

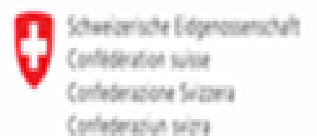


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2016-2017

Annual Report

Human
Rights
Programme
UNDP



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Acronyms and Abbreviations

APF	Asia Pacific Forum
AWP	Annual Work Plan
BNHRC-CDP	Bangladesh National Human Rights Commission Capacity Development Project
BLAST	Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust
BRAC	Building Resources Across Communities
CBO	Community Based Organizations
CHT	Chittagong Hill Tracts
CMW	The Committee on Migrant Workers
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
HRP	Human Rights Programme
HRDs	Human Rights Defenders
HRBA.	Human Rights Based Approach
ICCIPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ILO	International Labour Organization
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NHRC	National Human Rights Commission
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
PAB	Programme Advisory Board
PIC	Programme Implementation Committee
RoI	Roster of Investigators
CEDAW	The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
TIB	Transparency International Bangladesh
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
VAW	Violence Against Women

1. Human Rights Programme at a glance

Country:	Bangladesh
Project Title:	Human Rights Programme
Implementing Agency:	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
Development Partners:	DANIDA, SIDA, SDC
Project Duration:	1 st January 2016 – 31 st December 2020
Project Budget:	USD 10,597,570
Government Contribution:	N/A
UNDP Contribution:	N/A
DANIDA Contribution:	USD 270,880.36
SIDA Contribution:	USD 4,227,605.00
SDC Contribution:	USD 1,232,741.62
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: Primary: SP Outcome 2 Stronger Democratic Governance to meet citizen expectations (Secondary SP Outcome: Outcome 3: Institutions enabled to deliver universal access to basic services).

2. Introduction

Development and implementation of improved social policies and programmes, focusing on good governance, reduction of structural inequalities and advancement of vulnerable individuals and groups is a priority issue for Bangladesh. UNDP undertook human rights related programming for the last five years through the Bangladesh National Human Rights Commission Capacity Development Project (BNHRC-CDP), ending in December 2015.

The Human Rights Programme (2016-2020) is a new initiative of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) of Bangladesh and UNDP in partnership with DANIDA, SIDA and SDC. The four-year programme aims to enable the human rights and justice institutions for promotion and protection of the rights of all citizens, women and ethnic minorities. The Programme supports state based institutions, with a special focus on the NHRC, as well as undertakes key civil society interventions to improve human rights coalitions across the country. 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. It will build gender equality initiatives, strengthen civil society activities for women and girls and build the position of the NHRC as an important partner for gender equality within Bangladesh.

The Programme will focus on building the capacity of existing human rights architectures in Bangladesh. 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.

In 2016, the programme has assisted in capacity building of NHRC, awareness raising for promotion of women's rights and gender equality, capacity building of CSOs and HRDs and advocacy initiatives in promotion of the rights of ethnic minorities.

3. Key Results and Achievements

3.1 Submissions under international human rights instruments

The NHRC submitted two independent reports to international treaty bodies: the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Convention on Migrant Workers. These reports provide an update on the human rights status in Bangladesh and well-articulated recommendations to improve the human rights situation in Bangladesh. Technical support provided to NHRC through the project was key to conducting necessary consultations and preparing the reports.

3.2 Support Thematic Committees to facilitate rights dialogues and policy debates

NHRC formulated the terms of reference of its thematic committees, developed its annual work plan and intervention plan in line with the recommendations made under international human rights reviews and GOB priorities, which has enabled thematic committees to engage in contemporary policy and rights dialogues. Constrictive inputs provided to NHRC through the project facilitated the drafting and finalizing process of those documents.

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

Civil society organizations (CSOs) operating in rural setting were able to establish better links and networks with national stake holders engaged in the human rights sector. These networks and links enable grassroots level organizations to contribute in a collective voice in human rights policy dialogues and debates. The challenge funds launched by the project provided the needed platform and capacity for meaning engagement of grass root level CSOs

3.4 Support youth networks to advocate for human rights and raise awareness

Youth from ethnic minorities are increasingly engaging in advocating for rights of ethnic communities. They have formed an online network as an advocacy tool to highlight key issues impacting on rights of the minority, The leadership and capacity building training programmes under the HRP project was pivotal in strengthening the capacities, leaderships skill and networking ability of youths from ethnic minorities.

3.5. Capacity building Human Rights Defenders for better human rights monitoring and reporting

Refresher Trainings for the Human Rights Defenders (HRD) has enabled better monitoring and reporting incidence of human rights violations to the National Human Rights Commission and other relevant authorities.

3.6. Joint fact finding mission to ensure increase accountability and higher impact

NHRC and the Parliamentary Caucus on Indigenous Peoples have conducted joint fact finding mission to investigate human rights violations perpetrated on the Santal community at Gaibandha, resulting in swift action from stakeholders, responsible for protecting human rights. HRP was instrumental in organizing the joint fact finding mission and provided all logistic supports to conduct a successful fact finding mission.

