

Emancipation,  
Equality and Justice!

**CHARTER OF DEMANDS**  
OF THE FEMINIST MOVEMENT IN  
**B A N G L A D E S H**

NARIPOKKHO

**Emancipation, Equality and Justice!**

**Charter of Demands of the Feminist Movement in Bangladesh**

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## Preface

This document on women's vision of emancipation is entitled "Charter of Demands of the Feminist Movement in Bangladesh." It presents a comprehensive picture of the role, participation, and contribution of women in the context of national, regional, and international history, focusing on the achievement of women's rights in Bangladesh since Liberation. In addition, various demands have been formulated for women's liberation in the light of the present socio-economic and political context.

Specific demands have been raised to ensure the liberation and empowerment of all women in Bangladesh, irrespective of religion, caste, class, ethnicity, and language. These relate to governance and politics; discriminatory laws against women; the concept of a humane state; women's political participation and representation in politics; development and progress; feminist economics; women in the workplace and women friendly workplace; women in agriculture; care work and welfare-oriented society; safe migration; the impact of environment and climate change; women and culture; media and communication technology; gender inclusion in mainstream development; the individual women; freedom from violence; women's health and sexual and reproductive rights; education and training; women in special circumstances; women from marginalized and disadvantaged communities including sex workers, hijras, gender diverse identities; and the role of disabled women. The final section is on the role of the women's movement in implementing the Charter.

The effectiveness of women's movements in achieving the true liberation of women over the past century remains a subject of debate. While the movement has sometimes been highly active, at other times it has experienced setbacks or been silenced. Based on this experience, the Charter of Demands of the feminist movement in Bangladesh has been developed with the participation of various organizations and individuals associated with the women's rights movement in Bangladesh, in collaboration with Naripokkho. This was done at the initiative of Shirakat-Gah, a non-governmental organization based in Pakistan working to empower women through strong women's movements,

The Charter of Demands of the Feminist Movement in Bangladesh was prepared by the 348 participants representing 177 women's and human rights' organizations as well as media and cultural activists through a national conference in October 2018 and workshop in March and April 2019 (List of participants in Annex-1) organized by Naripokkho. A few organizations contributed in writing which included Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, Bangladesh Women

Adibashi Network and SPARK, WARBE Development Foundation, Women with Disabilities and Development (WDDF) and Bangladesh Environment and Legal Association (BELA). Late Rakhi Das Purkayastha, Organizational Secretary of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad was actively involved in this process, and we gratefully acknowledge her contribution. The whole process was coordinated, facilitated, written and edited both Bangla and English document by Naripokkho. We are also grateful to the members and staff of Naripokkho who have contributed to the process as well as the final document.

## Introduction

The movement for women's emancipation is part of the movement for social transformation. Women have contributed to all progressive democratic movements including anti-colonial and independence movements, such as the anti-British movement in the Indian subcontinent. In the context of Bangladesh, women's participation in the 1952 language movement, their participation in the students' protests in 1969, and the liberation war of 1971 is noteworthy.

The women's movement in Bangladesh can be seen to be a continuation of the social and political movements as a whole. It also traces a particular feminist tradition, as it harkens to the writings and activities of Begum Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain who is considered a trail-blazer for women's struggle for equality and freedom, or the revolutionary Pritilata Waddeddar, who stands as an example of fearlessness and courage.



An interesting feature of the Bangladesh women's movement is the intertwining of history with its ongoing activism. Highlighting three main issues around which women's groups mobilize and raise their voice will be helpful in seeing how this is brought about. The three main issues are

- i. Mobilizing against violence against women (VAW)
- ii. Advocating and lobbying for equality of rights and
- iii. Ensuring women's economic empowerment.

These issues are considered to be important as they are necessary for ensuring both equality and freedom. Violence or the fear of violence is one of the constraining factors in many



aspects of women's lives, curtailing their freedom of movement and ability to establish themselves independently. It also leads to a host of attitudinal biases and so-called traditional mores, which place emphasis on women's chastity and 'honour', and create stereotypical images which divide women into the Madonna versus whore categories.

When women are discriminated against by the state through legal measures, this not only bolsters the disadvantages that are structured into social practices, but gives them legal validity. Hence the fight for equality not only between men and women, but for all citizens involves legal measures and reforms.

Women's independence and equality is in large measure determined by their economic status, and women's economic participation thus becomes part of the overall approach to improvements in women's position and status within the state and society.

Taking up these issues one after the other, we will see how the women's movement is closely linked to national history. For example, mobilizing against and raising awareness about violence against women (VAW) or gender-based violence (GBV) is one of the most prominent activities of all women's groups in the country. This can be traced back to the history of the birth of Bangladesh, which even while it highlights the violence that was unleashed against women, illustrates the difficulties of naming and recognizing that violence. The atrocities that were unleashed against the people of Bangladesh included the systematic rape that women were subjected to. The victims of this war-time rape were given the title "*Birangona*" or the brave one. Despite this recognition, *birangonas* have remained the most unacknowledged of war heroines, hidden from public view. Finally, when in 2016 a belated recognition and compensation was announced for these largely disappearing women, the women insisted on being addressed as women freedom fighters or *nari Muktijoddhas*, as for them, the earlier title had become a badge of shame and dishonour. The word "honour" resonates in the lives of women who have been raped and assaulted, as *Birangonas* are 'honoured' by referring to their 'loss of honour'

The links between national history and the position of women is well illustrated by the story of the *Birangonas*, who remain in an anomalous state, celebrated as war heroines, but the atrocity committed against them remains largely unuttered. Another document from the founding moment of the nation-state - the first constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh (1972) - is also illustrative of the anomalous position that women occupy within the state. The constitution stresses the equality of all citizens in its opening preamble. This is contradicted in Article 28(2), which states that "Women shall have equal rights with men in all spheres of the State and public life." This opens the field for differentiating between the citizens on the basis of gender, which is done through legal discriminations on family and personal life, such as marriage, divorce, inheritance etc. These arenas are governed by religious dictates, dividing the polity by religion and does not adhere to the notion of equal

gender rights. Bangladesh Mahila Parishad (BMP) was involved in many legal reforms, such as the anti-dowry act or the marriage registration act, but the issue of equality in the family only came up in the late 1980s with the demand for a uniform family code, and the recognition of gender equality in *all* spheres of life. The division between the public and the private that the constitution was making has far-reaching consequences in the lives of women.

A third issue that can be traced back to the founding moments of the country is the question of development, where women's development is often seen as an indicator of national development. In 1975, when the UN declared the Decade for Women's Development Bangladesh was already part of the development discourse. A host of NGO's were committed to including women in their programmes as workers, while working towards women's development. Women were thus envisaged both as targets and agents for social change and progress. The figure of the woman development worker helped to bring about a change in the attitudes towards women in the country, as much as the development issues they were working with, such as family planning or micro-credit or income generation.

The women's movement in Bangladesh has been building on the issues outlined above in innovative and creative ways. Women's groups mount their protest programmes in many forms: through cultural performances, writing, protest marches and rallies, forging alliances with other human rights and progressive groups, and in trying to keep their public presence. At every step of the way, organizations have been involved in forging new ways of mobilizing and new strategies of action.

The women's movement is perhaps now at another watershed moment, where with the changing political and social context, we have to think of new alliances and new ways of mobilizing. The World Women and Human Rights Conferences have helped with this process during the past several decades and the charter of demands that follows is done in the same spirit. The links between the global or transnational women's movement and the women's movement in Bangladesh are crucial to establish human rights, dignity and empowerment of women.



Photo: workshop

## A. Governance and Politics

### 1. Good governance

#### Background

Good governance depends on the independence, autonomy and effectiveness of the three pillars of the state (i) the legislature, (ii) the judiciary, and (iii) the executive. Accountability, transparency, rule of law, people's participation, fair and equitable distribution of resources, and devolution of power makes for better and stronger governance. Centralisation of authority is a barrier to grass-roots participation in governance.

