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BANGLADESH NARI PROGATI SANGHA

Editorial Advisor

Rokeya Kabir

Editor

Habibur Rahman Chowdhury

Cover Design

Moniruzzaman

D-Graph

Data Compilation, Design and Compose

F M Sarwar Hossain

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House # 255 Road # 19 (old)

Dhanmondi, Dhaka - 1209

Phone : 8111323, 8124899

Fax : 9120633

E-mail : bnps@bangla.net

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95/6 Distillery Road

Gandaria, Dhaka - 1204

Phone : 7410838, 7410765

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BNPS : At a Glance

Beginning : 24 June 1986

Legal Status :

BNPS is registered with

⇒ Women Affairs Directorate, No. MBP-465/86 dated 24.06.86

⇒ Department of Social Service, No. DSS/FDO/R-271 Dated 27.09.88

Geographical Coverage

District	06
Thana	18
Union/Ward	59
Village/Para	258

Current Number of Groups	1095
Current Number Group Members	15777
Current Number of Area Committees	133

**Total number of people directly involved : 70000 (Approximately)
in different activities since inception**

Education Support

School	30
Students	1320
Teacher	30

Cumulative Information on Savings and Credit

Group Savings Generated (Tk.)	6622722
Cumulative Credit Disbursement (Tk.)	37230962
Number of Recipient	12426
Rate of Credit Recovery	97%

Staff Strength

Female	Male	Total
119	58	177

On Going Projects and their Donors

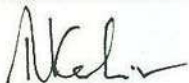
Project	Donor
Strengthening the Women's Empowerment Process in Bangladesh	Intercharch Organization of Development Cooperation (ICCO), The Netherlands, and Evangelische Zentralstelle Fur Entwicklungshilfe E.V. (EZE), Germany
Socio-economic and Political Empowerment of Women in Bangladesh	Heinrich Böll Foundation (HBF), Germany
Democracy Education for Effective Local Elected Bodies	The Asia Foundation (TAF), Bangladesh
Networking and Advocacy for Legal Rights	The Asia Foundation (TAF), Bangladesh
Creating Enabling Environment for Women	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), Bangladesh
Strengthening the Women's Movement in Bangladesh	Royal Norwegian Embassy (NORAD), Bangladesh

Foreword

Women all over the world started coming out of their captive life. The process enhanced to a certain extent during the last decades when the women groups came closer to realize their dreams. Women's movement globally contributed a lot in the transformation process. In Bangladesh, women organizations, women activists and the NGOs are also contributing with their utmost efforts towards strengthening the women's movement. Nevertheless, the situation of women is quite frustrating. They are victim of violence, gross violation of human rights and systemic discrimination in all facets of life. BNPS, since its inception, has been undertaking programs with a view to promoting equal rights of women and gender justice with its limited resources. In this venture, the organization has to adopt the strategies and programs with the changing global trends in social, economic and political arena. This report portrays the initiatives taken by BNPS in 1999 and put light on the changes observed in its working areas.

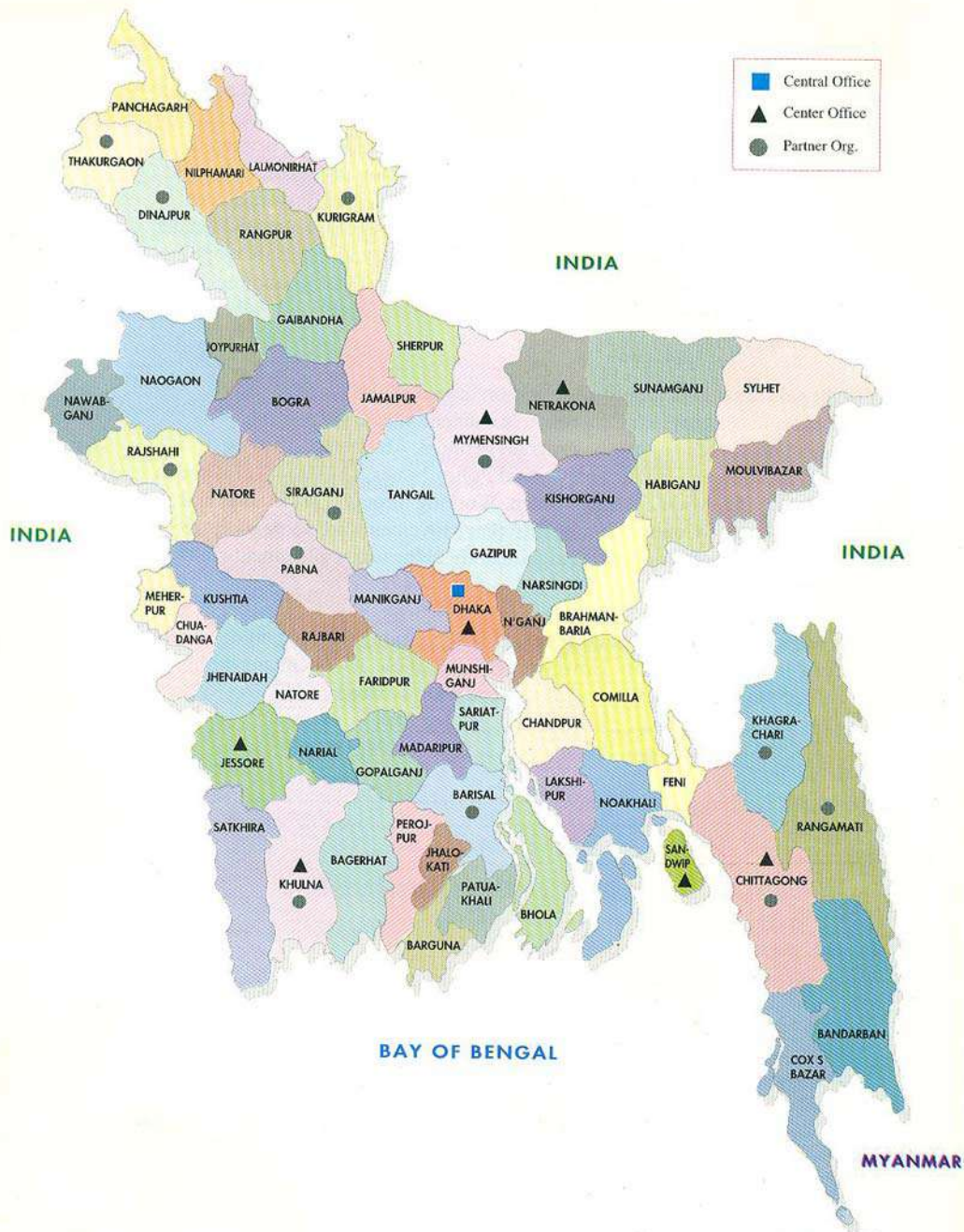
The insight gained over the period of operation helped BNPS identify some effective strategies through which qualitative changes visualized towards empowerment of women among the program partners. Alternative Theater, Debate on Women Issues, Studies on Critical Policy Issues, Grassroots Linkage in Advocacy, Involving Middle Class Women, Working through Partnership, and Highlighting Women's Contribution in Different Movements are some of those unique approaches which contributed significantly to the accomplishments in the context of the organization.

It is our pleasure to share the achievements of BNPS among the stakeholders and well-wishers through this report. However, we count these achievements with careful enthusiasm, since a great deal more remains to be done.



