

# People's Development Justice Report

## FDJ Monitoring Programme 2020-2021

### National Monitoring and Review of the Sustainable Development Goals and Development Justice in the Bangladesh



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**Initiative for Right View (IRV)**



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## Executive Summary

Bangladesh is one of the most vulnerable countries due to high population density (ca. 170 million people in 147,570 km). Climate change is a very real, immediate threat to the people in Bangladesh where a one-meter sea level rise could submerge almost 20% of the country and displace millions. Government has taken measures to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) since it launched the seventh Five Year Plan 2016-2020 in 2015. But progress is slow and has been hampered due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In the COVID-19 era, the government imposed nationwide lockdown in response to COVID-19 and recent several super cyclones caused severe destruction. The COVID pandemic exposes an increase in poverty; on the other hand, there is a rise in the number of rich people. This is a huge sign of inequality and economic injustice. The number of the new poor in Bangladesh stood at 24.5 million, or 14.7% of the total population. The negative effects of climate change in countries such as Bangladesh are becoming apparent day by day. The country is one of the most affected and vulnerable countries and also one of the least carbon emitting countries. Climate change will be a serious threat to Bangladesh in achieving the SDGs as seen in the status of the Goal 13 targets of the country.

The indigenous Munda and Mahato community has been living in the southwest coastal region of Bangladesh living with the high vulnerability to COVID-19 and climate change. They have been deprived of basic socio-economic rights. They have no adequate access to education, health care, food and nutritional security, safe drinking water and hygienic sanitation. They are living with depressed economic situations. The situation of women, girls and persons with disability is many times worse, as their contexts are often ignored. They also became more vulnerable due to COVID-19 and their ability to absorb shocks was compromised. The COVID-19 lockdown is also disproportionately impacting the economic situation of those who have already been suffering from severe poverty. They lose their livelihoods and enter debts. According to the findings of our monitoring, the measures taken by the government to raise awareness regarding the COVID-19 pandemic has been successful but the initiative for relief distribution is lagging behind.

Climate change vulnerabilities are major problems for indigenous peoples in Bangladesh. The indigenous Munda and Mahato communities in the southwest coastal region experience regular climate-induced disasters due to their geographic locations. These communities primarily rely on agriculture and livestock for their livelihoods. As a result, climate change, coupled with a general lack of assistance, makes them particularly vulnerable. Simultaneously, super cyclones affect productive land and partly or completely damage houses and roads. Food security is at stake owing to the loss of

crops and intrusion of saline water. Due to storm surge, several points of embankments near their living place were breached and overtopped resulting in washing out of agricultural lands, damages to livestock and household properties.

Impact of COVID-19 and climate change to indigenous Munda and Mahato women is largely a human rights issue. Women's historic disadvantages, their lack of access to resources and information and their limited power in decision make them more vulnerable to the impact of both COVID-19 and natural disasters. The Munda and Mahato women and girls are one of the most disadvantaged and socio- economically vulnerable sections of the country's population. They often face multiple discrimination due to their status as a minority, indigenous identity, and gender. Gender-based violence is also a critical issue. Munda and Mahato women have been suffering from multiple discrimination. Most of them are excluded on three levels—as minority people, as women within minority people and as women. They are deprived of human rights and denial of basic need. They are neglected and oppressed in society.

They have been deprived of their civic and human rights, economic and cultural facilities and facing social oppression. Because of systemic oppression, Munda and Mahato women think of their lives as nothing and often lack ambitions. Instead of going to school, young girls will spend their day doing household chores. This also hampers their education.

The government did introduce social safety net programs, however these still fail to address the particular needs of these indigenous communities. These programs do not consider the variation of their cultural diversity, and livelihood pattern. Their issues need to be seen in a comprehensive manner. They have little contribution to climate change and yet they suffer the most. The SDGs should be addressing the situation of these communities, but we are still always lagging behind especially on issues of human rights and climate change.

The government's approach in achieving the SDGs in a "whole of society" manner is failing to address the specialized needs of the marginalized indigenous populations. In its 7th (2016-2020) and 8th (2020-2024) Five-Year Plans, in an effort to integrate the Agenda 2030 and the goal of SDGs "leave no one behind", the government has emphasized and pledged to "empower ethnic minorities". We demand that indigenous peoples should be at the heart of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

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**Kazi Zaved Khalid Joy Coordinator (CEO)**

Initiative for Right View (IRV)

## Acronyms and Abbreviations

ADB	: Asian Development Bank
APTA	: Asia-Pacific Trade Agreement
BCCRF	: Bangladesh Climate Change Resilient Fund
BIMSTEC	: Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral, Technical and Economic Cooperation
CEPA	: Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement
CDP	: Committee for Development Policy
CSOs	: Civil Society Organizations
CHT	: Chattagram Hill Tracks
DTT	: Double Taxation Treaties
EPZ	: export processing Zone
EU	: European Union
FDJ	: Feminist Development Justice
DFQF	: Duty-Free Quota-Free
GED	: General Economics Division
GCF	: Green Climate Fund
GSP+	: Generalized System of Preferences Plus
HLPF	: High-Level Political Forum
ICU	: Intensive Care Unit
IDMC	: Internal Displacement and Monitoring Center
IFIs	: International Financial Institutes
IOM	: International Organization for Migration
IPCC	: Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
JAICA	: Japan International Cooperation Agency
LDC	: Least Developed Country
OMS	: Open Market Sale
NGOs	: Non-Government Organization
NWDP	: National Women Development Policy
SAFTA	: South Asian Free Trade Area
SDG	: Sustainable Development Goals
SSNP	: Social Safety Net program
UN	: United Nations'
WASH	: Water Sanitation Hygiene
WB	: World Bank
WHO	: World Health Organization

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## 1. National Context and Introduction

### BANGLADESH

Country population: 161,356,039

GDP Per capita: 161,356,039

Wealth Inequality index-Palma Ratio: Based on the palma Ratio income inequality is raised to 7.53 in June, 2020 that of 2.92 in February, 2020

UNDP Gender Inequality index Value: 0.5362018

UNDP Gender Inequality index Rank: 129 out of 162 country

#### Government Budget Expenditure

Military Expenses: 4.36 billion US Dollar Health Expenditure: 298 billion US Dollar

Welfare Fund for the Oppressed Women and Children (2019-20):0.5 billion

Project on increasing the capacity of adaptation to climate change to counter salinity of Coastal communities, especially women (Green Climate Fund) (2020-21) 1.106 billion Taka

Allowances for the Widow, Deserted and Destitute Women (2020-21): 12.3 billion

Maternity Allowance Program for the Poor Lactating Mothers (2020-21): 1.5 billion taka

Special Assistance Fund for women development & Women Entrepreneurs (2020-21): 1.25 billion Taka

#### COVID-19 Context

Number of confirmed cases 1879255 (WHO; 08 Feb, 2022)

Number of Death 28670 (WHO; 08 Feb, 2022)

Number of workers affected by COVID-19 crisis in the terms of employment: Reach about 12 million which is approximately 20% of the domestic worker (Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh 2020).

During the COVID-19 situation; from January to September 2020, 397 women were died because of domestic and sexual violence, and only 208 cases were filed. At least 975 women were raped, 204 women were made victims of rape attempt, and death after raped 43 women. 12 women were committed to suicide after raped.

## Country Context

Bangladesh is one of the most vulnerable countries in the region due to high population density (ca. 170 million people in 147,570 km), poor health care systems, poverty, and the weak economy. The Sustainable Development Report 2021 ranked Bangladesh as one of the countries that has been on track in terms of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Index since 2015. The government has taken measures to achieve the SDGs since it launched the seventh Five Year Plan 2016-2020 in 2015. However, this has been challenged by the pandemic and has slowed the progress. According to the World Bank,



the country's poverty rate increased by 7.0 % to 30% in the last fiscal year than that of a non- COVID counterfactual scenario. The COVID pandemic sees an increase in poverty; on the other hand, there is a rise in the number of rich people. This is a huge sign of inequality and economic injustice. According to a recent study, the number of the "new poor" in Bangladesh stood at 24.5 million, or 14.7% of the total population. Bangladesh is in a weak position in the implementation of 12 out of 16 indicators of the SDGs, such as eradicating poverty, combating climate impacts and ensuring decent work and economic growth. The goal of zero hunger (SDG), good health and wellbeing (SDG 3) sustainable cities and communities (SDG 11) and clean water and sanitation (SDG 6) have seen moderate progress but not enough to attain the goals by 2030

### *Gender-based violence*

The COVID-19 pandemic has struck men, women and children. They also find that, due to the pandemic, those who traditionally face discrimination like domestic workers, garment workers, slum dwellers, public transport workers, and in the general, the pro-poor population are discriminated against and stigmatized. During this time gender based violence has increased dramatically. Women who generally earn less, also save less and

hold insecure jobs and have been particularly hard hit by the lockdowns. Women's participation in the informal economy has severely been affected. In families where the spouse is out of job and there is uncertainty in income, domestic violence has seen a rise during the present crisis. The growing rate of intimate partner violence as a result of lockdown shows they are trapped with their abuser. Crises often limit women's ability to get away from abuse. The lockdown situation prevented them from accessing community support mechanisms and also support and services from the law and order enforcement authority.

