

# Annual Report 2023

## Indigenous Peoples Development Services -IPDS



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## **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 defender's 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.

## **Development context**

Bangladesh is a country rich in many cultures and people of different nations. Besides the 170 million Bengali population, more than 3 million indigenous peoples have been living in the

country for centuries. Indigenous peoples have diverse languages and cultures, religion, traditions and ways of life. Indigenous peoples are the most marginalized and vulnerable community in Bangladesh. They continue to suffer discrimination, marginalization, extreme poverty and conflict. In our working area in Madhupur forest, Khasi and Garo regions, they have lost their ancestral rights to land and forests. In the past five decades of independence, many indigenous peoples faced forceful migration to the neighboring country India for safety and better future life. Bangladesh government recognized 50 ethnic communities by the Cultural Ministry gazette in March 2019. Government's Education Policy 2010 and National Women Development Policy 2011 have included indigenous issues. The 7th and the 8th Five Year Plan of the government have also included and addressed indigenous issues and the need for development of indigenous peoples. But the reality and the implementation of these policies are the big challenge for indigenous peoples. IPDS is working hard to raise the voices of indigenous peoples at local and national levels. It is working for the capacity building of indigenous peoples for advocacy and network for long. Indigenous human rights defenders are active in the society with increased knowledge and capacity.

In this period, indigenous peoples celebrated the UN International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples at local and national level. The theme of the Day was: 'The role of indigenous women in the preservation and transmission of traditional knowledge'. Members of the Parliament, UN agencies, civil society, media, women and youth participated in these events as a symbol of solidarity and unity in diversity.

The denial of Adivasi identity and rights was a crucial issue again in this period and this denial syndrome is becoming more difficult for asserting indigenous peoples' rights. The attitude of the government is day by day becoming negative towards Adivasis. Land problems in Madhupur, Khasi regions and other areas have not been addressed by the government. Government made commitment to form a separate Land Commission for plain land Adivasis in their Election Manifesto in 2008, but no single step was taken in this regard. This government also promised to adopt a Minority Protection Act and form National Minority Commission in 2018, but no progress was made at all. Indigenous organizations are active in advocacy for demanding these rights.

The national election is ahead and tensions among minority community are increasing. Because they have experienced that minorities become target for attack and communal violence during the elections. The political situation is day by day becoming worse in the country. High level of corruption has impact on the poor including indigenous peoples. Indigenous peoples become helpless in this situation.

### **3. Implementation of the project**

#### **3.1 Objectives of the project**

- Indigenous human rights defenders get increasingly better at defending indigenous human rights.

- Indigenous people increasingly participate in decision –making processes at local and national levels.
- Increase understanding of indigenous issues and rights among majority Bengali communities at national level.
- Indigenous values including culture, languages and land rights are protected and conserved

## **Major activities done in this year:**

### **Training on human rights, land rights and indigenous rights**

IPDS organized three training's on human rights of indigenous peoples' rights in this year. Women and youth participated in the training. These training's were held on 22-23 October 2022 at Pirgacha, Modhupur. The second training was held in Askipara, Mymensingh on 23 June 2023. The third training was also organized in Modhupur on 23 June 2023.

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 79 participants attended this training. Among them 60 participants were women and 19 were men.

### **Seminar workshop on indigenous issues**

In this year, IPDS organized two seminars on indigenous issues. These seminars were held on 23 September 2022 at Shantiniketon and 27 June 2023 at Achik Michik Society, Modhupur, Tangail. Total 53 indigenous community leaders, youth and women participated in the seminars. Most of the participants were women and girls.

The main discussion issues were the emerging issues of indigenous peoples like livelihood option in the forest, social and cultural issues, climate change issues, land problems and its impact on indigenous peoples and their livelihood.

### **International Day of the World's indigenous peoples**

Like every year, the UN International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples was observed at local and national level. The theme of the Day was: The role of indigenous women in the preservation and transmission of traditional knowledge.

At national level, on 9 August 2022 more than 5,000 indigenous and non-indigenous people joined this event at the Shahid Minar, Dhaka University as the symbol of solidarity and strength. Members of the Parliament, Expert Members of National Human Rights Commission, and the Convener of the Parliamentary Caucus on Indigenous Peoples, civil society, professors, NGOs, media and indigenous leaders attended the Day and made their speeches in support of indigenous

peoples' rights. A cultural event was organized with more than 200 performers from different indigenous communities. Newspapers including TV channels broadcast the event with importance. This Day celebration was a platform of all indigenous groups to join together for showcase of their identity, culture and rights. A souvenir was published on the occasion with the message of the UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres on this Indigenous Day. Articles were published on indigenous issues with their demands for rights.



World Indigenous Day 2023

### **International Human Rights Day**

Human Rights Day was observed at local and national level. In the national level, indigenous men, women and youth participated in the event organized by the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) as the main event in the Hotel Radisson Blue. The Law Minister Mr. Anisul Haque was the Chief Guest of this event. The Chairman of the National Human Rights Commission Dr. Kamal Uddin Ahmed attended the event as the Special Guest. Civil society members, NGOs, indigenous leaders, media and other human rights activists participated in the event.

The theme of the Day was “Dignity, Freedom and Justice for All”. The Law Minister said that the government is committed to uphold the human rights for all. He also mentioned that Bangladesh has become a member of the UN Human Rights Council four times. Ten indigenous women, youth and girls participated in this event. At local level, the Human Rights Day was observed at Askipara A’chik Resource Centre in Mymensingh on 12 December 2022. Total 60 indigenous delegates attended the event.

### **Observation of International Mother Language Day**

The International Mother Language Day was observed in St. Paul's High School, Pirgacha, Madhupur. Total 252 students, teachers and community leaders participated in the event. A discussion and cultural event were held on the Day. In the discussion, the headman, teachers, IPDS representatives and community leaders delivered speeches on their own culture and languages. They discussed about the challenges on indigenous culture and languages. The speakers asked upon the community students to adopt and practice their own culture and language. Elders advised the youth and children to use mother tongue at home. At the end, students have presented a colorful cultural function on the Day.