Rokeya Kabir
Executive Director

Working Area of BNPS



An Introduction to BNPS

BNPS started its operation in June 1986 in Dhaka. During that time a nucleus of committed professional women came together to share their experiences on social issues focusing mainly on development, development policies and strategies and the development program implementation process. They analyzed the impact of development on poor people thoroughly, especially on women, in the light of global, regional and domestic context, and voiced a sense of urgency regarding the need to advocate alternative development processes that would give principal emphasis to the basic survival needs of the 50% most deprived and repressed people in Bangladesh - the women.

Vision

BNPS envisages a society which is free from all sorts of discrimination against women and where women enjoy equal rights and status in all sphere of life from family to state.

Mission

Mission of BNPS is to empower women socially, politically and economically through institution building, awareness raising and social mobilization.

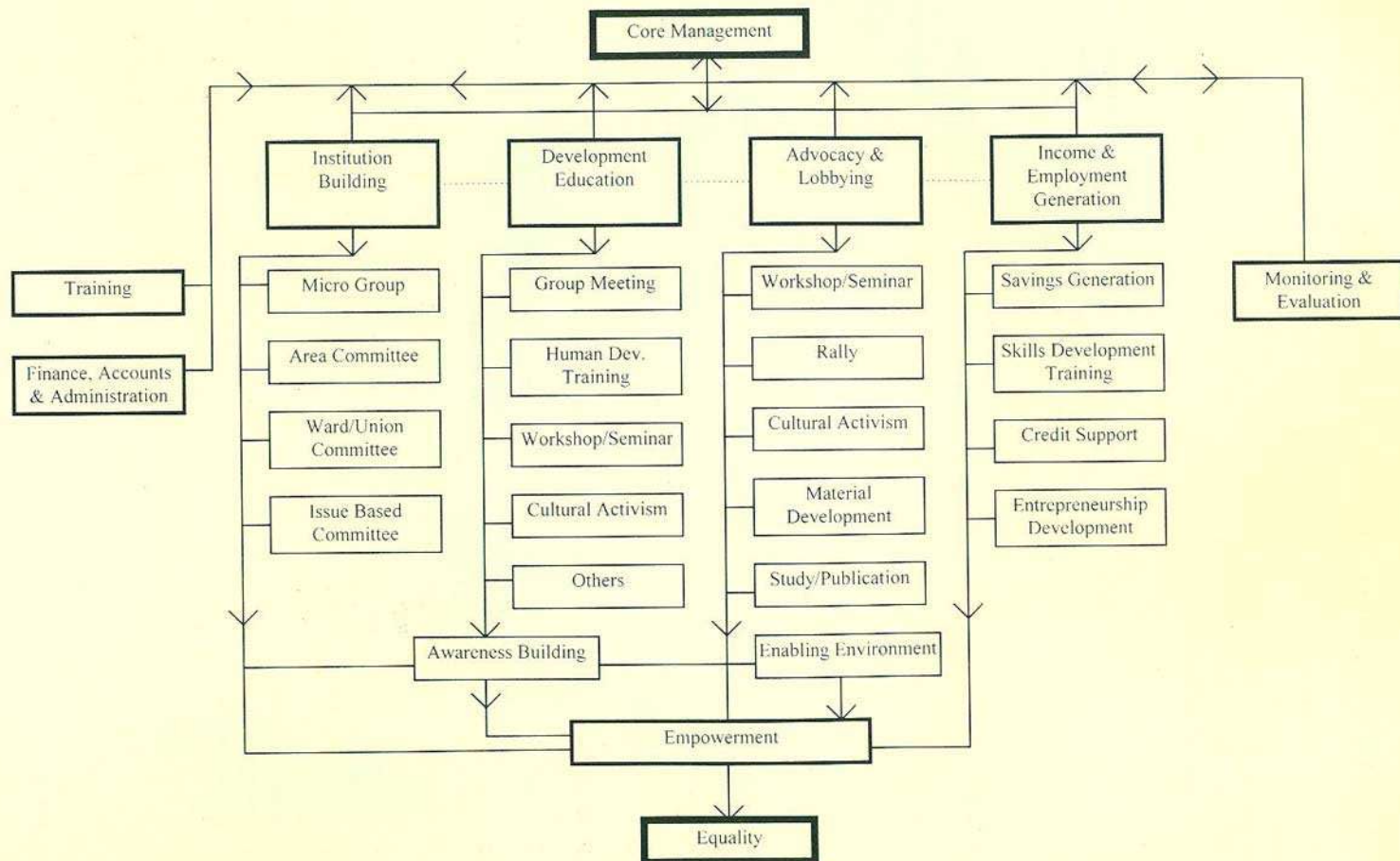
Special Features

- All activities are geared towards empowerment and self-reliance of women
- All members of the decision making bodies (Executive Committee and General Body) of the organization are women
- Most of the employees (70%) of the organization are women and possess activist background
- Bottom-up and participatory approaches are followed in decision making and program implementation process
- Strong and clear stand against communalism, fundamentalism, racial and other discrimination, and violation of human rights
- Special emphasis is given on taking development partners in implementing program activities and disseminating messages rather than making the organization itself bigger
- Conceptual clarity and sensitivity on gender issues are specially emphasized during recruitment of staff. Male staff of the organization are equally sensitized to women issues and it makes a difference when they voice towards gender justice

Executive Committee Members of BNPS

Ms Rahima Chowdhurani	Chairperson
Ms Nurjahan Murshid	Vice Chairperson
Dr Makhduma Nargis Ratna	Vice Chairperson
Dr Jahan Ara Aktar Khanam	Treasurer
Ms Salma Khatun	Member
Ms Shamim Siddiquee	Member
Ms Nasimun Ara Haque Minu	Member
Ms Helen Najmun Nahar Rahman	Member
Ms Rokeya Kabir	Member Secretary

