

# Annual Report 2006



## Acknowledgements

ASK acknowledges the work of all its staff and members, which has been the basis of this report. This consolidated report draws upon the individual reports provided by each unit. The activities of several units are included under separate clusters which describe ASK's broad-based strategies for creating awareness of human rights and legal aid as well as other forms of support and advocacy for law and policy reform.

Annual reports are a process of making sense out of the many different activities and the many experiences that form ASK's contribution to promoting a culture of rights and responsibilities of all citizens. The contribution of all the staff and members in preparing this report and in commenting upon it needs to be recognized. I take the opportunity to make special mention of the contribution of Ms. Sara Hossain towards this report. She has enriched the content and quality of this report through her painstaking editing. ASK also acknowledges the initial assistance provided by Ms. Shabnam Nadiya in writing this report.

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Md. Asaduzzaman, Advocate  
Secretary General

## Acronyms

ADMIN	: Administration Unit	RSS	: Regional Sector Specialist
ADR	: Alternative Dispute Resolution	RRM	: Rapid Response and Mediation Unit
ADV	: Advocacy Unit	SAF	: Staff Appraisal Format
AM	: Area Manager	SC	: Study Circles
ASC	: Ain Shohayota Committee	SOL	: Social Opinion Leader
ASK	: Ain o Salish Kendra	SR	: Service Rule
BARD	: Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development	SSHH	: Support Services and Halfway Home Unit
BRAC	: Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee	STT	: School Theatre Team
CAT	: Convention against Torture and other cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment.	TOR	: Terms of Reference
CEDAW	: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.	TOT	: Training of Trainers
CHT	: Chittagong Hill Tracts	TRN	: Training Unit
COMM	: Communication Unit	ULTT	: Union Level Theatre Team
CRC	: Convention on the Rights of the Child	UN	: United Nations
DIC	: Drop-In Centres	UZLTT	: Upazila Level Theatre Team
DOC	: Documentation Unit	VAW	: Violence against Women
EC	: Executive Committee	WLUML	: Women Living under Muslim Laws
FC	: Foundation Course		
FGD	: Focus Group Discussion		
FIN	: Finance and Accounts Unit		
GA	: Gender Awareness		
GJHR	: Gender Justice and Human Rights		
GSJ	: Gender and Social Justice Unit		
HR	: Human Rights		
HRD	: Human Resources Development		
HRV	: Human Rights Violation		
IBD	: Issue-Based Drama		
ICC	: International Criminal Court		
INV	: Investigation Unit		
LEB	: Local Elected Body		
LIT	: Litigation Unit		
LL	: Literacy Learning		
NGO	: Non-Governmental Organization		
NGOAB	: NGO Affairs Bureau		
OCD	: Orientation Course on Democracy		
OUT	: Outreach Unit (Set up Legal Clinics)		
PTs	: Participants		
PIL	: Public Interest Litigation		
PNGOs	: Partner Non-Governmental Organizations		
PP	: Project Proposal		
PSH	: Psycho-Social Help Unit		
PT	: Popular Theatre Unit		
PWC	: Protection of Working Children Unit		
RES	: Research Unit		
RM	: Regional Manager		

## Glossary

**Shalish:** An informal, traditional system of mediation used to settle marital and land disputes outside the court.

**Shalishkar:** Mediators who conduct *shalish*. Traditionally, religious leaders, local elected representatives, school teachers, NGO workers, etc.

**Hilla:** Intervening marriage often imposed in cases where the husband orally divorces the wife repents later and wants to take her back. Although in practice in some places, it has no legal basis in law in Bangladesh.

**Fatwa:** Arabic for opinion by a person learned in *Shariah*. In Bangladesh villages, it is pronounced by persons who have no legal authority; they do not clarify an ambiguous legal situation but weigh up evidence, which traditionally was never a function of a *fatwa* giver. Increasingly, *fatwas* are being used to bolster the authority of the *shalish*. Some punitive *fatwas* have been issued against women for being divorced, for working with NGOs or even working outside the home. Some punishments are inhuman, such as, flogging, buried up to waist and stoned to death, beating with shoes, etc.

**MND:** Manabadhikar Nattya Dals are union based voluntary theatre teams trained by the Popular Theatre Unit to perform social dramas on local human rights and legal issues. The members also include women.

**MNP:** Manabadhikar Nattya Parishads are Upazila based federations of union based theatre teams.

**MSP:** Manabadhikar Sangrakkhan Parishads are voluntary teams of human rights monitors formed under by the Gender & Social Justice Programme at the Union and Upazila levels.

**MNS:** The Manabadhikar Nari Samaj is formed by women members of each MSP who work with NGOs such as CARE, or are members of Village Defense Party, etc.

**Village Court:** Courts, that are published under the Village Court Ordinance 1976. Any party to the dispute may in the prescribed manner and on payment of the prescribed fee, apply to the Chairman of the Union Parishad concerned for the constitution of a village court for trial of a case. Constituted by a chairman and two members to be nominated in prescribed manner by each party. It has no powers to pass a sentence of imprisonment, but may order the accused to pay to the aggrieved person compensation of an amount not exceeding five thousand taka.

**Legal Aid Fund:** This fund has been established under The 'Aingoto Shahayata Prodan Ain, 2000' ( Legal Aid Fund) Act was enacted on 26 January, 2000 to provide legal aid for persons who are insolvent, distressed and unable to bear the expenses on their own. Provides subsidies for lawyer's fees, cost of cases and supplementary charges. The District Judge is the President and Bar Association Secretary is the Secretary of the Committee, which includes District Magistrate, Police Super, Public Prosecutor, Representative of Department of Women and Child Affairs, Department of Social Welfare, Local NGOs and others. Lawyers have to submit quarterly reports to the Committee about their cases.

**MAP:** Manabadhikar Ainjibi Parishad (Human Rights Lawyers' Forum) formed under the GSJ Programme, to help victims avail Government Legal Aid Fund as referred by the MSP.

**PNGOs:** ASK has a Dhaka-based office. In order to carry out local level activities, e.g. advocacy, training, legal aid, etc. it selects like-minded PNGOs at the community level. ASK provides technical support, while these organizations organize project activities. ASK provides training on family laws, human rights, women's rights etc. to these organizations' staff and group members/leaders. PNGO's are women-headed organizations chosen by ASK to develop women leadership at the grassroots level.

## ASK Project Tree

### Goal

Rule of Law based on principles of democracy, human rights, justice and gender equity.

### Purpose

- Increase access to justice
- Ensure accountability
- Eliminate all forms of discrimination

Outputs	Result	Activity
<b>Output -1</b>	Community activism for Gender and Social Justice and human rights promoted.	1.1 Raise awareness on Human Rights, Law and Gender relations. 1.2 Promote gender and social justice. 1.3 Facilitate community activism on Human Rights through Action Theatre.
<b>Output-2</b>	Access to justice increased.	2.1 Provide legal aid service 2.1.1 Set up legal clinics (Dhaka & outside) 2.1.2 Corvene and conduct mediation. 2.1.3 Conduct cases (litigation) 2.2 Provide support services 2.3 Protection of working children. 2.4 Psycho Social counseling.
<b>Output-3</b>	Accountability and good governance ensured.	3.1 Research 3.2 Advocacy for law and policy reform. 3.3 Media Campaign and Communication
<b>Output-4</b>	Human Rights situation monitored.	4.1 Investigate and monitor Human Rights situation 4.2 Document HR situation and disseminate information.
<b>Output-5</b>	Effective program management ensured.	5.1 Develop Human Resource 5.2 Monitor and Evaluate Programme 5.3 Develop and implement effective and efficient financial system.

# Ain o Salish Kendra : An Overview

Since 1986, Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK) has been a key service provider and activist organization in the field of human rights in Bangladesh. It provides free legal aid to the disenfranchised and takes up class actions in defense of human rights. ASK emphasizes a non-partisan approach to human rights. ASK's programs seek to promote community activism, access to justice, accountability and good governance. Although a number of development partners provide support to ASK in its various programs, ASK is working toward program sustainability through replication by PNGOs and government agencies, or fundraising through training, publication sales and provision of expert services.

## Thematic priorities

- Promote community activism for gender and social justice and human rights
- Increase access to justice
- Ensure accountability and good governance
- Monitor Human Rights situation
- Ensure effective program management

## Key information on Units

ASK's programs are carried out by 15 units and 1 component (Counseling). They form five clusters corresponding to the expected outputs in the project tree. Cluster work addresses various dimensions of the objectives listed above and helps reinforce the impact of individual units by building on each other's efforts.

## Registration

- Registrar of Joint Stock Companies and Firms under Societies Registration Act, 1860 on September 20, 1986.
- NGO Affairs Bureau under Foreign Donation Regulation Ordinance, 1978 on June 28, 1993.
- In special consultative status with UNECOSOC since July 31, 1998.

## Members

- Founding members: 9 (4 women and 5 men)
- General members: 27 (16 women and 11 men)
- Executive Committee members: 9 (5 women and 4 men, 1 Founder Member and 8 General Members).

## Staff

Total: 174 (including regular, contract, full time and part-time), Women: 123, Men: 51

## Result 1. Community activism for Gender and Social Justice and Human Rights

*Training Unit (TRU)*

*Gender and Social Justice Unit (GSJU)*

*Popular Theatre Unit (PTU)*

## Result-2: Access to Justice

*Outreach (Legal Clinics) Unit (OUT)*

*Rapid Response and Mediation Unit (RRMU)*

*Litigation Unit (LIT)*

*Support Services and Half Way Home (SSHH)*

*Protection for Working Children Unit (PWC)*

*Counseling in Psycho-Social Help (PSH)*

## Result 3: Accountability and Good Governance

*Research Unit (RES)*

*Advocacy Unit (ADV)*

*Media and Communication Unit (COMM)*

**Result 4: Human Rights Situation Monitoring**  
*Investigation Unit (INV)*  
*Documentation Unit (DOC)*

**Result 5: Effective Program Management**  
*Administration Unit (ADMIN)*  
*Finance and Accounts Unit (FIN)*

**Projects:**

ASK's programmatic goals are achieved through several projects:

- a. Promoting Gender Equity, Human Rights and Democracy
- b. Facilitating Community Activism for Gender and Social Justice and Human Rights
- c. ASK-BRAC Joint Legal Aid Programme
- d. Protection of Full time Domestic Child Workers from Abuse and Exploitation

**Legal Aid Clinics**

ASK operates six Legal Clinics within Dhaka. Specific locations of the Dhaka Legal Aid Clinics are: (1) Shah Ali Bagh, Mirpur, (2) Johnson Road, (3) Goran, (4) Kamrangichar, (5) Keranigonj, (6) Mohammadpur. The number of Legal Clinics functioning out of Dhaka (in the Dhaka and Rajshahi Divisions) in collaboration with BRAC.

**Drop-in Centres for Working Children: 8**

- 1 Bashabo : 1
- 1 Mirpur : 2
- 1 Mohammadpur : 2
- 1 Goran : 1
- 1 Shajahanpur : 1
- 1 Ekota (Johnson Road) : 1

**Drop-in Centres for full time Child Domestic Workers: 11**

- 1 Dhanmondi : 2
- 1 Kalabagan : 3
- 1 Kalyanpur : 4
- 1 Mohammadpur : 2

**Program Coverage**

ASK implements its programs in twelve upazilas of eleven districts to promote and encourage community activism for Gender and Social Justice and human rights. ASK collaborates with BRAC to enable its group members to access justice in 110 rural locations in the Rajshahi divisions.

**Partner NGOs (12)**

Adarsha Shapla Unnayan Sangstha (ASUS), Naogaon Bandhan Society, Kishoreganj Sadar Gana Unnayan Kendra (GUK),

Gaibandha Mohila Unnayan Foundation (MUF), Faridpur  
Mukti Nari o Shishu Unnayan Shangstha, Kushtia.  
Pabna Prostisruti (PP), Pabna  
Shabolomby Unnayan Samity (SUS), Purbadhala, Netrokona  
Social Association For Rural Advancement (SARA), Mymensingh  
Social Development Organization (SDO), Narayanganj  
Welfare Efforts (WE), Jhinaidha  
Uttaran Mohila Shangstha, Sirajganj (SUMS)  
Women Development Organization (WDO), Netrokona Sadar

**Donors**

NETZ- Germany  
NOVIB- The Netherlands  
Save the Children (Sweden-Denmark)  
The Royal Norwegian Embassy- Dhaka  
The Swedish Embassy- Dhaka

**National Networks**

*Action Network to Combat Violence Against Women (ANCVAW)* is a coalition of 14 Bangladeshi NGOs. ANCVAW is committed to collaborative action at community, district and national levels for the recognition of domestic violence as a public and human rights issue and to promote the criminalization of domestic violence against women.

*Bangladesh Shishu Adhikar Forum (BSAF)* is formed by 170 member organizations that campaign for the implementation of the Child Rights Convention.

*Beijing Plus Five for Women's Rights* was formed by a large coalition of women's organizations to implement the Beijing Platform for Action, which has been adopted by the Government of Bangladesh. The government in consultation with many women's groups including this network adopted a National Policy for the Advancement of Women in 1997.