3.7 Awareness and advocacy tools promoting a culture of human rights

Policy debates, seminars and awareness programmes has generated greater sensitization of communities on human rights. HRP jointly with NHRC has launched several awareness campaigns contributing awareness raising on HR among the public

4. Description of Activities – April 2016 to April 2017

This section provides an elaborated description of key activities undertaken by HRP under each of its programme outputs.

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

During this period, the NHRC has demonstrated a strengthened capacity to deliver on its mandate, evidenced through a number of activities:

1.1 Project planning and initiating workshop



On 4-5 September 2016, the project completed a planning workshop to design the detailed activities of the HRP in a consultative manner. The workshop successfully received input from relevant stake holders engaged in the human rights practice area.

A total of 28 participants from NHRC, government Ministries and CSOs participated in the workshop, which was held at

Several key recommendations resulted from the workshop. These will inform the activities of the four-year programme.

- *Amend NHRC Act and support the establishment of NHRC's branch offices at regional and district levels;*
- *Publish periodical human rights situation analysis report by the NHRC;*
- *Empowerment of NHRC through amending its existing act and through bestowing executive and investigative power;*
- *Organizing talk shows, use of social media and other means of communications for information sharing along with publishing newsletters;*
- *Agreement to provide an orientation on the human rights issues to the officials of different ministries.*

BRAC CDM Rajendrapur, Gazipur. During the workshop, the selection criteria of CSOs and CBOs for the Challenge Fund was also adopted.

1.2 Peer to peer learning

Members of NHRCB also chairing various thematic committees of NHRC were supported by HRP to attend a peer to peer learning session with the NHRC India. Being in the same region and neighboring country there are similarities with the nature and incidents of human rights violations and type of complaints received by both Commissions. The similarity of the founding Acts of both the Commissions echo similar roles and functions. Several best practices observed during the visit are as follows;

- ✓ Systematic advocacy by the Indian commission contributing to state policy reforms;
- ✓ Investigation techniques used to address human rights violations by the law enforcement agencies;
- ✓ Coordination, follow up and interaction with government entities to ensure maximum number of recommendations made by the commission are implemented (the rate of success is at 95%)¹.

“Extrajudicial killings, a bar to rule of law, and strict action will be taken if information in this regard is available to the government”

- Hon’ble Minister, Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, Mr. Anisul Huq, MP.

- ✓ The visiting team has the opportunity to observe the computer based case management system, online complaint receiving systems and resource management including staff and technology needed to operationalize a complaint handling system

Further to the visit in Delhi, a Seminar titled ‘Experience Sharing of NHRIs: Challenges and Way Forward’ was held on the 28 January, 2017 in Dhaka. The seminar successfully engaged the Indian human rights commission in an in-depth dialogue. During discussions, the human rights issues, in particular, child rights, migrant workers’ rights, repatriation of trafficked victims and the bilateral relation between NHRC India and NHRC Bangladesh were identified and explored.

As next steps NHRC, B has taken a keen interest to re-design its digital complaint handling system from the lessons learned from NHRC India. NHRC, B has also commenced work on introducing legislative reforms and practices in the area of human rights drawing from the learning of best practices of NHRC, India.

1

1.3 Human Rights Day 2016

On 10 December 2016, government officials, members of civil societies and NGOs, youth representatives and academicians participated in the discussion for International Human Rights Day: “Stand up for someone's rights today”. The NHRCB organized rallies and discussion sessions with relevant stakeholders in Dhaka, Rangamati and Khulna districts. Around 500 participants from different organization working on Human Rights issues attended the events. .



Presiding over the event in Dhaka, NHRC Chairman Kazi Reazul Hoque, in his speech urged everyone to be aware of their human rights and importance of proactively engaging in promoting human rights in Bangladesh.



In Khulna, the rally was inaugurated by Mr. Narayan Chandra Chanda, honorable state minister, Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock. Following the rally a second event was organized to discuss on human rights issues.

In



Rangamati, contemporary issues on human rights were discussed. In Rangamati, the rally started from Rangamati Deputy Commissioner's office and ended at the Jela Shilpa Kola Academy auditorium. Representatives of different NGOs and CSOs including BLAST, BRAC, Green Hill, CIPD, TIB, Red Crescent, journalists, students and teachers of different educational institutions took part in the event.

1.4 Independent Capacity Assessment – NHRC

A capacity review of the National Human Rights Commission, Bangladesh was carried out between 22-26 January, 2017. The review is a follow up to the capacity assessment exercise of NHRC which was jointly conducted by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Asia Pacific Forum (APF) and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in 2013. Recommendations of this capacity assessment are now included in a capacity development strategy for NHRC which will be jointly implemented by the project and NHRC. This strategy will serve as a tool to measure progress against set milestones and indicators.

