

# Annual Report 2019

## Indigenous Peoples Development Services -IPDS



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## **Introduction**

The history of indigenous peoples around the world has often been marked by oppression and exploitation. Throughout the world today, it is widely recognized that indigenous peoples are among the most disadvantaged and vulnerable. Their land has been taken forcibly without their consent. Their culture and way of life are treated as inferior in the society. Thus they have become most marginalized people and poorest of the poor. Indigenous peoples are custodians of some of the most biologically diverse territories in the world. But they continue to suffer discrimination, marginalization, extreme poverty and conflict. Some are being dispossessed of their traditional lands as their livelihoods are being undermined.

Bangladesh is a country rich in many cultures and peoples of different nations. They are the Adivasis, indigenous peoples of Bangladesh. They are strikingly diverse in their culture, language, religion, traditions and patterns of social and economic life. In Bangladesh, there are more than 50 distinct communities living in the country for centuries and their population is over 3 million. Indigenous peoples are the main victims of violations of human rights in Bangladesh. For centuries they have been facing serious threats to their life and existence. Especially the human rights situation in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), in Modhupur forest under greater Mymensingh district and in Khasi hills under Moulvibazar district, indigenous peoples is under threat of eviction from their ancestral land. Thousands of indigenous young girls are migrating to the cities for searching jobs and many of them often face harassment and discrimination in beauty parlors, garments factories and private companies.

Indigenous peoples have also been facing eviction from their ancestral homeland by Eco-park projects. The right of indigenous peoples to land and the forest was ignored and thousands of false forest cases were filed against them. Many times indigenous women are the victims of sexual harassment and torture by the forest guards and police. They do not get justice from the law, due to cultural and racial discrimination.

Apart from violation of the fundamental freedoms and human rights, the most serious problems faced by indigenous peoples in Bangladesh include limited access to education, health, information and other social services, discrimination at the hands of non-indigenous people, including government functionaries and the imposition of other inappropriate and socially and economically destructive development projects. The Indigenous Human Rights Defenders and leaders often face violation of civil and political rights in the cause of struggle for their rights to land and natural resources.

There are some recent positive trends visible among civil society, intellectuals, NGOs, media and progressive individuals and politicians in Bangladesh towards indigenous peoples. They are raising their voices for support to indigenous peoples' rights. In recent years, the Education Policy, Women Development Policy, Sixth Fifth Year Plan, Budget documents and some policy papers have included indigenous issues. The Parliamentary Caucus on Indigenous Peoples in one of the positive steps for indigenous peoples. It can be said that

indigenous issues are at least visible at national level. A culture of dialogue has been initiated at local and national level. But they have to go long way.

For all these efforts and achievements, Indigenous Peoples Development Services (IPDS) has played vital and key role in the country. This year, IPDS has successfully implemented its activities to aware indigenous and non-indigenous peoples about their rights. Series of community elder's conferences, youth and women gatherings, cultural exchange, training seminar on land, human rights and indigenous issues, media advocacy, social rally and campaign, cultural events, events of promoting tolerance and peace, youth conferences and other rights-based approach development were organized with indigenous peoples of the project area.

In this year, series of events were organized to support and strengthen the indigenous communities to develop their own support mechanisms. The majority community, civil society, NGOs, the media, women associations and councils, youth, individual experts and intellectuals and academics were engaged to raise voices for dignity of indigenous peoples. Relations and communications were built up between Adivasis and non-Adivasis to address indigenous issues. A special focus on indigenous women and youth was made. Human rights education program was done for school and college students.

#### **Current Projects:**

##### **MISEREOR Germany Project:**

**Project Title:** Capacity Building of Indigenous Human Rights Defenders in Bangladesh

#### **Project Goal, Objectives and Outcome:**

##### ▪ **Objectives**

- Indigenous human rights defenders are protected and successfully practice their opinions at different forums.
- Indigenous women and men's voices are heard and participate in decision making processes at local, national and international level.
- Indigenous values including culture, traditions, customs, land and languages are protected and conserved.

##### ▪ **Output 1: Enhanced capacity of indigenous human rights defenders on UN human rights mechanisms and instruments to protect their rights.**

##### ▪ **Activities:**

Activities: Capacity building training on UN human rights instruments, awareness raising on SDGs, human rights seminar, celebration of international days, building networks with national and global human rights defenders forum and human rights networks, support to local indigenous organizations to protect their rights and small initiatives.

**Output 2:** Indigenous human rights defenders including women take part in different tiers of decision making processes including traditional organizations.

**Activities:** Training of Trainers on management and leadership for indigenous women and youth, organizing workshop, quarterly/half yearly coordination meeting at local government and administration, national level advocacy workshop with Parliamentary Caucus on

Indigenous Peoples and National Human Rights Commission, connection and participation in the global platforms.