*Coalition for the Urban Poor (CUP)* coordinates campaigns for the right to shelter of slum dwellers and mobilizes them to exercise their rights.

*Sramik Nirapotta Forum* a network of 14 organizations concerned with safety at the workplace. The organizations came together after the collapse of the building that housed Spectrum Sweater Industries in Polashbari, Savar. The Forum has campaigned for workers' safety through the media, has supported workers injured in industrial accidents and has filed class actions to establish corporate responsibility for workers deaths and injuries and the families of workers killed.

*Samajik Protirodh Committee* is a network of women's groups in Bangladesh formed to resist vio-

lence against women by both state and non-state actors, to campaign for democratic participation of women in public decision making and to resist the forces of fundamentalism and communalism. The Secretariat is located in the Bangladesh Mahila Parishad.

*We can end violence against women* is an international campaign against violence against women particularly in the domestic field. The campaign holds meetings, seminars, workshops and publishes materials to inform people about forms of violence against women and how individuals can through personal measures create social activism in preventing gender based violence. ASK is now the Chair of the national committee of the campaign.

### **International Networks**

*Asia Pacific Forum for Women, Law and Development (APWLD)* based in Chiang Mai, Thailand, networks with legal and women's rights organizations across Asia and the Pacific to campaign for women's rights, to create awareness of rights and to draft recommendations for legal reform.

*The Asian Migrants' Forum* is based in Hong Kong. It raises issues concerning workers' rights and fair working conditions through creating awareness of rights of migrant workers and creating structures of support.

*End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and the Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes - ECPAT*

*International*, based in Bangkok is the world's largest NGO dedicated to fighting the commercial sexual exploitation of children. It has member NGOs in 70 countries around the world.

*Forum Asia (FA)* based in Bangkok, Thailand promotes human rights through training, education and awareness of international standards for different constituencies.

*International Women's Rights Action Watch (IWRAP)* based in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia promotes women's rights under UNCEDAW and other UN Conventions and supports organizations to prepare shadow reports for treaty bodies.

*South Asians for Human Rights (SAHR)* is a broad network of human rights activists and organizations based in South Asia. It is led by I.K. Gujral as Chairperson and Hameeda Hossain as Co-Chairperson. In 2005 it formed a South Asian Commission for Protection of the Rights of the Minorities, whose members have visited four countries so far to study the human rights situation.

*South Asia Forum for Human Rights (SAFHR)* is a sub-regional HR organization consisting of 35 member organizations.

*Women Living Under Muslim Laws (WLUML)* is an international network of women's organizations that have engaged with problems faced by women in contending with Islamic laws. ASK has prepared several documents on how laws affect women's lives in Bangladesh.

## Introduction

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Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK), which was started in 1986 completed its 20<sup>th</sup> year in 2006. To celebrate the occasion, ASK arranged for various programmes including cultural functions, events for the ASK family members and the Salma Sobhan Memorial Lecture graced by the presence of two Nobel laureates of this subcontinent, Professor Amartya Sen and Professor Muhammad Yunus. Plans to develop a documentary on the activities of ASK since its inception are also underway.

During 2006 the Government did not demonstrate the political will necessary to uphold its own basic commitments regarding good governance and for curbing corruption or violence. As a result the whole country witnessed an unprecedented escalation in violence in the form of extra-judicial killings by the state itself as well as violent attacks by non-state agents that were allowed to continue unhindered. The general feeling was that the state provided a tacit support given to the perpetrators in the name of people's approval. At times, the support, came out as public statements by even senior ministers. The most unfortunate part was that the justification given to the acts of violence was done in the name of religion. The other explanation given by many approving such atrocities was in the observation that elimination of 'terrorists' was the only possible way of dealing with the perpetrators as otherwise the judiciary lacked the power, integrity and independence to deal with them. This created an atmosphere in which violence at different levels received a kind of social sanction and acceptance impacting people's private life, needless to say particularly of women, children and various minority groups. Corruption, unchecked by the concerned authorities, was instrumental in rampant appropriation of public as well as private resources, land grabbing, dislocation and marginalisation of the powerless. 'Monga', water-logging, unbearable power crisis leading to social unrest, mismanagement in the garment sector are just a few examples that demonstrate the effects of such unbridled power-hunger and incompetence. However, arrest of leading militants Shaikh Abdur Rahman and 'Banglabhai' restored some confidence in the minds of the people in the Government's intention to fight religious militancy.

ASK as a human rights and legal aid organisation, continued to act and react to the situational turns by taking up issues of human rights violation with the appropriate authorities as well as providing legal assistance to individuals through both formal and informal dispute resolution mechanisms. ASK continued its assistance to women and other vulnerable groups like religious and ethnic minorities, the industrial workers

as its main focus group. This year the clients seeking assistance showed a clear preference for mediation opposed to court intervention. The year saw work in advocacy aided by research, in the area of policy reform, especially in regard to the National Women's Development Policy, full ratification of CEDAW, rights of the slum dwellers, taking part in the consultation for drafting the right to information law to be submitted to the ministry of law, justice and parliamentary affairs to mention a few. Investigation activities were mainly directed to look into the impact of militant activity as human rights. For ASK, corruption has been rather a new area where some investigative efforts were given. The annual human rights report was published routinely with other regular periodicals. One of the special achievements was the publication of Professor Amartya Sen's *Salma Sobhan Memorial Lecture* on the occasion of ASK's 20<sup>th</sup> year celebration. Training, Gender and Social Justice and Popular Theatre Units were able to reach larger number of people in an effective manner whereas work with children extended its activities to child domestic workers. Psycho-social counseling and the support services had the number of clients increased significantly. The BRAC-ASK legal aid programme is undergoing a review to take a new direction.

Since this was also the year of taking over the rule by the care-taker government, ASK, like many other organisations and institutions had the scope for operating in a condition free from political pressures in the later months of the year, though continued human rights violation by the state like extra-judicial killing kept ASK standing upright against it. Towards the end of the year there had again been an escalation in the political violence and anarchy that was loaded by people's anxiety and fear that the forthcoming election may not be free and fair leading to considerable instability in every sector of life. This ultimately resulted in declaration of emergency in the country and dismantling of the existing care-taker government replaced by new advisers in the early days of the new year. At this very important juncture of completing the 20<sup>th</sup> year and entering the new year, ASK looks forward to standing up to its commitment to create enabling conditions for all to access justice, attain democracy and equality and live in human dignity.

I acknowledge the hard work given by all my colleagues in seeing through the year and thank gratefully the honourable members, particularly the Executive members of ASK for the invaluable cooperation and guidance given to my colleagues and myself in the course of running the organisation.

**Sultana Kamal**  
Executive Director

## Executive Summary

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Established in 1986, Ain o Shalish Kendra (ASK) provides free legal aid to the disenfranchised. ASK emphasizes a non-partisan approach to human rights through community activism, human rights monitoring and ensuring good governance. ASK's programs are donor-funded but efforts to sustain these programs are made through replication of selected programs by PNGOs and government agencies, or fundraising through training, publication sales and provision of expert services. ASK currently has Fifteen units and One component (Counseling) in operation. A total of 174 staff (including regular, contract, full time and part-time) are currently employed by ASK.

ASK implements its programs in twelve upazilas across the country. ASK collaborates with BRAC to enable the later's group members to access justice in 185 rural locations in the Dhaka and Rajshahi divisions.

### **Result 1: Community activism for Gender and Social Justice and Human Rights**

To ensure deep-rooted human rights awareness leading to active engagement, ASK's involvement begins at the lowest level of governance through union based programs.

The *Training Unit* organizes and conducts courses and workshops in subjects such as family law, gender equality, and violence against women, collective responsibility and activism, mediation and advocacy techniques.

The *Gender and Social Justice Unit (GSJ)* focuses on mobilizing and developing community activism, raising awareness of gender and social justice, encouraging fair decisions and more women's participation in *shalish* or mediation, etc. GSJ is instrumental in developing and sustaining various community based organizations that promote and protect human rights. The *Popular Theatre Unit (PTU)* mobilizes youth in the community as theatre activists. It organizes and trains them to enact issue based plays so as to sensitize their community. A school based HR education pro-

gram covering 18 schools has been included under this approach.

### **Result 2: Access to Justice**

Access to justice - through increasing access to legal support and related extra-legal services has been an over arching goal for ASK.

The *Outreach Unit (OUT)* functions in collaboration with BRAC. This unit conducts free legal aid clinics in Dhaka as well in program areas in the rural areas.

The *Rapid Response and Mediation Unit (RRMU)* was established to provide the disenfranchised, particularly poor women, workers, working children and minorities with speedy and proactive access to justice.

The *Litigation Unit* resorts to litigation as a dispute resolution mechanism.

The services and facilities provided by the *Support Services and Halfway Home (SSHH)* Unit complements the extensive legal aid program of ASK by providing medical, economic, psychological and social support to survivors of domestic violence, rape, trafficking, etc.

The *Protection for Working Children (PWC)* Unit provides working children with basic education and training, healthcare, recreational opportunities, legal support.

Through the *Psycho-social Help* component, ASK has broken new ground in the survivor assistance and rehabilitation scenario of Bangladesh, espousing the view that emotional well-being is just as important as physical health.

### **Result 3: Accountability and Good Governance ensured**

Research and proactive dissemination of its findings is a prime method of monitoring the dynamics of discrimination and identifying socio-political and economic concerns from a right's perspective. The *Research Unit* conducts research on various topics of concern to ASK.

The *Advocacy Unit* works to protect the fundamental rights of the citizens through advocacy and public interest litigation

The *Media and Communication Unit* conducts media campaigns, press briefings, and publishes a quarterly Bulletin, reports and other publications. The unit also looks after the ASK website.

#### **Result 4: Human Rights Situation Monitored**

Constant monitoring draws public attention to human rights violations. The *Investigation Unit* monitors various institutions (including hospitals, police stations and courts) on a regular basis and interviews under-trial prisoners when permitted.

Computerized data on legal and HR literature is catalogued, classified and archived by the *Documentation Unit* for research, publication, HR reports, case filing, writ petitions and media reporting. This Unit is also responsible for dissemination and distribution of ASK Bulletins, reports and other publications.

#### **Result 5: Effective program management ensured**

The day to day functioning of ASK as well as the long-term programmatic overview is taken care of by the Administration Unit and the Finance and Accounts Unit.

The *Administration Unit's* primary role is to provide support (such as administration, information tech-

nology, human resources development and logistics) for implementation of ASK's programs.

The *Finance and Accounts Unit* is responsible for all aspects of organizational and program finance monitors program expenditure and provides monthly reports on budget expenditure by Units.

#### **Overall Outcome**

ASK's concept of legal aid is holistic covering legal and extra-legal services and involves dispute resolution, litigation, monitoring of law enforcement, advocacy and public campaigns and physical and psychological support for victims of violence. Its goal is not only to provide help in individual cases, but through an all-encompassing approach to support demands for a fair judicial system, increased public participation in preventing HR violations and reduced community tolerance of violence and discrimination. The protection of human rights and concern regarding violations are issues regularly covered in the media; ASK has played a strong role in making this possible.

ASK's three pronged strategy includes awareness, transformation and bringing about action results in partnership with local organizations and interaction with local representatives and officials. This has improved the capacity for community activism to demand and perform accountability and protect rights.



# I One

*Community activism for Gender and Social Justice and Human Rights*

- ❑ Training Unit
- ❑ Gender and Social Justice Unit
- ❑ Popular Theatre Unit



Raising critical awareness of inputs at community level as well as an understanding of how laws and policies impact on gender relations is integral to improving the overall Human Rights situation. These actions also stimulate community potential for voluntary activism through sensitization and strengthening of local elected bodies and community based organizations. Feedback and impact assessment observation suggests changes in social attitudes towards women and the rights of common citizens.

ASK's programs provide support both financial and technical to community based organizations in its program areas. To ensure that the awareness of Human Rights leads to active engagement, ASK interacts with the lowest level of governance. The Training Unit, the Gender and Social Justice Unit and the Popular Theatre Unit engender union based programs.

## Training Unit

The Training Unit aims to achieve active, meaningful participation of conscious citizens from grassroots level through awareness, skill, and education program. These programs are implemented in collaboration with 12 PNGOs helping to create a culture of human rights and promoting community activism for gender and social justice. Key training topics include -

- Paralegal training
- Human rights
- Fundamental Rights
- Women's Rights, CEDAW, VAW
- Conceptual Clarity on Gender
- Gender relations analysis (GRA)
- Legal issues, labor and land laws
- Justice System
- Family Law (Muslim, Hindu & Christian)
- Good Governance, mediation and advocacy
- Govt. Legal Aid Fund
- Networking
- Laws relating to sex workers

### Key Information

No of courses conducted: 207
No of participants:
Male-1712, Female-2387, Total-4099

The training team comprises a coordinator, 4 senior trainers and 6 trainers. The majority of these employees are lawyers. Various training methodologies are used and modules, handouts, posters are developed by TRU. All training materials as well as methodologies are reviewed and updated periodically.

