

Annual Report 2020

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 Five 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:

IPDS-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:

Seminar workshop on indigenous issues

A seminar was held on 19 June 2020 at A'chik Resource Centre in Haluaghat, Mymensingh on indigenous women and health issues in this Covid 19 pandemic. They discussed on the situation of indigenous peoples during this covid-19. Indigenous leaders, government health workers, women, youth and community members participated. Total 34 persons participated in this seminar. Among them 15 were women.

Observation of International Women's Day

With the objectives of awareness raising on gender equity, ensure women rights, reduce women torture, ensure women rights in the family, ensure educational rights for girl, the international Women's Day observed. The theme of this year was "I am generation equality: realizing women rights".

Ensuring women's rights a human chain was organised on 5 and 8 March 2020 at Nalitabari and Kulaura Upazila. More than 250 participants took part in this event with festoons and poster with different slogans on women's rights.

On 9 March a discussion and a short cultural programme were held at national level, Chayannat Auditorium, Dhaka.

Speaking as the Chief Guest at the discussion, Worker's Party President, Former Minister Rashed Khan Menon MP said, "Despite the empowerment of women in the country, women are still oppressed and persecuted due to the attitude of the society and the patriarchal society." And the situation of indigenous women is even more deplorable. In order to protect the rights of indigenous women, the indigenous women's rights movement must be linked to the mainstream women's rights movement.

Advocacy and networking meeting

IPDS organised total 4 advocacy and networking meetings at local level in this project period. Total 167 participants from indigenous organisations, local elected bodies, media and civil society attended these meetings.

In these meetings, they made emphasis on the need of advocacy programme and lobby work to ensuring the access and benefit of the government's social services and safety net programme for indigenous peoples. They also made the point for ensuring the active participation of indigenous representatives in the Union Council; local Standing Committees and decision making-process.

The following challenges were discussed in these meetings:

- Lack of access of indigenous peoples in the local government;
- Lack of participation of indigenous peoples in the decision-making process at local level;
- Communication gap between indigenous peoples and the majority community;
- Lack of strong leadership from indigenous peoples;
- Emerging issues on forest related problems;
- Lack of indigenous youth leadership;

The participants took some decision in these events 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.

1.8 Support to indigenous community organisations

In this period, IPDS made support eight indigenous community organisations for advocacy and capacity building programme. These organisations are addressing indigenous issues at local level.

Workshop with traditional organisation and indigenous organizations

Traditional organisations and indigenous organisations are the suitable platform for indigenous communities. They are working on emerging local issues. IPDS organised two meetings with them in this period. They are the village Nokma (Chief), church leaders, community leaders, women, youth, representative of Adivasi Rights Committee and networks. In this workshop, participants discussed on local social issues, challenges with youth without job, community life and unity, social conflicts etc. In this area, there was some tension between indigenous peoples and Bengalis because of alcohol and drug use. A decision was made to form a committee to address this problem and contact with local Union Council. Total 77 participants attended these meetings and among them 34 were women.

Meeting with National Human Rights Commission

A meeting was held on 16 June 2020 with National Human Rights Commission in Dhaka on the thematic group of the ethnic and religious minorities. In this meeting minority issues including indigenous issues were discusses. IPDS President made presentation about the situation of indigenous peoples during this Covid pandemic. The NHRC Commission asked IPDS to give

them a list of vulnerable families. Accordingly NHRC took decision to support indigenous families. The NHRC also wrote a letter to government Ministries and divisions to support indigenous peoples in this corona outbreak.

Fact Finding Mission

A fact finding team visited the indigenous area Jhimai Khasi village to enquire and observe the situation of Khasi people who have been facing threat of eviction and facing court cases on their ancestral land. IPDS team with other civil society members and lawyers visited the village and encouraged indigenous peoples to stand for their customary land rights. After the visit, a press conference was held at national level to make public opinion and attention to policy-making bodies. This visit inspired the villagers and increased their strength for struggle for survival. The 72 indigenous families have been traditionally occupying the land and enjoying the land rights. IPDS has been supporting the court case for this village and made linkage with national human rights groups.

Human Rights Education

IPDS supported four community events on human rights and indigenous issues. In these events, the importance of indigenous identity, languages and culture was highly focused. More than 3,500 indigenous youth, students and parents joined these events focusing the need for promotion and protection of indigenous languages, cultures and traditional life. A showcase of cultural diversity was presented at the national level.

On 22 December 2020, IPDS organized another human rights education program with the youth and students in Dhaka. Total 25 students participated in the program. The participants discussed about their rights, human rights issues, and other challenges in the city life. They took a decision that they would often sit together and increase their knowledge about human rights.

Media advocacy

IPDS organised a meeting with journalists on 29 January 2020 in the auditorium of Joyenshahi Adivasi Unnayan Parishad, Modhupur, Tangail. A written statement was made for the journalists. In this meeting, ten point demands were raised from indigenous community. They were: Provide the reserve seats for indigenous peoples (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 job and services, taking opinion of indigenous peoples' organisations 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.

IPDS organized three trainings on human rights of indigenous peoples' rights in this period. Indigenous community leaders, youth and women attended these trainings. These trainings were held on 2 August in Askipara, Mymensingh, and 8 October in Kulaura, Moulvibazar and 20 October in Mymensingh town. Religious minority community members participated in Moulvibazar district.

