

ANNUAL REPORT

July 2019 - June 2020



নাগরিক উদ্যোগ
NAGORIK UDDYOG
CITIZEN'S INITIATIVE

ANNUAL REPORT

JULY 2019 - JUNE 2020



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1 ABOUT NAGORIK UDDYOG

1.1 Introduction

Nagorik Uddyog (NU) was established in 1995 by a group of nationally and internationally renowned Bangladeshi human rights activists and academics aiming to promote good governance, access to justice and institutionalize democracy at the local and national level. Since its establishment, NU has been working to strengthen local government via the dual imperatives of, on the one hand, raising awareness among the general masses of people's basic human rights and, on the other, building people's capacity to pursue and realize these rights. In the beginning, the organization worked on a voter education program and raising awareness among the women so that they can claim their rights from local government institutions and the community. Over time, NU extended its activities across the country with a specific focus on rights of marginalized people especially access to justice of the rural communities, Dalit rights, right to information and human rights advocacy.

Afterwards, NU brought the initiatives to the notice of the international community by its networking with international rights groups including the United Nations bodies. The organization played a key role to establish a national level campaign on the issues of right to food, right to information, Dalit rights and informal sector labour rights. With regard to that, NU at first involved with some projects and later started to lead the works such as Campaign for Right to Food and Social Security (RTF&SS), Campaign on Citizen Right

to Information (CCRTI), Bangladesh Dalit and Excluded Rights Movements (BDERM), and Bangladesh Labor Rights Forum (BLRF). Subsequently, NU attained expertise on the implementation of the programs on access to justice through community mediation, legal

education, referring cases to village court, strengthening arbitration council at the union level and providing legal aid at the court level. NU also specialized on promoting rights of Dalit and marginalized communities including Indigenous Peoples. Over the period, NU effectively established networks with national and international organizations working for civil and political rights as well as economic, social and cultural rights.

1.2 Background

Mission

Nagorik Uddyog aims for an egalitarian society based on social and gender justice. It wishes to see accountable, transparent and responsive institutions that can mobilize the community to attain their rights and entitlements. In particular, NU focuses on issues related to women, socially excluded, unprivileged, Indigenous Peoples and other minority communities.

Vision

Nagorik Uddyog (NU) envisages a poverty-free nation with equal rights and dignity irrespective of race, colour, sex, language, religion, ethnic or social origin, income, birth or other opinion and social status.

The mandate of NU is to promote human rights and good governance with a particular focus on local governance. It is committed to democratizing the conventional system of mediation (Salish), so as to establish social and gender justice. It facilitates to realize the rights of women at the grassroots level through education on civil rights, human rights and women's rights and by resolving community and family dispute through mediation. NU also works on to promote the rights of the minorities, with special focus on Dalit, Linguistic Minorities and Indigenous Peoples.

Objectives

1. Improve access to justice through human rights education, community mediation and legal aid;
2. Strengthen women leadership by promoting their individual and collective capabilities to realize women's rights;
3. Protect and promote rights of Dalit, indigenous peoples, socially excluded, child and minority communities;
4. Strengthen Local Government Institutions (LGIs) by supporting local justice mechanisms, ensuring good governance and building institutional capacity;
5. Promote labour rights through awareness, mobilization and skill training, policy advocacy, campaign and networking;
6. To empower citizens through raising awareness and using the right to information act for making transparent and accountable governance;
7. To protect the environment to make it sustainable and raise awareness on climate impact and adaptation;
8. Undertake research, fact findings and investigations on socio-economic, cultural and civil and political rights;
9. Protect and promote human rights through the lobby, advocacy, networking and campaign at local, national and international level.

1.3 Legal Status

NU functions in compliance with the legal requirements of the government and NGO Affairs Bureau of Bangladesh. NU is registered with the Joint Stock Company and NGO Affairs Bureau of Bangladesh.

Joint Stock Companies Act No. (Act XVIII):

Registration Number: C 360 (17)/ 95,

Date of Registration: March 20, 1995

NGO Affairs Bureau:

Registration No. 1240

Date of Registration: February 23, 1998
(Renew Date: February 23, 2018)

1.4 Governance

At present, NU is run by a ten-person Executive Committee consisting of 5 men and 4 women and a Chief Executive Officer. This Committee oversees the organization's basic operation and makes decisions as to its strategic agenda.

NU operates eight distinct operational units that handle either the organization's administrative affairs or indeed carry out its projects and programs. A Central Management Committee (CMT) consisting of senior female and male staff including the Chief Executive takes the operational decisions of the organization. These six units are known as:

- Access to Justice Program
- Partnership Program
- Advocacy, Campaign a& Networking
- Research, Policy & Communication
- Legal Aid & Investigation
- Theater and Cultural
- Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Documentation
- Administration and Finance

1.4 Working Area

NU's head office is located at Lalmatia, Dhaka [House-8/14, Block-B, Lalmatia, Dhaka].

NU operates 4 (four) Child Care and Drop-in Center in Dhaka.

NU has 4 (four) field offices located at Badarganj and Rangpur Upazila at Rangpur District, Kalihati Upazila of Tangail District and Barisal Sadar and Banaripara Upazila of Barisal District. Besides,

NU has partner offices at Maulavibazar, Bhola, Khulna, Jessore, Mymensingh and Nilphamari (Syedpur) district.

2

COMMUNITY ACTIVISM FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND GENDER JUSTICE



2.1 Grassroots Women Leaders Network

Nagorik Uddyog, since its inception in 1995, has promoted human rights and good governance, with a particular focus on gender rights. NU considers the establishment of a gender sensitive society to be critical to the formation of a larger democratic polity. It is committed to democratizing the conventional system of mediation, so as to establish social and gender justice. NU emphasizes on building and strengthening people's organization for ensuring rights and meaningful access to justice of marginalized people as well as developing human rights activism. With this view NU helped facilitate the creation of two distinctive community based organizations – Grassroots Women Leaders Network (GWLN) and Citizens Rights Group (CRG). A brief of the function of this organizations is as follows:

Nu understands that it is of the outmost importance that women leaders be trained and developed at the grassroots level given the crisis in formal institutions. Rural women in Bangladesh, are vulnerable to a long entrenched patriarchal social order and hold very little access to justice, basic social services, and community decision-making processes. One of NU's key concerns is hence to empower rural women, including elected women members of the UPs, to build their capacity to realize their human rights themselves and help ensure their effective participation in the electoral process, in local development committees, and important decision-making activities like Shalish. To this end, NU works to form organizations of women like 'Grassroots Women Leaders Network', providing them with training and workshops on key human rights and legal issues, and helping them consolidate their power to respond to the injustices they face as a group.



Members of the GWLN aspire to see their networks eventually achieve a level of independence and self-reliance. Such autonomy would on the one hand evidence the goal of women's empowerment in rural Bangladesh being achieved, and it would also give the women greater sovereignty over their own interests and their own destinies as Bangladeshi citizens. And finally, GWLN in four working areas of NU- Rangpur Sadar, Badarganj under Rangpur district, Kalihati under Tangail district and Banaripara under Barishal district have been able to register themselves, with the Department of Women Affairs in their respective districts. They operate the project 'Access to Justice through Human Rights Education and Community Mediation' as the partners of NagorikUddyog. Additionally, they are also receiving government funds from their own initiative.

2.2 Citizens' Rights Group (CRG)

Citizens' Rights Group (CRG)s are fully functioning community institutions. Each formed with selected members from the unions who are especially interested in promoting human rights, governance and women rights. Each CRG consists of 36 members from the union (18 male, 18 female). Members of CRGs are given extensive training on human rights law as well as mediation techniques. 'Refresher courses' are given as required. Each union-level CRG holds regular meetings to review and discuss the human

rights situation in their respective community as well as Shalish. Members share experiences and describe interesting aspects of recent Shalish hearings. They also discuss relevant State and international laws, which enables members to keep each other updated and informed. These meetings are beneficial for monitoring Shalish procedures and to help uphold human rights activism at the community level.

The CRGs are much visible in the community as a collective strength in protecting rights of people especially women and eliminating all kinds of social abuses and prejudice from the community. Their collective or individual efforts in resisting child marriage, domestic violence, establishing the inheritance right of women, realizing rights of alimony and maintenance, has made them a great comfort to the destitute people in one hand and a pressure group to the influential people on the other hand.

The CRG's increased participation in social activities and social organizations enhanced their acceptance in the community. Many members are representing the maximum social organization in the community. Their growing relationship with UP bodies has made the UP more accountable and accessible for people. For instance, with the assistance of



2.3.1 Skill Development Training

Training for Community Forum Members: NU organized skill development training to the forum members. In order to enhance the skill of the women leaders and forum members, NU organized 3 training sessions for GWLN executive members to enhance their skill on organizational development and management. A total of 63 women attended the training.

