

Baseline Study for
Empowering left behind minority communities to effectively participate in the
development process of Bangladesh' project

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It has been a pleasure to conduct the baseline survey and public perception survey during June, 2021 for the project of “Empowering left behind minority communities to effectively participate in the development process of Bangladesh.” The team has worked with utmost sincerely and dedication and hopefully the work will reflect the same. There are several parties that we express gratitude towards for their gracious support. Firstly, we would like to thank Christian Aid for trusting us with the activity. We thank the Christian Aid project team including MEAL for their continuous guidance throughout the work. We also thank each of the partner organizations of the project for their field level, training and knowledge related, and overall collaborative support. We express special gratitude for the field level support we received from Bandhu, Nagorik Uddyog, Social Welfare Society and WAVE Foundation which has truly enhanced the experience of our staff and the quality of the work itself. We would like to thank the government official interviewees for the study who have kindly given us the time to speak about the policies and issues relevant to the target groups. Additionally, we would also like to thank the consortium organizations for assisting with arranging the interviews. We would also like to thank the household respondents, community people, people living in the program area, as well as all field investigators and supervisors. Without their cooperation this study would not have been possible.

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List of Acronym

Bandhu	Bandhu Social Welfare Society
BELA	Bangladesh Environment Lawyer's Association
BGMEA	Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association
BLAST	Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust
CBOs	Community Based Organizations
CHTs	Chittagong Hill Tracts
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
DSS	Department of Social Services
DSW	Department of Social Welfare
FGD	Focused Group Discussion
FY	Fiscal Year
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
KAP	Knowledge, Attitude and Practice
KII	Key Informant Interviews
LNOB	Leave No One Behind
MEL	Monitoring Evaluation and Learning
MOSW	Ministry of Social Welfare
NHRC	National Human Rights Commission of Bangladesh
NSPS	Bangladesh National Social Protection Strategy
NU	Nagorik Uddyog
PWD	People With Disability
RDC	Research and Development Collective
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SEKN	Social Exclusion Knowledge Network
SME	Small and medium enterprises
UNO	Upazila Nirbahi Officer
WAVE	WAVE Foundation

Executive Summary

In line with the SDG goal of “Leave no one behind”, Christian Aid has launched a project named “Empowering left behind minority communities to effectively participate in the development process of Bangladesh”. The Action will be implemented by a consortium of partners Christian Aid (CA), Bandhu Social Welfare Society (Bandhu), Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST), Nagorik Uddyog (NU) and WAVE Foundation (WAVE), each with a strong track record of working with Dalit, Adivasi, Transgender and Hijra communities and local government administration (Zila, Upazila and Union Parishad), executive and judiciary bodies, law enforcement agencies in 9 districts of Khulna (Khulna, Sathkhira, Jessore), Rajshahi (Rajshahi and Nagaon), Sylhet (Sylhet, Hobiganj and Moulvibazar) and Dhaka (Dhaka City Corporation) divisions.

The overall objective of the project is to empower local minority rights Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and networks in Bangladesh to effectively engage with left behind communities and enable their participation in local governance and development process. The project plans to achieve the overall objective through three specific objectives includes to building capacity of related CSOs and enabling environment to promote socio-economic rights and structured participation of the communities, reducing discrimination and harmful practice against them and promote inclusive policy formation, implementation and governance accountability through the CSOs. To measure the results of the actions, the project set three overall objective level indicators and 10 specific level indicators. This baseline study was conducted to gather baseline value of the indicators and the perception survey was conducted to understand the public perception of minority rights.

For this study, a mixed method approach including both quantitative and qualitative was used. Data was collected from both primary and secondary sources. The baseline study was guided by a study matrix which used multi-stage cluster sampling method also considering the strata of targeted communities. Quantitative data were analyzed mainly using MS Excel. However, some statistical tests including chi square, fisher exact tests were conducted using SPSS.

The policy analysis revealed that Government of Bangladesh (GoB) cabinet recognized the Hijra community in 2013 and published gazette in 2014 stating the Hijra community as ‘Hijra lingo’ (‘Hijra sex’). This recognition expressly refers to ‘Hijra’. It does not deal with other communities and individuals who have non- normative gender and sexual expressions, and do not conform to the gender assigned to them at birth (transgender women and men), but do not belong to the Hijra culture. This reflects a prevailing confusion about the idea of ‘gender’, as the Hijra community is only one of many diverse communities, and being ‘Hijra’ is neither a biological characteristic nor a gender identity. However, in 2013, the Ministry of Social Welfare (MSW) introduced several livelihood schemes for the Hijra community under the social Safety Net program which excludes the transgender and intersex people who may not be part of the Hijra culture (BLAST, 2019), also some Hijra’s Kothi may not be part of the Hijra Culture. They also face extreme vulnerability in terms of social stigma, discrimination, and violence. There is no specific law of inheritance for gender-diverse people in Bangladesh and inheritance law in the country mainly is religion based which does not recognize transgender people in the question of inheritance.

There is controversy in different laws regarding recognition of Plain land ethnic minorities. While the state acquisition and tenancy act 1950 mentioned the Plain land ethnic minorities as “aboriginal casts”, amendment 15 mentioned them as “people with ethnic identity” which is in conflict with state acquisition and tenancy act 1950 definition. Government does not provide any social safety allowance

for them. Although according to the state acquisition and tenancy act 1950 'aboriginal' people cannot sell or mortgage their property which protects them from land grabbing by other, they can sell or mortgage with the permission of revenue office. This clause created an opportunity of land grabbing. Although there was 5% quota for indigenous people for employment but recent abolishment in 2018 stopped the opportunity.

Although in Bangladesh, National Social Protection Strategy (NSPS) expressed a commitment to end social and economic discrimination and in 2012 the Prime Minister issued a Directive calling for special measures to include Bede, Dalit, and Harijan communities in the Social Safety Net Programme, since the 2015-16 fiscal year Dalits are no longer specifically mentioned in the allocation, which has been allocated to minority groups in general. Often, due to social stigma people usually do not sell their property to people from the Dalit community. They have quotas for their traditional job but there is no quota for other general jobs.

GoB recognizes People With Disability (PWD) through Rights and Protection of Persons with Disabilities Act 2013. The government has increased the coverage and the rate of allowance of different social safety-net programs for PWD. Although there is no problem about inheritance for Muslim PWD, other major religions including buddha and Hindu law a person with a mental disability is not entitled to inheritance. According to the Rights and Protection of Persons with Disabilities Act 2013, A PWD is entitled to equal opportunity of employment as per their qualification.

The study found minority communities have very little influence (only 5%) in local development process as well as important decisions for the wellbeing of society. The percentage of people being part of any committee or body was found to be low regardless different regions. Overall, 39% minority people faced discrimination regarding access to agriculture, health, social protection & education on the ground of their ethnicity, physical ability, caste or gender identity all time and sometimes. Majority of transgender and hijra(76%) pointed that they faced Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) on the ground of their gender identity where 10% women said so. Only 17% of minority respondents reported that they can access to the basic services in all cases or many cases.

Majority of CSOs from Dhaka showed positive attitude towards getting support from local authorities and duty bearers. Mainly, CSOs get financial, capacity building and relief support (COVID, hygiene, or natural disaster related) from local authorities. About 71% CSOs are found to be member of development committee working with at least 20% dalit, plainland ethnic minority, hijra and PWD. CSOs reported broadcasting messages challenging stereotypes, prejudices and harmful practices against minority and PWD.

Creation of small business activities and alternative job opportunities for the minority communities can help to empower them. Emphasis should be given to provide adequate microcredit support in terms of designing special credit and finance schemes for minority communities. Bangladesh Relief and Rehabilitation Department should make a priority list of most vulnerable population and ensure relief for the listed people. CSOs, CBOs and Advocacy networks need intensive support for engaging further government officials in their minority right based activities. It is high time for Government to take necessary initiatives to enforce the proposed Anti-discrimination Act. Besides, Government attention should be drawn through the project emphasizing formation of a separate land commission for the plain land ethnic minority people and providing effective solutions to their dispute problem. Necessary steps should be taken to create education opportunity and improve accessing government jobs for dalit community. It is necessary to ensure appropriate training facilities of teachers, redesigning curriculum, suitable study materials and equipment etc to promote inclusive education for PWD. Government should assign responsibility of the well-being of the minority communities to the 13 standing committees in Union Parishad.

Background

Although the Constitution of Bangladesh declares the equal rights for all citizens and prohibits discrimination, the social and economic exclusion of minority communities is practiced over the entire country. Bangladesh consists majority Bengali ethnolinguistic people while it consists approximately 1.3 million ethnic minority community. Besides, the ethnic minority it consists other different left behind minority communities e.g., Transgender and Hijra (approximately 8000), Dalit, people with disability etc. These communities are historically prone to exclusion that make them extremely vulnerable. Amongst minority population, the Dalit, Ethnic minorities, People with disability and Transgender and Hijra communities are most marginalized. The discrimination persists on the above groups on access to education, healthcare, housing, employment, and legal support continues to be impeded, particularly for individuals with lower socio-economic backgrounds.

As reported by Ministry of Social Welfare (2021), there are about 5.64 million of Dalit and 11,000 Hijras in Bangladesh. According to the National Population Census 2011, the country's indigenous population is approximately 1,586,141, which represents 1.8% of the total population of the country. According to DIS (2020), 1,810,821 people in Bangladesh have a disability (1,108,859 men, 699,473 women, and 2,489 who are described as third gender). Historically, they communities are oppressed by dominant groups in society and discrimination against the minority community delineates its reflection in every sphere of socio-economic and political life concerning basic rights associated with citizenship such as property rights, inheritance, employment, education and health care, social security, justice, legal services, safe living spaces. In Bangladesh, they experience multiple forms of deprivation e.g., poverty, lower levels of educational attainment, labour market participation and community involvement and ultimately falls in a dismal condition characterized by denial of fundamental human rights with isolation and stress.

Bangladesh began the decentralization process with the 1997 Local Government Act, followed by the 1998 Upazila and 2000 Zilla Parishad Acts. These reforms have decentralized power and resources from the federal Government to division, district, sub-district (Upazilla), and union levels, and took the government "closer to the people". The reforms have transferred 17 subjects to Upazilla and Union Parishad Administration, but in reality, this did not materialize. Therefore, participation of community (especially minority people) in the standing committees (formed under the law) is quite minimal. Moreover, 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has a core commitment to leave no one behind (LNOB) from the process and benefits of development and social change. To achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) it is imperative to reach to every excluded community as well as individual to ensure their participation in the development process.

In line with the SDG goal of "LNOB", Christian Aid has launched a project named "Empowering left behind minority communities to effectively participate in the development process of Bangladesh". The Action will be implemented by a consortium of partners Christian Aid, Bandhu, BLAST, NU and WAVE, each with a strong track record of working with Dalit, Ethnic minority, Transgender and Hijra communities and local government (Zila, Upazila and Union Parishad), executive and judiciary bodies, law enforcement agencies. The Action is planned in a manner that will allow each organization to implement activities based on their specific areas of technical and managerial competencies. Development should to be viewed from a holistic perspective, keeping in mind the intersecting social,

political and structural factors. The project takes an initiative aiming at empowering these communities to improve their involvement in the development process of Bangladesh.

Overall Objective

The overall objective of the project is to empower local minority rights CSOs and networks in Bangladesh to effectively engage with left behind communities in local governance and development process.

The project plans to achieve the overall objective through following specific objectives:

Specific Objective 1:

To build the capacity of local and national minority rights CSOs and networks and ensure a conducive and enabling environment to promote socio-economic rights

Specific Objective 2:

To reduce discrimination, and harmful practices by increasing awareness on minority rights, capabilities and contributions in society; and challenging stereotypes prejudices, and harmful practices within and against minority

Specific objective 3:

To promote inclusive policy formulation, implementation and governance accountability by strengthening advocacy and lobbying influence of minority rights CSOs.

To measure the results of the actions the project set three overall objective level indicators and 10 specific level indicators.

Target Population and Geographical Coverage

The Action will focus on four most marginalized groups in the country, amongst others: 1. Dalit, 2. Transgender, 3. People with Disability and 4. Plain Land Ethnic Minorities (Adivasi). The target area for the proposed Action are nine districts in three divisions (Khulna, Rajshahi and Sylhet) and Dhaka city. **The** final beneficiaries of the proposed Action are 625,616 minority people of Adivasi, Dalit and Transgender communities (with at least 30% women and those with disability intersection) and 1,876,848 indirect beneficiaries across nine selected districts of Bangladesh. Within these nine districts, the Action will target 73 Upazilla and 666 union Parishads.

Rajshahi and Naogaon districts of Rajshahi division is a concentration of Ethnic minority and Dalit population. The main ethnic groups are Santal, Oraon and Munda clans; Dalits - Barman, Rabidas and Mahali caste. Sylhet, Hobigonj and Moulvibazar districts of Sylhet division where Dalit and plain land Ethnic minority work as tea labour mainly. The main ethnic and Dalit groups are Bauri, Robidas, Munda, Kalendi, and others. Satkhira, Khulna and Jashore districts of Khulna division located at the disaster-prone area of Bangladesh and affected most recently by Cyclone Amphan. The main Dalit communities are Rishi, Rabidas, Muchi, Majhi, Jaladas, Paroi, Kaiputro, Beara, Nikari, Shikari, Swarnaker, and others; ethnic minorities are Munda, Santal, and others.

The target groups for this Action are 100 CSOs, 73 advocacy networks and 292 Change Agents (usually from the community and are human right advocates) and will work on behalf of the right-holders to ensure marginalisation and access to services are improved. The CSOs will established linkages with DPOs.

Objective of the Study

To have a benchmark for all future activities and establish priority areas for the project, Christian Aid aims to capture baseline data against which the project's log-frame will be reported. The baseline information will guide Christian Aid to measure its' achievements and outputs over the period of implementation. This will also help devise appropriate monitoring tools for Monitoring Evaluation and Learning (MEL) of the project interventions. This study will to set baseline values for following indicators:

OO1.1 % of surveyed representatives of left behind communities (disaggregated) who report that they can participate effectively in local governance and development processes.

OO1.2 Evidence that CSOs representing Dalits, Adivasis, transgender groups and people with disability have effectively input into local and national governance and development processes, to reduce discrimination, violence, and exclusion.

OO1.3 Evidence of actions taken by power holders to change national policy and its local level implementation, including planning dialogue, to be more inclusive and responsive to minority communities and disabled persons

SO1.1. % of CSOs involved in the project who are receiving support from local authorities and duty bearers to uphold the rights and entitlements of minority communities.