On 11 November 2020, IPDS with other human rights organizations and NGOs jointly organized a human chain in Sylhet on the current situation of Ishachara Khasi village. The Khasis and Garos faced threats of eviction from their land by the miscreants and land grabbers. The land grabber event filed a false case against the Khasis. Through this human chain, organizers made appeal to the government administration and police to protect their land and livelihood. They also made demand to the government for their safety and security. The media highly covered the event.

On the occasion of the CHT Peace Accord, a discussion was held on 2 December 2020 at national level. Member of the Parliament, renowned civil society members, NGOs, media, women leaders, youth and indigenous community leaders attended this event. The participants urged the government and other stakeholders to fully implement the CHT Peace Accord and to establish the fundamental human rights of indigenous peoples and take special measures for economic, social and cultural development. Newspapers including top TV channels published the news.

Training on human rights, land rights and indigenous rights

IPDS organized three trainings on human rights of indigenous peoples' rights in this period. Indigenous community leaders, youth and women attended these trainings. These trainings were held on 2 August in Askipara, Mymensingh, and 8 October in Kulaura, Moulvibazar and 20 October in Mymensingh town. Religious minority community members participated in Moulvibazar district.

The training contents included the topics such as the concept of human rights, UN human rights mechanisms including civil and political rights, economic, social and cultural rights, Indigenous Peoples Rights, national legal issues, ILO Conventions related to indigenous and tribal peoples, minority rights, Human Rights Defenders etc. Total 97 indigenous youth and women participated in these trainings.

Women, youth and elder's conference

On 31 October 2020 IPDS organized indigenous youth conference in Askipara Achik Resource Centre in Haluaghat Mymensingh district. In this program, 45 indigenous Youth from different indigenous communities participated. They were from different universities and youth organizations and active in youth activism. IPDS President Sanjeeb Drong, was fully present in the conference. The theme of the conference was 'Youth Leadership: Present and Future.' This conference included community visit, family visit, seminar and a cultural program.

This gathering has successfully connected indigenous youth from different regions and made bondage among them, specially between the CHT and plain land. In this program, the elders and youth dialogue played a significant role for bridging the gaps. This event has increased the capacity of youth leadership too.

Workshop with traditional organization and indigenous organizations

A workshop with traditional organization was held on 13 November 2020 with the village Chiefs and elders at community level. This event was held in Kulaura, Moulvibazar district. The Khasi and Garo Chiefs and community members participated in this event. This event was organized jointly with KUBORAJ Inter Development Organization. Ms. Flora Bably Talang, General Secretary, KUBORAJ facilitated the entire program. She delivered speech on the overall

situation of Khasi villages. She mentioned about the attack on the Khasi villagers by land grabbers. The Muslim land grabbers evicted the Khasis and grabbed their lands for more than one month. Finally, with the help of the police and administration, the Khasis got back the land. But few cases were filed in the court. IPDS is supporting the Khasis and helped them to publish this case widely in the media. This event helped indigenous peoples to unite themselves for asserting their rights and building network.

Meeting local elected bodies, media and civil society

A meeting with local elected bodies was held in Jugli Union Council, Haluaghat, Mymensingh on 14 December 2020. Total 35 participants attended this meeting including the Chairman of the Council and Members. Adivasi community leaders, women and youth also participated in the discussion. The major issue was to building relationship with local elected bodies, increasing safety net support for Adivasis, including women, elderly and widow etc.

Meeting with Parliamentary Caucus on Indigenous Peoples

IPDS organized a discussion on indigenous issues with the Parliamentary Caucus on Indigenous Peoples at national level on 2 December 2020. The objective of this event was to advocate with the Caucus, civil society, media and other stakeholders to aware and sensitize them on indigenous people's rights issues relating to COVID 19 pandemic. The participants made emphasis on the need of special measures for supporting and promoting indigenous peoples. They raised the issues on the need for a special indigenous policy at national level.

Fact finding mission

On 14 September 2020, the Forest Department forcibly destroyed the banana plantation of a Garo woman in Modhupur forest. This incident was highly covered by media with photos and nationwide protest was begun. IPDS organized a Fact Finding Mission to Modhupur.



The owner of the land, Ms. Basanti Rema, a Garo indigenous forest-dweller has no paper document of her land title. But the Garos have been living in the forest and cultivating crops for generations. They believe that it is their ancestral land. But the Forest Department does not respect this culture of land ownership. So, land conflict continues. A Fact Finding Team visited the Forest on 25 September. The civil society members, university professors, journalist, Television presenter, indigenous leaders and lawyers were in the team. This team met the victim Garo women family and community. This team also met the government authority and raised the points of violation of human rights. Government representatives made assurance to support the Garo women. After few days, IPDS confirmed that government has made some cash support to Garo women and granted a brick made house. IPDS also supported her and connected her with other social networks. Now, it seems that the land right is protected and safe for the family. This Fact Finding visit had inspired the villagers and increased their strength for struggle for survival.

