

Report No. 97

**Domestic Violence in Bangladesh**  
*Cost Estimates and Measures to Address the  
Attendant Problems*

Publisher

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The Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), established in 1993, is a civil society initiative to promote an ongoing dialogue between the principal partners in the decision-making and implementing process. The dialogues are designed to address important policy issues and to seek constructive solutions to these problems. The Centre has already organised a series of such dialogues at local, regional and national levels. The CPD has also organised a number of South Asian bilateral and regional dialogues as well as some international dialogues. These dialogues have brought together ministers, opposition frontbenchers, MPs, business leaders, NGOs, donors, professionals and other functional group in civil society within a non-confrontational environment to promote focused discussions. The CPD seeks to create a national policy consciousness where members of civil society will be made aware of critical policy issues affecting their lives and will come together in support of particular policy agendas which they feel are conducive to the well being of the country.

In support of the dialogue process the Centre is engaged in research programmes which are both serviced by and are intended to serve as inputs for particular dialogues organised by the Centre throughout the year. Some of the major research programmes of the CPD include **The Independent Review of Bangladesh's Development (IRBD), Trade Related Research and Policy Development (TRRPD), Governance and Policy Reforms, Regional Cooperation and Integration, Investment Promotion and Enterprise Development, Agriculture and Rural Development, Ecosystems, Environmental Studies and Social Sectors.** The CPD also conducts periodic public perception surveys on policy issues and issues of developmental concerns. With a view to promote vision and policy awareness amongst the young people of the country, CPD is implementing a **Youth Leadership Programme.**

Dissemination of information and knowledge on critical developmental issues continues to remain an important component of CPD's activities. Pursuant to this CPD maintains an active publication programme, both in Bangla and in English. As part of its dissemination programme, CPD has decided to bring out CPD Occasional Paper Series on a regular basis. Dialogue background papers, investigative reports and results of perception surveys which relate to issues of high public interest will be published under its cover. The Occasional Paper Series will also include draft research papers and reports, which may be subsequently published by the CPD.

As part of CPD's publication activities, a CPD Dialogue Report series is brought out in order to widely disseminate the summary of the discussions organised by the Centre. The present report contains the highlights of the dialogue on *Domestic Violence in Bangladesh: Cost Estimates and Measures to Address the Attendant Problems* held on 9 August 2008 at the CIRDAP Auditorium, Dhaka.

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Dialogue on  
**Domestic Violence in Bangladesh**  
*Cost Estimates and Measures to Address the Attendant Problems*

**The Dialogue**

The Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) organised a dialogue on 9 August 2008, titled **Domestic Violence in Bangladesh: Cost Estimates and Measures to Address the Attendant Problems** at the CIRDAP auditorium, Dhaka. *Professor Rehman Sobhan*, Chairman, CPD chaired the afternoon discussion. *Rasheda K Chowdhury*, Advisor for Women and Children Affairs to the Caretaker Government of Bangladesh was present as the Chief Guest. Additional Director of CPD, *Dr Fahmida Khatun* presented the keynote paper. *Professor Mustafizur Rahman*, Executive Director of CPD, provided a short background of the dialogue and welcomed all participants including policy makers, academicians, development activists and members of the diplomatic missions, journalists and representatives from various professions. *Advocate Sultana Kamal*, former Advisor to the Caretaker Government & Executive Director, Ain O Salish Kendro and *H E Dr Dora Rapold*, Ambassador, Embassy of Switzerland attended the session as Special Guest and Guest of Honour respectively. *Ms Simeen Mahmud*, Senior Research Fellow, BIDS was present as the designated discussant.

**Introductory Remarks by Professor Mustafizur Rahman, Executive Director, CPD**

Taking the floor *Professor Mustafizur Rahman* welcomed the guests and participants. He observed that the issue of spousal violence is somewhat out of the purview of the CPD, which so far concentrated on organising dialogue on macroeconomic issues, trade issues and issues of governance. However, acknowledging the importance of this particular issue and to analyze its economic impact, CPD undertook this study in collaboration with the Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC). He also expressed his expectation that the study would be able to provide policy guidelines for the policy makers.