SO1.2 % of minority rights CSOs & advocacy forum in local (union & upazilla i.e. standing committees etc) and district development committees whose membership consists of at least 20% Dalit & indigenous women, transgender and people with disability

SO1.3 Number of local CSOs and advocacy networks representing Dalits, transgender and Adivasis whose capacity to advocate for minority rights and participate actively in policy dialogues and consultations at national, district, upazila and union parishad standing committees has increased.

SO2.1 Number of advocacy forums/coalition, change agents, and duty bearers broadcasting project messages challenging stereotypes, prejudices and harmful practices.

SO2.2 Number of citizens participating in various interactive awareness campaigns promoted by the project to challenge stereotypes, prejudices and harmful practices (disaggregated by gender, age, disability and ethnicity).

SO2.3 % of the surveyed population who report a more favourable perception of minority rights after being exposed to the annual interactive campaign (disaggregated by gender, age, disability, caste, and ethnicity).

SO2.4 Number and % of people who report that discrimination, violence, or exclusion has reduced for them (disaggregated by gender, age, disability, caste, and ethnicity).

SO3.1 Evidence of advocacy targets, change agents, duty bearers and media outlets actively speaking out on inclusive governance and minority rights awareness at local and national level

SO3.2 Number of policy changes and implementation recommended by this Action adopted by senior policy makers.

SO3.3 % of targeted minority community members that report improved access to basic services (agriculture, health, social protection & education) as a result of social audits.

Besides, the project also aims to conduct a national campaign for creating favorable perception of minority rights among the general people across the country. Before that this study also aims to understand perception of general people regarding minority rights. A separate report is produced on the perception of general citizens regarding minority community. The study will additionally address the following questions-

- What is the perception of the general citizens of minority rights and minority inclusion?
- What is the level of inclusion of Dalits, Adivasis, transgender groups and people with disability have into local and national governance and development processes, to reduce discrimination, violence, and exclusion?
- What is the level of discrimination, violence, or exclusion in the target minority communities? What types of injustices are prevalent?
- What is the state of access to basic services (agricultural, health, social, protection, and education) that these communities have?

Methodology

For this particular study mixed method approach including both quantitative and qualitative was used. Data was collected from both primary and secondary sources. The baseline study was guided by a study matrix (Annex 2). For baseline study data was mainly collected from targeted project participants e.g., dalit, hijra, Plain land ethnic minorities and people with disability through quantitative survey. However, qualitative data was also collected to get 'how' answer of the quantitative data from relevant stakeholders. Besides, a robust policy review was done through primary and secondary data collection. For understanding perception of the general people both quantitative and qualitative data were collected. A trained gender balanced team collected data from 10 June to 25 June 2021.

Sampling

For baseline study, two different sampling frames were identified and two different types of sampling method were used for the frames including Sampling frame I: Minority communities and Sampling frame II: CSOs and advocacy network. Considering the geographical variation for quantitative data, survey sample was drawn by two-stage cluster-sampling method and stratified sampling method based on sampling frame I and sampling frame II, respectively. For determining the sample size 95% confidence level and 5% Margin of Error was considered, for clustering design effect 2 was used. Upazila (sub districts) were considered as cluster. Data was collected from 18 clusters of nine districts. In each cluster dalit, PWD, Plain land ethnic minorities, hijra strata were ensured. The cluster upazilas were selected purposively depending on the concentration of target population. In consultation with the consortium partners the clusters were selected. During cluster selection the research team also tried to ensure maximum representation of CSO, CBO and advocacy networks in the sample area. The detailed sampling design for both sampling frames can be found in Annex 3. Data were collected from 815 samples for sampling frame I and 52 for sampling frame II in the targeted area. In addition, total 18 Focused Group Discussion (FGD) and 19 Key Informant Interviews (KII) were conducted to get the detail insight about the data. For policy review different constitution of Bangladesh, laws, act and policy documents were reviewed along side 10 KIIs were conducted with relevant stakeholders including Member of Parliament (MP), secretary of Legislative & parliamentary Affairs, National Human Rights Commission (NHRC).

Data Collection, Quality Assurance and Analysis

Quantitative data was collected through ODK based data collection system that is KoboCollect and qualitative data was collected using a paper-based approach. For quantitative data collection questionnaires were used while for conducting FGD and KII different checklist were used (Annex 4). For data quality assurance, a comprehensive mechanism was used from tools development to field data collection and data cleaning. For the analysis, mainly a descriptive method was used. However, some statistical tests were also done. Data was analyzed by using MS Excel (pivot tables) and SPSS. Noteworthy quotations were used from FGDs and KII for explaining the results.

Limitation

Since the study was conducted at the time of COVID-19, the study may not reflect the normal situation of the minority communities. Thus, it may affect the perception of general citizen as well as minority communities. The lockdown imposed by government created difficulties to find Hijra members at upazila level. However, it was compensated by collecting additional sample from district levels.

Since transgender communities live in separate quarters, most of the interviews of transgender took place in presence of their Gurumaa. The presence of their Gurumaa might have an impact on their statements and perceptions. In order to get more accurate information on sexual harassment, case studies are preferred. Due to time constraint, the issue of sexual harassment has been addressed by incorporating few minor questions on sexual harassment in questionnaire.

Since an intercultural marriage between Khashia inhabitant and Bangali took place in Goyanghat, Sylhet, Khashia community has become extremely conservative. In fact, some interviews took place in Church in front of father. It might cause difference in their statement and perception.

Result and Discussion

Policy Analysis

In this sub-section the policy analysis result is presented. Relevant policies were analyzed in different aspects and this sub-section was organized by the target people categories:

Gender diversified people: Transgender and Hijra, Intersex

Context

GoB has taken several steps to enhance social protection and inclusion of gender-diverse people. In 2013, the cabinet's decision to recognize the Hijra community and to provide them national identification in documents. This was the first step towards legal recognition. In 2014, the MSW published a gazette notification regarding the Hijra Community. In 2018, the Voter list Act 2009 was amended, to provide 'Hijra' as a sex category in the voter registration form, in addition to 'male' and 'female'. In 2013, 'Despite the fact these steps highlight the Government's willingness to engage Hijra

¹ FROM RECOGNITION TO REALIZING RIGHTS: LEGAL PROTECTION OF GENDER IDENTITY IN BANGLADESH LAW 2019. Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST) (@blast.org.bd)

community and ensure their constitutional rights, any other laws or policies expressly prohibiting discrimination based on gender identity, are yet to be enacted.

Official Recognition:

Despite gazette published in January 2014 by MSW stating that the Hijra community "shall be recognized as the 'Hijra lingo' (Hijra sex/gender), this recognition expressly refers to 'Hijra'. It does not deal with other communities and individuals who have non-normative gender and sexual expressions. It seems that there is a misconception about Gender and culture. This gazette excluded the other gender and sexually diverse community with its definition and recognized only one culture as gender.

There is no clear definition of gender-diverse population including hijra in the gazette or from the cabinet. Accordingly, different government authorities were free to carry out identification processes as they chose. In 2018, the Election Commission updated NID cards to include 'Hijra' as a gender identity by amending the Voter List Act 2009 and the Voter List Regulations 2012. Hijras can now hold national identity cards, where they can identify their sex as 'Hijra'. However, this recognition is only the pen and pencil (Hossen, L. M), this recognition was not formalized in the reality because of the cultural, social prejudices and bureaucratic complexities. Most of the hijra cannot change their name and sex. In contrast, the department of immigration and passports includes a category of 'other' in addition to 'male' and 'female'. Some government forms (e.g., account opening application forms of state-run banks) now include a category of 'Third Gender'.

Social Inclusion:

In 2013, the MSW introduced several livelihood schemes for the Hijra community under the social Safety Net program. It provides an old-age allowance of 500 BDT for a month from the age of 50 for Hijra people, a stipend for 'Hijra student', and skill and capacity development training to engage them in income-generating activities. However, the social SafetyNet program excludes the transgender and intersex people who may not be part of the Hijra culture, but also face extreme vulnerability in terms of social stigma, discrimination, and violence.

Legal support for addressing sexual violence:

There is no specific law for gender-diverse people. As there is no clear definition of gender-diverse people, they are often harassed while asking for legal support, especially when they want to file sexual harassment or rape case. According to penal code 1860, A man is said to commit "rape" who except in the case hereinafter excepted, has sexual intercourse with a woman against her will, without her consent, when consent has been obtaining by putting her fear of death, or of hurt. The law does not recognize sexual harassment or rape of people who are not biologically women. As transwomen, intersex persons, and Hijra have no women genitalia they are not entitled to filing a rape or sexual harassment case. Moreover, if any hijra or transwomen get rape, mistakenly or for lack of proper law, the law enforcement agency use section 377 for such case, which is totally vague and under this section, this is difficult to prove the offense.

Inheritance:

There is no specific law of inheritance for gender-diverse people in Bangladesh. In Bangladesh, the law of inheritance is different based on religion. Under Islamic law, the property is distributed to son, daughter,

and wife, Under Hindu law the only son has the right to inheritance, Buddhists also follow the Hindu law and under Christian law, Son, Daughter, and wife get the property. But no religion mentioned intersex persons and transgender property rights. The Transgender, Intersex and Hijra people cannot have family and get married legally. Transgender people cannot claim property by their gender identity, they claim the property as per their biological identity. This further exacerbates their already vulnerable claim to property rights.

Employment:

In 2015, government declared that the "Hijra" community people are to be appointed as traffic police, and the Hijra people applied for the position as per the government declaration. To get proof of authenticity, the Ministry of Health required 'authentic Hijras to be identified through medical check-ups. After the test, they were declared to be 'fake Hijras', because they had male genitalia and were considered to be men pretending to be Hijras. The Hijra then complain against the medical examination to the human rights commission and the entire employment procedure stopped then. In the absence of any guidance on how to identify members of the Hijra community and Hijra culture, relevant authorities often resort to carrying out physical examinations to verify whether a person is an 'authentic Hijra'.

However, In June 2015, Bangladesh Bank issued a circular requesting all scheduled banks and financial institutions to include the Hijra community within their Small and medium enterprises (SME) loan activities. This step meant Hijra individuals could apply for bank loans to set up their businesses.

In the budget proposals of 2021-2022, Bangladesh finance minister A.H.M. Mustafa Kamal proposed a tax rebate for employers who recruit 10 percent of their total workforce, or more than 100 employees, whichever is lower, from among "third gender" persons. "The rebate will amount to 75 percent of the total salary paid to workers from the third gender, or 5 percent of the payable tax, whichever is lower," the finance minister said in his budget speech. As there is no clear definition of "third gender", there is the caution of being physically examined by the employer.

Gender identity concerns the social and cultural behavior and expression with which an individual feels most comfortable. It depends on many factors, such as personality, environment, intimacy, and social inclusion. All these factors are important in shaping a person's gender identity. Gender identity is best understood through a spectrum, as there is a diverse range of identities beyond the 'male' and 'female' identities.

Within this context, Hijras in Bangladesh are mostly individuals who were assigned as male at birth but identify as women or intersex persons. A few of them are now referring to themselves as transwomen ('rupantorito naari'). Their 'Hijra' identity is established by their induction into the Hijra tradition, their position as disciples and wards to a Hijra elder, known as their Guru. Hijras have their own culture and customs, and a community dialect known as Ulti. Other gender-diverse people do not have the same culture, customs, and beliefs as those held by the Hijra community.

Constitutional Framework

The fundamental principal of state policy stated that Every person has equal right and state ensure life, freedom and safety for all and ensure the basic necessities for all citizens, including food, clothing, shelter, education and medical care, and guaranteed employment at a reasonable wage.

According to Bangladesh constitution article 27; All citizens are equal before law and are entitled to equal protection of law.

Article 28(1) states that the State shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth.

Article 28(3) also states that, no citizen shall, on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth, be ineligible for, or discriminated against in respect of, any employment or office in the service of the Republic.

Article 29(2) declares that, no citizen shall, on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth, be ineligible for, or discriminated against in respect of, any employment or office in the service of the Republic.

Article 42 (1) states the property rights of citizen. It says that subject to any restrictions imposed by law, every citizen shall have the right to acquire, hold, transfer or otherwise dispose of property, and no property shall be compulsorily acquired, nationalized or requisitioned save by authority of law.

Recommendation:

1. Develop proper law with addressing all issue regarding transgender and hijra population to clarify the meaning of official recognition of the 'Hijra' community in 2014.
2. Develop an inclusive and appropriate definition to clarify the "Hijra Lingo" Hijra sex does not include the other gender diverse community such as transgender (trans women, trans men) and intersex people.
3. Develop a clear gender identity to use for the NID card, passport, and other official forms in addition to men and women. Initiatives should be taken for addressing the challenges of name change for transgender communities in legal documents.
4. Abolished the term 'Third gender'. 'Other' term can be used along with the man and women instead of the third gender.
5. Include the term "Transgender", "Intersex" and "Hijra" in primary text book in the human identity, social science, physical health and hygiene, other related section and national curriculum as well.
6. Introduction of stigma free education for transgender and hijra.
7. Provide access to live in family as well as society.
8. Ensure stigma free health services from the public hospitals for transgender and hijra.
9. Change the definition of 'Rape' and 'sexual harassment'. An order should be passed to protect Transgender (transwomen, intersex people, and hijra) from rape and sexual harassment.

10. Disseminate knowledge and provide gender-inclusive sensitivity training to public institutions that are working with gender-diverse communities.
11. Provide vocational and livelihood training to gender-diverse people for their employment and equal employment opportunities.
12. Since special facility like tax reduction from government for the employer who appointed from Transgender community has been declared, it is high time to work on strict implementation while ensuring employment for transgender community.
13. Allocation “quota” for gender diverse community in an educational institute, Public and private job sector, and political organization.
14. Reserved seats in parliament to represent the gender-diverse community.

Plain Land Ethnic minority

Context

There is no specific law and policies for the plain land Ethnic minority people in Bangladesh. The GoB does not recognize ethnic minority as Adivasi. The constitution of Bangladesh mentioned them as ethnic minority groups by the 15 amendments of the constitution. However, the state acquisition and tenancy act 1950, section 97, mentioned Plain land indigenous community as 'aboriginal' caste. The act protected and reserved the land rights of aboriginal people. Though the GoB had some reservations of employments for the indigenous people, after the movement against quota, GoB issued a circular abolishing the quota system for class-I and class-II jobs in the civil service amid demonstrations for reinstating quota for the freedom fighters' descendants and indigenous communities. Bangladesh has not adopted the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and the economic and political rights of the country's indigenous peoples continue to be ignored.