**Output 3:** Promoted indigenous values, culture, traditions, and languages and protected their lands.

**Activities:** Sensitization workshops for indigenous and non-indigenous students; promotional materials on indigenous human rights, life and livelihood, media advocacy; cultural events, youth and women conference, supporting land related cases & documentation, sharing workshop on the findings/recommendations of land related human rights violation cases.

**Major activities done in this year:**

IPDS has organized regular and quarterly meeting of the Solidarity Committee and Adivasi Rights Committee in the field area in Mymensingh and Moulvibazar district.

**Activities done during this period 2019**

**1.1 Regular meeting of the Solidarity Committee and Adivasi Rights Committee:**

To reduce the existing gap between indigenous peoples and mainstream communities and create leaders among the indigenous communities and raise the rights issues of indigenous peoples in different decision making forum, IPDS formed 10 Solidarity Committees with 262 members male 179, female 83 and 20 Adivasi Rights Committees with 399 members, male 157 and female 242. In this project period, this Solidarity Committee and Adivasi Rights Committee Members organised regular meetings on indigenous issues. The aim of the meetings was to run the committee actively and keep them vibrant. It also played an important role in building unity and promoting solidarity among the members. These meetings helped indigenous communities for building their capacity.

In these meetings they discussed about human rights, security, social and economic issues, political situation, local issues with land, livelihood, education for children, youth issues, legal case and vested property issues etc.

**1.2 Community Elders' Conference**

IPDS organized 3 community elders' conferences in this project period. Local Headman, village Chiefs, women and youth leaders and members of indigenous community participated in these conferences. In these events, they discussed about their situation, problems and their movements for human rights. This conferences created scope and space for regular meeting and dialogue.

**1.3 Social gathering:**

Total 2 gatherings with 220 (among them 60% women) participants were held in this project period. This gathering brought an opportunity to share their problems and prospects among boys and girls. A coordinating committee was formed to address youth and girls issues at city level. The youth leaders raised their issues such as challenges in urban life, lack of hostels and accommodation, cultural reality in the city, lack of support for organizing meetings, inadequate scope for part time job, economic hardships etc. Participants made emphasis on the need of this kind of gathering in their life. They gained more knowledge and confident for advocacy for their rights.

This social gatherings has built and increased network and alliance among communities.

#### **1.4 Capacity building training**

In this project period IPDS organized 2 Capacity Building Training for indigenous peoples. In these trainings, total 62 participants attended. Indigenous Chiefs and Headmen, women leaders, youth, social and cultural activists, community leaders and members of the Human Rights Defender's Committee participated in these trainings.

The objectives of the training programme were to build capacity of community leaders and increase their skills and experience; to provide access to information about human rights and to strengthen the networking and advocacy for indigenous peoples' rights.

#### **1.5 Organize Seminar workshop at Union Councils and Upazila level**

In this period, IPDS organized 2 seminar workshops with Union Parishad, local administrative body and indigenous human rights defenders. They shared their views, experiences and problems in these seminar workshops. The aim of these seminars and workshops was to create mass awareness and reduce the gap between mainstream community and indigenous peoples at local level. The UP Chairmen, Members, indigenous human rights defender committee members and civil society members participated in these seminars.

#### **1.6 Human Rights Education at school, college and university level**

IPDS organized human rights education programme for students at school and college level. In these events, basic human rights issues were introduced to the participants. The purpose of this programme was to raising awareness at the schools and college levels on human rights. More than 2,000 indigenous and non-indigenous students participated in these events.

#### **1.7 Network building workshop:**

IPDS organized total 3 networking and solidarity building meetings in this period. These seminars have brought indigenous peoples and majority community to sit together and have dialogue to know each other better and respect their rights. These events have impact on the relationship between indigenous and non-indigenous communities.

#### **1.8 Cross learning visit**

IPDS organized one cross learning visit programmes for sharing experience in their life. Indigenous peoples from two regions came to know about their situation and human rights. Total 10 members from Khasi hills, Sylhet area visited Garo villages in Mymensingh and shared their knowledge and experience with Garos. They exchanged their views, discussed about their livelihood, culture, land and problems. They also shared about their struggle for survival on their land. They committed to work together for the benefit of their own community. This visits created a space for network and cooperation among them.

#### **1.9 Human Rights Day**

IPDS observed the Human Rights Day on the 10<sup>th</sup> December in 2019. Every year IPDS staffs and indigenous human rights defenders, community leaders, youth and women participated at local and national levels. In the events of national level, IPDS participated with National Human Rights Commission. At the local level, IPDS jointly organized the Day with other NGOs and community organizations. Government delegates, civil society, NGO and youth

participated in this event. In 2019, the theme was “Indigenous Youth: Stand up for Human Rights.”

