

# Training for Indigenous Women in Decision-Making

## NARRATIVE REPORT

Name of organizations responsible for co-organizing: <b>Hill Tracts NGO Forum (HTNF) &amp; Trinamul Unnayan Sangstha</b>	
Office Address: <b>Hill Tracts NGO Forum (HTNF)</b> , Rajbari Road, Rangamati-4500, Chittagong Hill Tracts, Bangladesh <b>Trinamul Unnayan Sangstha</b> , Khagrapur, Khagrachari-4400, Chittagong Hill Tracts, Bangladesh	
Person Responsible:	<b>Dipujjal Khisa</b>
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Project Location/Venue: <b>HTNF Conference Room, Rangamati</b>	
<b>ON PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION</b>	
<b><i>Briefly state the goal of the project and comment on the extent to which these were achieved:</i></b>	
<p>The training is objected to make available an appropriate venue for women to exchange specific and common experiences within their social context; To provide women with broader comprehension of their rights towards building their capability to protect and insist recognition of such rights upon its violation, within their community and in general; To provide a space to discuss on skills and knowledge necessary to make wise decisions or influence leaders in their community within in the context of changing relations in indigenous communities or societies; To employ indigenous resolution processes in the long-term to decide on conflicts and situations of in-equality to be able to guarantee the rights of indigenous women within communities and the general society.</p>	
<p>It might be notable that training has been organized only with women participants whereby they got a space to discuss their experiences. A number of issues were discussed in the training i.e. inheritance, domestic and sexual violence, etc has not only given a comprehensive ideas but also the practical exercises and field visit for interaction with other women increase their understanding the issues, concerns and their rights. Finally, interaction with Hill Tracts NGO Forum's Women Resources Network encourages them to think of long-term strategies to deal with their rights issues.</p>	
<p>Finally, it could be said that to some extend this training has achieved most of the training objectives. After the training, the participants realized that they would have to become aware of their position in the private and public life. They have become aware of the fact that indigenous women do not have access to inheritance that's why they are neglected in the society and within the family. Since women are powerless they are considered freckle and thus they are being easily tortured. To get rid of torture/harassment within the family and in society women have to become self-dependent efficient and aware of their rights. They realized that because of the excessive burden of housework women could not participate in meetings and as women have lack of knowledge they are less efficient, less confident and less courageous. More or less, all of the participants have become conscious of the real condition of their own lives.</p>	

***Describe how these objectives were carried out and which of the approaches appropriate:***

- ❖ In order to achieve the above objectives several methods was followed i.e. includes lecture, workshop, group work, experiences sharing, field visit for understanding practicality, buzz sessions, mind mapping, visioning and brain-storming exercises, inter-active learning cum sharing method.
- ❖ However, we found that in compare to the lecturing on a session the brainstorming sessions, workshops and the exercises were very much fruitful. The field visit also became effective to understand the women problems by themselves and it also some times give good example of dealing with some women issues.

***What problems were encountered in carrying out the project and how were these addressed?***

The problems encounter while conducting the training are as follows:

- ☞ The level of understanding of the participant was different especially their educational background, some were highly educated and some are not so. Even some hardly understand the Bengali.
- ☞ Time limitation became crucial during the training. Some time it felt that sessions needed long time to make it clear to the participants.
- ☞ Language barrier was a problem.

***Who were the participants (attach a list of the participants)? Were they the intended participants? What confirmation has been provided by the participants that the objectives of the project were relevant to their needs?***

A total of 33 participants were present in the training programme. All participants were women from Chakma, Marma, Tripura, Pungkua, Khumi, Garo, Orao, Khashi, Gorka community from all over Bangladesh.

Of course, all of the participants were intended participants. However, a number of participants were also expressed their willingness to attend the training. Due to shortage of fund and limitation of only training they could not able to participate.

In their confirmation letter the participants expressed the following points as their need of understanding:

- The strategies to place indigenous women in decision-making position.
- The ways to eradicate the existing discrimination against women.
- The ways to assist women in development activities.
- The existing laws favorable to women specifically in CHT context.
- The social and political status of women in society.
- The conception on Gender.
- The condition of women in Economy.
- The overall condition of women in CHT.
- Women's leadership.
- The ways to eradicate superstition from society.
- The CHT Regulations.
- The relationship between women and NGO activities.
- Human Rights and women.
- The awareness campaign on women rights.
- International women organizations and their activities.

- The strategies to acquire women rights.
- The strategies to organize women.
- The effective role of women in the mainstream development activities.
- The paternal property inheritance for daughters in indigenous society in CHT.
- What kind of assistance the local NGOs are providing to develop the condition of women.
- National and International strategies to deal with gender issues.
- The national and international organizations assisting to deal with the gender issues.