1.5 Thematic committees of NHRC – Activated

NHRC has dedicated thematic committees linked with the communities and public at large mandated to promote equality and inclusion. In the reporting period, three Thematic Committees were activated: Child rights; Dalit, hijra and excluded minorities; persons with disabilities. The Committees consist of civil society organizations, human rights activist, state institutions, academician, development agencies and intergovernmental agencies and are chaired by NHRC commissioners, allowing space to own and promote work carried out by these committees using the NHRC platform.

The Thematic Committee on “Child Rights” was held on 16 February 2017 at NHRC conference room, Dhaka where NHRC and the CSOs working for child rights agreed to undertake joint actions on eliminating child labour in Bangladesh. They also agreed to engage in policy advocacy for establishing the Child Commission as well as to advocate for limiting the special provision in the recently enacted Child Marriage Restraint Act. NHRC committed to expand a child friendly complaint mechanism jointly with Save the Children through local government institutions.

The Thematic Committee on “Dalit, Hijra and Excluded minorities” was held on 23 March 2017 at NHRC conference room, Dhaka. The NHRC and CSOs agreed to work together on “Dalit, Hijra and Excluded minorities” issues in Bangladesh. A small committee has been formed to review the draft of the “anti-discriminatory law”. The committee includes the CSOs who will be engaged in advocacy campaigns on the importance of “anti-discriminatory law” in Bangladesh.

The Thematic Committee on “persons with disabilities” was held on 19 March 2017 at NHRC conference room, Dhaka. NHRC and CSOs agreed to work together guided by a road map on secreting and protecting rights of persons with disabilities. The road map has been drafted and is now in advance stages of discussions with the relevant government entities. There were several follow up meetings held to discuss advocacy campaigns on autisms, including organizing an art competition for autistic children.

1.6 Identification of priorities for 2016

The HRP and NHRC team held a two-day planning workshop to develop the strategy and workplan for the programme. The workshop delivered key outcomes to support programme results:

- The programme strategy is aligned with the workplan of the NHRC;
- The Terms of Reference (ToR) for the NHRC Thematic Committees were developed;
- The Communication and Advocacy strategy of NHRC was formulated.
- Focal points for relevant HRP stakeholders were identified, helping to reduce coordination gaps;
- NHRC committed to reviewing and adopting relevant standard operating procedures.

The joint discussion and commitment to these outcomes will ultimately help to ensure an inclusive human rights approach to policy discussions and advocacy campaigns. This joint discussion has contributed in harmonizing the work plans of both HRP and NHRC which is pivotal to ensure inclusion of CSOs in policy discussions, take a human right based approach in devising advocacy campaigns and maintaining transparency. In addition, the nomination of Focal Point for HRP during this session is expected to reduce coordination gaps among stakeholders of the project. Further NHRC expressed its willingness to revisit SOPs prepared under the previous project and will take necessary action to adopt SOPs progressively.

1.7 International reporting obligations under treaty bodies

HRP supported the drafting and submission of a written statement on ICCPR to the Human Right Committee. The Project also supported NHRC to attend the review of Bangladesh in Geneva in March, 2017. NHRC will continue to receive technical support in tracking and monitoring progress on the concluding observation made by the Human Rights committee in Geneva.

Further, HRP supported NHRC to submit its report on CMW based on consultations it had with both government and civil society organizations. Following the submission HRP organized a video conference allowing NHRC participation during the review of Bangladesh on 3 April, 2017 by the Committee on Migrant Workers from Dhaka .

Such initiatives will enhance the capacity of NHRC in terms of preparing human rights report to the treaty bodies/international human rights instruments supporting NHRC to deliver its mandate articulated in Section 12 (h) of NHRC Act 2009.

Output2: 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 an enhanced capacity to engage in human rights advocacy and awareness raising, evidenced through a number of activities:

2.1 Refresher training – Human Rights Defenders



Human Rights Defenders in Bangladesh benefited from a refresher training titled ‘Human Rights Fact-finding and Reporting’, designed to increase their knowledge and skills on modalities of conducting a fact-finding mission, networking, reporting on human rights issues and integration of gender considerations. The training was held at YWCA, Mohammadpur, Dhaka on 9-10 October, 2016 and was participated in by 26 Human Rights Defenders engaged in voluntary human rights

work across the country and who are also members of the Roster of Investigators (RoI) of the National Human Rights Commission, Bangladesh.