### **1.10 International Day of the World’s Indigenous Peoples**

The 9 August is the International Day of the World’s Indigenous peoples. IPDS observed the Day at local and national level. The existence and rights of indigenous peoples in Bangladesh is still to be recognized by the Constitution. There is no government initiative to observe the International Day of the World’s Indigenous People in Bangladesh. But indigenous peoples in Bangladesh are observing the Day in very demarking and befitting manner from the year 2000. These are being possible by some courageous and creative leadership of indigenous peoples. IPDS from its very embryonic time associated and promoted the significant observation of the Day.

In 2013 the theme was "Indigenous Languages." The UN Secretary General made a statement on the Day.

More than 5,000 indigenous and non-indigenous peoples attended in this event. TV channels and daily newspapers published reports and news.

### **1.11 International Mother Language Day**

21<sup>st</sup> February International Mother Language Day. IPDS observed the Day at local level with children, youth and students.

More than 300 students with community people, youth, children and women attended the event. These events included: cultural competition with dancing, songs, reciting poetry, indigenous storytelling, reciting folktales, playing indigenous drums and drawing traditional arts in own language.

### **1.12 Support for indigenous cultural events**

IPDS provided support to cultural groups and organized cultural events to revive indigenous culture, traditions and languages. Five events have been supported by IPDS.

### **1.13 Support to Indigenous organizations**

Total 7 indigenous community organizations received support for organizing youth seminar, gathering, orientation programme, magazine publication and capacity building. Skill and capacity of Indigenous Peoples Organizations (IPO) have been increased and developed.

### **1.14 Legal support for Violation of Human Rights**

IPDS provided legal support for 6 cases that involved indigenous peoples. The cases were filed against indigenous peoples for harassment. Indigenous peoples also filed cases when they faced attack by miscreants and land grabbers. Most of the cases are continuing and IPDS would continue to support the cases financially, morally and through advocacy. Four villages with more than 300 families were protected by this legal support. More than 2,000 indigenous peoples indirectly were saved from the endless harassment.

### **1.15 Advocacy for Land Commission and Policy**

IPDS organized regular advocacy with policy makers, Parliamentary Caucus on Indigenous Issues, civil society, media and other key stakeholders. Parliamentary Caucus raised this

Land Commission issue at the Parliament. This demand has now become popular at national level.

#### **1.16 Legal Volunteers and Activist**

Two legal volunteer and activist were involved in human rights activities and documentation. They collected data and information locally on human rights violations. They participated in events at filed level and raised voices on indigenous issues.

#### **1.17 Publication of posters**

IPDS published three posters on three issues on Indigenous Peoples' Day and Human Rights Day and Tolerance Day. The posters were widely distributed at local and national level for awareness raising and creating positive public opinion.

#### **1.18 Advocacy Campaign with Parliamentary Caucus**

Besides regular meeting, two events of advocacy campaign with Adivasi Parliamentary Caucus on Indigenous Peoples were held in this year. MPs, indigenous leaders and civil society members attended the event. They spoke in favour of indigenous peoples' rights. Media and TV channels covered this event well.

## **5. Project funded by Foreign Commonwealth Office - FCO**

Project Title: Enhancing political participation of indigenous peoples in Bangladesh.

Purpose: To improve the capacity of indigenous peoples through promoting dialogue and advocacy platform for ensuring political participation and good governance.

#### **Activities taken in this Year:**

##### **1. Dialogue and Consultation:**

On 28 November 2019 IPDS organised a dialogue and consultation meeting at Shantiniketon meeting room, Jalchatra, Modhupur, Tangail. Total 61 participants attended this meeting. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Eugin Nokrek, Convener of the Advocacy platform. The local elected chairman and members participated in the discussion session. The following challenges are addressed in the meeting:

- lack of access of indigenous peoples in local government;
- lack of access to participation in the decision making process at local level;
- communication gap between indigenous peoples and majority community;
- lack of leadership of indigenous peoples;

The participants made some recommendations in this event such as: need to work jointly from Advocacy Platform to increase access to local government services, building relationship and increase contact with members of local union councils, ensuring indigenous representatives in the various committees at local government and administration, capacity building training for indigenous youth on good governance and human rights etc.

##### **2. Network Building Meeting:**

A network building meeting was held on 6 December 2019 at Joyenshahi Adivasi Unnoyan Parishad, Modhupur. Total 37 participants from indigenous community, NGO representatives, church leaders, women and youth leaders attended the meeting. They discussed about the local emerging issues of indigenous peoples and about the strategy to address their issues. They made some decisions for ensuring their rights.