Training on Gender, Law and Human Rights: 6 training sessions on gender, law and human rights were organized for the GWLN members. The objective of the training was to enhance leadership capacity of GWLN through enriching their knowledge on family, social, political and legal issues. Besides, gender based violence, challenges faced by women, social discrimination was also discussed in the training.

Training on law and mediation for Union level CRG: 40 training session organized for the Union level CRG on law and mediation. The objective of the training was to provide knowledge on existing laws of the state as well as mediation technique and process. It was expected that the training will strengthen members' organizational and individual capacity and thus they will be able to contribute effectively to society.

UP they helped a large number of vulnerable people in getting VGF cards, VGD cards, elderly allowance, widow allowance, and allowance for disable and other support from government and non-government organizations. During natural calamities like flood and cyclone Sidr, they responded to the affected people through distributing relief goods, giving shelter, repairing houses, educational institutions, mosques and roads with their own contribution.

2.3 Activities of GWLN and CRG

The GWLN meets quarterly at Union and Upazila level where they share their experiences in working to establish women's rights, discuss the GWLN's activities in the past quarter and plan the GWLN's upcoming activities for the term ahead. Enlisted women leaders participate in such a meeting, and when possible women UP members and female college students also take part. The meetings build confidence among the women leaders to collectively work against violations of women's rights in their communities. They also play a significant role at the community level in educating people – women and men – about human rights and the intrinsic value of gender equality. GWLN has an annual conference each year in all working areas.



2.3.2 Community Awareness

NU regularly organizes community awareness raising in the form of court yard meetings and popular folk song performances.

Women Group Discussion: Women Group Discussion (Courtyard meeting) generally participated by women, adolescent boys and girls. The meetings are usually conducted by women leaders and the discussions progress based on a flip chart that contains information on women rights, inheritance rights, reproductive health and hygiene issues, gender equality, importance of girls' education, demerits of child marriage etc. In the reporting period, 11 women groups discussion were held and were participated by 360 women and 71 men. The women group discussion encouraged many women to register complaints with NU for domestic violence or other family matters.

Folk song performance: NU organizes Baul show (Folk song) at community level to disseminate messages on legal and human rights particularly on early marriage, dowry, family violence, violence against women, divorce, importance of girl's education, inheritance rights of women, land rights and the benefits of mediation to resolve the local disputes. In 2019-20, NU organized 13 Baul shows in the working areas through which 2094 community people (women 719, male 1375) received awareness raising messages on the above mentioned issues.

Day Observations

NU organized multiple rallies and human chains in celebration of following days – International Mother Language Day on 21st February, International Women's Day on 8 March, National Legal Aid Day- 28 April, International Day to resist violence against women on 25th November. A total of 1110 people (women -777, men 393) attended the celebrations of the aforementioned day.

School & Madrasa Campaign against Child Marriage

GWLN and CRG initiated innovative campaigns at schools and madrasahs for creating awareness against child marriage, domestic violence and to disseminate human rights education. In the reporting period, they organized 14 sharing meetings at schools and madrasahs attended by 1658 participants (female student -884, male student 605, teachers and guardians 169). This event also influenced the participants in constituting the 'Child Marriage Resistance Committee' consisting of students and teachers.

2.3.3 Organizational Activities

Half Yearly Coordination meeting with wider stakeholders:

GWLN and CRG jointly organized sharing meeting at 7 unions on the issue of access to justice, human rights and gender justice. A range of stakeholders including Parliamentary

Member, union and upazila elected representatives, religious leaders, marriage registers, civil society members, journalists, and representatives from Government Organizations and non-government organizations, representatives and forum members themselves have attended in the sharing sessions. A total of 251 persons (199 women and 51 men) participated in the meetings. On this occasion, honorable guests and participants in the sharing meetings discussed the adverse consequences of child marriage, dowry and importance of women participation in decision making process of traditional community mediation.

Project Orientation with wider stakeholders

Citizens' Rights Group (CRG) organized 3 stakeholder meetings at Upazila level and 21 meetings at union level. The objective of the meetings was to provide orientations to the project to the wider stakeholders like government officials, local elected representatives, NGOs, media and community personnel as well. A total of 1612 participants (women- 176, Men-1436) from different professions and strata attended the events.

Fact finding of Human Rights violation

In the reporting period, GWLN and CRG prevented 13 child marriages. Besides, they handed over investigation reports of a rape case on a minor girl and the torture of domestic workers to the law enforcing agencies and administration. The fact-finding portions of these incidents enhanced member's capacity to deal with human rights issues. In a few cases, where influential people were found with the incidents, the group brought out human chains, press conferences as well as submitted a memorandum to the administration and police to take necessary action.

2.3.4 Receiving Joyeeta Award

Three (3) members of GWLN, Banaripara Unit, received the Joyeeta Award for their courage and contribution to promote women rights in the society. Every year, the award is given by the government to women who have shone in particular areas

of life, including entrepreneurship, social development, education, employment, motherhood, and prevention of repression. They are presented on 'Rokeya Day' on 9 December, which celebrates Begum Rokeya, a pioneer of women's liberation and education in South Asia. The awardees this year were Ms. Mahinur Begum- for her contribution to the education and employment; Ms. Poli Akther- in the category of transformation after repression and Ms. Shipu Rani for the social development category. They were given crests and prize money through a ceremony organized by the Banaripara Upazila Administration and Department of Women Affairs on 9th December 2019.

GWLN receiving grant from government departments

Grassroots Women Leaders Network (GWLN) of Kalihati, Tangail received 40,000 taka and GWLN Rangpur Unit receives 20,000 taka in project funds from the Department of Women Affairs for social development project

Access to Social Safety Net Support

GWLN and CRG helped men and women from perished community's poor community men and women to receive different government social safety net support. A brief of the support received by the community people is as follows- VGD card-54, VGF card-40, widow allowance-31, allowance for lactating mother-53, tube-well-22, festival assistance (10 kg rice)-7, Disability card-11, house-1, solar panel-23, warm clothes-14, disability allowance-4, card fare rice price card-1 and card for fishermen-2.

CRG gets government registration

CRG, Banaripara Unit got registration (Reg no. 17, Banaripara-U) from the government Department of the Cooperative. From their savings members have the opportunity to borrow money for small scale business. During the accounts of CRG of Banaripara has been audited by the government line department.

3

ACCESS TO JUSTICE



Community mediation is a traditional and popular means of ensuring access to justice in the rural community of Bangladesh. However, the structure of the community mediation process reflects the disparities in the class and gender hierarchy endemic with in social relations in rural Bangladesh. Rural society in Bangladesh is male dominated, especial powerful and influential males; women are only prevented from making their voices heard in a traditional shalish, further their participation, presence and representation is strongly discouraged. Consequently, in cases where there are conflicting parties hailing from unequal social or economic statuses, judgments invariably go in favor of the dominant group. Ruling on matters of custom or religion tend to be made on the basis of personal interpretations of texts and community norms rather than with reference to the legal framework. Even after treading the abovementioned blockades to justice

for the discriminated, the Salish systems and the rulings ensuing therefrom are not impervious to corruption, nepotism and the pressure of political patronage.

Recognizing the potential of Shalish to serve as a means for accessible justice for rural people, women in particular, NU strives to make *Shalish* more open, gender sensitive and democratic. NU believes, without the development of alternative institutional structures-which will be equitable and sustainable in the long run-access to justice, will never be democratic. Community organizations arising out of the initiative of NU - Citizens Rights Group (CRG) and Grassroots Women Leaders Network, play pioneering roles in transforming the traditional shalish through their legal knowledge and effort to establish equality and participation of women in the shalish.

NU'S APPROACH FOR TRANSFORMING TRADITIONAL SHALISH

Members of the community, irrespective of social status or sex can register complaints with NU. Union level staff of NU or group members also help the community people to register their complaint with NU. NU has developed a systematic method of recording the complaints for shalish. Different forms are used for different parts of the process, from receiving the complaint, to the eventual settlement of the complaint. When a complaint reaches the community Mobilizer, a formal shalish registration takes place at the local NU office. The complainant must fill out a shalish form specifying the nature, history and details of the grievance. The shalish form serves as an official record of the proceedings. The local staff then undertake a fact-finding mission to investigate the validity of the charges. On the basis of this evidence, NU sends a notice announcing an upcoming shalish to both parties. If both sides are willing, a mutually convenient date and place of shalish is fixed. In case one party does not show up on the designated date, NU will set new dates. After the successful resolution of disputes, NU Community Mobilizer will follow up the decisions made in the shalish for three months. In a few cases, NU refers the aggrieved party to the courts. Steps in the proceedings of the shalish, such as the setting of date for mediation session, selection of mediators, place where the mediation will be held, settlement of the outcome of the dispute and its implementation - all are undertaken by community mediators who have been trained by NU. NU not only documents and follows up throughout the entirety of the shalish process and keeps the mediators updated on the status of the Shalish, but also follows up whether the shalish process and decisions that have been taken conform to legal and human rights standards.