**Keynote Presentation by Dr Fahmida Khatun**

**a) Focus, Rationale and Methodology of the Study**

At the beginning of the presentation of the paper titled ‘Missing Dynamics of Spousal Violence Discourse: Measuring the Economic Costs’ *Dr Fahmida Khatun* explained the rationale of taking up the study and pointed out that domestic violence is prevalent across all social and economic groups in the rural and urban areas in Bangladesh. Explaining the focus of the study, she mentioned, “As most of the time husband is responsible for committing violence against wife, the study mainly focuses on the intimate partner violence that is violence committed by the husband”. *Dr Khatun* stated that it is really

difficult to collect actual data on spousal violence as in most cases the victims do not disclose incidences of such violence to others, let alone the law enforcing agency or legal counselors. She cited a number of reasons behind this attitude which included social embarrassment and stigma, fear of jeopardizing family honour, fear of repercussion from husband etc.

*Dr Khatun* pointed out that considering the increased prevalence of domestic violence and its long term impact on the economy it is important to estimate both physical and psychological costs of spousal violence (SV). It is expected that the findings of this study would be linked with Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) of Bangladesh, Millennium Development Goal (MDG) and also with the national budget as gender equity has been one of the major concerns in all these documents.

She stated that though there are several studies on the prevalence of SV, in Bangladesh no study has attempted to measure the economic costs associated with such violence. Existing studies (Naved *et al* 2006; Begum 2005; Bhuyia, Sharmin and Hanif 2003; Koenig *et al* 2003; Azim 2000; Schuler *et al* 1996) neither focus exclusively on SV nor do they take into account psychological violence. Also, very little is known about the disclosure of violence and help-seeking behaviour of abused women. It is within this background, the present study intends to estimate various types of economic costs associated with SV in Bangladesh by interviewing the victims of such violence, she added.

*Dr Khatun* then made an effort to differentiate between direct and indirect costs of spousal violence. According to her, there are economic cost associated with violence which includes direct cost and some indirect or hidden cost which cannot be quantified in monetary terms. She explained that the present study estimated direct costs in the form of health care, displacement, social service, legal service and criminal justice. Loss of productivity due to violence has been estimated as indirect cost. Cost per victim has been calculated based on the actual costs incurred for each type of costs mentioned above.

Regarding the research methodology, *Dr Khatun* informed the dialogue that recall method was followed and in order to do so, the survey team collected 800 revealed cases before June 2007 and interviewed 200 respondents based on their availability who have come to the human rights organisations selected by CPD for legal or some kind of assistance. A structured questionnaire was used to collect both qualitative and quantitative information for in-depth interviews with victims.

Regarding the urban-bias of the study, she explained, “Most respondents (82 per cent) were from the city corporations. Because they are more aware and conscious of their

rights and the human rights organisations are more accessible to the urban people compared to the rural people”. In order to measure costs of violence the victims were asked about various types of violence they had experienced like physical, psychological, sexual and economic violence.

She expressed her expectation that this current effort may turn into a beginning to make the policy makers think about the extent of the impact of the spousal violence and its impact on our national economy. An estimation of cost of SV can help the policy makers in allocating resources more effectively and efficiently which may contribute to reduce violence against women and gender equality in future. Thus, the objective of this study is to help policy makers while formulating strategies to reduce violence against women and allocation of resources towards this end. Referring to the studies conducted in countries like Australia, Canada, Chile, Finland, India, Mexico City, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Switzerland, United Kingdom, and the USA, she mentioned, “While several studies on violence against women exist in developed countries, only a few exist in developing and least developed countries (LDCs)”.

### **Socio-Economic and Demographic Characteristics of Victims**

As *Dr Khatun* explained, the demographic and socio-economic condition of the victims had been determined based on a number of factors including age, education, occupation, number of children, NGO/MFI membership and behavior of husband’s family. Most of the victims interviewed for the purpose of the study were between 20-30 years of age and the mean duration of the victims’ married lives was 8.26 years, ranging from 1 to 30 years. Almost 31 per cent of the victims studied up to class VIII and only 10 per cent had bachelor or masters degree. 83 per cent of the victims did not have regular jobs and they had to seek financial help from their family and friends to fight against SV. The study revealed that 69 per cent of the victims who chose to seek remedy through legal system had children, which was contradictory to the common perception that victims having children were reluctant to fight against SV. At the same time, NGOs/MFIs played a significant role in influencing the behavior of the SV victims as 46.5 per cent of the victims who decided to fight against SV reported that they or their family members had been members of NGO/MFIs. Moreover, the study showed that almost 63 per cent of the victims reported that the behavior of their in-laws were provocative against them during the disputes.