- organise active dialogue with local government and administration

- to advocacy for ensuring participation of indigenous peoples and decision making process in the local government
- to build strong network to active advocacy

### **3. Media Advocacy**

A press conference was held on 8 December 2019 at Joyenshahi Unnayan Parishad, Modhupur. Local journalists were present in this press conference. A written statement was made from IPDS for the journalist. Total 4 reporters from national and local newspapers and TV channels attended this event. Reports were published on indigenous issues in the newspapers. In this press conference ten points demands were raised from Advocacy Platform. They are: reserve seats (quota) in the local government, Upazila parishad and National Parliament, quota in the Committees of union councils, ensuring indigenous beneficiaries in the social safety net programme, preference of indigenous peoples in government services, taking opinion of indigenous peoples before adopting any project affecting their life, ensure reserve seats in the membership of the political party, establish government primary schools in indigenous area etc.

### **4. Cultural Event:**

With the theme “Diversity is Beauty and Strength”, the colourful tolerance cultural event was held on 15 December 2019 at Askipara A’chik Resource Centre, Haluaghat, Mymensingh. More than 500 people joined this event including cultural personalities, artists, civil society members, religious leaders, women and youth. Celebration of pluralism and diversity was demonstrated in this event. Indigenous and non-indigenous performers participated in cultural programme.

### **5. Annual Social Gathering:**

A big social gathering was held on 6 December 2019 in Lalmatia Housing School and College, Mohammadpur, Dhaka. More than five thousand of indigenous peoples and majority peoples attended this event. On the occasion of traditional thanks giving ceremony “Wangala” of Garo’s indigenous communities were celebrated the day focusing indigenous identity and traditions.

The Wangala is a symbol of unity of Garo community. Cultural personality and dramatist Mamunur Rashid attended this programme and spoke for the attention of government to promote indigenous culture. Total 12 cultural groups took part in traditional dances and music. Members of majority community, church leaders, women and youth, professors, civil society members, pastors and priests, NGOs activists, farmers and high level government officers attended the festival. It was a showcase of cultural diversity and it inspired indigenous peoples, specially the youth to be proud of their own culture and way of life. It has also created respect to majority community for indigenous peoples. The Wangala is also a bridge of traditional and modern culture of Garos. Media has widely covered the festival. During the festival, poster and magazine were published and widely distributed. Besides this, indigenous fair with crafts, arts, ornaments, indigenous food and clothes were available in the exhibition. TV channels broadcasted LIVE programme of this gathering and IPDS president made TV interviews focusing on the need and importance of the cultural diversity.

### **6. Dialogue with National Human Rights Commission:**



A Dialogue meeting with National Human Rights Commission at national level was organised on 19 December 2019 in Azimur Rahman Conference Hall, the Daily Star in Dhaka. Members of Parliament, Full time Member of National Human Rights Commission Dr. Kamal Uddin Ahmed, Aroma Dutt MP, Fazle Hossain Badsha MP, Professor Dr. Rahmat Ullah, Dean, Faculty of Law, University of Dhaka, Dr. Zobaida Nasreen, Associate Professor, Department of Anthropology, University of Dhaka, civil society, media, indigenous community leaders and youth attended this dialogue. In this dialogue, the need for separate policy for indigenous peoples will be raised. The importance of special measures for strengthening and ensuring the political participation of indigenous peoples was focused on the day.

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ILO-IPDS Project

Name of the project: **“Capacity of constituents strengthened to prevent unacceptable forms of work among women and indigenous workers in target sectors”**.

### Trainings

A three days long training for indigenous women workers has been organized focusing on leadership skill development and right issues. The training was held on 30 June to 02 July, 2019 at Caritas training room in Sylhet. Participants from different indigenous communities like Garo, Chakma, Patro, Khasia and tea communities were participated from Dhaka, Sremangal, Moulvibazar and sylhet region. Indigenous peoples those were participated in this training were working with different sectors which are unacceptable forms of works like beauty porlor, tea sector, clinic act. Trade union leader and the vice chair of Kamalganj Upazila Mr. Rambhajan Kairi, Deputy divisional director for women affairs, government of Bangladesh, ILO national Coordinator Mr. Alexius Chicham, Human rights activist, CARITAS regional director facilitated the training programme. A total of 34 participants including facilitator, organizer and volunteer were present at the training.

Total 8 capacity building training for tea workers on labour laws and human rights were held in 6 different valleys. On 20-21 August at Labour House in Balishira Valley, and 23-24 August in Monudhulai Valley, 16-17 October, 2019 at Longla Valley, 18-19 October at Jhury Valley, 11-12 November at Malinicheera tea garden and 13-14 at Caritas Sylhet office in Sylhet Valley, 24-25 November at Chandpur tea garden and 26-27 November at Valley office in Laskorpur Valley. Panchayet Committee leaders including women and youths were participated in these training. Bangladesh Cha Sramik Union central

leaders, human rights activists, trade union leaders, government officials, ILO and IPDS officials and lawyers facilitated the training sessions.