National annual convention on human rights

A National Convention on indigenous issues was organized jointly with other Adivasi organizations and NGOs on 28 November 2020 At Caritas Mymensingh auditorium. Mr. Alexius Chicham, National Coordinator of ILO presented the Keynote paper on indigenous issues. Hajong, Garo, Koch, Barman, Banai, Hodi and majority community members attended the event. In this convention, the participants made emphasis on the need of separate Ministry and Division for plain land Adivasis. The Chief Guest was the State Minister of the government Mr. Sharif Ahmed MP. The Minister also assured the participants to present this issue to the policy level

and Parliament. Mr. Mizanur Rahman, Additional Deputy Commissioner was also present in this event. Indigenous leaders made some recommendations in this event such as the special budget for Adivasi development, reserve seats in the universities, quota in the government job etc. The participants agreed to work and advocate jointly for asserting these rights.

Support for indigenous cultural events (Wangala)

With the theme “Our Culture Our Identity”, the Annual Garo Cultural Festival Wangala was held on 1 November 2020 at Askipara village, Haluaghat, Mymensingh. Village elders, women, youth and community members participated in this festival. The Wangala is a thanks-giving ceremony to the Creator. Garos are grateful to the natural world for their survival. This program has an impact for protecting and preserving the nature and environment. Indigenous elders, women and youth participated in the dance and music together. This is symbol of solidarity and community life. More than 200 people joined this event.

Regular meeting of human rights defenders

IPDS is regularly organizing formal and informal meeting with indigenous human rights defenders at local and national level. The human rights defenders are actively participating in emerging issues. In these regular meetings, they collect reports on human rights violations and try to address them.

Impact (in the period under review)

The pandemic has made the most vulnerable and indigenous peoples more vulnerable. The human rights situation of indigenous peoples and minorities is getting worse day by day. The economic impact of the Covid-19 crisis in Bangladesh has led to a precipitate and alarming decline in the incomes of indigenous peoples. Normally the income level of indigenous peoples is low. Many indigenous peoples have lost their job in this pandemic. They did not have the permanent job. They were engaged in informal sector of the job market. This includes the Ready Made Garments (RMG) sector, beauty parlours (majority workers are indigenous women) and domestic service (maids, caretakers and guards). The lack of employment protection and benefits in these sectors has turned them into highly vulnerable situation.

Impact of the project is remarkable in this period. The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) showed their positive willingness and interest to do their best for indigenous peoples’ rights. IPDS made an appeal to the NHRC to provide support for indigenous vulnerable people. On 22 July, NHRC issued a letter to Senior Secretary of the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief, government of Bangladesh. The copy of this letter was given to the Deputy Commissioners. This letter has mentioned about the demand raised from IPDS President. For this advocacy work, total 57 indigenous women directly received assistance from government.

Overall assessment and outlook

The pandemic has made a big challenge in the life of indigenous peoples in Bangladesh. The positive side is that at least still indigenous peoples are surviving and having energy to struggle for their rights and existence. Even in this Covid 19 situation, indigenous peoples’ organizations are trying hard to advocate for their human rights and development. IPDS led a high-level delegation of indigenous peoples to the Planning Ministry and the Bangladesh Bureau of

Statistics (BBS). In this period, the BBS ensured that the upcoming population census would include the data and information about indigenous peoples. Indigenous peoples still is advocating for the national policy in the country.

The good thing is that at local and national level, indigenous peoples are becoming more aware of their identity, culture and rights day by day. Indigenous peoples' human rights are issue now and media is pointing this issue differently and positively in Bangladesh. Indigenous peoples are now becoming proactive in the defense of their human rights. Despite positive developments with media, civil society and NGOs, the political will is a serious concern for indigenous peoples, including lack of positive attitude by the bureaucracy.

Conclusion

The pandemic has greatly impacted the life and livelihood of marginalized people. Our beneficiaries are facing an uncertain future in term of their economy and survival. The human rights condition of indigenous peoples is fully in a challenge. There is no scope or priority in this pandemic to address the land issues of indigenous people. Considering all the challenges in this pandemic, IPDS is trying hard to mobilize indigenous communities and our beneficiaries to stay active and building stronger relationship and network among them and other civil society organizations. It seems that

Indigenous peoples of Bangladesh will have to go long way. The good news in 2020 is that the government 8th Five Year Plan July 2020 to June 2025, Promoting Prosperity and Fostering Inclusiveness has included indigenous people's development issues significantly. Now, we should advocate for the inclusion of indigenous peoples in the implementation process. IPDS can play a good role for this advocacy.

Another positive side is that the, a group of majority Bengali community and civil society are now supporting Adivasi issues. At government level, there are still both negative and positive sides about the rights of indigenous peoples. Majority of the Bureaucracy is still in negative side for Adivasis. This government made promises to address Adivasi issues, land, forest, economic development etc., but nothing has been met in the last 12 years. Land and legal cases are still to be solved or addressed. No political or government steps have been taken against the existing forest cases. This is the main challenge for Adivasis. The problem of Khasis in the forest with Tea Companies has not solved. The positive thing is that, in some extent, the Deputy Commissioner and local authority plays positive and supportive role for Adivasis. This is the strong point. The good thing is that in our working area Khasis and indigenous peoples are becoming more confident to face the challenges and protect their rights and existence. These indigenous initiatives need more support in future and at present.