There is a severe shortfall of good governance in Bangladesh from local to national level. As a result, people are deprived of rights and privileges including education, health, food security, voting, freedom of speech, freedom to unite etc. Lack of good governance fosters lack of accountability at the societal and individual levels. The situation is more acute for women. The culture of impunity that prevails in the country is a barrier to establishing good governance in society and women are the most affected by this.

One of the major reasons for lack of justice is the spread of corruption in every sphere of the state and society. According to Corruption Perception Index of the year 2022 by Transparency International, Bangladesh's position was 147 out of 180 countries in terms of how well it tackles corruption<sup>1</sup>. According to this report all departments at almost all levels are plagued by corruption affecting all citizens of the country. Women and other disadvantaged and marginalized people are most affected.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2022>

One of the main ways of establishing good governance is political, economic and administrative decentralization and devolution. Through this process authority and responsibility are transferred to government, non-government and autonomous institutions of the state at various levels. In addition, the local government system becomes stronger and more active through this process.

Although the issue of decentralization has been clearly mentioned in the Constitution of Bangladesh this provision has not been effectively implemented to date. Due to lack of decentralization, active participation of citizens in the process of social, political and economic development remained limited.

### **Our demands**

1. Put into action the Constitutional guarantees provided for the functioning of the State and remove the provisions in the Constitution that are discriminatory towards women.
2. The institutions charged with delivering good governance and reducing corruption should be allowed to function independently and without political interference.
3. Legislative bodies should limit their activities to the formulation of laws and monitoring of their implementation.
4. Authority, responsibilities and scope of work should be clearly distributed between local and central level authorities and their functions coordinated.

## **2. Laws discriminatory towards women**

### **Background**

The Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh guarantees equal fundamental rights to all citizens. The Constitution guarantees that all citizens shall have equal access to the law, and the State shall not discriminate in any manner against citizens. However equal rights between men and women are not recognized in all spheres of the state and public life. Although the State has been asked to make special provisions for the promotion of women and children and for the development of any backward section of citizens, no action has been taken to establish equal rights of men and women till date.

As a result, women are always subject to discrimination under personal law related to succession, marriage, divorce, etc. The mother is not the legal guardian of the child; she is merely the custodian. Women (of all ages) are always in subordinate positions.

### **Our demands**

1. Equal rights between women and men have to be ensured in personal life as well in public life. According to Clause 26 of the Constitution, laws governing marriage,

divorce, inheritance and guardianship are in conflict with the spirit of equal rights and should be modified.

2. Eliminate all sorts of cultural and institutional practices that perpetuate the subordinate position of women.
3. Establish equal dignity for women through the implementation of all international conventions and treaties ratified by the government.
4. Establish equal rights of all citizens irrespective of gender, race, religion and disability.
5. Provide special measures to allow women to participate equally and enjoy equal rights in the family, society, workplace, and educational institutions.
6. Recognition of equal rights of women to inheritance of property

### **3. The Humane State and Women**

#### **Background**

The State should ensure the safety and security of the lives and property of all citizens and ensure the rights of its citizens. It should maintain peace and harmony. It should create opportunities to promote freedom of expression and cultural diversity. The State should ensure stability and sustainability of social, economic and environmental conditions. The rule of law should be ensured. All citizens should be treated equally regardless of religion, ethnicity, class, sexual orientation and gender identity. Only then can the State be termed as a humane state. The state should not show loyalty to any particular religion. In 1988, through the Eighth Amendment to the Constitution, by declaring Islam as the state religion, Bangladesh has discriminated against people of other religions, which is contradictory to the ideals of a humane state.

In a humane state the society should be secular and citizens would be non-communal. The State can not have a religion and the present does not have any reference to the hereafter. Society should be secular as different ideologies and religious beliefs exist in the society. Religion should be seen as a personal affair. Secularism is essential to establish fairness, equality and equal rights of women. When religion influences state mechanisms women's equal and human rights are diminished. Bangladesh is no exception. Although the Constitution of Bangladesh has guaranteed the basic rights of all citizens it has certain contradictory provisions regarding the rights of individuals and the importance of religion. For example, Article 36 of the Constitution guarantees the free movement of every citizen but in practice the freedom of movement of women is restricted from a religious perspectives.

Although women play a vital role in developing and nurturing culture, women are controlled and restricted in the name of religion. Culture, customs and religions continue to play a key role in keeping women in subordinate positions, which the state sustains.

Finally, an important characteristic or principle of the humane state is the respect for human life. Therefore, the State cannot take human life or allow anyone or any institution to do so. However extrajudicial killings by the state law enforcers are being carried out without bringing the culprits under the judicial system in Bangladesh. Furthermore, the 'death penalty' is contrary to the fundamental rights and principles of human rights and the right to life. Therefore, the penalty of death should be prohibited by law.

#### **Our demands**

1. Repeal the Eighth Amendment to the Constitution establishing Islam as state religion.
2. Promote a culture of respect for different opinions and others' language, culture and religion.
3. Promote humanism, secularism, and freedom of speech, language, culture in social and other media.
4. Teaching of religion in schools should be limited to religious books only. Religious matters should not be included in lessons on social science, Bengali, etc

#### **4. Women's political participation and representation**

##### **Background**

The political structure of Bangladesh extends from the Union Parishad which is the lowest tier of local government to the Parliament at the national level. In the local government, women are directly elected to the reserved seats to ensure women's representation, but at the national level in the parliament women are nominated by the political parties, which is a barrier to women's political empowerment.

The active involvement and representation of women should be established through equal participation and democratic practice at every level of the power structure. Moreover, due to the presence of black money and muscle power in the political arena, women are deprived of the opportunity of participating in politics. It is essential to have women's participation and representation in the decision-making process of all organizations including political parties, different social organizations, and trade unions.

##### **Our demands:**

1. Inclusion of one-third female members in committees at levels of all registered political parties to create a favorable environment for women's participation within the political parties.
2. Ensure development of women's leadership through training, mentoring and special measures.

3. Involve women on a priority basis at each stage of decision-making process for the development of women's status and location.
4. Ensure participation of women in decision making processes at all levels of local government committees, committees of different social institutions and women in the administration including
5. Create provision for direct elections by women, increase of reserved women seats in the Parliament, increase number of women's seats in one-third and reallocate constituencies.
6. Eliminate the use of black money, muscle power and corruption in politics.
7. Reintroduce the provision of 'no-vote' in ballot papers so that there is scope to express "no confidence" in the candidates proposed.
8. Provide specific responsibilities for women members in the reserved seats of the Parliament. According to the People's Representation Ordinance 2009 and 90 (C) political parties have to include one-third women by 2020.

## **B. Women and Development**

### **5. Women Development Policies and Programme**

National Women's Development Policy has been enacted to ensure women empowerment, equal rights and equal opportunities for women. This policy has been formulated by the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, in discussion with other ministries and agencies and non-government organizations, in light of the fundamental rights of women recognized by the constitution, international treaties namely CEDAW, CRC and Beijing declaration.

The Women's Development Policy has 22 objectives. Among them the most important is establishing equal rights of men and women in all spheres of state and public life in light of the constitution of Bangladesh. The other objectives include the protection of women, full and equal participation of women in the mainstream of socio-economic development, elimination of poverty, recognition of women's contribution and elimination of all forms of discrimination, inventing and importing optimal technologies of women's interest and prohibiting the use of anti-women technologies and to ensure the development of women entrepreneurs and to provide the necessary support to women development.

Ensuring women's human rights and fundamental freedoms, development of the girl child, elimination of all oppression against women, armed conflict, education and training, sports and culture, women's active participation and equal rights in all the activities at the national economy, elimination of women's poverty, women's economic empowerment, women's

employment, and formulation of gender responsive budgets, have been given priority in the women's development policy.