Official Recognition

The GoB does not recognize indigenous peoples as indigenous. The amendment of the 2011 Constitution, “people with different ethnic identities” than the Bengali population are mentioned. However, only cultural aspects are mentioned, while issues related to the economic and political rights of indigenous peoples, continue to be ignored.

The state acquisition and tenancy act 1950 mentioned the Santals, Bhuiyas, Bhumijes, Dallas, Garos, Gonds, Hadis, Hajangs, Hos, Kharias, Kharwars, Kochs (Dhaka Division), Koras, Maghs (Bakerganj District), Mal, and Sauria Paharias, Maches, Mundas, Mundais, Oraons and Turis as “aboriginal casts”. Whereas 15 amended mentioned them as “people with ethnic identity” which is conflicted with State Acquisition and Tenancy Act 1950 definition. In 2019, the Ministry of Cultural Affairs made an amendment to "Small Ethnic Groups Cultural Institutes Act of 2010" by enlisting 50 indigenous communities-11 in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) and 39 in the plains which was 27 before revised.

Social Inclusion

Bangladesh government does not provide any social safety allowance specifically for the plain land indigenous people. They are entitled to the allowance in general, as the allowance is allocated by the local government, often they are excluded from the allowance such as old age allowance, disability allowance, lactating mother allowance, etc. However, the prime minister cabinet allocated some

scholarships for indigenous students, agricultural & farming allowance, and livelihood training. There is also a 5% quota for university admission for indigenous students.

Land rights:

The indigenous people are entitled to purchase any land in Bangladesh, but they cannot sell their land to other communities if they want; to protect the land from being grabbed by others. According to the state acquisition and tenancy act 1950, the aboriginal persons are not entitled to sell their property to the other community, it also mentioned that an aboriginal person can sell or mortgage their property, but they have to apply to the revenue office for permission. However, in practice lot of indigenous people are selling their property to the Bengali community with the permission of DC or a revenue officer. There is allegation that local powerful people buy their property taking benefit of this option. There is a law to protect the land of aboriginal persons but it is not implemented. In this context, indigenous people are losing their land.

Inheritance:

There are above 50 different castes among the plain land indigenous communities. Every caste has its own custom and culture. Except Garos', most of the other castes follow the Hindu family law in terms of their inheritance. As Garos are matriarchal in their practice, their family property goes to their younger daughter and she looks after her mother's property. But the other community women have no rights over the land.

Employment:

The indigenous community was historically discriminated by the states and majority people. They did not get the opportunity of education for a long time. GoB had implemented a 5% quota for the member of the indigenous community on employment. In October 2018 a protest was took place to abolish the 30% quota for the Freedom fighter successors. Then GoB issued a circular abolishing the quota system for class-I and class-II jobs in the civil service amid demonstrations for reinstating quota for the freedom fighters' descendants and indigenous communities. After the declaration, another protest took place at Sahabag to reenforce the quota for the indigenous community but it has not passed yet.

Constitutional Framework

The fundamental principal of state policy stated that Every person has equal right and state ensures life, freedom and safety for all and ensure the basic necessities for all citizens, including food, clothing, shelter, education and medical care, and guaranteed employment at a reasonable wage.

According to Bangladesh constitution article 27; All citizens are equal before law and are entitled to equal protection of law.

Article 28(1) states that the State shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth.

Article 28(3) also states that, no citizen shall, on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth, be ineligible for, or discriminated against in respect of, any employment or office in the service of the Republic.

Article 42(1) stated the property rights of citizen, it says, Subject to any restrictions imposed by law, every citizen shall have the right to acquire, hold, transfer or otherwise dispose of property, and no property shall be compulsorily acquired, nationalized or requisitioned save by authority of law.

Recommendation

1. Constitutionally Recognize Indigenous people as Indigenous community, not ethnic minority community.
2. Enact specific laws to protect indigenous people rights.
3. Develop and enforce Indigenous land right protection act.
4. Develop specific land commission for plain land indigenous people.
5. Enforce “quota” on social Safety Net programs for indigenous people, such as old age allowance, disable allowance, and widow allowance.
6. Re- enforce quota on government employment for indigenous people.
7. Provide vocational and livelihood training for employment.
8. Reserved seat for local government and parliament to represent the Plain land indigenous community.
9. Constitute a plain land indigenous people forum where every group of the indigenous community will represent.
10. To make arrangements for the preservation of the language and culture of the indigenous people.
11. Enforce uniform family law to disseminate equal property rights.
12. Introduce primary education for indigenous children in their mother tongue

Dalit

Context

In recent years, Bangladesh government has taken several steps to enhance social protection and inclusion for underprivileged communities. Yet, there is no specific gazette or policy passed to enhance the livelihood of the Dalit community. The Constitution of Bangladesh declares equal rights for all citizens and prohibits discrimination on the grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth. However, Bangladesh has no laws addressing ‘untouchability’ and caste-based discrimination. Responding to the persistent and widespread discrimination against Dalits in Bangladesh, in 2013 the NHRC and Bangladesh Law Commissions engaged with Dalit human rights defenders and Civil Society Organizations to introduce a draft Anti-discrimination legislation. The Law Commission of Bangladesh has made a draft of the Elimination of Discrimination Act in 2014. Moreover, National Human Rights Commission also has made a draft for the ‘Elimination of Discrimination Act’ in 2018. Indeed, without defining the pivotal term ‘discrimination’ covering all the protected characteristics of discrimination an anti-discrimination law neither can be a tool to eradicate discrimination from all spheres of the society nor fulfill the expectation of the people as to a society free from discrimination. (Rahman, 2020).

Social Inclusion:

In 2012, the Prime Minister issued a Directive calling for special measures to include Bede, Dalit, and Harijan communities in the Social Safety Net Programme, to enhance food security and allocate funds for housing. The 2014 Bangladesh NSPS expressed a commitment to end social and economic discrimination through legislative and other measures, including access to basic services - education, health, nutrition, family planning, and water supply and sanitation. However, due to the long-standing exclusion of Dalit communities, the lack of knowledge about their rights, and stigma, Dalits have been unable to access these Safety net programs. Since FY2015-16 Dalits are no longer mentioned in the allocation, which has been allocated to minority groups in general.

Right to Land:

Most of the Dalit community has no land. Most of the people of the Dalit community have lived in *khas* land (government owned land) and besides the railway in Urban areas. There are no limitations to purchase land as per law, but still, there is a social stigma to live besides Dalit family, so people usually do not sell their property to a person who belongs to the Dalit community. As Most of the Dalit People belong to the Hindu religion, their inheritance is distributed as per Hindu family law.

Furthermore, Dalits inhabiting the so-called 'colonies', without adequate water, electricity, or sanitation, are facing eviction as a result of the government's housing projects. In 2013, the government build 1,148 flats for sweepers of Dhaka city. The government allocated those houses only for the person who works in City Corporation. Among 2,000 Dalit families in the colony only 150 works in the Dhaka South City Corporation so, the project leaves many of the dwellers homeless.

Employments:

GoB allocated an 80% quota for the employment for the member of the Dalit community for the work they are entitled to doing generation by generation, Such as Dom and cleaning. There is no quota for the other job to inspire them to be included in the mainstream job sector. There are some members of Dalit who enter the mainstream job sector but still, they face social discrimination.

Constitutional Framework

The fundamental principal of state policy stated that Every person has equal right and state ensure life, freedom and safety for all and ensure the basic necessities for all citizens, including food, clothing, shelter, education and medical care, and guaranteed employment at a reasonable wage.

According to Bangladesh constitution article 27; All citizens are equal before law and are entitled to equal protection of law.

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Article 42 (1) stated the property rights of citizen, it says, Subject to any restrictions imposed by law, every citizen shall have the right to acquire, hold, transfer or otherwise dispose of property, and no property shall be compulsorily acquired, nationalized or requisitioned save by authority of law.

Recommendation

1. Enforce the proposed bill of anti-discriminatory law
2. Enforce a policy for the Dalit community to meet the SDG goal
3. Allocate free education quota for Dalit community on priority basis.
4. Appoint Dalit teacher particularly in the area of Dalit people living
5. Allocate quota for public and private sector employment based on their qualification.
6. Allocate house for non-employed person in dom & harijan community.
7. Increase provision of vocational and livelihood training for the employment.
8. Reserved seat in local government and parliament to represent Dalit community
9. Sending a non-discriminatory order to all educational and others institute by the Ministry.

People with Disability

Context

Bangladesh Government passed the Rights and Protection of Persons with Disabilities Act 2013 on 9 October 2013. It included both physically and mentally challenged people as people with disability. The law protected the land right, educational rights, inheritance, accommodation, employment, and transportation rights for disable people. MSW provides several livelihood protections for the people with disabilities.

Official recognition:

According to the Rights and Protection of Persons with Disabilities Act 2013, A PWD is someone who has autism or autism spectrum disorders, physical disability, mental illness leading to disability, visual disability, speech disability, intellectual disability, hearing disability, deaf-blindness, cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, multiple disabilities, and other disability.

Social Inclusion:

The government has increased the coverage and the rate of allowance of different social safety-net programs. MSW mandate to securing rights and privileges of the autistic and disabled girl child through mass communication, autism awareness program, installation of disabled girl-child friendly structure in the educational institutions. It also provides education, training, and rehabilitation services to persons with disabilities; The MSW provides a monthly allowance for the person with a disability based on their financial ability. The MSW also initiated disable people-friendly educational structure.

Inheritance:

The right of inheritance is guided by personal religious laws. As per Hindu law, a person with a mental disability is not entitled to inheritance.

Employment:

According to the Rights and Protection of Persons with Disabilities Act 2013, A PWD is entitled to equal opportunity of employment as per their qualification.

Constitutional Framework

The fundamental principle of state policy stated that every person has equal right and state ensure life, freedom, and safety for all and ensure the necessities for all citizens, including food, clothing, shelter, education and medical care, and guaranteed employment at a reasonable wage.

As per Article 15 (d) of the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh 'It shall be a fundamental responsibility of the State to attain a constant increase of productive forces and a steady improvement in the material and cultural standard of living of the people through planned economic growth, with a view to securing its citizens right to social security, that is to say, to public assistance in cases of undeserved want arising from unemployment, illness or disablement, or suffered by widows or orphans or in old age, or in other such cases'.

Article 27; All citizens are equal before law and are entitled to equal protection of law.

Article 42 (1) stated the property rights of citizen, it says, subject to any restrictions imposed by law, every citizen shall have the right to acquire, hold, transfer or otherwise dispose of property, and no property shall be compulsorily acquired, nationalized or requisitioned save by authority of law.

Recommendation:

1. Identify as 'especially able people' instead of a people with disability.
2. An order published and implement to build disability-friendly structure and toilet.
3. An order published and implement to initiate disability-friendly public transport.
4. Appoint Special teacher in every school for especially able students or people with disability.
5. Initiate awareness program to remove social stigma and discrimination towards people with disability.
6. The Rights and Protection of Persons with Disabilities Act 2013 include all rights for the PWD. But there is a lack of implementation and there is corruption. However, government initiates to build some buildings for people with disability. There is a need to act for proper implementation of that initiative.

Indicator wise result

OOI.1 % of surveyed representatives of left behind communities who report that they can participate effectively in local governance and development processes (disaggregated by geography, sex, age and community).

Respondents were asked whether they think their voice is heard in local development decision making e.g. road construction, health facilities, disaster management, relief distribution, allowance listing and distribution). Only 5% respondents reported that they can participate effectively in local governance and development processes, either most of the cases or all the cases their voice is heard in development process (Figure 1).

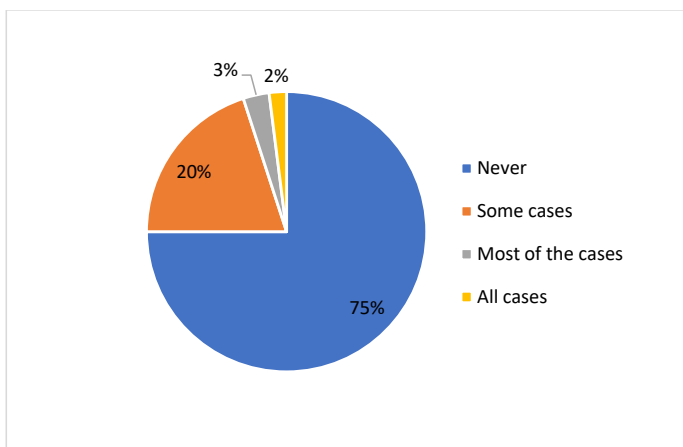


Figure 1: Respondent's thinking on hearing their voice in local development decision making.

Minority communities have very little influence in local development process as well as important decisions for the wellbeing of society. The highest percentage of negative response came from the transgender and hijra respondents. Table 2 shows that 87% said never and 11% said some cases they feel that their voice is heard in local development decision making followed by women respondents (80% said never and 16% said sometimes). Age of the respondents is not found to be an influential factor towards the perception of the minority communities. In context of overall minority communities, majority of Transgender and Hijra community (87%) followed by PWD (84%) and Dalit (79%) reported to be never thought their voice is heard in local development decision making. In contrast highest percentage of Plain land ethnic minorities reported that their voice is heard either most (5%) or all of the cases (3%). This difference is found statistically significant at $p < 0.05$. FGD findings also support their statement.

According to Ali (2013), 'the indigenous people of the plain lands are socially isolated with little access to mainstream economic and political spheres. The complexity arises from ethnic inequality, long-term discrimination, lack of education, little access to land, food, water and lack of employment, which resulted in increased poverty amongst these indigenous groups.' Professor Majbah Kamal, Department of History, Dhaka University presented research papers in the program titles Dalits Poverty profile

organized by MJF (Daily Star, 19 November 2008). According to his research, 'Dalit population as a whole is least aware of the Government. The political participation of Dalit population is zero. Their representation at the Village, District and the National level government is rather insignificant compared to their population size'.