3.1 Status of Community Mediation

During 2019-2020 NU received as many as 822 complaints of various categories. Of the total 911 cases, (newly recorded 822 and 89 pending cases of last year) 553 cases were settled and 209 cases were rejected for various reasons. NU initiated committee members (WSC, CRG, GWLN) often made the parties settle disputes within their family environment through pre-counselling. Some cases were also rejected on grounds that after investigation by the NU bodies they were found to be false. Two cases were referred to the courts, as the parties to the

dispute could not find an amicable position, and were unhappy with the outcome of the Shalish. The following table shows the number of Shalish conducted during 2019-20.

Sl.	Types of complaint	Last year Pending	This year received	Resolved	Cancelled	Referred to court	Currently Pending
1	Domestic violence	22	256	164	80	0	34
2	Family dispute	12	149	116	18	0	27
3	Alimony	0	2	1	1	0	0
4	Maintenance	3	9	5	5	0	2
5	Polygamy	0	1	0	0	0	1
6	Dowry	9	53	28	22	0	12
7	Divorce related	0	1	1	0	0	0
8	Guardianship	0	2	0	1	0	1
9	Separation	14	0	4	4	0	6
10	Reinstatement of conjugal life	21	151	77	53	0	43
11	Conflict among neighbors	1	56	45	5	0	7
12	Sexual harassment	1	37	32	1	0	0
13	Land dispute	1	37	33	5	0	0
14	Inheritance right	0	4	3	1	0	0
17	Compensation claim	4	47	33	6	0	12
18	Stealing	0	4	1	3	0	0
19	Personal loan	1	7	6	2	0	0
20	Microcredit	0	6	4	2	0	0
Total		89	822	553	209	0	145

Resource Realization through Salish

Through community mediation a total of 999 (543 females and 456 male) community people benefited from the community mediation organized by NU over all time. Besides, NU aided the realization of BDT 47, 66,000, 31.5 acres of land in favor of beneficiaries through community mediation. Among the beneficiaries 66 women were women and 21 were men.

3.2 Legal Aid support to the community level

Apart from community mediation, NU provides legal support to destitute who cannot otherwise afford proper legal support. The cases that could not be settled through Salish are taken into consideration to decide whether they will be given legal support in the court

based on the criticality and importance of the case. In this matter, at first NU investigates the matter, and later supports the victim to get justice through formal court with the help of panel lawyers. The victim also can apply for legal support from NU.

Currently NU is undertaking 51 cases in its 7 working areas on different categories like family dispute, violence against women and children, land dispute, dowry, alimony and maintenance; all of which are litigated and supported by a panel of 18 highly skilled and dedicated lawyers.

Courts	Filed	withdrawal/ rejected	judgment	pending
Family court	23	0	0	23
Women and child tribunal	12	0	0	12
Other criminals matters	13	0	0	13
Other civil matters	1	0	0	1
Land related	6	0	0	6
Total	55	0	0	55



Half Yearly Coordination Meeting with Panel Lawyers and stakeholders:

NU arranges half yearly coordination meetings between panel lawyers, beneficiaries and other stakeholders. Government officials, local government elected members, and group members are also invited in the meeting. This year, 3 coordination meetings were organized by NU. A coordination meeting with the presence of lawyers not only generate opportunities to share details about the case and the procedures involved but also creates a network between the lawyers and the stakeholders.

Legal Advice through Community Legal Counseling Center:

NU facilitates legal counseling sessions at community level. Impoverished people come to legal aid clinics to receive legal advice that is provided by a skilled panel lawyer at the union level. During the reporting period 418 impoverished members of the community (around 40% being women) received advice on different legal issues.

4

RIGHTS OF THE CHILD



4.1 Daycare Centres

NU has been implementing a program on rights of the child focusing on providing care to the children of mothers who work in the informal sector and garment factories. Currently NU is operating multiple Daycare Centers and Drop in Centers for the children of working mothers. There the children receive pre-primary education, vocational education along with healthy meals and health care. A glimpse of the number of children at the Day Care Centers and Drop in Centers are as follows –

Name of the center		Number of Children		
		Boy	Girl	Total
Day Care Center	Sawnapuri-1	27	23	50
	Sawnapuri-2	19	28	47
	Total	46	51	97
Drop in Center	Alor Mela-1	46	24	70
	Alor Mela-1	44	24	68
	Total	90	48	138
Grand Total		136	99	235

A total of 97 children received care from the Day Care Centers (Swapnapuri-1 and Swapnapuri-2) of Nagorik Uddyog. The working mothers drop their children (2-5 years old) at the center while going to their work and pick them up after office hours. The children can stay at the centre for 13 hours (7:00 AM to 8:00 PM), allowing working mother's time to pick up or drop their children before and after their working day begins. The children are provided with breakfast, lunch and evening snacks. Along with nutritious food, they are also provided with pre-primary education, health care and entertainment and thus they grow amid protection and security. During the reporting period, 21 children of the daycare center got admission into mainstream schools. NU has a follow-up mechanism for the children who left the daycare center. During 2019-20 period, on an average 35 children have received health



care from the day care centers. NU helped 42 children of the day care centers to get their birth registration documents. In the reporting period 2 meetings of the guardians were attended by 87 guardians. In the meetings they learned about rights of labor, rights of women workers, safety at workplace, social safety net program, labor laws etc.

4.2 Drop-In Center

Through the Drop in Centers, NU supports 80 children by providing informal education, skill development training, and health care facilities to school drop-outs, working and street children. During 2019-20, 138 children received support from the Drop-in Centers namely, Alor Mela-1 and Alor-Mela-2. These children are usually involved in informal sector work or help their family household chores. NU provides them with informal and technical education through the drop-in centers. They are allowed to come to the center when they get the time and receive education for 2/3 hours. In the Drop in Centers, children learn the alphabets, words, how to count, and make

sentences both in English and Bengali. The children also learn rhymes, songs, and about hygiene issues. During the reporting period 8 children, who received informal education, got admitted into formal primary education. After getting admission in formal school the children are followed up on in three states and if any children drop out from the school, NU consults the issue with their guardians in an attempt to continue their education.

During 2019-20, 11 peer group meetings and 10 awareness raising meetings held with the children of Drop in Centers. Particular problematic areas, based on the social problems generally they face in their life (such as a negative consequence of smoking, eve-teasing, dowry and child marriage) is selected and discussed in the group meetings. Through participating in the peer meetings children benefited from the awareness created among them. 29 children completed a training course on sewing as part of vocational education. 27 children have received birth registration with the help of NU.

5

PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM



5.1. RIGHTS OF DALIT AND SOCIALLY EXCLUDED

It is estimated that around 6.5 million Dalit, socially excluded and minority communities are living in Bangladesh. Over the years, they have been experiencing multiple forms of discriminations and human rights violations. They experience dehumanizing practices linked to socio-cultural deprivation and discrimination based on work and descent, such as untouchability and chronic poverty in Bangladesh. They have been deprived of proper accommodation, education, health, water and sanitation, employment opportunities and participation in social and political activities.

Considering the human rights situation of the Dalit community, Nagorik Uddyog and BDERM have been jointly working, aiming to create an enabling environment where Dalit, socially excluded and minority communities would be able to live with full respect and dignity and be capable to exercise their rights fully as citizens.

In 2008 NU helped facilitation of a platform of Dalit led organizations - Bangladesh Dalit & Excluded Rights Movement (BDERM). Since its inception, BDERM has been playing a pioneering role in popularizing the movement of Dalit rights in Bangladesh as well as regional and international level.

Currently BDERM has been working with 7 divisional coordination teams and forming 54 district committees. Along with the divisional team, 2500 registered individual members, 17 Civil Society Organization's members and 65 Dalit Human Rights Defenders (DHRDs) across the country have been working with BDERM to protect human rights violation against Dalit and socially excluded minorities.



5.1.1 Organization Capacity Building

A. 10th National Convention of BDERM

10th National Convention of BDERM was held on 1st of December, 2019 and was participated by BDERM leaders from all over the country. The convention placed its previous years' activity report and a general discussion regarding the rights of Dalit and the present context of the country. Mr. Israfil Alam, MP, was the chief guest of the convention while Ms. Gloria Sarkar Jharna, MP; Mr. Shamsul Huda, Executive Director, Association of Land Reforms and Development (ALRD) and Mr. Gobinda Saha, Lead Consultation, CSS Bangladesh were present as special guests of honor. Others who gave solidarity speeches in the convention was Mr. Md. Sharifuzzaman Sharif, General Secretary, Gono Sanghati, Mr. Mukul Ranjan Sikder, Advisor, BDERM, Mr. Utpal Biswas, General Secretary, Minority Rights Forum and Mr. Zakir Hossain, Chief Executive, Naogrik Uddyog and Advisor, BDERM. The convention was chaired by Ms. Moni Rani Das, President, BDERM.