### **Types of Violence**

*Dr Khatun* explained that most of the respondents mentioned that they experienced mainly four kinds of violence: Physical violence which included hitting / punching /

kicking, hitting with an object, choking, burning, acid throwing, hitting with a weapon, forced abortion; Psychological violence included threat of physical violence, insult, restricting mobility, abandonment; Sexual violence included marital rape, forced prostitution, refusal to have sex; Economic violence included stopping food, stopping maintenance for victim, stopping maintenance for children, dowry / dowry demand, not permitting to earn income, forcing to earn.

*Dr Khatun* further added that as the study covered violence that occurred during the last 12 months, victims were asked to recall events of violence during this period. Costs are calculated in the form of actual costs incurred by each victim.

Describing the findings of the study, *Dr Khatun* mentioned that 93 per cent of victims reported that they had experienced physical violence, only 13 per cent reported of having experience of sexual violence, 91 per cent victims reported economic violence and 84 per cent reported psychological violence committed by their husbands.

### **Costs of Spousal Violence**

*Dr Khatun* explained that in order to measure the economic costs of spousal violence the victims were asked to identify three most severe cases of SV that she experienced during the last twelve months.

The study reported that when the victims experienced different types of violence they had to seek medical support for mainly two types of treatment- physical and psychological. She mentioned that according to the study, in total 154 victims spent money for physical health care which is 77 per cent of the total sample. Total health care expenses as reported by the interviewees amount to Tk. 1,461,010 and on an average each victim had to pay Tk. 9,487.1. On the other hand, though SV has a significant impact on the victim's mental condition, only a few sought the assistance of psychological therapists. As the study showed, only 13 of the 200 victims went to therapist and they spent Tk. 1,39,000 for mental health care which comes to Tk. 10,453.8 per victim. *Dr Khatun* opined that there were two possible reasons behind the victim's reluctance to go for psychological treatment- therapy is apparently expensive and there is also lack of awareness regarding psychological health care. Adding up all these, it comes to Tk. 1,596,900 for health care expenses, she mentioned.

Victims reported that violence by their husband caused displacement from their husbands' house to parents', other relatives'. Based on the finding of the study, *Dr Khatun* stated that about 87 per cent victims (174 in total) had to leave their husbands'

houses at least once during the time when the domestic disputes were going on. On an average, the amount spent by each victim was Tk. 2,043.72 and the total cost incurred due to displacement was Tk. 3,55,605.

*Dr Khatun* mentioned that social service cost refers to the cost incurred due to arranging a shalish. She pointed out that contrary to the common belief that shalish is free of cost, the victims had to spend money to resolve their disputes through shalish. About 94 per cent of the total respondents spent money for shalish. The cost of shalish per victim was Tk. 1,054.1 and total cost for arranging shalish was Tk. 1,98,175.

Only 44 per cent victims went to the family court whereas most of the others went to an organisation for a solution. The study revealed that the victims had to spend quite a large amount of money in order to get justice from the formal legal organisation (court). Each victim had to spend Tk. 6,729.3 on account of travel and food when they went to the court and total cost amounted to Tk. 5,85,450.

In most cases, the victims were reluctant in seeking justice from the criminal justice service. Explaining the reason for this, *Dr Khatun* mentioned, “Getting justice through formal legal process is lengthy and also costlier compared to the informal process. They have to bribe the police and bear the cost of court and lawyers’ fee”. The study shows that in 64 per cent cases police took bribe. The average per case bribe was Tk. 5,081.4 and the total cost was Tk. 2,18,500. Forty one victims had to spend money for criminal justice and in order to reach up to the verdict in the court, they had to spend Tk. 7,00,800 in total on account of court fee and lawyers’ fee. Thus, the total cost incurred for criminal justice was Tk. 9,19,300.