Table 1: Percentage of respondents think their voice is heard in local development decision making

Category	Never	Some cases	Most of the cases	All cases
Geography				
Dhaka	81%	15%	4%	0%
Khulna	72%	20%	6%	2%
Rajshahi	76%	17%	2%	4%
Sylhet	76%	23%	1%	0%
Sex				
Men	66%	28%	2%	3%
Women	80%	16%	3%	1%
Transgender and Hijra	87%	11%	2%	0%
Age				
<=35 Youth	76%	19%	3%	1%
>35	74%	21%	2%	2%
Community				
Dalit	79%	18%	1%	1%
Plain land ethnic minorities	62%	30%	5%	3%
Transgender and Hijra	87%	11%	2%	0%
PWD	84%	13%	2%	1%

Respondents were asked whether they are members of any committee or body which can represent their community's demand or secure their rights effectively in local governance and development process. Alongside, they were also asked whether they have any representative in such committees and whether they have any representative in local political parties who can place their demands in federal government. Only 6% respondents were member of such committees while 24% reported to have their representative in such committees and 16% reported to have representative in local political parties (Figure 2).

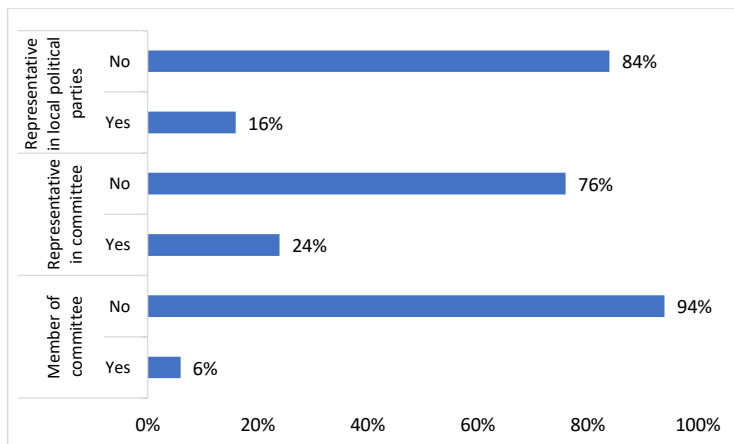


Figure 2: Respondent's overall participation in local governance and development process.

The percentage of people being part of any committee or body was found to be low regardless of location; Dhaka (4%), Khulna (5%), Rajshahi (2%) and Sylhet (10%) division (Table 3). In all the questions, Transgender and Hijra community people showed lowest participation followed by women. This can be explained as women mainly stay at home and have lower mobility than men. Transgender people are extremely excluded from mainstream society and they have minimal interaction with local governance process as well as such committee or body. The findings support the findings of Beall and Piron (2005), which revealed that powerless hijra cannot participate in social, economic, cultural and political activities, nor are they associated with the mainstream social systems and institutions. During FGD one transgender person responded said, 'people even don't want to talk to us, forget about being part of local governance process.' In another FGD, a respondent said 'mainstream community does not want to sit with us. They will not allow our representatives in local government. We are neglected by others.'

Like previous discussion, there is difference among the communities regarding the questions. Majority of the Plain Land Ethnic minority community was found to be part of committee of body in local governance process or representatives in committee or representative in local political parties (Table 3). This percentage was found to be highest as among the communities. For example, in a FGD a respondent said, 'we live in large number in an area, for that we may face lower problems than who live scattered in other area.' However, compared to mainstream community, the percentage is poor.

Table 2: Percentage of respondents being part of local governance and development process

Category	Member of committee		Representative in committee		Representative in local political parties	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Geography						
Dhaka	4%	96%	30%	70%	48%	52%
Khulna	5%	95%	22%	78%	22%	78%
Rajshahi	2%	98%	21%	79%	12%	88%

Category	Member of committee		Representative in committee		Representative in local political parties	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Sylhet	10%	90%	26%	74%	12%	88%
Sex						
Men	8%	92%	29%	71%	20%	80%
Women	5%	95%	24%	76%	14%	86%
Transgender and Hijra	5%	95%	7%	93%	11%	89%
Age						
<=35 Youth	6%	94%	21%	79%	16%	84%
>35	7%	93%	27%	73%	16%	84%
Community						
Dalit	5%	95%	27%	73%	13%	87%
Plain land ethnic minorities	9%	91%	30%	70%	23%	77%
Transgender and Hijra	5%	95%	7%	93%	10%	90%
PWD	5%	95%	16%	84%	13%	87%
Overall	6%	94%	24%	76%	16%	84%

As the scenario of political participation of minorities is not good, consequently they hardly get any invitation in any shalish or any local judiciary as observer or jury member. Overall, 90% respondents (73% said never and 17% said some cases) responded negatively (Figure 3).

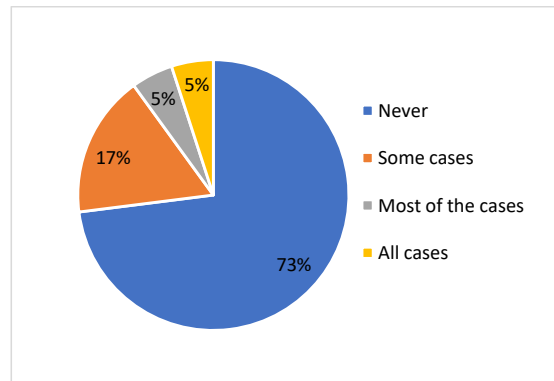


Figure 3: Overall minority community getting invitation in shalish or local judiciary.

Majority (82%) of women and transgender never got any invitation in any shalish or any local judiciary as observer or jury member (Table 4). Age variation in this case does not have any significant impact for reporting. Although all minority communities are deprived of participating in any shalish or any local judiciary, majority of PWD people (89%) followed by transgender people (82%) are found to the worst sufferer complaining that they never got any invitation in any shalish or any local judiciary as observer or jury member. In the present study during FGD, respondents from every community reported, 'mainstream people come to our shalish or local judiciary if we invite, but they do not invite us'.

Table 3: Percentage of respondents getting invitation in shalish or local judiciary as observer or jury member

Category	Never	Some cases	Most of the cases	All cases
Geography				
Dhaka	74%	22%	4%	0%
Khulna	70%	18%	8%	3%
Rajshahi	65%	19%	4%	12%
Sylhet	82%	14%	3%	1%
Sex				
Men	62%	23%	6%	8%
Women	82%	12%	3%	3%
Transgender and Hijra	82%	11%	5%	2%
Age				
<=35 Youth	77%	16%	4%	3%
>35	68%	18%	6%	8%
Community				
Dalit	75%	17%	4%	4%
Plain land ethnic minorities	61%	22%	8%	9%
Transgender and Hijra	82%	11%	5%	2%
PWD	89%	8%	0%	3%

Comment [M1]:

The state of the minorities of getting invitation for local citizen charter formulation or policy development is found to be quite similar like the previous questions. Overall, 83% of all respondents said never, 12% said some cases, 2% said most of the cases and 3% said in all cases they got any invitation for local citizen charter formulation or policy development (Figure 4).

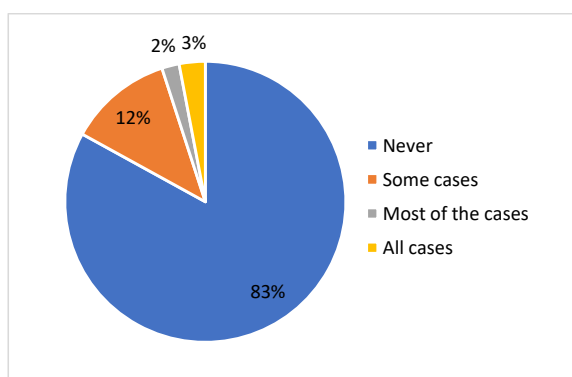


Figure 4: Invitation for local citizen charter formulation or policy development.

The minorities are deprived of such invitation from mainstream people regardless of minority men (93%), women (89%) and transgender (93%), respectively reported that they never got any invitation for local citizen charter formulation or policy development. Compared to other minorities, the state of PWD and transgender people was found to be more acute as 100% PWD (94% said never and 6% said sometimes) and 99% transgender (93% said never and 6% said sometimes) responded negatively. Besides 96% Dalit (84% said never and 12% said sometimes) and 91% plain land ethnic minorities (74% said never and 17% said sometimes) responded negatively (Table 5).

Table 4: Percentage of respondents getting invitation for local citizen charter formulation or policy development

Category	Never	Some cases	Most of the cases	All cases
Geography				
Dhaka	93%	4%	4%	0%
Khulna	87%	10%	2%	1%
Rajshahi	73%	16%	4%	6%
Sylhet	87%	11%	0%	1%
Sex				
Men	93%	6%	0%	2%
Women	89%	8%	2%	1%
Transgender and Hijra and Hijra	93%	6%	0%	2%
Age				
<=35 Youth	85%	13%	1%	1%
>35	81%	11%	4%	4%
Community				
Dalit	84%	12%	2%	2%
Plain land ethnic minorities	74%	17%	4%	5%
Transgender and Hijra	93%	6%	0%	2%
PWD	94%	6%	0%	0%

When respondents were asked about participating in any public hearing or advocacy meeting with government or local decision makers, majority of respondents replied negative (87% of respondents said never and 9% respondents said some cases) while only 4% responded positively (Figure 5)

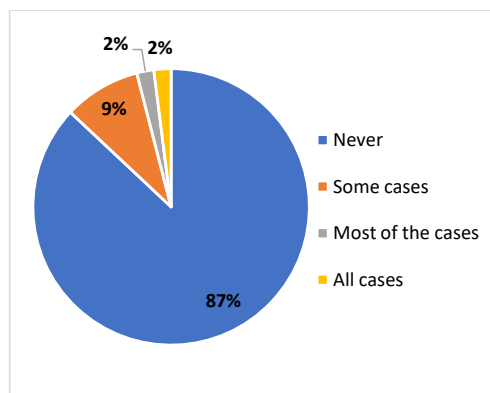


Figure 5: Participation in public hearing or advocacy meeting with government or local decision makers.

The findings revealed that 81% of men, 90% of women and 96% of transgender of minority communities never participated in any public hearing or advocacy meeting with government or local decision makers. Highest 98% transgender (96% said never and 2% said sometimes) and 98% PWD (93% said never and 5% said sometimes) revealed their poor participation public hearing or advocacy meeting with government or local decision makers (Table 6). The FGD findings also disclose similar results.

Table 5: Percentage of respondents participating in any public hearing or advocacy meeting with government or local decision makers

Category	Never	Some cases	Most of the cases	All cases
Geography				
Dhaka	85%	12%	4%	0%
Khulna	91%	7%	1%	0%
Rajshahi	80%	11%	4%	5%
Sylhet	90%	9%	1%	0%
Sex				
Men	81%	13%	3%	3%
Women	90%	8%	1%	1%
Transgender and Hijra	96%	2%	2%	0%
Age				
<=35 Youth	87%	10%	2%	1%
>35	87%	9%	2%	2%
Community				
Dalit	89%	9%	1%	1%
Plain land ethnic minorities	78%	15%	4%	4%
Transgender and Hijra	96%	2%	2%	0%
PWD	93%	5%	1%	1%

SO2.4 Number and % of people who report that discrimination, violence, or exclusion has reduced for them (disaggregated by gender, age, disability, caste, and ethnicity).

Under this indicator, the respondents were asked whether they faced any discrimination regarding access to agriculture, health, social protection & education on the ground of your ethnicity, physical ability, caste or gender identity. Figure 6 shows that more than one third respondents said they faced any discrimination regarding access to agriculture, health, social protection & education (16% said all cases and 23% said most of the cases) and 30% respondents said they never face discrimination.

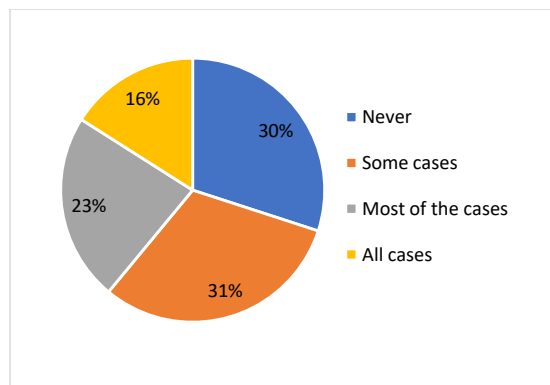


Figure 6: Minorities facing discrimination regarding access to agriculture, health, social protection & education.

The study found that majority of 47% transgender said they faced discrimination regarding access to agriculture, health, social protection & education on the ground of their gender identity all time and sometimes, respectively whenever they try to access those services (Table 7). During FGD Transgender and Hijra community people said, 'In all the sectors we are deprived. Neither government nor general people think about us. When we seek any service for health or education the authorities firstly think not to give the service.' A lot of hijra have claimed inability to secure a job due to lack of formal education and discrimination in educational institutions (Khan, S. I. et al, 2009).

Table 6: Percentage of respondents facing discrimination regarding access to agriculture, health, social protection & education

Category	Never	Some cases	Most of the cases	All the cases
Geography				
Dhaka	7%	48%	33%	11%
Khulna	25%	29%	26%	20%
Rajshahi	31%	28%	24%	16%
Sylhet	34%	33%	19%	13%
Sex				
Men	33%	34%	23%	10%
Women	31%	35%	23%	11%
Transgender and Hijra	17%	11%	25%	47%
Age				
<=35 Youth	30%	29%	22%	19%
>35	29%	34%	25%	12%

Community				
Dalit	29%	34%	25%	13%
Plain land ethnic minorities	40%	34%	20%	6%
Transgender and Hijra	17%	11%	25%	47%
PWD	21%	38%	23%	17%

Furthermore, the respondents were asked whether they feel exclusion regarding access agriculture, health, social protection & education on the ground of your ethnicity, physical ability, caste or gender identity. Overall, more than one third of the respondents reported to feel exclusion regarding access agriculture, health, social protection & education either in most of cases (17%) or all cases (17%). As majority of transgender people feel discrimination regarding access to agriculture, health, social protection & education on the ground of gender identity, they feel excluded from these services also. The study found 51% transgender reported feeling excluded regarding these services in all cases and 16% felt so in most of the cases (Table 8). Chi square test found there is statistically significant difference regarding the question of exclusion among the communities at $p < 0.05$ level. One transgender FGD participant expressed his grief saying, 'we are historically prone to exclusion, our voice remains unheard'. Disaggregation of opinions by different minority groups shows that percentage of people feel exclusion is highest for transgender (52% in all cases and 16% in most cases) followed by dalit (15% in all cases and 16% in most cases), PWD (14% in all cases and 25% in most cases) and plain land indigenous people (7% in all cases and 16% in most cases).