B. Organizational Meeting

In the 2019-20 reporting period, BDERM organized 4 meetings of the executive committee of the platform. The agenda of discussion of the meeting were presenting district-regional level activities, allocation of national budget for Dalit community and the upcoming convention of BDERM. Besides, BDERM organized 17 District and Upazila level meetings during 2019-20.

5.1.2 Partners Capacity Building

A. Training on program management, finance and documentation

A capacity-building training was organized for the partners of BDERM on 21 July 2019 at Dhaka to strengthen their organizational strength. Through the training the partners learned about reporting, event reporting, case study writing, financial management and accounts.

B. Workshop on organizational policy review, development and implementation:

A workshop on organizational policy review, development and implementation was organized on 12th October, 2019 and was participated by the four (4) partners of BDERM. Through the workshop the partners learned about formulation and implementation strategy of Gender policy, sexual harassment redressal policy, child protection policy, conflict resolution policy, environmental policy etc.

C. Workshop for partners Capacity building

Two workshops held from 22 to 23 December 2019 with the partner organizations Uddipta Mohila Unnayan Sangstha, Asrumochon Mohila Unnayan Sangstha, Malavibazar Cha Jonogosthi Adivasi Front and Dalit Nari forum. The key issues of the workshops were review



of organizational management, it's strengths and weaknesses, review of policies and how to promote them from their own organizational activities.

D. Mobile app for tracking Dalit Human Rights Violation

A training focusing on a mobile application (app) for tracking Dalit human rights violations was held on 28th December, 2019. The aim of the training was to orient DHRDs about the using of the app and reporting of Dalit human rights violation through this app.

5.1.3 Advocacy Activities

A. National level advocacy:

Localization of SDGs: Issues of Dalit and Excluded communities

Nagorik Uddyog and BDERM organized a series of dialogues at the district level to mobilize SDGs focusing issues of Dalit and Excluded communities. On the 30th of December, 2019, a dialogue held at Rangpur titled "Sustainable Development Goals-2030: Inclusion of Dalit and Excluded Community". The dialogue was chaired by eminent academician of Rangpur Mr. Moley Kishor Bhattacharya. Ms. Mohsina Khatun, Panel Chairman, Rangpur Jila Parishad was the chief guest. Other guests were Mr. Masudar Rahman Milan, Vice Chair, Rangpur Sadar Upazila Parishad, Mst. Kajli Begum, Vice Chair, Rangpur Sadar Upazila Parishad, Ms.

Ira Haque, President, Women Chamber of Commerce and Industries, Rangpur, Khandakar Fakhrul Anam Benju, Chairperson, Sushaner Jonno Nagorik (SUJON), Rangpur city and Mr. Zakir Hossain, Chief Executive Nagorik Uddyog. Mr. Uttam Kumar Bhakta, General Secretary, BDERM facilitated the event. A keynote paper was presented which highlighted the status of the Dalit community in the Rangpur Division and placed some recommendations to be addressed by the government and other concerned agencies. The guests and speakers assured that they would incorporate the issue brought forth, of the Dalit from their respective activities.

Vulnerability of Dalit to Climate Change and inclusion in the SDGs

NU, BDERM and Paribartan, Khulna jointly organized a seminar on "Climate Vulnerability of Dalit and Excluded People of the Southern Coast: Protection and Inclusion in the SDGs" on December 24, 2019 at CSS AVA Center, Khulna. The seminar aimed to identify vulnerability of the Dalit and other socially excluded people living in the coastal areas due to the impact of climate change, finding ways forward to address their issues and the engagement of relevant government department, civil society and development organizations to ensure their inclusive development. The meeting was attended by Ms. Gloria Sarkar Jharna MP as chief guest while Mr. Syed Rabiul



Islam, Additional Divisional Commissioner (development) chaired the seminar. Besides, relevant government departments, civil society representatives also participated in the meeting. Hundreds of affected Dalit community people attended the seminar and shared their concern in the seminar.

National Seminar on adoption of Draft Anti-Discrimination Act

A round table discussion titled “Why Anti-Discrimination Act should be adopted urgently was organized on the 12th of December, 2019. Mr. Israfil Alam, MP was the chief guest while Ms. Lutfa Begum, MP and Mr. Shamim Haider Patwary, MP were present as special guests of honor along with two academicians having expertise in relevant laws. The round table was also attended by representatives of different excluded communities and shared the justification in favor of adoption of this act.

National Budget Monitoring:

An analytical report focusing allocations for the Dalit population in the national budget 2019-2020 has been prepared and shared with the policy makers and relevant stakeholders. Advocacy activities with a view to influence the policy makers to increase allocation in the national budget continued based on the report.

Day observance:

BDERM also celebrated Victory Day and paid homage to the martyrs of the liberation war

placing wreaths at the National Mausoleum at Savar. BDERM also celebrated international human dignity day at 50 districts with the slogan of our struggle, our dignity and our freedom.

B. Local level advocacy

Campaign, protest rally, human chain

Issue based human chain and rally was organized at Khlulna on 19th October, 2019 demanding the adoption of the Anti-Discrimination Act to eliminate discrimination based on work and descent. On the 19th of December, 2019 BDERM organized a human chain and rally at Sreemangal Upazila demanding a preferential quota for the tea community students in all public and private universities. Three (3) sharing meetings were held on ‘Socio-Economic Development of Dalit community’ at Charfasion Upazila, Bhola, Tala Upazila of Satkhira and Kamalganj Upazila of Maulavibazar district.

C. International Advocacy

International Conference on Castism

An International Conference on ‘Contemporary caste, Gender and Minority Questions in West Bengal & and Bangladesh: Some Exportations’ was held at Kolkata, West Bengal, India from October 31- November 3, 2019. Saint Xavier’s College, India; Victoria University of wellington, New Zealand, Ambedkar University Delhi, Nagorik Uddyog, Dhaka & Observer Research Foundation, Kolkata jointly organized this conference.



Eminent academicians, historians, writers, social thinkers and human rights activists from India and Bangladesh attended the meeting as discussants and presented papers in various sessions on relevant issues on the theme of the conference. A team of delegates from Nagorik Uddyog and BDERM attended the conference along with distinguished personalities such as Mr. Harisankar Jaladas, writer; Syed Abul Maksud, writer and columnist; Dr. Mesbah Kamal, Professor, University of Dhaka; Aroma Dutta MP.

Sharing meeting with ADRF and NCDHR

A sharing meeting was held among the representatives of BDERM, Asian Dalit Rights Forum and NCDHR on the 8th of December, 2019. The discussion was also participated by journalists, academicians and civil society representatives of Bangladesh. The purpose of the meeting was to share news of Dalit activism in Bangladesh and to collect the opinions of the civil society on the matter.

Participation in the Beijing 25+ Review:

Tamanna Singh Bariak, International Affairs Secretary of BDERM attended the Asia-Pacific Regional Review of the 25th Anniversary of Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action: Beijing +25 Review, held at Bangkok, Thailand from November 21-27, 2019. She attended various sessions and shared statements in an event of the CSO Forum.

5.1.4 Education support for poor Dalit students

BDERM and BDWF operate multiple pre-primary schools named “Uddyog Education Center” intending to increase literacy within the youth of the Dalit community. This

program has brought about positive changes among the Dalit parents and they have become increasingly more interested in the education of their children. Currently, with the support of NU, BDERM and BDWF have been running 25 (10 more will be introduced in the present year) pre-primary schools, across the country along with providing the basic necessities of education such as books, notebooks, floor-mats, stationary and flipcharts. At the moment, 750 Dalit students are studying in these pre-primary schools. The education centers are located in Dhaka, Bhola, Barisal Sadar, Jessore (Chowgacha), Satkhira (Tala) Botiaghata (Khulna), Shreemangal, Tala and Komolganj under the Maulavibazar district.

5.1.5 Fact finding of Human Rights Violation

A total 31 cases of human rights violations against Dalits were investigated during the reporting period. The issues in the cases were related to land grabbing, untouchability, physical abuse, vandalizing of religious statues and temples, early marriage and dowry, abduction of Dalit girls, filing false cases against Dalit persons, domestic violence on Dalit women, discrimination at educational institutions, and denial of access to temples, restrictions on the usage of passages and roads, etc. However, 11 cases were mediated through the help of the local UP chairmen, members and influential people. One case was referred to a local legal aid providing organization and the remaining cases are still under follow-up.