COVID-19 pandemic has struck men, women and children, but the impacts are varied. Child marriage is still prevalent in the country. During the pandemic, child marriage has increased significantly in Bangladesh. During the seven months from April to October 2020, 13,886 child marriages took place in 84 sub-districts in 21 districts of the country. Early marriage and any form of GBV is a violation of human rights and a challenge to achieve SDGs.

### *Climate Change*

The climate vulnerable population, especially the marginalized community of the southwest coastal region became more vulnerable to natural disasters due to COVID-19. The imposed nationwide lockdowns in response to COVID-19 and continuous natural disasters like super cyclone Amphan and YAAS caused severe destruction.

It has affected productive lands and partly or completely damaged houses and roads. Food security is at stake owing to the loss of crops and intrusion of saline water. Due to storm surge several points of embankments were breached and overtopped resulting in washing out of agricultural lands, damages to livestock and household properties. It also damaged or destroyed tube-wells and toilets, creating a water sanitation hygiene (WASH) crisis and compromising the ability of households to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Cyclone Amphan resulted to economic losses worth \$1.5 billion, or nearly tk 12,744 crore when it hit Bangladesh (Cyclone Amphan: Bangladesh may face losses worth Tk12, 744cr | Dhaka Tribune).

Cyclones such as Amphan make it very difficult for Bangladeshi to fight COVID-19 or achieve the SDGs. National poverty stands at 29.5%. The COVID-19 pandemic has pushed nearly 62 percent ethnic minority people who live in plains below extreme poverty line, according to a survey of Indigenous People's Development Services. These communities need special programs and proper budget allocations. The pandemic coupled with climate induced disasters makes indigenous communities more

vulnerable. CSOs in Bangladesh have been playing an important role at national and community level in addressing the priorities of the people who are left behind. CSOs undertook activities in collaboration with different ministries and departments or other public authorities. With regards to Goal 13, the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief (MoDMR), along with a number of CSOs, has prepared a scoping paper on the 4 years of the implementation of the SDGs in Bangladesh and explored the potentiality of the national mechanism on climate change induced disaster losses and damages in Bangladesh. The paper includes that CSOs have enhanced their focus on vulnerable groups, particularly the poor and marginalized communities, such as the dalits and harijans, adivasis and differently-able people, sex workers, transgender groups, climate-vulnerable population, among others.

#### *Social protection and basic social services*

Social protection, alternatively called social security or social safety net program, is a set of policies and programs aimed at reducing social and economic risk and vulnerability of the poor, enhancing their capacity to protect themselves against hazards and loss of income including under emergency situations. The government has been contributing safety net programs to reduce poverty and vulnerability.

Bangladesh has adopted a Social Security Strategy in 2015. In 2018-19, a total amount of US 7.55 Billion was allocated from the government budget for social safety net programs. The allocation was 13.81 percent of the annual budget and 2.53 percent of the GDP. Twenty four per cent (24%) allocation of Social Safety Net Programs (SSNP) goes to only 0.5% beneficiary as pension for the government employee. In recent years, devastating cyclones, floods and COVID-19 pandemic, the dramatic increase in food prices in 2008 and the global recession have all impacted upon economic growth in Bangladesh. It resulted in a deterioration of food security and the nutritional situation in the country. Sometimes there is availability of food, but the poor people do not have the purchasing power. The government organized Open Market Sale (OMS) which targets the poor households and can also stabilize the price of the food market. There are around 116 safety net programs in the Bangladesh Open Market Sale (OMS), it is the most recognized program among Social Safety Net Programs (SSNP) in the country. Twenty eight per cent (28%) of SSNP beneficiaries are engaged with OMS but allocation of the budget is just 7% for this Program. Such a program and allocation must be rearranged. There is no SSNP specialized for indigenous communities and they have no participation in social safety

net programs. These programs do not consider the variation of their cultural diversity, and livelihood pattern, which includes their particular vulnerability to climate change and economic shocks caused by the pandemic.

CSOs have also been playing important roles in carrying out activities towards implementation of the SDGs. Keeping in purview the agenda of the upcoming High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) and the SDG Summit.

#### A. Systemic Barriers

##### i. *Unjust Trade and Investment Agreement*

The current long term plan of Bangladesh and its implementation is focused on attracting foreign direct investments through infrastructures like transport facilities and export processing zones (EPZ). The government is in the process of establishing 100 economic zones within the next 15 years to attract private investment for industrial development which need more than 100 thousand acres of land along with mega infrastructure development projects like power plants, ports, highways also grabbing hundreds and thousands acres of land.

Land grabbing is not gender neutral. Gender inequalities in access to and control over land are widespread. But while much debate has focused on their economic performance and success factors, EPZ programs have often formed the object of contestation over land expropriations and poor labor conditions. Economic Zones are target-oriented workplaces where virtually all indicators of sustainable human development including labor standards, labor laws, human rights, health, and safety and the environment are ignored. There are several reports of exploitation of women in economic zones. There is evidence that the quality of employment is generally poor. Bangladesh has signed bilateral investment treaties. International brands and the international community continue to press the government to meaningfully address workers' rights and factory safety problems in Bangladesh. On 24 April 2013 the Rana Plaza collapse led to the death of 1,100 garment workers and injured around 2,000 additional workers.

According to the International Labor Organization, more than 4.5 million people work in 4,500 garment export factories in Bangladesh, the world's second largest garment export after China. As a result of the accord, over the last five years, more than 120,000 fires were recorded, and building and electrical hazards exposed and nearly 200 factories with 2 million workers lost their contracts because of poor safety standards after more than 38 inspections.

More than 20 million people depend directly and indirectly on the garment industry, according to the BGMEA. More than 80% of the workers are women from poor backgrounds. Their employment in the garment industry has made them visible in the national employment statistics and has contributed to the country's income (Zohir, 2001). For these women, the garments (RMG) sector is a lifeline out of poverty. The laws that should be protecting the rights of the women workers are not being implemented properly. Ninety per cent (90%) of the women workers are not aware about the existing laws that should protect them as well as their rights. Female employment is concentrated in low paying and low productive jobs. Pregnant women in factories are denied maternity leave. According to the Bangladesh Labor Act, women are entitled to 16 weeks maternity benefit. And if any women workers are involved with trade unions, she may lose her job. Another contributing factor to the rise sexual harassment of women workers is the absence of safe transportation and safe living areas/accommodation. There is no arrangement of safe living accommodation especially for the women's workers in industrial areas. Finally it has been proved that the rights which have been stipulated under different laws, are not being enjoyed by the women garment workers in the country.

Corporatization of the state has been a gradual process and business corporations have been benefitting immensely by influencing the country policies and controlling the apparatuses. Workers and owners of industrial units under Bangladesh Economic Zones Authority have rights under the Bangladesh EPZ Labor Act, 2019 and according to a statutory regulatory order issued by the Prime Minister's Office in 2019.

The order stipulated a provision for the EPZ labor act saying the act would be applicable for the owners and workers of industrial units of country's all Economic Zones under Bangladesh Economic Zones Authority. Abolishing the EPZ Workers Welfare Association and Industrial Relation Act, the government has passed Bangladesh EPZ Labor Act, 2019. Although the government brought changes in many areas of the previous law, the International Labor Organization Committee of Experts observed violations of conventions related to freedom of association and right to form or join a union.

Bangladesh has signed bilateral investment treaties with 29 countries; The U.S.-Bangladesh Bilateral Investment Treaty was agreed in 1986 and entered into force in 1989. The Foreign Investment Act

includes a guarantee of national treatment, granting U.S. companies the equivalent of domestic status. Bangladesh has successfully negotiated several regional trade and economic agreements, including the South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA), the Asia-Pacific Trade Agreement (APTA), and the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral, Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC). Bangladesh is also gearing up to sign a free trade agreement (FTAs) and amend labor laws to continue to avail duty benefits on merchandise export once it comes out of the least developed country (LDC) status.