IPDS-International Labour Organization-ILO Joint SDGs Project

Project Title: Enhancing social protection for female tea garden workers and their families in Sylhet division.

Project Duration: January, 2020 to January, 2022

Brief description of the project:

The joint programme of the Government of Bangladesh and four UN agencies, female tea garden workers and their families in Sylhet Division, one of the most left behind population groups of the country, will enjoy strengthened and more coordinated access to national social protection coverage and local social services, in a more empowering and non-discriminatory environment contributing to decent work. Building on existing Government and private sector efforts and agency programmes, a policy shift to be achieved with this partnership-focused initiative will consist of Government progressively strengthening coordination of social safety nets and social services and enhancing regulation of service provision by tea garden owners who perform functions as direct duty bearers for basic social services, notably health, as well as for education. On the ground, the women, who make up about 65% of the approx. 360,000 tea garden workers, and their families, as well as trade unions, will be more empowered to claim their rights to social protection and development, information and participation, as well as labour rights.

A combination of upstream policy and legislative advocacy, dialogue and coordination; data generation, analysis and coordination; capacity development for increased system strengthening, service delivery and access, and individual and institutional empowerment and skills training, will be jointly carried out by partnering agencies ILO, UNICEF, UNFPA and UN Women with substantive support and coordination from the UN Resident Coordinator's Office. The programme strategy builds on an analysis of root causes and manifestations of long-standing challenges that partnerships between Government, private tea sector businesses, trade unions and the UN are committed to address, with empowered participation especially by the female tea garden workers. The programme should generate synergies that may eventually contribute to a multiplier, upscaling effect on other extremely poor groups, including tea garden workers in other parts of the country, notably Chittagong.

Outcome of this project:

Outcome: By 2022, tea garden workers and their families, especially women, enjoy increased social protection in health, education and decent work and access and use of quality public services in a safer and more empowered environment.

Out puts of this project:

1. Government has improved capacity to identify and address the gaps in social protection policies, Bangladesh Labour Law and other relevant laws, and to prioritize actions for tea garden workers, particularly women.
2. Public service providers, including Government and tea garden owners, have improved capacities to implement services/programmes mandated in the laws and policies to improve living and working conditions of tea plantation workers, especially women and their family members.
3. Tea garden workers and their families, especially women and children, are empowered

with increased awareness and knowledge of human rights and labour standards to access public services including family planning, child and maternal health and nutrition, education and skills training, water, sanitation and hygiene, and child protection services.

4. Tea garden workers, notably women workers, have increased capacity to negotiate and exercise collective voice to influence policies and hold the Government of Bangladesh and the Bangladesh Tea Association accountable for integration of tea garden workers in the national social protection system.

Major Activities:

1. Organize advocacy workshops/national discussions on proposed amendment of policies and laws with relevant ministries and department including BTA by end of 2021
2. Support relevant stakeholders to initiate Tripartite/bipartite action plans covering decent work, health, education and gender issues including maternity leave/breastfeeding issues at workplace by end of 2021
3. Conduct capacity building training for DIFE, Labour Department and, garden managers, Bangladesh Tea Association and relevant govt. entities to ensure Occupational Safety and Health compliance in the tea garden
4. Conduct capacity building training on the practices of freedom of association, collective bargaining and sound industrial relations for tea garden workers particularly women at Panchayet, Valley and Central Committee level of Bangladesh Cha Shramik Union
5. Conduct trainings on negotiation skills, management and leadership for tea garden workers particularly women of Panchayet, valley and central committee leaders of Bangladesh Cha Shramik Union

Major activities have done this year:

Capacity Building Training

Total 21 capacity building training on negotiation skills, management, leadership, collective bargaining, practice of freedom of association and sound industrial relation for tea garden workers particularly women at Panchayet, Valley and central level were conducted.



Participants from different tea gardens, Panchayet, Valley and Central leaders were attended.

Thirteen capacity building training were held on 07-08 October at Longla valley where participants from four tea gardens including Karimpur, Hazinagar, Raznagar and Chandbag tea garden were attended. On 09 October at Jhury Valley, 9-14 November at Sylhet valley and 22-25 November at Balishira Valley. Participants from different tea gardens Panchayet leaders, Women and valley leaders were attended. All these training focus on negotiation skills, management and leadership. Mr. Komal Bunarjee, Presedent of Jury valley, Mr. Saju Goshwami, President of Longla valley, Mr. Shahidul Islam, President of Longla valey, Mr. Raju Guwala, president of Sylhat valley, Mr. Bijoy Hazra, president of Balishira valley, Secretary, vice president and other members were attended.



Another eight capacity building training on the practice of freedom of association, collective bargaining, sound industrial relations were held at different valleys. Participants from Valley and panchayet leaders including women were attended. The training were held on 28-29 November at Laskorpur Valley, 4-11 December at Balishira and Monudhulai Valley, 14-15 and 17-20 at Sylhet valley. Bangladesh Cha Sramik Union central leaders, Valley leaders, government officials were also attended. Total 572 participants including women and youth were attended where 348 male and 224 were female.