5.2 DALIT WOMEN EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMME

Dalit women in Bangladesh are one of the most voiceless groups in the country being discriminated by the dominant castes and other groups in the society. While being discriminated by the internal orifices of their community, the Dalit women also face discrimination from the mainstream patriarchal societal structures. The discrimination faced by the Dalit women is usually threefold based on the grounds of caste, gender and economic status. Dalit women in Bangladesh are thus trapped in highly patriarchal societies, confined to the bottom of both caste and gender hierarchies and are victims of high rates of domestic violence and societal isolation. Many Dalit communities are ruled by patriarchal systems under which Dalit women have very little or no scopes to raise their voice in the family, let alone in the rest of society, and Dalit women seldom get the opportunity to explore their potentiality for leadership. Local panchayats (governance bodies) are dominated by male Dalits, and in most cases Dalit women are not allowed to talk before the panchayat. It is still a dream for most of the Dalit women to be represented in the local panchayat as a primary stage of their empowerment. Though there are implementation gaps in a number of areas when it comes to the inclusion of Dalit women in development policies, special measures have been taken to improve the

situation for women in general. However, the Dalit community is not made the target of any programmed interventions. Similarly, while some policies have been made to ensure facilities for minorities, extremely poor and disadvantaged groups, the issues of Dalits were not given any attention.

Under this circumstances, NU and BDERM have taken initiative to facilitated and capacitate Dalit women led CSOs and bring them under a national platform to raise their demand collectively at both the national and local level to realize their rights and entitlement. The initiative focuses on strengthening Dalit women led CSOs under a national platform, create awareness on Dalit women rights issues and to produce evidence based knowledge and information for advocacy and campaign. With this view NU helped the facilitation of the Bangladesh Dalit Women Federation (BDWF) network.

5.2.1 Organizational Capacity Building

A. National Convention of BDWF

Bangladesh Dalit Women Federation (BDWF) organized an annual convention on 28 July, 2019 at CBCB, Mohammadpur, Dhaka. The objective of this convention was to share progress reports of the BDWF with its members, preparing action plans and the election of the new committee of BDWF. Ms. Aysa Khanam, Chairperson of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad (BMP) was present as the Chief Guest in the convention. The special

guests were Mr. Zakir Hossain, Chief Executive, Nagorik Uddyog and advisor of BDWF; Ms. Jona Goswami, Director, BMP and Nadira Parvin, Programme Manager, Nagorik Uddyog. The convention was chaired by Moni Rani Das, Chairperson, BDWF. A total 75 participants (female-65, male-10) participated in the convention. The new committee members elected through the convention are as follows- Chairperson- Prova Rani Baraik, Vice-Chairperson- Dipa Majumdar; General Secretary- Banani Biswas; Treasurer- Aynamoti Biswas; Organizing Secretary- Jayonti Rani, Member-Moni Rani Das and Anima Mondol,

B. Community awareness meeting on Gender based Violence

Members organizations of BDWF conducted 60 awareness creating sessions on gender and gender based violence. It needs to be mentioned that members of the BDWF received training on gender and gender based violence, to conduct awareness sessions with local Dalit women, men and adolescents. A flip chart on gender and GBV was printed under the project that was used by the BDWF members during the awareness sessions. A total of 1,724 (female-1664, male-60) people of Dalit community attended to the awareness sessions.

C. Periodic meeting of BDWF

A Half yearly meeting among BDWF members is held regularly at the Nagorik Uddyog office, Dhaka. A total of 10 member organizations of the BDWF participated in this year's meeting. BDWF member organizations presented their individual plan for the development of Dalit women. Additionally, they prepared a half yearly plan for BDWF. They also finalized the draft constitution of BDWF in the same meeting.

D. CBO meeting

42 CBO meeting at 4 Upazilas were conducted participated by 988 Dalit community people (796 female and 192 male). The agendas discussed in the meetings were human rights, discrimination, skills training, violence against women and prevention, employment opportunity for Dalit and access to available government services.

E. Organize bi-monthly meeting with DHRDs

4 bi-annual meetings of Dalit Human Rights Defenders were held in the 2019-2020 reporting period. 6 bi-monthly meetings with DHRDs were also held during the reporting period. The activity progress was reviewed and challenges were identified and discussed in the meeting. Action plan for the next two months was also prepared in the meeting. DHRDs were given feedback on the last CA visit to Jashore and a refresher session was also held on how to conduct CBO meetings. Some of the agendas were education and small entrepreneurship support to the DHRDs, CBO skills training, fact finding and annual stakeholder's meeting. The Field Officers were requested to work closely with DHRDs so that they can get a clear idea about project activities.

F. Dalit women congregation

The biggest ever congregation and get together of Dalit women led organizations and activists held on October 22, 2019, at WVA auditorium Dhaka. The enthusiastic Dalit women brought a rally with the slogan 'Our Struggle, Our Dignity, Our Freedom' in observance of the event. A discussion meeting was also held and Ms. Aroma Dutta, MP as the chief guest gave her speech to inspire the Dalit women to stick to their struggle of realizing rights.

5.2.2 Economic Empowerment:

A. Income Generating Training and capital for Dalit Women:

187 Dalit women were provided with skills training on hand embroidery and karchupi from 9 unions of the project area. The 3 months long training was conducted by a master trainer. Additionally, 25 women were given training on sewing work. Among them 5 of the women, from Batiaghata, Kulna were given monetary aid so that they could start their own businesses. In Barisal, four Dalit were given BDT 4000 each to start small scale businesses. 6 Dalit women were given sewing machines after three months of training on dress making.



B. Job placement and small entrepreneurship support to the DHRDs

A total of 9 DHRDs were provided financial support to start a small business during the reporting period. A need based assessment and analysis was conducted to identify the potentiality of the small business they proposed. A total BDT 10,000.00 were provided to each DHRD for initiating small business. The DHRDs who received this support are as follows:

C. Conduct need assessment for apprenticeship training for Dalit community

An assessment held with 34 business institutions to explore the possibilities and scopes of apprenticeship training for the people of the Dalit community. During the assessment discussions were held with members of the dalit community as well as the owners of different business institutions on how the apprenticeships could be undertaken. Successful discussion with 4 business institutions were conducted and they agreed to enroll 6 people from the Dalit community to their business institutions.

NU later held an assessment for the job placement of rest of the targeted Dalit people. We conducted this assessment in each of our working areas and found that Dalit women who are especially housewives were interested to receive training on hand stitching

so that they can earn some money without interrupting their household work. This is to be mentioned that we have so far identified 9 groups in 9 unions. Total 187 Dalit women were provided a three-month long training course on hand embroidery.

D. Provide job placement training to 40 people from Dalit community

It was found that most of the rural Dalit women weren't involved with any income generating activity which could turn out to be helpful for their financial empowerment. In addition, we also found that there was a great demand for hand embroidery in Jashore and Khulna districts. So, the project team organized skills training course for 187 Dalit women from 9 unions under the Jashore and Khulna districts. It was a 3 month long training course which ended on the 15th of December, 2019.

A few of the enrolled trainees had the good luck of getting work while they were still in the middle of their training., however it was a little challenging for most of the trainees to find work orders as they were new to the business. With a view to reduce this difficulty, the project organized a consultation meeting at CCTS, Jashore on the 23rd of December, 2019 where the trainees were introduced to the local business holders. Md. Rafiqul Hasan, Additional Deputy Commissioner (General), Jashore was present as the Chief Guest. Other distinguished personalities present at the consultation meeting were Angela Gomej,



Founder & Executive Director, Banchte Shekha, Jashore; Rahenur Islam, Assistant Director, District Employment and Manpower Office, Jashore; Md. Ashadul Islam, Assistant Director, District Social Service Office, Jashore; Mobinul Islam Mobin, Executive Editor, Daily Gramer Kagoj, Jashore; Zakir Hossain, Chief Executive, Nagorik Uddyog, Dhaka; Bubhutosh Roy, Vice-President, BDERM; and Anjum Ara Mahmuda, Programme Officer, Women Affairs Office, Jashore. The consultation was chaired by Moni Rani Das, President, BDERM.

5.2.3 Advocacy & Communication:

A. Organize evidence based advocacy to improve the rights of Dalit women

Bangladesh Dalit Women Federation organized a consultation on 'Socio-Economic Development and Empowerment of Dalit Women: Reality and Way Forward' on the 30th of July, 2019 at CIRDA, Dhaka. Dr. Meghna Guhathakurata, Honorary Member, National Human Rights Commission. The special guests were Sara Hossain, Honourary Executive Director, BLAST; Ms. Aysha Siddiqui, Deputy Director, Department of Women Affairs; Ruhin Hossain Prince, Member of Central Committee, Communist Party of Bangladesh; Zakir Hossain, Chief Executive, Nagorik Uddyog and Advisor BDWF; Moni Rani Das, President, Bangladesh Dalit and Excluded Rights Movement (BDERM). The event was chaired by Ms. Prova Rani Baraik, Chairperson, BDWF. The keynote was presented by Istiaque Mahmud, Project Coordinator, Nagorik Uddyog. A total 11

members of the BDWF along with a total 86 participants (female-70, male-16) participated in the consultation. The guests gave emphasis on the need for quality education and alternative employment opportunities for Dalit women for their socio-economic development and empowerment.