### **Observation of International Women's Day**

The International Women Day was celebrated with rally and discussion meeting country wide. The Theme in this year was "Digit ALL: Innovation and technology for gender equality." IPDS organized a discussion and cultural programme in the celebration of Women Day at Askipara, Mymensingh. More than 140 Community elders, women, youth and students took part in the event. President of IPDS chaired the entire programme.

### **Advocacy and networking meeting**

IPDS organized an advocacy and networking meeting on 9 November 2022 at BRAC learning Centre, Srimangal, Moulvibazar for indigenous peoples and tea garden workers. This meeting was held among indigenous and marginalized groups with International Labour Organization and other representatives. In this meeting, the discussion was done on human rights and livelihood options for indigenous peoples and tea garden workers and religious minorities. The ILO made a presentation about their plan for the marginalized communities in the region. Total 13 community leaders joined the event.

Another meeting was held on 18 June 2023 at Central Shahid Minar, Dhaka. This advocacy meeting organized jointly with other organizations at national level to demand the protection of nature, environment and indigenous rights. More than 400 participants attended this event.

### **Support to indigenous community organizations**

In this year, IPDS supported nine indigenous organizations who are working on human rights issues and community people. These organization play a vital role in the society to promote indigenous rights. They are the social and youth organizations, student's associations and local church organizations.

## **Training of trainers for women and girl's human rights defenders**

Training of Trainers (TOT) for human rights defenders was organized from 11 to 12 November 2022 in Shantiniketon, Modhupur. Total 28 indigenous women and youth human rights defenders attended this training.

The content of the training was:

- Historical background of indigenous peoples in Madhupur National Park: Indigenous movement
- Human Rights and Indigenous Peoples' Rights: National and International Instruments
- Human Rights: Perspective on Women and Girls in Bangladesh: Role as human rights defenders in Bangladesh
- Land Rights: ILO Conventions No. 107 and 169 and its applications to Indigenous and Tribal Populations in Bangladesh
- Advocacy and Network: Importance for Indigenous Peoples

## **Women, youth and elder's conference**

Indigenous women, youth and elders conference and cultural programme was held on 26 November 2022 at Pirgacha Mission, Madhupur, Tangail District. More than 200 participants from different communities like Garo, Hajong, Koch and Barman took part in this event. The objective of the conference was to enhance and strengthen the capacity indigenous youth and women at the local level for advocacy and rights.

In the inaugural session Professor Dr. Ellen Bal, Vrije University Amsterdam and Rev. Fr. Lawrence Rebeiro, CSC, Parish Priest, Pirgacha Catholic Church attended as Special Guests. Mr. Sanjeeb Drong, President of IPDS has given the welcome speech in this event. He said, Madhupur forest is a home of indigenous peoples. They have been living in this land for many years. But they have been facing threat of eviction because of the National Park. Indigenous peoples are in tension with the New Declaration of the Reserve Forest in 2016. The guests made importance for the preservation and promotion of indigenous languages, identity and culture in this forest. Indigenous women can play a vital role to protect and preserve their rights and culture in Madhupur, they added. Ms. Sulekha Mrong, General Secretary, Achik Michik Society (Garo Women), Mr. Eugin Nokrek, Chairman, Joyenshahi Adivasi Unnayan Parishad, Ms. Kona Nokrek, UP Member spoke in the event. A cultural programme was also organized.

Another Women conference was held on 17-19 March 2023 in Mymensingh. More than 172 women leaders from different indigenous villages gathered together to discuss women issues and leadership. A two-day seminar was held with panel discussions by different speakers.

### **Workshop with traditional organizations and indigenous organizations**

In this year, IPDS organized two workshops with traditional organizations. One workshop was held with tea garden and khasi community on 9 November 2022 at Borolekha under Moulvibazar District.

Another workshop was held on 13 April 2023 at Telikhali village under Mymensingh District. The participants discussed the emerging security issues of livelihood, land problems and the pressure from the land grabbers and vested interested groups. Some women participants talked about the health issues and sought for support. Total number of participants 57.

### **Meeting local elected bodies, media and civil society**

In this period, IPDS organized three meetings with local elected bodies. Total number of participants were 82. Among them 38 were female. The elected Chairman of Union Council presided over the meeting. Community leaders asked the chairman for inclusion of marginalized people to get the government safety net services. Three Chairmen from three Union Councils participated in the meetings. They assured to include the marginalized peoples as beneficiaries in all government services.

### **Meeting with National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)**

Indigenous peoples from Madhupur forest have been suffering from the consequences of historical injustice, including dispossession of their lands, territories and resources as well as a lack of control over their traditional way of life.

The forest department is again planning to evict indigenous peoples from Madhupur forest and Khasi hills regions in the name of development projects.

In December 2020, Indigenous peoples got message of eviction notice in the name of afforestation project. Local indigenous organizations, civil society, media and church leaders addressed these issues and organized protest rally, human chain to protect their ancestral land.

A meeting was held on 9 February 2023 with the Chairman of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) in Dhaka. Some indigenous leaders from Madhupur forest attended this meeting. In this meeting Madhupur forest issues including indigenous issues were discussed. The Chairman of the NHRC has assured indigenous peoples that the NHRC will look into indigenous matter.

### **Meeting with Parliamentary Caucus on Indigenous Peoples**

Meeting with the Parliamentary Caucus on Indigenous Peoples and Minorities was held at the Daily Star building on 7 August 2022. Mr. Rashed Khan Menon MP, Former Minister and Founder Convener of the Parliamentary Caucus on Indigenous Peoples presided over the meeting.



Mr. Fazlul Haque MP, Mr. Ubaidul Muktedir Chowdhury MP, Pir Fazlur Rahman Misbah MP, Professor Dr. Mesbah Kamal and Sanjeeb Drong, President of IPDS spoke in the meeting. They spoke for the need of the national indigenous policy in Bangladesh. MPs made emphasis on the need for a separate Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act, submitted to the Parliament a few years ago. They said that they would raise the issue in the next Parliament. Total number of participants in this event was 55. Media covered the news of the event.