Women and technology, women's food security, recognition of women's contribution in the national economy through agricultural labor, arranging direct elections for women to ensure their political and administrative empowerment, and appointing a significant number of women at the higher level of the decision-making process also were given priority in the policy.

Besides this the undertaking special programs for women has been given importance in the policy. These include protection of women, children, person with disabilities and women from disadvantaged and ethnic minority groups during and post disaster time. Emphasis was also given to take positive steps to ensure media's role in the publicizing and promoting the rights, interests and special needs of women subject to violence.

Our demands

1. All discriminatory laws, policies and programmes should be eliminated
2. Laws, policies and programmes should be formulated to be consistent with international conventions and treaties
3. The National Women's Development Policy should be reviewed and updated.

## **6 Feminist Economics**

### **Background**

We need knowledge and research on how macroeconomic principles and structures sustain inequality and how these could be changed to promote gender equality in order to create a fair and sustainable society. We are aware that the present global and national economic structures and processes do not value equally women and men's contributions, potentials, interests and needs. Economic models that are based on feminist economics and research would consider both women's and men's daily lives and different living conditions, leading to a society which would give adequate priority to reproduction and care functions in the welfare society.

Women's experiences, skills and potentials should be allowed to flourish along with men's and the indicators for economic success and development should value what women and men have defined as priorities. Work life balance would be ensured. We also know that poverty has different meanings in different countries, and for women and men. In addition, women outnumber men among the poor.



## Our demands

1. The government should develop and monitor budgets from a gender equity perspective in order to systematically monitor resource allocations to gender equality policy goals
2. Skills in feminist economic analysis should be developed so that economic policies are gender sensitive.
3. Unpaid care work should be made visible, reflected in economic models and taken into account in socioeconomic planning.
4. Economic disparities and discrimination against women must be identified and measures taken to remove them
5. Macroeconomic policies such as trade and fiscal policies should include gender analysis and of the differential impact on women and men.

### 7. Woman in workplace and women friendly workplace:

#### Background:

The extent and nature of women's economic contribution is generally not recognized or valued. Women are involved in productive paid work both outside and inside the home (home based work as well as outside employment or trade). They are also involved in productive work for the market (as producers and entrepreneurs), expenditure saving work (if they did not do the work someone would have to pay to get the work done) as well as unpaid care work.

Female participation in Bangladesh's labour force has increased to 42.68% in 2022, up from 36.3% five years ago, according to a survey report conducted by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) released in early 2023. Female labour force participation in rural areas has increased significantly in Bangladesh thanks to women's growing involvement in the agriculture sector and urban-rural migration brought on by the global coronavirus pandemic. In 2016, the female labour force participation rate in rural areas was 38.6 percent. In 2022, it shot up to 50.89 percent, according to the latest edition of the Labour Force Survey that was published in 2023. One of the reasons could be the increase in off-farm activities in recent times. The massive lay-offs in garment factories, which mostly employ women, during the pandemic could also explain the spike in rural female labour force participation. In fact, migration from urban areas to rural regions and other towns has seen a rise, as shown in the Sample Vital Registration System 2021.

At the same time, female labour force participation in urban areas declined significantly: from 31 percent in 2016-17 to 23.6 percent in 2022. It is relatively easier for women in rural areas to be involved in family's economic activities. Economists have commented that the statistical increase in rural and overall female labour force participation may not be positive

as women's access to quality jobs did not improve. The female labour force in rural areas is mostly involved in self-employment rather than wage-related jobs. The drop in female labour force participation rate in urban areas is not a good sign. There is a shortage of jobs for urban educated women especially white-collar jobs as per their aspiration, which may be reflected in a much higher rate of unemployment for educated women.

Women generally have fewer opportunities than men to have paid work, either outside or inside the home. Some of the causes are differences in labor force participation, working conditions, wages and pension benefits. Fewer women than men are gainfully employed and a higher proportion of women work in the informal sector or as unpaid family labor. Wages are lower, working conditions are poorer and the work is more precarious.

### **Our demands**

1. Strengthen women's rights to equal pay and career opportunities and undertake tangible structural measures to support them. The government, employers' organisations and trade unions should act to establish decent working conditions which conform to the Labour Law.
2. The government should implement a parental system that promotes shared responsibility for childcare between men and women and ensures public childcare and elderly care with guaranteed quality.
3. Provisions for the elimination of all forms of sexual harassment and violence at the workplace should be implemented by employers (High Court Guidelines of 2009) and monitored by government and trade unions and a law formulated to ensure this.
4. Women's safety and security in public spaces and on the way to and from work should be ensured by law enforcement agencies, local government, local communities and workers and employers associations.
5. Construction of women-friendly toilets at the work place should be ensured.
6. The informal sector professions where women dominate such as domestic workers and street vendors should be gradually formalized and brought under the ambit of the Labour Law to ensure basic pay and other labour rights.
7. Women's contribution to agriculture should be recognized and their role as farmers acknowledged. Here too minimum wages should be declared.
8. Support services such as secure transport, decent housing and child care, to enable women to participate in the work force should be provided by government, employers and also the private sector.
9. Women should be supported and encouraged to enter into non-traditional, higher productivity and higher paid trades/professions.

10. Change conventional idea that women will only do small scale business by making opportunities available for women to do large scale business as well.
11. Provide equal rights to property and assets.
12. In case of separation of marriage, the assets acquired by the couple will be divided between husband and wife.

## 8. Women in agriculture

### Background

The backbone of Bangladesh's economy is agriculture. Apart from achieving growth in this sector, it is not possible to ensure reduction of rural poverty, unemployment and food security. Women are actively playing equal roles both at home and in the fields while doing agriculture. But the contribution of women to the country's agricultural economy is not yet recognized. Like other informal sectors women workers engaged in agricultural sectors is also severely discriminated against.

According to a 2011 report by the World Food and Agriculture Organization (REO), 70 percent of women are directly involved in agricultural marketing, 80 percent women food producers, 10 percent women processing cereals and 60 to 90 percent of women are involved in rural marketing<sup>2</sup>. In South Asia 39% of the women's agricultural workers Women's agricultural workers in Bangladesh 45-49 percent in the region, the participation of 89.5 percent women workers in crop sowing, accumulation and processing can be seen. Approximately 90 percent of the women's role in agriculture was significant. Female workers in developing countries of Asia and Africa give labor for more than 13 hours.

Women are involved in more agricultural activities than men. Women carry out 17 steps in 21 steps of agricultural work. However, due to patriarchal views women do not get recognized for their agricultural work from the family or society. Women farmers are also deprived of "agricultural cards" (*Krishi Cards*) given out by the Department of Agricultural Development to ensure access to services and resources. Women farmers do not own the land they cultivate as they do not have equal inheritance rights or equal rights to property.

### Our demands

1. Recognize the role of women as farmers and measure the financial contribution of women's agriculture to the GDP.
2. Ensure womens access to marketing of agricultural products.
3. Allocate 'Krishi Cards' for women farmers.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.fao.org/3/am307e/am307e00.pdf>

4. Create opportunities for training in modern agricultural technology for women farmers and take initiatives to develop agricultural machinery suitable for women.
5. Ensure the availability of agricultural and other loans, the use of appropriate technology, dignity and financial inclusion in light of the section 14 of the CEDAW.
6. Recognize the contribution of women in water management in the home and agriculture sector with irrigation to prevent water deficiencies due to climate change.
7. Strengthen organizational reforms to encourage women in agro-based activities.

## 9. Care Work and Welfare

### Background

Care is essential for human wellbeing and for economic development. Across all societies, women bear greater responsibility for unpaid care than men (Esplen, 2009). Prevailing gender norms mean that women and girls undertake the bulk of unpaid care work such as looking after and educating children, looking after older family members, caring for the sick, preparing food, cleaning, and collecting water and fuel.