Moreover, negotiations with the European Union (EU) are underway for becoming eligible for the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) plus after the expiry of the European GSP in 2029, however, to become eligible for the GSP plus, Bangladesh needs to amend its existing labor laws and those involving economic processing zones (EPZs). This is to comply with 27 international conventions, including four core ones centering labor rights, good governance, protection of environment and human rights. Bangladesh signed its first bilateral Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) with Bhutan in December 2020 while it is in discussions with several countries for PTAs and Free Trade Agreements (FTAs). A joint study on the prospects of a bilateral Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) between Bangladesh and India is underway. In addition, PTA negotiations with Nepal and Indonesia are in advanced stages. Bangladesh has signed Avoidance of Double Taxation Treaties (DTT) with 36 countries. Bangladesh met all three criteria required to graduate from the United Nations' (UN) list of Least Developed Countries (LDC) for the first time at the triennial review of the United Nations Committee for Development Policy (CDP) in March 2018. In February 2021, the CDP confirmed Bangladesh's eligibility to graduate from LDC status. The country is scheduled to officially graduate from LDC status in 2026 instead of 2024 as earlier planned to allow it two additional years for smooth transition in view of the adverse impact of COVID-19 on the economy.

Bangladesh will lose duty-free and quota-free (DFQF) access to several major export markets after the graduation. However, the European Union's Generalized System of Preferences Plus (GSP+) Program may allow Bangladesh DFQF access for an additional three-year transition period following the country's effective date of graduation. To be eligible for the EU's GSP+ Program, Bangladesh must ratify additional international conventions on human and labor rights, the environment, and governance, and present its plans to amend and enforce its laws accordingly.



Investment agreements and trade policy influence women and men in many ways, yet some trade policies still fail to consider prevailing gender inequalities. Investment agreements are also gender biased. Gender discrimination mixes other disadvantages including socio economic status, race, class, ethnicity, sexual orientation and disability. As trade policies interact with the economy, they have potential to entrench gender justice. Investment agreements and trade policies need to acknowledge the impacts of such policies to women. It is necessary to promote gender equality as part of inclusive economic growth and sustainable socio economic development. Promoting women's full participation helps the advancement of society. Only a few trade agreements call for the collection of sex-disaggregated data, use of indicators and analysis of gender statistics. The expansion of business and trade in Bangladesh expanded women's role in the economy. Creates more and better employment opportunities for them.

Pictue-01

ii. *Corporate Capture*

Bangladesh economy is dependent on foreign direct investments. For increasing economic activities, the state becomes a subordinate functionary of corporate economic power. Serious human rights violations have been perpetrated by transnational corporations' global supply chains. In addition, as International Financial Institutions' (IFIs) influence has increased through investment in massive development projects, which often lack proper impact assessments, environmental destruction and human rights violations increase. IFIs in financing development processes to control land and natural resources in situations of armed conflict have spurred greater conflict and fragility in all three regions. The efforts of IFIs and dominant countries for their economic and political influence also involves close coordination with concerned governments to suppress indigenous peoples' rights and limit their democratic space to seek effective development cooperation and genuine development process.

Majority (61%) of the current members of the parliament are businessmen. Steering of politics is gradually captured by the business corporation hence could largely influence policies of the country. As a developing country, investments in Bangladesh from abroad are increasing and side by side the national companies are emerging and contributing to the national economy. Most foreign corporations are able to evade tax payment as their influence in legislations and policy-making increas.

Bangladesh is losing more than \$703 million every year because of tax abuses committed by multinational corporations and private individuals. In 2020, the State of Tax Justice 2020 Report stated that the global tax abuse by multinational corporations costs the country \$674 million and another \$29 million is lost due to tax avoidance by the individuals.

The World Bank (WB), the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the UK Aid, China and the Islamic Development Bank disburse concessional and non-concessional loans and grants every year to Bangladesh. In fiscal year 2020, the government received a total of \$7.3 billion worth of foreign loan/aid from the development partners. The World Bank—the country’s biggest multilateral lender supported Bangladesh following its independence and since then committed more than \$26 billion to support the various initiatives. Meanwhile, the WB disbursed \$1.42 billion in 2018, \$2.03 billion in 2019 and \$1.51 billion in 2020. The second-largest lender ADB released \$2.53 billion in 2020 sovereign and non-sovereign loans and grants, and provided \$19.22 million in technical assistance, and mobilized \$1,730.76 million in sovereign and no sovereign financing for Bangladesh and also released \$938 million in 2018, \$1.25 billion in 2019 for boosting competitiveness employment, and private sector development, promoting green growth and climate resilience, and strengthening human capital and social protection.

Japan is not only the largest bilateral development partner of Bangladesh, but also is the third-largest donor among its peers operating in the country. In 2012, Japan became the largest bilateral donor for Bangladesh. Transnational corporations (TNCs) and other companies are often involved in human rights abuses. Despite international voluntary regulations, it’s hard to bring transnational corporations to justice due to the complexities in supply chains and the absence of liability for International Financial Institutions (IFIs). Multilateral and bilateral development financial institutions such as the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the World Bank (WB) and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), as well as financing from emerging economies, such as India and China, are actively financing connectivity projects. An investment for a coal-based power plant threatens to destroy one of the world’s largest mangrove ecosystems.

The Sundarbans protect the coastal communities from extreme cyclones and surges, and threatening it will put communities to further vulnerability to natural disasters. Scientists and activists have repeatedly voiced concerns that the coal power plant could spell disaster for the world's largest mangrove forest. Land around the Sundarbans is being sold and grabbed. Over 300 investors/ businesses and individuals have so far bought more than 10,000 acres of land in the villages adjacent to the Sundarbans. There are 42 new companies that invested us\$ 264,705,882.35 in Khulna and Bagerhat districts. Thirty-eight (38) new companies invested US 7625647.58 in the region.

### iii. *Land grabbing*

As a developing country, Bangladesh has been experiencing an increasing rate of land use conversion as a result of population density, economic development and climate change. Bangladesh has a long history of inequitable access to land and women are most deprived. Local and foreign, public and private forces are involved in land grabbing. Such as

- Government departments and agencies
- International financial institutions (IFIs)
- Various types of investment banks
- Transnational corporations (TNCs), backed by their states
- Multinational and transnational business entities
- Elites, bureaucrats and powerful politicians
- Local investors and businessmen

The total arable land of the country is not more than 14.4 million ha. Every year 1% of its arable land or 82,900 hectares of crop land and everyday 221 ha of arable land is lost to land use conversion. 1.3 million hectares of government-owned land had been grabbed for different kinds of interventions and mega projects such as large-scale land acquisitions/grabbing are happening. This creates land alienation of local communities, human rights violations, and loss of livelihoods and culture. In the country, women have been facing discrimination in terms of land ownership, control and market access, and in every other sphere of society. Southwest coastal regions are prone to land-use changes such as transformation from rice cultivation to shrimp culture influenced by global markets.

As agricultural lands were turned into shrimp farms, the share-croppers and landless wage laborers found themselves losing their livelihoods, and began movements against destructive shrimp farming. At first, 96 acres of land were acquired for the construction of the Khan Jahan Ali Airport but now the government's move to acquire 536 acres more of land led to the displacement of 2000 people from 9 villages. For the Khulna-Mongla railway project, 400 acres of land in Khulna, 278 acres in Bagerhat, and 73 acres in Mongla have been acquired. For the 1320 MW Rampal power plant project, 1,834 acres of land in Rampla, Bagerhat were acquired. Land acquisition reduced crop production of the locality, and displaced 5000 people and threatened the mangrove ecosystem.

Different private groups and companies are acquiring land by giving false assurances. Women in the communities are mostly affected as they experience discrimination and social bias. The COVID-19 virus threatens to worsen highly unequal situations. Heightened competition for land has immediate impacts on women's land-use options, on their income and livelihoods, on food affordability and related costs of living. Landless communities have no political power to influence policy to improve their access to land. Women are more vulnerable as they are also being marginalized within these communities.

Land grabbing threatens women's knowledge systems, their socio-cultural relations with land and nature and with the stewardship and care for the land and its inhabitants. Gender inequality in accessing and controlling land reduces overall food security and family welfare. Pandemic and climate change disasters created double stress on them. Negative implications on women's customary land-based livelihoods. Their land access, control and occupation rights were threatened. There are losses and threats to livelihoods and food security. Impacts on women's health faced direct threats of infection with COVID-19 Increase in women's unpaid care work and mental stress. Displaced women driven to cities in search of employment. Violence increases during periods of instability and disasters which impact on rural women farmers who sell or supply their agricultural products mainly to street vendors and informal markets. They have also been affected by lack of access to justice.