TRU provides training to the staff and community members associated with the 12 PNGO areas in 11 districts, in collaboration with the Gender and Social Justice Unit and Popular Theatre Unit. Participants include VDP members, UP members, MNS, MSP and MNP activists, teachers and community leaders. In addition, TRU provides training to external organizations on request following

### ASK provided training to

- Concern Bangladesh
- BWHC
- CODEC
- IDEAL
- Terre des Hommes (TDH)
- Bandhu Social Welfare Society
- RDRS Bangladesh
- Food for the Hungry
- Manob Mukti Sangstha
- Leprosy Mission of Bangladesh Shishu Niloy
- Supoth
- SOVA
- Shakti Foundation

assessment of organizational needs as well as follow up training. This year 185 of the training courses provided were on-request for other organizations, with 3591 participants (female-2087). Total number of trainees is 4099, over half of whom were women.

Course evaluation, reports and follow-up reporting from the other units exhibit a marked difference in pre- and post training attitude and activities, such as enhanced interest and awareness regarding HR issues as well as gradual development of a strong and empowered attitude. Through the training courses participants gain knowledge regarding-

- Where to complain if an incident occurs.
- What to do about medical reports as supplementary evidence to support a victim.
- How to assist the victim during trial.
- Where & how to obtain help for legal aid fund.

The training courses succeeded in correcting misconceptions regarding a number of legal issues, laying emphasis on mediation as the preferable method of dispute resolution, focusing on the importance of unity and networking, etc. Sharing of learning with various local level forums, family, community members through meetings and workshops furthered the impact of TRU activities.

The activities of TRU have impacted the program areas in a number of ways. These include rising levels of participation of women in salish mechanisms both as mediators and spectators, increased participation of women UP members in union activities, increased marriage registration as well as lawful talaq or divorce, individual and group resistance to various social injustices and violence, strong networking activities, increased usage of Govt. Legal Aid Fund, etc. However, trainer feedback indicated a demand for in-depth knowledge on several issues such as CEDAW.

Examining training outcomes reveals a rising awareness in the community regarding negotiation of their rights and working voluntarily to promote and protect Human Rights at community level. This is emerging from the motivation born of these training courses and from the efforts of GSJP and PT programs. TRU conducted training sessions in various areas of Bangladesh in response to demands made by different organizations. For staff development, TRU organized training courses for the trainers and other ASK staff. By providing training at different organization and by selling materials, TRU earned a total amount of Taka 12,08,058.00.

In 2006, capacity-building activities developed the unit further in terms of professionalism. Its participatory training modes, which utilized varied methods and materials, enhanced TRU's demand to other organizations. Training modules and other materials that were developed and designed by the ASK TRU also succeeded in arousing the interest and enthusiasm of other organizations. As a result non-ASK organizations re-designed their TOR with TRU for training courses.

## Gender and Social Justice Unit

The focus of the Gender and Social Justice Unit (GSJP) is to:

- Raise gender awareness, promote gender equality and achieve gender equity.
- Ensure quality *salish* (Mediation)
- Activate Village Courts to ensure access to justice
- Assist people to avail District level Govt. Legal aid fund for ensuring access to justice.

The GSJP addresses gender inequality at all levels of the family, community and state. The unit conducted a baseline survey, held workshops at the union level after which it formed Ain Shohayota Committees (ASC) [Legal Assistance Committees] at the local level. Separate workshops were also held with UP chair and members, and other social elites; in addition, advocacy meetings with the administration took place. The primary object of the GSJP is the *shalish* or village level adjudication process to which the majority of the rural populace turns for settling disputes. The traditional *shalish*, run by village elders and local elites, is heavily weighted against women and the poor. GSJP activities are designed to promote more egalitarian *shalish* rulings and increase the participation of women. More formally speaking, the GSJP ensures that *shalish* procedures and rulings in its working areas are in conformity with the national legal framework.

GSJ is instrumental in the development and sustainability efforts of various CBOs in the interests of advocacy and safeguarding of HR. Chief among these are the Manobadhikar Sangrakkhan Parishad (MSP) and the Manobadhikar Nari Samaj (MNS) - CBOs that act as watchdogs and activists at the union level. In addition, GSJ assists in the formation of the district level Manobadhikar Ainjibi Parishad (MAP) - a federation of lawyers - that provides free legal advice and services to the disenfranchised. The formation of the union level Manobadhikar Nari Samaj (MNS) aims to ensure women's participation in decision making and to develop women's leadership.

### Key Information

Union level Manobadhikar Sangrakkhan Parishad (MSP): 48  
Union level Manobadhikar Nari Samaj (MNS): 48  
MSP members: 2160, MNS members: 1440, Total: 3600  
Salish conducted by MSP / MNS : 237  
Initiatives taken by MSP/MNS to prevent HRV: 252  
Legal aid support provided availing district level legal aid fund: 58

It may be noted that trainings addressed to PNGOs are conducted by GSJP. The Unit conducted a number of training courses and workshops including founda-

tion courses on law, gender relations, advocacy, good governance, communication and facilitation skills etc. for PNGOs. Courses and study circles were arranged for civil society groups at union and upazila level on governance, gender issues, mediation and facilitation skills, and paralegal training as well as follow up training sessions. The unit organized two study circles - one on 'Base Line Survey' and another on 'Log Frame Analysis'. Opinion sharing workshops and advocacy workshops were conducted with LEBs, local government officials, and PNGO staff. These workshops focused on a number of issues including the local HR situation and the inactive Village Court process. The workshop held with the district level legal aid commit-

**Case Study 1:** In May 2006, Moulana Abdul Matin of Gaibandha Sadar Upazilla was invited to solemnize the marriage of a 15/16 year old boy and a 10/12 year old girl. When he refused to commit this illegal act, he was threatened with social and religious ostracism, a heavy fine (the cost of the wedding) and loss of job. Later on, he was prevented from carrying out his responsibilities as a Moulana. The Moulana refused to back down from his position and informed the MSP. Further notification was forwarded to the local NGO community, various government officials as well as the community at large. As a result, the offenders have accepted their culpability and an agreement has been reached that they will apologize in front of the whole community. A specific day is being determined and NGO members are also to be present at that meeting.

**Case Study 2:** Aftab Hossain of Billvaduria married a second time without his first wife's consent. Following this marriage, he sent his first wife Ambia Khatun to her father's house and refused to pay maintenance. Ambia informed the MSP and a Salish was convened. Aftab agreed to pay maintenance for his wife. He took Ambia back home and began abusing her. After tolerating this for several days, Ambia informed the MAP. Following Aftab's plea for another chance, MAP arranged another Salish where Aftab and his second wife took Ambia back. A few weeks later he attempted to murder Ambia. When she tried to escape he locked her up. Ambia's 10 year old daughter managed to inform an MNS member of the whole situation. She informed the local chairman and member and Ambia was rescued. Currently MAP has a case filed against Aftab.

Emerging and potential problems which can hinder project implementation	Suggested actions
Some PNGOS lack seriousness in program operation. Successful program implementation depends on external pressure applied by ASK.	The following year either the program area or the PNGOS will be replaced.
The resignation of CO as they are receiving higher salary elsewhere.	Increased salary.
The terrorism of JWB has aroused fear within the community hindering the program activities.  Political alliance with extremist groups leads to fears that the practice of Fatwa will again emerge rendering all efforts to effectively establish the legal framework futile for example the agreement between Awami League and Islami Okkyo Jote.	ASK is presence should be maintained there to advise and take action.  NGO leaders as well as different sectors oppose the alliance, articles should be published in the news papers. From the unit we are continuously getting in touch with the CBO leaders to have discussions

tees and MSP and PNGOs was highly significant as it identified the causes for non-utilization of the government legal aid fund.

GSJ held a number of operational planning meetings with PNGOs. Bi-monthly meetings were held with MAP and monthly MSP (136 meetings, 2099 male and 1135 female participants) and MNS meetings (498 meetings, female participants 6546, male participants 1128) at union level. The MSP Annual General Meeting and Planning Workshop reviewed annual activities and strategies plan for the coming year. Public discussions focusing on the local HR situation were organized in twelve working areas as well as open dialogue sessions with Kazis, and female local government members.

In addition, “special” days - such as International Women’s Rights Day, Independence Day, 21st February, Child Rights Day, Human Rights Day - were observed with a variety of programs by the active MNS without any financial support from ASK or other organizations. MSP and MNS organized 28 legal camps to ensure door to door legal assistance.

A total number of 44969 people (female 22152, roughly 49.26 percent) benefited directly from the various activities of GSJ.

Increased and active awareness regarding rights has been noticed at community as well as individual level. Networking - in the form of CBOs extending support to adjacent communities - is gradually emerging as a positive development.

The union and district level MSPs have developed their own fund and are maintaining accounts. The MSPs of 6 working areas have taken initiatives for registration of their organizations.

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MSPs of 6 working areas have taken initiatives for registration of their organizations. The members of MAP have formed a central committee, had their first meeting in Dhaka finalizing the bylaws of MAP Central committee. Increased focus on lawful salish, proper documentation of all actions taken, special emphasis on the illegality of Hilla marriage and child marriage has led to positive impact in program areas. More reportage of child marriages, unlawful divorce, and an increase in marriage registration is a positive outcome.

Increased responsibility and activism on the part of CBOs is a direct result of institutional strengthening and empowerment of local level civil bodies. Dispute resolution activities within established legal frameworks, activism-centered discussions, awareness and utilization of Government legal aid fund, workshops and trainings initiated and organized by MSP and MNS are becoming the norm.

## Popular Theatre Unit

Main focus of Popular Theatre Unit:

- Create opinion against HR violations through Action Theatre
- Human Rights Education for high school students.

The Popular Theatre Unit (PTU) has enhanced community activism by training local volunteers to stage issue based dramas and act as pressure groups. The Unit trains school students on theatre, hold study circles for discourse on issues, encouraging them to monitor human rights situation in the locality. The Unit promotes the commemoration of special national and international human rights events, to promote culture of tolerance and democratic values. Theatre is a dynamic process for developing analytical skills of the people on particular issue, specially the non literates. This is a strategy intended to remove stereotyped perceptions of class, gender and rights.

### Eight Step Methodology of PTU

- Step-8 Institutionalization (transformation into an essential resource team)
- Step-7 Action (includes audience behaviour or calls for a particular next step on the issue)
- Step-6 Performance and feedback
- Step-5 Practice
- Step-4 Dramatization of the story
- Step-3 Development of the story
- Step-2 Research and determination of issue
- Step-1 Rapport building and Primary Team Formation

ASK is developing public awareness in human rights with strategies, which will lead to a transfer of responsibility from the NGO to the community itself where participation of all is assured towards contribution to a culture of human rights.

The Popular Theatre Unit works in conjunction with PNGOs. ASK provides financial and technical support while the local NGOs execute programs at field level. PTU mobilizes the local community to form Manobadhikar Nattya Parishad (MNP) or the HR Theatre Team. MNPs perform issue based drama and transmit their skills to others. PTU follows an eight-step methodology called "Action Theatre as an effective change making tool".

During the past year, theatre groups have been performing more dramas and the involvement of the theatre activists in various cases of HRV has increased. This created the need for the local theatre groups to organize into Upazilla level and then District level federations. PTU along with GSJP organized a working meeting where the project was reviewed and experiences on program implementation exchanged. Heads of ASK and the PNGOs were called in the meeting alongside community Organizers, Program Supervisors and Theatre Activists. Organizing an Upazilla level MNP (UzMNP) was needed in order to enhance the visibility, influence and network of the union level theatre groups. UzMNP organizes events on a larger scale, and publishes a yearly literature and calendars. The UzMNP also supervises the union level MNPs and participates in lobbying for human rights cases with the local police officers, lawyers and journalists. The local MNPs are gradually gaining ground as a mobilizing force. Study circles have been formed dedicated to discussing legal provisions, observation of "special days", etc. Even though ASK's PTU limits its work to training theatre activists and performing issue based dramas, often the theatre activists are called in for *shalishes*, as they are considered to be trained in legal and HR issues.

### Key Information

Issue based Drama performed: 629  
Audience(Approx): Female: 98695, Male: 196143  
Total: 294838  
Major Issues: National budget, Mass arrest, Violence Against Women (Dowry, Dower, Divorce, Domestic violence, Acid throwing), Police torture, Corruption, Fundamentalism, Extra judicial killing, Guardianship etc.  
Union Manbadhiker Nattya Parishad (UMNP)— 60  
Members: Female: 208 Male: 1925 Total: 2113  
Upazila Manabadhiker Nattya Parishad (UzMNP)— 12  
Members: Female: 17 Male: 211 Total: 228  
Number of School Theatre Team (STT): 18  
Members of STT: 18 Girls: 225 Boys: 225 Total: 450  
Issue based Drama performed by STT: 99  
Audience: Female: 6992 Male: 6398 Total: 13390

Every month UMNPs meet to decide various issues such as Issue Based Drama Performance, day observation, victim assistance, monitoring Kazi office and Hospital etc. PNGO and Theatre Activists attend the meetings as observers. In 2006, 48 annual general meeting of UMNP have been organized in 12 working areas. UzMNP directly supervised the Annual general meeting and Council of UMNP. In addition, local facilitators conducted 5 workshops in 6 working areas and produced 5 dramas on political terrorism, police torture, rape, dowry, etc. A bulletin is published periodically to publicize MNP activities. In addition, three UzMNPs visited three Union Health Complexes to observe service delivery.