The NHRC committed to several undertakings as an outcome of the training:

- ✓ *Launch an initiative to formulate a HRD Protection law,*
- ✓ *Stablish a HRD Focal Point at NHRC,*
- ✓ *Providing a proof of affiliation for the selected HRDs;*

The objectives of the Training were: 1. *To provide a refresher Training on Human Rights Fact-finding and Reporting* 2. *To create and maintain a stronger network and channels of communication among HRDs* 3. *Promote closer engagement of the HRD with NHRC* 4. *Seek input and information on challenges related to their engagement as an Investigators of NHRC on a pro bono basis.*

During the workshop, several key challenges were identified and recommendations were made;

- ✓ *Need for closer affiliation with NHRC*
- ✓ *Institutionalize engagement of NHRC and human right organizations (through a MOU)*
- ✓ *An identity card from NHRC to the HRDs will help in interacting with law enforcement agencies*
- ✓ *Establishment of Focal Point at the NHRC for regular communication with the HRDs*
- ✓ *Pro-activeness of NHRC in monitoring, investigations and reporting of human rights violations and further steps with the human rights violation reports*
- ✓ *Additional initiatives needed to increase awareness on human rights*
- ✓ *Regular capacity development training arrangement for the HRDs*
- ✓ *Enhance NHRC engagement at the gross-root level and its visibility*

2.2 Capacity building for organization working to advance rights of excluded groups

The training organized by HRP has strengthened the network between NHRC and Dalit based CSOs, with increased knowledge and skills women rights, sensitized the Dalit based CSOs representatives to take appropriate actions on VAW and increase understanding on complaint mechanism of NHRC. Following the workshop the Dalit based CSOs have established a network with the objective of raising human rights issues, specifically to promote the rights of Dalit women. The training workshop was organized by HRP on 30-31 October 2016 at YWCA, Mohammadpur, Dhaka. 30 participants from different organizations attended the training program. Out of 30 participants 24 participants were from different districts of Bangladesh and 12 were females.

Several next steps were identified;

- ✓ *Adoption of Ani- Discrimination Law in Bangladesh. NHRC to advocate with government to expedite the process.*
- ✓ *Raise awareness on rights of the Dalit community do not get better jobs e.g. cleaner, guard, messenger. NHRC should take steps on this.*
- ✓ *Advocate for quotas for Dalits in high schools or colleges*
- ✓ *Convene Cultural activities for Dalit based organizations*
- ✓ *Regular coordination and networking between NHRC and Dalit CSOs.*
- ✓ *Regular capacity development training arrangement for the Dalit based CSOs*
- ✓ *Organizing regular seminar/conferences on Dalit rights at district levels*



2.3 Supporting Rights Advocacy Forums

Based on a mapping exercise of CSOs working on human rights at both national and local levels the project conducted a capacity building program on the HR and application of HRBA as an entry point to identify possible coalitions and working dynamics between national and local CSOs. Further, a workshop on Human Rights Based Approach was organized on 29-30 March 2017 at Daily Star Centre, Dhaka with a view to explore the CSOs good practices in Human Rights works/actions at local and national levels of Bangladesh. Total 26 CSOs (National=9, Local=17) took part in this day long workshop to share their works experience on Human Rights issues and explore good practices in addressing human rights violations. The participants identified good practices in line with five thematic issues including Women rights, Child rights, Rights of

Indigenous people/groups, Rights of persons with Disabilities and rights of excluded minorities. As a next HRP announced a call for small grants to support CSOs/CBOs under the Challenge fund.

The grants were dispersed to selected CSO following an open bid soliciting applications with the objective of establishing partnerships with CSOs, CSO coalitions and specialized institutions to enhance capacity and engagement of CSOs/CBOs in Human Rights awareness and rights-issue based advocacy. The grant covered human rights in general, ethnic minority rights, women rights, child rights, rights of persons with disabilities and rights of excluded groups.

The challenge fund is expected to;

- ✓ *Create greater opportunity to enhance networks and coalitions with CSOs/CBOs in sector;*
- ✓ *Generate opportunities to engage with state justice and human rights institutions including BNHRC*
- ✓ *Provide opportunities to take part in advocacy and rights discussions forums at local and national levels;*
- ✓ *Establish stronger coordination with human rights stakeholders in Bangladesh*

During the first call DHRUBA, N.Z. Ekata Mohila Samiti , UDDIPTO, Rupantar Uddyog and NARIPOKKHO received grants for period of six month from Jan to June 2017 . During this period, notable achievements of the abovementioned CSOs include enhanced capacity of CSOs, working on women rights and child rights issues to operate in rural setting to establish better links and networks with national stake holders engaged in the human rights sector. As a consequence of the human rights actions at grassroots levels, awareness on issues women rights and child rights, gender equality, caste and gender based discrimination have been enhanced.