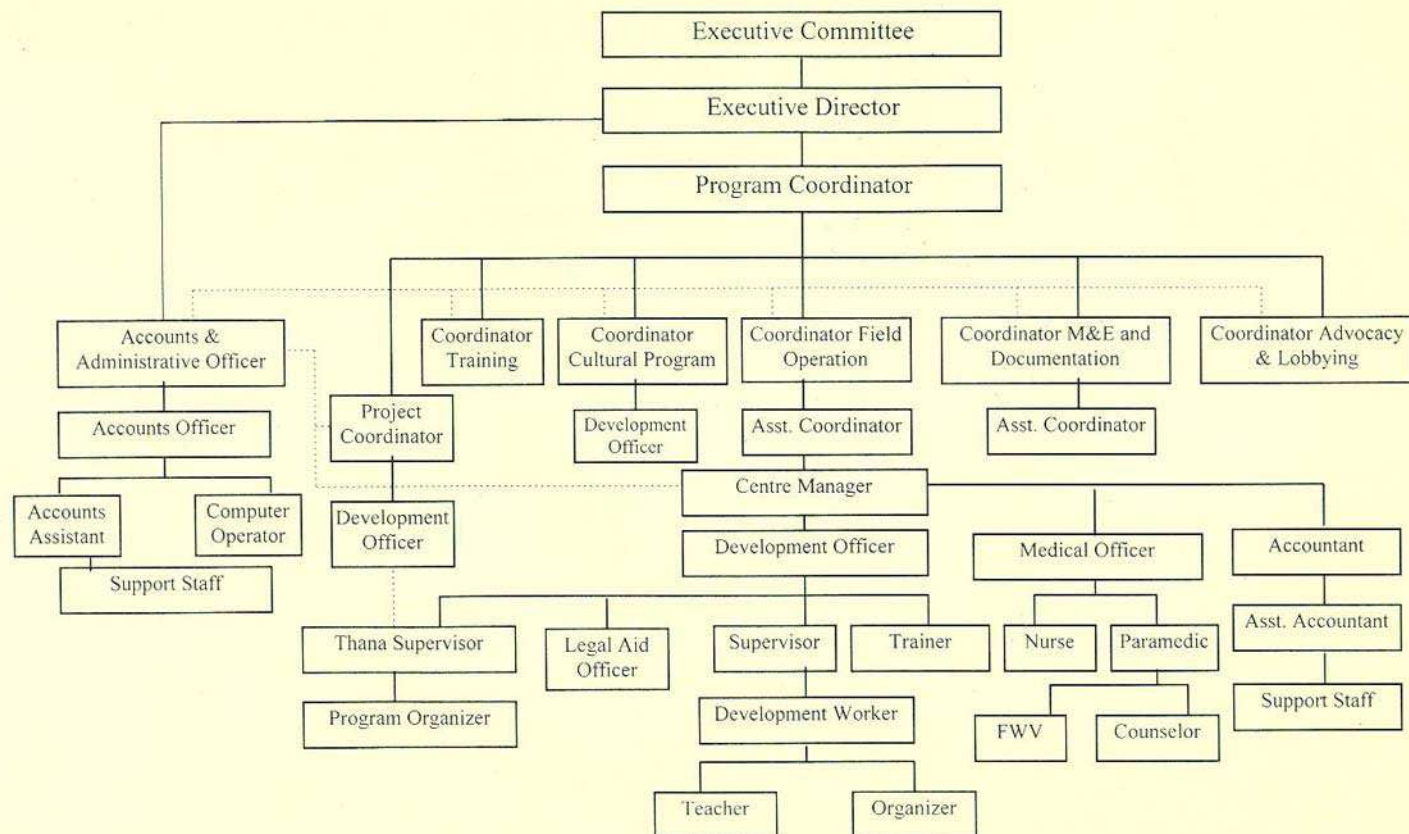
Systems in Operation of BNPS



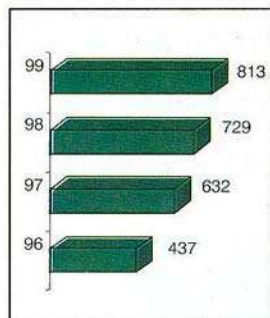
Core Programs

- Institution Building
- Development Education
- Political Empowerment of Women
- Income and Employment Generation for Women
- Advocacy & Lobbying
- Legal Awareness and Legal Aid
- Non-formal Education for Children and Adolescent Girl
- Health Education and Services for Poor and Women
- Environment and Disaster Management

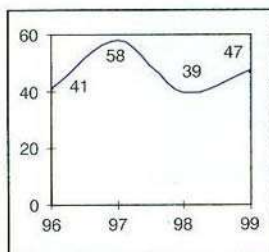
Organogram



• Institution Building



Year Wise Savings and Credit Groups



Year Wise General Groups

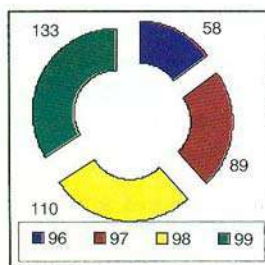
Institution building program aims at organizing the women at the grassroots level to make them united and collectively stronger. Institution building includes micro group formation and building broader networking groups. The groups in different phases go through a continuous process of awareness sessions on various social, political and economic issues. There are three types of micro groups in BNPS such as Awareness Building Group, Savings and Credit Group, and General Group. At the first stage the Awareness Building Groups are formed. Members of these groups participate in awareness raising sessions for four months. After that, group members who are willing to receive credit support and interested to be involved in all other grassroots level initiatives of the organization, form Savings and Credit Groups. Rest of the members of the Awareness Building Groups, who are not willing to get credit supports, form General Groups. Members of General Groups meet once in a month and other group members meet in every week. Area Committees are formed with representatives from the 4-6 micro groups to build network among them. Member of this committee meet once a month. Other than these, group members of BNPS also formed issue based committees like committee to resist cruelty against women and small traders women association.

Institution Building program of BNPS has created an opportunity of the poor of its working area to be united and undertake different initiatives by their own. Now the group members are able to identify the positiveness of forming their own institutions and can feel the difference by comparing their previous situation. Mobility of group members has increased up to a considerable level and they can solve problems of their groups by themselves.

Male members of the families of the group members and the community people are also positive to the initiative of BNPS. Because of this, especially in the rural area, grassroots workers of BNPS find it a bit easier to form new groups. Besides, in some places, group members also took initiatives to form new groups. In 1999, total 32 Awareness Building Groups were formed by the own initiatives of group members in different working areas of the organization.

In 1999, BNPS emphasized on identifying new participants for the groups in its comparatively new working areas in Jessore, Khulna and Mymensing. Besides, Netrakona and Dhaka Center

In October 1999, group members of Musapur area of Sandwip Center came to know that a girl child marriage is going to be occurred in their community. After being informed, they met the parents of the girl and tried to make them understand that child marriage is illegal and it will not be good mentally and physically for their daughter. Even after that parents of the girl were not agreed to stop the marriage. Then the group members told them that if they do not stop the marriage they will inform the police and Chairperson of the Union Parishad. That was the last step they could do and fortunately parents of the girl finally stop the marriage.



Year Wise Area Committees

• Development Education

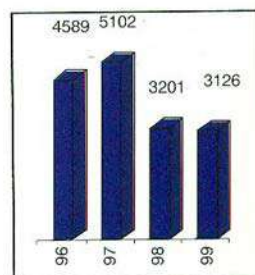
To raise the analytical skills and strengthen capacity of focus people to understand their own situation, BNPS has been implementing Development Education program in its working areas. Under this program, informal discussion sessions organized at the group level and formal in-house training courses organized at the center level according to the specific training module on various social and leadership aspects. Besides, cultural programs like folk song and alternative theater shows were also organized to sensitize the community people and to create a favorable environment for women in the society. In 1999, this program became more strengthened through reviewing and improving the training modules and developing flip charts.

also had to form new groups as a number of groups broke during the ever devastating flood in Bangladesh in 1998. Sandwip Center also had to form some new groups as some old groups broke up because of river erosion.

It has been found in the working area of BNPS that group members were very aware about forming and strengthening their own institutions. Members of one Savings & Credit Group in Sandwip were mentioning that if they could not organize their group meeting on the scheduled day because of any natural calamity then they organize it on the next day. Participation of group members in the group meetings was 82% in Sandwip and overall it is 84% among the groups of BNPS.

There are number of instances in all the working area of BNPS where group members found taking joint initiatives to solve their family level problems. The rate of wife beating, child marriage, dowry, polygamy and such other occurrences were negligible in the families of group members of BNPS. If group members got to know of any such incident they take instant initiatives to mitigate the problem. Even they also take necessary initiatives if any injustice happened to be occurred in their society.