School Theatre Teams (STT) perform plays, publish wall-magazines, participate in debate and cultural competition, celebrate significant days and attend study circles. TAs supervises the program through visit and coordination meeting with Guide Teachers. The PTU coordinator monitors the program and attends selected meetings. Eighteen Schools from six working areas were selected through field visits, while one Guide teacher was selected from each school. Popular Theatre Unit developed UMNPs and provided them training. Villagers dedicate their time and energy to work for the theatre group. Even though theatre workers are not offered any salary, there is no lack of enthusiasm. People always attend performances and engage in discussions that last for days. In some places theater workers have used personal funds to continue and expand their projects. In many areas UMNP initiated study circles. School based discussions, theatre festivals and other programs. Formation of Upa Zilla MNP added a new dimension to village life and involved youth into social activity, in many places local funds were generated. The program has spontaneously emerged in a short period, but has developed a structural sustainability. However, there does exist a lack of experienced leaders

in every UzMNP who could independently direct an issue-based movement towards a goal. MNP have intervened in incidents of human rights abuse in the locality. As a result the victims were benefited and the perpetrators stood warned against further violations. MNPs contribute to social mobilization against human rights violations by performing issue-based dramas, lobbying with local UP members, chairmen and police officers. In some cases the MNP members help to transport the victim to courts, hospitals and police stations as well as provide moral support.

#### **Key Hindrances to implement programs**

- High drop out rate of Community Organizers (CO) of PNGO.
  - Conflict between Governing committee and the teachers of the School in few areas.
  - Political terrorism and fundamentalism
  - The local police authority non-cooperated during the annual HR Theatre Festivals in most of the working areas using Islamic militants as an excuse.
- Some PNGOs are confused about their supervisory

role in developing MNP capacity. Programs might be withdrawn from one or two areas due to insincerity, incapability and misconduct of PNGOs, which have been noticed during the period. PNGOs and other NGOs have taken similar type of program for different agenda in the same area where they pay the theatre worker for every performance, which creates confusion and conflict among the volunteer MNP members. Hence, a phase out from old six PNGOs and continuation of a minimum program with the MNP federations is foreseen.

Organize working meeting and operational planning meeting with the top management of PNGO and ASK where the ideology/ philosophy of the program is analyzed and the importance of independent functioning of MNPs clarified again and again. Provide continuous workshops, training and TOT for developing second and third line leadership in the MNPs. Initiate discussion on current HR situation through performing well-produced drama; organized exchange meeting, citizen's meeting, and seminars for local social opinion leaders, professionals, students and LEBs.



# III Two

## *Access to justice*

- Legal Clinics (Outreach) Unit**
- Rapid Response & Mediation Unit**
- Litigation Unit**
- Support Services and Half Way Home**
- Protection for Working Children Unit**
- Counseling in Psycho-Social Help**



Access to justice through legal support and related extra-legal services has been an overarching goal for ASK. Legal services are provided primarily through legal aid clinics and two other units. The extra-legal services are delivered through three units: the support is as essential for the well being of the clients as the actual litigation services.

### Legal Services are provided through:

Outreach Unit

Rapid Response and Mediation Unit

Litigation Unit

### Extra-Legal Services are provided through:

Support Services and Halfway Home

Protection for Working Children Unit

Counseling in Psycho-social Help

## Outreach Unit

ASK and BRAC have collaborated to offer prompt, effective, free legal assistance to BRAC group members. From 1999 BRAC agreed to give legal assistance to non-group members in cases of violence against women and children. BRAC provides logistic & managerial support, whereas ASK provides technical support. ASK Outreach Unit supervises and monitors all program activities of BRAC program personnel and panel lawyers. The policies and principles of ASK legal aid services offered in Dhaka are being replicated in the rural areas through legal aid clinics under the joint legal aid program.

There is one clinic at each thana level BRAC area office which provides legal aid services.

A total of 110 legal clinics in 11 districts (Rajshahi, Natore, Chapainawabgonj, Joypurhat, Naogaon, Sirajgonj, Gaibandha, Kurigram, Rangpur, Nilphamari & Dinajpur) of Rajshahi division are run by staff of BRAC trained by ASK under the BRAC-ASK Joint Legal Aid Program.

In the present reporting period, Outreach Unit staff lawyers visited 207 Legal Aid Clinics, 41 client workshops have been organized in 11 districts, 35 coordination meetings have been held (87 female, 1328 male participants). Dialogue sessions were held with Government officials, Lawyer, journalists and Civil society about Violence Against Women (VAW). There were eleven Dialogue sessions held at Rajshahi, Natore, Chapainawabgonj, Joypurhat, Naogaon, Sirajgonj, Gaibandha, Kurigram, Rangpur, Nilphamari & Dinajpur Gaibandha districts where 89 females and 501 males were present.

### Key Information

4775 complaints registered.

2616 complaints settled through mediation.

Taka 29875036/- has been recovered through mediation in the last year.

1032 complaints filed in court.

382 complaints have been settled through litigation.

1129 complaints have been rejected or postponed.

307 complaints are pending at court.

In 2006, ASK and BRAC jointly organized a two daylong panel lawyer's workshop at Bogra TARC. The participants (14 female and 56 male) were panel lawyers of 11 districts of Rajshahi division, BRAC R.S.S and Staff Lawyers, ASK staff lawyers of outreach unit and senior individuals of BRAC management.

Advocacy of BRAC-ASK program personnel with different organs of the government and networking with Acid Survivors Foundation has enabled acid burn victims to obtain prompt and effective legal and medical relief. In many cases, the disenfranchised approach our program of their own volition without any initiative from our program personnel. In our program areas people get interest to settle their disputes through mediation rather than to go to the court. Furthermore, influential persons and local elite of the community also advice the disputants to settle their disputes through mediation. Legal Aid Program also to create a bridge between the Gov't officials, journalist, lawyer and civil society to ensure necessary legal support door to door.

From the beginning of the pilot program, ASK Outreach Unit has worked with BRAC in 27 districts in the number of districts in different times. Now ASK is working in 11 districts with BRAC. Being inspired by this programme, BRAC has replicated this program in almost of the whole Bangladesh. As a result, vulnerable women and children have access to legal aid. However, inadequate supervision, follow-up monitoring and lack of refresher training is a problem for successful completion of cases.

## Comparative Study

Description of steps taken	Status of Complaints								
	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000	1999	1998
<b>Complaints accepted</b>	4775	3932	7112	9074	4757	2777	2166	887	536
<b>Settled through mediation</b>	2616	1891	3739	4598	2276	1244	899	472	169
<b>Cases conducted by lawyers</b>	1032	608	930	1128	242	216	112	33	25
<b>Cases disposed of</b>	382	358	431	284	121	81	33	13	0
<b>Clinics</b>	110	211	210	238	230	168	128	91	32

## Result

- BRAC staff and ASK coordinate work of panel lawyers outside Dhaka.
- The joint legal aid program is followed up regularly.
- Legal issues are discussed for victims redress.
- Norms and values of legal aid are emphasized.
- The activities of legal aid clinics are monitored and supervised.
- Panel lawyers are made aware about higher court's judgments, which can then be implemented in lower court.
- Lawyers, journalists, Gov't officials made aware and sensitized about violence against women.
- Panel lawyers are sensitized about human rights lawyering and gender issues.
- Psychological pressure on clients is reduced.
- Experience of sufferings and successes of clients is shared.
- The experience is shared among the unit staff.
- Decisions are taken to develop the program.

Recovery of money as dower and/or maintenance from January- June'2006 under the BRAC-ASK Joint Legal Aid Program: Rajshahi Division.

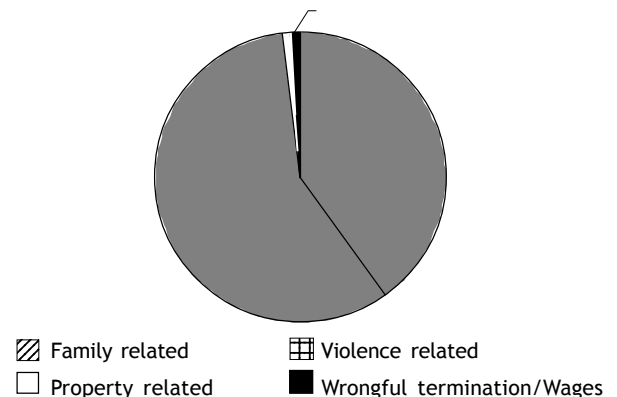
Rajshahi	4885764/=
Natore	2820155/=
Chapainawabgonj	2141266/=
Noagaon	1937527/=
Joypurhat	1759100/=
Dinajpur	2814000/=
Nilphamari	2306200/=
Gaibanda	1690900/=
Sirajgonj	2473823/=
Kurigram	2523000/=
Rangpur	4523301/=
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,98,75,036/=</b>

## Rapid Response & Mediation Unit

From the very beginning of ASK's function the Legal Aid Unit (LAU) is trying to enable the disenfranchised, particularly poor women, workers (such as garments worker, day laborer), working children and minorities to access justice. LAU provides legal aid, firstly, at ASK office and next at six on-site clinics at Mirpur (from 1992), Goran (from 1992), Johnson Road (from 1992), Kamrangirchar (from 2001), Mohammadpur (from 2004), and Keranigonj (from 2005) in Dhaka and sometimes outside Dhaka. LAU was later bifurcated into two units; a) Mediation and Rapid Response Unit

(RRMU) and b) Litigation unit. RRMU continues its functions as before such as addressing emergencies as well as negotiating settlements through mediation. Sometimes RRMU also moves before court on emergency basis in Dhaka and outside of Dhaka. Mediation is a popular method for women to seek justice, especially for family disputes. In Bangladesh, where the formal judicial system is time consuming, expensive, corrupted and even biased when it relates to women's issues; mediation offers women a familiar and safer space to negotiate their rights and let their voices be raised and heard. RRMU thus attains its goal through mediation, negotiation, legal advice and rapid response to HR violation cases.

Registered Complaints



## Category of Complaints

Total complaints now stand at **1382** at the end of December 2006. It is to be noted that **1225** pending complaints up to December 2005 were carried and **1650** new complaints were received. After taking proper steps this unit closed **1493** complaints.

If the opposite party responds to the notice and comes to ASK and if, after being informed about the complaints, agrees to sit with the first party for mediation then a date is set. Unit lawyers facilitate the mediation. During the last 12 months, RRMU conducted 659 mediations in which 329 were settled and 330 are waiting for further sitting. RRMU provided legal advice at ASK office to 456 clients personally and 1608 clients by phone.

RRMU has 6 on-site clinics at Johnson Road, Mirpur - 1, Goran and Kamrangirchar Mohammadpur & Keranigonj in Dhaka, which are visited by unit lawyers once a week. Total of 9323 visits by old and new clients were counted of which 3003 visits were at the legal clinics. RRMU received 564 new clients during the reporting twelve months in the legal clinics. Staff Lawyers of RRMU visited the legal clinics 251 times to provide legal advice, follow up client cases etc. In the reporting period a total of 97 GDs

and 10 FIRs were lodged in different police stations against occurrences of criminal offences.

### Key Information

- Total no. of complaints registered: Clinic: **564** Office: **1086** Total: **1650**
- **4159** visits by clients carried over from previous years
- Total number of visits by each client: **9323**
- Total number of mediation conducted: **659** in which settled : **329**
- Total number of complaints settled through negotiation: **267**
- Total amount recovered through mediation: **3891451** among which **34,58,701/-** recovered as dower money and cost of maintenance, **4,16,250/-** recovered as maintenance of children, **13000/-** as borrowed money, **3500/-** recovered as wages of eight months of a client.
- Number of initiative taken as rapid response: **705**
- Arranged shelter for shelter less victims of HR violations:
  - Halfway Home- 77
  - Nirmal Shelter Home- 19 (for long term shelter & vocational training)
  - CTRDW - 5
  - Shishu Palli - 13
- Arranged medical care for HR violation's victims
- D.M.C (Dhaka Medical College) & O. C.C (One Stop Crisis Center)- 14
- Community Hospital- 9
- Arranged psychosocial counseling to empower emotional distressed clients- **32**
- Released sex workers from police station & court custody- **38**
- Released and handed over victims to the legal guardians from safe custody, vagrant home and government shelter home (Upon request from women & child affairs ministry and social welfare ministry)- **39**
- Rescued lactating children from opposite party- **23**
- Total no of victims released under DMP Acts: **385**

In the current reporting period, **1650** new complaints (1192 of the complainants were women) were registered in which **682** complaints were on family matter, **960** complaints on violence matter. Besides, **6** complaints were matters related to employment issues whereas **2** complaints were regarding property & money related disputes.