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

3.1 Dialogue with Law Enforcement Agencies

A tripartite meeting between NHRC, Bangladesh Police and UNDP was held on 4th February 2017 in Hotel Sonargaon. The meeting was held to explore the opportunities to work together. Several actions points were identified. As next steps the project will facilitate the formulation of a working group to devise the training curricular, identify master trainers and organize a TOT on policing and human rights. High level officials from all 3 agencies attended the meeting. The key achievement of the event includes:

- ✓ Consensus among all three stake-holder to undertake joint interventions
- ✓ Commence human rights training programme
- ✓ A focal person from PHQ nominated a to liaise with HRP

Output4: Strengthened capacity of national stakeholders to better protect and promote women’s rights

4.1 SDG 5 – Gender Equality

A seminar titled “Achieve Gender Equality and Empowering All Women and Girls” was conducted with key stakeholders, including women’s rights activists, government representatives, development partners and media. Out of total 76 participants of the programme 47 were females.

Other key recommendations gathered from the dialogue are as follows:

- ✓ *In spite of long advocacy there is no specific indicator on VAW in the 7th five-year strategic plan, so it would be very difficult to measure the change. Since it is a working document and would be reviewed periodically so NHRC could advocate with government to review the document from gender lance and adding gender based indicators.*
- ✓ *To end VAW patriarchal attitude and mindset/perception towards women need to be changed through massive awareness and advocacy programme by all stakeholders.*
- ✓ *The discriminatory personal law on inheritance, marriage and divorce should be amended to achieve gender equality in private sphere of life. Government should consider to enact uniform family code. It is a long-awaited demand of feminist group of Bangladesh*
- ✓ *In past CEDAW concluding observation acted as pressure tool for enacting laws on Domestic Violence and Prevention & Protection Act 2010 and Human Trafficking Prevention and Suppression Act 2012. Thus, CEDAW concluding observation should be used as advocacy tool to enact law on Stopping Child Marriage and Prevention of Sexual Harassment as well.*
- ✓ *Enacting law on Victim and Witness Protection act is crucial to prove the violence against women cases. Number of VAW cases disposed with acquittal only due absence of submitting sufficient evidence to prove the cases. Because most of the time the accused party influence the victims not to continue the cases.*
- ✓ *Comprehensive prevention protection and reintegration approach required to stop VAW. The Law enforcing agency and the Judiciary should play proactive gender sensitize role to contribute to ending VAW*

During the workshop, it was observed that withdrawing of reservations on CEDAW article 2 and 16.1 (C) are strongly affiliated with political will. Participants were of the view that NHRC should lobby with government to withdraw the CEDAW reservations and reform necessary laws & policies. It was also noted that reservations of CEDAW articles conflict with the spirit of Constitution of Bangladesh. Further, Government commitment to achieve the SDGs goal including goal 5 will be hindered if CEDAW reservations are not withdrawn. Thus, the withdrawal of CEDAW reservations is a precondition to implement SDGs.

1.2 Policy dialogue – Voices of the unheard

As a part of International Women’s Day celebration on 8th March, a policy dialogue was held in collaboration with the Daily Samakal. This event was symbolic in nature but was able to create a new practice; involving women from marginalized group as discussants. After the dialogue a full page supplementary was published in Daily Samakal, a prominent daily newspaper in the country. In the policy dialogue, unheard stories of women contributing to the economy of Bangladesh participated in the discussion on women’s role in development.



As next steps HRP will be holding a policy discussion jointly with NHRC’s thematic committee on rights of women in work places based on findings of a research on this subject matter.

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

5.1 World Indigenous day

A High-Level Policy Dialogue titled ‘Indigenous people: Right to Education, Land and Livelihood’ was organized jointly with the Parliamentary Caucus on Indigenous People organized on 07th August 2016. The programme was facilitated by International Labour Organization (ILO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Research and Development Collective (RDC).

The event helped to build awareness of national stakeholders on the rights of indigenous peoples. Key recommendations from the forum include:



1. Ensure recognition of customary land rights of indigenous peoples;
2. Ensure primary and secondary education for indigenous children to facilitate their higher education;

3. Allocate adequate budget for indigenous peoples;
4. Ensure constitution recognition of indigenous peoples;

5.2 Dialogue with Minority rights advocates



The NHRC Rangamati office with the support of Human Rights Programme organized a round table discussion with ethnic advocates, CSOs, journalists and human rights defenders on 29th November 2016.

The event was successful in sharing the functions of NHRC, and fostering understanding among stakeholders of human rights problems/issues in context of CHT

areas. Possible solutions and actions/initiatives to promote ethnic minority rights in CHT and in plain land were also explored.