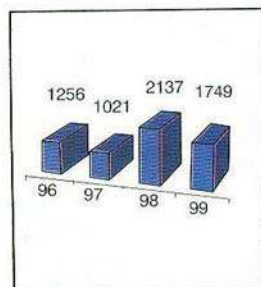
Almost all the micro groups already joined the Area Committees specially in the old working areas of the organization. These committees played a vital role in mitigating problems among the group members and also to take joint initiatives of development activities and protesting against any discrimination on women.



Number of People Participated in Awareness Building Course

Over the period of time, Development Education Program of BNPS have been found quite effective to raise the awareness of poor grassroots women. It was mentioned by the group members that before joining BNPS's groups, they did not know about women's rights specially political, social and economic rights. Now they are much sensitized on these issues and have the confidence to raise their agenda in respective forum.

As a result of different initiatives of Development Education Program of BNPS, group members found much aware of their status and situation in the society and they are able to transfer such awareness into action when necessary.



Number of People Participated in the Training on Leadership



In May 1999, one staff of BNPS was going back to office from Bakalia area of Chittagong after completing her work with the groups. She had a good amount of money which was collected from the group members as savings and reimbursement of credit. At that time, some miscreants attacked her and took all the money from her. By knowing this incident, group members of Bakalia area mobilized themselves and met the local Commissioner just on the next day. There they demanded necessary action by the Commissioner to get their money back. The Commissioner took immediate steps and were able to get most of the money back which was looted by the miscreants.

• Political Empowerment of Women

Political empowerment of women is one of the most important area of concern in BNPS. The organization believes that it will contribute to ensuring the overall empowerment of women. The patriarchal structure of our society limits women's involvement in the politics. Presently a very few number of women are active in politics at different level. Most of the women representatives at the national parliament are selected by the elected male members, not elected by the people. As a result, they are in most cases accountable to the men, in particular, to the ruling party who selected them rather than to people. Because of this, women do not get any positive result out of existing system of their involvement in the political arena.

BNPS along with its partner NGOs have been playing a significant role in enhancing women's participation in political institutions since 1990. Political Empowerment of Women program of BNPS had proved to be a very effective one during the last two elections namely, the Parliament election in 1996 and the Union Parishad election in 1997.

A project was initiated by BNPS titled 'Democracy Education for Effective Local Elected Bodies' in 1997 in 8 unions of Netrakona district and 4 unions of Sandwip thana of Chittagong district with a view to creating more opportunity for women to participate in the local level decision making and make the Local Elected Bodies (LEBs) more responsive to the poor particularly women. Major activities of the project includes organizing training for LEBs, group leaders, organizing workshop and sharing meeting with LEBs and community leaders, conducting dialogue sessions between voters and LEBs and coordination meeting with the stakeholders.

In 1999, BNPS organized 4 training courses on 'Roles and Responsibilities of LEBs in Promoting Good Governance' in Netrakona and 2 training courses on 'Access of Women and the Poor to Public Resources' in Sandwip. Total 160 elected representatives participated in those training courses. Training courses were also organized for group leaders of BNPS where 501 group leaders participated. It has been observed that after participating in the training of BNPS, group leaders and group members were involved in the process of preparing list of VGF and VGD cards, elderly allowances distributed by the LEBs.

According to the information of UPs of the project area it has been found that women members took part in 40.38% of total salishes in 1999 which is comparatively much higher than the previous year when women's participation was only 17% in Netrakona and 2% in Sandwip.

A Member of Sarikait Union of Sandwip thana distributed two VGF cards to a family which is not at all permitted by the government policy. Community people protested the faulty distribution of VGF cards and informed it to TNO through a letter. Thus a government official was assigned to investigate the matter. According to the investigation report those cards lost effectiveness.

BNPS organized 9 workshops with the women member of Union Parishad (UP) in 1999 and issue of those workshop were 'Women Members and Public Relations' and 'Problems of Women LEBs and Their Role to Overcome'. Total 168 women member of UP in the project area participated in those workshops.

Total 428 community leaders participated in the workshops organized under this project in 1999 and about 600 people participated in the sharing meetings between LEBs and community leaders. Dialogue sessions between LEBs and voters also organized in 1999 where about 800 women and men participated. Through those initiatives community leaders and voters had been able to identify the gaps with LEBs and came into consensus to provide necessary support to the LEBs in development activities. Besides, they have also built a network titled 'Union Unnayan Committee' to make LEBs more transparent and accountable to the constituents.

A series of coordination meetings were organized with GO, NGO, civil society groups in the project area in 1999 and about 2000 people participated in those meetings. The purpose of those coordination meetings was to ensure better services of the government employees for the community.

One poster on 'Equal Participation of Women and Men in the UP Activities' and one leaflet on defining the roles on women member's were published in 1999. Besides, forty eight alternative theater shows were organized at different important places of the project area to raise awareness of mass people on gender and governance issues.

In the annual review meeting it was expressed by the partners organizations that the technical support extended from BNPS to the partners; training for capacity building, develop training modules and materials etc. were very useful for them in implementing the project activities.

Another project titled 'Creating Enabling Environment for Women' was initiated on pilot basis in 1998 by BNPS under the Political Empowerment of Women program. Ten partner organizations from the local level NGOs have been involved in implementation of that project. The main objective of the project is to contribute in creating a favorable policy environment for integration of women in the mainstream of development process. Major activities of this project includes organizing program development workshop, training of trainers course, staff development training, sharing meetings and workshop, study on policy issues, awareness raising sessions, workshop with community leaders, training for LEBs, dialogue sessions

Rajia Established the Women Leadership

Rajia was elected member in the reserved seats for women in the Chiram Union of Netrakona District. In this union there are other two women members. But the Chairman and some other male members of the Union were not ready to accept their leadership. They were avoiding the women members in all the meetings. Sometimes they took their signature in blank sheets without writing resolutions of the meetings and also gave false signature of the women members. Rajia could not accept this.

Along with her fellow women members Rajia protested this to the Chairman. But he gave no attention to their voice. In this Union, all the activities were done by the male members and women were left apart. The Chairman was staying in the Thana headquarters. When the women members visited him in his house he did not even behave well.

One day when Rajia requested the Chairman to issue a VGD card for a distressed women, the Chairman again misbehaved with her. She strongly protested the matter. After that incidence, she also organized other members particularly those who belong to lower income strata. They decided to bring non-confidence move against the Chairman. Ten out of 12 members came to a consensus. Understanding the situation, the Chairman confessed his fault and promised them to run the Union Parishad in a participatory manner.

The initiative taken by Rajia lead the Union Parishad to a better one where every member irrespective of men and women can participate in the activities of the Parishad.

between LEBs and voters, debate on women issues, publishing awareness materials, and developing training module on democracy education.

At the national level, two program development workshops were organized during 1999 where 37 staff of partner organizations and BNPS participated. Within that period two training modules were developed on democracy education. One training of trainers course was organized where 18 staff of partner organization and BNPS participated. Those participants also joined the refreshers course organized in the same year. Two staff development training on Advocacy and Lobbying, and Development Management were organized in 1999 where the total number of participants were 39. Four sharing meeting organized in 1999 on the issue of 'Implementation of Constitutional Commitments to Establish the Rights and the Status of Women', 'Women's Status in Existing Family Laws', 'Cruelty on Women and Children Amendment Act 1995', and 'Law Reform in Favor of Women' Total 614 people i.e. member of the civil society groups, political leaders, MPs, women activists, policy makers and lawyers, journalists, NGO activists participated in those sharing meeting. Workshops on 'Roles and Responsibilities of Journalists to Report on Women Issues', 'CEDAW and Women in Bangladesh', 'Human Rights and Women Issues', and on 'Universal Family Law in the Constitutional Perspective' organized in 1999 where people from different backgrounds participated.