### **Fact Finding Mission**

IPDS organized a fact-finding visit to the Khasi village Boromchal and Lakhipur in Kulaura from 21 to 23 November 2022. Seven members participated in this mission. They organized a community meeting in Lakhipur Parish with Khasi and Garo elders, women, youth and elected members. The land problem issue with the Forest Department and other land grabbers in Dolukchora and Kakrachora punji was the main discussion issue. Tea garden company was trying to evict the Khasi villagers in Kakrachora punji in Kulaura. IPDS made advocacy and lobby with the local administration for protecting the indigenous families at national level too. Finally, it was temporarily solved and the indigenous peoples are living on the land. They do not have land papers and their traditional customary rights are not recognized. In Dolukchara, the Khasis are facing threats from local land grabbers and Forest Department. This fact-finding mission helped the Khasis to be united to fight for their land rights. Newspapers made reports on this problem.



Community Meeting with Khasi and Garo members at Lakhipur Mission, Moulvibazar

## **National Annual Convention on Human Rights**

A National Convention on indigenous issues was organized jointly with national indigenous platform on 28-29 April 2023 at CBCB Centre. Total 160 Indigenous leaders from all over the country were present in this conference.

In this convention, Rashed Khan Menon MP, Fazle Hossain Badsha MP, Convener of the Parliamentary Caucus on Indigenous Peoples, civil society members, University Professors, cultural activists, NGO leaders, women and youth spoke for the rights of indigenous peoples. In this event, the need for Land Commission for plain land indigenous peoples, special measures for social and economic development, quota in the government job, reserve seats in the Parliament and other important issues were raised. The media covered this event very well.

## **Human Rights Education**

Total six Human Rights Education programme was held in this period. Total number of participants was 3,407 from schools, colleges and university. These young people were very interested in human rights issues. Small booklets of basic human rights (Including the Bengali version of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights) were distributed to them supplied from the UN Resident Coordinator's (UNRC) Office. IPDS contacted with the UNRC Office.

## **Media advocacy**

A protest rally and human chain was organized by IPDS jointly with other indigenous organizations on 13 November 2022 in Dhaka city. This protest was to protect the ancestral of Mro people from a plan of building a 5 Star Hotel on their land. This event got a high media coverage. IPDS President made an interview in BBC. In this connection, five UN Special Rapporteur wrote letters to Bangladesh government to stop the building of the 5 Star Hotel on the hill.

On 11 November 2022, a media advocacy was held in Sylhet to protect the environment and land of Khasi people. IPDS also participated in the media advocacy for ensuring adequate health services for indigenous women on 3 February 2023. On the 28th of April 2023, IPDS participated in the celebration of the Legal Aid Day with other legal aid organizations and NGOs.

## **Support for indigenous annual cultural events (Wangala)**

The Annual Garo festival Wangala was held on 12 December 2022 at Askipara village. This festival is a thanks giving ceremony to the Creator and mother earth and symbol of cultural identity of the Garos. Wangala has a deep meaning of gratitude to the natural world. It taught us about the connection between nature and human being. It says all is connected.

This festival brings the Garos and indigenous peoples in social harmony and unity. One of the unique things of this festival is the connection and relation between elders and youth in the society. Lots of cultural performance was done in this event and it made the relation of community people stronger. It also plays a vital role for bridging the gap between youth and elderly people. More than 300 people participated in this festival.



Wanna Festival at Askipara

### **Legal support for violation of human rights**

IPDS supported four Court cases directly in this period. Three cases are on land and forest cases and the one is the rape case. Two minor Garo girls were attacked and raped by Bengali Muslim groups when they were returning to their village from the Christmas event at night. The 8 rapists were arrested and sent into jail. This case is going on and IPDS is supporting the family.

### **Support for Human Rights Defenders**

Three indigenous human rights defenders have received direct support from IPDS for running their activities on indigenous issues. This support has inspired them for upholding their work.

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

The indigenous peoples from Madhupur have been suffering from dispossession of their lands, territories and resources as well as a lack of control over their ways of life. Because of the forest department is again planning to evict the indigenous peoples from Madhupur forest in the name of development projects. For a long time, indigenous peoples have been demanding for forming the separate Land Commission to solve the land problem. Government made a commitment to

establish this Land Commission in 2008. IPDS jointly with other indigenous organizations are leading this movement for this Land Commission and on 16 June 2023 organized a big rally at Madhupur to implement the commitment.

### **Social and Legal volunteers**

Two legal volunteers have been working as volunteers in the field. They are active with their job in the local area and participating in events on indigenous issues and other social issues.

### **Regular meeting of human rights defenders**

Regular meeting of human rights defenders is being held on several emerging and current issues. Total 20 meetings were held with 367 participants among them 224 were women.

### **Publication posters and flyer**

On the occasion of International Day of the World's indigenous Peoples on 9 August 2022, a souvenir was published. The UN Secretary General, UN Resident Coordinator Bangladesh, EU Ambassador, delivered solidarity message for indigenous peoples. Good numbers of articles on human rights and indigenous issues have been published in this magazine.

### **Impact**

During this time, indigenous women, girls and youth human rights activists participated in regional and national lobbying and campaigning efforts to protect and promote human rights. Most Adivasis in Greater Mymensingh and Madhupur Forest are strengthening their advocacy and networking with local elected bodies, government, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), the media, and other stakeholders. Building a special partnership with the Parliamentary Caucus and civic society, IPDS is working on a number of topics to help IPs achieve their rights. Nowadays, Indigenous peoples are aware of their rights and play an important part in advancing human rights in their community.

Indigenous peoples of the Madhupur forest area facing numerous challenges, including the forest department declaration of their lands as reserve forests and the operation of various projects in the forest area. Through this (MESEREOR) initiative, IPDS provided training and workshops on human rights, land rights, networking, alongside other areas. Nowadays, indigenous human rights defenders are fighting for their rights, and IP leaders are capable of handling legal proceedings and are sufficiently courageous to face it.

In this period, the BBC, Al Jazeera and private television channels have broadcasted news and reports on indigenous issues. Lots of editorials have been published on indigenous peoples in many daily newspapers. Mainstream Bengali writers have also published articles and features on

indigenous issues. In this period, the UN Resident Coordinator, EU Ambassador and other dignitaries made their message in support for indigenous peoples in Bangladesh. Indigenous organizations including women and youth organizations took part in the struggle for their rights at local and national level.