Table 7: Percentage of respondents feel exclusion regarding access agriculture, health, social protection & education

Category	Never	Some cases	Most of the cases	All the cases
Geography				
Dhaka	26%	52%	11%	11%
Khulna	26%	29%	25%	21%
Rajshahi	46%	24%	16%	15%
Sylhet	36%	34%	13%	17%
Sex				
Men	41%	33%	16%	10%
Women	36%	32%	18%	14%
Transgender and Hijra	19%	13%	16%	51%
Age				
<=35 Youth	36%	28%	17%	19%
>35	36%	32%	17%	15%
Community				
Dalit	35%	34%	16%	15%
Plain land ethnic minorities	45%	33%	16%	7%
Transgender and Hijra	19%	13%	16%	51%

Category	Never	Some cases	Most of the cases	All the cases
PWD	34%	27%	25%	14%
Overall	36%	30%	17%	17%

A question is specifically asked to women and transgender people whether they faced any Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) on the ground of their ethnicity, physical ability, caste or gender identity. Majority of transgender (76%) pointed that they faced SGBV on the ground of their gender identity where 10% women said so. It is worth mentioning that many women are subject to gender-based violence but they feel hesitant to disclose the fact sometimes in fear of family, husband and society and sometimes due to embarrassment. The study found that 21% women denied to talk about this issue. The transgender community was found to be subject to SGBV more compared to any other minority groups (Table 9) followed by Dalit which is statistically significant at $p < 0.05$ level. A respondent of Dalit community in FGD opined that the girls in their community become victims of eve teasing in the ground of their race, and for that they need to marry off their girls early. Another respondent of Hijra community said, 'in many cases men sexually harass us, touch our body with ill intention'.

Table 8: Percentage of respondents faced any SGBV on the ground of their ethnicity, physical ability, caste or gender identity

Category	Yes	No	Don't want to say
Geography			
Dhaka	36%	29%	36%
Khulna	28%	69%	3%
Rajshahi	26%	72%	2%
Sylhet	27%	36%	37%
Sex			
Women	10%	69%	21%
Transgender and Hijra	76%	19%	5%
Age			
<=35 Youth	30%	54%	16%
>35	22%	60%	19%
Community			
Dalit	11%	71%	18%
Plain land ethnic minorities	9%	66%	25%
Transgender and Hijra	76%	19%	5%
PWD	10%	69%	21%
Overall	27%	56%	17%

Overall, respondents were also asked whether they faced violence including physical assault, bullying, physical injury on the ground of their ethnicity, physical ability, caste or gender identity. Around one fourth of the respondents reported that they faced such violence (Table 10). In the question, people of hijra community positioned at top followed by Dalit community people. Among the communities statistically significant difference is found at $p < 0.05$. Majority of 67% Transgender and Hijra pointed that

facing physical assault, bullying, physical injury on the ground of their gender identity is a very common thing to them. During FGDs, respondents from hijra community reported many of them left schools because of bullying by teachers and fellow students. A respondent said, 'students of my school even used to throw stones at me'. Another respondent reported 'when we visit hospital, authorities ask us whether they will provide bed in men room or women room. You do not have any allocation in the hospital.' The study found percentage of minorities facing violence is comparatively lower except Transgender and Hijra (Table 10). Besides, in this study, minorities aged below 35 years (26%) were more subject to violence compared to the minorities aged above 35 years (21%). This study also found higher percentage of men reported the event of violence (physical assault, bullying) than women which statistically significant at $p < 0.05$. This could be because men's mobility is higher than women in patriarchic country context especially in left behind minority which may result higher violence against men. During FGD, men respondents of Plain land ethnic minorities reported due to land ownership conflict they faced event of violence. In another FGD with Dalit community people men respondents reported they faced physical assault by other community. A slight geographical variation is also observed where Khulna division is positioned at top.

Table 9: Percentage of respondents faced any violence including physical assault, bullying, physical injury on the ground of their ethnicity, physical ability, caste or gender identity

Category	Yes	No
Geography		
Dhaka	30%	70%
Khulna	34%	66%
Rajshahi	20%	80%
Sylhet	19%	81%
Sex		
Men	20%	80%
Women	13%	87%
Transgender and Hijra	67%	33%
Age		
<=35 Youth	26%	74%
>35	21%	79%
Community		
Dalit	20%	80%
Plain land ethnic minorities	12%	88%
Transgender and Hijra	67%	33%
PWD	18%	82%
Overall	24%	76%

SO3.3 % of targeted minority community members that report improved access to basic services (agriculture, health, social protection & education) as a result of social audits.

Within this indicator, the opinion of minority community members regarding their access to agriculture, health, social protection, legal and education is rated as- can access fully, can access some cases, can access many cases and cannot access at all. Figure 7 shows, more than three fourth respondents

reported that they cannot access the basic services at all and some cases while only 17% reported that they can access to service fully (5%) and most of the cases (12%).

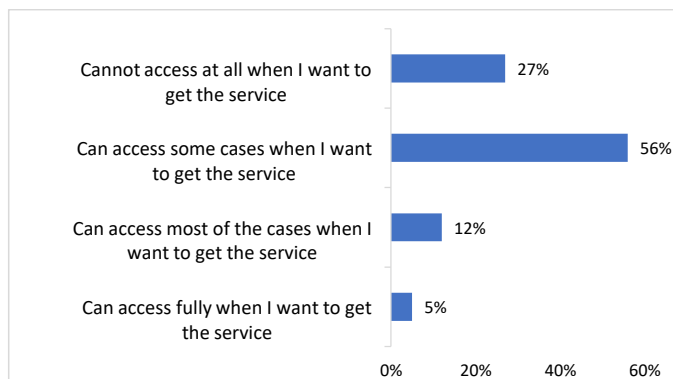


Figure 7: Minorities access to basic services.

The study found access to agriculture, health, social protection, legal and education is very difficult for transgender and hijra compared to other minority women and men as 48% transgender and hijra reported to “cannot access at all” followed by 28% women and 20% men (Table 11). Opinions of minority community members did not find to be varied due to age variation. The highest percentage of respondents ‘cannot access to these services’ was found for transgender group (48%), followed by PWD (32%), Plain land ethnic minorities people (23%) and dalit (22%), and respectively. Fisher Exact Test shows this variation as statistically significant at $p < 0.05$.

Table 10: Opinion of minority community members regarding their access to agriculture, health, social protection, legal and education

Category	Can access fully when I want to get the service	Can access most of the cases when I want to get the service	Can access some cases when I want to get the service	Cannot access at all when I want to get the service
Geography				
Dhaka	0%	0%	63%	37%
Khulna	10%	14%	52%	24%
Rajshahi	3%	13%	52%	32%
Sylhet	2%	11%	61%	26%
Sex				
Men	7%	14%	59%	20%
Women	2%	13%	57%	28%
Transgender and Hijra	5%	5%	42%	48%
Age				

Category	Can access fully when I want to get the service	Can access most of the cases when I want to get the service	Can access some cases when I want to get the service	Cannot access at all when I want to get the service
<=35 Youth	4%	13%	55%	28%
>35	6%	12%	57%	26%
Community				
Dalit	5%	14%	59%	22%
Plain land ethnic minorities	4%	14%	59%	23%
Transgender and Hijra	5%	5%	43%	48%
PWD	5%	10%	53%	32%

Therefore, respondents were asked to rate their overall access to agriculture when they seek the service. Overall, the access of minorities to agriculture was not found to be up to the mark. Actually, a significant portion (40%) of targeted community people is not associated with agriculture. Highest percentage of Hijra followed by PWD and Dalit community people are not associated with agriculture. However, very few people (4%) reported they can 'access fully' or 'in many cases' to agriculture. Table 12 shows that highest transgender, followed by women and men rate their access to agriculture as "cannot access at all". It is found that age variation has no effect on the rating of the minorities. During FGD, Plain land ethnic minorities who are mostly associated with agriculture reported that they rarely receive support for agriculture from government and many of them are unaware about government agriculture service altogether. A respondent reported that 'when we seek any service like agriculture input, we need to go from one department to another, and finally locally elected body say you will get next time. We even don't know whether there is any agriculture input support for our community from government.' However, during KII agriculture officers reported, 'we allocate budget for Adivasi, but many cases despite of receiving service they deny'.

Table 11: Rating of respondents on their overall access to agriculture

Category	Can access fully when I want to get the service	Can access most of the cases when I want to get the service	Can access some cases when I want to get the service	Cannot access at all when I want to get the service	Not Applicable
Geography					
Dhaka	4%	0%	0%	81%	15%
Khulna	3%	2%	10%	25%	61%
Rajshahi	2%	3%	7%	58%	30%
Sylhet	0%	2%	15%	47%	36%
Sex					

Category	Can access fully when I want to get the service	Can access most of the cases when I want to get the service	Can access some cases when I want to get the service	Cannot access at all when I want to get the service	Not Applicable
Men	3%	3%	16%	45%	34%
Women	1%	2%	8%	50%	39%
Transgender and Hijra	0%	2%	3%	31%	64%
Age					
<=35 Youth	1%	2%	11%	45%	41%
>35	2%	3%	10%	45%	40%
Community					
Dalit	2%	2%	9%	40%	47%
Plainland ethnic minorities	2%	3%	18%	61%	16%
Transgender and Hijra	0%	2%	3%	31%	64%
PWD	1%	2%	4%	40%	53%
Overall	2%	2%	11%	45%	40%

In case of rating overall access to health (e.g., visiting public health service providers, getting required medicine which is available in public health service, getting preventive health care), more than half of the respondent (14% respondents cannot access at all and 47% respondents can access in some cases) reported negatively (Figure 8).

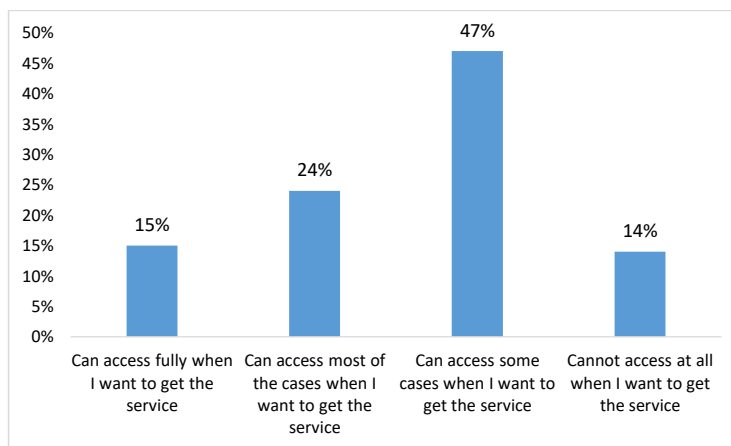


Figure 8: Minorities access to health service.

The study also found the dominance of transgender and people (34%) in not getting access at all (Table 13). For accessing health service, transgender people reported not only gender-based discrimination but also alleged sexual harassment in public hospital. It is found that age variation has no effect on the rating

of the minorities. Table 13 shows that other minority groups faced comparatively less difficulties compared to transgender group as 18% PWD, 13% plain land Adivashi and 7% dalit rated their access to health care as “cannot access at all”.

Table 12: Rating of respondents on overall access to health

Category	Can access fully when I want to get the service	Can access most of the cases when I want to get the service	Can access some cases when I want to get the service	Cannot access at all when I want to get the service
Geography				
Dhaka	7%	26%	56%	11%
Khulna	21%	24%	46%	9%
Rajshahi	24%	10%	39%	28%
Sylhet	6%	35%	50%	9%
Sex				
Men	19%	25%	46%	10%
Women	14%	28%	46%	12%
Transgender and Hijra	10%	10%	47%	34%
Age				
<=35 Youth	17%	22%	45%	16%
>35	13%	27%	47%	13%
Community				
Dalit	18%	26%	50%	7%
Plain land ethnic minorities	15%	29%	42%	13%
Transgender and Hijra	10%	10%	46%	34%
PWD	15%	22%	44%	18%
Overall	15%	24%	47%	14%

Table 14 shows that 46% transgender, 18% women and 12% men rated their access to education (e.g., enrollment in quality school, higher education, quota, scholarship etc) as “cannot access at all”. The rating of the respondents did not vary between youth and people of more than 35 years age. In context of minority groups, 47% of transgender group, 35% of PWD group, 14% of Dalit group and 9% of Ethnic minority group could not access to education at all. During FGD, a hijra respondent in Rajshahi said, “I used to attend school, passed class 8. When I realized that I was a transgender person, then everyone in the school started hating and teasing me. That's why I didn't study any more. If there was a separate reading system for us, no one would tease.” It seems like overall literacy rate of minority groups is not well. A respondent from Plain Land Ethnic minority community said, ‘teachers treat our children differently and does not give enough attention’.

Table 13: Rating of respondents on their access to education

Category	Can access fully when I want to get the service	Can access most of the cases when I want to get the service	Can access some cases when I want to get the service	Cannot access at all when I want to get the service
Geography				
Dhaka	0%	11%	52%	37%
Khulna	22%	32%	28%	18%
Rajshahi	24%	13%	31%	31%
Sylhet	9%	24%	57%	11%
Sex				
Men	21%	23%	43%	12%
Women	16%	24%	41%	18%
Transgender and Hijra	7%	13%	34%	46%
Age				
<=35 Youth	17%	22%	39%	21%
>35	17%	22%	43%	18%
Community				
Dalit	19%	25%	42%	14%
Plain land ethnic minorities	18%	27%	45%	9%
Hijra	7%	13%	33%	47%
PWD	18%	12%	35%	35%
Overall	17%	22%	41%	20%

The respondents were also asked for their rating on overall access to social protection e.g., different allowance, list of relief distribution. The study found that only 16% minority people reported they can access social protection fully or in many cases while 7% can fully access and 9% can access in most of the cases (Figure 9).

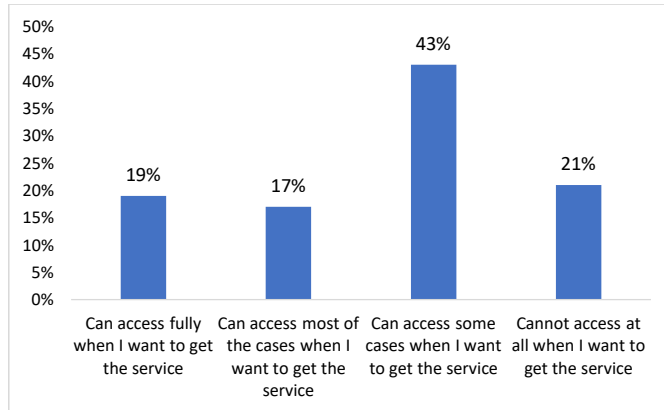


Figure 9: Minority's access to social protection.