In research conducted by BIGD, women were found to put in 6-7 hours of work into care work a day compared to 1 hour by men. Men were found to spend 8-9 hours in productive work compared to 5 hours by women. But men spent equal time on sleep and 2 hours more on leisure than women. Hence women spend on average two hours more on work (care plus productive work) than men<sup>3</sup>.

In time-use research conducted by BBS, it was found that while rural women among the employed 15+ population spend 3.5 hours more in paid work than the total (employed and unemployed) 15+ population, they spend only 2.1 hours less in household work and also have less leisure time. This pattern is the same but more pronounced among urban women. This reveals the increased work burden on women who are employed, which some call “double burden”. Furthermore, women who are employed spent more time on work (paid + household) than men. The large amounts of time spent by women and girls on unpaid care means that their participation in civil, economic and social spheres, and in public life is restricted.

Another challenge is the increasing life expectancy and its effects on women and men and on our society. An important aspect is that women live longer under worse living conditions than men. It is obvious that the care of patients with incurable age-related diseases will require major efforts on the part of the state and local authorities but also on the part of families where it is often women who bear the burden.

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<sup>3</sup> Mahmud, S and Mustafa, S. (2015) “Pattern of time use of adult women and men in rural North Bangladesh in 2013-2014”. Report prepared for ActionAid Bangladesh, Centre for Gender and Social Transformation (CGST), BIGD, BRAC University, Jan 31, 2015

## Our demands

1. The role of women and girls in the provision of unpaid care be recognized and unpaid care work be valued
2. The value of unpaid care-work be recognized by integrating it into GDP satellite accounts.
3. The drudgery of unpaid care work be reduced by providing supporting services such as day care centres, running water, gas for cooking and use of technology (e.g. for preserving food);
4. Unpaid care work be redistributed from women to men, and from the family to communities and the state
5. Initiatives needs to be taken to adopt technology for health improvement of women. In this case, make special arrangements for the vulnerable population so that they can live with dignity.

## 10. Safe migration for women

### Background

According to the Bangladesh Bureau of Manpower and Employment, more than 15.2 million Bangladeshi workers have migrated to 168 countries around the world. From 1991 May to 2023 the number of migrant women workers was 1,142,335. This number is constantly increasing but the entire process of migration is not seen as safe for women. The Bangladeshi women workers' job market is principally Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Jordan, Oman, Qatar and United Arab Emirates. Generally, there are opportunities to work in the Middle East as a domestic worker. Besides, women are also working in different countries in the garments industry.

Lack of skills, complications in processing passports and visas and dependency on brokers for whole process of migration makes the migration process complex. Female immigrant workers are often victims of violence including physical and mental torture and sexual abuse. Some become victims of unwanted pregnancy and are forced to return home. As soon as Bangladeshi workers arrive in the Middle East and Malaysia, their passports and related papers are taken away by the concerned authorities. Hence, they do not have any valid document in hand for free movement. Women workers employed as domestic workers are often subjected to physical abuse.

The number of Bangladeshi women migrants increased in 2019 (104,786). In 2020 and 2021 because of COVID -19 the numbers went down (in 2020 is was 21, 934 and in 2021 is was 80, 143). However, in 2022 the number increased (105, 466). During the COVID pandemic workplace violence, wage theft, excessive working hours, lack of health care, not being able

to keep in touch with the family, not being allowed to go home or being dismissed without reason were some of the problems faced by migrant women. Women are going abroad as domestic workers and risks are greater in this profession.

## **Our demands**

### **Migration procedures**

1. Recruiting and sending of workers overseas after simplifying and updating the relevant laws and enforcing the legal processes.
2. The government should enter into bilateral agreements to ensure the safety and security of the Bangladeshi workers, so that the issues of salaries, allowances, safe working environment, residence, hours of work, weekly leave and Bangladesh government's supervision rights, etc. are addressed.
3. Provide appropriate training to women workers, improving their skills and increasing their employment opportunities, finding new labour markets and dignified workplace.
4. Exemption of fees and other charges so that the cost of emigration of women migrant workers will be 'Zero'. These costs are to be paid or reimbursed by the employer.
5. A copy of the agreements signed between the employee and the employer has to be available with the migrant worker.

### **During the migration period**

6. Ensure Post Arrival Orientation for the migrant women workers after reaching the destination country.
7. Ensure safe housing for women workers, monitor the contract with the government and the owner of the concerned country.
8. Ensure all rights of Bangladesh's workers according to the labour laws of the destination country.
9. Ensure all rights including education, health, and education of children of the women migrant workers left in the country.
10. Monitoring by the Government of Bangladesh for ensuring all liability including increase of manpower (labour attachment) in the embassy.

### **Returning workers**

11. List returnee immigrants and arrange their employment according to their level of skills. Ensure appropriate environment for the safe investment of their remittance.

12. Provide rehabilitation including counseling services, engaging them with income generating activities, providing health care services to the returnees who are victims of torture so that they could be reintegrated in their families and society for a dignified life.
13. The responsibility of women migrant who have been raped and the children born out of rape has to be taken by the government. The citizenship of such children also has to be ensured by our government.
14. Provide legal assistance to the victims of abuse and provide legal assistance as required, to ensure the wages paid.
15. Arrangement has to be made for the payment of women's money cheated by the broker and to bring the brokers under the jurisdiction of law.

## **11. Effects of Environment and Climate Change**

### **Background**

Environmental disasters affect both men and women. Because women are more vulnerable the impact of any disaster is always greater on women. Access to natural resources is an important issue in the socio-economic context of Bangladesh. As the economy of this country is mainly agriculture based, so a large number of women and men are still dependent on natural resources for livelihood. When water bodies are polluted by environmental degradation, excessive pressure of collecting drinking water falls on women because of their domestic roles. If wasteland or common land is no longer available, it becomes harder for poor women to gather food. Women are affected when the air becomes contaminated, trees do not bear fruit or land becomes salinated through shrimp culture and it is not possible to have poultry or cultivate fish for family consumption.

Opportunities to move to alternative economic activities are more limited for women. When a natural disaster strikes, women's social protection forces are broken down. She loses not only access to natural resources, but also loses family bindings. So, it is possible to have a long-term harmful impact of climate change on women's lives and livelihoods.

### **Our demands**

1. Recognize the importance of women's traditional agricultural livelihood activities and take measures to safeguard these.
2. Increase access to natural resources and give priority to women in distribution of resources to create livelihood opportunities.
3. Introduce special protection for women in disaster prone areas.

4. Encourage women's participation in the development and implementation of development projects with environmental implications and give priority to their views.

## C. Society

### 12. Women and culture

#### Background

From the family to society and the nation, the condition and status of women are influenced by culture. Differences in space and time create culturally differences, and lead to divisions and inequality among people living in the same cultural circle. As a result of the social and cultural differences between men and women, women have been kept back in education, work and development since ancient times. Social and cultural systems on one hand empowered men and on the other hand made women powerless.

Women's deprivation is justified as cultural. For example, a girl is influenced by her childhood and the views of her family and environment. She views men as strong, decision-makers with authority. On the other hand, she views woman as weak, homebound and subordinate. Traditional cultural concepts teach women is to be subservient. Her human and civil rights revolve around father and husband. The husband has the sole rights over her body and mind and this is acknowledged by the family and society. So, her role in the family is entirely dependent on husband or father. Raising and rearing of a child is considered to be the only valuable role in a woman's life.

The society wants to see women as motherly, loving, free from all desires, greed and jealousy. Women are perceived as goddesses who sacrifice their dreams and hopes for their children, husband and family. On the other hand, the woman who lives outside the traditional norms, is considered to be a prostitute. This type of woman is considered to be untouchable. Society divides women into either Goddesses or as Prostitutes.

Using the excuse of religion women are subjected to injustice in the family and society. Religion is used as a tool to control women. Discrimination against women has been strengthened at the state level due to religious laws. It is to be noted that religion-based laws are not only increasing the gap between men and women but also increasing communal conflict between different groups.