Nowadays agricultural land, wetlands and water bodies are used for other purposes and lack proper monitoring and governance. Power-

ful vested groups and politicians in villages and towns routinely grab the lands of poor classes, ethnic and religious minorities. Among other examples, hundreds of housing companies in urban areas have started to demarcate their project area using pillars and signboards before receiving titles. They use local muscle men with guns and occupy local administrations, including the police. Most of the time, land owners feel obliged to sell their productive resources to the companies at a price inferior to market value.

Lack of proper resettlement and compensation policy affected communities who are not compensated and resettled properly. Different private groups and companies are also grabbing land by giving false assurances. In Bangladesh all the indigenous communities are facing the problem which poses a vital threat to their livelihood and existence. Plain land indigenous communities have been suffering from multiple forms of violence and exploitation. They suffer from loss of control over their ancestral lands and are now on many occasions forcefully evicted by way of fake documents.

#### iv. *Climate change*

Climate change in Bangladesh is a critical issue as the country is among the world's most vulnerable based on geographical location and socio-economic conditions. In the 2020 edition of German Watch's Climate Risk Index, it ranked seventh in the list of countries most affected by climate calamities during the period 1999-2018. There are nineteen coastal districts that are most vulnerable to the effect of global warming in the country. Reports showed that nearly six million people in Bangladesh are already exposed to high salinity and the number is expected to increase to 13.6 million by 2050 and to 14.8 million by 2080. The IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) report has treated Bangladesh as one of the top most climate affected countries in the world despite having a little contribution to carbon emission.

The number of households affected by natural disasters is rising, and by 2030, around 30 million households are expected to be affected by natural disasters. The effects of natural disasters in the forms of economic losses to households and the economy, incidence of sickness and injury, as well as loss of schooling days—are all at high levels, and expected to get worse in the coming years. Greenhouse gas emissions are forecasted to increase at faster rates in 2030, which will also be accompanied with warmer average temperatures.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) has predicted that increased natural disasters and loss of livelihoods due to climatic factors would displace around 6 million people from their homes in Bangladesh in the coming decades.

Marginalized, ethnic, Dalit and minorities of the coastal areas have been suffering most. These areas, despite being rich in natural resources, are also very fragile. They are deprived of human rights and denied basic social services. After Sidr, Aila and AMPHAN cyclones, vast agricultural land became unusable due to salinity intrusion, and compelled to switch to shrimp farming on agricultural land. As a result, people lost their traditional source of income and increased food insecurity. Because of extreme salinity and intensive shrimp farming, ground water is not safe to drink. Majority of the households used to source drinking water from deep tube-well 10 years ago, but now only 12.5% households are able to get water from that source. More than 50% of the households are relying on stored rain water as the main source of drinking water.

#### Pictue-02

As captured in the Bangladesh Government coastal zone policy, the coastal zone is slow in socio-economic development and lacks the resources to cope with environment deterioration and hazards (MoWR 2005). Today, communities face depletion of natural resources and economic insecurity. These factors prevent stable and sustainable livelihoods, disaster resilience including the capacity to recover quickly and efficiently following disasters. This in turn perpetuates chronic poverty. The government committed to protect coastal people through building most essential and protection-oriented critical infrastructure like embankments and polders in most vulnerable coastal areas. However, these infrastructures are not properly implemented because local communities have no participation and ownership in the process. There are also small initiatives that have been taken to provide economic opportunities for their adaptation and ensure sustainable livelihood but still not enough to address the systemic insecurities.

#### v. *Patriarchy and Fundamentalism*

Bangladeshi women have been struggling to establish their rights and voice in decision-making in the family, society and in government processes. In practice, women are still facing discrimination, exclusion and injustice and have negligible influence in decision making processes. Discriminatory laws and policies hinder formal

equality and socio-political conditions prevent women from exercising their rights (World Vision 2015). Women and girls are generally looked down upon, trapped within a backward cultural framework, molded by rigid perceptions of patriarchy.

Women are primarily expected to be wives and mothers engaged in undervalued work like reproducing and rearing children, cooking, cleaning and looking after the household. They are not sufficiently protected from domestic violence, including dowry deaths because these are not treated as criminal offenses. Family laws treat women unequally, marriage, divorce, custody of children, inheritance are generally resolved in family courts which usually favor men.

In Bangladesh as per Khas land (public land) management and distribution policy, single women and widows are not eligible to apply for khas land unless they have "an able-bodied son". Inheritance practices in Bangladesh are deferred by statutory law to governance through the different domestic religions. The laws themselves may be discriminatory to women. For example, Hindu laws rarely entitle women to land inheritance. Under Islamic law, daughters inherit half the share of land compared to sons, and cultural norms support a daughter surrendering her inheritance to her brothers.

A widow receives one-eighth of their husband's property if she has children, and one-fourth if not. However, there is a general risk that property ownership becomes monopolized by paternal relatives rather than passing to direct female kin. Recently, the government of Bangladesh has attempted to revise this law by legislation equal property rights between man and woman relating to inheritance. This change of law was based on the government's National Women Development (NWD) policy 2011 aimed to provide an equal share to women in property and opportunities in work and business.

#### vi. *Militarism and Conflict*

The massive loss of land and livelihood by indigenous communities and the destruction of their environment and culture due to militarization is likely to intensify the resistance of indigenous peoples and exacerbate existing armed conflicts. The acquisition of huge areas for military installations has already resulted (or will result) in the loss of the common lands and village homesteads of thousands of indigenous communities. Many households belonging to the Mro and smaller ethnic groups of Bandarban are desperately struggling for their survival after being deprived of access to the lands and forests indispensable for their traditional means of

livelihood. Indigenous Mro villagers of the Chimbuk Range in Bandarban district in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) are under threat. Due to the construction of a luxury five-star hotel they have been evicted from their own land adversely affecting an estimated 800-1,000 acres of lands belonging to them. They have been reportedly encroached upon jointly by the Army Welfare Trust and the business giant Sikder Group's R&R Holdings Ltd.

Violence against women is one of the most serious threats faced by the indigenous peoples in the CHT. Due to land grabbing and arson attacks by settlers, Jumma villagers are slowly losing control over their resources which are vital for the continued existence of their culture and way of life. Arbitrary arrests and torture and violence against women all violate their fundamental rights such as freedom of expression and freedom from fear.

The CHT Accord signed in 1997 is considered one of the constructive measures taken by the government to address the socio-economic and political programs of CHT. However despite repeated promises by the government a full implementation of the accord has proven to be elusive. Major provisions of the accord including land dispute resolution, withdrawal of temporary military camps and devolution of power to the local bodies are yet to be fulfilled.

vii. *Patriarchal Authoritarian Governance*

Bangladesh is rooted to a deeply patriarchal society. Social norms, education, employment and legal rights and gender inequality in Bangladesh are all perpetuated by patriarchy; it has its own social, cultural and political practices which are not gender neutral. Marginalized women have no opportunity to take part in decision-making while even their issues are not strongly represented in the development plans and activities that are adopted on the basis of policies at the national level. Women's access to assets and property is still very limited. Male and female disparities in education increase steadily from the primary to post graduate levels. Discriminatory wage structures and unequal access to earned income have not been reduced. Women continue to face legal discrimination regarding inheritance. Women's representation in policy and administrative decision making bodies has not improved much either. In a patriarchal society, policies are biased and male-dominated. From their childhood, women are forced to live in a culture which tolerates and permits degradation of themselves. Since laws are based on religion and social value systems, and male dominance, it is entrenched in



the culture and has reinforced age-old patriarchy and hindered women's enjoyment of equal rights. Because of this culture, women's access to assets and property is still very limited. Women continue to face legal discrimination regarding inheritance. Women's representation in policy and administrative decision making bodies has not improved much either.

After getting married, a girl is required to live in her husband's house. Family also sees daughters as troubles unlike sons that generate income and take care of parents. Discrimination starts in the family. When a wife lives with her husband after the wedding, she is considered in a subordinate position and the husband sees himself as more powerful over her. This sense of subordination kills the women's self-respect, self-confidence and self-esteem and sets restrictions on their ambitions.