Seminar and workshop

On 30 November to 02 December, 2020 IPDS in association with all implementing partners and donors organized divisional workshop and training for DIFE, Labour department, BTA, BCSU and other stakeholders.

Coordination Meeting

For better understanding and effective implementation of the project activities, IPDS had several coordination meetings with the Bangladesh Cha Sramik Union-BCSU in time to time. Total 4 coordination meetings were conducted in presences of the central committee members of Bangladesh Cha Sramik Union-BCSU in Sremangal Labour house. General Secretary of BCSU

Mr. Rambhajan Kairi, Vice president Mr. Pankaj Kondo, treasure Mr. Paresh Kalindi and Mr. Bijoy Hazra were made advice, comments and recommendations to smoothly implement the activities.



In addition, series of coordination meetings were held among implementing partners and donors.

Achievements: Recommendations, Findings and lesson learns of this project:

➤ Recommendations:

- Need to amend the discriminatory article of Bangladesh labour law against tea labour.
- Capacity building of tea garden workers on basic human rights, labour rights, negotiation skills, collective bargaining, management and policies.
- Strengthen the leadership skill and network among central, valley, panchayet leaders and tea garden workers.
- Building sound industrial relation in tea sector particularly owner, workers and government.
- Support to strengthen Bangladesh Cha Sramik Union to building their capacity.
- Build linkage between tea workers and national associations, trade union, employers association, civil society, media etc.
- Series of awareness raising programs for tea workers about their rights including government safety net and other facilities.

- Organize interactive dialogue between tea workers, national worker association, trade union, employers association and government.

➤ **Findings:**

- Lack of awareness about basic human rights, labour rights, policies etc.
- Lack of leadership skills of Panchayet, Valley and Central leaders.
- Lack of appropriate laws and policies for tea garden workers.
- Lack of budget allocation for indigenous and tea workers.
- Lack of initiatives from government and development partners towards tea community people.
- Lack of access to justice.
- Lack of education, health and sanitation etc.

➤ **Lesions learned:**

- Dialogue with government, trade union and associations are helpful.
- Capacity building trainings, meetings, seminars, workshops etc. are very effective for asserting rights.
- Information dissemination about basic human rights, labour rights, polices are essential.
- Linkage and building relationship with government, trade union and employer associations are important and useful.
- Dialogue between owners and workers are very useful.

IPDS-UNDP HRP Project

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

Objectives:

- To increase awareness and capacity building on human rights of indigenous peoples in the plain land;
- To contribute to protect and promote the culture of indigenous peoples in Haluaghat and Dhobaura upazila under Mymensingh district

Major Activities:

1. Awareness raising session on Human rights and indigenous peoples rights;
2. Training on human rights and indigenous peoples rights;
3. Consultation meeting with indigenous peoples, group leaders and youth;
4. National level dialogue with Gov. NHRC, CSOs, Media on Indigenous Policy;

Activities have done this year:

Awareness Raising Sessions

Total 10 awareness raising meetings have been organized in different upazilas like Haluaghat, Dhobaura and Modhupur. 4 meetings in Dhobaura on 12 March, 2020, 22 and 27 January and 13 February, 2021, 03 in Haluaghat on 16 February, 2020, 02 January and 14 February, 2021 and another 3 meetings organized in Madhupur on 23 January, 13 February and 14 February, 2021. Indigenous peoples including women and youths, elders, community leaders were participated in these awareness raising sessions.

Trainings

Total 6 training on human rights and indigenous peoples rights have been organized in Mymensingh, Haluaghat, Dhobaura and Modhupur. On 23 December, 2019 a training is conducted at Dhobaura. Participants including men and women from Banai, Hajong, Hadi and Garo indigenous communities were attended. Ms Tuly Labanna Mrong, Program Coordinator of IPDS has given welcome speech in the event. Mr. Bisheshor Banai, Joint Secretary, TWA central committee, Ms. Tuly Labanna Mrong, Ripon Banai, PC, IPDS facilitated sessions on different topics. Three trainings were held on 02 August, 2020, on 21 January and 20 February, 2021 respectively at Askipara resource center in Haluaghat. The formal training had started with the third session Mr. Sanjeeb Drong, President, IPDS and General Secretary of Bangladesh Indigenous Peoples Forum conducted. He focused on the importance and what are the human rights issues of indigenous peoples. He also discussed about the present human rights situation of indigenous peoples in Bangladesh and how young people can play role to protect their rights. He mentioned that there are strong international instruments and safeguards for indigenous peoples to protect their rights. With the references of constitution of Bangladesh he said, all the citizen of the country will enjoy equal rights even special measure can be taken by the state for the backward sections but unfortunately indigenous peoples have been facing discrimination for long. The special measures, laws and policies are not sufficient towards indigenous peoples.



In afternoon session after taking lunch the session started with a discussion on the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Constitution, Civil and Political Rights, SDGs, ILO Convention-109 &169, HR Declaration other declarations and covenants by Mr. Sanjeeb Drong.