However, culture can also be a powerful means of social change.

#### Our demands

1. Promote alternative cultural expressions which challenge stereotypical gender norms



2. Enable women to access means of expression (such as writing, visual media, songs, poetry and films) to promote their own visions of culture and promote new gender norms
3. Set up safe spaces where women and men can innovate cultural forms and expressions.
4. Provide resources for women artists and cultural activists.
5. Promote exposure to cultural practices of other regions and countries so that the relativity of our cultural practices can be realized.

### **13. Media and new communication technologies**

#### **Background:**

The number of women working in media is very low. A study found that only 10% of women work in 10 newspapers. There are slightly more women in electronic media. Media is basically male dominated.

Women are far behind in the use of new information and communication technologies. Women are less confident and less interested in the use of technology. New technologies have many advantages as well as disadvantages. Sexual harassment of women and cybercrime is increasing due to the misuse of technology. Along with increasing participation of women in the workplace and greater mobility of women the threat of violence on women in the social media or on the internet is increasing.

#### **Our demands**

1. Encourage new innovation in technology and promote promotion of women in educational with special emphasis on STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) education.
2. Create women friendly media organizations and address women's safety in the workplace.
3. Highlight positive images of women through media.
4. Prevent abuse of technology.
5. Encourage innovation in technology involving women.
6. Provide technical equipment such as computers laptops in education institutions
7. Develop teachers' skills in technology and involve women in this process.
8. Enhancing opportunities for women to participate in technology-based workplaces and provide training for outsourcing work for women.
9. Increasing awareness of the safe Internet access of women.
10. Media should not be restricted with the excuse of violation of the rights of a religious, ethnic or any particular group.

11. Amendment of Ensure proposed Cyber Security Act 2023 is conforms to human rights standards
12. Formation of sexual harassment committees in the media sector.
13. Enable women's participation in the media by ensuring maternity leave and daycare facilities for infants and children.

#### **14. Inclusion of gender equality in the mainstream development**

##### **Background**

Inclusion in gender equality in development activities or gender mainstreaming is a strategy for establishing equal rights of women. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Vienna Declaration, Child Rights Convention, CEDAW and other international treaties gave due importance to the equal distribution of resources among men, women and third gender. [MS1] Gender mainstreaming takes into account the condition and position of all sexes in each and every stage of action, such as legislation, policy and program planning and monitoring and evaluation of these implementation.

All policies, laws and programs that affect the lives of the people should be reviewed for their implications for all genders. This strategy seeks to ensure that all policies and programs address the interests and needs of women, men and third gender and benefits are equally distributed among all. Above all this strategy seeks to minimize the differences between of wealth and earning opportunities between women, men and third gender.

This required political will and gender equality policies. In the 8th Five Year Plan of Bangladesh, gender equality has been addressed in the sectoral chapters as well as in a separate chapter. But negative attitude of the implementers, inadequate budget allocation and lack of knowledge are affecting successful implementation.

##### **Our demands**

1. In order to carry out gender mainstreaming gender analysis skills needs to be developed in sectors and within organizations so that the status and position of women in each sector and organization can be understood and measures identified to promote equality. Increase the knowledge and awareness of the concerned people on the issues.
2. All institutions, policies, legislations and programmes should respond to the differential needs and interests of women, men and third gender.
3. Take special measures to address inequalities and discrimination for the women and third gender, listen to them. Evaluate the process of inclusion of gender equality policy in each organization.
4. Review institutional policies and measures to address gender equality. Service providing agencies should review and evaluate their processes and procedures to

understand whether they are able to address the differential needs and interests of all genders.

5. Increase conceptual understanding of gender equality.
6. To adopt positive measures for attaining gender equality in accordance with Section 5 of the Sustainable Development Targets and to allocate necessary budget for this.

## **D. The Individual Woman**

### **15. Violence free life for women**

#### **Background**

Violence against women is not only a matter of physical aggression, it is an age-old strategy to dominate the body and soul of women. The prevalence and forms of violence on women is alarming and proves the insecurity of women's lives and being. Violence against women is increasingly visible and its dimensions, types and patterns are worsening. Many women are being subjected to hidden abuse and violence and live in extreme insecurity in the family and workplace. As a result, their development and well being are affected. No woman irrespective of class, age, ethnicity or sexual orientation is free from the threat of violence at home, in educational institutions, playgrounds, markets, transport and workplaces. The victims of rape are blamed by society for what happened to them. To date, the matter of physical or psychological harm caused by the mass rapes in 1971 gets less attention than that of the so-called "loss of her honour".

According to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 2015, 87 percent of women are victims of torture and violence, and many of them are victims of sexual abuse by husbands. Forced sexual intercourse within the marital relationship is not recognized as a criminal offense. Domestic violence is still seen as a private family matter although an Act has been approved for its prevention and protection in 2010.

Though new laws were enacted to curb violence and sexual harassment against women, it is mainly derived from the Penal Code of 1860 and the Criminal Procedure Act 1898 except for some additions to the definition of crime and to the implementation process of the law. The law has been perceived as positive by a section of people for its provisions such as restrictions in getting bail, completing investigating within a given time provision for life-term imprisonment and death penalty. However, the law is largely abused. It has reduced the capacity of the Judge to apply his/her judgment. As a result, rapid judgments are made either with punishment or acquitting the alleged perpetrator unconditionally. Hence justice is not being served and women are ultimately deprived from the potential benefits of the law.

### **Our demands:**

1. Amend the current laws relating to rape, dowry, sexual assault and molestation etc., to promote women's interests and equal rights.
2. Consider 'forcible sexual intercourse in marital relations' as rape and a criminal offence.
3. Public, private organizations and media to jointly undertake long-term public awareness programs related to violence. This would include implementing a comprehensive campaign on the "Domestic Violence Prevention and Protection Act 2010"
4. Reorganization and reconstruction of the judicial system in the light of gender equality and extinction of law like testimony law those demean women. Ensure respectable language and behavior towards the victims of torture at all levels of the trial process.
5. Facilitate women's access to criminal justice system through removing biases such as extravagant costs, corruption and influence.
6. Allocate specific resources in the national budget to prevent violence.
7. Include relevant topics to create awareness of dignity and respect for all human beings through school textbooks from the primary to higher levels.
8. Establish strong monitoring system by the Human Rights Commission, Ministry of Home Affairs, Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, to properly file cases, investigations and settlement cases of violence against women.
9. Activate and make effective the Committees to Prevent Violence against women at union, upazila, district and national level and ensure their accountability.
10. Introduce uniform family code or common family law to ensure gender equality in matters related to family law.
11. Prohibit the use of language which are disrespectful towards women such as references to loss of chastity and honour in the case of those who suffered mass rape during 1971, in all official documents, writings and speeches.
12. Greater dissemination of hotline numbers and increase capacity of shelter homes for victims of torture.

## **16. Women's Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights**

### **Background**

Women's health suffers due to negligence by women themselves and by their families, lack of awareness and the conservative attitudes of the society. Women's bodies are used to

justify and create disparity, deprivation and discrimination against women. Society's views of the reproductive power of women, reproductive organs and sexuality are negative. Social values and views about sexual organs are extremely negative. Above all, women's reproductive capacity is not considered as a strength or a merit but is rather undermined and suppressed. Women's bodily rights are fundamental rights of a woman. Hence the slogan "My body - my right".

Women's sound health is interrelated with her rights of survival. We have to see women's health in terms of her life-cycle from an infant to an elderly woman. The complications after childbirth put women at risk. The current rate of maternal mortality has to be understood as a violation of a woman's right to life as in most cases these deaths are preventable. It is a woman's right to choose safe, effective, accessible and affordable birth control methods. It is fundamental to maintain the continuity of health services throughout a woman's lifecycle: during pre-pregnancy, pregnancy and women's post-delivery times. Women need to receive health care with respect, dignity and fairness.