The strategy to implement the project's activities at the local level through local NGOs was the best way to go. BNPS was able to build a strong partnership with the local NGOs. These NGOs seem to have effective relationship with grassroots people, community leaders, members of LEBs and with Thana and District administration.

Both BNPS and its partners carried out the activities stipulated in the project fairly successfully. In terms of the impact on the ultimate beneficiaries the activities of the project are making changes in the right direction.

Comments made by the external evaluator

At the local level, total 6319 awareness raising sessions on Democracy Education were conducted among the group members of the partner organizations in 1999 and the total number of participant of those session were about 47000. Besides, about 4000 people i.e. community leaders, LEBs, voters participated in local level workshops, training, and dialogue sessions organized in 1999 at the working areas of the partner organizations of the project.

Working through partnership helped BNPS to easy outreach in the areas and implementation of the project activities rather than setting new office by BNPS in the areas as the partners have comparative advantage in working in their old operational areas.

Through this partnership strategy BNPS had been able to raise the sensitivity of the partner organizations on gender issues.

Partner organization gained a considerable level of expertise to involve civil society groups in different advocacy initiatives, which is a qualitative change for the partner organizations.

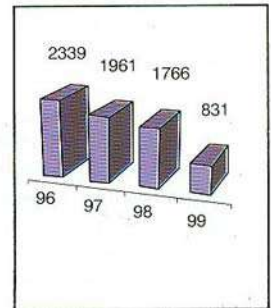
Awareness initiatives with the groups organized by the partners resulted in the raising/voicing of demands on their rights by people at the grassroots level. However, as the leaders of the groups lack necessary skills and understanding for dealing with the advocacy initiatives with the UP, sometimes they could not obtain the result they expected.

• Income and Employment Generation for Women

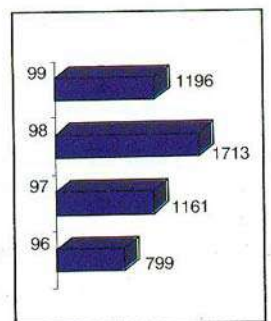
Income and Employment Generation for Women program of BNPS contribute significantly to achieve one of the main objectives of the organization - the economic empowerment of women. Under this program BNPS provides training on Accounts Keeping, Income Generation Activities-Selection Planning and Management (IGASPM), and skills development training on various trade i.e. Homestead Gardening, Sewing, Block Printing, Boutique, Cattle Rearing, Poultry etc. BNPS also extends credit support to the group members and encourage them to generate savings regularly. IGASPM and skills development training are must for group members who are interested to receive credit support from the organization.

Over the period, BNPS has developed a very sensitive approach to select economic activities, which fit each individuals interest, skills, capability and marketing opportunity and women can make good use of the training they receive. Following such procedure minimum 7-8 months required to provide the first credit support to the group members which is longer than credit disbursement procedure of other NGOs. Most of the NGOs provide credit within 15-30 days of formation of groups. However, group members of BNPS can understand the difference very soon specially when they operate their income generation activities successfully. In Jessore and Mymensingh area some group members were mentioning that though they had no prior experience of investing money in the small business yet, they are not facing any problems to implement those.

Activities of the Income and Employment Generation for Women program found successful to increase the status of women at the family level. With the technical and financial



People Received IGASPM Training

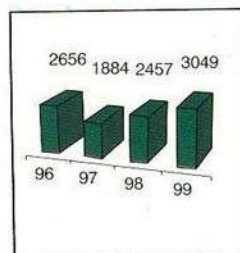


People Received Skills Development Training

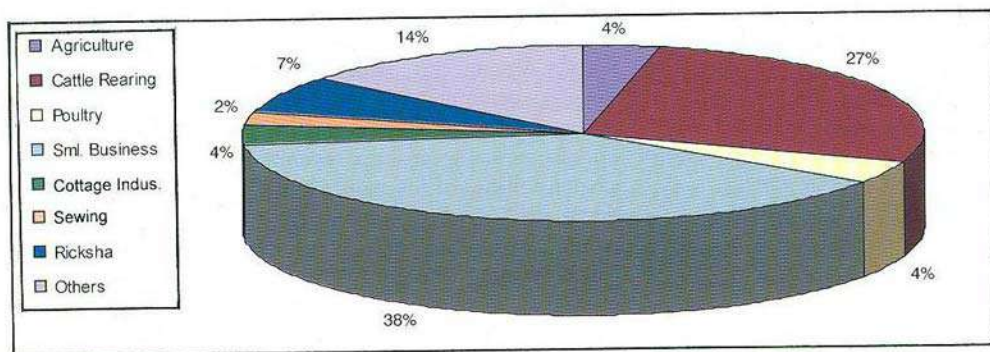
support of this program a number of group members had been able to raise the level of income of their families. Earlier, most of the income of their families had been spent for food. Now with that extra income they can educate their children in the school, and buy cloths and other essentials for them. As women have been identified now as an earning member of the family, their opinion on various family aspect also have been taking into account by the male member of the family.

Besides, because of this program, women have been coming out of their houses and getting involved in different income earnings activities with mass people. Such experiences are providing them bigger exposure of life and make them more confident to handle their business independently. It has been observed that in the area like Sandwip, where religious fundamentalists are quite active and does not allow women in the market area, some group members of BNPS involved in both selling and purchasing day to day materials. In other places situation is more better. In Barhatta area of Netrakona Center, some of the small entrepreneurs purchase materials from the big markets and then sold those at the local level. Sometimes they even helped other small traders, both male and female, to purchase materials from the capital city.

By utilizing credit amount of BNPS and their own savings, about 10% member of the Savings & Credit Groups raised a capital of Tk.2000 - 3000. They are now confident to undertake IGAs with bigger budget. About 65% members of Savings & Credit Groups implement IGAs by themselves completely. Rest of the members partially depends on their close relatives specially to sell their products but have control over the earnings.



Persons Received Credit Support



Sector wise percentage of credit disbursement in 1999

• Advocacy & Lobbying

BNPS initiates advocacy & lobbying activities both at the grassroots and national level. Within a short period of time after inception, it was realized by BNPS that micro level interventions should be supplemented with macro level policy interventions. For this reason, BNPS always maintains the strategy of linking grassroots level advocacy initiatives with the national level policy making process. The main objective of this program is to bring in a sustainable change in the life of the grassroots people particularly women. BNPS has been implementing a number of activities under Advocacy & Lobbying Program. Policy analysis and assessment of impact of policies on the life of grassroots people are being done regularly. Series of workshops, sharing meetings, seminars and dialogues were organized at local and national level with the civil society, media persons, lawyers, policy makers and other relevant groups on different policy issues. To strengthen women's movement, middle class women were also involved in different programs. Besides, BNPS organized debate among the school/college students to develop analytical skills of the participants and sensitize teachers, parents and students on gender issues. Materials like poster, leaflet and booklet newsletter etc. were also published to raise mass awareness on women's issues. These materials were distributed all over Bangladesh among different NGOs, government institutions and micro groups at the grassroots level through ADAB and other networks. Articles were also published in different national dailies on women issues.

