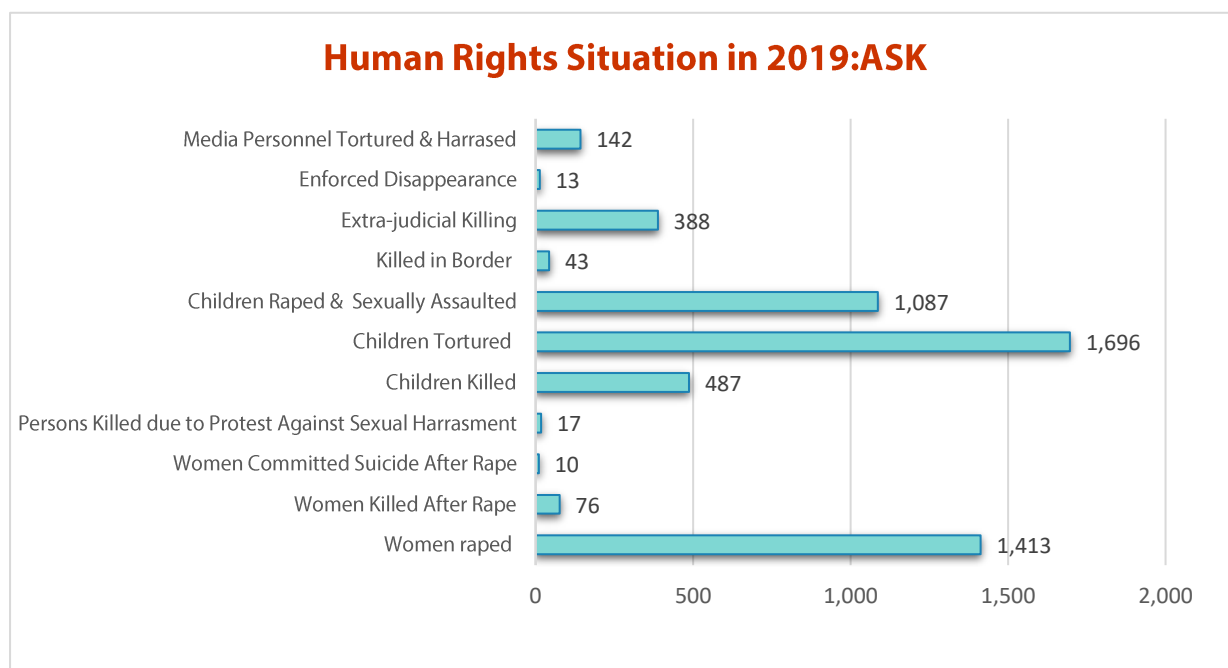
The year 2019 was an important year for Bangladesh, a key highlight includes the membership at the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC). While Bangladesh is succeeding in reducing poverty and enhancing growth, its civil and political rights situation came under criticism by national and international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

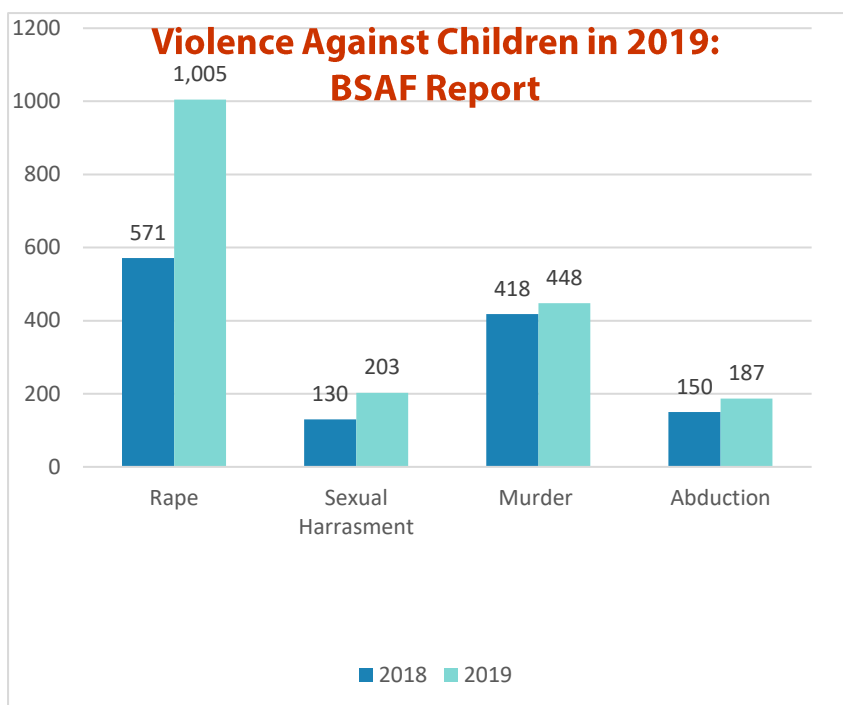
As per Global Gender Gap Report 2020 of the World Economic Forum (WEF) Bangladesh was placed at the 50th position out of 153 countries a decline from its 48th position in 2018. However, Bangladesh is the top country among the South-Asian countries a position it has maintained for the past years. It also 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.