If women victims are detained in jail or in vagrant home in the name of safe custody lawyers of RRMU take steps to help to release those victims. Total 39 such victims were handed over to their guardians. Upon the request of different organizations such as Concern Bangladesh, Care Bangladesh, Sanghati seeking legal assistance for the release of detained

sex workers. RRMU assisted 38 such victims from police lockup or jail. RRMU rescued 23 infants, who had been abducted by the father or his family due to custody disputes. After successful mediation, RRMU does follow-up for 6 months. In this reporting period, field workers of RRMU followed up 176 clients after reconciliation.

### Cases conducted by RRMU

Status of Complaint	Number of Clients
Pending (from last year (+)	1225
New (+)	1650
Closed (-)	1493
<b>Total</b>	<b>1382</b>

In the reporting period a total amount of Tk. 38,91,451/- was recovered from the opposite parties through mediation as dower and maintenance costs, **13%** higher than the previous year Among it, Tk. 34,58,701/- was recovered as dower money, 13,000/- recovered as borrowed money and a small amount of 3,500/- recovered as wages of a client. RRMU has been able to recover this huge amount of money within shortest possible time through mediation avoiding the long process of court. RRMU take prompt action against a total of 705 HR violation incidents on the basis of dailies.

In this reporting year, RRMU succeeded in closing 1493 files following effective and prompt steps. Among the total number of 659 mediations conducted by RRMU, approximately 50% disputes were settled. RRMU provided free legal advice to 2064 clients (by phone 1608 clients or directly 456 clients) which benefited them to decide how they should proceed to access justice. RRMU has released 385 victims who were illegally arrested under DMP Acts. RRMU made contact with the concerned government authorities over telephone for 136 HR violation incidents requesting them to take action against those events. RRMU made contact with other like-minded organization such as BMP, BLAST, ASF, BNWLA, RDRS, CODEC, Mukti Nari Unnayan Shangstha, Manobadhikar Bastobayan Shangstha over telephone for 193 HR violation incidents to assist the victims

RRMU referred officially **91** individual complaints regarding land disputes, complaints outside Dhaka to BLAST, BNWLA, Malila Parishad, etc. Regarding advocacy to protest and prevent HRV, RRMU regularly took part, during the reporting period, in a total of **50** seminars, symposiums, protest rally, demonstration etc.

A new partnership project (with Concern Bangladesh) started from Sep-06 to provide legal aid to the socially disadvantaged at vagrant home. By this new initiatives 70 victims has been released within 4 months. Long term shelter home, in addition to a Halfway Home, for post settlement/rehabilitation of the

clients will encourage perseverance in the struggle for legal rights, and enable clients to overcome lack of family or community support. It is seen from our experience that serving of notices by hand (through our field workers) is more effective than serving of those by mail. Thus, settlement of complaints through mediation has been increased. In future, RRMU plans to set up a full-fledged legal clinic in its own premises along with other facilities for clients.

## Litigation Unit

The Litigation Unit provides free legal aid by conducting cases in the court and other ways such as advocacy, awareness building and pursuance to the concerned authority for enabling people to have access to justice. Litigation unit usually receives gross violation of human rights cases; severe offence cases such as rape, murder, torture, acid throwing; dowry, polygamy detention matters, civil revision, criminal appeal etc. In case of family matter most of the cases are received from Mediation Unit after their failure to resolve the matter using mediation and negotiation process. Unit staff lawyers and panel lawyers conduct all cases in and out of Dhaka. Panel lawyers mainly conducted cases in the High Court Division and Labor Court Cases in side Dhaka while staff lawyers conducted district court cases and in some cases in labor court. Thus a total of 12,04,400Tk was recovered through the court.

### Key Information

Staff Lawyers	Panel Lawyers	Total
Case filed 174	Case filed 35	209
Case settled 82	Case settled 79	161
Pending case 246	Pending case 70	316

### Other Activities

Response in HR violation case	3
Client freed from jail and safe custody	74
Steps taken at court	2489
Steps taken on cases outside Dhaka	20
Client dealings at office	1195
Attended Meeting, seminars, workshop etc.	28
Report writing	28
Action meeting	245
Unit's internal meeting for effective management	40

### Classification of cases

Under Family Law Ordinance-1985	119
Under Nari O Shishu Nirjatan Damon Ain-2000	27
Penal Code 1860	16
DMP Ordinance 1976	3
Cases under Cr. P. C.	1
Dowry Prohibition Act-1980	12
Guardianship Act-1890	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>183</b>

Staff of this unit have participated in 28 meetings, seminars, training, workshop which were organized on different issues related to prevention of violation and protection of HR and networked to other legal aid providing organizations. Unit staffs have attended 245 action meetings, prepared 28 reports on monthly and half yearly basis, and reports for the NGO Bureau, EC.

Under the guidance of the coordinator, staffs of this unit have prepared daily, weekly quarterly and monthly activity plan while the coordinator supervised, monitored activities, internal evaluation, analyzed the progress of the unit activities and conducted internal formal and informal meetings of the unit on need basis. The coordinator provided necessary financial support for the unit activities and maintained accounts of the unit duly. Panel lawyers have filed 35 new cases and retain 70 pending cases. 2489 people have benefited directly from the activities of the Litigation Unit.

Type of Cases	Number
Cr. Appeal	6
Cr Miscellaneous	15
Civil revision	2
Medical negligence	1
Writ	2
Jail Appeal	1
Labour Matter	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>

Networked with other lawyers and other organizations such as BLAST, BNWLA etc. Visited the spot, talked with the victim, lobbied the authority of police and administration to create pressure on them for proper investigation and taking legal steps.

According to the planned objective Litigation Unit

Outcome	Indicator
Empowerment of some women came through self-employment with recovered money for dowry and maintenance.	In as many as five cases, Litigation Unit is informed that the women have invested money in income generating activities and some with interests of that money are conducting self-employment.
Established rights of a number of women, children, worker individually through court.	A few judgments have been passed in favor of the clients relating to the same issues.
Women, poor, oppressed, and disenfranchised people become more conscious about their rights	Unit has received 174 new cases in this period, while in the same period of the previous year the number was less.
Staffs are skilled more by participating different training and seminars.	Staffs are efficiently facing the emerging issues and promptly solving the problem in the field.
Police, law enforcement authority, government and non-government institutions have been changing their attitudes positively.	They are showing positive attitude in case of FIR entry, issuing prompt and lawful warrant, helping clients to recover their property and other cases which is informed to Litigation unit by the clients.

## Activities carried out by the Unit

Issues	Activities
<b>Drafting plaints , written statement and petitions Lobbying</b>	Unit lawyers drafted <b>2658</b> plaints, statements, petitions, other petitions for filing and conducting all types of cases. Litigation Unit wrote articles, communicated with legal service organizations, govt. organizations, govt. officials P.P, G.P, I.G.P, and SP. for lobbying to reform laws, establish and ensure human rights.
<b>Taking steps for human right violation cases</b>	On the basis of the report of the daily newspapers, Litigation Unit communicated both verbally and in written form with the concerned authorities for taking proper steps.
<b>Responded in serious HR violation case</b>	In every case of violation of HR, Litigation Unit always gave a quick response and took steps according to law.
<b>Complaint recording</b>	Litigation Unit recorded a <b>183</b> of complaints during this period at ASK.
<b>Client dealings at office</b>	Unit lawyers have dealt (listened to problems, provide counseling, made them aware about case related existing law and other legal aid related discussion) <b>1195</b> client at office.
<b>Argument before court attend court mediation</b>	Lawyers attended <b>87</b> court mediations on behalf of ASK's Litigation unit's clients.
<b>Process to recover dower and maintenance money from court</b>	Following judgment of <b>49</b> Dower and maintenance cases the Unit completed all necessary process to recover money on behalf of clients.
<b>Traveled outside Dhaka for conducting case</b>	The Unit lawyers moved outside Dhaka for <b>20</b> times for conducting cases to provide legal aid for the clients.

has achieved quite satisfactory results. The unit filed more cases than last six months of the previous year and it is seen that the unit disposed a notable number of important cases with a large number of positive judgments on behalf of clients. This is an indication that more victims are getting support in accessing their right to be protected against violence.

People are becoming more conscious and utilizing their resources to establish their legal rights.

### Problems

**Limitation of law:** Law is unavailable for receiving proper remedy due to discrimination against women in personal laws. This lacuna hindered and continues to hinder project implementation and it is apprehended that the existing problem, unless and until solved, will prevent the unit in providing just remedy to the distressed clients.

**Weak administrative system:** Administrative mismanagement hinder the court process.

**Power practice:** Sometimes threat, as a form of muscle power comes from opposite party is a bar in getting relief of cases.

**Shortage in number of staff lawyers:** Sometimes necessary steps in various cases out of Dhaka are taken in delay due to shortage in required number of lawyers. It hinders our achievements.

**Male dominated mind of Judges:** Judges sometimes are seen biased with their judgments and in some dower and maintenance cases, they just apply their mind, not the judicial mind.

**Non co-operation of various related persons:** Litigation unit's lawyers are facing non-cooperation from *peshkar*, peon; court clerk, GRO police, Thana police, because of their tendency of taking money (bribe) from lawyers and parties. They show negative attitude to Human Rights lawyers, which is an obstacle for performing activities.

**Lack of social security, male domination on women, illiteracy:** In some serious human and women rights violation cases victims are not coming to seek help being further victims of threat from powerful people and women victims strongly face social threat and later they are convinced by their guardians not to ask legal help from others. It also hinders the project.  
**Confrontational politics:** It is influencing badly on law enforcement authority and agencies to be biased, which simply hinders the project.

### New client profile

Occupation	No.
Business	39
Day Laborer	32
Domestic Maid	2
Garments	23
<b>Service</b>	24
Student	11
Work in Home	95
Others	18
No work	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>254</b>

**Fact:** Shila (not real name) of 13 years D/O : Idris Miah, Vill: Patuakandi, Post : Patuakandi, P.S. & Dist: Kishoreganj was working as house helper from 12.12.04 at Md Nurul Haque's house of West Nakhhal Para, Tejgaon, Dhaka. On 02.12.04 Shila went to Kishoreganj from Dhaka without informing house owner and house owner filed a case at Tejgaon Police Station bringing theft allegation against Shila ( GR Case No 1046/04). Kishoreganj police arrested her under section 54 of Penal Code and with the reference of case filed at Tejgaon Police Station. The case was transferred to Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Court, Dhaka. During trial the Court gave an order to keep Shila in Lalmatia Government Shelter Home considering her safety.

**Litigation Unit Intervention:** Lalmatia Shelter Home Authority sought legal assistance for minor girl Shila's bail to the Unit over phone.

**First step:** Litigation unit, taking the matter, collected all the relevant papers from Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Court and collected information from Lalmatia Government Shelter Home Authority. Going to Shila's father's house Unit staff collected information and informed her father about the Litigation Unit's intervention and advised him to keep regular contact with the Unit. He again sought legal assistance from the Litigation Unit regarding his daughter's case.

**Second step:** On 22.08.05 the Litigation Unit lawyer moved a bail petition for Shila.

**Result of the case:** The Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court granted the bail petition and passed order on behalf of the petitioner.

**Comment:** Notable number of minor female victims are sent to various types of Government Shelter Home and these Shelter Home Authorities normally request the Litigation Unit to provide legal aid to those minors.

services for distressed clients if needed which extends to health care, psychosocial help, skill development training, basic literacy learning and referrals to other organizations.

SS & HWH networks with PNGOs and conducts client workshops on human rights issues. It also arranges awareness raising training for PNGO members on Family Law, VAW, child rights and also arranges workshops for clients every month.

To maintain liaison between partner NGOs and ASK, networking is necessary. This unit liaises with 3 Women networks ie. 'Ekota', 'BAWSHE' and 'Karmijibon'. Discussing issue : ASK's involvement with those PNGOs is mainly running their legal clinics, organizing training on family law, organizing client workshops to discuss about ASK's mediation and litigation process.

- ASK also invites them to special events.
- PNGOs also attend ASK's different day celebration programme.
- ASK also attends their different meetings where we can exchange our views.

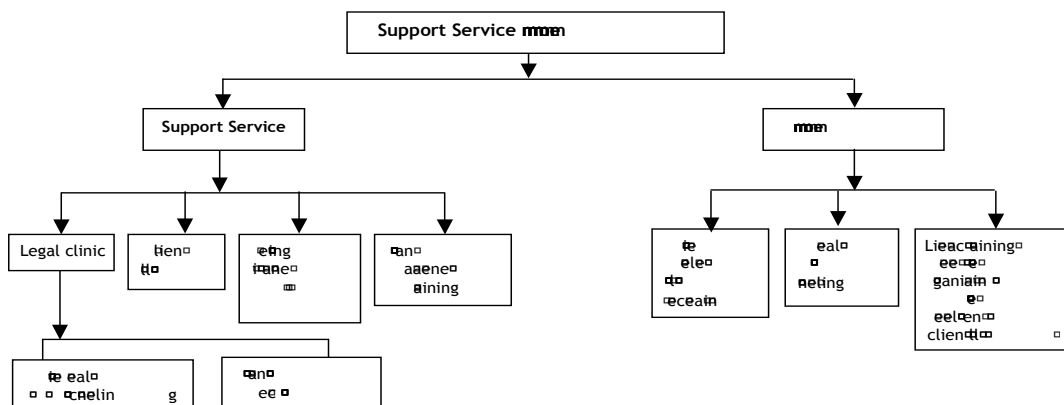
In this year we organized 16 awareness raising trainings, 24 client workshops, provision of medical services to 114 legal clinic clients, and food, transport and other support to 150 clients. 3146 clients availed the services of the legal clinic.