Regarding the cost due to lost working days, *Dr Khatun* mentioned that according to the study, 54 respondents reported that they had to cease their regular activities due to SV. In total, the number of lost working days was 1988 and total economic value of lost working days was Tk. 1,27,872. On an average each victim had to lose 37 working days and average cost per person was Tk. 2,368.

### **Impact of Spousal Violence**

By adding up all types of costs it was found that total economic cost of SV of 200 revealed cases was Tk. 37,83,312 implying that cost per victim was Tk. 18,917. This expenditure was for a period of 12 months during which incidences of SV occurred. While explaining the findings of the study, *Dr Khatun* mentioned, “Costs of SV has severe implication both for the household and national level.” She also added that



allocation for gender equity in Bangladesh is only 77.4% of the total cost incurred due to SV. She observed that costs could be even higher if intangible costs like costs of pain, sufferings and morbidity were taken into consideration. She expressed that there is a larger impact of this economic cost because had there been no SV, the victims could have used the money for other productive purposes.

### **Policy Recommendations**

*Dr Khatun* concluded her presentation by suggesting some policy recommendations. She strongly advocated for an anti-domestic violence law. At the same time she proposed for an increase in allocation for reducing SV and suggested that if access to government services were made easier, that would have played a significant role in reducing the spread of SV. Finally, she mentioned that if the government and the mainstream NGOs work together in order to raise awareness against SV that would have quite a significant impact.

### **Open Floor Discussion**

#### **a) Culture of Acceptance, root cause of violence**

The designated discussant *Ms Simeen Mahmud*, Research Director, BIDS remarked that domestic violence has become a common phenomenon in Bangladesh. Quoting a study conducted by ‘Bangladesh Mohila Parishad’ she noted that in the month of July alone, 346 cases of domestic violence occurred in Bangladesh. She focused on the philosophical base of SV and identified the prevailing ‘culture of acceptance’ as the root cause of this occurrence in Bangladesh. She stated, “it seems normal when parents beat their children, teachers beat their students at school, police become violent on the accused person in the police custody and our culture is to accept all these behaviors” As this acceptance is being transmitted from generation to generation, it has become institutionalised thus leaving an alarming impact on the overall societal development.

*Advocate Sultana Kamal*, Executive Director, Ain o Shalish Kendro also acknowledged the significance of this culture of tolerance. In this connection she referred to the findings of the study that about 69 per cent of the children do not have any reaction when they witness SV. Later he may follow the behavior of his father in his own conjugal life and think it as a normal behavior and rights of him to commit SV. A child must be taught from his textbook about the division of labor, dignity of women and thus discouraging the SV. A woman when experiences spousal violence from her husband whom she loves most, trusts more and thinks he may protect her from all the odds, it shakes her very

existence. She then loses confidence in herself to fight back. This type of psychological cost of SV cannot be measured in monetary terms.

### **b) Civil Society and the Government, Both have to Play their due Roles**

*Professor Rehman Sobhan* pointed out that the study, in effect, revealed an interesting scenario. “If you look at the costs, it would appear to have exceeded the costs of what we call *mastani* in our society and if these numbers are to be accepted then obviously we have more *mastans* in our bedrooms than we actually have in the streets of Dhaka”. He opined that to reduce the costs of SV and in fact to eliminate it from our society, both the civil society and the government have to play their due roles. The civil society organisations have to identify and put forward the best possible agenda to eliminate the *mastans* from the bed rooms. Then it is up to the policymakers to formulate and implement the policy.

In this context, *Ms Simeen Mahmood* mentioned that the study undertaken by the CPD to measure the economic cost of SV would become handy in formulating policy. “Our policy makers always prefer numbers” she commented, “this study, hopefully will make them understand that the nation can save a huge amount of money only by preventing spousal violence.”

Pointing out the significance of the study, *Advocate Sultana Kamal* remarked that until now the policymakers seem hesitant in spending money in this critical area. But this study would help the civil society organisations to exert pressure on the government- “we can now show them that if you do not allocate enough money to stop or prevent the SV, a huge amount of money will be wasted while dealing with the issue”. This survey may function as an effective tool for the women organisations which would help them to take necessary steps for advocacy. Day by day violence is increasing in an alarming rate and the expenditure on this is growing larger and larger. This study may put some insights on to where government allocation is necessary and how much allocation is needed. The women organisations may capitalize this survey and try to find out exactly where the allocations should go, she added.