Age variation has not affected the rating of the respondents. Minority group wise, highest 53% of transgender group followed by 48% of Dalit group, 35% of plain land Ethnic minority group and 27% of PWD group could not access to social protection at all (Table 15). FGD findings also support the result. During FGD a Transgender and Hijra respondent reported, 'most of our aged people do not get any allowance, however, some hijras who live in urban area get allowances'. Some of the hijras also reported inconsistency regarding getting allowance. A respondent reported, 'I received allowance once, then I received nothing.' Another member said, 'during COVID-19 first wave we received nothing as relief though we were the most affected as during that time we could not collect money from market or from the parents of new born which is our main business.' In case of accessing social protection, PWD were found to be ahead of other minority groups. As 58% PWD reported having PWD card, it might be a reason for their better access to social protection. For example, in one of the locations for this study, 5-6 Bagdi persons informed that they got old age allowance but they were forced to bribe. They informed that their three Muslim neighbours also got the allowances but they did not need to pay any bribe.' The DSS has been implementing a special programme for the Dalit and harijan communities. The programme has targeted 37,932 Dalit and harijan people in this year. The components of the programme include old age allowance (for those who cross 50), stipend for the students studying at four layers of education, training on income generating activities, and post training financial assistance. For the FY 2018-1019, the government has allocated 50.03 crore Taka for this programme.²

The Government Programmes for People with Disabilities is a support strategy which consists of a disability benefit for children with a disability and those of working age population with a disability (GED 2015). The Allowance for Financially Insolvent PWD is available for anyone over 6 years old with a disability with an annual income of less than 36,000 taka (Bangladesh Situation Analysis, 2020). The present study found that only 27% of PWD group could not access to social protection at all which is comparatively better than other minority groups. FGD findings revealed that few persons with disabilities are unaware of disability allowances and few people do not raise voice against discrimination.

² <http://dss.gov.bd/site/page/909e2813-4cbf-49a8-81bf-12366bb20ee4/>- (last accessed on 5 March 2019)

Table 14: Rating of respondents on their access to social protection

Category	Can access fully when I want to get the service	Can access most of the cases when I want to get the service	Can access some cases when I want to get the service	Cannot access at all when I want to get the service
Geography				
Dhaka	0%	7%	56%	37%
Khulna	10%	10%	44%	35%
Rajshahi	9%	7%	32%	52%
Sylhet	3%	10%	48%	39%
Sex				
Men	10%	10%	46%	33%
Women	4%	8%	41%	47%
Transgender and Hijra	3%	9%	35%	52%
Age				
<=35 Youth	6%	10%	39%	46%
>35	8%	8%	47%	37%
Community				
Dalit	6%	5%	41%	48%
Plain land ethnic minorities	7%	13%	44%	35%
Transgender and Hijra	3%	9%	35%	53%
PWD	12%	12%	49%	27%

The state of access to legal services and justice is not well enough as overall 21% people cannot access and 43% people can access in some cases (Figure 10). More than one third of the respondents can access to legal service fully or most of the cases.

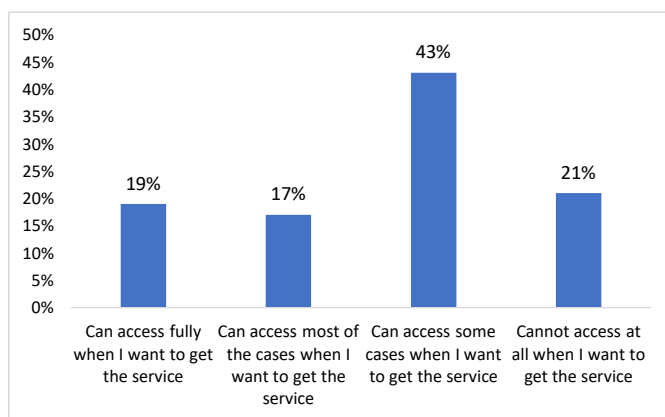


Figure 10: Minority's access to legal service and justice.

The rating of the minorities did not vary with age. Minority group wise, highest 42% of transgender group followed by 24% of PWD group, 18% of Dalit group and 13% of plain land Ethnic minority group could not access legal services and justice at all (Table 16). The official's attitudes to Hijra people are deviant, immoral, deceitful, mentally ill, abnormal, insane, annoying, and disabled. These sorts of attitudes are affecting the Hijra people development program. The way of stigmatization is constructed.'

For instance, a rights-based lawyer's organization, the Bangladesh Environment Lawyer's Association (BELA) was able to take one case on violation of a disabled person's right to Court, but petition was not offered to the victim.' As per the FGD findings, many people with disabilities are not even aware of legal services properly and sometimes they are afraid to raise voice for legal services. A FGD respondent of the present study said that "I cannot even move, hardly do anything. I am nothing but a burden to my family. It is very difficult for me to get justice against any legal action". Attitudes and behaviors are very important for accepting people in the society. The attitude of people with disability is not engaging the positive way of thinking regarding themselves and their capabilities.

Table 15: Rating of the respondents on access to legal service and justice

Category	Can access fully	Can access many cases	Can access some cases	Cannot access at all
Geography				
Dhaka	33%	19%	48%	0%
Khulna	19%	16%	46%	19%
Rajshahi	27%	13%	32%	28%
Sylhet	12%	21%	50%	18%
Sex				
Men	20%	19%	45%	15%
Women	20%	16%	45%	19%
Transgender and Hijra	14%	11%	33%	42%
Age				
<=35 Youth	20%	17%	43%	20%
>35	18%	16%	44%	21%
Community				
Dalit	20%	22%	41%	18%
Plainland ethnic minorities	20%	15%	52%	13%
Transgender and Hijra	14%	11%	33%	42%
PWD	22%	12%	41%	24%

Figure 11 shows a comparative summary of access to public service for all minority groups. The overall access of all minority groups is not up to the mark (more or less 40%) which clearly indicates that they are lagged behind in accessing public services compared to the mainstream community. It is clearly observed that the access of transgender and hijra to all public services (2% in Agriculture, 20% in health, 20% in education, 12% in social protection and 25% in legal service) was the lowest compared to other minority groups. Among different services, access to legal service (25%) for transgender and hijra was found to be higher than other services, but lower compared to other minority groups. Although Dalit community's overall access to public service was good comparatively, their access to social protection

was found to be lowest (11%). Since FY2015-16 Dalits are no longer mentioned in the social safety net allocation and allocated to minority groups in general, which might be affected their access to social protection.

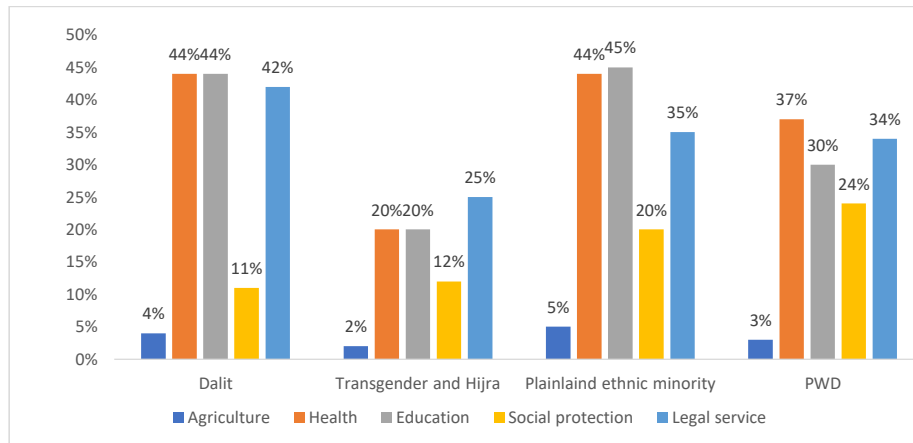


Figure 11: Comparative access to public service of different minority groups.

CSOs, Advocacy Network and Duty Bearer

SO1.1. % of CSOs involved in the project who are receiving support from local authorities and duty bearers to uphold the rights and entitlements of minority communities

Under this indicator, percentage of CSOs who are receiving support from local authorities and duty bearers to uphold the rights and entitlements of minority communities and the type of support received by them were investigated. Overall, one third CSOs (33%) reported that they always receive support and more than half of the CSOs (52%) mentioned that sometimes they receive support from local authorities and duty bearers (Table 17). Majority of CSOs from Dhaka showed positive attitude towards getting support from local authorities and duty bearers (40% CSOs mentioned always and 60% CSOs mentioned sometimes). Most of the Dalit right CSOs reported to get support compared to the other communities except Dalit right CSOs in Rajshahi (all the Dalit right CSOs said they never got any support for Dalit community). In Khulna, half of the CSOs reported to never get any from local authorities and duty bearers for Ethnic minority. On the other hand, the response of CSOs to getting support for Ethnic minority was found to be pretty good in Sylhet. It might be because there is massive Plain Land Ethnic minority right movement there. Therefore, majority of CSOs got support from local authorities and duty bearers to uphold the rights and entitlements of Plain Land Ethnic minority community.

Table 16: Percentage of CSOs received support from local authorities and duty bearers to uphold the rights and entitlements of minority communities in the past 12 months

Category	Never	Sometimes	Always	Grand Total
DHAKA	0%	60%	40%	100%
Dalit	0%	33%	67%	100%
Transgender and Hijra	0%	100%	0%	100%
KHULNA	15%	46%	38%	100%
Adivasi	50%	50%	0%	100%
Dalit	17%	33%	50%	100%
PWD	0%	50%	50%	100%
Transgender and Hijra	0%	67%	33%	100%
RAJSHAHI	20%	50%	30%	100%
Adivasi	25%	50%	25%	100%
Dalit	100%	0%	0%	100%
PWD	0%	50%	50%	100%
Transgender and Hijra	0%	67%	33%	100%
SYLHET	17%	58%	25%	100%
Adivasi	0%	33%	67%	100%
Dalit	0%	0%	100%	100%
PWD	33%	67%	0%	100%
Transgender and Hijra	0%	100%	0%	100%
Grand Total	15%	52%	33%	100%

Out of 39 surveyed CSOs total 33 reported they receive support from local authorities. Mainly the CSOs receive financial supports from local authorities and duty bearers to uphold the rights and entitlements of minority communities which is followed by capacity building. However, during COVID-19 first phase significant percentage of CSOs reported they receive support for relief distribution (Table 18).

Table 17: Type of supports received by CSOs (multiple answers)

Type of supports	% of CSO
Financial	64%
Legal	36%
Official/ Bureaucratic	27%
Relief support (COVID, hygiene, or natural disaster related)	76%
Capacity building	48%

SO1.2 % of minority rights CSOs & advocacy forum in local (union & upazilla i.e. standing committees etc) and district development committees whose membership consists of at least 20% Dalit & indigenous women, transgender and people with disability

This indicator covers the percentage of minority rights CSOs & advocacy forum in local and district development committees, the number of members of CSOs, disaggregation of members by minority groups (Dalit, indigenous women, transgender and people with disability), and registration of the organization.

At first, respondents were asked whether respondent CSO and advocacy forum have any membership in local development committees. Overall, almost two third of the respondents said that they have membership in local development committees. Geography wise, 75% CSOs and advocacy forum in Sylhet agreed on their membership in local development committees followed by 73% CSOs and advocacy forum in Khulna (Table 19).

Table 18: CSOs' membership in local development committees

Row Labels	Yes	No	Grand Total
DHAKA	40%	60%	100%
Dalit	33%	67%	100%
Transgender and Hijra	50%	50%	100%
KHULNA	73%	27%	100%
Adivasi	100%	0%	100%
Dalit	71%	29%	100%
PWD	50%	50%	100%
Transgender and Hijra	67%	33%	100%
RAJSHAHI	40%	60%	100%
Adivasi	25%	75%	100%
Dalit	0%	100%	100%
PWD	100%	0%	100%
Transgender and Hijra	33%	67%	100%
SYLHET	75%	25%	100%
Adivasi	67%	33%	100%
Dalit	0%	100%	100%
PWD	83%	17%	100%
Transgender and Hijra	100%	0%	100%
Grand Total	62%	38%	100%

Overall, 71% CSOs were found to be member of development committee who have at least 20% Dalit, plain land ethnic minority, hijra and PWD in their member body (Table 20). Apparently, Table 20 shows, highest 100% CSOs working for transgender and hijra have at least 20% Transgender and hijra community member. Since these organizations serve transgender and hijra community drawing strength from the community, all the interviewed CSO respondents replied positive. Besides, 80% CSOs working for ethnic minority have at least 20% plainland ethnic minority member and 60% CSOs who work for Dalit community were found to have 20% dalit members. On the other hand, lowest percentage of CSO having membership of development committees was found for CSOs working for PWD community (50%). In Bangladesh the minorities are in deplorable situation because in most of the cases their right to education, healthcare, housing, employment, and legal support are ignored by the mainstream

people and local authorities. CSOs have direct relationship with different relevant sectors of government. Therefore, the project is planned to work with CSOs of different tiers (i.e.village/union, upazila and district) to ensure minorities inclusion in national processes. Within this project, CSOs are the key stakeholder groups while people of minorities are the final beneficiaries. It is believed that the involvement of CSOs can effectively contribute in human right establishment.

Table 19: Percentage of CSOs as member of development committees

CSO	% of CSO who have at least 20% dalit, Plain land ethnic minorities, hijra and PWD		
	Yes	No	Total
Plainland ethnic minority	80%	20%	100%
Dalit	60%	40%	100%
PWD	50%	50%	100%
Transgender and Hijra	100%	0%	100%
Total	71%	29%	100%

Out 24 CSOs who have membership any local development committees total 21 CSO (88%) had registration from different departments. Mainly they are registered from Department of Social Service, only one CSO was found registered from Department of Youth Development (Table 21). Majority of CSOs working with different types of minority groups were found to be registered. Department of social service was found to be the most dominant source of registration of the CSOs.

Table 20: Percentage of CSOs having registration and their respective source of registration

Category	Have registration (%)		If Yes, from where (%)			
	Yes	No	Social Welfare	Social service	Dept of women affairs	Department of Youth Development
% of CSO who have registration	88%	12%	10%	75%	10%	5%
Type of CSO						
Adivasi	80%	20%	0%	100%	0%	0%
Dalit	100%	0%	20%	60%	20%	0%
PWD	88%	12%	14%	86%	0%	0%
Transgender and Hijra	83%	17%	0%	60%	20%	20%

OOI.2 Evidence that CSOs representing Dalits, Adivasis, transgender groups and people with disability have effectively input into local and national governance and development processes, to reduce discrimination, violence, and exclusion.