Human Rights Defenders of indigenous peoples and their roles and importance with this topic Mr. Ripon Chandra Banai, Secretary of Youth and Students, Bangladesh Indigenous Peoples Forum discussed with the participants. He gave some examples how indigenous youths are and playing role to protect and promote IP rights in the country. He encouraged and requested the indigenous youth to become a human rights defender for their own community. On 20 October, 2020 another training was held at CARITS in Mymensingh. Participants from different indigenous communities were attended. The formal training had started with the third session Mr. Ripon Banai, Youth and Student Secretary of Bangladesh Indigenous Peoples Forum conducted. He focused on the importance and what are the human rights issues of indigenous peoples. He also discussed about the present human rights situation of indigenous peoples in Bangladesh and how young people can play role to protect their rights. He mentioned that there are strong international instruments and safeguards for indigenous peoples to protect their rights. With the references of constitution of Bangladesh he said, all the citizen of the country will enjoy equal rights even special measure can be taken by the state for the backward sections but unfortunately indigenous peoples have been facing discrimination for long. The special measures,

laws and policies are not sufficient towards indigenous peoples. In afternoon session after taking lunch the session started with a discussion on the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Constitution, Civil and Political Rights, SDGs, ILO Convention-109 & 169, HR Declaration other declarations and covenants by Mr. Eugin Nokrek, President of JAUP.

Human Rights Defenders of indigenous peoples and their roles and importance with this topic Ms. Tuly Labannya Mrong, PC, IPDS, discussed with the participants. She gave some examples how indigenous youths are and playing role to protect and promote IP rights in the country. She encouraged and requested the indigenous youth to become a human rights defender for their own community.

On 17 January, 2021 another training was held at Shantiniketon Hall room in Modhupur. Participants from different communities were attended.

Cultural events

A discussion meeting and cultural event Askipara, Haluaghat on 15 December, 2019. Indigenous cultural shows from Garo, Hajong, Banai and Hadi communities were displayed their traditional cultural shows in this event. Indigenous dances, songs are also presented by artists. More than 500 indigenous and non indigenous peoples were enjoyed the cultural event. A discussion meeting and cultural event is held at Haluaghat Sadar on 21 February, 2020. Mr. Lalit Kumar Drong, Head teacher of St. Andrew's High school with his all teachers, Head teacher of Holy family girl high school, all the teachers of both schools, Ripon Banai and development partners representatives were attended in this cultural event. Indigenous cultural shows from Gar, Hajong, Bengali, and other community people were displayed their traditional cultural shows in this event. Indigenous traditional dances, songs are also presented by artists. More than 500 indigenous and non indigenous peoples were enjoyed the cultural event. Before the cultural event sports competition was held. Another indigenous cultural event is held on 30 October, 2020 at Askipara in Haluaghat. Indigenous Hajong traditional dances, Gao traditional dances, IP traditional songs and dances were performed in this event. More than 300 indigenous and non indigenous peoples were enjoyed this cultural programme. On 13 February, 2021 a consultation meeting followed by indigenous cultural shows is held in Madhupur. Hundreds of indigenous and non-indigenous people including men, women, youth from different communities like Barman Garo, Koch were attended in the programme.



Another two a pleasant and colorful indigenous cultural event and sports were performed by indigenous peoples. Indigenous Garo artists, Hajong, Banai, Bengali artists were also perform. On 21 February, 2021 these events were held at Dhobaura and Haluaghat.



Consultation Meetings

A total of 5 coordination meeting has been organized during the project period. On 15 February at Dhobaura, 21 March at Haluaghat, 27 January, 2021 at Modhupur, 31 January at Haluaghat

and 14 February at Haluaghat. Indigenous men, women, youth, teachers, community and religious leaders, local elected body members, government officials, were attended.

Achieved Results

1. 310 Indigenous peoples aware about their human rights during the project period through awareness raising sessions including women and youths
2. More than 3000 indigenous and non indigenous people know about the cultural rights of indigenous peoples rights through cultural events and more than 10000 indigenous and non indigenous peoples benefited by these traditional cultural events.
3. 19 Indigenous peoples included in different standing committees and 518 indigenous peoples included in safety net programmes
4. 176 indigenous peoples community leaders, women and youth trained up on human rights and indigenous peoples rights
5. Promoting human rights situation and building harmony in the society by participating indigenous cultural events and knowing one each and others culture so that they respecting each other.
6. 43 local elected body members, 18 government officials, engaged and sensitized on human rights and indigenous peoples rights issues

Lessons learnt:

1. Involving non indigenous peoples in cultural event is useful to build harmonize society and respect their rights each other.
2. Cultural programme is very effective tools to inspiring them about cultural rights
3. Youth leaders are proactive to take challenges at any situation even COVID-19 pandemic.
4. Indigenous leaders shared their views in their own language which is more effective and inspirable for community people
5. Post training school teachers are teaching their students about indigenous peoples rights in their class both indigenous and Bengali people students which sensitizing students about indigenous peoples rights;

Challenges:

Pandemic situation due to COVID-19 interup to continue project activities timely; As most of the participants are beeing poor some times they do not willing to attend meetings; Indigenous traditional and cultural instruments are not available; There is no platform for indigenous cultural practice;

IPDS-MJF Project:

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

Annual progress report

1.1 Particulars of the Project:

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Title | Indigenous peoples' rights are protected and promoted in Bangladesh |
| Program and thematic area | Livelihood & Indigenous peoples (Excluded people's rights) |
| Grant period (Month and Year) | January 2019 to December 2021 |
| Reporting date | January 2020 to December 2020 |

1.2 Project Location detail*:

1. sylhet district Moulvibazar : Borolekha & Kulaura.
2. Mymensigh district sherpur: Nalitbari.