Providing an example of where government allocation should go *Advocate Sanaiyya Fahim Ansari*, Senior Deputy Director of Ain-o-Shalish Kendro mentioned that the study showed how expensive Shalish as a mechanism to ensure access to justice is. She proposed that this is where the government could allocate more money to release the victims from the burden of spending.

However, *Ayesha Khanam*, President, Bangladesh Mahila Parishad was of the opinion that putting pressure on the policymakers would not be enough. To her, elimination of SV has more importance than reduction of the economic cost of it. For that, the participation of the whole society, as well as the policymakers is required. She differed with the recommendations of the study terming them as ‘temporary’ and ‘short-term’ efforts. She pointed out the necessity of long term action plan and long term strategy to address the root cause of SV.

### **c) There are Other Costs Associated with Spousal Violence**

Pointing out a limitation of the study, *Ms Simeen Mahmood* noted that in the survey long term economic costs were not taken into account. She observed that it would be interesting to know what proportion of the victims’ income or her family income is spent for various kinds of expenditure such as expenses in connection with leaving home, getting service after the violent behaviour. What cost do the community, the society and the state had to bear? If the answers of these questions are found then the cost will be a larger amount which will obviously draw attention of the policymakers, she added.

*Ms Rokeya Kabir*, Executive Director, Bangladesh Nari Progoti Sangstha claimed that measuring SV in terms of economic cost is not always the right thing to do. She stated that SV often caused death to the victim, and it is not possible to realize its impact properly. The death of the victim has long term impact on her children. She concluded that in most cases these long term costs are never taken into account.

In this context, *Dr Shaheen Islam*, Professor, Department of Psychology, University of Dhaka expressed that psychological impact of SV is severe. However, as in most cases, the victims failed to afford psychological cost, the government should take some necessary initiatives to establish psychological therapy center where the victims could go for treatment.

Taking cue from *Dr Islam Professor Rounaq Jahan*, Senior Research Scholar, Southern Asian Institute, Columbia University commented that as the survey report shows that only six women out of 200 have taken the psychological therapy, it can be assumed that psychological therapy is very expensive. Thus, the government should look into this matter. *Professor Jahan* suggested for the government to establish some one-stop centres for the distressed women who badly need psychological therapy.

*Dr Mehtab Khanam*, Professor, Department of Psychology, University of Dhaka, pointed out that as we were talking about women’s empowerment, it would be better to replace

the word “victim” by “survivor”. She stressed that without finding out the reasons of SV, it would be impossible to reduce or eliminate this social phenomenon. She thanked CPD for conducting this survey study and mentioned that further study is needed to explore whether social or economic causes contribute to the spousal violence or whether the inter transmitted behavior contribute to the spousal violence. At the same time she raised a note of caution for the researchers and mentioned that while dealing with the ‘survivors’, one has to be careful as every time women are asked about their experience of SV, it makes them revisit the incident.

### **Missing Link**

*Ms Nilufar A Karim*, Institutional Capacity Building Specialist, PLAGI II project mentioned that, one or two exceptional cases of SV should have been taken into account. She pointed out that economic cost has some other dimensions such as loss of productivity of the victim which the study has not addressed properly. At the same time, when SV results into divorce, the cost of marriage and related costs which were incurred by her family should also be added to the economic costs.

Taking the floor, *Ranjan Karmakar*, Executive Director, Steps Towards Development thanked CPD for giving such a tool in their hand which would help them a lot in future in their working arena. At the same time, he expressed that the impact of the SV is not same all over the country. For instance, in Char areas where the livelihoods are totally different and most of the people are poor, cost incurred due to domestic or SV has much more severe impact on their lives compared to the urban middle class people. He also proposed that the study should try to find out whether because of SV skilled working women had to quit their jobs.

*Dr Anwara Begum*, Research Fellow, BIDS underscored the need for prevention and rehabilitation cost to be added to the actual cost.