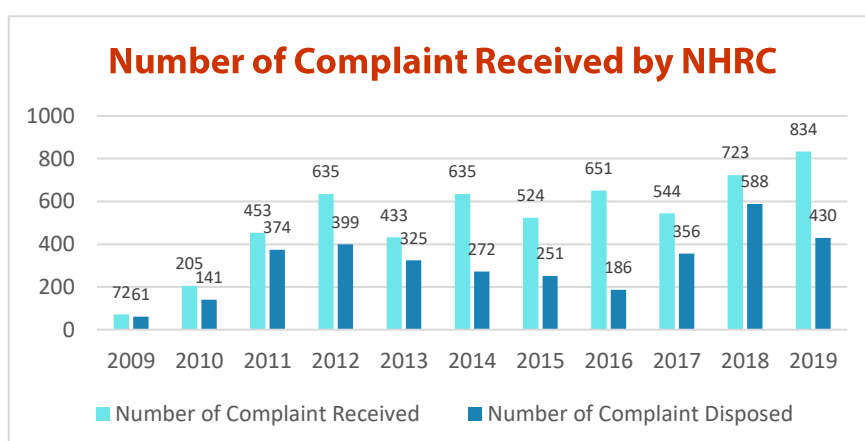
3. Key Results and Achievements

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:

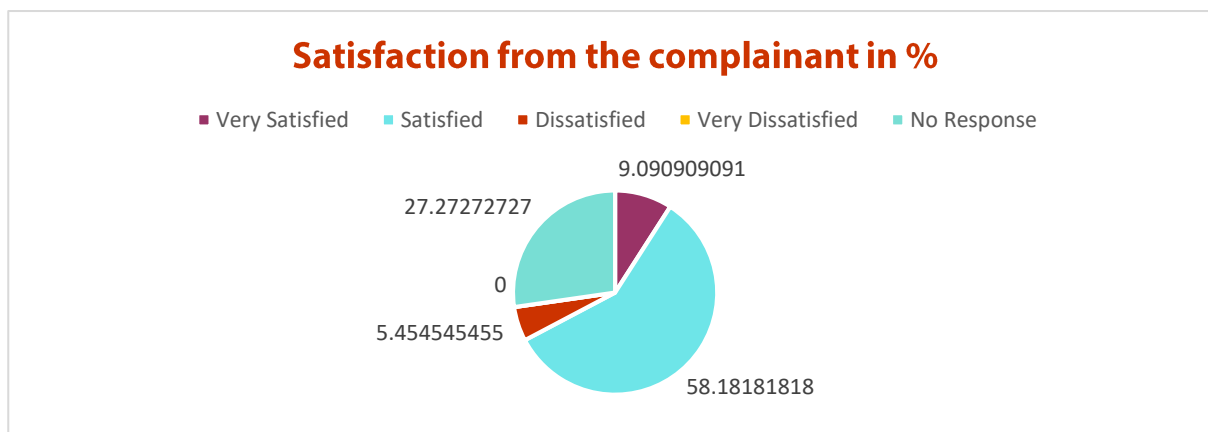
3.1. Improved efficiency of NHRC's service delivery

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.

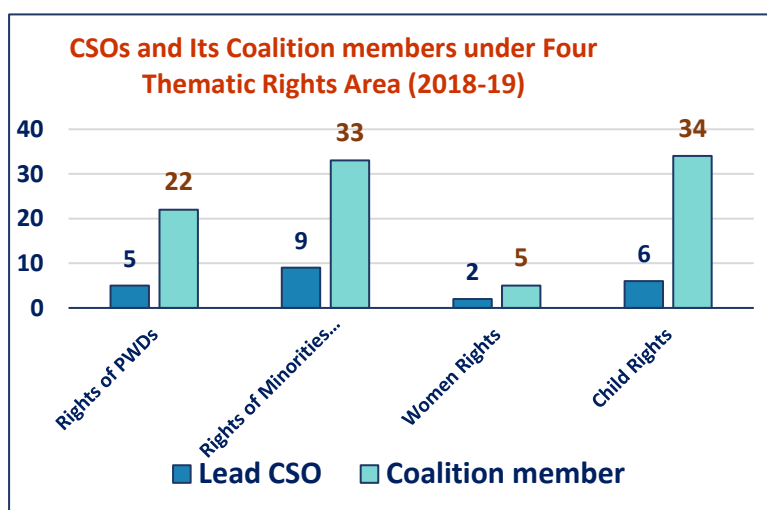
3.4. Increased accountability and higher impact through joint fact-finding missions

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 million ²and 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/>





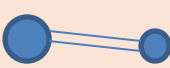




⁸ <https://minorityrights.org/country/bangladesh/>

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.