## Dialogue Workshops

On 23 June 2019 a dialogue workshop with indigenous workers on UN instrument and labour rights is held at Caritas office, Chittagong. More than 60 participants from Chittagong port city those who are working in different job sectors like, EPZ, RMGs, beauty parlors, health sectors from Chakma, Marma, Tripura, Garo, Hajong communities were attended this event. Director and deputy director of labour, Chittagong division, Mr. Alexius Chicham, National Coordinator, ILO, Mr. Tapan Datta, President of Trade Union Kendra, Chittagong division, Amarshanti Chakma, President of Bangladesh Pahari Sramik Kallyan Forum, Mr. Pahari Bhattyacharya from BILS, IP right activists, youth leaders, women among other attended this event.

A dialogue workshop is held on 27 May, 2019 at Sremangal. The dialogue is focus on UN instrument and labour rights. More than 35 participants from different communities and sectors were attended this workshop. The workshop is started with welcome address by Mr. Ripon Banai where he shared the objectives of the workshop. Executive Committee members of Bangladesh Cha Sramik Union including president and secretary were also attended.

Three awareness raising workshop were organized jointly with Bangladesh Indigenous Workers Associations and Bangladesh Cha Shamik Union. On 17-18 September at Sremangal, 22 November at Savar and 29 November at Gazipur. Participants from different forms of job sectors and communities including women and youth were attended. Leaders from Bangladesh Indigenous Workers Associations and Bangladesh Cha Shamik Union facilitated these workshops.

### A. Coordination Meeting

A coordination meeting was held on 29 september, 2019 at CBCB center, Dhaka. Bangladesh Indigenous Workers Association members from different region were attended and discuss about the labours issues in this meeting. IPDS facilitated the meeting as secretariat where Mr. Alexius Chicham, National Project Coordinator also attended.

Although Bangladesh has achieved impressive GDP growth rate of around 6% over the last one and a half decades and succeeded in achieving targets of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) across many of social indicators, growth of intolerance has emerged as a looming threat to the social cohesion and peace in Bangladesh. There has been an increase of violence that is

targeting minorities, LGBTI, etc. Since 2016, involvement of the young people in intolerance-inspired acts has become a major cause of concern in Bangladesh in the context that young people constitute 34% (Giving Youth a Voice [2012], BRAC IGS) of the population of the country. Young people from indigenous communities, religious and sexual minorities face multiple challenges and deprivation due to their identity. These youth groups can equally contribute to the national development if they are properly integrated into society.

## **IPDS- Action Aid Project**

### **Name of the Project: ‘YOUNG PEOPLE PROMOTING SOCIAL COHESION AND PEACE’**

#### **Formation of a youth led peace network:**



On 20 September, 2019 a youth led peace network was launched. The event was took place at Teacher lounge in Dhaka University. Total 18 young people from different identities and different universities were attended as network members. Mr. Sanjeeb Drong, president of IPDS, Dr. Sourov Shikder, professor of Dhaka

University, Mr. Korban Ali from ActionAid Bangladesh and Ms. Tuly Mrong, programme coordinator of IPDS spoke in this event.

### **Organized the meeting of peace network:**

The first second and third meeting of peace network was held on 02 October, 20 November and 17 December 2019 at Bangladesh Adivasi Forum office. Total 13 youth network members were in first meeting 14 youth in second and 17 in third present in this meeting. Mr. Sanjeeb Drong, president of IPDS, Mr. Ripon Banai, project coordinator of IPDS were also attended.

### **Organized inter cultural dialogue:**



IPDS organized the main event of inter cultural dialogue on 8-9 November, 2019 at Askipara Achik resource center, Haluaghat in Mymensingh. A colorful cultural programme was displayed in this event. Before the cultural event a discussion session was held on peace and diversity. Mr. Sanjeeb Drong delivered a lecture on these issues. He said that Bangladesh is a country of diversity where people from different identities were living for long. He also said that diversity is not threat but it is beauty and strength. Dr. Sourav Shikder, Professor, Linguistic Department, University of Dhaka, Dr. Abul Mansur Ahmed, Professor, Mass Communication & Journalism, University of Dhaka, Md. Korban Ali, Deputy Manager, Youth Representation, Action Aid, Bangladesh among other was spoke in this event. Colorful traditional and Bengali dance from Garo, Khasi and Hajong community were displayed. Local

band and individual artist were performed. 24 youths from department of mass communication and journalism, university of Dhaka, 12 youths from peace network and 03 youths from Action Aid Bangladesh were participated.