## Support Services and Half Way Home Unit

As most ASK clients come for assistance in distress, they need support during the continuance of mediation or litigation or even before or after. The Support Services and Half Way Home (SS & HWH) Unit was established to meet the demand for such services. The SS & HWH complements the legal aid program by maintaining liaison with the clients for six months after the mediation in order to monitor compliance with the settlement so that the resolution of mediation becomes sustainable. Distressed clients who need immediate and urgent shelter and survivors of domestic violence, rape, trafficking etc. are kept in the Half Way Home who stay under supervision of the coordinator of SS & HWH. Clients are usually kept there for 10 to 15 days, but their stay may be extended upto six months. Ten persons can be accommodated in the home at a time. The Unit also provides other support

### Key Information

Total no. of clients organized for legal clinic:	3814 persons
Total no. of client's followed up:	1407 persons
Total no. of clients accommodated in Half Way Home:	214 persons
Refer clients to other organizations for further development	
ASCR (Nirmol Asroy Kendra)	19 clients
CTRDW	7 person
Shishu Polli Plus	8 clients 5 child
Govt. Shelter Home (Mirpur-1)	1 client
Podokkhep	1 client
<b>Total</b>	<b>36 clients with 5 children</b>



Clients who need urgent security are put in the Half Way Home to stay under supervision of the co-ordinator of the Unit. Survivors of domestic violence, rape, trafficking are kept here. Health service, recreation, counseling and art lessons are provided in the Half Way Home. HWH creates opportunity for training. Counseling is conducted once in a week. A total of 77 clients were registered at the HH, while 114 clients were provided with shelter, 102 clients received psychosocial assistance.

Our activities can be linked with those of other shelter providing organizations, which can provide us better shelter options for our clients and other support to continue project activities. Through our Unit we have tried to develop a uniform attitude among the clients towards social security for any victim of violence. As clients are being aware of legal rights, they will be able to motivate others, even without economic involvement, to give shelter to victims who feel insecure.

#### Status of Half Way Home

Complaint	Client
Rape	51 with 26 Children
Lost	41
Rescue from jail	4
Tortured by husband	34 with 19 children
Force marriage	14 with 11 children
Tortured by employer	4
Unmarried mother	2 with 1 children
Shelter less	2
Other	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>210 with 57 children</b>

#### Protection for Working Children Unit

Given the preponderance of child labour in Bangladesh, ASK experience in the early nineties was translated into programs for providing help in education, health and legal protection to working children. The Protection for Working Children Unit now offers a flexible system of non-formal education in Drop in Centers (DIC) to support working children towards awareness of their rights.

1376 children (Boys- 881, Girls-495) in different occupations benefit from 9 drop in centers near their working sites. Guided by a manual 'My World' authored by ASK expert. It contains \*12 topics of life skills. During the reporting period 845 children (Girls: 484;Boys361) participated in 83 sessions of 'My World' workshops. Consultative workshops held at

Mohammedpur, Goran & Ekota DIC on Conflict with parents, adolescence and reproductive health. Three teacher's workshops were organized where 69 teachers participated. Topics included Effective communication skill, Self-exploration, Self-development. 347 children enrolled in Govt. primary school, NGO Schools and Vocational institutes. 4758 (Boys-2489, Girls-2269) attended 376 events of newspaper assembly 893 (Boys-554, Girls-339) children used mini libraries arranged at each DIC. 1777 working children (Boys-1014; Girls-763) received health support of first aid, routine checkup, medical treatment and referrals to relevant hospital. Legal aid services are available for working children.

- Each month legal aid unit organizes 8 legal clinics; 6 children received Legal aid on Arrest, Death by road accident, Violence, Missing, Kidnap, Parental conflict. Each case was attended appropriately by legal aid unit in cooperation with community and the police.
- 40 parents meetings were held where 766 (Male-49, Female-717) parents were present. The discussions focused on Primary Health Checkup, Enrolment of children, Parental responsibilities, Self-Exploration, Conflict between children and parents, adolescence. 6 employers meetings held. 52 (Male-17 Female-35) employers were present.
- Sponsorship provides children opportunities for further education. 20 children continue their education under this program. During the reporting period we arranged 5 meeting with the children. The on going programme is successfully run with the co-operation of the community. 639 parents have taken financial responsibility for educational support. 99 parents sent their children to hospital for treatment, 30 parents provide medicine, 78 parents sent children to school, 432 parents provided educational material and 23 parents withdrew their child from hazardous child labour. Music, Art, theatre are used as therapeutic activities for emotional well being. In the reporting period 152 art classes, 417 music classes held. The children also participated in an art exhibition and an art workshop. New issues of the magazine Srijonsil were brought out, while various days were observed.
- Importance of polio vaccine explained to the children who participated in this camp and convince to bring children for vaccination at DIC. 33 Children from different DICs attend a gathering and rally at Shahid Minar, 4 Children from DICs participated in drama workshop organized by British Council. During the reporting period "People's

Empowerment Trust and Commonwealth Education Fund” organized a face-to-face meeting with child Members of Parliament. 4 of our children attended this meeting.

- 1376 children (Boys- 881, Girls-495) accessed to basic, general and continued education. Impacts are seen in capacity building creative & development of life skills. 639 Parents/Guardians have taken intention to provide educational support to their children. Health support, both physical and emotional through counseling brought a sense of trust, security and wellbeing amongst the beneficiaries.
- Drug addiction has been identified in many children living on streets or near vicinity of adult drug addicts. ASK in cooperation with Apon is able to conduct a process for admission and cure of drug addicts for rehabilitation. Of the 50 selected children in process, 20 children agreed to get admission to APON for Rehabilitation. Findings suggest that orphaned/neglected poor children are more likely to fall prey to drugs. After treatment some may relapse if not reintegrated with employment and socialisation. APON workers visit these children again to help them sustain their drug cure APON hopes to give service of education, counseling, skill training and recreation for the children as their reintegration As a follow up action we maintain regular communication with children at APON. Our social worker visits them once a week.

### Key Information

Description	Boys	Girls	Total
Children enrolled	881	495	1376
Children visited DIC	24848	22663	47511
Workshop	109 workshops		
Participants	361	484	845
Outside workshops	19 workshops		
Participants	89	203	292
Legal Aid Support	03	03	06
Children enrolled with other schools	180	167	347
Health support	1014	763	1777
Sponsorship support	09	11	20

**639** parents and employers took partial responsibility for their children’s health and education.

The Unit’s program is running well. DIC module at ASK is replicated by NGOs and GO as in the case of project ARISE under the Deptt of Social Services Govt of Bangladesh. The community (Parents, guardians, employers, school, police, ward commissioner) have

become more conscious regarding the issue of working children. They are very keen to continue their co-operation in future some offer space for drop in centers free of cost, head teachers of schools provide studentship for the brilliant students. Employers, group counseling brings a gratifying response. Requests are made for more group sessions and generous offers made to help DIC progress.

For the past three years we have been running the programme for full time child domestic workers to protecting them from abuse and exploitation. From July 03 to December 2006. 946 child domestic workers registered with drop in centres. The project in emphasizing the mental, physical and social development of child domestic workers provides health, education, legal protection and psycho-social help. We are also trying to initiate a process to increase government and community accountability towards the protection of child domestic workers.

### Children Occupation Data

Name of Occupation	Number of Children		
	Boys	Girls	Total
Van Driver/Helper	06	0	06
Garbage Collector	481	90	571
Rickshaw Driver	03	0	03
Garage Worker	14	0	14
Brick Cheaper	06	16	22
Factory worker	21	25	46
Electric Helper	01	0	01
Garments workers	04	02	06
Tailor	01	01	02
Domestic Helper	15	114	129
Shop Assistant	110	10	120
Vegetable/Fruits/			
Flower/fish Seller	60	52	112
Hawker	21	03	24
Cleaner	02	04	06
Tiffin Carrier	01	03	04
Sewing	04	31	35
Office Peon	02	0	02
Loader	20	0	20
Art work	09	01	10
Handicraft	02	19	21
Packet maker	09	09	18
Garland maker	01	04	05
Others	88	111	199
	<b>881</b>	<b>495</b>	<b>1376</b>

### Counseling in Psycho-Social Help

The need for psycho-social aid cuts across age, class, gender and profession. Through the activities of this component, ASK has broken new ground in the survivor assistance and rehabilitation scenario of Bangladesh, espousing the view that emotional wellbeing is just as important as physical health.

ASK counselors attend to clients referred by other ASK units. Over a hundred clients (64 percent of whom were children) received counseling for emotional disorders. These cases were referrals from the Legal Aid Unit, DIC and Halfway Home. ASK has developed a code of ethics for counseling. Mainstreaming of counseling as in the curriculum in reputable institutions is an ongoing effort of this component. Training courses, orientation sessions and meetings were held throughout the year; participants consisted of healthcare professionals including psychologists, DIC children's employers and other professionals. In 2005, four trainings were held for 104 participants, while fifteen orientation sessions were organized for 299 participants (male-75, female- 224).

Children workshops "My World"				
Curriculum		Number of workshop		
		Girls	Boys	Total
Myself	38	36	74	07
My body	36	21	57	03
My food	50	29	79	05
My neighbour	65	53	118	14
My history	20	26	46	03
My health	28	22	50	10
My culture	64	57	121	15
My environment	09	09	18	01
My beliefs	18	33	51	08
My rights	33	32	65	12
My country	44	39	83	15
My reproductive health	77	19	96	08
Follow up and special workshop	205	74	279	27
<b>Total</b>	<b>687</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>1137</b>	<b>128</b>



# III Three

*Accountability and Good Governance*

- Research Unit
- Advocacy Unit
- Media & Communication Unit



Research and proactive dissemination of the findings is a prime method of monitoring the dynamics of discrimination and identifying sociopolitical and economic concerns from a rights' perspective.

## Research Unit

Through research human rights issues and needs can be evaluated and a methodology and indicators can be refined for our purposes.

### Key Information

- Conducted research on human rights violations such as Building Construction Act as part of its Emergent Issue Research.
- Identified issues and conducted study on 'Right to Pure Drinking Water,' as part of needs based research.
- Published an annual report on human rights situation in Bangladesh in 2005.
- A study on medical negligence.
- Needs Assessment for new project on 'Women's Empowerment in Legal Process.'
- Contributed ASK's 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary programme on 20<sup>th</sup> September and 25<sup>th</sup> December and provided Research assistance on the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Report .
- Cross checked on the draft report on 'Extremist Activities, Insecurity and Response of Civil Society.

We have completed a needs assessment on 'Women's Empowerment on the Legal Process.' The selected issue is completed jointly with Training Unit. The Human Rights in Bangladesh report provides a report and analysis of the yearly state of human rights. Research Unit arranged 2 group discussion meetings on "Human Rights Report in Bangladesh 2005" to identify issues and chapters for the volume. Fifteen chapters were selected from group discussion meeting. This report's usefulness is increasing because of its acceptance as a credible and objective source of information. This report is well recognized and is frequently used as reference by human rights activists and organizations nationally and abroad.

## Advocacy Unit

Advocacy Unit works for the protection of fundamental rights of citizens through advocacy and by filing litigation in the public interest. This Unit also takes part in out of court advocacy programs with the government and other like-minded groups on the issues of human rights violations. This Unit also works to reform repressive and discriminatory laws by providing new drafts and recommendations to the Law Commission and other relevant forums. Advocacy Unit monitors domestic application of international instruments like CEDAW (Convention on the elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women), CAT (Convention against Torture and other forms of cruel,

inhuman and degrading treatment) and the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ESCR). Moreover, this Unit is observing the implementation of positive judgments obtained by ASK.

### Key Information

- Filed 4 PILs to ensure fundamental rights of the citizens. About 50000 persons were benefited directly and many other beneficiaries benefitted indirectly.
- Identified 5 issues and took steps relating to human rights violations.
- Attended and organized 15 meetings with different organizations in the area of human rights violations.
- Regular liaisons with different foreign governments, UN bodies and International NGOs against human rights violations.
- Regular monitor of the applications of the International Instruments in national level.
- Monitor and follow-up the implementation positive judgments that have been obtained by ASK.

### Activities performed

Always monitoring the implementation of judgment passed by the High Court relating for the amendment of Sections 54 & 167 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (Cr.P.C) by following up cases of good practice and also sending letters and reminders to the concerned authorities where violation is reported.