### **Overall assessment and outlook**

The overall project progress is good and satisfactory. Indigenous peoples received direct benefits from the project and they are fully involved in all process of the project implementation. The capacity building of indigenous peoples is a crucial issue for them in Bangladesh for advocating for their rights. This is an existence issue and survival issue for them as minority community. Because of the project, there is a voice now at local and national level for promoting human rights of indigenous peoples including land rights and other resources. IPDS is supporting indigenous elders, women, youth and community leaders to increase their capacity for dialogue and consultation with government officials and other policy makers.

Indigenous issues now are heard at local and national level. In the National Park or forest area, indigenous human rights defenders are becoming united to fight for their rights. Several demands and Memorandum have been submitted to the local District Authority, Ministry and higher authority to take steps. A good network was established with majority mainstream community and human rights activists.

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 and administration.

### **Conclusion**

Considering numerous obstacles, IPDS believes the project is moving in the correct direction. Working for and alongside Bangladesh's indigenous peoples is a longstanding experience of IPDS. One encouraging aspect is that a segment of the civil society and the majority Bengali community are supporting Adivasi problems. The rights of indigenous peoples continue to have both positive and bad aspects at the federal level. The majority of the bureaucracy continues to be prejudiced toward Adivasis. However, decent officers are always present. In the past fifteen years, this government has made no appreciable progress toward addressing the issues of Adivasis, land, forests, economic growth, etc. Despite its pledges. There are still unresolved land and legal problems. To address the current forest cases, neither political nor governmental action has been done. The primary obstacle facing Adivasis is this. There is still an issue with Khasis in the forest and tea companies. The Deputy Commissioner and the local government do, to some extent, play a positive and supportive role for Adivasis, which is a good thing. The salient feature is this. The good news is that indigenous and Khasi peoples in our working region is growing

more self-assured to face obstacles and defend their rights and way of life. In the end, IPDS needs additional funding to continue its work with Bangladesh's indigenous peoples.

## **IPDS-International Labour Organization-ILO Project: ProGRESS**

### **Project Title: Promoting Gender Responsive Enterprise Development and TVET Systems ProGRESS Project**

Indigenous Peoples Development Services-IPDS has signed an agreement strategy with ILO to implement the project in Sylhet and Mymensingh districts. In this connection, IPDS has been implementing the project activities as per the work plan and in collaboration with ILO. With the technical and financial support IPDS started TVET services in two districts. During this period, 100 apprentices and 50 MCPs from different trades were selected and the apprentices have been working/enrolled with the MCPs from 1st October. They are on board now. IPDS produced CSLBs of 10 different occupations and 01 guideline for the trainers for off the job trainings.

Following the implementation agreement, IPDS selected more than 50% women, 5% person with disabilities and 100% of the beneficiaries are from indigenous communities.

The ProGRESS Project is designed to address major problems and barriers that disproportionately hinder female Labour force of Bangladesh from equitably and productively participating in the Labour market in a sustainable and resilient manner. The project aims to promote women's economic empowerment in Bangladesh through policy reforms, TVET services, entrepreneurship promotion, and skills development with gender equality and green skills at the core of its strategies. The project has been working with relevant government agencies, employers, training and employment providers, and business development service providers to strengthen their capacities to train and employ more women in selected economic value chains with wider scope for women's employment-employing digital technologies amongst other innovative and women-training and employment solutions, with particular focus on digital solutions and green jobs.

### **MAIN OBJECTIVE OF THE ProGRESS PROJECT:**

The project's main objective is to support the economic empowerment of youth, male and female work force of Bangladesh in order to improve their economic wellbeing and maximize their contribution to the national economic growth, especially for the female workforce. In particular, it aims to increase number of women in Bangladesh employed with decent work in a broader range of occupations (100 young women and men out of which 50% are women and 3% persons with disabilities).

**Specific objectives are to:**

Support the government to align and implement policies for inclusive skills development, increase training and employment opportunities for women, youth and other disadvantaged groups.

Promote employment and entrepreneurship in selected value chains and market systems for young women and disadvantaged groups.

Improve accessibility, inclusiveness and sustainability for green skills training opportunities for target group of trainees including women and other disadvantaged groups.

**Outputs of this project:**

1. 250 entrepreneurs (new and existing) trained four sectors (agro, ICT, handicraft, tourism and care work) based on the need assessment
2. Coordination platform established with different TVET institutions and value chain actors for leveraging supports towards the project
3. 50 numbers of Master Crafts Persons are selected and 100 trainees trained

**Major Activities of this project:**

- Capacity building training for IPDS staff, SWCCI, BCSU and other relevant constituents
- 4 batches of tea garden women, youth and ethnic communities/minorities and their associations on finance, management, leadership and technical issues in the targeted locations/districts
- Training for selected indigenous and tea communities (Max 20 pers. 10 for Sylhet and 10 for Mymensingh) on handicrafts (handloom)-Monipuri/Garo. Training will be practical and theoretical for the period of 3-5 months
- Coordination with local TVET institutes and members' organizations for improving skills mismatch
- Provide information and business services and/or link with business development service providers to improve quality standards, market opportunities, access to credit and penetration in domestic and export market
- Support and participate in the trade fair/exhibition organized by local chambers and business associations
- Select 100 apprentices based on the agreed selection criteria and place them into the selected 50 workplaces for supervised training under the guidance of the MCPs.
- Provide all logistical support to the selected work places to implement apprenticeship training program. Monitor and supervise the project implementation as per the work plan and modalities agreed with the ILO.
- Support to develop the capacity of IPDS Staff to implement and monitor skills and apprenticeship training

## **Major activities have done this year:**

### **Training on Informal Apprenticeship Program for MCPs (Mastercraft Person)**

A TOT on Informal Apprenticeship Programme for MCPs (Master Craft Person) was held at Brac Learning Centre, Sreemangal, Sylhet on 04-05 October, 2023. MCPs from different trades/occupations like Beauty care, Mobile Servicing, Tailoring and dress making, Computer operation, Welding, Hand loom (Weaver) etc. including men and women, person with disabilities, were attended. With the support of International Labour Organization-ILO the two daylong training programs conducted by Indigenous Peoples Development Services-IPDS. Around 35 participants including organizer and facilitators took part and attended in this TOT training. Apart from the training sessions, the program was designed with two formal sessions - inaugural and closing. In inaugural session Mr. Ripon Banai, Project Coordinator of IPDS, shared the training objectives and expected outcomes.



