

**Report on  
National level Seminar on “Human Rights of Marginalized Populations: Our Roles and Responsibilities to improve the situation”**

**Project name: Promotion of social partnership for empowerment of marginalized communities in 6 districts and at national level in Bangladesh (PROSPECT).**



**Financial Assistance**

BMZ-Germany

**Technical Assistance**

NETZ Partnership for Development and Justice December-27, 2020

**Report submitted by**

PROSPECT Project, DASCOH Foundation

Lutheran Mission Complex

Dingadoba, Rajpara, Rajshahi-6201

**Introduction:** Promotion of social partnership for empowerment of marginalized communities in 6 districts and at national level in Bangladesh (PROSPECT) is project financed by BMZ and NETZ Partnership for Development and Justice, and implemented by DASCOH Foundation, Pollisree and Manob Kollyan Parishad, RIB. The PROSPECT project is being implemented from July-2019 in six districts in the North Western part of Bangladesh focusing at strengthening human rights defenders and public authorities to protect and promote the rights of marginalized communities. The seminar was organized for ensuring social justice and improvement of living and livelihood conditions of the marginalized and other less-income group people. More than 85 people of professions, communities and stakeholders joined the seminar-cum view sharing meeting.

**Objectives of the event:**

- To know the Civil Society Organization (CSO) and Non CSO members’ perception on human rights issues and safety net support from the findings of base line survey.
- To raise the voice for marginalized populations in policy level
- To address concrete human rights violations against marginalised groups
- To advocate for ensuring social justice and improve the human rights of the marginalized population

**Outcome of the event:**

- Policy maker is committed to take initiatives in making separate land commission for plan land’s indigenous community.
- Most of the participants are agreed to work together to improve human rights of marginalized group.
- Linkage is developed between main stream and indigenous group.
- A strong platform is formed to make advocacy in national level.

**Agenda**

- Welcome speech
- Key note/survey findings presentation
- Panel discussion
- Open discussion
- Speech of the Chief guest
- Vote of Thanks

Topic	Description	Remarks
Initiation of meeting and	NETZ Bangladesh Development and Justice organized a national level seminar of PROSPECT project titled “Human Rights of Marginalized Populations: Our Roles and Responsibilities to improve the situation” on 17 November 2020 at Nankin Darbar Hall in Rajshahi where Md. Fazle Hossain Badsha, Parliament Member Rajshahi-2 was present as chief guest while professor	

welcome	<p>Md. Sarawar Jahan Chowdhury, Department: Geology mining, professor Md. Abdul Hannan, Department: Law and Justice, Rajshahi University, Most: Hasina Mamataj, Deputy Director of Department of Social Services, Md. Akbarul Millat, Editor, Shonar Desh, Rajshahi, Md. Shahidul Islam, director, NETZ Bangladesh were present as panel discussants. Md. Akramul Haque, Chief Executive Officer of DASCOH Foundation was the chair and anchored the entire event. On behalf of NETZ, Afsana Binte Amin Program Manager of NETZ welcomed to all and started the meeting through delivering the background and objectives of the seminar.</p>	
Survey findings presentation	<p>Researcher Md. Abdul Hannan presented the findings of base line survey of PROSPECT project conducted 6 districts in Bangladesh where CSO and Non CSO members, Students Forum, Non student Forum and LAs participated in the survey interpreting the issue . The main focus of the survey was to explore the human rights violation situation towards women and marginalized communities in the North western part of Bangladesh. The researcher presented the violence report of January-2020 to July-2020 of “Ain O Shalish Kendro”. The base line survey report showed the knowledge level of participants on Human Rights issues and social safety net support. The rate of response of CSO members is higher than non CSO members at every indicator. Apart from this, he put forward a set of recommendations for establishing social justice towards the marginalized and plain land ethnic communities through removing all sorts of disparities where the combined initiatives of Government, Non government and representative of local government can play the vital role to promote marginalized communities.</p>	