*Ms Samia Ahmed*, Manager, SWAV, Action Aid pointed out that this study did not cover the southern part of the country, the most violent area in Bangladesh where the suicidal rate is very high. These are Chuadanga, Meherpur, Kushtia and Jhinaidah. She mentioned that the respondents should have been selected on the basis of economic strata. She observed that it is relatively easier to get access to victims belonging to the lower economic strata. However, in middle class and higher economies strata the SV is also as frequent. But the information about those always remains in the dark, she added.

**f) Not New Laws but Implementation of the Existing Laws is Necessary**

*Mr Sadrul Hasan Mazumdar*, Project Coordinator, BNWLA talked about their experience as regards existing situation of violence against women. According to him BNWLA does not have the facility to adequately cover all aspects of the issue. For the same reason other legal aid organisations also many a times can not help the victims who come to seek help from them. He proposed that to reduce or eliminate the SV, a legal reform which would cover all aspects of SV is necessary.

However, *Professor Rounaq Jahan* differed with him. She mentioned that making new laws would not solve the problem of SV rather much emphasis should be put on ensuring the implementation of the existing laws. Violence against women is prevalent in the developed society also. Though the developed countries have enacted a number of laws to prevent the violence against women, they failed to address the issue properly. One study shows that in Sweden, reported violence against women have increased from 1991-1996 to 1996-2007 period, she added.

Taking the floor, *Dr Dora Rappold*, Ambassador of Switzerland conveyed her thanks to CPD for conducting the present study. She stated that violence has many dimensions and it is very difficult to measure the economic cost of spousal violence. To her, the important question is what can be done to eliminate spousal violence. Acknowledging that Bangladesh has its own measures to find out ways to deal with it, her suggestion to the policymakers, government and the major stakeholders was to change legislation, if need be and define policies and to understand that there is a need to do something about it. She indicated that in Bangladesh one of the major reasons of domestic violence is the imbalance of power. In families, husbands are speakers and the wives are listeners. She explained how the Government of Switzerland deals with it. Domestic violence is wide spread around the world and Switzerland is not an exception, she said. In Switzerland the constitution provides that it is the duty of the government to protect the dignity and the integrity of women. Various forms of domestic violence including the sexual violence and violence that causes injuries are termed as official offence. If the victim does not report the incident of violence to the legal authority the government takes initiative and plays the role of prosecutor. This was introduced four years ago. At the same time, the state has taken initiative to provide social, medical, legal and psychological counseling to the victim. She said, “in Switzerland, we show zero tolerance in case of domestic violence”. She proposed that in case of Bangladesh the policymakers may take some initiatives to make adjustments in the legislation. The NGOs, the civil society and the other stakeholders may play a prominent role to prevent the spousal violence.

### **Response from the Authors**

Responding to the floor discussion, *Dr Ferdous Jahan*, Associate Professor of Public Administration, Dhaka University remarked that domestic violence is so wide spread that at the beginning of the study they were confused about where to begin and which issue to focus. She reminded the dialogue participants that the study tried to find out the costs of spousal violence. Explaining the methodology she commented that the research team undertook this study as an exploratory one and for that purpose recall method and revealed cases had been used as research method. She explained that this finding was just the beginning and in future, the CPD would take this study further.

### **Remarks by the Chief Guest**

*Ms Rasheda K Chowdhury*, Hon'ble Adviser for Women and Children Affairs, started by emphasising on the social acceptance of spousal violence. She pointed out that this acceptance is also prevalent at the policy level. Even the women members of the policy level accept the spousal violence as a normal incident. The social acceptance of spousal violence is severe among the rural women. She suggested that the spousal violence should be termed as a criminal activity. She agreed with the floor discussion that appropriate budget allocation in specific areas is required to address the problem. She mentioned that the Government is now trying to make some one stop centers for the victims of spousal violence. Moreover, initiatives have also been taken to address gender issues in the textbook at primary level so that the future generation can remain free from this culture of acceptance of domestic violence.

She pointed out that media has a prominent role to play in preventing the spousal violence. Praising media's role during the last 10 to 15 years in the field of domestic violence, she observed that media has a tendency to focus only on the extreme cases. In her opinion, media has to cover both extreme and general cases and present it in an objective manner. Referring to the absence of the Government officials in the discussion, she stated that in future any discussion on the spousal violence should include the government officials as they are the ones who would provide some input in the policy in future.