1.3 Direct Beneficiary Number:

| Targeted beneficiaries | Male | Female | Boys | Girls | Person with Disability | Total |
|------------------------|------|--------|------|-------|------------------------|-------|
| Indigenous peoples | 828 | 1084 | 632 | 786 | 90 | 3330 |

PART TWO: PROJECT PROGRESS

2.1: Progress on action plan

| SL | Activities | Target | Achieved | Male | Fem | Brief/narrative on the activities | Remarks |
|----|----------------------------|--------|----------|------|-----|--|---------|
| 1 | Meeting with primary group | 82 | 60 | 202 | 505 | In this quarter IPDS have been organized 60 meeting with primary group members. In this meeting have been discussed about the feedback mechanism and EDD, livelihood support, livelihood | |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|----|----|----|----|---|--|
| | | | | | | activities, covid 19 awareness, access of health service. | |
| 2 | Half yearly meeting with upazila development committee | 06 | 03 | 34 | 20 | IPDS have been organized 3 half yearly meeting with upazila adcoacy commitee meeting at kulaura on 18/03/2020, Borolekha on 16/01/2020 and in Nalitabari on 23/01/2020. | |
| 3 | Half yearly meeting with union committee. | 26 | 06 | 57 | 30 | IPDS have been organized 06 meeting have been organized with union level advocacy committee in kulaura with kormodha union and kulaura sadar union, in Borolekha at Uttar daghin bag daghin union and Daghin shahabajpur union level committee, in Nalitabari at kakorkandi and Ramchondrokura union level committee. In this committee meeting have shared and discussed about the social awareness and access of Government servicess and facilities. | |
| 4 | Interactive dialogue with Union Parishad elected bodies on Government access service and inclusion of ethnic peoples in | 13 | 04 | 44 | 22 | IPDS have been organized 04 interactive dialogue with union parishad chairman and member about the | |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|----|----|-----|-----|--|--|
| | various committees. | | | | | Government facilities. | |
| 5 | Day observation: International mother language day observation on 21 st February 2020. International disabilities day 2020 | 03 | 03 | 237 | 442 | In this period IPDS have been organized International mother language day on 21 February in various places in the working area. IPDS also have been organized the international autism day at Lutijuri punjee on 3rd December, 2020 with the disabilities persons, punjees children and community peoples. | |
| 6 | Yearly coordination meeting with 03 ethnic woman forums at upazila level. | 03 | 01 | 4 | 14 | IPDS have been organized a yearly woman forum meeting at Nalitabari on 18/03/2020. In this committee meeting have shared and discussed about the social awareness and access of Government services and facilities. | |
| 7 | Day observation: woman's Event | | | | | | |
| | International woman's day observation | 03 | 03 | 112 | 507 | The International woman day observation on 5th March and 08th March 2020 to make a remarkable on this day at Nalitabari , kulaura & Borolekha. | |
| 8 | Provide mix training to ethnic man, woman, boys and girls group on human rights, | 03 | 01 | 13 | 8 | IPDS have been ogranized 1 mixed training at Borolekha on | |

| | | | | | | | |
|----|---|----|----|-----|-----|--|--|
| | leadership and gender. | | | | | 27/02/2020 on woman rights, leadership and gender based training. | |
| 9 | Training for targeted woman, Union and upazila advocacy committee and youth group on indigenous rights, land and cultural rights; | 03 | 01 | 15 | 13 | IPDS have been organized 1 mixed training at Nalitabari on 15/01/2020 on indigenous issues, land and cultural rights . | |
| 10 | Provide direct support to 06 indigenous youth organization; | 02 | 02 | 02 | 0 | The direct supported given to Singur punjee youth club and youth commission of sylhet diocese. | |
| 11 | Legal aid and assistance for cases; | 03 | 03 | | | | |
| 12 | Celebration of indigenous social and cultural events; (3 event per year) (Wangala and Noya Kawa) | 03 | 02 | | | | |
| 13 | Khasi festival shadsuk mynsiem | 01 | 01 | 160 | 175 | IPDS have been organized the khasi festival in Borolekha shat no punjee on 08 February 2020. The khasi indigenous peoples from various punjee participated in this festival. This khasi festival is known as the dance of the joyful heart. The festival performed to celebrate harvesting and sowing in relation to the agriculture cycle and also paying obeisance to God, | |

| | | | | | | | |
|----|--|----------------------------|----|-----|-----|---|--|
| | | | | | | the creator for the blessings that he has showered. During this festival men and woman dress in their traditional costumes of gold and silver ornaments dance to the beats of the Nakra(drum) and the tunes of Tangmuri (khasi flute). | |
| 14 | Morjada Gori sommota | 20 | 17 | 125 | 168 | In this quarter IPDS have been organized 17 group awarness building on Morjada Gori somota in various field level with community group member. | |
| 15 | Skill Development Training for Group Members on IGA and Alternative livelihood | 12 | 02 | 21 | 28 | IPDS have been organized 02 skill development training in Kulaura on 20/02/2020 and in Nalitabari on 18/02/2020. In this training the Government officer facilitated the whole training session on agriculture and livestock service in the project area. | |
| 16 | Staff meeting | 12 | 07 | 42 | 30 | IPDS have been organized regular coordination meeting. In this period we have organized 03 monthly coordination meeting with staff. | |
| | | Covid-19 activities | | | | | |
| | Activity Category : Awarness raising | 01 | 01 | | | In this COVID 19 IPDS circulate and | |