<p>Panel Discussion</p>	<p>Md. Akbarul Millat, Editor, Shonar Desh, Rajshahi spoke on the occasion as a panel discussant that supporter is more than accused. “One group violates the human rights and other groups support it”. He emphasized on changing attitude of national politics. He added that at present human rights depend on social position. He said, firstly human rights should be practiced within family.</p> <p>Panel discussant Professor Mr. Abdul Hannan, Department of Law and Justice, Rajshahi University, in his speech noted that the more we talk about rights, the more indifferent we are about responsibilities and duties. He spoke about human rights, fundamental rights and legal rights. All rights are protected by constitution. If marginalized people get rights, everyone will get rights. Deprivation of human rights leads to chaos in the society. Women's rights get established from the family if husband and wife share their work, he added. He also addressed that it is our duty to heighten the disadvantaged group.</p> <p>Speaking at the programme, Mr. Shahidul Islam director, NETZ Bangladesh observed that rights can be ensured by ensuring human dignity. Democracy that protects human dignity is important in the practice of democracy. He added that fight has to be continued in a non-violent manner. The rights of indigenous will disappear if the indigenous people leave the fight. Values have gone to the degenerated people. We have to work so that our children do not get conducted by these corrupt people, he said.</p> <p>Panel discussant Most: Hasina Mamataj, Deputy Director of Department of Social Services spoke that law is there but practice and implementation is very less. She emphasized to practice human rights, behavior and ethics from family. She also laid the emphasis on self reliance and awareness for preventing sexual harassment against women.</p> <p>Professor Md. Sarawar Jahan Chowdhury said, human rights are recognized by our constitution. He highlighted various aspects of the distressed people and pointed that earlier almost 24% population were ultra poor but now 40%-42% are ultra poor due</p>	
-------------------------	---	--

	<p>to COVID-19</p> <p>The Chief guest Lawmaker Fazle Hossain Badsha said, a bill entitle indigenous right act has been placed in the national parliament. Referring to the rights of indigenous people on land, he noted that a land commission needs to be formed for plan land’s indigenous community like Chittagong Hill Tracts. He also addressed that mainstream people’s support is vital for protection of rights of the marginalized and ethnic minority people. He added, Human rights movement will not succeed unless fundamental needs of the disadvantaged and less-income and ethnic groups are addressed first.</p> <p>He called on the concerned authority to come up with immediate steps to prevent the encroachment on the lands of the underprivileged people.</p> <p>The chief guest said, the mainstream people should protect the rights of the minority groups and there should be a harmony between the mainstream people and the minority ethnic groups. “He urged to the public representatives to work for people so that they won’t be deprived from their rights”.</p> <p>He wished equal rights and non discrimination state according to our constitution. In addition, he urged to be aware on sexual harassment and rape against women.</p>	
<p>Open discussion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapainababgonj District CSO president Zonab Ali addressed their succeeded activities as like reducing child marriage and sexual harassment against women along with challenges and recommendation.</li> <li>• Human Rights Defender (HRD) Bahamoni Murmu pointed that Illegal birth certificate is one of the most challenging issue to stop early marriage. She added, mostly women are subjected by domestic violence.</li> <li>• NGO personnel Ms. Alima Khatun Lima opined that Women are more marginalized in marginalized groups because they have less opportunity to know. In order to take women forward, we need to have a positive attitude towards women and they need to be involved in all activities.</li> <li>• Emphasizing on cultural diversity, HRD Vogobat Tudu, in his observation, said that indigenous people would be familiar with their cultural identity.</li> <li>• BRAC representative said that gender discrimination is a</li> </ul>	

	<p>barrier to promote human rights. He also pointed on our weak moral education.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Human Rights Defender (HRD) Moriom Begum said, attitude on male- female creates discrimination to establish rights. She mentioned that reluctance by administration and marriage in the dead of night are the obstacles to stoppage of child marriage.</li> <li>• HRD Kolpona Tirki said, ethnic minority group is deprived from language and cultural function. She also spoke emphasizing on safety net support for marginalized population.</li> <li>• Mr. Abdul Baki, Local authority spoke of discrimination in village courts and law enforcement.</li> <li>• While speaking at the event, Mr. Afzal, representative of NGO opined that Indigenous people are deprived due to traditional law. Rights must be established through organizing movement and awareness.</li> <li>• Mr. Aktaruzzaman, Chairman Deopara Godagari said that it would have been better if the people's representatives had acted with transparency and honesty. He recommends for holding seminars with government, private, district councils as well as representatives of media.</li> <li>• Most of the Human rights defenders and LAs expressed their experience that women are mostly vulnerable and subjected from violence. They addressed the land rights of ethnic minority groups. Apart from this, they recommended to work together to improve human rights.</li> </ul>	
<p>Closing/vote of Thanks</p>	<p>Md. Akramul Haque, Chief Executive Officer of DASCOD Foundation, chair of the seminar closed the event to summarize the entire session and with a vote of thanks and expressed his gratitude to all for active participation in the seminar.</p>	

Prepared by: Md. Abdur Razzaq  
 Project Manager, DASCOD Foundation.