### **Concluding Remarks**

In his concluding remarks *Professor Rehman Sobhan* mentioned that Government has little role to play in preventing spousal violence other than passing some important laws or promulgating some ordinances. However, it is the human rights organisations that should carry the social movement forward. As a pressure group, the human rights organisations should have the capacity to exert pressure on the political parties and their leaders so that they are forced to incorporate these issues into their policy agenda. Professor Sobhan also pointed out that at the end of the day it is the political parties who will formulate the policies and therefore the human rights organisations have to make the political parties conscious about their bestowed responsibilities. He observed that unfortunately there exists a communication lag between the civil society and the political society, which makes the political society feel that they have no obligation to look into the voices coming from the constituency.

The chair thanked the participants for their presence, participation and valuable inputs.

## List of Participants

<i>Ms Samia Ahmed</i>	Manager SVAW, Action Aid-Bangladesh
<i>Ms Tahsinah Ahmed</i>	Senior Programme Officer, Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC)
<i>Ms Aklima Akter</i>	Junior Officer, Shakti Foundation
<i>Advocate Sanaiyya Fahim Ansari</i>	Senior Deputy Director, Gender and Social Justice Department Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK)
<i>Dr Anwara Begum</i>	Research Fellow, Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS)
<i>Ms Nilufa Begum</i>	General Manager, Shakti Foundation
<i>Advocate Masuda Rehana Begum</i>	Assistant General Secretary, Bangladesh Mahila Parishad
<i>Ms Rasheda K Choudhury</i>	Hon'ble Advisor to the Caretaker Government Ministries of Primary & Mass Education Women & Children Affairs and Cultural Affairs
<i>Professor Syed M Hashemi</i>	Executive Director, BRAC Development Institute, BRAC University
<i>Dr Hameeda Hossain</i>	Former Director & Founder Member, ASK
<i>Mr Abu Taher Md Hussain</i>	Senior Information Officer, Ministries of Primary & Mass Education
<i>Dr Shaheen Islam</i>	Professor, Department of Psychology, University of Dhaka (DU)
<i>Dr Ferdous Jahan</i>	Associate Professor, Department of Public Administration, DU and Academic Coordinator, Masters of Development Studies, BRAC University
<i>Professor Rounaq Jahan</i>	Senior Research Scholar and Adjunct Professor Southern Asian Institute, Columbia University
<i>Ms Rokeya Kabir</i>	Executive Director, Bangladesh Nari Progoti Sangstha (BNPS)
<i>Advocate Sultana Kamal</i>	Former Advisor to the Caretaker Government and Executive Director, ASK
<i>Ms Nilufa A Karim</i>	Institutional Capacity Building Specialist Policy Leadership and Advocacy for Gender Equity (PLAGE) Project
<i>Mr Ranjan Karmaker</i>	Executive Director, Steps Towards Development
<i>Dr Mehtab Khanam</i>	Professor, Department of Psychology, DU
<i>Ms Ayesha Khanam</i>	President, Bangladesh Mahila Parishad
<i>Dr Fahmida Khatun</i>	Additional Director, Research, Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD)
<i>Ms Khadija Leena</i>	Senior Manager, BRAC Gender Resource Centre
<i>Ms Simeen Mahmud</i>	Research Director, BIDS
<i>Mr Sadrul Hasan Mazumder</i>	Project Coordinator, Bangladesh national Women Lawyers Association (BNWLA)
<i>Ms Sharmeen Murshid</i>	CEO, BROTEE
<i>Dr Nazmoon Nahar</i>	Member, Naripokkho
<i>Ms Monira Rahman</i>	Executive Director, ACID Survivors Foundation
<i>H E Dr Dora Rapold</i>	Ambassador, Embassy of Switzerland
<i>Ms Rita Das Roy</i>	Project Coordinator, Naripokkho
<i>Ms Rina Roy</i>	Director, Right, Manusher Jonno Foundation
<i>Ms Tapati Saha</i>	Advocacy Specialist, PLAGE Project
<i>Mr Swapan Sarker</i>	Executive Member, Bangladesh Samaj Unnayan Parishad
<i>Ms Marufia Noor Shifa</i>	Assistant Coordinator, Karmojibi Nari
<i>Ms Dina Siddiqi</i>	Research Associate, University of Pennsylvania
<i>Professor Rehman Sobhan</i>	Chairman, CPD
<i>Ms Mahin Sultana</i>	Coordinator, Pathways of Women's Empowerment BRAC Development Institute, BRAC University
<i>Mr Osman Goni Talukder</i>	Deputy Chief, Ministry of Women and Children Affairs
<i>Ms Sabera Yeasmin</i>	Project Manager, Phulki