Women are also not able to run in public office due to lack of capital and restrictions by local customs. Women are seen as incapable of leadership and dependent. Women lack access to decision-making and have no right to own or access resources. Because of this, they are highly vulnerable to eviction and resource grabbing. Women cannot own property, they cannot be mentioned in the land title and they can't even inherit property.

A number of existing laws have been amended and new legislations made to prevent violence against women. Most significant laws are Dowry Prohibition Act 1980, THE CHILD MARRIAGE RESTRAINT ACT, 2017 (Act No. VI of 2017) An Act to make afresh a time-befitting law by repealing the Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929, the Suppression of Violence against women and Children Act, 2000, the Suppression of Violence against women and Children Act, 2000, the Domestic Violence (prevention and protection) Act 2010. Government established violation against women prevention cell. One stop crisis center, victim support center for prevention violation against women and children.

The absence of a comprehensive law, discrimination and violence against vulnerable groups persists, including religious minorities, indigenous people, the dalit community, hijra and transgender people, and people with disabilities. Since 2011, the Government of Bangladesh has provided an 'other' gender category for passport applications. Since 2013, it has granted 'third gender' status to the country's approximately 10,000 hijra (transgender) community members.

## B. Priorities Issues

Our advocacy messages are ending discrimination against women and girls, elimination of violence against women and girls, elimination of all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage, proportion of countries with systems to track and make public allocations for gender equality and women's empowerment.

Indigenous peoples are among the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change as a result of their close interaction and reliance upon the climate and natural systems. The marginalized indigenous Munda and Mahato communities living at the brink of the southwest coastal region are at the front line of climate change, directly affected by cyclone, saline intrusion due to sea level rise. Every year a birch of embankment washed away the standing crops, fishing farms, destroyed the sources of drinking water, roads and houses. The injustice is that they have not been responsible for the unsustainable levels of greenhouse gas emissions that have contributed to the climate crises. It is a common phenomenon in these areas but authorities have not taken significant initiatives.

Taking advantage of their vulnerability, local businessmen grab their land by paying minimum cost and displace them. During off season, male are migrating to other areas for six month leaving women at home at the risk of food and social insecurity and family burden. Women have to fetch drinking water as far as 3 kilometers daily.

Climate change is not gender neutral. Indigenous women are more vulnerable than men. They are excluded on three levels: as women, as indigenous peoples and as women within indigenous peoples. We monitor the social and gender justice indicators as it aims to eliminate all forms of discrimination, marginalization, exclusion that pervade the indigenous communities. We also believe the relationship between indigenous peoples and climate action is an intimate and indispensable one.

Below are our key recommendations:

- **Develop capacity of climate vulnerable indigenous community**

The magnitude and severity of climate change impacts is greater than before. Indigenous communities of the southwest coastal region of Bangladesh are highly vulnerable to climate change, since they inhabit remote areas, marginalize and ecologically fragile areas. They have been suffering from multiple discrimination. Most of them are exclud-

ed on three levels as minority people, as women within minority people and as women. Women tend to be perceived as victims only; for this reason they are sidelined when decisions are made that relate to adaptation measures. Marginalized women's voices should be raised to demand climate justice. Adaptation and Social Safety Net programs should integrate Munda and Mahato women's perspectives and ensure the inclusion of indigenous women and communities in the planning and implementation of the program. Indigenous communities may need capacity building and support which is able to ensure participation and benefit.

- **SDG Monitoring**

Our priority issues are linked to the priority areas of the government in the SDGs commitment or as reflected in the national development plan or National Priority Goals. The 7FYP (7th Five Year Plan 2016-2020) has been prepared in coordination with the targets of SDGs. The government 7FYP integrated SDG-5 as Gender Parity Index in tertiary education to be raised from 0.70 to 1.0. The ratio of literate female to male for age group 20-24 to be raised to 100% from the current 86% and increase the share of female officers (Grade-9 and above) in the public sector to 25% by 2020. In SDG 13, we demand to take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts. Environmental, climate change and disaster risk reduction considerations are integrated into project design, budgetary allocations and implementation process.

- **Advocacy**

It is necessary to increase advocacy for the inclusion of gender justice in climate change debates for achieving SDGs. Creating an effective lobby with local officials from government departments will enhance the quality of new livelihoods; ensure community rights are protected; and improve access to government support services. This will reduce their social and political marginalization and discrimination and ensure their needs are recognized and addressed. Impact to women as a result of climate change is largely a human rights issue. Women's historic disadvantages, their restricted access to resources and information and their limited power in decision-making make them most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Human rights include the right to life - a right that climate change is affecting as indigenous women and traditional peoples are continually impacted and marginalized. Climate change policies must consider gender issues and women's involvement for the advancement of world development. Climate change and

environmental policies must be intrinsically linked with gender, as women are often the first to be affected by changing environments. This advocacy has a plan to lobby and advocate for gender and adaptive measures for indigenous community development from grassroots to national level. People centric policy recommendations will be found for policy advocacy.

- **Network building**

Share acquired knowledge and tools with civil society groups locally through online tools and platforms. To be part of large and stronger local regional and global movements of feminist and peoples organizations and networking to achieve development justice.

## 2. **National Architecture of SDGs Implementation**

The Bangladesh government has established an Inter-Ministerial Committee on SDGs Implementation. The Committee comprising secretaries from 20 Ministries/Divisions coordinates SDGs monitoring and implementation. The Principal Coordinator (SDGs Affairs), a newly created high-level position in the Prime Minister's office, heads the committee. General Economics Division (GED) is the secretariat for the committee to coordinate implementation at the policy level along with monitoring and reporting SDGs status. GED has published 'Mapping of Ministries by Targets in the Implementation of SDGs Aligning with the 7th Five Year Plan'. The book aims to ensure the effective implementation of SDGs. The report identified lead ministries for all the 169 targets. To collect regular information for proper monitoring and evaluations of SDGs progress GED has published a book titled 'Data Gap Analysis for Sustainable Development'. Finance or resources is a must to realize the SDGs, GED has published a book titled 'SDG Financing Strategy: Bangladesh Perspective'. It has estimated the resources needed for implementing SDGs.

In addition to that, 'National Monitoring and Evaluation Framework of SDGs: Bangladesh Perspective' has been formulated for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of SDGs. GED also has published 'National Action Plan of Ministries/ Divisions by Targets for the Implementation of SDGs'. To present the goal-wise progress of Bangladesh along with challenges, GED has recently published 'Sustainable Development Goals: Bangladesh Progress Report-2020'. All the 17 SDGs are already integrated into the 7th h Five Year Plan (FYP). Among the 17

goals, 14 goals (82%) are thematically fully aligned, 3 goals (Goal 14, Goal 16, and Goal 17) of the SDGs (18%) are partially aligned with the 7FYP.

**Involvement of NGOs and CSOs** There is no legislative or constitutional provision or framework that supports the CSOs in engaging in the development planning and implementation process with the government with equal footing. Civil society groups can lend a hand in grant management. The Government of Bangladesh (GoB) has also acknowledged the crucial role of CSOs in SDG implementation. The General Economic Division (GED), in its outcome document titled "Integration of SDGs into the 7th Five Year Plan" states that effective coordination among all stakeholders, including the civil society, is key for SDG implementation. However, up to now, there is no institutional framework that has been developed to ensure effective CSO participation.

Our national development plans and SDGs are thematically and functionally aligned, and implementation of them are mutually reinforcing and complementing. The need for intense stakeholder engagement is another concern, as the country is not yet experiencing the level of collaboration that's necessary. Bangladesh is already working to make these efforts more inclusive, bringing together the private sector, NGOs, CSOs, and members of the media. The VNR process of Bangladesh is led by the "SDGs Implementation and Review Committee". The "whole of society" approach in implementing the SDGs has integrated in the views of relevant stakeholders from central to the local level. Bangladesh is already working to make these efforts more inclusive, bringing together the government and other non-state actors such as the private sector, Local Government Institutions (LGIs), Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), Community Based Organizations (CBOs), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), and others to actively participate in realizing the SDGs.

The Citizen's Platform for SDGs in Bangladesh is a civil society initiative, taken at the national front, to contribute to the implementation of the globally adopted 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Platform is an initiative of a group of individuals; the objective has been to track the delivery of the SDGs in Bangladesh and enhance accountability in its implementation process. The platform currently includes 40 partner organizations working on SDG issues across the country.

