

Report on

‘Ending Violence against Women and Girls: Our Roles and Accountability’



Date: 09 March 2021

Venue: Porjoton Motel, Rangpur

Arranged by: NETZ-Bangladesh

Cooperated by: Pollisree

Introduction:

The non-governmental organizations Pollisree and NETZ=Bangladesh have been working for a long time to establish and uphold the human rights of the people of Bangladesh, especially in the North West. The active cooperation of the larger civil society, governmental and non-governmental organizations and policy makers is essential to establish the social, political and economic rights of marginalized communities, including women and indigenous peoples, and to prevent any kind of persecution and violence against them. To this end, NETZ-Bangladesh, Pollisree, RIB, MKP and DASCOH Foundation jointly organized a seminar on "Violence Against Women and Girls: Our Role and Responsibility in Prevention" at the Tourism Motel on 9 March 2021 at 11 am. At the beginning of the discussion, Ms. Shamsun Nahar, Manager, Gender Justice and Training spoke on behalf of Pollisree. Ms. Shamim Ara Begum, Director of Pollisree has chaired and conducting the seminar. Ms. Afsana Binte Amin, Program Manager, NETZ-Bangladesh presented the concept note at the seminar.



Chief Guest:

Honorable Mayor of Rangpur City Corporation Mr. Md. Mostafizur Rahman was the chief guest at the seminar, in his inaugural address he has thanked to Pollisree to organize such a timely seminar and also inviting him.

Honorable Guest:

Honorable Deputy Commissioner of Rangpur Mr. Md. Asib Ahsan thanked Pallishree for organizing such a seminar. He said, We need to increase women's access to social, political and economic spheres. The development of the society will be accelerated only if the access of women in all spheres of the society is established. Women's domestic labor should be viewed with respect. We want to build a society free of discrimination. If we do not create a women-friendly work environment, women will become unemployed. Not only that, we also need to ensure that a woman can work safely in her home. Appearing as the guest



of honor, the Additional Deputy Commissioner of Rangpur said in his discussion, "If you give us your recommendation to stop the incidents of violence against women in the society, we will send it to the Council of Ministers."

Experience sharing of survivor's:

Asha Khatun, Gongadas totpara, Horidebpur, Sadar, Rangpur Asha Khatun was married to Miraj Ali in 2006. Physical abuse in various ways started after marriage. Asha Khatun has already given birth to two daughters in 2010 and 2013. Torture increases after the birth of a daughter. Asha Khatun was brutally beaten when her child fell ill. Even heating the rod in a gas stove would rub it on Asha Khatun's body. One day Miraj Ali lost his job due to beating of a colleague. He then sent his wife and two children to his wife's father's house. From then on, he does not pay for the maintenance of his wife and child and marries another. Asha Khatun is currently living in misery at her father's house with her two children.



Rimu Khatun, age 9 years, mother: Morzina Begum, father: Lal Mia, village: Panapukur Madhyapara, upazila: Gangachara, district: Rangpur. Rimu was left at home and her day laborer parents went to work in the next village. Realizing the opportunity, one of the grandfathers of the next house Md. Shamsul Haque (50) sexually abused Remu. Remu, the victim of sexual abuse, told his parents everything and Remu was admitted to Rangpur Hospital by his parents. No one cooperates with Remu's parents if they want justice for the incident. Later, Remu's parents filed a case with Gangachara Model Police Station.



Information about the case

Case No. 21/144, dated 24/4/2018, 09 (1) of the Women and Child Abuse Suppression Act, 2000 (Amendment / 03). 09 (01)

Present Status of the case

The accused are moving freely with a three-month interim bail from the court and threatening to evict the plaintiff from the house. The plaintiff is currently living through fear. No action is being taken from the police station. So far the case has been dated twice.

Rimu's current condition

Rimu is currently studying in a madrasa and is physically ill.

Mahmuda Khatun, Age 23, Husband: Mizanur Rahman, Krisnochura CSO, Village: Panikatam, Union: Eluari, Fulbari, Dinajpur From the time of marriage, Mahmuda Begum was suspected and beaten by her husband. Does not pay any expenses in the family. Mahmuda Begum got a cow from her father. She raises these cows and living by earning through this cow. Yet she is not free from torture.