Photo: Group photo of Participants

### **Objectives of the training**

MCPs from different trades/occupations at local and community level will implement this informal apprenticeship programme for indigenous and tea community youths. So, they need to enhance and strengthen their capacity on Informal Apprenticeship Programme. Thus, the objectives of the training have been identified as follows;

- Capacity development of MCPs to implement informal apprenticeship program;
- Awareness about decent work and occupational health and safety;
- Use of the Competency Skills Log Book (CSLB);



## **Methodology of the Training**

### **a) Participants' selection process:**

Before conducting the training Indigenous Peoples Development Services-IPDS conducted series of focused group discussions, one to one meeting, individual interviews, with different stakeholders following the TNA, local market demands, availability, job opportunities etc. IPDS has been discussed with resource persons about training contents and materials

The Training participants (MCPs) have been selected thorough this process in consultation with the consultant from the perspective areas. It was followed the criteria and had a screening of identify the best needs of this training participants (MCPs). Most of the MCPs have been identified based on their working experience, market value, educational qualification, engagement with community at local level.



### **b) Contents of the Training:**

As the MCPs are not widely familiar with TVET, Occupational safety and health, OSH, Introduction to Competency Skills Log Book (CSLB). Thus, the contents of this training identified on the issues.

The training divided into 12 sessions in 02 days on these following topics:

1.Session 1: Inauguration and welcome Speech;

2.Session 2: Introduction and Ice Breaking:

-Sharing objectives of the training

-Self-introduction by all participants

-Sharing their expectations

3.Session 3: Introduction to ILO informal apprenticeship programme and apprenticeship in Bangladesh;

4.Session 4: Inclusion in TVET: Sensitize and Promoting Gender, PWD, equality in TVET and relevance with informal apprenticeship programme;

5.Session 5: Introduction to CBT&A and its relevance in apprenticeship programme;

6.Session 6: Task analysis and Step of Demonstration;

7.Session 7: Exercise on OSH and Occupational Safety & Health;

8.Session 8: Introduction to Competency Skills Log Book (CSLB);

9.Session 9: Use of the Competency Skills Log Book (CSLB);

10.Session 10: Demonstration on use of the Competency Skills Log Book (CSLB);

11.Session 11: Group work and presentation on use of CSLB;

12.Session 12: Review of day 2 & Closing of the training program;

### **c) Training Sessions**

The formal training had started with the third session Mr. Tareqe Aziz, Consultant and TVET expert of IPDS conducted. He focused on the importance and how the apprenticeship programme works especially TVET, Occupational safety and health, OSH, Introduction to Competency Skills Log Book (CSLB) etc. With the references of previous experience, and worldwide TVET programme, he discussed the importance and significant of this apprenticeship programme.

In afternoon session after taking lunch the session started with a discussion on Occupational Safety & Health and exercised on OSH.

He encouraged and requested the MCPs to keep the workplace neat and clean and take care about Occupational Safety & Health.

The second day started with the recap of previous day where participants shared their learning and experience. After the recap session, Mr. Tareqe Aziz, consultant of IPDS conducted the sessions as per the schedule.

### **Evaluation, impact and comment from the participants:**

Mr. Ripan Chandra Banai, PC, IPDS led the evaluation session. A number of participants had expressed their opinion on the training materials and methodology through the evaluation form.

- a) The participants found that the training had strengthened their knowledge with regard to the apprenticeship programme how it works especially TVET, Occupational safety and health, OSH, Introduction to Competency Skills Log Book (CSLB) etc. It was first time for most of the participants attending such training and suggested that the program should be more elaborated.
- b) Many participants expressed that the content is very useful and got a clear picture on the apprenticeship programme, OSH, occupational safety and health, CSLB etc.
- c) It has been suggested that there should be more focused on the practical work and applicable examples.

### **Distributed Materials:**

During this training materials like hand note, file, pen, pencils, rubber, bags, VIPP cards, notes, books (CSLB), documents on OSH, occupational safety and health and other related documents.



Photo: Trade wise exercise.

### **Training on Informal Apprenticeship Program for MCPs (Master-craft Person)**

A TOT on Informal Apprenticeship Programme for MCPs (Master Craft Person) was held at Aski Resource Cenyre, Haluaghat, Mymensingh on 15-16 October, 2023. MCPs from different trades/occupations like Beauty care, Mobile Servicing, Tailoring and dress making, Computer operation, Welding, Hand loom (Weaver) etc. including men and women were attended. With the support of International Labour Organization-ILO the two daylong training programs

conducted by Indigenous Peoples Development Services-IPDS. Around 25 participants including organizer and facilitators took part and attended in this TOT training. Apart from the training sessions, the program was designed with two formal sessions - inaugural and closing. In inaugural session Sanjeeb Drong, President of IPDS was attended and delivered his opening speech. He said, this project is a unique one because, the ultimate goal of this project is to creation of jobs for the indigenous youths and involved them with income. He also said that you MCPs are doing great job. A number of youths have been getting skill training in your workplace. Mr. Drong was also thanked to the ILO for continues support and cooperation. Mr. Ripon Banai, Project Coordinator of IPDS, shared the training objectives and expected outcomes.



Photo: Participants group photo

### **Objectives of the training**

MCPs from different trades/occupations at local and community level will implement this informal apprenticeship programme for indigenous and tea community youths. So, they need to enhance and strengthen their capacity on Informal Apprenticeship Programme. Thus, the objectives of the training have been identified as follows;

- Capacity development of MCPs to implement informal apprenticeship program;
- Awareness about decent work and occupational health and safety;
- Use of the Competency Skills Log Book (CSLB);

## Methodology of the Training

### a) Participants' selection process:

Before conducting the training Indigenous Peoples Development Services-IPDS conducted series of focused group discussions, one to one meeting, individual interviews, with different stakeholders following the TNA, local market demands, availability, job opportunities etc. IPDS has been discussed with resource persons about training contents and materials.

The Training participants (MCPs) have been selected through this process in consultation with the consultant from the perspective areas. It was followed the criteria and had a screening of identify the best needs of this training participants (MCPs). Most of the MCPs have been identified based on their working experience, market value, educational qualification, engagement with community at local level.