To gather evidence that CSOs representing Dalits, Ethnic minority, transgender groups and people with disability have effectively input into local and national governance and development processes, to reduce

discrimination, violence, and exclusion; CSOs and advocacy forums were asked whether they have been included into local and national governance and development processes, to reduce discrimination, violence, and exclusion of Dalits, Ethnic minority, transgender groups and people with disability. In response, 54% CSOs reported they did so (Table 22). This involvement almost similar in every region. They mainly were involved in dialogues with local governance, participated in different related seminars and campaign. Besides, they also spoke in different meetings of local government about minority community rights.

Table 21: Percentage of CSOs have effectively input into local and national governance and development processes, to reduce discrimination, violence, and exclusion

Category	Yes	No	Grand Total
DHAKA	60%	40%	100%
Dalit	67%	33%	100%
Transgender and Hijra	50%	50%	100%
KHULNA	54%	46%	100%
Adivasi	50%	50%	100%
Dalit	67%	33%	100%
PWD	50%	50%	100%
Transgender and Hijra	33%	67%	100%
RAJSHAHI	50%	50%	100%
Adivasi	0%	100%	100%
Dalit	100%	0%	100%
PWD	100%	0%	100%
Transgender and Hijra	67%	33%	100%
SYLHET	55%	45%	100%
Adivasi	67%	33%	100%
PWD	50%	50%	100%
Transgender and Hijra	50%	50%	100%
Grand Total	54%	46%	100%

OOI.3 Evidence of actions taken by power holders to change national policy and its local level implementation, including planning dialogue, to be more inclusive and responsive to minority communities and disabled persons

Mainly national level policy related initiatives by powerholders are discussed in policy analysis section. In relation to local level implementation during KII government officials, law enforcers, legal aid organizations, journalist, faith-based leaders, were asked about their initiatives. Most of the government officials reported they try to make local level implementation more inclusive. In KIIs, representative from department of youth, social welfare; and women and child welfare informed they provides registration for different CBOs of minority groups. They also provide training. They opined these initiatives help government their policies in local level. However, they also informed still Transgender and Hijra are getting minimum support. In a KII respondent from women and child welfare department said, 'I am working here for 10 months, but I did not find any training, allowance or registration application from hijra community'. In many cases minority community people do not have enough

knowledge about their rights and sometimes they show limited interest to take government opportunity. For example, a land officer of Naogaon district reported in during KII that, 'some plain land Ethnic minority people live in pieces of land designated for the Road Transport and Highway Division, Upazila administration wants to give them land in other places, but they don't want to go their'. Agriculture officer informed, 'many cases minority people do not know about budgetary allocation for them. There is need for mass awareness among the minority groups in local level for such allocation'. Plain land Ethnic minority people seek law enforcement support in minimum level, they solve most of the problems through their own judiciary system that is panchayet. Dalit and PWD people sometimes seek the law enforcement support and are treated like mainstream people. Hijra community people rarely seek such support. A law enforcer representative informed, 'we try to give them all types of law enforcement support, though hijra community people rarely come to us.' For legal aid support, local legal aid organizations provide them lawyer support in no cost or in minimal costs. Although during FGD a respondent from Plain land ethnic minorities informed, 'we won a case for our land but finally we did not get the land in reality'. In public hearing or local level policy making, presence of minority groups are very minimal. Respondents suggested for structural change in government official procedures.

SO2.3 % of the surveyed population who report a more favourable perception of minority rights after being exposed to the annual interactive campaign (disaggregated by gender, age, disability, caste, and ethnicity)

The study revealed the perception of general people on minority rights (Table 23). A perception study was conducted among 394 general citizens. **Overall, only 7% general people showed their favorable perception of minority rights.** Findings disclosed that more unfavorable perception was showed for Transgender and Hijra community (90%), followed by Dalit (84%) and plain land Ethnic minority community (84%). The discriminatory attitudes and practices may look like denial of providing services, dillydally responsiveness, harassment, undue burden of unauthorized payment, deprivation from development schemes, biased dispute resolution favoring the powerful elites, impediment to the access to natural resources and social safety net schemes, etc."

Geographical variation was observed in perception of general citizens about minority rights. Among 384 respondents, most of them showed negative perception about minority rights irrespective of region. Most unfavorable perception about minority rights was observed in Dhaka (100%), followed by Sylhet (99%). The least unfavorable perception about minority rights was observed in Khulna region (83%). This negative perception reflects in social discrimination and exclusion. The perception of general citizens did not vary significantly neither between men and women nor between people aged below 35 years and people aged more than 35 years (Table 23). For the perception study, general citizens were asked about their perception in different aspects eg. work and employment, education, social protection, renting property, sharing public space, attending their religious and cultural programs etc for different minority groups. Overall negative perception is estimated when negative answers are got from each aspect. Since, only 22 sample were collected from Dhaka, that reflect 100% negative perception.

Table 22: Percentage of general people showed favorable perception of minority rights

Category	Percentage of general people showed favorable perception of minority rights									
	Overall		Dalit		Hijra		Plain land ethnic minorities		PWD	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No

Region										
Dhaka	0%	100%	0%	100%	5%	95%	5%	95%	18%	82%
Khulna	17%	83%	39%	61%	24%	76%	37%	63%	30%	70%
Rajshahi	4%	96%	9%	91%	5%	95%	9%	91%	21%	79%
Sylhet	1%	99%	1%	99%	1%	99%	1%	99%	10%	90%
Gender										
Women	6%	94%	16%	84%	9%	91%	14%	86%	17%	83%
Men	8%	92%	16%	84%	11%	89%	17%	83%	23%	77%
Age										
<=35	8%	92%	19%	81%	11%	89%	19%	81%	22%	78%
>35	6%	94%	13%	87%	8%	92%	12%	88%	17%	83%
Overall	7%	93%	16%	84%	10%	90%	16%	84%	20%	80%

SO3.1 Evidence of advocacy targets, change agents, duty bearers and media outlets actively speaking out on inclusive governance and minority rights awareness at local and national level

Most of the cases it was found that duty bearers do not have option to speak out on inclusive governance and minority rights awareness independently. In a KII, a respondent said, 'as a government official I need to do only government initiatives, these initiatives are minorities centered'. However, they mainly participate in different government initiatives which includes different day observations, coordination meeting, government award programs for women (including left behind minority) etc. In some cases, they participate in dialogues arranged by different CSOs where they speak about government's initiatives. Some CSOs including legal aid organizations organized some dialogues where they discussed about the minorities. As evidence, some CSOs presented newspaper clipping and some meeting minutes. Although the organizations work for minorities it was not found to be that much significant. However, no CSO was found who works with all types of targeted communities. In KII, media representatives reported they try to publish major events of minorities including festival, casualties, news on violence, mobs etc. They mainly depend on rights-based organizations and CBOs' press release although sometimes they independently collect new as well.

COVID-19

COVID-19 has a disproportionate impact on minority communities. The movement lockdown introduced during the COVID-19 crisis created massive disruptions on their employment and level of income. Respondents were asked whether they lost their job due to COVID-19. Many people from the minority communities live hand to mouth, depending entirely on income from their daily work. But during the countrywide lockdown, many lost their basic income. More than one fourth of the respondents lost their job due to COVID-19. Majority of 66% Transgender and Hijra people followed by 29% people of Dalit community, 14% people of plain land Ethnic minority and 8% people of PWD lost their job during pandemic. As most of the transgender are not employed, what they meant by losing job was they had to stay at their place, could not move due to restrictions. During FGD, a respondent of hijra community informed ‘Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) called us and instructed not to go outside, though they did not give us any relief. During lock down we could not go outside for earning money’.

Some are afraid of eviction, which is looking increasingly likely for many, given that 86 percent of respondents did not have savings and almost half owed payments on loans. During FGD of the present study a Transgender and Hijra member mentioned that “COVID-19 disrupted our basic income from such means as collecting alms, participating in religious rituals. We are forced to stay at our place, cannot go out due to streets closing. Police are roaming everywhere; they do not allow us to collect money. People do not hire us for job, it is more difficult for us to survive sitting idle and earning no money.” Minority communities reported that overall they were unemployed for 7.6 months on average during COVID19. Among them PWD was highest 9.8 months followed by Transgender and Hijra for 8.1 months (Table 24). As minority communities are already marginalized in the employment sector, the impact of COVID-19 on them may be significant.

Findings showed that 24% men and 18% women said that they lost their job due to COVID-19 (Table 24). The women searched alternative income or financial support opportunities. Moreover, in patriarchic country context women are assumed to take care of children and household members especially for ill patients. Percentage of respondents who lost their job due to COVID-19 varied between people who aged below 35 years (33%) and aged more than 35 years (19%). The first wave of COVID-19 pandemic had a dramatic effect on the labor market. Employment fell and unemployment rose sharply during this time. The reason of higher rate of young jobless people might be that the young people who joined work just before the pandemic mostly lost them during pandemic. Therefore, the rate of young jobless people is found to be higher. Geographical variation is also observed from the table that highest 42% minority people in Dhaka and lowest 21% minority people in Sylhet said that they lost their job during pandemic. The possible cause for this result might be as Dhaka is an industrial area, most of the respondents associated with industrial work lost their job while most of respondents in Sylhet area worked in tea estates; they were less subject to losing job during COVID-19.

Table 23: Percentage of respondents lost their job due to COVID-19

Category	Yes	No	Average No. of months (if Yes)
Geography			
Dhaka	42%	58%	5.4
Khulna	38%	62%	8.0
Rajshahi	15%	85%	6.5
Sylhet	21%	79%	7.6

Category	Yes	No	Average No. of months (if Yes)
Sex			
Men	24%	76%	6.1
Women	18%	82%	7.5
Transgender and Hijra	66%	34%	8.1
Age			
<=35 Youth	33%	67%	8.0
>35	19%	81%	6.8
Community			
Dalit	29%	71%	6.0
Plain land ethnic minorities	14%	86%	6.2
Transgender and Hijra	66%	34%	8.1
PWD	8%	92%	9.8
Overall	27%	73%	7.6

COVID-19 left a heavy burden of losing income of the minorities. While many people did retain their jobs during COVID-19, it caused significantly reduced income for the minorities. In response to the question of decreased income during pandemic, more than three fourth of the respondents lost their income due to COVID-19. Highest 97% transgender followed by 85% dalit people, 79% PWD and 70% Ethnic minority reported that they lost their income due to COVID-19 (Table 25). According to the minority communities, on average almost every group was subject to loss of more than 50% of their income. Highest 68% income of transgender reduced for the pandemic. Some of them lost income because of losing job and some of them lost income because of salary decrease or comparative lower return from business during pandemic.. In Bangladesh the Transgender and Hijra community remains socially excluded, living on the fringes of society. Most make money by collecting alms, singing and dancing at weddings or child birth, many have moved to begging and prostitution. Since lockdown introduced, they are forced to stay at their place which caused lose in their income. Besides, 79% men and 78% women lost their income due to COVID-19. The percentage of income loss was found to be highest for women compared to men. Age variation did not have that much impact on income lose. Among other minority communities reported to lose of income due to COVID-19. Geographical variation is also observed from the table that highest 92% minority people in Khulna and lowest 72% minority people in Sylhet said their income reduced during pandemic.

Table 24: Percentage of respondents lost their income due to COVID-19

Category	Yes	No	Average Percentage of income loss (if Yes)
Geography			
Dhaka	77%	23%	48.1
Khulna	92%	8%	61.9
Rajshahi	85%	15%	50.0
Sylhet	72%	28%	53.6
Sex			
Men	79%	21%	48.6
Women	78%	22%	56.6

Category	Yes	No	Average Percentage of income loss (if Yes)
Transgender and Hijra	97%	3%	68.0
Age			
<=35 Youth	81%	19%	57.7
>35	83%	17%	55.3
Community			
Dalit	85%	15%	53.1
Plain land ethnic minorities	70%	30%	47.2
Transgender and Hijra	97%	3%	68.0
PWD	79%	21%	50.0
Overall	81%	19%	56.9

Women are bearing the brunt of increases in unpaid care work. In Bangladesh, pre-COVID-19, women on average performed 3.43 times more unpaid domestic care work than men (BBS Gender Statistics 2018). In Bangladesh, as in the rest of the world, women are the primary caregivers of the young, infirm, and the elderly. As the pandemic continues, this burden of caregiving is likely to increase disproportionately for women.

Women are shouldering a much heavier burden of household labor and caregiving during Covid-19. In this study, the women were specifically asked whether COVID-19 caused an increase to their workload (Table 26). Overall, almost one fifth of women reported to have increased workload due to COVID-19. The closure of schools and the entire family staying at home has further exacerbated the burden of household work on women and now women must absorb the additional work of constant family care duties. 24% women reported not knowing whether their workload increased or not. Minority community wise, highest 20% dalit women, followed by 16% Ethnic minority women and 13% PWD women reported to have increased workload during pandemic. Increasing workload during pandemic significantly varied between people who aged below 35 years and aged more than 35 years as majority of 20% respondents aged below 35 years faced increased workload compared to the respondents aged above 35 years (12%). Geographical variation is also observed from the table that highest 28% minority women in Khulna and lowest 12% minority women in Sylhet addressed their increased workload during pandemic. As most the minority women of Sylhet area worked in tea estates, their work was comparatively less affected than others. That's probably why less women in Sylhet think that their workload increased due to COVID-19.

Table 25: Percentage of women respondents having increased workload due to COVID-19

Category	Yes	No	Can't Say
Geography			
Dhaka	20%	60%	20%
Khulna	28%	51%	21%
Rajshahi	16%	73%	11%
Sylhet	12%	50%	38%
Sex			
Women	18%	58%	24%
Age			

Category	Yes	No	Can't Say
<=35 Youth	20%	56%	24%
>35	12%	63%	25%
Community			
Dalit	20%	61%	18%
Plain land ethnic minorities	16%	55%	29%
PWD	13%	53%	34%
Overall	18%	58%	24%

It was realized, people should have access to safe health and hygiene related information sources at least where they can cross check different information received from different media. Respondents were asked whether they have any source of information where they can check whether the message received regarding COVID-19.