The second inter cultural dialogue was held at Nokmandi community center on 14 December, 2019. Youth peace network members and others were attended in this event.



The third inter cultural dialogue was held at Kalachandpur on 17 December, 2019. Many indigenous and Bengali people were attended in this event. Mr. Sanjeeb Drong, President of IPDS, Alexius Chicham, NPC, ILO, Hemonto Henry Kobi, Deputy Secretary, GoB, Konel Kama, Deputy Director of revenue Dhaka region were attended this event.



### **IPDS-UNDP Project**

Name of the project: **“Promoting the rights of ethnic minorities through awareness raising and engaging duty bearers at local and national level”**

A discussion meeting and cultural event was held at Askipara Achik Resource Centre on 15 December, 2020. Ten cultural groups including youth and women participated in the performance. More than five hundred indigenous and non-indigenous peoples attended this event. This event has a great impact on celebrating the cultural diversity and promoting respect towards indigenous traditional cultures and history. Indigenous children and youth have become aware about their own identity, languages and cultural values. Non-indigenous peoples become sensitized and supportive on indigenous issues. Prominent actor, writer and dramatist Mamunur Rashid was present in this event and made a valuable speech for bridging the gap between indigenous culture and mainstream culture. He added that State and majority community should come forward to stand for the protection and promotion of the rich cultural heritage of indigenous peoples. He made an emphasis on the need of national academy for preservation of indigenous culture and knowledge. Professors, civil society

members, NGOs, women and youth, social and religious leaders and cultural activists joined this event.

A Workshop is held on 23 December, 2019 at Goshgaon, Dhobaura. Total sixty participants from different indigenous communities were attended where 20 male and 40 female.

### **Manusher Jonno Foundation Project, funded by DFID/UK Aid**

Project Title: Indigenous peoples' rights are protected and promoted in Bangladesh.  
Program and thematic area: Livelihood & Indigenous peoples (Excluded Peoples' Rights-EPR).

Grant period: January 2019 to December 2021

#### **1.1 Direct Beneficiary Number:**

Targeted beneficiaries	Male	Female	Boys	Girls	Person with Disability	Total
Indigenous peoples	1,648	1,873	795	850	344	5,510

### **PROJECT PROGRESS**

#### **2.1: Progress on action plan**

SL	Activities	Target	Achieved	Male	Fem	Brief/narrative on the activities	Remarks
1	Project inception workshops with UNO and other government officials at upazila level.	02	02	51	18	IPDS organized the project inception workshop at Kulaura on 08 <sup>th</sup> , May 2019 & at Borolekha on 19 <sup>th</sup> June, 2019.	
2	Formation of 03 upazila level committee for advocacy on access to government services and entitlements.	3	03	45	15	IPDS organized advocacy committee meetings. In this meeting 60 participants were present.	
3	Half yearly meeting with upazila development committee	06	05	62	25	IPDS organized half yearly meeting with upazila advocacy committee.	
4	Formation of 13 union level indigenous man and woman committee.	13	13	122	118	IPDS organized formation of 13 Union level ethnic men and women. Every committee form in 15 members.	
5	Half yearly meeting with union committee.	26	20	204	115	IPDS organized 20 half yearly meeting	



						with union committee members. In this meeting total participants were 319.	
6	Formation of Group at Village level (VDG). In each committee will form 20 members in 82 villages (male 7 female 8 boys 3 girls 2)	82	82	886	930	Village development group was formed in 82 villages in this quarter. In this forming meeting total participant were 1,816.	
7	Formation of 3 ethnic youth (boys, girls) forum at upazila level.	03	03	23	33	IPDS has formed 3 ethnic youth to make unity and strengthen the youth.	
8.	Half yearly meeting for 3 ethnic youth forum at upazila level.	06	05	35	19	IPDS have organized 3 meetings with indigenous. Total participant were presented 54.	
9	Interactive dialogue with Union council elected bodies on Government access service and inclusion of ethnic peoples in various committees.	13	09	102	40	IPDS organized 4 interactive dialogue with union council elected bodies on Government services and inclusion of ethnic peoples in various committees. Total participants were 142.	
10	Interactive dialogue with community clinic and Government hospital.	02	02			IPDS has organized interactive dialogue with community clinic and government hospital.	
11	Day observation: International Indigenous peoples day observation on 9 <sup>th</sup> august.	04	04	548	467	IPDS observed the UN Indigenous Peoples' Day at local and national level	
12	Formation of indigenous woman forum in each upazila.	03	03	10	49	IPDS formed 3 Adivasi women forum.	
13	Yearly coordination meeting with 03 ethnic woman forums at upazila level.	03	03	08	46	IPDS organized 2 coordination meeting with 2 indigenous women forum. In this meeting they have shared about the gender, activities of	