Photo: ToT on Informal Apprenticeship Programme for Master Craft Persons

### b) Contents of the Training:

As the MCPs are not widely familiar with TVET, Occupational safety and health, OSH, Introduction to Competency Skills Log Book (CSLB). Thus, the contents of this training identified on the issues.

The training divided into 12 sessions in 02 days on these following topics:

**Session 1:** Inauguration and welcome Speech;

**Session 2:** Introduction and Ice Breaking:

- Sharing objectives of the training
- Self-introduction by all participants
- Sharing their expectations

**Session 3:** Introduction to ILO informal apprenticeship programme and apprenticeship in Bangladesh;

**Session 4:** Inclusion in TVET: Sensitize and Promoting Gender, PWD, equality in TVET and relevance with informal apprenticeship programme;

**Session 5:** Introduction to CBT&A and its relevance in apprenticeship programme;

**Session 6:** Task analysis and Step of Demonstration;

**Session 7:** Exercise on OSH and Occupational Safety & Health;

**Session 8:** Introduction to Competency Skills Log Book (CSLB);

**Session 9:** Use of the Competency Skills Log Book (CSLB);

**Session 10:** Demonstration on use of the Competency Skills Log Book (CSLB);

**Session 11:** Group work and presentation on use of CSLB;

**Session 12:** Review of day 2 & Closing of the training program;

### **c) Training Sessions**

The formal training had started with the third session Mr. Tareqe Aziz, Consultant and TVET expert of IPDS conducted. He focused on the importance and how the apprenticeship programme works especially TVET, Occupational safety and health, OSH, Introduction to Competency Skills Log Book (CSLB) etc. With the references of previous experience, and worldwide TVET programme, he discussed the importance and significant of this apprenticeship programme.

Before the lunch break Mr. Tanjel Ahsan from ILO joined the training through zoom link. He greets the participants and discuss about the informal apprenticeship programme. He emphasized on the importance of apprenticeship programme in context of Bangladesh. He thanked to the MCPs for building the youths skillful through this project.

In afternoon session after taking lunch the session started with a discussion on Occupational Safety & Health and exercised on OSH.

He encouraged and requested the MCPs to keep the workplace neat and clean and take care about Occupational Safety & Health.

The second day started with the recap of previous day where participants shared their learning and experience. After the recap session, Mr. Tareqe Aziz, consultant of IPDS conducted the sessions as per the schedule.

### **Evaluation, impact and comment from the participants:**

Mr. Ripan Chandra Banai, PC, IPDS led the evaluation session. A number of participants had expressed their opinion on the training materials and methodology through the evaluation form.

- a) The participants found that the training had strengthened their knowledge with regard to the apprenticeship programme how it works especially TVET, Occupational safety and health, OSH, Introduction to Competency Skills Log Book (CSLB) etc. It was first time for most of the participants attending such training and suggested that the program should be more elaborated.
- b) Many participants expressed that the content is very useful and got a clear picture on the apprenticeship programme, OSH, occupational safety and health, CSLB etc.
- c) It has been suggested that there should be more focused on the practical work and applicable examples.

The closing session presided over Mr. Probin Snal, Office in Charge, IPDS Haluaghat office. Mr. Sanjeeb Drong, President of IPDS thanked all the participants for their active participation. He expressed with hope that the engagement with MCPs through this project will bring a peaceful and prosperity in the society. Together, we make the project successful and creates jobs in society.

### **Distributed Materials:**

During this training materials like hand note, file, pen, pencils, rubber, bags, VIPP cards, notes, books (CSLB), documents on OSH, occupational safety and health and other related documents.



Photo: Trade wise exercise.

## **Celebration of Indigenous Cultural Festival Dhaka Wangala 2023**

With support of ILO and IPDS, Dhaka Wangala successfully celebrated the Wangala festival on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2023 at Lalmatia Housing Society School and College, Dhaka. The purpose of the celebration of annual festival was to nurture, revive and populate the traditional culture among the young generations in changing world. The festival also promoted the Garo entrepreneurs to introduce their new products through days long event.

The Wangala festival is a traditional carnival for the Garo community to thank the Almighty Misi Saljong as Pattigipa Ra'rongipa, the **Sun God**, for blessing the people with a rich harvest. Wangala Festival signifies the beginning of winter and also marks the end of labor in fields ushering in a period of relaxation and merry making. There are two basic stages to the Wangala festival: Chu-Rugala-The Pouring of rice beer, is the first stage and is done by the priest, known as “Kamal” and the Chachat Soa-Incense burning, is the second stage. At Rugala, an offering of the first-hand special rice beer, cooked rice and vegetables are offered to the Giver, Misi Saljong.

International Labour Organization (ILO) has supported through IPDS for Dhaka Wangala as a solidarity contribution to promote and revive the Garo culture, traditions and culture of gratitude to its almighty God. It also contributed to Garo entrepreneurs to introduce their new products through two days long event. Dhaka Wangala has utilized the grant received from ILO for ensuring logistics particularly stage decoration, stall for Garo entrepreneurs, LED screening and sound system for cultural programme.

### **Inaugural ceremony**

The festival begun with a procession along with Nokma, the head of the ceremony, guests, former Nokmas, girls, boys and children. The inaugural ceremony commenced with presence of Honourable Chief guest and special guests among others. Mr. Sanjeeb Drong, General Secretary, Bangladesh Indigenous Peoples Forum were the special guests. Mr. Suidish Sangma, Nokma, Dhaka Wangala presided over the inaugural ceremony.

Speakers said that Garo indigenous community is very rich with its culture, tradition, customs and beliefs. Wangala is one of the annual festivals which was lost due to Christianization and again revived their own traditional festival. Every community has their right to celebrate their own festival and religion as mandated in the constitution. Honorable Prime Minister patronizes for promotion of culture of ethnic communities.

Wangala festival brings our Garo migrants in Dhaka together to revive their cultures and traditions. It has immense significance for Garo indigenous communities to understand their own culture, tradition and festivals. The modern Garo children should know first their culture, language and values otherwise the globalization will engulf our culture. In most cases Garo migrant's children do not practice their mother tongue at their family and even with their neighbours due to unaware of their culture and traditions. Wangala celebration can play a vital role for engaging Garo parents in the city to practice their own language and culture.