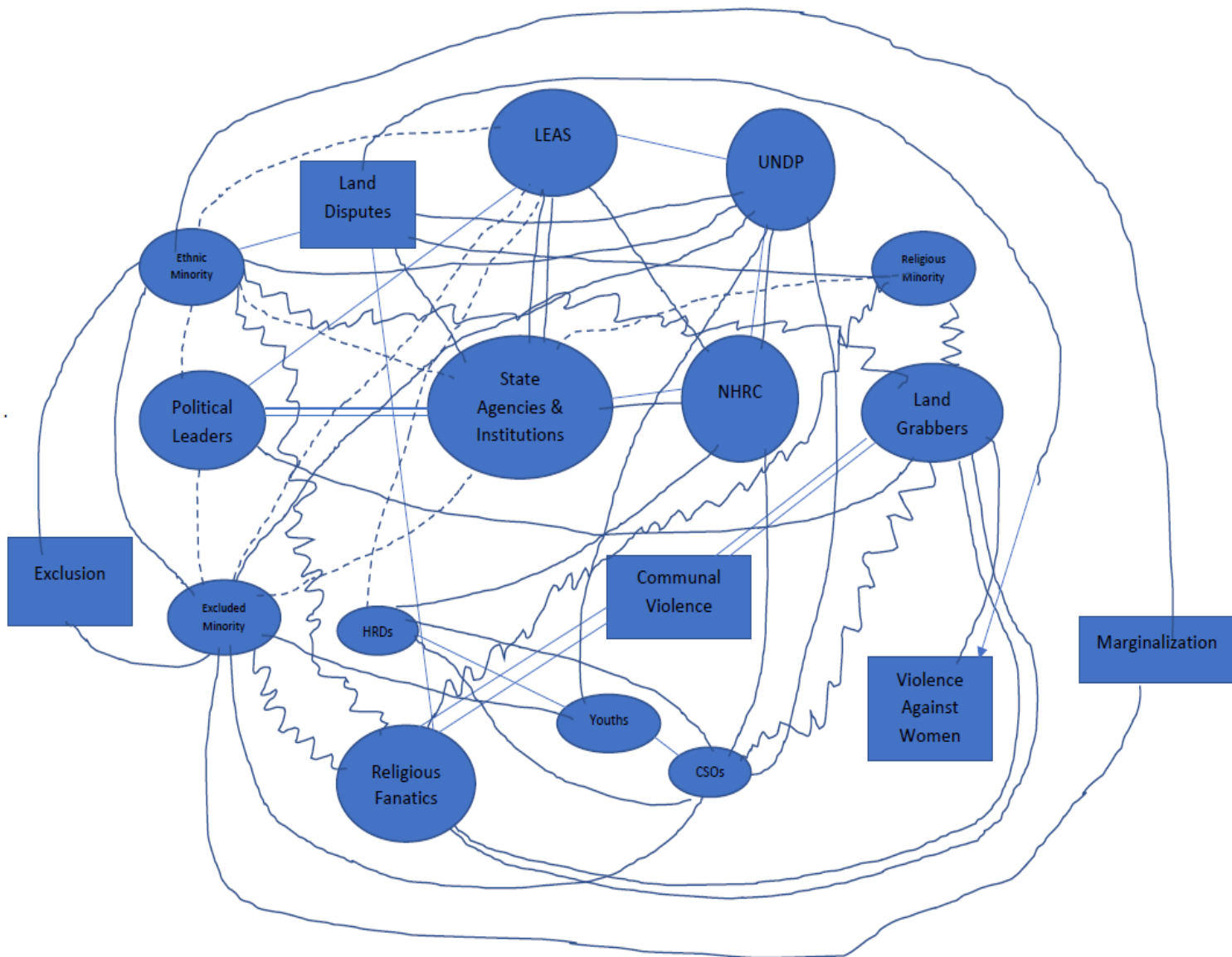


Figure: Actors (Conflict Analysis) Mapping: The Rights of Minorities

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.