There is a lack of accountability in the health system for reducing maternal deaths during childbirth and ensuring safe birth and maternal health while ensuring women's health and reproductive rights.

Programmes adopted at the International Conference on 'Population and Development' held in Cairo in 1994, the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995 considered health as an important right of women. Later, 'Sexual and reproductive health and rights' were recognized in the overall discourse of health of women. In the last 25 years, there has been progress in the protection of maternal and child health, and various policies have been endorsed based on sexual and reproductive health issues. Yet the laws, policies and programs related to women's health in Bangladesh are not equal to international human rights standards. 40 Ministries have started producing gender budgets. But provisions for separate budget for women's reproductive health services are yet to be introduced.

Lack of skilled workers in the government health care centers and the lack of doctors and their absenteeism; lack of improved communication system; lack of maintenance of equipment, complications of administration; insufficiency and misuse of medicines; not having a well-organized referral system, corruption and underutilization of health infrastructure are the principal factors of poor health service in the country which affect women more.

## **Our demands**

### Access to health care

1. Ensure continuous and quality services for the entire lifecycle of women including adolescents and their nutritional needs, elderly women and young children.

2. Increase awareness through using the media of issues of sexual and reproductive health and rights of women which are socially neglected.
3. Increase the accessibility of women to universal reproductive health services.
4. Increase necessary infrastructure, coordination systems, human resources, adequate health care and necessary budget for these.
5. Showing respectable and neutral behavior and providing confidentiality for women and adolescents and providing services with sincerity and patience.

#### Family Planning

1. Create opportunities to choose a safe, effective, accessible, and acceptable birth control method based on women's choices and needs.
2. Prevent unwanted pregnancy and risky miscarriages.

#### Maternal health

1. Ensure 24-hour emergency care services during pregnancy, maternity and postnatal periods. Ensure access to a coordinated activity of comprehensive health care services, and provide fast and efficient way to save the life of motherhood.
2. Ensure conditions for safe delivery at home if the mother herself wishes to give birth at home.
3. Strengthen the registration of vital information to ensure proper flow of information regarding maternal deaths. Clear instructions have to be given for proper recording of the information about the maternal death at home, in hospital and on the way to hospital.

#### Sexual health

4. Arrange age-appropriate organizational and informal training for developing positive and respectful attitudes and practices of sexuality and sexual relations.

### **17. Education and training**

#### **Background:**

The United Nations Child Rights Convention has given priority to the education of every child in each state. Girl Child education has been given priority also in the Beijing Action Plan and Bangladesh's National Women Development Policy. The Government of Bangladesh has formulated an Education Policy in 2010. Its main goal is to develop and practice human values. All children, including marginalized and poor, are to be covered by education. All children will get equal opportunities and get quality education.

In reality there are four streams of education: Bangla and English medium, madrasa and informal education and all children do not get equal opportunities. In the joint study of BBS,

Diykoina and UNICEF in 2017, it was found that in the primary level enrolment for girls (1-5) was 98% and for boys it was 97%. At secondary level (classes 6-10) enrolment of girls was 72% and boys was 62%. While almost all children graduate from 5th grade but in the secondary level of schooling, 54% girls passed the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) and 66% boys. The dropout rate is 45% for girls and 34% for boys.

At higher levels the main reasons for the decreasing the rate of girl education are poverty, insecurity, child marriage and parents' reluctance. Due to various steps taken by the government girls' access to education has increased slightly. But there remain questions about the quality of education and the divide between the quality of public and private education. The major reason for this is the poor management in education system. Besides, lack of teachers in the remote areas, lack of quality teachers, lack of adequate number of students in the class, lack of transparency and lack of monitoring are also responsible for this situation.

### **Our demands**

1. Through effective implementation of the 2009 Education Policy ensure minimum quality of education which will promote humane values and liberal thinking.
2. Provide technical, agricultural, household, life-based, work-oriented, multi-pronged education and special education for women.
3. Ensure equality and coordination between private and public education systems.
4. Ensure quality of education and minimum education standards for all children including children with disabilities.
5. Providing special education for children with special needs.

### **18. Women of various ethnicities**

#### **Background**

Apart from Bengalis in Bangladesh, there are more than 45 ethnic minority groups, such as Santal, Orao, Chakma, Marma, Mang, Tripura, Munda, etc. The population is about 3 million in number and nearly half of them are women. The people of this ethnic group have been advocating for their recognition by the state as 'Adivashi' according to the United Nations' definition of "Adivashi". However, Government of Bangladesh has termed this groups as ethnic minority group or *Upojati* under the constitution.

Although the issue of equal rights and equal status of women has been given due importance at family, social and state life, women in these communities are subjected to exploitation, discrimination, deprivation, negligence, persecution and violence. They are subject to constant violations of human rights and ethnic aggression, violence and discrimination, both in the hills and in the plain land. In the hills they are abused by the army. There is a conflict

between adivashis and settlers in the CHT. In the name of development of these people in different parts of the country, land grabbing, rape, false cases, militarization, eviction from land and forcible settlements of outsiders are common. They are marginalized socially as well.

### **Our demands**

1. Rapidly resolve the debate on minor ethnicities, minor ethnic groups, tribes, indigenous people.
2. Strengthen security to stop violence against women and children of ethnic communities and bring the perpetrators of violence to justice.
3. Take speedy and appropriate steps against torture on women and children of ethnic communities.
4. Confirmation of the representation of women of different ethnicities in parliament and local government system.
5. Ensure priority in all areas from education and employment.
6. Full implementation of the provisions under CHT Peace Agreement and implementation of the clauses of the Commission on Land Dispute in the CHT.
7. Involvement of women in the SDG implementation process and taking women's advice before adopting all types of policies.
8. Take action against rape, looting, torture in the name of protection by military rule.
9. Amendment and effective implementation CHT Peace Agreement through mutual discussions and negotiations.

## **19. Dalits and Harijan women**

### **Background**

According to Dalits and Harijans, the number of Dalit-Harijan people in Bangladesh is more than one crore (ten million). Their identity is based on their profession, religion and ethnicity such as Palaki puller, washer folk, Doom (those who deal with dead bodies), fishermen, Kapali, Kaura, Namasudra, Rishi, Nupita, Sanatkarmi etc. They are considered untouchable by society. They are deprived of social, economic, employment opportunities and rights. Historically, Dalit people were confined to their specific profession and isolated from mainstream society.

The level of discrimination and oppression of Dalit people is more prominent for women and girls. They are oppressed firstly as Dalits and secondly within their society as women. A study found that in the case of education, Dalit people, especially girls, are victims of discrimination. Dalit children at school have to sit in the back of the class at all times. They are discriminated



against during school admission. They are forced to clean the toilets at the schools. They get less education on one hand, and on the other hand they face discriminatory behavior which causes them to dropout of school.

Dalit women of some communities are engaged in informal jobs and also face wage discrimination. Girls are eager to work in the garment factories but cannot because their family members, especially husbands, normally do not permit it. In most cases women are involved in household chores except for Harijan.

Rates of girl's early marriage in Dalit and Harijan society are very high and the practice of dowry is prevalent. In the case of Harijans women are not allowed to be present in arbitrations and the arbitrator's decision has to be accepted. Many women suffer from various kinds of violence by their husbands and their families and there is no provision for divorce. Most of the women have no knowledge about laws for their protection and have limited access to justice.