						the forum. In this meeting there were 54 participants male 08, female 46.	
14	Formation / Reform of ethnic women organization. (10 women organization will be formed or restructured)	10	10			Ten ethnic women organization at village level have been formed.	
15	Provide direct support to 10 indigenous woman organization for capacity building.	02	02	0	02	The support given to Lutijuri punjee simsaka and Nursury punjee women organization.	
16	<b>Day observation: woman's Event</b>						
	International woman's day observation	03	03			International Women's Day was observed at local and national level.	
	International Rural Day	03	01	16	56	International Rural Day was observed at Lutijuri punjee under kulaura upazila.	
	International human rights day	03	03	120	144	Human Rights Day was observed at local and national level.	
	16 days of activism against gender based violence.	03	02	85	125	The 16 days activism against gender based violence in Nalitabari and Borolekha upazila.	
17	Provide mix training to ethnic men, women, boys and girls group on human rights, leadership and gender.	02	02	27	24	In this period IPDS organized 2 mix training for the ethnic men, women, boys and girls on human rights, leadership and gender mainstreaming.	
18	Training for targeted woman, Union and upazila advocacy committee and youth group on indigenous rights, land and cultural rights;	02	02	28	15	In this period IPDS have organized training on indigenous rights, land and cultural rights for the committee and group members	
19	Provide direct support to 06 indigenous youth organization;	02	02	02	0	Direct support was given to Singur punjee youth club	

						and youth commission of Sylhet Diocese.	
20	Legal aid and assistance for cases;	03	03	02	01		
21	Celebration of indigenous social and cultural events; (3 event per year) (Wangala and Noya Kawa)	03	02				
	wangala	01	01	148	252	Wangala Garo festival was organized by IPDS at Askipara on 15 December 2019.	
	Noya khawa	01	01	80	120	The Noya khawa a Hajong festival was organized by IPDS in Nalitabari on 6 December 2019.	
22	Morjada Gori somota	03	02	50	85		
23	National media advocacy (Press conference) Media. (3 media advocacy in project period)	01	01	45	35		
24	Skill Development Training for Group Members on IGA and Alternative livelihood	06	06	88	84	IPDS have organized skill development training for the group members in Borolekha. All the training resource person were the government officials of agriculture and veterinary surgeon. In this training total 172 participants were present.	
<b>Other than Work Plan (WP)</b>							
1	Staff training on TOT and staff gathering					IPDS have organized a staff gathering and training on TOT at Askipara, Haluaghat IPDS office on 12 – 14/09/2019.	
2	Human chain protest on rape against children and woman					IPDS organized a human chain protest on rape against children and women	

						on 3 <sup>rd</sup> September, 2019 at kulaura. In this human chain there were presented 30 more peoples male 10 female 20. The issued spread in various newspaper and network.	
3.	Civil society and organization from Dhaka visit at Jhimai punjee on 11 December 2019.					ALRD, IPDS and KUBORAJ arranged a visit tour at Jhimai punjee for observation of the punjees peoples livelihood and problem faces recently.	
4	Visit at Jhimai punjee by Counselor, Royal Danish Embassy, Dhaka.					The First counselor of Royal Danish Embassy of Dhaka visited the jhimai punjee on 28/05/2019 to see their livelihood and human rights violations situation.	
5	Consultation meeting with Kulaura Upazila chairman A.K.M Sofi Ahmad Salman and indigenous leader.					The consultation meeting with upazila chairman of kulaura and IP leader held on 29/06/2019 at Lokhipur mission center. The programme arranged by lead organization KUBORAJ inter punjee development and supported by IPDS.	

## Impact

IPDS made a significant impact at local and national level on indigenous issues. Indigenous peoples are now visible at national agenda. Civil society, NGOs, media and human rights organizations now put indigenous issues in their agenda. Government and policy makers, UN agencies, European Union and development partners now at least include indigenous peoples as one of the vulnerable groups in the society. IPDS promoted dialogue between indigenous peoples and majority communities, MPs, policy makers, advocates, academics, government officials, elected bodies, indigenous chiefs and women, youth, media and other

key stakeholders. These events had a great impact towards better understanding the rights of indigenous peoples. Now, non-indigenous organizations include indigenous issues in their development agenda in Bangladesh. Media is becoming a bit sensitized on indigenous issues and it covered news and reports on indigenous peoples. IPDS President participated in many government meetings regarding indigenous issues.

During the project period, IPDS has implemented activities to strengthening indigenous peoples' initiatives for human rights in project areas.