B. Meeting with Parliamentarians

National Parliamentarian Forum on Dalit Concern organized a meeting on 4 September 2019 at the Parliamentarian Club of the National Parliament. The focus of the meeting was to influence the policy makers in regard to inclusion of Dalit issue in the Sustainable Development Goals as well as other facilities of the government. 11 parliamentarians attended the meeting with Mr. Israfil Alam, MP in the chair of the meeting.

C. Dalit Women and SDG-5

Bangladesh Dalit Women Federation (BDWF) and Dalit Women Forum jointly organized a sharing meeting titled "Development and Empowerment of Dalit Women: In the Perspective of SDG-5" on October 23, 2019 at National Press Club. A keynote paper presented in the meeting highlighted the situation of Dalit women in Bangladesh and how their issue is linked with SDG-5 and importance of inclusion of Dalit women issues

in the government planning and activities to achieve SDG-5 by 2030

D. Printing and distribution of IEC materials and reports

A total of 30 flipcharts on gender and issues relating to gender based violence were published. These flip charts were used by the BDWF members during awareness sessions. A total of 7000 brochures on BDWF profiles were published as well. The distribution process is under progress.

E. Observation of sixteen days activism

Bangladesh Dalit Women Federation (BDWF) celebrated 15 days of activism on prevention of violence against women. On The 25th of November, 2019, BDWF organized different activities in different places which included 5(five) discussion meetings at five (5) districts, four (4) rallies and two (2) human chains. Around 681 people (female-590, male-91) attended those events. BDWF and Dalit women forum celebrated 'Orange Day' through organizing a rally in front of the National Press club demanding prevention of discrimination and violence against Dalit women and children. BDWF member organizations organized 10 awareness raising sessions on the issue of gender and gender based violence participated by Dalit male, female, adolescent girl and boys.

F. Half-yearly meeting of CBOs with union council representatives

28 half-yearly meetings with union council representatives in 14 unions (2 in each union) were held during the reporting period. A total of 1,154 people (female-681, male-473) attended the meetings. The UP members along with the UP chairmen and people from the Dalit community attended the meetings. The objectives of these meetings were to attract attention of the local elected representatives to the existing problems of Dalit communities and request them to provide necessary support for the socio-economic development. These meetings provide opportunity for the Dalit to strengthen their relationship with the local elected representatives. The people of the Dalit communities presented their problems

in front of the chairmen and members and requested them to provide necessary support.

The meetings also helped to strengthen the relationship of the Dalit community with the union council representatives. As a result, their access to the government services increased. It needs to be mentioned that during the reporting period a total of 252 people (female-137, male-115) from the Dalit community got access to government services as an outcome of the advocacy meeting with the union council representatives.

Sl.	Type of service	Number of beneficiaries		
		Female	Male	Total
1	Old allowance	9	19	28
2	Widow allowance	8	0	8
3	Abandoned by husband allowance	5	0	5
4	Disability allowance	8	11	19
5	Housing support	1	11	12
6	VGD	30	17	47
7	VGF	51	45	96
8	Stipend	8	7	15
9	Food for Work	3	0	3
10	Bede & Disadvantaged Allowance	2	1	3
11	Maternity allowance	4	0	4
12	Fishing card	0	4	4
13	30 Kgs of Rice	1	0	1
14	Micro Credit Support	7	0	7
Total=		137	115	252

Referred 70 people to get services from the local CSOs

Total 310 people (female-289, male-21) were provided support to get access to the services offered by the local CSO. Services wise number of beneficiaries is as follows:

Non-government Services				
SI	Name of service	# of people received services		
		Female	Male	Total
1	Income Generating Activities	7	0	7
2	Livestock rearing	0	1	1
3	Micro Credit Support	280	20	300
4	Eye Care	2	0	2
Total		289	21	310

Annual networking meeting of CSOs and government representatives

Four annual networking meetings were held between the CSOs and the government representatives during the reporting period at Avaynagar upazilla, Jashore; Bagharpara upazilla, Jashore; Batiaghata and at Fultola Upazilla, Khulna. A total of 193 participants (women -107, men 86) from government offices, CSOs, media and Dalit community attended the meeting. Dalit community raised issues of access to govt. services, problem in offering prayers in the temple, discrimination at the local tea stall/shops etc. in the meeting. The guests were committed to provide necessary support to resolve their problems.

Performance of street drama on Dalit human rights issue

Street drama performance is one of the best ways to communicate with people and

to deliver awareness creating messages. During the project period, the project team rehearsed the script of the street drama which was developed to create awareness in the community about the impact of untouchability and discrimination against the Dalit. The DHRDs, CBOs and project staff played an active role as performers. A week long rehearsal was held in July of 2019 under the guidance of an expert from Nagorik Uddyog. The team performed the drama in 14 unions from 17-22 July, 2019. A total of 2,068 people (female-691, male-377, and children-1000) from the Dalit community and different parts of the society witnessed the performances. The spectators said that the performance helped them understand different type of discrimination against the Dalit. They knew about the impact of early marriage and drugs on this community. They opined that like other people of the society, Dalit community also has right to be treated equally and that Dalit children should be given equal opportunity for education. This drama performance delivered such messages to the society.

Communication and networking with local CSOs

A total of 25 Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) were identified in the project working area for providing service to the people of the Dalit community. The project staff and DHRDs were in regular contact with them and referred people Dalit community to get their support. 103 people were contacted for strengthening the network being formed. The purposes of communication and networking with local CSOs were to invite to the meetings and establish a platform for the Dalit community to get access to their services, collecting information for skills training and for collecting information on the registration process of CBOs. *Please see annex: 1 for the list of the CSOs.*

5.3 Rights of Urdu Speaking People

Nagorik Uddyog supports the Council of Minorities to assist the community-based paralegals who work in Urdu-speaking camps across five cities in Bangladesh. The paralegals work primarily to empower fellow Urdu-speakers, so that they can understand and learn about their rights as citizens and to obtain and use legal identity documents. Paralegals also track each case to build an empirical understanding of how effectively relevant laws are being implemented in the project areas.

To create a bridge between the law and real life of the Urdu speaking communities in the country, we have been providing paralegal legal support through five community-based paralegal centers in Dhaka (Mirpur and Mohammadpur), Mymensingh, Khulna, Chittagong, and Syedpur. Camp dwellers and others who have queries or need legal support come to our paralegal centers. Fifteen youths are assigned as community-based paralegals to provide knowledge on law and government information to the community people and provide skills like negotiation, community education, approach of organizing and advocacy to seek concrete solutions to instances of injustice. They also serve

as a dynamic “frontline” of justice service providers. They are not only working to resolve client’s legal issues but also building each client’s capacity so that they can deal with problems related to access to justice in future.

Community Legal Awareness

Paralegals of the project have organized community group meetings, community legal forums and community advocacy meetings. About 10-15 women, men, boys and girls attended the community group meetings. In the group meetings and forums, they discussed the importance and uses of the civil documentation in their daily life. In every centre, they organize one community forum every month and invite 50 community members from every sphere within the communities.

Workshops on legal awareness

24 workshops on legal awareness creation was organized in the project areas. 480 community people (female 240, boy 62 and girl 178) attended the workshops and learned about the roles and responsibilities of a citizen, processes of getting citizenship certificate, birth registration, national ID card etc.. The workshop also discussed the demerits of child marriage, gender based violence etc.

Access to Basic Services							
Sl	Activity	Mohamadpur	Mirpur	Mymensingh	Syedpur	Khulna	Chittagong
1	Birth registration	624	603	85	212	58	405
2	Citizenship certificate	4	26	62	9	36	128
3	Passport	New	34		4	6	
		Correc- tion	6				
4	National ID card	New	70	172	10		16
		Correc- tion	4	10			17
5	General Diary	1	24	2	15	1	
6	Death Certificate			2	4		1
7	Trade License	New	2		2		3
		Correc- tion			1		
8	Bank account	6	2		5	22	
9	Health Care	47	48	2	4	100	30
10	Education services	3	17	1	8		25
11	Affidavit			3			
12	Tax Identification Number						2
13	Elderly Allowance	22					
14	Disability allowance	2					

Community Advocacy event

In the reporting period, 6 community advocacy meetings were organized in 6 paralegal centers and were attended by 40 community members in each centre. Project activities and good practices are shared in the meetings. Beneficiaries also share their experiences within the meeting. Members of the community also expressed their gratitude to Nagorik Uddyog, Council of Minorities and

NAMATI for their initiative and hard work for the camp dwellers. They also demanded that the project be continued because civil documentation is one of the key elements for the camp dwellers to claim themselves as Bangladeshi Citizens.

