

At glance of Girl Power Project

Girl Power Project (GPP): Girl Power is a five-year (2011-2015) project, funded by Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs for promoting equal rights and opportunities for Girls and Young Women (GYW). It is being implemented globally in Ghana, Liberia, Sierra Leone; Ethiopia, Zambia, Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan, Bolivia and Nicaragua. In Bangladesh, Plan International Bangladesh as a lead organization, the project is implemented through partnership. USS one of the partner of Girl Power Project and implementing at 4 Upazila (Domar, Dimla, Jaldhaka and Nilphamari Sadar upazila) under Nilphamari District.

Project Name : Girl Power Project (GPP)

Project Duration : July 2011-December2015

Funded by : Plan International Bangladesh

Main Donor : Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Netherland

Project budget : 17,848,337 BDT

Project Target at a Glance (to be reached through planned activities)

No. of union/ward	29
No. of community	174
No. of Civil Society Organisation (CSO)	23
No. of CSO network	4
No. of government institution	49
No. of government professional	49
No. of group/CBO	10
No. of representative from different group/CBO	10
No. of individual (girls and young women)	5000
No. of girls and young women forum (GYWF)	29
No. of Child Protection Group (CPG)	29

Project Goal:

Reducing gender based violence against girls and young women.

Project Objectives

- To strengthen civil society organizations on influencing policy through lobby and advocacy to establish rights and justice for girls and young women
- To increase awareness and sensitize duty bearers on the rights of girls and young women
- To improve legal protection system for girls and young women
- To increase capacity of right holders (girls and young women) to protect gender based violence.

Project Strategy

- Strengthening civil society
- Building alliance and establishing network
- Sensitizing media
- Ensuring legal protection measures for girls and young women
- Engaging and making local government and socio cultural groups responsive
- Developing skills of girls and young women to protect themselves and making livelihood choices
- Enhancing participation of girls and young women in appropriate forum

Project relevancy:

Female, children and girls of disadvantaged family of backward northern part face more discrimination. Early marriage, dowry, low wages, eve teasing, calling by name, physical and mental torture etc are very common for women. Girls and young women are more tortured in this discrimination. They are so frustrated that they even remain silent though they are treated with more discrimination. In fact they practices to tolerate all torture silently. The proposed will create awareness to remove this discrimination in the targeted community. Awareness among girls and young women will play a vital role in the development of the society. This project will play an effective role in women development as well as national development.

Situation analysis during project initiate:

Eve teasing is now becoming as social problem in the target area. It has becoming the most disturbing for girls and women specially schools and collage going students. It has gradually become one of the brutal forms of sexual harassment. Due to Eve teasing some girls and young women are leaving from school and college, increasing early marriage rate and raising family crisis.

Violence: Incidences of violence such as divorce, domestic violence, trafficking and sexual exploitation are existed in target area. Most the violence against girl and young women is related to child marriage, eve teasing, dowry etc. It is estimated that more than 60% of women suffer form of abuse form their husbands or family members.

Education: Nilphamari is a poverty prone area, where quality of primary education is not up to mark. The inhabitants of this area are mostly deprived from proper techniques and information of child caring and rearing. Boy's net enrolment in primary education is 91.2% where girl's enrolment is 94.2% it seems the net enrolment of girls is a bit better than boys. On the other hand boy's survival rate is 41.3% and girls 42.3%. The meaning of survival rate is the % of the student to what that enrolled in the first grade of primary education in a given school year and eventually reach grade five. Average literacy rate is 25.35% where male 33.16% and female 16.98% (Banglapedia 2006)

Health:

Malnutrition is found around the Nilphamari and that makes barrier on normal growth and development of each and every child especially of girl's child because of family level gender discrimination (Key Informant Interview with UH&FPO). Neonatal mortality rate is 37 per thousand live births, infant mortality rate is 52 per thousand live birth and under 5 mortality rate is 65 per thousand live birth (BDHS survey, 2007). But some conditions are now gradually improving e.g. 85.9% immunization for all type and Vit-supplementation coverage is 81.9%. Poor women and adolescent girls are also in a vulnerable in this situation. Morbidity and mortality of mothers is not improving significantly. Maternal mortality ratio is 32 per thousand which is far behind from the MDG target.

Nearly 70% of women reported a reduction in their "normal" consumption level during pregnancy. Awareness on antenatal check up is gradually increasing which about 52%. On the other hand Post Natal Care (PNC) facility gets less priority only 30.1% women receive PNC from a medically trained service provider within two days of delivery. Still the tendency of home based delivery system & assistance of skill birth attendant is not up to the mark. Now only 18% skill assistance is present at the time of delivery and 85% deliveries occur at home. During pregnancy period the rate of receiving vaccination is increasing about 54.9% women are taking vaccine. It is a major concern to intake vitamin-A supplementation for lactating mother group. The status of Exclusive Brest Feeding is 48.6%. (BDHS Survey report-2007). It has been observed that, during any sickness the women and girls always gets less priority than men or boys for treatment and usually women's are advised to consult with Kabiraj/quack. Prejudice and taboos prevails in entire district regarding health service seeking practice and that affects pregnant mothers.

Livelihood:

Most of the children especially girls as well as women who live in rural areas of Nilphamari district is involved in agricultural sector i.e. tobacco, paddy, wheat, jute cultivation and guardians treat it as family responsibility. But the reality is that, women workers don't get their actual wages compared to the male workers. They always deprived and get half of the wages than men.