#### **Our demands**

1. Abolition of discriminatory laws and enactment of the Anti Discrimination Act.
2. Implementation of 'quotas' in the educational institution and in the workplace.
3. Develop housing schemes for Dalits and Harijans, provide loans on simple terms and ensuring permanent settlement in the name of both men and women living in the houses under the scheme.
4. Bring Dalit and Harijan children to mainstream education and create opportunities for higher education and work oriented education.
5. Set up day care center for the children of Dalit and Harijan parents by Government and private initiatives.
6. Stop harassment on the Dalits and the Harijan people using political power.
7. Stop grabbing of land of the Dalits and Harijans and ensure the responsibility of the concerned law enforcement agencies and administration in such cases.
8. Include Dalit women under social security coverage of government and provide necessary allowances such as old age allowances
9. Ensure the employment of the Dalits and Harijans in the Union Parishad, Municipalities and the City Corporations following the Labor Act.
10. Special efforts have been taken by the local government, administration to prevent child marriage.
11. Ensuring the security of the people of this community, especially women, during and after the election.

12. Ensure equal rights of women of this community in assets and property.
13. Keep special allocation in the national budget for the construction of hostels to facilitate their education and employment.
14. Take effective steps to stop violence against women of Dalits and Harijans in the streets, in the workplace, in the family.

## 20. Sex workers

### Background

Currently there are nine brothels in the country. In addition, there are a large number of floating sex workers. Since 1991 sex workers have been involved in the women's movement when their involvement started after the eviction of the brothels. In 1997 the century old Kandupatti brothel of Dhaka Tanbazar and in 1999 the Nimtoli brothel of Naranganj were evicted. At that time an alliance, "Shonghoti" meaning "solidarity", was formed with 86 organizations who were united in their demand for the protection of human rights of sex workers. Politicians and religious leaders continue to threaten eviction of sex workers and eradication of sex work considering sex work to be immoral act.

There are also differences of views among women activists on sex work. Some are of the view that sex work should be recognized as an occupation, while others are of the view that sex work is morally unacceptable and should never be considered a profession. At the height of the eviction drives, a writ was filed in the High Court in 1999 in which a rule was issued recognizing sex workers as professionals and the Government was directed to ensure the human rights of sex workers.

### Our demands

1. Use of mother's name in birth registration of sex worker's child.
2. Ensure all types of services including healthcare for sex workers.
3. Ensure safety and security of sex workers, include their right to be safe in their place of residence.
4. Arrange rehabilitate of sex workers according to their own choice.
5. Ensure that the children of sex workers have access to mainstream educational institutions.

## 21. Transgender and sexual preferences and gender-based contacts [MS2]

### The background

Like other countries of the world, there are Hijra and people with different sexual identities in Bangladesh who are recognized as third gender. Bangladeshi Hijra people are deprived of all kinds of rights as citizens and as a result, they were lagging behind in all aspects of life.

Although the Hijra community was recognized by a Gazette notification in 2013 as Third Gender the definition was not clear. The number of Hijra population in Bangladesh is still under debate. They live in groups in different parts of the country including the capital. They generally cannot be involved in any institutional education. Due to recent official recognition, they know that the opportunity to have national identity cards, voting rights, right to be election candidates, but their families and society at large still do not accept them. They are deprived of the right to be buried according to their religious beliefs.

There are also people of different sexual orientation in the country. Society and law do not recognize their sexual preferences. Hence this population is hidden. According to the Bangladesh Penal Code, this matter is unnatural and punishable. However according to various international human rights definitions a person should have the right to choose their sexual identity.

Experiences from other countries around the world have shown that it is more rewarding if the movement of Hijra or third gender is not isolated, rather it is integrated with the women's emancipation movement.

#### **Our demands**

1. Ensure all rights of Hijra population including identification under the name of parents and family. Ensure their rights of succession.
2. Provide proper employment to all Hijra population for increasing their skills through specialized training and arranging appropriate employment.
3. Create opportunities for enrolment in education through providing special scholarships and incentives.
4. Recognize the individual's right to choose sexual identity and relations. Sexual relations and identity are personal matters
5. Repeal Section 377 of the Penal Code which criminalises homosexuality

## **22. Women with disabilities**

### **Background**

Disabled women are an important part of the women's rights movement. In Bangladesh, especially in rural areas, an estimated 12 million disabled women live with different types of risks. The likelihood of the discrimination and deprivation of women with disabilities in comparison to men and able-bodied women is relatively high. Only 20 percent of disabled people are getting rehabilitation opportunities. Resource allocation for coping with disability is grossly inadequate.

A study done in the Asia-Pacific region found that 80 percent of the disabled women do not have the freedom to live independently. Disabled women, as all other women, are victims of various rights deprivation. They are socially shunned and are dependent on others. While laws may not discriminate against women with disabilities, they are discriminated against in different ways by family, society and the state. While there are some laws and policies in favour of people with disability but these are not enforced.

### Our demands

1. Adoption of measures provided for in development plans and programs to empower women with disabilities including women with disabilities living in rural areas or women with disabilities of ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities.
2. Adoption of specific measures by the government to address Violence against Women with Disabilities.
3. Special interventions are needed to incorporate accessibility standard, universal design and reasonable accommodation for Persons with Disabilities in public and private infrastructures and transportation in line with CRPD.
4. Take initiatives for making awareness of judges, lawyers, court personnel and law enforcement personnel, police and other public servants regarding the rights to access to justice for persons with disabilities specially girls and women with disabilities survivors.
5. Allocation of budget for persons with disabilities in development and mainstream budgets, to exercise the equal citizen rights, specially in the areas of education, employment, health care, transport and public life enjoyment through the provision of individualized support and reasonable accommodation to girl students with disabilities in accordance with CRPD.
6. Provide for resource teachers and learning materials for inclusive education of girls and women with disabilities up to university level.
7. Organizations of Persons with Disabilities must undertake regular monitoring to incorporate accessibility standard and universal design for Persons with Disabilities in all public and private institutions
8. State party to ensuring appropriate accommodation is available for women with disabilities, especially those with sensory, psychosocial or intellectual disabilities, in criminal, civil and administrative proceedings.
9. Measures to ensure accessible health care to women with disabilities including in relation to sexual and reproductive health.
10. Training for health-care professionals about the rights of persons with disabilities should be organized and thus negative attitude about disability would be eliminated.

11. Special provisions for ensuring accessibility of women with disabilities in all public service.
12. All types of civil and political rights along with voting rights (accessible vote center, ballot paper and AVM system) of women with disabilities must be ensured.
13. Segregated data of women with disabilities should be available.
14. Participation of women with disabilities in all activities of the society including family formation, cultural and recreational activities must be ensured. Government support must address the strengthening of capacity of organizations of girls and women with disabilities.
15. Ensure that the rights mentioned in the 'Rights and Protection of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2013' are ensured.

### **Peace and Security:**

#### **Background:**

Peace and security are global issues that are also relevant for Bangladesh. In post-independence Bangladesh, various forms of violence and intolerance are prevalent, especially in the hill regions. Despite the signing of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Accord on December 2, 1997, the presence of security forces, conflicts between Bengalis and hill people, and armed clashes continue to pose risks in this region.

During general elections, election periods, and subsequent times, various forms of persecution and violence occur against those who are considered weak, numerically inferior, or marginalized based on religion, language, ideology, ethnicity, or community. Attacks such as assault, looting, destruction of homes, forced occupation of land and property, rape, and even killings occur frequently. Even in local and national student union elections, incidents of violence are prevalent.

The struggle for power, oppression, greed, political violence, religious intolerance, the ineffectiveness of the police and administration, the decline of the rule of law, judicial inefficiency, etc are among the main reasons for the disruption of "peace and security."

#### **Our demands:**

1. Establishing equal respect for everyone regardless of religion, caste, race, or language, with the slogan "One country, one identity."

2. Taking effective initiatives to eliminate intolerance in society, such as observing a national "Day of Harmony" and organizing various programs.
3. Reviewing and amending the constitution and relevant laws and implementing them effectively.
4. Revising and implementing the Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Accord for the greater good of the people.
5. Not giving priority to any particular religion in the constitution.