### 3. **Planning FDJ Monitoring**

Profile of communities

We work with *Indigenous women (approx 170 Munda & Mahato women) in Southern part of Bangladesh, 7 villages of Koyra sub district in Khulna district.*

#### **Impact Objectives**

Adaptation and Social Safety Net programs in Koyra sub-district Bangladesh integrated Munda and Mahato women's perspectives and ensure the inclusion of indigenous women and communities in the planning and implementation of the programs.

Goals: 5 (Gender Equality) and 13 (Climate Change)

#### **Target**

5.1, 5.3, 5.5, 5.c, 13.2, 13.3

SDG/National/Development Justice Indicators

1.5.3 National and local disaster risk reduction strategies

1.b.1. Government recurrent and capital spending to sectors that disproportionately benefit women, the poor and vulnerable groups.

5.5.1 Seats held by women in national parliaments and local government

5.c.1 systems to track and make public allocations for gender equality and women's empowerment

13.1.1 National and local disaster risk reduction strategies

13.2.1 The establishment or organization of an integrated policy/strategy/plan which increases their ability to adapt to the advance impact of climate change, and foster climate resilience and low greenhouse gas emission development in a manner that does not threaten food production.

13.3.2. Strengthening of institutional systematic and individual capacity building to implement adaptation, mitigation and technology transfer, and development actions

13. a.1 Mobilize the United States dollar per year starting in 2020 accountable towards the \$100 billion commitment.

#### **Research Topic**

Impact of climate change on IP women's livelihood and food security

#### **Key Research Question**

What is the impact of climate change on drinking water, food security, income, life and livelihood of indigenous communities especially on the women?

What are the systematic barriers in addressing the problem?  
 What are the ways to overcome the barriers?

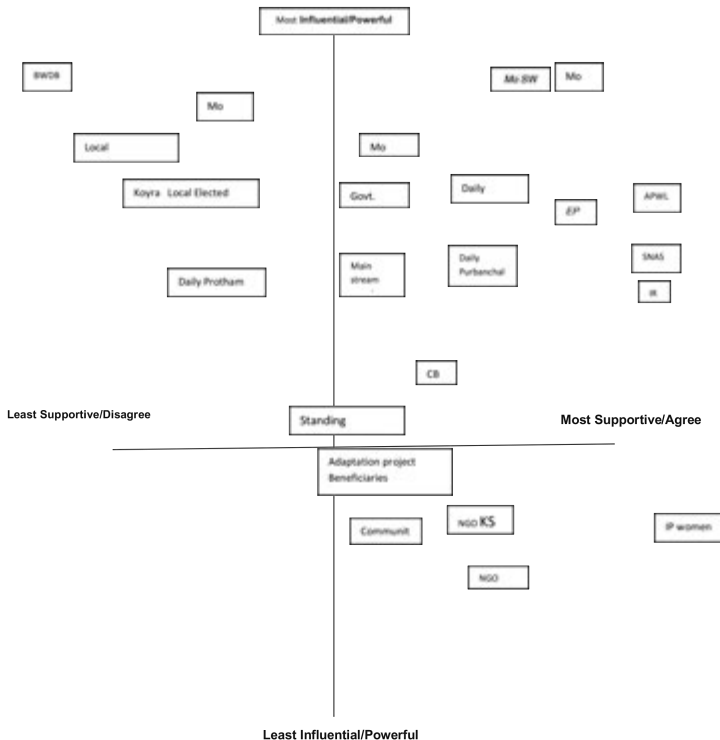
## Methodologies

### Power Mapping

Impact Objective: Adaptation and Social Safety Net programs in Koyra sub-district Bangladesh integrated Munda and Mahato women's perspectives and ensure the inclusion of indigenous women and communities in the planning and implementation of the programs

### Power Mapping

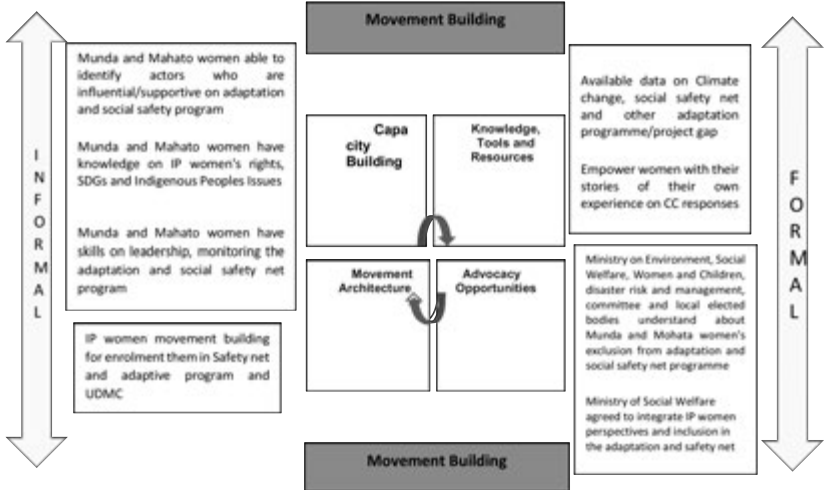
Impact Objective: Adaptation and Social Safety Net programs in Koyra sub-district Bangladesh integrated Munda and Mahato women's perspectives and ensure the inclusion of indigenous women and communities in the planning and implementation of the programs







# Theory of Change



#### 4. Thematic Analysis

##### **Objective:**

Build capacity of feminist and women's rights civil society organizations to advance local, national and regional gender-responsive sustainable development policies, through participation in policy development and monitoring, mobilizing citizen's support, demonstrating best practices and advocating for human rights and Development Justice.

##### **Specific Objectives:**

- Develop the capacity of feminist movements and women's rights organizations to conduct evidence-based advocacy for the monitoring and review of the Sustainable Development Goals.
- Foster knowledge and resources on the impact of development policies, practices and projects on women at the national level by monitoring SDGs through the Development Justice indicators.
- Establish strategic advocacy plans and opportunities to support women's own position and solutions for development policy at national level, regional and international levels through the Asia Pacific Regional Civil Society Engagement Mechanism (APRCM) and the Women's Major Group.
- Strengthen institutional development of partner organizations through leadership development and movement building for Development Justice.

Southwest coastal region of Bangladesh is one of the fronts of climate change, directly affected by sea level rise. The country is less than ten meters above sea level. There has been increasing salt water intrusion, coastal land subsistence and siltation. Climate change affects everyone, it is not gender neutral. Climate change magnifies existing inequalities, reinforcing the disparity between women and men in their vulnerability and capability to cope with climate change (UNDP, 2007; Mitchell et al., 2007).

The climate change impacts on human lives particularly in people of low income communities including indigenous Munda and Mahato community are affected by compromised health, financial burdens and social and cultural disruptions. Indigenous Munda and Mahato communities are the first to experience the nega-

***Urmila Muda said, as the families cannot arrange sufficient food so they arrange early marriage of their girls. They have been facing the same problem again and again. They have no life.***

tive impacts of climate change as they are living in the most vulnerable coastal areas of Bangladesh. Climate change threatens men and women. It is often more acute for women, especially poor, rural and indigenous. The burden of Munda and Mahato women is much heavier due to gender inequalities in various social, economic and political institutions. It also creates major security challenges for them. Munda and Mahato communities are poor and deprived. Climate change damages their livelihood. Frequent natural disasters and storm surge washed away several embankments, inundated standing crops/vegetables and smashed up their houses. Food security is at stake owing to the loss of crops. The Munda and Mahato communities experienced the same situation after cyclone AMPHAN and YASS. As a result they have been passing vulnerable lives. They are not only marginalized by environmental dynamics but also in their social and economic development. This is reflected in adult illiteracy rate, education, access to health care, nutrition, employment, transportation and gender empowerment indicators which remain very low, with high geographical inequalities. They are excluded from the larger social circle because of differences not only in the language, cultural patterns and styles, but also because of their lifestyles. They are recognized as “low” and “untouched”. They are the most deprived, neglected and discriminated community

Their economic condition is very poor and they are living in poverty. Despite working hard, it is very difficult for them to meet their daily needs. In a certain time of the year, it is impossible to meet up daily

***Karuna Munda says. “Due to salinity and scarcity of drinking water family of other areas are not interested to get marry to girls in their areas”. She added that lack of information of disaster make women more vulnerable.***

needs. Migration rate was high among them because of lack of work opportunities. Certain times of the year there is no work and wages are very low. Six month of the year male are migrated to other areas for earning wages. Nowadays, the main occupation of male members are day and seasonal laborers, fishing, and rarely sharecropping. Like male women also work as day laborers apart from household work. Women take on most of the burdens of the families (cooking food, water collection, safety and security of the children and elderly people) while the male members usually migrate to the mainland for employment. In an agrarian society the rural poor Munda and Mahato community depend on markets.