Continuous networking with different human rights organizations, Bar Associations and individuals for implementation of the direction of the High Court relating to amendment of Sections 54 & 167 of Cr.P.C.

Inaction and omission of the concerned authorities (Ministry of Labour, Chief Inspector of Factories and Fire Service & Civil Defense) to ensure effective enforcement of applicable laws on workplace safety in particular prevention of deaths and injuries of workers from fire in garments manufacturing factories, amounting to breach of their statutory duties and causing deaths of 57 workers in KTS garments, Chittagong.

Failure of concern authorities (Health Directorate & Ministry of Health) to perform their respective functions and legal duties to ensure monitoring of proper medical treatment systems of citizens all over Bangladesh under the Medical Practice and Private Clinics and Laboratories (Regulation) Ordinance 1982 causing loss of life of citizens due to medical negligence.

Killing of 17 persons in police firing in Chapainababgonj district for demanding proper distribution of electricity.

Inaction and omission of the concerned authorities (Ministry of Labour, Chief Inspector of Factories and Fire Service & Civil Defense) to ensure effective enforcement of applicable laws on workplace safety in particular prevention of deaths and injuries of workers in Ship breaking sector in Chittagong where one worker dies in a week and one gets injured in a day.

Attended discussion meeting on judicial system of India and Bangladesh organized by BLAST.

Meeting with the several human rights organization on the issue of the fire incident in KTS garments factory of Chittagong for which 57 workers died.

Attended the meeting for formation of the Committee on Democratic Nepal.

Attended the District Task Force Meeting at the Office of the Deputy Commissioner Dhaka regarding the release of the children in conflict with law.

Attended the meeting at the Office of the Director General of Social Welfare for changing the Vagrancy Act 1943.

Attended the meeting on Food Security in Bangladesh: legal obligation, organized by BLAST.

Attended the meeting on improving criminal justice: Reform proposal on bail system organized by PPRC.

Attended the meeting to ensure ecological environment in Modhupur forest organized by BELA.

Organized meeting on draft of Bangladesh Citizenship Act.

Attended the meeting torture on the ethnic groups by the settlers in Khagrachori.

Attended the meeting about the voting rights of the disable people.

Attended the meeting about the situation of the slums in Bangladesh.

Attended the Seminar organized by Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) on the amendment of the People's Representation Order 1972 for the purpose of General Election 2007.

Attended the National Seminar on the amendment of National Women Development Policy.

Roundtable discussion organized by Save the Children UK against the use of children in several processions during election.

National Workshop on the proposed Domestic Violence Law.

Alliance to protect pre and post election violence against women and minority community.

UN Special Rapporteur for Housing by providing him a paper on overall situation of the forced eviction and illegal arrest and harassment of slum dwellers of Kallyanpur bosti, Dhaka.

President and Prime Minister of Pakistan to ensure the protection of warships and properties of the minority communities.

Migrant Forum -Asia against the detention of 115 Bangladeshi fishermen in India.

Minister, Ministry of Labour, Thailand to protect the abuse of workers rights by some companies.

Regular contact with Indian High Commission to take necessary steps for release and repatriation of Indian citizens detained in Bangladeshi Jail after serving their terms of conviction.

#### **File Public Interest Litigation:**

*Obtained Judgment in Writ Petition No-2852/1997*

#### **Fact:**

Hafizur Rahman @ Fazlu was convicted for 12 and 8 years in two cases and was detained in Jhenaidaha jail. He was kept under bar fetters in jail for long 33 months and was not capable to move freely. Moreover it is noted that the use of bar fetters upon the prisoners is the common practice in jail.

#### **Legal steps taken:**

Challenging the use of bar fetters upon the prisoner named Fazlu in Jhenidaha jail for long 33 months is illegal and also prayed for declaration the common practice of bar fetters upon the prisoners in jail is unconstitutional

#### **Judgment:**

Practice of bar fetters upon the prisoners is inhuman.

Authority should follow the related laws to impose bar fetters upon the prisoners.

Maintain a record book why the bar fetters was imposed upon the prisoners.

Persons who imposed bar fetters upon Fazlu should be brought under departmental proceeding if they are in service.

#### **Litigation on Public Interest Issues undertaken to obtain landmark Judgments**

##### **Right to life**

##### **(Writ Petition No-2019/2006)**

**Fact:** On 23.02.2006 a four-stored building situated at the BSCIC Industrial Area in Chittagong used as the factory of KTS Textile and Garments caught fire and 57 workers died. At the time of fire the main gate was closed under the direction of the management and there were no emergency exits. Many of the workers finding no route of escape simply burnt to death and their bodies were found in the stairwell, on the floor and window grilles.

**Legal steps taken:** Challenging the inaction and omission of the concern authorities (Ministry of Labour,

Chief Inspector of Factories and Fire Service & Civil Defense) to ensure effective enforcement of applicable laws on workplace safety in particular regarding prevention of deaths and injuries of workers from fire in garments manufacturing factories, amounting to breach of their statutory duties and causing deaths of workers.

**(Writ Petition No-624/2006).**

**Facts:** So many private clinics have been established across the country for providing medical service to the people. According to the Medical Practice and Private Clinics and Laboratories (Regulations) Ordinance 1982 Director General of Health Directorate will monitor the services of those clinics. But due absence of proper monitoring by the government, private clinics are involved in fraudulent practice. In 2005 about 65 people died for fraudulent practice in private clinics. After investigation it has been found that most of the private clinics are not properly equipped and there is no authorized doctor and nurses and they are conducting major operations.

**Legal steps taken:** Failure of concern authorities to perform their respective functions and legal duties to ensure monitoring of proper medical treatment of citizens under the Medical Practice and Private Clinics and Laboratories (Regulation) Ordinance 1982 causing loss of life of citizens is illegal.

**Right to Information**

**Writ Petition No- 12306/ 2006**

**Fact:**Bangladesh government allocated six crores taka for Asiatic Societies of Bangladesh to publish the books named Cultural Survey of Bangladesh. The main objectives of that publication are to collect the cultural heritage of Bangladesh by which the nation will know about the history of culture of Bangladesh. The main activities of that project were field survey in different part of Bangladesh to information from grassroots level. But the Asiatic Society was going to publish the books without conducting any field survey.

**Legal steps taken:** Challenged the publication of the books named Cultural Survey of Bangladesh without conducting field survey is illegal and without lawful authority as the whole nation will be deprived of knowing the cultural heritage of Bangladesh.

**Right to freedom of movement**

**Civil Petition for Leave to Appeal- 1632/2006**

**Fact:** In 1997 writ petition no- 2852/1997 was filed against the common use of bar fetters upon the prisoners in jail as it is violative of fundamental rights. In 2006 High Court passed judgment that the use of bar fetters should be used as per law, but did not declare it illegal or unconstitutional.

**Legal steps taken:** Appeal has been filed against that judgment as the High Court Division did not declare the common practice of bar fetters in jail is illegal and unconstitutional.

Investigation and collection of evidence:

The following investigations were conducted

Death of two WASA drain cleaners during work in old Dhaka area.

Killing of 17 individuals during police firing in Chapainababgonj district for demanding proper distribution of electricity.

Theft of a newborn baby from Dhaka Medical College.

Wrong treatment of 13 eye patient of Noagaon district, for which they became blind.

Conflict between the ethnic groups and Bangali settlers in Khagrachori Hill district.

Detention of an innocent person in Comilla Central Jail in place of real accused person as their name was same.

Fraudulent form distribution by North South Developer Company for the rehabilitation project of the slum dwellers in Bhashantek area of Dhaka City.

Follow up of Pending Cases:

Appearing before the Court individually or with senior lawyers regularly in pending cases as required.

Monitoring applications of International Instruments:  
- Regularly citing the international instruments in each case petition as appropriate.

## Media & Communication Unit

Media and Communication Unit (MCU) is the media focal point of ASK. The MCU uses print media in publishing articles exposing violations of legal and constitutional rights while identifying loopholes in the law and possibilities for legislative changes. It circulates press release/reactions to print and electronic media and organizes press conferences/ media briefings on the issues of human rights violations. MCU publishes quarterly bulletins, legal handbooks for law reform and publications on emerging human rights issues. This unit also authors articles for print media to generate legal analysis.

For the reporting period four issues of the quarterly bulletin have been published. In total 20,000 copies were published. The second edition of 'Narir Ekattor' as in published in response to the demand of the readers. In the second edition we rearranged and classified the case studies according to geographical location as well as added follow up to those. The printing mistakes of the first edition have also been corrected. It's draft English version is also been completed. In addition, the ASK Annual Report 2005, ASK

20<sup>th</sup> year commemorative report and Salma Sobhan Memorial Lecture have been published. During the reporting period 41 press releases were sent to the newspapers and 49 articles on contemporary issues of human rights sent from ASK were published in different newspapers.

### Key Information

Quarterly bulletin published: 4 issues, 20,000 copies in total.

Press Release sent : 41

Press conference: 01

Articles sent to the newspaper : 49

#### *Publications*

Narir Ekattor (Second Edition)

Salma Sobhan Memorial Lecture by Amartya Sen

ASK 20<sup>th</sup> year Commemorative Report

ASK Annual Report 2005

The web site of ASK has been in operation since 2003. We have already established the structure for regularly posting alerts, demand justice notices and press releases. Our various publications including annual reports and quarterly bulletins are also posted there. There also appear reports of recent legal activities by ASK.

The Media and Communication unit has sent Memoranda/ Letters on behalf of ASK to the government and informed the media as well. During the reporting period, the Unit sent several memoranda on issues like mass arrest and the movement of primary & community schoolteachers. During the reporting period, it also sent memoranda to the Caretaker

Government seeking measures to be taken in ensuring enjoyment of human rights, in particular, the uninterrupted voting rights of the minority people.

The Unit has published a bilingual handbook on United Nations Human Rights Mechanism. In this handbook, overviews of UN human rights mechanisms have been discussed. Besides, several other chapters have incorporated information on other important mechanisms introduced by the UN in the protection and promotion of human rights, such as Treaty bodies system, Special Procedures etc.

In addition to the information on how these mechanisms are functioning, the chapters also discussed how national human rights organizations can engage themselves in those systems as important advocacy platforms to hold their respective governments accountable in their national and international commitments for protection and promotion of human rights.

During the reporting period, the Unit took part in a number of international campaigns. It, together with the regional human rights organization, FORUM-ASIA sent a letter to the Government of Bangladesh protesting the Kansat killing. The Unit also facilitated ASK's submission of two written statements together with FORUM-ASIA to the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) 62<sup>nd</sup> session on Religious Intolerance and Disappearances and summary execution. The Unit facilitated ASK's oral statement on the issue of "Universal Periodic Review" and/or "Review of mandates and mechanisms" together with Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (Forum-Asia) at the first session of the Human Rights Council in June 2006.



# IV Four

## *Human Rights Situation Monitoring*

- Investigation Unit
- Documentation Unit



Constant monitoring of the human rights situation is necessary to formulate a strategy against violations. This monitoring is carried out by direct and indirect methods. The direct initiator is the Investigation Unit, which acts as public watchdog, routinely probing into incidents reported at hospitals and police stations. The Documentation Unit conducts indirect monitoring by compiling and archiving all relevant information and documentation.

## Investigation Unit

Verification of information and documents is an utmost requirement for legal assistance, for lobbying and campaign or to initiate PIL. Research and advocacy work related to human rights also need monitoring, investigation activities of information, data, documents or reports. Initially, the Investigation Unit was started with 2 employees in 1994. Currently the Unit comprises two Senior Investigators, three Investigators under direct supervision of its Coordinator the Director. 14 investigative follow up reports and case documents related to Violence by Non-State Actor were published, a Report on Prison Conditions in Bangladesh, two discussions one at Rajshahi and Naogaon on Violence by Non-State Actors and Human Rights were organised by ASK for civil administrators, local NGOs, human rights activists, journalists, private and public lawyers also with local civil society.

Institutional level monitoring includes police station watch, court custody and hospital observation in Dhaka. Investigators of the unit monitor police stations to watch the nature of complaints lodged at the stations, complaints recording procedures and cases of violence against women and children. Investigators

monitor arrests under repressive laws such as SPA, Section 54 of Cr.P.C. DMP Ordinance, Nari o Shishu Nirjaton Daman Act 2000, Speedy Tribunal Act. 2003. Investigation unit monitors the court to observe the treatment to under trial prisoners such as the environment of court custody, the treatment of court police, the use of bar fetters etc. Investigators also try to interview under-trial prisoners if it is allowed.

As part of Hospital Monitoring, ASK investigation staff visit and collect information/data from the Emergency Ward, Female and Children Ward and burns unit of the Dhaka Medical College Hospital to identify HRV, e.g. acid burn, rape, custodial violence and domestic violence. We also collect information on unnatural deaths from the Morgue. In 2006, the Unit visited police stations 67 times, observed hospitals 57 times and visited court premises 55 times. Investigation requires extensive visits by the Investigators to the places of occurrence (even at remote areas) to interview witnesses, victims, suspects, police or other govt. officials, local people to collect relevant information and documents for evidence. In 2006, the Unit conducted fact-finding into 108 incidents of HRV.