Mr. Sanjeeb Drong, President of IPDS, columnist and General Secretary of Bangladesh Indigenous Peoples Forum said that human rights of indigenous peoples must be adhered according to national and international human rights safeguards. Garo indigenous community is very peace-loving community and has immense influence with its traditional culture and beliefs. He also said that ILO has been working with indigenous and tribal peoples in recognition of their particular vulnerability and marginalization. It adopted the Convention No. 107 on Indigenous and Tribal Populations in 1957, which was revised and updated in 1989, with the adoption of convention No. 169. Respect for cultures, traditions and ways of life must be the foundation of the way forward. Ensuring that their voice is heard in the design and implementation of policies and measures meant to enhance their living and working conditions is fundamental.

Mr. Suidish Sangma, Nokma of Dhaka Wangala thanked all the guests for making the celebration more meaningful with their presence. He also thanked all the individuals, organizations and volunteers who unconditionally extended their hands to make the event successful.

The inaugural ceremony followed the cultural show with the participation of Garo artists from different schools, college and universities of Dhaka. The guests visited the stalls that decorated with traditional ornaments, costumes, dresses, traditional food items and agricultural products.

### **Proceedings of the event**

The Nokma (Chief of the event) performed the Chachat Soa ceremony (marked by burning of incense) at the central pillar of the stage to mark the beginning of the Wangala Festival.

Dhaka Wanagla celebration committee brought out colorful rally in the venue premises. The Garo artists danced with the traditional music and lead the rally to the stage. During Wangala, people young and old dress in their colourful garments (Dakmanda", Daksari, or Gando) and feathered headgear (do'me) and dance to music played on long, oval-shaped drums (Dama). They performed their traditional dances, including Gorirua, Grikka, Nanggory, Dellang Mangpina, Amak Balanga Malla, Serenging and Bi Sa Dimdima dances on the stage. Dama Gogata, the dance with drums, flutes and assorted brass instruments by men and women in colourful dresses and proud headgear, a picture which is synonymous with visuals of Wangala – is performed on the last day of the two days-long celebration.

The main part of the Wangala festival is Rugala (lit. The Pouring of [rice beer](#)) and Cha·chat So·a (lit. [Incense](#) burning) are the rituals performed on the first day by the priest, who is known as "Kamal". These rituals are performed inside the house of the Nokma (chieftain i.e. the husband of the woman who holds power over an a'king) of the village. Dama Gogata, the dance with drums, flutes and assorted brass instruments by men and women in colourful dresses and proud headgear - a picture which is synonymous with visuals of Wangala - is performed on the last day of the days-long celebration. Katta Doka (talking in a singing style/traditional tribal [rapping](#)), Ajia, Dani Doka (describing Wangala by singing), Chambil Mesaa or the Pomelo Dance are performed during two days.

Dhaka Wangala also organized the debate competition among the university students with their mother tongue. The purpose of the debating was to practice their own mother tongue and convey the message to the young generation about their rich culture and traditions. The most attracting part of the festival is the cultural programme with participation of different groups.

### **Thanks-giving and closing ceremony**

At the end of the festival, Dhaka Wangala celebration committee organized thanks-giving and closing ceremony. The celebration committee chose Nokma for 2024 who will be leading the celebration in coming year.

### **Result of the programme**

Dhaka Wangala has mobilized approximately 12,000 indigenous and non-indigenous during this festival and widely disseminated the message of gratitude, tolerance and practice of own culture and traditions. More than 100 women entrepreneurs participated with their designed dress, costumes, ornaments, traditional food shops and publications. Enthusiasm among the Garo communities particularly young children, boys, girls, students and parents was observed. The event also played significant role in reuniting all Garo migrants in Dhaka to meet once a year amidst of their busy life in Dhaka. It is expected that Wangala festival will further rejuvenate Garo indigenous communities to nurture their culture and traditions.

## **IPDS Implemented the project activities with Achik Michik Society in Madhupur, Tangail**

### **Project Title: Strengthening Women's Leadership on Natural Resources and Governance**

#### **"Training on Human Rights, Indigenous Peoples' Rights, and Advocacy"**

- **Objective:** The primary objective of this training workshop was to raise awareness among indigenous women and girls about their human rights, indigenous peoples' rights, and the importance of effective advocacy.
- **Participants:** A total of 25 indigenous women and girls actively participated in the training.
- **Key Topics Covered:**
  - International Labor Organization (ILO) Conventions on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007)
  - Human Rights of Indigenous Women and Leadership
  - The Significance of Advocacy and Networking for Safeguarding Indigenous Peoples' Rights

**Highlights:** The day-long program featured engaging sessions led by a resource person, fostering knowledge exchange and discussions among women and girls. They discussed various aspects of leadership, relevant policies, international declarations and covenants concerning the rights of indigenous women, and effective advocacy strategies to enhance their capacity.

### **1. Awareness Building Seminar:**

- **Title: “Harassment of Women in Agriculture and Access to Agricultural Services”**
- **Objective:** The seminar aimed to address critical issues such as fair wages, organic farming practices, harassment of women in agricultural work, and access to government facilities for indigenous women and girls in the field of agriculture.
- **Participants:** A total of 20 indigenous women and girls actively participated in the seminar.

**Seminar Content:** During the seminar, participants engaged in discussions surrounding issues related to fair wages, the promotion of organic crops, challenges faced by women in agriculture, and the availability of government services.

These events, organized by Achik Michik Society with the support of Women Fund Asia, played a significant role in empowering indigenous women and girls by increasing their awareness of their rights and the tools necessary for effective advocacy. The organization is committed to fostering positive change and improving the lives of indigenous communities.

### **2. International Women’s Day Celebration:**

International Women’s Day was celebrated on March 15, 2023, at Thanarbaid School Ground. A total of 127 individuals, including girls, women, and men, participated in the event. The Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) graced the occasion, along with women officers from 12 government departments. They emphasized the importance of a gender-equal world, free from bias, stereotypes, and discrimination. The event also celebrated women's achievements and raised awareness about gender-based discrimination. The girls in attendance were inspired, envisioning a future where they can become government officers and contribute to their communities. Local Indigenous Cultural Teams participated and performed during the cultural event.