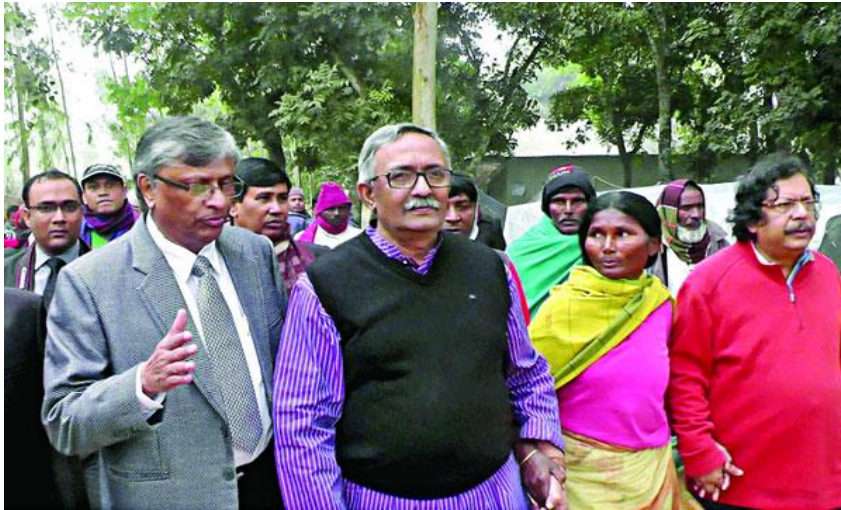
The round table discussion was chaired by Ms. Banchita Chakma, Honorary member of the National Human Rights Commission, with a total of 30 participants contributing as discussants to explore collaborative actions to advocate for ethnic minority rights. The discussion successfully identified several priorities concerning human rights issues affecting minorities which guided the NHRC thematic committee on Minorities. The regional offices in Rangamati and Khulna districts will be particularly relevant as it can serve as a focal point for local networks of CSOs, human rights practitioners and human rights defenders working to advance minority rights.

5.3 Fact finding mission – Examining rights of minorities and non-citizens



A joint meeting of the NHRC and Parliamentary Caucus was held with the support of Human Rights Programme on 8th December 2016. The objective of meeting was to explore collaborations with NHRC and Parliamentary Caucus on Indigenous people and discuss the scope of a fact-finding missions in minority prone areas of Bangladesh. A total number of 25 participants took part in the meeting resulting in consensus building and initiating collaborations between the

two parties for promotion and protection of the ethnic minority rights in the country. The discussion was instrumental in organizing the first ever fact-finding mission to examine human rights violations of the minorities; to Santal community at Gobindaganj upazila of Gaibandha district which took place on 11-12 December 2016. The mission consisted of members from the NHRC led by the Chairman, NHRC, five members team from Parliamentary Caucus led by the Convener and three members from UNDP taking part as observers.



During the fact-finding mission, members of the mission interviewed Santal community leaders, Sugar mill authority, police officials, local authority to ascertain the extent of human rights violations perpetrated on the Santal community members. The media attention drawn towards the mission could catalyze formal proceeding initiated by

victims within the formal justice sector. A detailed inquiry at the NHRC was held following the mission and the report has been now laid by as the matter is at present under the preview of courts.

A joint team from NHRC and HRP conducted a fact-finding mission to Cox'sBazar on February 24 - 26, 2017 to observe the human rights status of the Rohingya. A video documentary was made



on Rohingya issues stating the realities of Rohingya refugee staying at the camps at Cox's Bazar. A significant part of the production of the video was conducted in-house. The event gained tremendous media coverage and has helped to reposition NHRC as an advocate for rights of refugees locally and internationally.

5.4 Capacity building youth leaders

A two-day training workshop for the ethnic minority youth leaders was organized on 15-16 November 2016 at Dhaka. The training programme was to successful in enhancing knowledge of ethnic minority youth leaders on human rights obligations, responsibilities and issues, and also building their leadership skills. A total 23 youth leaders (10 were female) took part in the training as representatives of different ethnic minority communities. A second batch of youth members were trained on 14-15 March 2017 at Daily Star Centre, Dhaka with a total 31 youth leaders (15 were female) participating in the training.



Following the training the Ethnic Youth leaders established an online (Facebook-based) forum to network and to advocate for minority rights. The network of the ethnic minority youth will enable the present generation of youth leaders to play an active role in promotion and protection of ethnic minority rights. The online youth forum is linked with the International youth networks such as YUTOPIA and has nearly 312 active members. The platform helps crowd source information and disseminate information and raise awareness on contemporary debates on human rights.

5. Budget planning

Budget planning was carried out following several guidelines and lessons learnt.

HRP builds on its pre-runner, the Bangladesh National Human Rights Commission Capacity Development Project (BNHRC-CDP). Budget planning is crucial to every project. Lessons learnt during CPD has helped HRP to plan its budget taking many practical aspects in to account. In addition to CPD, HRP also benefits from the programmes both ongoing and implemented in the recent under the governance cluster of UNDP. Examples include the Police Reform Programme, Justice Sector Facility, Access to Justice and Activating Village Courts.