They often face structural barriers that prevent them from accessing markets and employment opportunities, financial services and credit,

market information. They are also deprived from the government support which is especially allocated for them like social safety nets and so on. As they are untouched and powerless they are deprived of access to it.

State has committed to protect coastal people through building most essential and protection oriented critical infrastructure like embankment and polders in most vulnerable coastal areas and providing economic opportunities for their adaptation and ensuring sustainable livelihood but the current long term plan and its implementation has been following a very traditional approach.

Green Climate Fund-GCF has been developed in 2018. Under this fund three projects namely clean cooking program, enhancing adaptive capacities of coastal communities and climate resilient infrastructure mainstreaming in Bangladesh. Developed Countries have pledged to provide US\$ 100 billion to this fund for adaptation and mitigation action. Developed countries did not keep their promise. Most of the funding has gone to support mitigation action in a few of the large developing countries; only a small proportion has gone to the most vulnerable and poorest nations like Bangladesh. To address the issue, the government formed Bangladesh Climate Change Resilient Fund (BCCRF) for organizing assistance from development partners. Now the fund is not operating. There are several policy response option exist that relate to climate change such as:

(1)National Adaptation Plan (NAP)-2014(2) Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (BCCSAP)-2009(3) National Plan for Disaster Management (NPDM) 2016-2020.

SDGs integrated with Govt. 7 FYP. The issues are

- Environmental, Climate Change and disaster risk reduction considerations are integrated into project design, budgetary allocation and implementation process
- 500 meter wide green belt to be established and protected along the coast.
- In 2003 Bangladesh also established a comprehensive Disaster Management Program (CDMP)
- The government has approved the Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy of Bangladesh (2016-20).

State has taken initiative to make this country digital which is unknown to the people of indigenous community. The government cares for all poor people but sometimes it is hard to reach out to people in remote areas. A key challenge in properly addressing the development needs of the indigenous peoples in Bangladesh is ensuring their access to justice in the face of violations of human rights. In parallel an issue of equal importance pertains to the rights of the indigenous women. Environmental justice is certainly applicable to them as they have contributed tiny if anything to the crisis of climate change but are disproportionately bearing its negative impacts.

### **Analysis based on the findings**

Both natural and human induced disaster as well as the effects of climate change increasing pressure hindering development of the southwest coastal region. The Indigenous Munda community who are locally treated as Buno (forest people), a small ethnic group living in a remote village of Koyra Upazila of Khulna district, Bangladesh. The area has been largely excluded from development intervention and investment despite the need to tackle high poverty rates, food insecurity, predictable seasonal poverty and hunger. They are among the most vulnerable for a number of reasons. First, the geographic and community features of rural and remote indigenous communities, along with conditions of economic and food insecurity and marginalization from services make them more vulnerable. They have largely been excluded from development interventions and investment despite the need to tackle high poverty rates, food insecurity, predictable seasonal poverty and hunger. They still live hand to mouth.

The acute identity crisis also linked to their growing exclusion and marginalization. They are recognized as an ethnic minority community.

They experienced employment disparity, wage gaps, landlessness and lack of security. They have for decades experienced structural vulnerabilities and uneven power relations. They have

*Kabita Munda of village Nalpara under Koyra upazila in Khulna said, 'Male members of the community temporarily migrated to another districts during 6 month in search of works including brick knill during low availability of works in their area. We have to pass days with children in utter hardship with a few or almost no money in their absence for almost six months of a year.' 'Can you imagine the hardship of mothers, especially of the ethnic minority mothers, when they try to collect food for children and elderly family members with almost no help from anyone? We are badly in need of financial help and food supply,' said 29-year-old Kabita. 'We cannot even ensure quality education for our children,' she said.*

been deprived from all basic services. Even they were not able to get the

support which was mainly allocated for them. It is very difficult for them to enroll their name in different social safety net programs.

They often lack awareness of social security entitlements and very few are selected to benefit from government run work programs such as VGD, VGF, widow allowance, old age allowance, lactating mother support. Government has increased the budget for the plain land indigenous community from USD 5.8 million in the FY 2020 budget to USD 9.5 million in FY 2021. Indigenous communities have no access to the discussion and decision making process of the national budget.

It is a matter of fact that there is also discrimination for indigenous community regarding budget speeches. There is no proper planning for the coverage of the disaster affected people in various allowances. According to a recent World Bank study Social Safety-net programs (SSNP) in Bangladesh have been

***'Natural disasters and the recent COVID-19 outbreak have aggravated our situation. Now many of our community parents marry off their daughters early to be relieved of bearing the cost of the foods for a member,' said Urmila Munda, village Majher Ait, Upazila Koyra, District Khulna.***

effective in providing food security and a limited measure of emergency relief. Access to SSNP significantly increased the likelihood of being food secure. Consequently, at least in the area of food provision, SSNP beneficiaries are better protected than non-beneficiaries, regardless of shock. Some safeguards have also been installed to ensure that targeted households are included in aid programs.

Beneficiary households are also excluded from the next round of distribution to ensure more equal coverage. Targeting mechanisms need to be improved because coverage of benefits remains strikingly low. Disaster victims did not receive assistance because of corruption, distance from union Parishad office, do not know and don't try. Munda and Mahato women are more vulnerable to the effects of climate change than men primarily as they constitute the majority of the poor and are more dependent for their livelihood on natural resources that are threatened by climate change.

They also face social, economic and political barriers that limit their coping capacity. Women are more vulnerable to disaster and threats of social insecurity in their search for firewood and water. Women remain in defenseless positions during disasters in communities with severe gender inequality. During a disaster and in post disaster management activities women are disproportionately affected.

They suffer from loss of death, have less access to health supplies, are less mobility and have little decision making capacity. They experience inequalities in legal, market and political institutions and have been accorded less rights than man making them more vulnerable in disasters.

In Munda and Mahato community women lack leadership. They cannot participate in arbitration or the decision making

process. Their social roles, access to resources and information, and participation leave them disadvantaged. Males do not allow women to meaningfully participate in any decision making process. This leaves virtually no room for meaningful contribution reducing vulnerability of the women. The main reason behind it that they are not socially organized and politically mobilized. Disaster creates poverty and parents have no way but to give early marriage to their children.

Due to salinity the community has to fetch water far away from their community and girls are also engaged with fish fry collection. Understanding the hazardous situation, parents of other areas are reluctant to give marriage to their son and daughter in those areas. The Munda and Mahato communities have no scope to participate in the decision making process

*Dhires Mahato, a leader of the community at village Hariharpur under Uttar bedkashi, Kayra where 54 families of the ethnic minority community live, said that the community people were worst sufferers of the disasters because most of them live on the Khas lands by the side of the rivers.*

*'Many of our community displaced during Amphan and living by the road side since Amphan hit the areas,' he added. He said that the male members of his community left houses for distant districts for almost six months a year but, in 2020 and 2021, COVID-19 curbs did not allow them to go outside and the people were suffering for the want of money and food. 'We now cannot afford adequate food for our family. Education of our children was hampered seriously,' he said. He said that many of the community have to go to the Sunderbans braving fear of attacks of tiger as they have no work or employment opportunity in their areas.*

**Case story:**

*Women are also often constrained by socially constructed roles and responsibilities that restrict their mobility and their access to social networks and information. Moreover women are more vulnerable to health issues than men. In time of disaster, for example: women's reproductive system become seriously threatened. Survival during pregnancy, as well as the health of both mother and baby after delivery, presents a range of gender-specific problems.*

*In addition women are heavily involved in agricultural activities, where strong connections with climate phenomena prevail. women's extensive agricultural production activities range from raising livestock and poultry, homesteading vegetables, fruits, spices and forestry for timber and fuel to agricultural field work.*

with the mainstream community. In general, they are not invited to the development meeting organized by Upazila Executive Officer (UNO). Their access to assets is limited and their economic contribution continues to be overlooked in economic planning as well as in disaster assessment. As a result, they often do not get a fair share from the post-disaster assistance. Their participation in disaster-related decision-making is still limited, as well. Men and women have different access to resources and information, different roles in society, different knowledge, and different coping mechanisms. It is unsurprising that environmental and climate change should affect men and women differently.