Because of advocacy initiatives BNPS has been recognized as an institute active in the field of policy reform for the well being of poor, especially women. Both at the local and national level, BNPS very often asked by the government and non government institutes to be involved in different policy making initiatives and policy implementation.

In 1999, seven divisional level workshops were organized on 'CEDAW and Women in Bangladesh', 'Implementation of Constitutional Commitments to Establish the Rights and Status of Women' and 'Increased Number of Reserve Seats for Women in the Parliament and Provision for Direct Election in Those Seats'. Among the participants there were grassroots level workers, community leaders, NGO activists, govt. officials, teachers, students, lawyers, and journalists. Two national level workshops had been also organized in Dhaka on 'Roles and Responsibilities of Journalists to Report on Women Issues in the Newspaper', and 'Increased Number of Reserve Seats for Women in the Parliament and Provision for Direct Election in Those Seats'. Participants with different background i.e. journalists, political leaders, NGO leaders, women activists, trade union leaders, intellectuals attended those workshops in presence of the Ministers of the related ministry of the country.

Total 43 local level workshops were organized during in 1999 in the working areas of BNPS where grassroots people participated. Those workshops had been organized to create common understanding among the mass people on different policy initiatives. Issues like family law, roles and responsibilities of the local government, and various legal aspects of women rights were discussed in those workshops.

A study was conducted during the reporting period on 'Direct Election in the Reserved Seats for Women in the Local Government : Effect of the New Policies on Women's Political Empowerment'. This had been done by an external researcher and a number of recommendations formulated towards strengthening the roles of women members in the local government.

BNPS has prior experiences of organizing debate among the students at different levels which was very much effective to sensitize both participants and audiences on women issues. By considering this, in 1999, BNPS organized debate program on women issues among the college students in its new centers in Khulna, Jessore and Mymensingh. Total 20 college participated in that program and number of audience were more than 10,000 in total. This year the debate program was also successful especially the students were found very much encouraged to participate in such program regularly. College students in Mymensingh were saying that no other NGO in their area ever created such opportunity for them to be involved in the initiative of women empowerment. This program also helped BNPS to be recognized as an unique organization in the development arena especially at the local level.

Cultural activities of BNPS has been found very much effective to sensitize people to various issue. Especially at the rural areas, number of audience of BNPS's cultural programs increased significantly. In some places, cultural groups of BNPS had been requested to perform outside the working areas of the organization. However, that could not be possible because of limited resources.

One poster was published in August 1999 on the demand of 64 reserved seats for women in the parliament. One booklet was published on the demand of implementation of constitutional commitments to establish the rights and status of women. That booklet had been distributed among the parliament members and member of the civil society groups. Second volume of the book titled 'Sangrami Nari Yuge Yuge' was published in December 1999. Brief life sketches of 100 activists women was included in this book. Other than these, three issue of quarterly Bangla newsletter of BNPS 'Nari Progati Barta' were published in 1999.

Each year BNPS celebrates seven significant national and international days and it was also done in 1999.

Cultural programs, rallies and discussion sessions were organized in all the centers of BNPS to celebrate these days and group members, community leaders and general people participated in those activities.

Besides, a central level rally was organized with the demand 'Stop Violence against Women' at Shahid Minar on 21 August 1999. About two thousand women attended this central level rally. A leaflet was published on the same demand and distributed among the participants of the rally and also sent to different NGOs nationwide. A poster was published on the death of poet Sufia Kamal, one of the most well known women activists, and the only women in Bangladesh who received state funeral. This poster was also distributed nationwide.

Celebrated National and International days:

21 February:
Language Martyrs Day

8 March :
International Women's Day

26 March:
Independence Day

1 Baishakh (14 April):
Bangla New Year

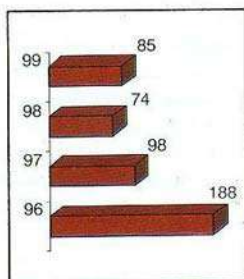
24 August:
Nari Nirjatan Protirodh Dibash

9 December:
Begum Rokeya Day

16 December:
Victory Day



• Legal Awareness and Legal Aid



Number of People Received Legal Support

In August 1999, members of a group of Netrakona Center successfully stopped a marriage which was going to be done by a Moulavi (religious leader) without any registration. Afterward, because of the initiatives of the group members, the marriage was done by the local marriage register.

With a view to protecting women's rights and raise awareness of women on their legal rights, BNPS implements Legal Awareness and Legal Aid program in its working areas. To raise awareness of grassroots women on legal issues BNPS organizes training course at the group level for which specific module developed by the organization. In August 1999, the module was reviewed according to the recommendations of the group members and grassroots level staff of the organization.

BNPS has one full time lawyer in Dhaka and all the other center offices involve local level lawyer on contract basis to provide legal education and support to women when necessary. Under this program, BNPS also organize workshops on legal issues, conduct study on policy issues and facilitate alternative dispute resolution. Total 21 workshops on legal rights of women were organized in 1999 at the local level in the working area of BNPS. Besides, leaders of BNPS's groups participated in 19 local level arbitration.

Some positive effects of this program have been observed among the group member of BNPS and also in the community. During the internal annual evaluation workshop of 1999 it has been found that about 75% group members were aware on different aspects of family law i.e. marriage registration, dowry, dower, child marriage, polygamy etc. Group members were also found active to protest against illegal initiatives in their community.

• Non-formal Education for Children and Adolescent Girl

Through Non-formal Education for Children and Adolescent Girl Program, BNPS provided the opportunity to the children of the group members' families and dropout children of the working area to study in its schools up to class three. BNPS operates 30 of such schools in Dhaka, Chittagong, Netrakona and Sandwip. Education curriculum of Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) followed in the schools with some additional information on gender.

Through analyzing different outputs of this program it has been identified that quality of the education provided in BNPS operated schools were much better than other government primary schools in the area and after completing the course in

It is not only reading and writing that has been teaching in the schools of BNPS.

Furthermore, cultural activities like singing, dancing and drawing are also practiced by the students. It could be worth mentioning

BNPS operated schools the students of these schools easily get admitted in the upper classes of government schools and were doing better in the examinations. In 1999 students' presence in the schools of BNPS was more than 83%.

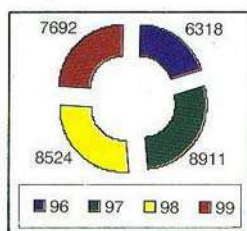
Each year BNPS organize annual sports and cultural program for the students of its non-formal primary schools. Particularly in the remote areas of Netrakona and Sandwip, this is the main recreational opportunity for the small children of those schools. This is also a year long cherished by the students of BNPS's schools in the slum areas of Dhaka and Chittagong. These programs were not only enjoyed by the students of the schools, both parents and the community people of the working area of the organization also enjoyed the cultural programs and sports competition with much enthusiasm.

here that students of BNPS operated schools found also capable of participating and winning prizes in open cultural competition organized by other institutions. In 1999, a student of BNPS school of Chittagong Center won the third prize in an open drawing competition which was organized on the occasion of celebrating the Victory Day.



• Health Education and Services for Poor and Women

It has been found during the internal annual evaluation of 1999 that 100% children of group members of BNPS who are under 6 years of age have been properly immunized against 6 major diseases.