### **3. International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples:**

International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples was celebrated on August 9, 2023, at Bhutia High School Ground. A total of 95 indigenous women and youth actively participated. Women and youth voiced their concerns against human rights violations and called for the recognition of their cultural identity, land rights, and civil status. The event was a collective effort of women and girls.

#### **4. World Environment Day:**

World Environment Day was celebrated on June 6, 2023, at Thanarbaid High School. A total of 40 students participated in the event, focusing on discussions about reducing damage to the forest and environment, preserving forests, and the importance of tree plantation. A tree plantation program was conducted with the students.

#### **5. Field Visits and Community Meetings:**

Regular exchange meetings with village representatives and women from different communities have fostered a spirit of collaboration on various issues. Indigenous women, in particular, have shown a keen interest in matters related to land, climate change, organic farming, and fruit cultivation. While many indigenous farmers continue traditional farming practices, efforts are being made to raise awareness and eliminate all forms of discrimination against tribal women. These changes are significant for Achik Michik Society, which works at the grassroots level to empower and organize grassroots leaders. The organization has a long-standing commitment to promoting and protecting human rights, documentation, women's empowerment, community development, education, and indigenous peoples' awareness.

#### **6. Regular Activities of AMS:**

##### **Violence Against Indigenous Woman:**

In the village of Pegamari, within the Sholakuri Union, a ninth-grade girl who attended private tuition in the afternoon around 4-5 PM was returning home. At that time, a young man from the same village attempted to assault her. She managed to escape somehow. Later, the matter was taken to a local council meeting.

In this council meeting, members from the village, including the chairman, representatives from two families involved, and Sulekha Mrong, the director of the Achik Michik Society, were present. However, the local members dismissed the notion that the girl was a bad influence, and they stated that the boy had no fault. Unfortunately, the girl was not given an opportunity to speak, and the patriarchal societal norms prevented her from receiving a fair hearing.

In Bhutia village, in the southern part of the region, a woman fell victim to harassment by a local gang. There, too, the woman was labeled as a bad influence and presented as a negative figure by the society. Although the Achik Michik Society intervened and sought justice, the local representatives were determined to suppress the woman's voice, and she did not receive a fair trial.

In another instance, a woman from Gachabari, abandoned by her husband along with her three children, received support from the Achik Michik Society and local representatives. With their assistance, she was able to reunite with her children

In Thanarbaid, a family sells alcohol in their home. Although alcohol is a traditional beverage among the Garo community, it is prohibited for sale to other communities. The Achik Michik Society responds to the invitation of the women in Thanaar Baid village and informs them of the prohibition of this business. Later, members of that family explain that they sustain their livelihood through this business and ask how they will survive if they stop it. With the assistance of the local chairman, a provision is made for them by providing a cow and ten ducks so that they can generate income through these means.

Achik Michik Society has successfully managed to shut down illegal businesses in several villages like Thanaar Baid, Kailakuri, and Beduria.

A village arbitration was held on 12-03 2023 at Opar Bhutia. The subject of the arbitration was attempted child rape. The child studied in Class 4 at Bhutia Primary School. While visiting the village's new wife, the child was attempted to be raped. Principal of Bhutia High School, Headmistress of Bhutia Primary School, Executive Director of Achik Michik Society, village leaders and villagers were present in the arbitration. After listening to the statement of the defendant, the trial concluded with a fine and a bond not to do the same in the future.

A village Salish was held on 05-07-2023 at khezai village. Arbitration is mainly done for land ownership disputes between relatives. Sholakuri Union chairman Mr. Akter Hossain, former chairman Mr. Yakub Ali, Joyensahi President Mr. Eugene Nokrek, Madhupur Upazila female vice chairman Mrs. Jasthina Nokrek, Achik Michik Society President Mrs. Maloti Nokrek, and ten other village leaders were present in the arbitration. In the long discussion review, the problem is solved by the joint efforts of all to maintain the peace of the family and society.

### **Empowering Indigenous Women:**

The Inspiring Journey of MS Momota Bormon”

MS Momota Bormon, a proud Koch indigenous woman, has overcome significant challenges in her life to become a beacon of change in her community. Her remarkable journey is a testament to her dedication and resilience.

After being forced into a child marriage at a young age, her educational aspirations were put on hold. However, her spirit remained unbroken. She eventually found her path to empowerment when she joined Achik Micik Society Preprimary School as a teacher. For four years, she dedicated herself to educating young minds, demonstrating her commitment to making a positive impact.

Momota's transformation truly took shape when she actively participated in various training sessions, seminars, and workshops organized by Achik Michik Society. These experiences not only enhanced her skills but also expanded her social and cultural awareness within the indigenous community. Through these activities, she forged valuable connections with a diverse group of individuals, including human rights advocates, community leaders, village chiefs, local elected representatives, church leaders, government officials, forest officers, and representatives from non-governmental organizations.

As a result, Momota emerged as a prominent Koch indigenous women leader, wholeheartedly dedicated to addressing a multitude of issues plaguing her community. She tirelessly works to combat women abuse and child marriage, advocating for the rights and dignity of her people. Notably, she has played a pivotal role in assisting village residents in accessing essential allowances for widows, the elderly, and the disabled.

One of the critical challenges faced by the Koch indigenous community is the alarmingly low education rate. Momota, with her indomitable spirit, not only pursued her own education through training and workshops but also tirelessly encourages her fellow Koch community members to enroll in schools. Her influence and acceptance within her community are profound, inspiring a new generation to dream of a brighter, more educated future.

MS Momota Bormon's journey exemplifies the power of determination, education, and community leadership. She stands as an empowering figure and a source of hope for her people, demonstrating that positive change is possible, even against significant odds.

The incident of oppression in Madhupur, Tangail, on Basanti Rema in the forest department is heart-wrenching. Through successive generations, Basanti Rema has become the owner of a piece of land from maternal inheritance. According to ILO Convention 107, traditional land rights or 'customary land rights' are recognized in Bangladesh. Basanti Rema, in her own initiative, cultivates a banana orchard on a land in the 40s. However, under the jurisdiction of the forest department, she is told to develop social infrastructure there, leading to the cutting down of those banana trees. This action leads to Basanti Rema's family being submerged in sorrow like the sea. Supported by various organizations, including the Achik Michik Society, Basanti Rema protests for her rights and a shop is constructed for her as a part of her justice campaign.