Community Legal Awareness						
Center	No of Meeting	female	Male	Boy	Girl	Total
Mohammadpur	78	765	20	42	343	1170
Mirpur	104	1020	23	49	468	1560
Mymensingh	25	225	7	26	117	375
Saidpur	50	485	22	47	196	750
Khulna	25	260	12	22	81	375
Chittagong	78	735	15	61	359	1170
Total	360	3490	99	247	1564	5400

Workshops on legal awareness						
Center	No of Meeting	female	Male	Boy	Girl	Total
Mohammadpur	4	40	0	7	33	80
Mirpur	4	40	0	10	30	80
Mymensingh	4	40	0	9	31	80
Saidpur	4	40	0	11	29	80
Khulna	4	40	0	11	29	80
Chittagong	4	40	0	14	26	80
Total	24	240	0	62	178	480

Community Advocacy event						
Center	No of meeting	Male	Female	Boy	Girl	Total
Mohammadpur	12	12	388	70	130	600
Mirpur	12	19	392	62	127	600
Mymensingh	12	10	388	89	113	600
Saidpur	12	19	382	77	132	600
Khulna	12	27	375	71	127	600
Chittagong	12	25	359	99	117	600
Total	72	112	2,284	468	746	3,600



5.4 Strengthening Labor Rights

Workshop

Nagorik Uddyog and Bangladesh Labor Rights Forum (BLRF) organized two batches of training titled “Violence, Sexual Harassment on Garment Workers: Way forward and Legal Rights” participated by 40 garment workers, labor leaders and labor rights activists. The objective of the training was to capacitate the participants to identify workplace violence against women workers and address the issues in their own capacity and thereby improve the working environment in the garment sectors of Bangladesh. The key issues discussed in the training are - identifying gender based violence, provide the notion of gender equality and redressal mechanism of gender based violence at workplace; globalization, labor movement for rights and perspective of Bangladesh, discussion on laws and policies regarding safeguarding of women against violence e.g. CEDAW, Repression against women and children act 2000 (amendment 2003) etc.

Round Table Discussion

BLRF and Nagorik Uddyog jointly organized a round table discussion titled “Stop violence, torture and harassment in the workplace: Ratify ILO Convention 190” on the 6th of

December, 2019 at the National Press club, Dhaka. Objective of the meeting was to convey the necessity of the ratification of the ILO convention No. 190 and how it would be helpful to curb violence and harassment at the workplace. The meeting was attended by labor leaders, garment workers, trade union leaders, labor organization representatives, academicians, civil society members, media personnel and representatives from employers.

Remembering wretched souls of Tajrin Garments

BLRF and Nagorik Uddyog also mourned the Tajrin Fire Tragedy on the 24th of November 2019, the day when hundreds of garment workers burnt to death in Tajrin Garment due to the negligence of the authority.

6 ADVOCACY & NETWORKING



NU's strategy for advocacy is to develop a pathway of communication between grassroots level organizations and international agencies for influencing government, agencies and individuals to act for the peoples' concern especially the poor, the marginalized and women.

National Level Advocacy:

Implementation of SDGs in Bangladesh

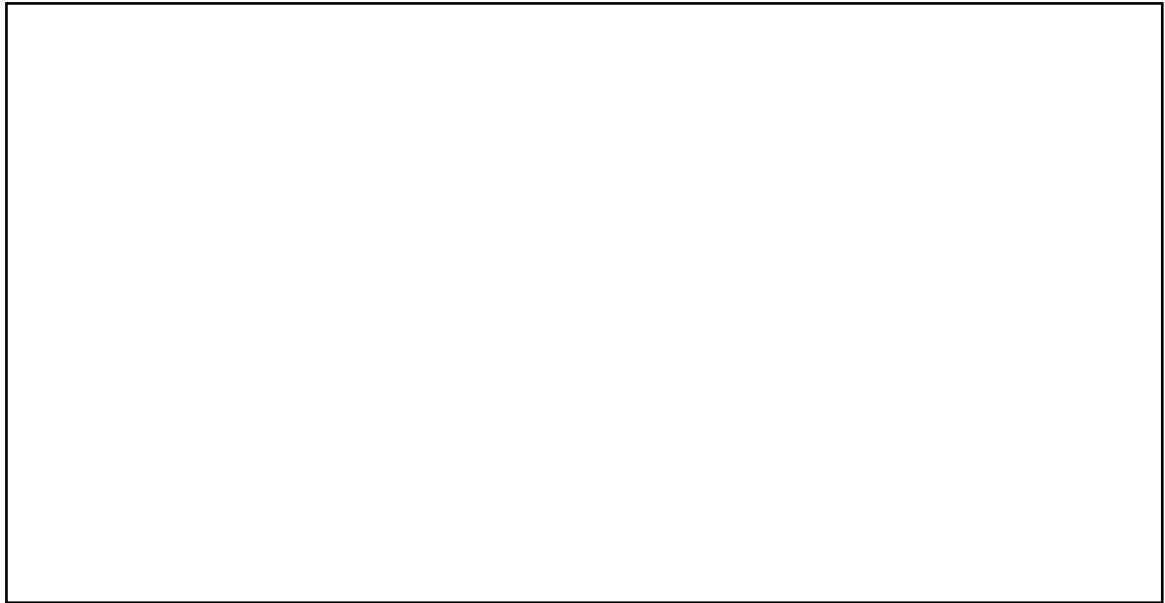
NU is a member of the Citizens' Platform for SDGs in Bangladesh, the biggest platform that works with the SDGs in the country. NU jointly organized several events with this platform in the reporting period. The Platform organized a national conference titled "VNR 2020 of Bangladesh: Positioning Non-State Actors" on the 11th of March, 2020 in Dhaka. The event was organised in association with, eleven (11) of its Partner Organizations; Action Aid Bangladesh, Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), HEKS/EPER, Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF), Nagorik Uddyog, Plan International Bangladesh, Save the Children in Bangladesh, Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB), VSO Bangladesh, Water Aid Bangladesh and the World Vision Bangladesh.

A total of ten thematic policy briefs were

presented and discussed at the event with a view to providing inputs to the Voluntary National Review (VNR) 2020 process of the Government of Bangladesh. Mr. Md. Shahriar Alam, MP, Hon'ble State Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Bangladesh, as the Chief Guest, and Mr. Sudipto Mukerjee, Resident Representative, UNDP Bangladesh, as the Special Guest, attended the opening session of the Conference. Dr. Shamsul Alam, Member (Senior Secretary), General Economics Division, Planning Commission, Government of Bangladesh, delivered his remarks as the Chief Guest, and Mr. K M Abdus Salam, Director General (Additional Secretary), NGO Affairs Bureau, Prime Minister's Office, Government of Bangladesh, spoke as the Guest of Honor at the closing session of the event. Designed with three thematic sessions related to various issues of youth and young people of Bangladesh, the day-long Conference was participated by around 250 representatives from CSOs, NGOs, academia, think-tanks, private sectors and media.

Human Rights Forum Bangladesh

Human Rights Forum Bangladesh is a platform of 20 Human Rights Organizations in



Bangladesh working to promote the human rights situation in Bangladesh. It monitors HR situations, prepares and submits a report to the UN Human Rights Council. The report includes the Universal Periodic Review, ICCPR, ICESCR, CAT and CEDAW. NU is the founding member of the platform and its Chief Executive now acts as a member of the Steering Committee. In the 2019-20 period, the forum organized its general meeting on the 19th of December, 2019. Besides, a press conference was organized for the recommendation of the UNCAT review on 22 August. NU also has developed the website of the HRFB.

Democratic Budget Movement

An analytical report focusing allocation of funding for the Dalit population in the national budget 2019-2020 has been prepared and shared with the policy makers and relevant stakeholders. Advocacy activities with a view to influence the policy makers to increase allocation in the national budget further continued based on the report.

Bangladesh Water Rights Forum

NU is an active member of Bangladesh Water Rights Forum. During the reporting period a brochure has been published through the network.

International Level Advocacy:

UN Advocacy

Nagorik Uddyog has special consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). NU regularly attends the Voluntary National Review (VNR) of the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) on SDGs every year. NU Chief Executive, Zakir Hossain, attended the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) held from, 6-7 July 10, 2019, at UN Building, New York, on Inclusive, Resilience, of Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent including Caste and Gender in DRR through SDGs.

Asian Dalit Rights Forum (ADRF)

ADRF organized a meeting on Inter-sectionalities of Gender and Caste: Inclusion and Participation of the Marginalized in SDGs in New York from 6-16 July 2019. ADRF organized another meeting titled International Congress on Discrimination Based on Work and Descent, Untouchability & Contemporary Forms of Slavery from 32- 30 September 2019 at New York. NU Chief Executive, Zakir Hossain, attended both events.