People Received Health Support

Health education is provided among all the program partners of BNPS while health services are provided only in the working area of Netrakona and Sandwip since availability of these services are nil or very rare in Netrakona and Sandwip.

Through this program, BNPS organize awareness sessions on health education at the group level, provides medical facilities to group member and their families, organize staff training on health, organize basic training for selected Traditional Birth Attendants (TBAs), and refreshers course for TBAs.

Health education initiatives of BNPS created a considerable level of awareness among the group members and community people in the working areas of the organization. In Sandwip, this program has a great impact on the overall health situation of women as health facilities are very much inadequate in this island in the Bay of Bengal. In Barhatta thana of Netrakona Center, this program has similar affect as the place is very much remote and no other non-government or government organization provide health facilities among the people of this area. BNPS operates satellite clinic at different places in Sandwip and Netrakona for which group member need not to go to distant places to receive health facilities.

• Environment and Disaster Management

Sandwip, a working area of BNPS is one of the most disaster prone areas of Bangladesh. Very often this area get affected by severe cyclone and tidal bore. Some places of Netrakona and Dhaka Center are also low lying area and get flood affected almost in every year. To minimize the affect of such natural calamities, BNPS implement the program of Environment and Disaster Management. Initiatives of this program includes forming disaster preparedness groups, provide training on disaster preparedness and post disaster rehabilitation support.

In 1999, one training course was organized on Disaster Preparedness in Sandwip. Thirty group members and leaders of that area participated in this training. Different sessions of the course were facilitated by the trainer of Sandwip Center. Necessary initiatives which has to be taken before, during and after the natural disaster, especially cyclone, had been discussed in the training. Besides, disaster management groups in Sandwip had regular monthly meeting.

In 1998, Bangladesh experienced an ever devastating flood in its history during mid July to mid September. Out of total 67 districts, 47 were under flood water for about 8 weeks. Working area of BNPS in Dhaka and Netrakona had been also severely affected by the flood. During that severe flood BNPS took initiatives to provide emergency food and medicine supply among the flood affected people in its working areas. And after the flood the organization implemented a rehabilitation project in the flood affected areas of Netrakona District. The project was started in 16 November 1998 and completed in February 1999. Total 150 houses were provided among the flood affected people in Netrakona and 40,000 saplings of different trees distributed among the people through that project. The poor people of Netrakona working area of BNPS were greatly benefited by the house reconstruction activities of that project. Houses which had been totally destroyed by the flood and mostly in remote areas, where no other support reached either from government or non-government side, only those were selected with the participation of local people in the selection procedure.



Other Projects

- Networking and Advocacy for Legal Rights
- Strengthening the Women's Movement in Bangladesh

Saleha in Her Misery

Saleha was gang raped in Shiberhat, Sandwip thana of Chittagong while she was staying in an under construction hospital where she went to meet her husband who did not contact her for a few months.

Her husband and son were supposed to work as mason in that hospital. However, when she reached there from Chittagong she found her son but her husband was not there. She had to stay a night with her son in a room where construction was going on. That night some miscreants in collaboration with some construction worker raped her.

The guard of the hospital came to know the situation and contacted the local Union Parishad Chairperson, officials and the village defense police. They forced her to go back to Chittagong without giving any solution.

After knowing the incident, the local office of BNPS organized community people, development organizations and journalists. They brought Saleha back from Chittagong and filed a case in Sandwip. After that, police arrested one person involved in the incident.

A coordination committee was formed with local NGOs, and leaders of groups. They handed over a memorandum to the local thana and MP demanding justice for the victim. The case was going on while reported and the committee was vigilantly following up the situation.

• Networking and Advocacy for Legal Rights

BNPS has been operating the project titled 'Networking and Advocacy for Legal Rights' since September 1997 with a view to strengthening advocacy initiatives for legal rights of the disadvantaged especially women. The year 1999 was the final year of the project.

Major activities of this project includes organizing workshop, sharing meeting at field and national level, seminar at national level, rally at field level, and publish awareness materials.

Total 9 field level workshops were organized with the grassroots women and community leaders in Netrakona and Sandwip area. Issue of those workshops were 'Women's Rights in Existing Family Laws', 'Participation of Women in Salish Process' and 'Role of Community People to Ensure Birth Registration'. Total 267 people participated in those workshops.

Total 239 people participated in the field level sharing meeting organized in 1999 under this project. The sharing meetings were organized on 'Local Initiatives to Uphold Women Rights', 'Role of Community Leaders to Ensure Birth Registration' and 'Sharing Experience of Birth Registration'.

One national level opinion sharing meeting was organized in Dhaka on 'Implementation of Constitutional Commitment to Uphold the Rights and Dignity of Women'. Total 53 participants consisting of MPs, political party leaders, lawyers, journalists, women activists and NGO activists participated in that sharing meeting.

The National level seminar was organized on 'Law Reform in Favor of Women' where 98 participants from different background were present.

To make the birth registration issue popular two rallies were organized at Sandwip and Netrakona where students of schools, colleges, community leaders and group members participated. Besides, a poster published with the title of 'Birth Registration Right is a Citizen's Right' and distributed among the people of the working area, LEBs and among different NGOs.

Major recommendations of national level sharing meeting:

- Identifying the loopholes of proposed 'Nari O Shishu Nirjatan Daman Ain Bill '99*
- One-third seats have to be reserved for women candidates at the national parliament*
- Universal Family Law has to be introduced*

• Strengthening the Women's Movement in Bangladesh

BNPS completed implementation of the project titled 'Strengthening the Women's Movement in Bangladesh' in January 1999. This project was planned for one year started in December 1997. However, the duration of the project extended for two months afterward because of flood in 1998.

Objectives of the project were to increase coordination and solidarity among the women groups active on women issues, sensitize policy actors and influence them to bring in a positive change in laws and policies in favor of women and proper execution of existing laws, and develop the capacity of local level women organizations and BNPS to implement programs on various women's issues.

Major activities of the project includes organizing workshop at local and national level, staff development training, exposure trip, conduct study, and develop awareness materials.

Though most of the planned activities of this project were implemented within 1998, however the final report of the study on 'Obstacles to Law Reform in Favor of Women in Bangladesh' was prepared in January 1999. This report was finalized through a seminar at the national level where prominent lawyers, women leaders, journalists, NGO leaders, political leaders, MPs and member of the civil society groups participated.

In the safe custody issue, the important point is not to whom the girl or women would go to after the case is being settled, but why she would be put into so called safe custody or jail without committing any crime.

This custody provision is a clear violation of human rights ensured by the state.

- Specific comments of the study on 'Obstacles to Law Reform in Favor of Women in Bangladesh'.