Violence against girls and young women in the family is exist especially young married women are the victim of domestic violence due to dowry. The economic empowerment of young women is a major concern in Nilphamari district. Job opportunity within the district area is so narrow for the women and they have less mobility to outside of the district for seeking alternative job because the male counterpart of the family don't allow young women to go outside. The poor girls have less access to acquire livelihood related skills due to non-availability of service providers. Yet, few women and adolescent of poor family forced to migrate from their community for seeking alternative job beyond domestic or agriculture labor. Every year during lean period (April-May & October-Nov) the poor families suffer from food crisis and there are significant number of family don't manage three times meal in a day. Due to male dominated family or society the male counterpart of the family always gets priority of food intake and boys are always treated as the asset of the family so girls' child is usually victim discrimination of food intake (Source: Key informant interview with different actors)

Law and policy implementation in Nilphamari:

The girls and women are victim of different abuses. But they don't get real legal verdicts even in some cases they are not recognized to raise their voice in the court. Though union parishad has a village court to establish legal rights of the people but the reality is that it is not functional. It has been observed that many incidents which are suppose to go to under court sue but it comes under the village *Shalish* due to ignorance of law among the mass community. According to record of District Women Affairs Office of Nilphamari from 2004 to 2009 the below number of complain & sue filed in Nilphamari district court on different types of women and girls rights violation and the major cases were rape, dowry, early marriage, separation, physical assault and domestic violence.

Target population & Stakeholders:

5,000 girls and young women of age 10-24; 23 CSOs (NGOs, professional groups local clubs), 53 duty bearers (representatives of local government, public service, judiciary, law enforcement agency), 21 CBOs (women group, children organizations, etc.).

Working Areas:

The project works in 1 district, 4 Upazila's and 29 Union under Nilphamari District.

Project Management and staff:

The Project Coordinator is main vehicle and responsible for smooth implementation of the project. He/ She is fully responsible to the USS management leaded by the Executive Director and his management wings, guidance and concurrence with the policy, guideline and objectives of USS and donors lies in the contractual agreement and job descriptions to produce effective implementation with reputation. Key personnel of the project are Project Coordinator- 01, Technical officer- 04, Admin &accounts Officer- 01, and Peon- 01.

Implementing associate organizations (CSO) :

23 CSOs are involving to implement project objective with the banner of CSO network. CSO are- Anneahsa krira Chakra, Jaldhaka Press Club, Kaligonj Akota Jubo Sango, Future Samobay Samity, Bandhan Samaj Kallayn Sangstha, Jamuna Nari Kallaym Samity in Jaldhaka, Asar Alo Jubo Mahila Samity, SESTEV, Saoutgari Purbasha Mahilla Samity, Prottasa Lok Kendro, Service Provider Association, Press club in Domar, Uddug, Pallirup, Gayabari Jano Unnyn Sangstha, Tepakharibari Bonya Mahila Unnyon Sagstha, Simanta Mohila Unnayon Sangstha in Dimla Upazilla, Bittohin Somaj Unnayan Sangstha, Laxmichap Dhan Bank Association Nirob Bohumukhi Sombay Sommittee, Bhabonkuri, Bhabonkuri Yubo Sangstha, Kanialkhata Santi Sangho, and Press Club in Nilphamari Sadar .

Key Results Area (KRA):

1. **Civil Society Level:** Civil societies are sensitized and capacitated to represent issues related to vulnerable and marginalized girls and young women (GYW). They are actively engaging and influencing public decision making forums to include voices and visibility of girls and young women. Also the media is sensitized on this issue.

2. Institutional Level: A legal protection measure is established for girls and young women. Referral of victims for institutional care and support increased in joint venture with civil society organizations and the Government of Bangladesh.
3. Socio-cultural Level: Violence and discrimination has been reduced. Society values the role of girls and young women in public life. Positive attitudes and roles and responsibilities of civil societies for the rights of girls and young women are increased. Local government, socio-cultural groups are actively engaged to make them accountable to establish young women's rights to participate in socio-cultural events.
4. Individual Level: Girls' and young women's skills are developed to protect themselves. They are making livelihood choices of their own and their participation is increased in appropriate forums.

Major Activities:

- Providing various types of life skills, livelihood and self-defense(karate) training to young girls and women to empower and protect them against gender-based violence;
- Conducting training, advocacy and workshops among community representatives, CSOs, government professionals
- Journalist and other stakeholders to mobilize them towards this cause; Engaging in awareness raising campaigns among the community at large using popular theatre and mass media.

Major Achievements (till date):

- ❖ 4 CSO network formed and they are trained on CP, CR, Gender, Lobby & Advocacy and proving support to sensitize the duty bearers on different issues including Child Marriage
- ❖ 3213 girls and young women received life-skills training (Domar-747, Dimla-910, Jaldhaka-807 & Nilphamari-749), 17 received self defense (Karate) training (Jaldhaka-17), 31 received livelihood training in 4 Upazilla (Domar-7, Dimla-8, Jaldhaka-8 & nilphamari-8), out of them 16 received livelihood support and 15 girls and young women have self employed and placed in job.
- ❖ 84 journalists oriented on CP, CR, Gender through 4 Workshops, 10 journalists have been awarded for their best reporting on violence against women and child rights.
- ❖ 4 Theatre for Development (TFD) groups developed in 4 Upazilla, 73 TFD show organized in the community on child marriage, birth registration, violence etc and 101 communities have been reached through TFD show.
- ❖ 29 Child Protection Group (CPG) formed and 469 cases i.e. child marriage, violence, eave teasing etc were identified through CPG and total 395 cases were solved
- ❖ 29 GYW forum were formed and 4 Annual Conventions of GYW were conducted where children, parents, stakeholders attended and oriented on child protection mechanism.
- ❖ 25 Advocacy Workshops held on different issues i.e. child marriage, violence, where a total 976 participants attended

Prepared by: Mostafa Kamal, PC, USS, Jaldhaka