***How did the beneficiaries participate in the planning, implementation and evaluation of this project?***

The training was planned in consultation with leaders of HTNF and its Women Resource Network. During the training, participants have participated in making their plan of activities of the day. They planned the timing for food and other related activities. They also given chance to share their ideas and experiences during the discussion of the specific topics. Finally, participants evaluated the programme in a specific evaluation form.

***How did women participate in and benefit from the project? Provide gender disaggregated statistics where relevant (eg. The numbers of women and men participating in a workshop/study tour, etc.)***

A total of 33 participants, all were women, from 9 indigenous peoples from all over Bangladesh participated in the training. The participation of the participants was very spontaneously participated in the training. Their participation during the session was excellent.

**ON TRAINING OUTCOMES**

***What are the concrete results of the discussions based on the objectives and session topics (i.e. trends in decision-making, women's role in community, access to inheritance, domestic violence, etc.)?***

The participants were responsive to the respective sessions. They came to know about what is the real situation in decision-making position and in most cases men are the prime decision makers and most of the participants for the first time became able to realize that they have to overcome the backdrops in ascending to the decision-making position. They got information from the training that though women work sincerely within family and in community, their contribution remains unrecognized. The participants also came to know that since indigenous women do not have access to inheritance they are being neglected in society and thus have become vulnerable and do not consider themselves strong enough to rise into decision-making position. In case of domestic violence the participants are facilitated to know about the different forms of violence and the existing laws against violence that are favorable to women. They also came to know the fact that because of excessive house burden women could not attend the meetings/workshop/seminar and thus not being facilitated.

***What strategies in placing indigenous women in decision-making were identified?***

The following strategies are identified for placing the indigenous women in decision making: -

- Women are to be self- dependent.
- To make the respective people aware
- To make the women knowledgeable
- To be involved in outside activities
- Should have courage
- Formal discussion about gender issues
- To discuss gender issues in informal gathering.
- To discuss discrimination based on gender in family gathering with friendly atmosphere

- Gender discrimination should be displayed in cultural activities
- Gender discrimination has to be textualized in text books
- To ensure the participation of both women and men in gender training
- Have to be fairly educated
- To be aware of women issues by attending seminar/workshop/training in national and international level
- To arrange gender awareness activities for men
- To ensure women's participation in all spheres of development activities
- To make women and men gender sensitive
- The prejudice against women should be eradicated by using media and by attending seminar/workshop/training
- Women should be confident in decision-making
- To eliminate discrimination in wages of labor and to ensure co-participation of both women and men
- Evaluation and recognition of reproductive works
- Rearing the children with gender sensitization in the house and in educational institutions
- To encourage the media for gender equality
- Amendment of laws discriminatory to women
- Women should be given opportunity to make decision
- Have to attend seminar/workshop/training regularly
- Women should be aware about their own rights
- Women should have more involvement in administration both in Government and Non-government level
- Have to ensure participation of both women and men in gender seminar/workshop/training
- To keep concern on current affairs
- Dependence should be overthrown
- Excessive house burden of women should be lessened

***What follow-up and long-term plans were identified to sustain the activities of indigenous women and strengthening their roles in decision-making at various levels of society?***

- The requirement of networking among the indigenous women has been encouraged. Here, the role of HTNF-Women Resource Network (HTNF-WRN) is realized with its existing member organizations. It could play the role of mediator in communicating between women-led organizations of 3 Hill Districts and International organizations. In this case, HTNF-WRN should also need to raise their organizational capacity.
- More training is required to be conducted involving more women and men in a regular basis.
- More exposures of indigenous women at various levels including local, national and international level related to the issues of indigenous women are expressed to be highlighted.
- Strengthening women-led organizations in making available of funds for them for organizing various capacity raising training and other activities.

### **LESSONS FROM THE FIELD**

***What were the issues on gender shared by the community during the field trip?***

The field trip was conducted on the following issues:

- Women and Development
- Inheritance
- Sexual Harassment/Domestic Violence
- Division of House Work

During the field visit the participants found out that the current trends of development activities are not effectively conducive to the indigenous women's development, even in some cases women have

become prey to the so-called development organization's interest-seeking tendency.

In case of indigenous women's access to inheritance it is pointed out that women do not inherit their paternal landed property.

The situation of Domestic Violence/Sexual Harassment was found very severe in the field trip. Every now and then women experience physical assaults from their husbands or male counterparts. The housemaids were seen living in the most vulnerable condition.

In case of Division of House Work it was explored that women do most of the House works. Men hardly take part in house work or look after the children.

### ON FINANCIAL EXPENDITURES

***Attach a detailed financial report (following specific expenditures in each budget items) for the report and provide official receipts/invoice with supporting documentation.***

A total of USD 5000 in BDT 305,000 (Exchange rate 1\$= BDT 61) received from AIPP Foundation for conducting this training. Total expenditure of the training was BDT 271,891. Total Balance is BDT 33109. The expenditure details are attached herewith.

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