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

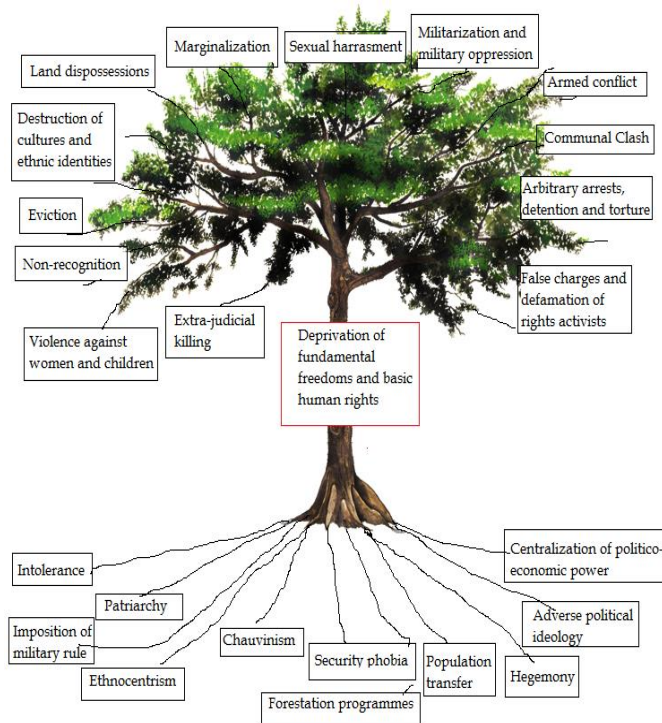
Involvement of vital stake holders during the programme formulation process was also helpful to in budget planning. There were several consultations with project beneficiaries to identify the key issues and setting the action plans to address the issues. The programme and finance staff of UNDP and staff 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 by programme staff and finalized in the PAB meetings.

6. Conflict analysis

Bangladesh is a country with diverse cultures and identities. Around 47 indigenous peoples live in different parts of the country, currently reaching over 3 million. While the Government has ratified most international human right treaties, these communities are often among the populations in society that are the most marginalized and discriminated against, falling behind on access to healthcare, education and participation in processes that affect their future.

Several underlying issues fuel tensions between indigenous peoples and state authorities, including, patriarchal social structures, intolerance and ethnocentric attitude of power holders, religious extremism, adverse political ideology, centralization of politico-economic power by majority, security phobia, forestation programme on indigenous people's lands. As a root causes these factors contribute to the core problem, deprivation of fundamental freedoms and violation of basic human rights.

In order to address the root causes of the conflict, the Human Rights Programme will work in



collaboration with the, CSOs and CBOs and the ethnic minorities thematic committee of the NHRC. Effort and resources to support indigenous peoples have primarily been directed to those living in the CHT. The Programme will endeavor to highlight issues concerning groups living in the plain lands by undertaking further research into the rights enjoyment of plain-land indigenous peoples Recognizing that VAW, and the rights of women and girls in general, are issues within these communities, the Programme will also work to engage communities on rights advocacy and awareness. Through training and leveraging local women’s CSOs the Programme will work to improve the understanding of the rights of women and girls in these communities.

At the national level, the Programme will work the Parliamentary Caucus on indigenous people as explained in section 5.3 to support fact finding missions and the development of policies and legislation relating to the rights of indigenous peoples. The Programme will support NHRC regional offices to form networks with indigenous advocates and HRDs, building on existing networks and collaborations. The Programme will establish regional dialogues with members from indigenous CSOs and CBOs working with the police, as well as chairmen and members of Upazillas and Union Parishads, to create a network of local change makers and advocates within the system.

At the local level, the Programme will focus on awareness raising by linking indigenous peoples with community radio stations to broadcast ethnic language programming and rights education. Capacity and leadership development empowers young people with the tools, skills and attitudes necessary to influence change. The Programme will support the next generation of young leaders through holding capacity and leadership training camps, establishing youth networks and connecting them to the regional and international rights community. The Programme will work closely with local authorities and the law enforcement to improve their responsiveness to indigenous peoples voices through formalized multi-party compacts and local action networks in targeted areas. These action networks will undertake joint initiatives with support from the challenge fund to enhance cohesion, social security and tolerance at the community level in the targeted areas and serve as a platform for sensitization, joint action plans and campaigns. Furthermore, rights training will be provided to build a network of experts within these institutions.

7. Gender analysis

Human Rights Programme has mainstreamed gender in all its programmes interventions and implementation processes. The principle of equality is being integrated throughout the project as a key strategy. The programme is guided by a gender strategy and carries practical guidelines to ensure gender is a prime focus in its implementation.

All 5 outputs of HRP have a specific focus on gender with output 4 dedicated to women empowerment and advancing women rights and all outputs contributing to establishing gender through engagements with relevant stakeholders i.e. NHRC, CSOs, CBOs, law enforcement agencies, relevant ministries, youth groups, media representatives and others. Below mentioned activities are example of some cross cutting programme initiatives, contributing to advance rights of women in Bangladesh.