**E. The role of the women's movement in the implementation of the Charter.**

The demand for equality between women and men has been articulated in numerous movements and struggles. Major improvements have come about in the condition of women. However, the subordinate position of women has been more resistant to change. The women's movement has to gain greater voice in order to bring about greater change towards gender equality. Some of the priority areas for action are the following:

1. Awareness creation on the condition and position of women through cultural programs.
2. Capacity development of women through organisation building.
3. Promotion of special measures for women living in extremely marginalized situations.
4. Advocacy for a life with dignity and access to social protection as needed.
5. Expansion of influence by women's rights activists engaged in different professions and/or are working as experts in different sectors by active promotion of women's rights and gender equality in their own workplaces.
6. Promotion of voluntarism, especially among the youth.
7. Creative use of social media to promote and advance the cause of emancipation, equality and justice.
8. Expansion of the reach and membership of the women's movement.
9. Adoption of the equality agenda by other social groups and movements through purposive interaction and participation.



### Naripokkho

#### Drum Beats In The Sky: Naripokkho's Dream and Journey of 35 Years

12-13- October 2018

SI No	Name of Organisation
1	Adhikar Mohila Unnoyon Sangstha
2	Adorsho Dustho Mohila Unnoyon Sangstha
3	Agrajatra MUS
4	Aknkha Mohila Unnoyon Sangstha
5	Amader Uddog
6	Anonna Kollayan Sangstha
7	ASED
8	ASF

9	ASS
10	Badhan Mohila Unnoyon Sangstha
11	Baduachar Satadal Samaj Kollayan Sangstha
12	Banani Mohila Unnoyon Sangstha
13	Banchar Asha
14	Bandhan Society
15	Bangla Academy
16	Bangladesh Economic Somity
17	Bangladesh Equality Society
18	Bangladesh Mohila Unnoyon Sangstha
19	Bangladesh Press
20	BAPSA - UBR-2
21	Bashbari Mohila Unnoyon Sangstha
22	Bikalpa Mohila O Shishu Unnoyon Sangstha
23	Bills
24	Bimail Mohila Somity
25	BIVPS
26	BNPS
27	Bondhon Society, Kishorgonj
28	Bonolata Nari Songho
29	Bowshi
30	Britter Baire Mohila o Shishu Unnoyon Sangstha
31	Chandpur Unnoyon Somity
32	Chapuir Mohila Unnoyon Somity
33	Choiderbala Mohila Kollayan Somity
34	Choyghoria Prottasa Mohila Sangstha
35	Chupria Mohila Sangstha
36	CIDA
37	Comilla Mohila Kollayan Sangstha
38	CYDO
39	DESC
40	Development Society (DS)
41	Dhaka Tribune
42	Dhaka University
43	Disk, Jhalokathi
44	District Women Affairs Officer (Retired)
45	Doorbar
46	DORP
47	DSK
48	Ekota Mohila Samaj Unnoyon Sangstha



49	Female Income Research Centre
50	FIDA
51	FPAB
52	Golabari Nari Kollayan Sangstha
53	Gonoshasthya Nagar Hospital
54	Gonoshayastha Kendro
55	Grambikash Sohayata Sangstha
56	Hasna Hena Mohila Somity
57	Himaonti - Rangamati
58	Hridoy Mohila Unnoyon Sangstha
59	Institute for Social Advancement
60	Jago Nari
61	Joyoti Society-Jessore
62	Kabidang Khagrachori
63	KCT Camp
64	Kormonir Samajik Mohila Unnoyon Sangstha
65	Ladies Club - Jamalpur
66	Mahigonj Chalkbazar Mohila Kollayan Somity
67	Manot Progoti Songho
68	Mata Muhori Mohila Somity
69	Mela SamajKollayan Sangstha
70	Mini Nari Kollayan Somity
71	Mohila O Shishu Odhikar Unnoyon Sangstha
72	Monoshika
73	Mouchak Mohila Samajkollan Sangstha
74	Muktagacha Bohumukhi Samaj Kollayan Mohila Somity
75	MUS - Khulna
76	Nagorik Uddog
77	Naripokkho
78	NARIPOKKHO X Staff
79	NDP
80	Nilambor Mohila Sangstha
81	NSS
82	NVNL Bugra
83	PARDO
84	Paribar Kallayan Kendra
85	Pathikrith Foundation
86	PDO
87	Poribar Kollayan Kendra
88	Pouro Mohila Samaj Unnoyon Somity

89	Prapti Nari O Shishu Sangstha
90	Probhati Mohila Unnoyon Sangstha
91	Prochesta Nari Unnoyon Mela
92	Protibha Bikash Mohila Sangstha
93	PSTC -UBR
94	Purto Khabaspur Mohila Unnoyon Sangho
95	PWD
96	Rangamati General Hospital
97	RDRS
98	RHSTEP (RHRN)
99	RHSTEP-UBR
100	Rover Girl Guide
101	RPDO
102	Rupaion Mohila Unnoyon Sangstha
103	Saj Jessore
104	Samota Nari Unnoyon Sangstha
105	Sancita Mohila Unnoyon Sangstha
106	Sankalpa Trust
107	Sarkarpara Mohila Somity
108	Satabdi Samaj Kollayan Sangstha
109	Satota Nari Jagoroni Somity
110	SBMK
111	SDA
112	Shadhin Mohila Unnoyon Sangstha
113	Shishuder Jonno Amra
114	SNUS
115	Sohardo Nari Kollayan Foundation
116	South East University
117	Sporsho, Dhaka
118	Srijon Mohila Sangstha
119	Srom Unnoyon Sangstha
120	Surjodoy Mohila Somity
121	SUVO, Barisal
122	SYDO - Jhalokathi
123	Tara Mohila O Shishu Unnoyon Sangstha
124	Taranga Mohila Kollayan Sangstha
125	The Hunger Project
126	TSDS-Rajshahi
127	Uddipan Mohila Kollayan Sangstha
128	Unnayan Sangha - US

129	Unnoto Poribar Gothon Mohila Sangstha
130	Unnoyon Sangstha, Jamalpur
131	UPGMS
132	USS
133	Uttor Shimraikandi Dustho Mohila Kollayan Somity
134	VCCF Bangladesh
135	WBB Trust
136	WDDF
137	Welfare Efforts -Jhinaidha
138	WFP
139	Women and Gender Studies, Dhaka University
140	Youth Power & Connectivity
141	YPC

### Participant List 23 March Workshop

Sl. No	Organisation Name
1	Acid Survivors Foundation
2	Ain Sahish Kendhro (ASK)
3	Awaj Foundation
4	Bandhu Social Welfare Society (BSWS)
5	Bangladesh Mohila Parishod
6	Bangladeshi Adibashi Womens Network
7	Blast
8	Breaking the Silence
9	Darus Salam
10	Fair Work Foundation
11	Hijra shongho
12	Innovision Consulting Ltd.
13	Kabidhang Modupur Khagrachori
14	Kalshi, Mirpur
15	Kappang Foundation
16	Kormojibi Nari
17	Mukti Nari O Shihu Unnoyan Shasta
18	Nari Odikar Nirapottha Nishchitkoron
19	Naripokkho

20	Protibondhi Nari Unnoyan Foundation
21	PWD, Shirajgong
22	Satabdi Shomaj Kallayn Shasta
23	Sbovojar Ovijan
24	Sex Worker Network, Dhaka
25	Shochaton Shomaj sheba
26	Social Uplifimint Volntary Organization (SUVO)
27	SPARC, Rangamati
28	Welfare Efforts (WE)
29	Women with Disabilities Development Fundation (WDDF)
30	WARBE Development Foundation

#### **Participent List 10 April Workshop**

<b>SI</b>	<b>Organisaton &amp; Adress</b>
1.	Aronnok Nattodor
2.	Thotkata Naribadi Blog
3.	Jugontor
4.	Self emplyment
5.	Masranga tv
6.	Nagoric tv