Attempted to rape

9-year-old Rezwana's house in American camp in Rampur union of Parbatipur upazila. On October 5, 2020, Rezwana was playing with her playmate Babli as usual. Md. Ishaq Ali grabbed Rezwana who was playing in front of the house and forcibly took her inside the house. At this time Babli entered the back room. Md. Ishaq touches Rezwana's chest and genitals. Then Rezwana screams and Babli bites Ishaq's hand and releases Rezwana. Rezwana did not tell anyone at home about the incident for fear. Two days later, while taking a bath, Rezwana's



mother saw scratch marks on her daughter's body and heard details from Rezwana. Rezwana's family then filed a case with Parbatipur police station. Whose FIR No. 8/294, date 8 October 2020, GR no. 294/2020, 4 (kha) of 9 of the Prevention of Violence against Women and Children (Amendment 2003) Act, 2000

Discussions by Honorable guests:

Mrs. Shahnaz Begum, Additional Deputy Commissioner (Education and ICT), said in her discussion that women are working in big positions. But many incidents also happen to women for which there is no justice. We will convey to the senior management all the recommendations that will be made through this seminar.

District Legal Aid Officer and Senior Assistant Judge Md. Minhazur Rahman said in his discussion that not only women are tortured for dowry but other social and economic issues are also involved. If cases of abuse of women and girls are referred to our District Legal Aid, we will arrange for legal assistance.



The Honorable Guest Deputy Civil Surgeon said in his discussion that the child needs to be educated in the family. Trust your child. We have made the country independent with many dreams. We should not be disappointed. We have to work together to build a beautiful society and country.

Mr. Rabiul Azam, Director, Manab Kallyan Parished, said, “When we think of safety, we go to the mother first. In this society, mothers must be given security. And this work has to start from the family.

Mr. Ruksana Bari Ruku, Vice Chairman, Parbatipur Upazila, thanked Pallishree for organizing the event and said, “We did not know where to go to solve this problem. We got a lot of information at this event.

Ms. Lubna Akhter, Lecturer, Gender Justice, Begum Rokeya University, Dr. Samarpita Ghosh Tania, Khandaker Abdur Karim, Meghna Guha Thakurta, Executive Director, RIB were present as speakers on the seminar.

Ms. Lubna Akhter, Lecturer, Gender Justice, she said in her discussion, “We are moved emotional by the experiences of the seminar participants. She said the biggest role in change is played by the family. The importance of family education is immense. Women's problems are created by people close to them. Day care centers for working women are very important and the state has to take care of it.

Dr. Samarpita Ghosh Tania in her discussion said that girls are not safe anywhere, so we have to work to create a feeling among the people. And girls need to be financially self-sufficient. We all have to work for this.

Khandaker Fakrul Anam said in his discussion, there are many gaps in our education system. Even those of us who do social work do not know which incidents can be arbitrated and which cannot. We all have to respect the law.

Meghna Guha Thakurta said the root cause of domestic violence is patriarchal mentality. The patriarchal mentality is controlling the family, society and the state everywhere. Hence the need to change the structure of society. And for this we need a united movement.

In the open discussion held after that, the participants provided various proposals and recommendations for the prevention of violence against women.

Ms. Afsana Binte Amin, Program Manager of NETZ-Bangladesh expressed her feelings and said, “We have received many recommendations through this seminar. We hope that the representatives of the various organizations present here will work to implement these recommendations.

Recommendations:

- Cases of abuse of women and children must be disposed of within 180 days.
- Cases of abuse of women and children in the High Court must be disposed of on a priority basis and within a specified time.
- Arrangements must be made for the safety, treatment and compensation of women, children and families of victims of torture during the trial.

- The process of giving witnesses in cases of abuse of women and children should be made timely.
- The process of giving witnesses in cases of abuse of women and children needs to be updated.
- Effective measures should be taken to formulate and implement policies to prevent sexual harassment as per the 2009 directive of the High Court.
- Police prosecutors and judges should be trained in handling and resolving cases of violence against women.
- Shelters should be set up to ensure the safety of women victims of violence, where the victimized women can be accommodated with their children.
- Increase coordination between existing One Stop Crisis Centers and district-level non-governmental organizations (NGOs) so that services can be streamlined.
- One Stop Crisis Center will increase the awareness of business opportunities and increase coordination between public hospitals. One Stop Crisis Center will increase the facilities.
- The existing laws and policies on all forms of violence against women need to be re-examined and, on a case-by-case basis, coordination with the government, NGOs and activists will enable men to develop alternative work plans.
- Domestic Abuse (Prevention and Protection) Act 2010 must be successful.
- The government should adopt zero tolerance policy against rape, sexual violence, and violence against women and children.
- Special campaigns against women abusers must be announced and implemented.
- All anti-discrimination laws must be amended and made timely.

Ms. Shamim Ara Begum, Executive Director of Pollisree, who presided over the seminar, said that today's event was organized to highlight the violence against women and children. It is not possible to stop violence against women just by enacting laws. Everyone needs to be united. To change the attitude of the society towards women. We have to start this work from ourselves. Finally, she concluded the seminar by thanking everyone for making the seminar a success through active participation.