| | | | | | | | |
|---------------------|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|---|--|
| 17 | activities (COVID) Activity : Distribution of IEC materials Period From : 2020-04-01 To : 2020-06-30 | | | | | rose up awareness building through leaflet in the working area about the COVID 19. The leaflet circulates in Bangla and khasi language. | |
| 18 | Food support | 350 | 350 | 152 | 198 | During the COVID 19 epidemic IPDS distribution food support for the needy peoples in the working area. (rice,dal , potato, union, oil, soap,) food package . | |
| 19 | Cash support | 330 | 330 | 102 | 228 | In this period IPDS with supported of MJF and BYLC supported 330 beneficiaries for cash support during COVID 19 in working area. | |
| Others works | | | | | | | |
| 1. | Civil society and organization from Dhaka visit at Ishachera punjee on 21 November, 2020. | | | | | ALRD, MJF, BAPA, BELA, Nijera kori, Bangladesh adivasi forum, IPDS and KUBORAJ arranged a visit tour at Ishachera punjee for observation of the punjees peoples livelihood and problem faces recently. The visit tour leads by Evelina chakma, MJF. | |

| Key result areas of the project - 2020 | Target | Achievement | Due |
|--|---------------|--------------------|--------------|
| Received safety net services | 755 | 523 | 232 |
| Received safety net services (Disable) | 99 | 0 | 99 |
| Received to health services | 368 | 1799 | 0 |
| Access to Education (enrolment in primary education) | 1500 | 836 | 664 |
| Women victims received compensation, resolution and legal services (Referral) | 20 | 0 | 20 |
| Received agriculture services and input (From both project and Govt. Department) | 499 | 178 | 321 |
| Women economic empowerment | 510 | 144 | 366 |
| Men economic empowerment | 510 | 196 | 314 |
| Men and boys informed/trained on issues of violence against women and girls | 78 | 0 | 78 |
| Men and women from various marginalized groups provided skills development training and entrepreneur assistance. | 503 | 0 | 503 |
| Representation in different local forums and bodies | 99 | 28 | 71 |
| Access to Safe Drinking Water | 60 | 4 | 56 |
| Total | 5001 | 3708 | 2,724 |

Case study: 01

James Ritchil is a disabilities person who lives in Lutijuri Punjee under kormadha union of kulaura upazila. His father is late Ilias rema , mother Monju Rithchil and one of his sisters. They have some land but it is impossible for james to cultivate the land because he cannot see anything. At present the only income sources of their family are the small shop in the village. He expends the income for their daily needs, treatment of his mother and education fees of his sisters. He faces allot during COVID 19 pandemic. He lost his daily income from his shop because nobody brought the shops necessities things due to lock down. He received the 1st round cash support 2500 taka from IPDS by the supported of Manusher Jonno foundation and UK aid. In this cash support he bought his all necessities and daily needs for his shop. He also received the 2nd round cash support on 19 October 2020. He will buy all the daily needs for his shop by the cash support. He thanks and grateful to the IPDS and MJF for the cash support.

Beneficiary's code: 19296002673

NID no: 1454248715

Phone: 018756715432

Case study: 02

Diyar phellei (47) lives in Nunchera punjee at kormadha union under kulaura upazila of Moulvibazar district. She is one widow woman. Her husband's died eight years ago. Then she remained a mental person. They are 4 members in their family. Her mother is a kidney patient. She expends the 1st round cash support for her treatment of her mother which she received from IPDS. Her daughter drop out after completed class five and could not continue her study due to poor. They have some lands for betel leaf cultivation but it is impossible for her to cultivate. Sometimes their relatives help her for cultivation of betel leaf. She works to others houses for increase income of their family. She received 2nd round cash support from IPDS on 19 October, 2020 which she will buy fertilizers for their better cultivation of their lands. She thanked and grateful to the organization of IPDS and Manusher Jonno Foundation for being supported her.

Beneficiary's code: 19296002647

NID no: 7304820900

Phone: 1305041675 (daughter)

Case study: 03

Trinity Nongkrot an inhabitants of Gandai punjee under Borolekha upazila of Mouvlibazar district. They are 5 members of their family. Her husband's died eight years ago. They did not have any land of their own that's why she works in others houses for her daily income source. Her elder son went to college in 2019. She expends the income source for her children's education fees and daily needs. She has received the 1st round cash support from IPDS on September. By this cash support she expends for treatment of her daughter. She will buy the sewing machine in the next cash support trinity said. She thanks and grateful to Manusher jonno foundation and IPDS for supported her.

Beneficiary's code: 19296001228

NID no: 5811429794751

Phone: 01890039893 (son)