More than 20,000 indigenous and non-indigenous peoples were benefited from the project activities in this year. Among them more than 5,000 indigenous peoples became aware about identity and rights. More than 5,000 non-indigenous people participated in our activities on indigenous issues. More 3,000 students and youth participated in human rights education programme at school and college level. It is very encouraging that now the public and private universities are organizing events on indigenous issues. In some university introduced indigenous studies as a course. Now, many NGOs, civil society and national mainstream organizations are celebrating the UN International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples. UNDP has a human rights programme (HRP) and special focus on indigenous peoples in Bangladesh.

According to our activities, more than 1,000 indigenous human rights activists built their capacity and improved skills for advocating for their rights through our project activities such as committee meetings, cross learning visit, reviving of indigenous culture, community elder's conference, seminars and workshop etc. Adivasi Rights Committee, Solidarity Committees and local people organized rally, human chain and dialogue meeting with their own capacity.

It is estimated that more than 2,000 columns, articles, reports, features, news and stories were published in national and local daily newspapers on indigenous issues in three years. Bengali writers have published articles and features on indigenous issues with full support towards indigenous peoples. Including IPDS President, intellectuals, writers, actors, poets and professors from Bengali community participated in many TV talk shows on indigenous issues. Inclusion of indigenous issues in drama, music, stories, poems, advertisements in TV and stage is increasing. In this project period, Parliamentary Caucus on Indigenous Issues finalized the draft law Indigenous Peoples Rights Act. It is now ready for placing in the Parliament. In this project period, many MPs spoke in the parliaments for special budget allocation for indigenous communities in national budget. MPs also visited indigenous areas where incident the human rights violation took place. In this period, IPDS drafted a Separate Land Commission Act by indigenous lawyer for plain land indigenous peoples.

## **Overall assessment and outlook**

Indigenous peoples at present are facing the denial of their existence and human rights. Government does not recognize indigenous peoples. It says there are some tribals in the country. This denial has created a big threat of eviction from land. This kind of denial has serious negative impact on mainstream population towards indigenous peoples' rights. In recent years, indigenous peoples faced some direct attack on their villages and livelihoods to grab their land. It is very alarming that government failed to bring the attackers into justice. Culture of impunity is increasing in the country. Still the lack of political will is a big

challenge for the development of indigenous peoples in Bangladesh. We had a vibrant civil society who were supportive towards indigenous peoples. Now, civil society is becoming weak and silent because of culture of fear.

Islamic extremist groups are rising and they killed the priest, foreigners, monks, religious minorities, bloggers, women and people from different beliefs and ideologies. Police is almost a failure in this case. Day by day, the space for human rights activist is reducing and shrinking. Indigenous human rights defenders feel threats to life in this situation.

Still lack of education and awareness among majority people to respect and promote the cultural diversity is a major concern. Government does not have any integrated development efforts for plain land indigenous peoples.

It is only a hope that indigenous peoples of the country are becoming united to raise their voices at local and national level, event to some extent international level. In this project period, IPDS organized events at national level jointly with the National Human Rights Commission, Parliamentary Caucus on Indigenous Peoples and civil society. A culture of dialogue has established. Our voices have been raised, but it has still no influence at policy level. This influence should be established. It is very essential to continue human rights education programme and campaign to wider audience for respect indigenous peoples' rights.

## **Conclusion**

The crucial issue for indigenous peoples of Bangladesh is a lack of civil and political participation and land rights. Still indigenous peoples face threats of eviction from their land. It is because the customary and ancestral land rights are not recognized by the law at national level. More needs to be done for ensuring the rights of indigenous peoples. A draft Land Commission Act has been prepared by IPDS for wider debate. Government has a commitment to form a separate Land Commission for indigenous peoples. Advocacy and lobby work should be done for enactment of this law. Indigenous peoples still face difficulties with bureaucracy attitude towards them. Negative mindset towards human rights of indigenous peoples is a big challenge among majority community. It is obvious to continue the awareness raising programme at local and national level. Capacity building for indigenous peoples' organizations is essential at grassroots level. Youth and women human rights defenders should be targeted for capacity building and network development.

A wider advocacy and campaign may bring a positive change among majority community, government machineries, politicians and mass people, young students, media and other stakeholders. A huge public awareness campaign is needed to change the existing mindset. Confidence building programme and creating trust between indigenous and majority community can bring a social harmony and development. Corruption and lack of good governance are the threat for suitable development.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) has recognized indigenous peoples and their vulnerability. Indigenous peoples are the poorest of the poor. It is important for indigenous peoples to participate in the implementation of the SDGs in Bangladesh. The theme, Leaving No One Behind is really a challenge for indigenous peoples in Bangladesh. Indigenous peoples should have participation in decision making process for control their own

development. In the next 10 years of SDGs, indigenous peoples and their human rights and development should be in priority of all development intervention.

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