Women in Bangladesh have limited access to resources. This has restricted their rights, limited socio-economic activities and muted their

voice in decision making. Poor urban-nourish and sick women, given their reduced capacity to cope with the effects of hazards, tend to be more vulnerable to the consequences of disaster and climate change. For example, climate change and vulnerability adversely affect reproductive health among many women. Poor women in particular tend to be calorically deficient and they receive less

**Case story**

*Indigenous villages are usually on the river side, so we have to fight with nature to survive. Frequently we have been suffering from floods causing damages of houses, crops and livestock. But the government or non-government cooperation are insufficient. We have to struggle a lot to avail that support also. Sometimes we have to pay bribe to get support sometimes we have to lobby. We see that the least and less quality of cooperation provided to the indigenous community. In the eve of celebrating centenary of Mujib, new houses have been provided to the poor people across the country. Indigenous communities got 21 houses in Koyra sub-district. Of these, we have got a total of 6 houses at Nalpara village of Koyra sadar union in Koyra sub-district.*

*But they have to bribe US \$141 for getting the house which includes 1 room, 1 bathroom, 1 kitchen and a veranda with tin shade. It is said that the cost of the house is taka US 3000. Six months have passed and now the plaster of the house is peeling off. The house is not so high as usual. When it rains, water comes inside. The information about the allocation and distribution of houses are not properly disseminated among the community. There were no consultations about the design of the houses. As a result the houses are unable to protect natural disaster and tidal surge. Even then, something is better than nothing.*

and poorer quality health care than their male counterparts, rendering them relatively less capable of coming with disaster.

Floods increase burdens on women in managing households. Not only do they suffer loss of a household's assets and living essential but given their typical dependence on economic activities, linked to their house-



hold activities, their overall wellbeing decreases. Climate change poses a challenge to the achievement of sustainable development.

The sustainable development goal still has a number of gaps and may also involve potential risks for indigenous people. The 2030 agenda does not reflect a full recognition of collective rights both in terms of land, but also health education, culture and way of living. Indigenous

**Case story**

*In the past years in Nalpara village, koyra sadar all the religious activities and festivals lead by the male and they formed the organizing committees and female members are not included. In 2033 the women community plan to take active part in the program. They organized themselves and designed the plan. The organizing committee selected Saraswati Munda to collect money for the program. As she is living in the patriarchal authoritarian society the leader of the society did not take it positively. The message is that as she is married and living in another village so she has no rights to do this and she is "outsider". Saraswati Munda did not refrain herself from collecting money.*

*Finally they completed their ritual properly. But, few male leaders of the committee could not accept women leadership. At last the ritual was completed properly with the leadership of women.*

people's right to define their economic, political, social and cultural development is also not strongly reflected. The 2030 agenda furthermore lacks cultural sensitivity across several goals such as health and education.

The biggest challenge is the lack of proper consultation and participation of indigenous communities in development interventions.

This issue is particularly significant as various interventions carried out in recent history failed to deliver their development promises and made the indigenous communities grow suspicious of large scale government sponsored interventions Munda and Mahato women have no representation in local and national government bodies.

Another key issue regarding the socio-economic development of indigenous peoples in Bangladesh is the lack of adequate targeted programs. COVID-19 served as a magnifying lens on the general deprivation of a community which at the same time increasingly has become a victim of climate change effects. The key development needs of the Munda and Mahato communities are employment, access to basic service (food shelter, drinking water), economic development and climate resilient livelihoods.

Women's initiatives and actions After Cyclone AMPHAN and the YAAS government provided housing support to the community through local administration. For including their name in the list, the community communicated with Union Disaster Management Committee (UDMC) local elected representatives and participated in meetings in the office of the local administration and as a result 21 Munda and Mahato families get housing support. On the other hand there are complaints against the relief support after cyclone YAAS. They found that the date of the food item has expired and Munda and Mahato communities' raise the issue to local journalists.

#### 5. **Common Ground Analysis for the Theme of HLPF 2021**

Our work and people's movements' work in our country contributing to the theme of HLPF. We have placed a large focus on community health messaging. It also has included health screenings, PPE distribution, and COVID-19 health audio messaging and COVID-19 awareness raising. Poster and leaflet distribution. Vaccine education and sensitization are also part of social movement. There has also been direct aid to families due to the heightened hardships of COVID-19. One best practice that emerged was using door-to-door techniques when trying to reach women. On March 8, 2020 three cases of COVID-19 were confirmed by the Institute of Epidemiology Disaster Control and Research (IEDCR) for the first time in Bangladesh. In 2020 Bangladesh will have only 5.3 doctors per 10,000 people 0.3 nurses per 1000 people, 0.87 hospital beds per 1000 people. There are 0.72 Intensive Care Unit (ICU) beds and 1.1 ventilators per 100000 people. The country has relatively very limited health service facilities in comparison to other COVID-19 affected countries. Bangladesh has never faced a situation like this before. To address the socio-economic situations, the government announced several financial stimulus packages of about USD 11.90 billion.

The diagnostic approach of COVID-19 patients in Bangladesh is of total instability and lack of coordination, and therefore a proper solution has not been found in the last five months since the outbreak of this disease. The health care management system of Bangladesh is not perfect, which has lots of weaknesses and problems. When a health

emergency of an immense proportion like that of COVID-19 pandemic grips the country, it seems that the health system management has lost its way. Most of the time, the health sector policymakers were talking about all kinds of preparations being already taken to tackle the pandemic COVID-19. However, the lack of coordination among various departments of the government and the absence of proper direction are very evident on the ground. Consequently, the Government has failed to restrict the travelers to enter into the country from the COVID-19 affected countries on time. While the government of Bangladesh needed to establish proper measures.

## **Demand and Recommendations**

### **Local**

- Inclusion of Indigenous women in local level different committees like UDMC, Social Safety net committees
- Gender disaggregated data should be collected and used in disaster and relief distribution with special attention to extremely vulnerable groups, including indigenous and rural women.
- Need to make options to participate and access to productive resources and social services for women in rural areas.
- More emphasis should be given to promote measures of SSNP since these measures will have the greatest impact on marginalized communities' future adaptability to natural disaster and the local impacts of climate change.
- The state should ensure reserved seats for indigenous women in the parliament and at all levels of local government bodies.
- It is essential to boost adaptive capability and adaptation efforts of Indigenous communities to migrate ongoing and projected climate effects.
- Meaningful employment, access to basic services such as health, education, drinking water inclusive women development and climate resilient livelihood are key development needs of the Munda and Mahato communities

### **National**

- Government should recognize Indigenous land ownership and protect against land grabbing through developing a resettlement Policy.
- The state needs to embark on a recovery/restructuring process aligning with the goals and targets of the SDGs in view of the COVID-19 pandemic, especially concentrating on climate vulnerable communities, Dalits, Ethnic and marginalized communities.
- Indigenous peoples, including women, should be included in all decision-making policies and measures on climate change affecting them.
- It is necessary to include the indigenous people's engagement effectively in SDGs implementation, their voices should be heard, and their rights will be respected, protected and their economic wellbeing should be incorporated in the Five Year Plan of Bangladesh.
- Fully implement the provisions of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Accord (1997) by the government.
- The State should develop a policy framework with support to the CSOs, for their capacity development and effective engagement in SDG implementation at all levels.

### **Regional**

- Rich countries should support developing economics to address climate change
- The Paris agreement must be fulfilled.
- Developed countries must fulfill their commitments of providing US\$100 billion annually with a 50:50 balance between adaptation and mitigation.
- Vulnerable countries must be supported by the developed countries by transferring green and clean technologies at affordable costs.

## **Conclusion**

People living in the southwest coastal region of Bangladesh are one of the most vulnerable positions in the country. Apart from development disasters they are suffering from climate change events, which needs to be brought into the eyes of national and global policy actors as it is hampering achieving the SDGs targets. To make people voice heard to the national and global policy maker's mass mobilization, campaign and advocacy is required.

Through the National Monitoring and Review of the Sustainable Development Goals and Development Justice in the Bangladesh a People's Development Justice Report was produced embracing the principles of universal respect for human rights and human dignity, the rule of law, justice, equality and non-discrimination which can be a strong tool for advocacy. Without addressing the structural impediments to the 2030 agenda the transformative vision of SDGs will never be achieved. So it is the time and opportunity to influence the national and global policies and framework for the SDGs implementation and to be part of larger and stronger local, national and global movement of feminist and peoples' organizations to achieve Development Justice.

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## **Initiative for Right View (IRV)**

H#372, R#19, Nirala R/A, Khulna  
Mobile : +88 01911 131961  
E-mail : joykhulna@gmail.com  
Website : [www.irvbd.org](http://www.irvbd.org)