South Asia Collective (SAC)

NU is a member of South Asia Collective - A forum for strengthening the voice of minorities in South Asia comprises a group of human rights activists and organizations who dream of a just, caring and peaceful South

Asia. It was formed to document the condition of the region's minorities- religious, linguistic, ethnic, caste and gender, among others- hoping this would help in better outcomes for South Asia's many marginalized groups. Since 2015, SAC regularly published minority reports on different thematic issues. The South Asia State of Minorities Report 2019: Migrants, Refugees and the Stateless seeks to identify the different groups that have been denied, among other things, access to fundamental rights and services, and, in some cases, even recognition of their status. The report demonstrates how this impacts their everyday life and enables abuse of their human rights. The report presents six country chapters— Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal,

Pakistan and Sri Lanka—reporting on the condition of the migrants, refugees and the stateless population within their territories, while also providing recommendations to better protect their rights.

Participation in the Beijing 25+ Review:

Tamanna Singh Bariak, International Affairs Secretary of BDERM attended the Asia-Pacific Regional Review of the 25th Anniversary of Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action: Beijing +25 Review held at Bangkok, Thailand from November 21-27, 2019. She attended various sessions and shared statements in an event of the CSO Forum.

NU's Affiliation with National Level Network

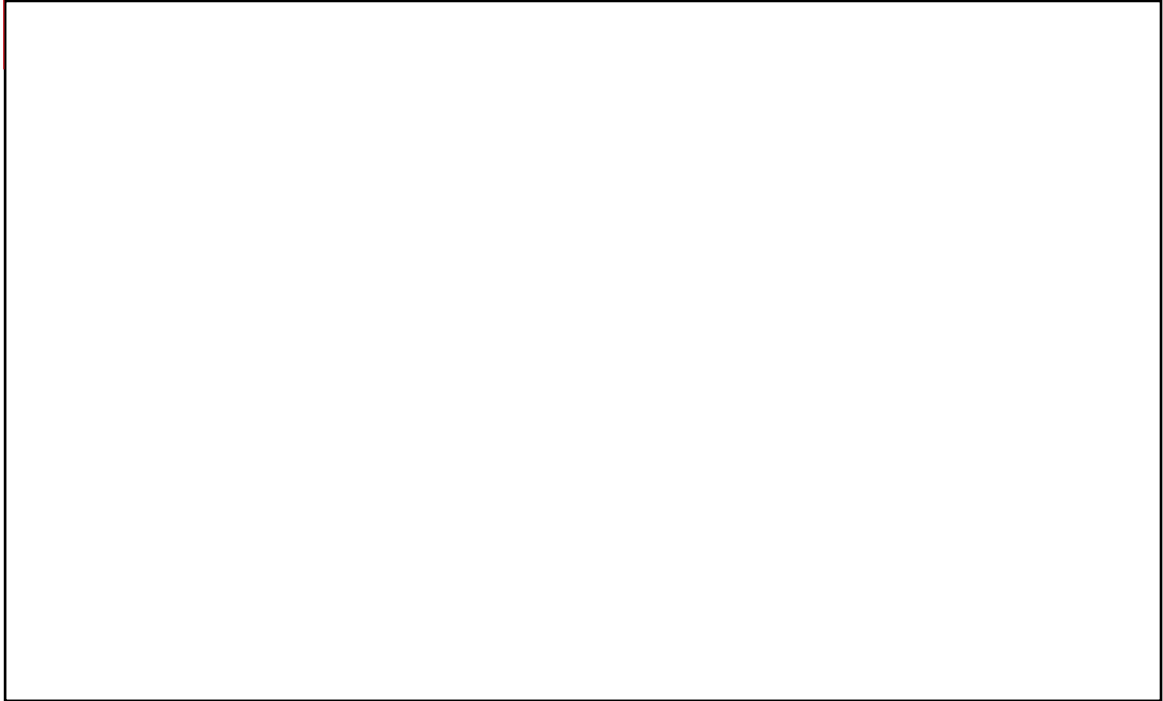
Human Rights Forum, Bangladesh	Right to Food and Social Security (RtF&SS)
Citizens Platform for SDGs in Bangladesh	Water Rights Forum
Shushasoner Jonno Nagorik (Shujan)	Bangladesh Water Integrity Network
Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon (BAPA)	Bangladesh Labour Rights Forum
Citizens' Initiatives for Domestic Violence (CIDV)	Campaign on Citizens Right to Information (CCRTI)
Governance Advocacy Forum	National Girl Child Advocacy Forum
Bangladesh Dalit and Excluded Rights Movement (BDERM)	Bangladesh Shishu Adhikar Froum (BSAF)

NU's Affiliation with International Network

Asia Dalit Rights Forum (ADRF). Kathmandu, Nepal	Habitat International Coalition (HIC)
A network of Improved Policing in South Asia (NIPSA)	South Asian Alliance for Poverty Eradication (SAAPE), Kathmandu, Nepal
South Asian Feminist Alliance for Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (SAFA)	International Land Coalition (ILC)
Global Legal Empowerment Network (NAMATI)	South Asia Collective
Asia Pacific Forum on Women Law and Development (APWLD), Bangkok, Thailand	Food First International Action Network (FIAN International), Heidelberg, Germany
International Dalit Solidarity Network (IDSN)	

7

GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION



Board of executives

Nagorik Uddyog boasts a board of executives participated by eminent human rights activists, academicians, development activists, members of civil society, and researchers. This committee is responsible for supervising overall governance of NU and contributing to basic operation. The committee examines the progress of the program undertaken and other aspects of the organization through quarterly meetings. NU's board of executive is constituted of 9 members. New members can be included upon vacancy of any existing membership.

Senior management Team

A Senior Management Team (SMT) formed with the senior level of staff active in supervising day to day activities at project and program level. SMT deals with strategic planning, fundraising and resource mobilization, program and operational process, policy and procurement, wealth and human resource, administration, financial

activities as well. The SMT looks after the different units of NU responsible for executing activities as planned.

Administration and Finance

Finance and Administration is an independent unit of NU headed by a Manager. It provides necessary administrative and logistic support for the implementation of projects as well as organizational affairs. The unit is also responsible for necessary staff recruitment and maintaining staff development issues, remuneration through assessment of performances. It supports coordination within the organization through monthly staff meeting, quarterly coordination meeting, and senior management meeting. It also maintains administrative functions with NGO Bureau, Government departments and Donors.

The unit supports the staff with sufficient electronic equipment like computers, scanners, photocopy machines, overhead projectors, multimedia tools etc. NU has its own domain name at [http://: www.nuhr](http://www.nuhr).

org. This website provides details of the organization and all of NU activities.

The Finance and Accounts wing maintains day to day financial activities like preparing budget, preparing financial reports, communication with donors and NGO affairs bureau for approval of grant etc. It is also responsible for ensuring transparency in financial activities and to ensure reasonable usage of funds.

Human Resource Management

The Human Resource of Nagorik Uddyog represents altogether 181 staff at different levels. Among them 143 staff work at field level while 38 supervises the activities from the central office at Dhaka. The human resource of Nagorik Uddyog is managed following a standard human resource policy. The policy is made through a participatory workshop attended by all level staff as well as assessment by external evaluators. Staff performance is evaluated every six months following a standard appraisal

manual. On the basis of appraisal, staff gain increment, promotion and other benefits of the organization. NU maintains a fair and transparent system in the recruitment of staff. Advertisement for recruitment is rightly served in the national or local dailies and website and the candidates are selected maintaining utmost transparency. After recruitment, staff is given a week long orientation that helps him/her to learn organizational, program management and behavioral practice of NU.

NU operates a contributory provident fund benefits from which are given to its employees in accordance with its policies. All permanent employees of the organization are contributing monthly to the fund of an amount of 5% of their basic salaries. The organization also contributes 5% of the employee's basic salary to the fund each month. Interest earned from the investment is credited to the employee's accounts on a yearly basis and this fund is audited every year by a firm of chartered accountants

LIST OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Chairperson

Dr. Farzana Islam

Vice Chairperson

Mr. Shah-I-Mobin Jinnah

Treasurer

Dr. Altaf Hossain

Member

Dr. Mirza M. Hassan

Advocate Z. I. Khan Panna

Safi Rahman Khan

Architect Salma A. Shafi

Zakir Hossain CE

FOUNDING MEMBER

1. **Prof. Khan SarwarMorshed**
Ex—Vice Chancellor,
Rajshahi University
2. **Dr. Hameeda Hossain**
Member , Executive Committee
Ain-O—Shalish Kendra
3. **Prof Rehman Sobhan**
Executive Chairman,
Center for Policy Dialogue
4. **Prof. Anisuzzaman**
Department of Bangle,
University of Dhaka
5. **Ms. Khushi Kobir**
Coordinator, Nijera Kori
6. **Prof. Borhanuddin Khan Jahangir**
Department of Political Science
University of Dhaka
7. **Mr. Ajay Ray**
Journalist
8. **Dr. Syed Hashemi**
Professor, Economics Department
Jahangir Nagar University
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