Support Programs

- Institutional Capacity Building
- Documentation and Publication
- Monitoring and Evaluation

Address of the Partner Organizations

Manab Kallyan Parishad (MKP) Bus Stand Road, Thakurgaon - 304 Phone: 0561-3659 E-mail: mkp@bdonline.com Contact Person: Mr Rabiul Azam, Director	Association for Social and Environmental Development (ASED) 125/A Raninagar, P.O. Kazla, Rajshahi - 6100 Phone: 0721-750519 (R) Contact Person: Ms Taiyeba Islam Executive Director
Bangladesh Social Advancement Society (BSAS) 13, Perera Road, Barisal Contact Person: Ms Bandana Nath, Director	Sirajgonj Uttaran Mahila Sangstha (SUMS) Darga Road, Sirajgonj Phone: 0751-72422 Contact Person: Ms Shafina Lohani, Director
SAMATA Village : Bishnupur, Post : Dulai, District : Pabna Contact Person: Md Abdul Kader Executive Director	Milanpur Mohila Samity Khagrachori Contact Person: Ms Indira Chakma Chairperson
Rupantar 65 Islampur Road, Santidham More Khulna - 9100, Phone & Fax: 041-731876 Contact Person: Mr Swapan Guha Chief Executive	Pajuriko College Para, Khagrachori Contact Person: Mr Sudhendu Bikash Chakma Chief Executive
CODEC 62/B, Road 3, Chandgaon, Chittagong Phone: 031-670663, 671405 Contact Person: Dr Khurshid Alam Executive Director	Zabarang Kalyan Samity Khagrapur, Khagrachori Contact Person: Mr Shaktipada Tripura Chairperson
Social Association for Rural Advancement (SARA) 23/1, Saradaghose Road, Naumahal (Nandibari) Post Box: 10, Mymensing - 2200 Phone: 091-54877 Contact Person: Mr Tushar Daring, Director	Khagrapur Mohila Kalyan Samity Khagrapur, Khagrachori Contact Person: Ms Shefalika Tripura Chairperson
Loka Unnayan Kendra Kalitola, Dinajpur Contact Person: Mr Tozammel Haque Executive Director	Jumbi Mohila Kalyan Samity South Kalindipur, Rangamati Contact Person: Ms Aparajita Chakma Chairperson
ZIBIKA Hospital Road, Kurigram Phone: 0581-891 Contact Person: Mr Manik Chowdhury Director	Garjantoli Mohila Kalyan Samity Garjantoli, Rangamati Contact Person: Ms Shagarika Roaja Chairperson

• Institutional Capacity Building

Institutional Capacity Building program of BNPS has vital supportive role in the growth of the organization over the period of more than last one decade and successful implementation of its different program activities in the field of socio-economic and political empowerment of women. The main objective of this program is to set the organization in a dynamic motion where each section or division of the organization can effectively play its role in an harmonized form.

At the early stages, BNPS made use of training materials of other NGOs to facilitate grassroots level training for the group members and trained the staff from other organizations. However, due to the differences in outlook and analysis, especially regarding women's issues, afterward BNPS developed its own training curriculum and module for its group members and started organizing staff development training according the specific requirements of the organization, where along with senior program personnel of BNPS, external resource persons also facilitate different sessions.

It should be mentioned here that organizing formal training courses is not the only component of the Institutional Capacity Building program of BNPS, rather, BNPS believes that it is a continuous process which would be strengthened through effective supervision, practical experiences and learning.

Each center office of BNPS is used as the training center to organize in-house courses for group members and the Central Office in Dhaka has a separate Training Cell headed by the Training Coordinator. Staff development training courses organized at the Central Office which has hostel facilities and adequate training equipment. Training Cell at the Central Office coordinate the overall activities of the Institutional Capacity Building program.

Total 5 staff development training were courses organized in 1999 by BNPS where program staff of all the center and central office participated. Those training courses were on 'ToT on Group Facilitation', 'Health Awareness', 'Advocacy and Lobbying', and 'Gender and Development'. Staff of BNPS also participated in a number of training courses in 1999 which were organized by other organizations. Some of those courses were on 'Environment and Environmental Law', 'Gender and Sustainable

Development', 'Advocacy and Lobbying', and 'Human Rights and Legal Awareness'. During that period, three training courses were organized for staff of the partner organizations of BNPS and those were on 'Human Rights and Women Issues', 'Good Governance and Local Government', and 'Organization Management'.

Other than organizing different training courses, Training Cell was also involved in reviewing training modules used in the field level training for group members and developed a flip chart.

BNPS is an active member of South Asian Network of Gender Activists and Trainers (SANGAT). This network is involved in promoting of gender and development in South Asia. In 1999, BNPS participated in different activities of this network. Besides, BNPS is one of the initiator of formulating 'Gender Core Team' which is involved in enhancing capacity of trainers of different NGOs in Bangladesh on gender issues. Other member of this team are BRAC, Proshika, and The PRIP Trust. In 1999, one training course was organized by the 'Gender Core Team' and senior program staff of BNPS facilitated some sessions there.



• Documentation and Publication



Main objective of the Documentation and Publication Program of BNPS is to ensure proper documentation of different initiatives of the organization and provide effective support in publishing awareness materials. In 1999, reports of all the major program activities of the organization were prepared. During that period 5 posters, 2 books, 1 flip chart, 5 booklets, and 2 leaflets were published by BNPS. Other than these, 3 issue of 'Nari Progati Barta' were also published in that period. This is a quarterly Bangla newsletter of BNPS. Publications of BNPS has a good demand among the NGOs in Bangladesh. Different development organization very often contact BNPS to get its publications especially posters and booklets which are much useful to raise awareness of mass people on women issues. Besides, books published by BNPS regularly sold in the annual book fair of Bangla Academy.

• Monitoring and Evaluation

During July - December 1996, BNPS initiated a simple monitoring and evaluation system to ensure proper implementation and assessment of different program activities of the organization. A separate Monitoring and Evaluation Cell also set up during that period at the central office in Dhaka. Later on, since 1998 this cell has been also involved in conducting informal research to find out effects and impacts of program intervention of BNPS in its working area. Besides, this cell also provides necessary support to the external consultants to conduct in-depth study implemented time to time.

For the monitoring purpose, a set of indicators have been chosen through which only a high priority relevant information are collected. Monitoring system of BNPS includes problem identification, application of solution with a mechanism for immediate feedback to the program.

BNPS promotes a positive and collaborative approach to evaluation which seeks to involve input and insights from stakeholders. A three phase workshop program has been designed annually for participatory evaluation i.e. workshop for focus group members and community members at field level, workshop for field level staff and group leaders at central level, and workshop for central staff along with field level staff and representatives from groups and community leaders.

Consolidated Financial Statement

Period : 01 January to 31 December 1999

SL.	Name of Project	Name of Donor	Opening Balance	Amount Received	Total Amount	Expenditure	Balance
1	Strengthening the Women's Empowerment Process in Bangladesh	ICCO, Netherlands and EZE, Germany	1,731,284	16,636,374	18,367,658	13,991,314	4,376,344
2	Socio - Economic and Political Empowerment of Women	IIBF, Germany	10,114	6,924,700	6,934,814	6,027,308	907,506
3	Creating Enabling Environment for Women	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) Dhaka	463,019	3,018,570	3,481,589	3,114,246	367,343
4	Strengthening the Women's Movement in Bangladesh	Royal Norwegian Embassy (NORAD), Dhaka	280,853	140,474	421,327	290,450	130,877
5	Networking and Advocacy for Legal Rights	The Asia Foundation (TAF), Dhaka	408,102	182,099	590,201	590,201	-
6	Democracy Education for Effective Local Elected Bodies	The Asia Foundation (TAF), Dhaka	1,898,183	2,847,056	4,745,239	4,292,873	452,366
	TOTAL TAKA		4,791,555	29,749,273	34,540,828	28,306,392	6,234,436

Notes

Notes