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<i>Mr Shawkat Ali</i>	Cameraman, Channel 1
<i>Mr Rokonuzzaman Anjan</i>	Staff Reporter, The Sangbad
<i>Mr Tanzim Anwar</i>	Staff Reporter, Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS)
<i>Mr Shamim Ashraf</i>	Staff Reporter, The Daily Star
<i>Mr Salahuddin Bablu</i>	Senior Reporter, The Daily Inquilab
<i>Mr Ratan Barua</i>	Reporter, Daily Supravat
<i>Mr Apurbo Stanly Gomes</i>	Staff Reporter, Radio Today
<i>Mr Talha bin Habib</i>	Staff Reporter, The New Nation
<i>Mr Moyeenul Hasan</i>	Cameraman, ETV (Ekushey Television)
<i>Mr S K Hasan</i>	Photojournalist, Jai Jai Din
<i>Mr Maruf Hassan</i>	Reporter, United News of Bangladesh (UNB)
<i>Mr Raju Islam</i>	Staff Reporter, INB
<i>Mr Rafiqul Islam</i>	Cameraman, RTV
<i>Ms Farah Jabin</i>	Staff Reporter, RTV
<i>Mr Shobhan Kamal</i>	Staff Reporter, The Bangladesh Today
<i>Mr Manzurul Karim</i>	Staff Correspondent, NTV
<i>Mr Masud Karzon</i>	Reporter, The Daily Samakal
<i>Mr Golam Kibria</i>	Cameraman, Bangladesh Television (BTV)
<i>Mr Kutub Uddin</i>	Correspondent, Diganta Television
<i>Mr Salahuddin Mahmud</i>	Senior Reporter, Channel 1
<i>Mr Khawaza Main Uddin</i>	Senior Staff Correspondent, The New Age
<i>Ms Shanta Maria</i>	Staff Reporter, The Daily Janakantha
<i>Mr Muskape Mashrek</i>	Reporter, Boishakhi Media Limited
<i>Mr Abdul Matin</i>	Staff Reporter, The Daily Bhorer Dak
<i>Mr Neaz Morshed</i>	Reporter, The Prothom Alo
<i>Mr S N Nandi</i>	Photographer, The Bangladesh Observer
<i>Ms Selina Nasrin</i>	Reporter, Bangladesh Television (BTV)
<i>Mr Syed Shamsuzzaman Nipu</i>	Senior Economic Reporter, The Daily Naya Diganta
<i>Mr M A Pasha</i>	Correspondent, Daily Dhaka Report
<i>Mr Sadequr Rahman</i>	Staff Reporter, The Daily Sangram
<i>Mr Remon Rahman</i>	Staff Reporter, The Daily Destiny
<i>Mr Taimur Rashid</i>	Reporter, Diganta TV
<i>Mr Syed Riaz</i>	Reporter, ATN Bangla
<i>Mr Zaid Al Islam Rohan</i>	Staff Correspondent, BD News 24
<i>Mr Md Sharif</i>	Photojournalist, The Daily Naya Diganta
<i>Mr Mozammel Shishir</i>	Staff Reporter, Bangla Vision
<i>Mr Syed Shoeb</i>	DU Correspondent, The Daily News Today
<i>Ms Afroza Shoma</i>	Reporter, Focus Bangla
<i>Mr Jamiul Ahsan Sipu</i>	Reporter, The Daily Ittefaq
<i>Mr Reaz Ahmed Sumon</i>	Photojournalist, Focus Bangla
<i>Ms Sabana Gulshan Swapna</i>	Staff Reporter, ETV (Ekushey Television)