More than half of the respondents (65%) reported that they have sources where they can check received information regarding COVID-19 (including death toll, remedy, health advisory, social support, vaccination etc.) (Table 27). It was realized, minority communities have more or less information sources where they can cross check different information received from different media. From the FGD findings, it was found that different health related NGOs work in the permanent slums. The dwellers mainly crosscheck the received information with these NGOs' health workers. Highest 67% of dalit people and Transgender and Hijra had source of information, followed by 65% Ethnic minority and 53% PWD. It seems like women (60%) have the least access compare to men (68%) and Transgender and Hijra (67%). Since women mainly stay at home and have lower mobility than men, lower percent of women reported have the credible information source. Age variation has not found to have significant impact on having source of information regarding COVID-19. In geographical context, highest 96% minority people in Dhaka and lowest 24% minority people in Khulna reported to have information source regarding COVID-19.

Table 26: Percentage of respondents having any source of information regarding COVID-19

Category	Yes	No
Geography		
Dhaka	96%	4%
Khulna	44%	56%
Rajshahi	80%	20%
Sylhet	64%	36%
Sex		
Men	68%	32%
Women	60%	40%
Transgender	67%	33%
Age		
<=35 Youth	66%	34%
>35	63%	37%
Community		
Dalit	67%	33%
Plain land ethnic minorities	65%	35%

Category	Yes	No
Hijra	67%	33%
PWD	53%	47%
Overall	65%	35%

Despite significant progress in recent years, Bangladesh has the highest prevalence of child marriage in South Asia and ranks among 10 countries in the world with the highest levels.³ The Ministry of Women and Children Affairs and UNICEF Bangladesh jointly organized the launch of the National Plan of Action to End Child Marriage (2018-2030). The goal of the NPA is to end the marriage of girls below the age of 15 years and to reduce by one third the rate of marriage for girls aged 18 years in 2021, and to completely eliminate child marriage by 2041.⁴ But the COVID-19 pandemic threatens to roll back progress on ending child marriage. Overall, only 2% respondents reported incidence of child marriage. As children and their families cope with school closures, loss of income and increased pressure in the home, there are increasing risks of child marriage. The rate of early marriage in minority communities found to be low, highest 3% dalit respondents reported to witness incidence of child marriage during pandemic (Table 28). Overall, 2% men and women respondents mentioned incidence of child marriage. Besides, 3% respondents aged below 35 years and 2% respondents aged above 35 years reported incidence of child marriage. Geographically, more incidence of child marriage observed in Khulna (3%) and Rajshahi (3%).

Table 27: Percentage of respondents reporting incidence of child marriage

Category	Yes	No
Geography		
Dhaka	0%	100%
Khulna	3%	97%
Rajshahi	3%	97%
Sylhet	1%	99%
Sex		
Men	2%	98%
Women	2%	98%
Transgender and hijra	2%	98%
Age		
<=35 Youth	3%	97%
>35	2%	98%
Community		
Dalit	3%	97%
Plain land ethnic minorities	2%	98%
Transgender and hijra	2%	98%
PWD	1%	99%
Overall	2%	98%

³ <https://www.unicef.org/bangladesh/en/press-releases/accelerated-action-needed-end-child-marriage-bangladesh-2030>

⁴ <https://www.unicef.org/bangladesh/en/press-releases/plan-action-launched-eliminate-child-marriage-bangladesh>

Respondents were asked whether themselves or their household members were infected by COVID-19. In response, overall, only 1% respondents were found to be infected by COVID-19 (Table 29). Among the minority communities, highest 2% respondents reported to be infected by COVID-19 while 1% of each other communities mentioned to be infected. Age variation had no impact on the findings. Geographically, Sylhet area was found to be ahead in number of infected people while no respondents were found to be infected by COVID-19 in Dhaka and Khulna. The results might not portray the actual number of COVID-19 infected people as majority of minority people do not test for COVID-19. Since they do not test, the apparent number of infected people is less.

Table 28: Percentage of households infected by COVID-19

Category	Yes	No
Geography		
Dhaka	0%	100%
Khulna	0%	100%
Rajshahi	1%	99%
Sylhet	2%	98%
Sex		
Men	1%	99%
Women	1%	99%
Transgender	1%	99%
Age		
<=35 Youth	1%	99%
>35	1%	99%
Community		
Dalit	1%	99%
Plain land ethnic minorities	2%	98%
Hijra	1%	99%
PWD	1%	99%
Overall	1%	99%

Awareness on Draft Anti-discrimination Act

Anti-discrimination law refers to legislation designed to prevent discrimination against particular groups of people; these groups are often referred to as protected groups or protected classes. Anti-discrimination laws vary by jurisdiction with regard to the types of discrimination that are prohibited, and also the groups that are protected by that legislation. (Levit and Nancy, 2012, Readler, 2018) Commonly, these types of legislation are designed to prevent discrimination in employment, housing, education, and other areas of social life, such as public accommodations. Anti-discrimination law may include protections for groups based on sex, age, race, ethnicity, nationality, disability, mental illness or ability, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity/expression, sex characteristics, religion, creed, or individual political opinions.

Despite these constitutional assurances, social discrimination is quite widespread in Bangladesh. Considering the scenario, Bangladesh's Law Commission recommended that the government form an anti-discrimination law back in 2014 to address these issues in a more efficient and comprehensive

manner. The respondents were asked whether they are aware of the proposed “Anti-Discrimination Act”. Overall, 11% respondents were found to be aware of the proposed act. Awareness among Transgender and Hijra was found to be quite good compared to other minority groups as 23% Transgender and Hijra were found to be aware of “Anti-Discrimination Act” (Table 30). According to country officer of Bandhu Social Welfare Society, Bandhu receives 60-70 complaints of discrimination every month. "This year we have already received 300 complaints of discrimination. Around 200 of them are family-related. For instance, some of them are not given their family property just because they are hijras. Some of them are forced to give all that they earn to their families. The other 100 complaints are against the police. Many members from the hijra community allege that the police regularly take money from them," (Daily Star, 2017). As awareness of anti-discrimination law among Transgender and Hijra is raising day by day, they are taking initiatives to raise their voice against discrimination. Besides, only 10% Ethnic minority, 8% Dalit and 6% PWD were found to be aware of the act (Table 30). People aged less than 35 years (13%) were found to be more aware of the act compared to the people aged more than 35 years (8%). In geographical context, highest 14% minority people were aware of “Anti-Discrimination Act” in Rajshahi while lowest percentage (7%) was found in Dhaka.

Table 29: Awareness among respondents regarding “Anti-Discrimination Act” to GoB

Category	Yes	No
Geography		
Dhaka	7%	93%
Khulna	10%	90%
Rajshahi	14%	86%
Sylhet	10%	90%
Sex		
Men	13%	87%
Women	5%	95%
Transgender and hijra	23%	77%
Age		
<=35 Youth	13%	87%
>35	8%	92%
Community		
Dalit	8%	92%
Plain land ethnic minorities	10%	90%
Transgender and hijra	23%	77%
PWD	6%	94%
Overall	11%	89%

Conclusion and Recommendation

This study highlights baseline data of multiple dimensions of the present situation of minority communities including type of discrimination, exclusion, disadvantages and hardships faced by minorities in Bangladesh. In the legislations and policies some inter-conflicts were found which limited the opportunity of securing rights for marginalized communities in the country's legal framework. Mostly property inheritance law which is guided by person's religious law mostly affect the minority groups' right specially for women, PWD and hijra. Despite several initiatives towards decentralization process of government, the participation of minority communities in local governance process is still minimal. Although from the study a slight variation was observed among different types of minority people, regardless the involvement in local governance and development process, level of discrimination, violence faced, their access to agriculture, education, health, social protection, legal service is similarly miserable.

Only few minority people (5%) can participate effectively in local governance and development processes as their voice is heard. Minority communities have very little influence in local development process as well as important decisions for the wellbeing of society. Very few minorities are member of local committees and have representative in local political parties who can place their demands in federal government. The percentage is poor compared to mainstream community and evidently the true spirit and essence of democracy remains an illusion for the minorities in Bangladesh.

Minority communities suffer from their identity crisis making them vulnerable in their everyday life. They are socially, culturally and politically segregated. They are victims of violence including physical assault, bullying, physical injury on the ground of their ethnicity, physical ability, caste or gender identity. Transgender and Hijra community is subjected to gender-based violence at a greater rate (76% reported) than general citizens. Facing physical assault, bullying, physical injury on the ground of their gender identity is a very common thing to Transgender and Hijra (67% reported). Many women face gender-based violence but they feel hesitant to disclose the fact sometimes in fear of pressure from family, husband and society and sometimes due to embarrassment. Moreover, only a few minority people are aware of the proposed "Anti-discrimination Law".

Minority people are largely marginalized and socially excluded in their access to agriculture, health, social protection, legal and education. In accessing basic services, Transgender and Hijra community is the worst sufferer. The situation of the other minority communities is also dismal. As some people with disabilities have PWD card, they have better access to social protection compared to other minorities. Besides, the access to legal support and justice is very limited irrespective of minority groups.

COVID-19 has a disproportionate impact on minority communities and the lockdown introduced during the COVID-19 crisis created massive disruptions on their employment and level of income. Many people from the minority communities' live hand to mouth, depending entirely on income from their daily work. Overall, 27% respondents lost their job and 81% lost their income due to COVID-19. Moreover, COVID-19 resulted an increase burden of unpaid work and household chores on women of minority communities. The closure of schools and the entire family staying at home exacerbated the burden of household work on women.

Majority of CSOs from Dhaka reported getting support from local authorities and duty bearers. The CSOs get financial, capacity building and relief support (COVID, hygiene, or natural disaster related) from local authorities. A good number of CSOs (71%) are found to be member of development committee having at least 20% dalit, plain land ethnic minority, hijra and PWD members.

Few recommendations are already suggested in the policy analysis section. The recommendations derived from minority communities and the baseline study are the following:

Recommendation from Dalit community

- Dalit people face discrimination in terms of getting relief goods, they reported that many people in their locality get relief but Chainman/members/local elected bodies are reluctant to provide relief goods to dalit community. They recommended that different government and non-government organizations should ensure strict monitoring at the time of relief distribution so that actually needy people get relief.
- Although dalits are landless laborers and houseless living in the place generation after generation provided by landlords, but those land are totally under landlord's control. Landlords often harass and threaten them to leave the place. Dalit people recommended that government should arrange accommodation for dalit people.
- Some Dalits addressed that they have to face problem in purchasing land even if they have adequate money for purchasing. They want government support to have easy access and difficulty free purchasing.

Recommendation from transgender and hijra community

- Some Hijra people said, they went to school but dropped out school because of bullying. Until now there has been no school exclusively for transgender people in Bangladesh. Government should take necessary steps to establish separate or special school so that transgender people can educate themselves while no one can tease them at school.
- Transgender and hijra people also reported to face discrimination in terms of getting relief goods. Local elected bodies do not give them those goods. They recommended that government should take care of the fact that hijra community can get relief also like other communities.
- Transgender and hijra community demanded to create employment opportunities, provide financial assistance and entrepreneurship training for them.

Recommendation from PWD community

- Some people with disabilities said that only people who are disable by born get support from social safety net. People who were earlier normal but became disable because of accident, face difficulties in accessing social safety net. They demanded to take adequate action by government to provide them easy access to social safety net.
- Some disable people do not get actual information about their allotted allowance in government social safety net. They want reliable source of information where they can get all necessary information about their allowance.

Recommendation from plainland ethnic minority community

- Some plainland ethnic minorities said unsafe drinking water is the main problem in their community. They face lack of consistent access to safe drinking water. However, ethnic minorities who live in Rajshahi and Sylhet, said their water is contaminated with iron and

arsenic, and not tested often. Government should take necessary steps to ensure safe water supply for them.

- Land grabbing issue is also mentioned by some plainland ethnic minorities. Sometimes landlords threaten them to vacate the place. They want government assistance in this regard.

Recommendation for overall minority communities:

- Creation of small business activities and alternative job opportunities for the minority communities can help to empower them. Emphasis should be given to provide adequate microcredit support in terms of designing special credit and finance schemes with easy terms and conditions for minority communities.
- CSOs, CBOs and Advocacy networks need intensive support for engaging further government officials in their minority right based activities.
- Although dalit and ethnic minority community's children can communicate in Bengali language, they are not good at formal Bengali language/ educational language. For this reason, they remain lagged behind comparing to others. More inclusive education system can be initiated by government.
- Since there are 13 standing committees in Union Parishad, government can particularly assign responsibility of the well-being of the minority communities to these committees and ensure strict monitoring of their work.
- Bangladesh Relief and Rehabilitation Department should make a priority list of most vulnerable population. Thus, it can be ensured that those listed people get relief at the time of relief distribution.
- It is high time for Government to take necessary initiatives to enforce the proposed Anti-discrimination Act.

Recommendation for specific minority communities:

Plain-land Ethnic minority:

- ✓ Land problems are more complicated for Plain-land Ethnic minority people as there has been huge land grabbing issues faced by them and their land ownership is also disputed. Moreover, land related insecurity is prevailing among Ethnic minority people. Local administration and land offices also have a neglecting attitude towards Ethnic minority people. Government attention should be drawn through the project emphasizing formation of a separate land commission for the plain land Ethnic minority people and providing effective solutions to their dispute problem. For having a land commission, proactive association of right based organizations and CSOs are much needed.
- ✓ Infrastructure development to ensure safe water supply for plainland ethnic minority community.

Dalit:

- ✓ It is observed from the study that now-a-days Dalit people are much interested in education, Dalit children are going to school. Necessary steps should be taken for reservation of education quota for Dalit and also quota system for Dalits in accessing government jobs.
- ✓ Since dalit people do the same work generation after generation, different government and non-government organizations should provide different skill development training for them to ensure

occupational diversity for them. It is imperative to change the mindset that a dalit child is not destined to do the same job what his father does.

- ✓ There is no legal institutional protection for dalit community. Bangladesh Law Commission should come forward to initiate both institutional and policy support for this vulnerable group.
- ✓ Reservation of seat in local government for Dalits at least in those areas where large number of Dalits are colonized.
- ✓ Dalit respondents reported to face threats from the landlords since they live in khas land. Government should take adequate steps to ensure rehabilitation before eviction. Bangladesh government already took multiple steps to establish housing for dalit. But few people are living there.

PWD:

- ✓ To promote PWD inclusive education, it is necessary to ensure appropriate training facilities of teachers, redesigning curriculum, suitable study materials and equipment etc.
- ✓ Steps should be taken to strengthen the existing social safety-net programme for PWDs.

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