- ✓ Reporting to UN treaty body on CEDAW
- ✓ Advocacy to withdraw reservations under CEDAW
- ✓ Incorporating gender concern in every reporting to treaty bodies and UPR reporting.
- ✓ Sensitizing all the thematic committee of NHRC on gender equality.
- ✓ Map current gender initiatives being undertaken by CSOs and providing grants to CSOs working on women's rights.
- ✓ Sensitizing law enforcing agency on handling gender based violence and capacity to uphold women's rights
- ✓ Undertaking a specific initiative for Dalit, vulnerable, marginalized and indigenous women.

Output four has been designed to implement activities on raising awareness and campaigns to eliminate gender based violence, restraining child marriage, overall orientation on women's rights at every level, women empowerment, conducting research on women's rights issues, national level policy advocacy to reform discriminatory laws and engaging with NHRC's thematic committee of women's rights.

Gender issues take center stage in HRP during program and content design, particularly in capacity building and training program. This is a practice which is strictly adhered to enhance gender sensitivity and raise awareness on equality among the targeted participants. During selecting the facilitators, resource persons, participants or special guests in any seminar, dialogue, workshop, training, HRP places a high emphasis to invite women and ensure their voices are heard their presence felt.

In the result framework and M& E framework specific indicators & targets have been set in collecting sex disaggregated data. Accordingly, every report of HRP including the event reports carry sex disaggregated data.

Logistics of HRP programmes organized in Dhaka and in the districts, is done keeping in mind special needs of women and at venue where it is convenience for women to participate. Programs organized in the districts, participially events targeting women from grass root organizations are given the option to request daily subsistence allowance in case they are to avoid night and late evening travels.

In addition to efforts to keep the programme gender focus the staff of HRP ensure a gender balance. Of the 8 core staff members of HRP 4 are women with the Chief Technical Advisor, National Programme Coordinator, Human Rights Expert and Gender Expert. Chief Technical Advisor leads the HR programme team and carries in her position significant decision making authority. National Programme Coordinator the is a senior position in the project responsible to ensure coordination between project management and operation of HRP.

8. 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, 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 is helping to ensure successful execution of the Programme.

9. Lessons learned and way forward

9.1 Lessons learned

9.1.1. Including multiple stake holders in all levels of project administration and implementation ensures cross sectoral cooperation and coordination. Project Advisory Board (PAB), Programme Implementation Committee (PIC) and Challenge Fund Board consist of relevant ministries, NGOs/CSOs and NHRC.

9.1.2 The capacity review of NHRC conducted by AFP, UNDP and OHCHR is well placed to be used as a tool to track progress of all aspects of NHRC including the extent to which it can deliver its mandate.

9.1.3 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.

9.1.4 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.

9.1.5 Involvement of Youth leaders in knowledge building and transformation process is a key in empowering youth in local community.

9.1.6. Wider consultations including holding consultation at district level bring to light human rights issues otherwise ignored or overlooked. Consultations have also led to several facts- finding missing raising NHRC profile among public

9.1.7 Participation of members of the excluded minorities vital in finding practical solutions to systemic problems compromising human rights

9.1.8. Staff capacity needs to be developed in order to avoid over reliance on external consultants. For example, M&E framework and the theory of change could be developed by the programme staff rather than hiring the international staff.

9.1.9. Delays in recruiting project staff has hampered programme delivery

9.2 Way forward

9.2.1 Continue to engage multiple stake holders in project implementation and decision making platforms

9.2.2. Align NHRC strategic plan (2016 -2020) concluding observations made under treaty bodies and the upcoming UPR cycle (3rd cycle recommendations)

9.2.3. Continue to work with thematic committees and involve them in fact finding missions and advocacy campaigns

9.2.4. Effective coordination and networking of CSOs working on Human Rights at local and national level needs to be closely pursued

9.2.5. Continue to expand the youth network and support establish links with other international and regional networks. Support effective engagement of youth leaders in community-based actions.

9.2.6 Expedite recruitments of HRP staff and improve working conditions at NHRC

9.2.7 A regular (monthly) review of the AWP of HRP and NHRC should be operational for tracking progress on both sides. This will eventually lead to more delivery.

10. Statement of expenditures and delivery (April 2016-April 2017)

During the period (April 2016 to April 2017) total budget was USD 829,195 of which USD 669,498 was spend by April 2017. The total delivery rate 81% against the budget.

Budget and Expenditure by donors:

Name of Donor	Budget	Expenditure	%
SIDA	656,143	640,732	98%
SDC	84,020	9,314	11%
DANIDA	89,031	19,452	22%
Total	829,195	669,498	81%

Donor wise Budget and Expenditure (April 2016 to April 2017)