No.	Subject	Completed	Referred for Action			
			LAU	Adv	Appeal to Authority	Media Article
<b>I.</b>	<b>STATE VIOLENCE</b>					
	Custodial Death (RAB CROSSFIRE)	11	3	8	5	4
	Physical Torture by Police & RAB	9	4	6	8	-
	Shoot out by police	2	1	-	2	-
	Mass Arrest	3	3	-	-	-
	Other Evictions	2	-	3	2	-
<b>II.</b>	<b>VAW</b>					
	Unlawful arrest	3	3	1	1	-
	Domestic Violence & Family dispute	7	5	-	2	-
	Unnatural death of Domestic worker	3	2	-	-	-
	Kidnap of College going girl	1	1	-	1	-
	Provoke to suicide young girl	1	1	-	1	-
	Rape	7	4	-	2	-
	Fatwa	2	1	2	1	-
<b>III.</b>	<b>ATTACKS ON MINORITIES</b>					
	Hindu Community	10	5	8	10	2
	Christian Community	1	-	1	1	-
	Adibashi People	1	-	1	1	-
<b>IV.</b>	<b>CHILDREN</b>					
	Unnatural death of domestic maid	1	1	-	-	-
	Torture of girl/boy	2	1	-	1	-
	Missing of adolescent	1	1	-	1	-
	<b>Death of a Street Children</b>	2	2	-	1	-
	<b>Children in Jail custody</b>	1	-	1	1	-
<b>VI.</b>	<b>INSTITUTIONAL VIOLENCE</b>					
	Garments	11	7	4	4	2
	Medical negligence	5	-	5	2	-
<b>VII.</b>	<b>OTHERS</b>					
	Violence by Non-State Actors	13	6	7	9	6
	Journalist Torture	2	1	1	2	-
	Miscellaneous	7	6	4	3	-
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>14</b>

Follow-up activities includes:

**Refer victims for legal assistance:** In this year, investigation reports of 73 cases were forwarded against targeted 36 cases for legal action/remedy to Advocacy Unit & Legal Aid Unit.

**Communicate to concerned authority to initiate legal or departmental action:** The Unit sent appeal letters related to 113 incidents including 61 investigated by this unit - to the appropriate authority; such as Secretary, Director/Asst. Secretary of concerned ministry, IGP, Police Superintendent, Officer in Charge and other government officer to initiate proper action or legal redress

**Investigative reporting for media (particularly for ASK publication):** 14 investigative reports were published in ASK Bulletin to create public awareness against HRV. Apart from these follow-up activities, the unit also initiated lobbying and campaigning such as arranging press conference, writing press releases, participating in seminars with journalists, meeting police officers, maintaining effective networks with local and national NGOs working in the field of human rights.

Monitoring activities of police stations resulted in documentation of information related to SPA, Section 54 of Cr.P.C., DMP Ordinance, Nari o Shishu Nirjaton Daman (Amendment) Act 2003, Speedy Tribunal Act 2002 to be used for legal help, research, advocacy and campaigning. Police station monitoring ensured proper treatment of people who came to the station including people in custody. Police personnel also became more aware of their practice and attitude regarding human rights. Police station monitoring resulted in the release of five children from police custody.

Hospital monitoring ensures rights of victims of human rights violations) to treatment as well as their right to justice. Doctors and nurses became aware of human rights and more careful of the victims, especially the children and women. In 2006, the Unit found 3 children and six women in the hospital who were not receiving proper treatment. The Unit initiated proper treatment and with the help of LAU returned them to their homes. Similarly, following court observation, court and prison officers improved their attitude and treatment to prisoners.

Investigation ensured victims' right to justice or legal remedy. Victims, family members, local communities and police officers became aware of human rights. Several (at least 15) investigative follow up reports along with case documents related to Violence by Non-State Actors were used in a special publication on Violence by Non-State Actors. Investigative and lobbying activities by the Unit, resulted in wide aware-

ness, as well as some response from the government against JMB torture and killings. People also became more aware of extra judicial killings.

An effective rehabilitation program for victims of the Spectrum Sweater Garment accident, sponsored by Sromik Nirapatta Forum (an alliance of 16 Organisations) was supported by the unit. At least 16 garment workers received financial assistance. The investigation into accident in factories/garments, etc. initiated lobbying with concern authority for the workers rights ensure. The investigated and then held a press conference on community violence and police harassment against Hindus living in Patkelghata under Satkhira. As a result, legal action was initiated and protection ensured against victimization of 30 minority families.

The highprofile visits facilitated by the Unit inspire the victims to attempt to obtain legal remedy, create indirect pressure on perpetrators, and also create pressure on the police to be fair and impartial in investigation. The Unit has collected, documented and preserved important information, evidence and documents related to HRV, application of various repressive laws/acts, etc through field investigation and institutional monitoring. This has already resulted (and will be useful in future) to engender effective response from ASK and from government authorities to protect or promote human rights. This outcome is supplementary to ASK's goal and objectives. Legal action has been initiated and the rights of victims to justice ensured in 23 incidents of HRV in eight districts. These cases were investigated by local NGOs on request by the Investigation Unit.

Restrictions imposed and non-cooperation by authorities are a key hindrance in court, police or hospital observation. Lack of training opportunities, scarcity of time and under-staffing are issues that compromise the quality of investigation as well as effective reporting.

## Documentation Unit

The Documentation Unit is a key resource centre of ASK. The Unit collects and preserves information on law, human rights and other relevant information and disseminates information in an appropriate form. The unit compiles and archives newsclippings on situation of human rights, legislative changes and governance issues as well as audiovisual materials. These materials are archived under 35 broad headings, which are further broken down into sub-topics. It subscribes to 12 dailies, 4 weeklies, 1 quarterly and 1 monthly. This unit has a total collection of 6800 titles of books and reports.

### Key Information

Total no. of statistics charts prepared : **41**  
 Total amount earned by selling publications: **2698** copies, Tk. 86644  
 Total no. of visitors who used Documentation : **511**  
 Others: Based on a series of news item provided by the Documentation Unit, the Advocacy Unit filed writ petitions on a case of medical negligence and loss of lives in a readymade garment factory.

The print media is the main source of information for the Documentation unit. Documentation is the first step towards further investigation. It is also used for research by other organizations and academicians. Scanning and compiling media reports from National newspapers and weekly magazines is a key responsibility of this unit as is tabulating and compiling statistics on violation of human rights and referring relevant cases for legal aid or other actions. The news clippings are used for Investigation, Litigation, Research, Preparing module of Mediation (Salish) and Publication (ASK) of different purposes. All materials are catalogued and classified. After cataloguing and classification, the information is transferred to a computer database for users. The unit maintains a unique data base with CDS/Isis.

**Human Rights Violations (HRV):** Total 727 news clipping on human rights violation issues were provided to other units of ASK for taking action. Other units have taken necessary steps for action.

Human Rights violation (paper cutting)	Event
Rape	180
Dowry	56
Salish and Fatwa	40
Acid burn	43
Suicide	26

Other types of violence against women	126
Religious Minorities	75
Law enforcing agencies violence	268
Eviction	07
Domestic worker	52
Child Abuse	59
Freedom of speech	49
Prisoner	54
Medical Negligence	35
Other Human Rights Violation	173
Beaten to death	02
Food	101
Slum eviction	02
CHT	04
Garments worker	27
Ethnic minority	12
Health	2
Militant Action Bangla Bhai	05
Militant Action (Bomb blast)	05
Ahmadiya	15
Imprisonment upon false accusation	10
Mass arrest	03
<b>Total</b>	<b>1431</b>

“Fatwa” maps were produced for research purposes identifying the various locations where fatwas had occurred. The unit maintains monthly user statistics to assess the importance and quality of resources. The materials of the Unit are can be accessed by non-ASK users as well. Archiving photographs in a systemic manner, preparing comprehensive bibliographies for the various ASK reports and publications also come under the purview of this Unit. The Unit activities are compiled and presented in a monthly report.

ASK documentation Unit is an established resource centre. Unit user statistics prove that non-ASK users regularly and repeatedly visit the Unit. 511 people benefited directly from the activities of the ASK Documentation Unit (277 female, 234 male).



# V Five

*Effective program management*

- Administration Unit
- Finance & Accounts Unit



Efficient and effective management – both financial and operational – is integral to the smooth running of any organization. The day to day functioning of ASK as well as the long-term programmatic overview is taken care of by the Administration Unit and the Finance and Accounts Unit.

## Administration Unit

The Administration Unit provides support (such as administration, information technology, human resources development and logistics) for implementation of ASK's programs. In 2005, personnel of this Unit participated in various training courses to improve their management and program implementation techniques.

Necessary personnel recruitment was completed by the Administration Unit as per project proposal and ASK Organogram. The Unit prepared and submitted Annual Reports for the year 2004 and for the period January-December 2004 to the Consortium Partners, the NGO Affairs Bureau (NGOAB) and concerned persons. Monthly Activity Reports were sent to the NGOAB. In addition four quarterly reports were prepared for ASK's Executive Committee Meetings.

## Finance and Accounts Unit

The Finance and Accounts Unit is responsible for all aspects of organizational and program finance. The Unit monitors program expenditure and provides

monthly reports on budget expenditures of Units. In addition, the Unit provides orientation to staff on budgeting and financial management for effective implementation.

The primary work of this Unit is the receiving of all cash/ cheque (receiving side) and checking official bills/fund requisitions etc (payments side) preparation of all vouchers, salary preparation, and record keeping. The monthly and annual accounts are prepared. This Unit prepared daily financial statements, income tax computations, project and annual budgets. It assisted auditors with their queries and preserve all financial books and records.

Financial reports were prepared and submitted to Donors, the NGO Affairs Bureau, DC office etc as required. This Unit responded to queries of other staff/management on the status of funds and other related financial matters. Besides the usual formats of FD-6, FD-2, FC-1, FC-2, MF-1, EF-1 etc. were prepared for project approval, fund release, completion or extension of various projects whenever required and submitted to the NGO Affairs Bureau as per regulation. This Unit also prepared budgets and collected project wise authentication certificate for DCs and TNOs.

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## ASK on the Web

[www.askbd.org](http://www.askbd.org)

The web site of ASK has been in operation since 2003. We have already established the structure for regularly posting alerts, demand justice notices and press releases. Our various publications including annual reports and quarterly bulletins are also posted there. There also appear reports of recent legal activities by ASK.



## Overall Outcome

ASK's concept of legal aid is holistic, covering legal and extra-legal services and involves dispute resolution, litigation, monitoring of law enforcement, advocacy and public campaigns and physical and psychological support for victims of violence. The outcome results in helping individual cases and using this experience to develop an over all strategy for class action. This all-encompassing approach has built confidence in the judicial system, increased public participation in preventing human rights violations and reduced community tolerance of violence and discrimination.

A significant outcome of ASK's multifold strategies is to build upon experience of individual cases, documentation of news and investigation reports to raise issues of human rights violations in a more public arena through the media, in public campaigns and advocacy for reform. Concern with human rights prevention and protection is now a regular input in the media and ASK has played a strong role in making this possible.

- ASK's three pronged strategy for awareness, transformation and action results in partnerships with local organizations and interaction with local representatives and officials. This has improved capacity for community activism.
- Monitoring by human rights defender groups or para-legals has created a positive environment for support to survivors of violence, for resolution of disputes and as a deterrent to violations of HR.
- People of the community have become more aware of the issue of working children. A child-friendly environment has been created in our working areas in terms of increased enrollment to school, reduction in number of children employed in haz-

ardous jobs etc.

- The outcome of ASK's activities is evidenced in the reduction of complaints of violence against women, hilla marriages, under age marriage and an increase in marriage registration. Another outcome is an increased participation of women in shalish.

## Lessons Learnt

ASK's programs enhance the knowledge and experience base of clients in various ways. Yet implementation of activities is a learning process for the organization as well. Consequently certain conclusions can be drawn:

- Community involvement is essential for social change.
- Experience sharing between clients and ASK personnel is essential for a proper understanding of rights and the exercise of these rights.
- There is a need to dialogue with government representatives and officials, panel lawyers and Government Legal Aid Committees. Activities to realize these goals are underway at ASK.
- Awareness evolved at the community level should be sustained and reinforced through active campaigning in the national media.
- Advocacy with law-enforcing agencies is important for implementation of legal procedures.
- Public awareness of laws and rights is necessary for better implementation of rule of law.
- Training and education is required for local government officials, locally elected personnel, NGO personnel, civil society groups and activists. Providing orientation and then reinforcing that knowledge through follow up activities is essential for sustainability.



## Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK)

**Balance Sheet**  
as at 31 December 2006

	Amount in Taka	
	2006	2005
<b>Sources of Fund:</b>		
Capital Fund (ASK Equity)	51,364,222	62,504,222
Liabilities	6,379,214	4,775,034
Gratuity Fund	6,377,263	4,775,034
Refundable to donor	1,951	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>57,743,436</b>	<b>67,279,256</b>
<b>Application of Fund:</b>		
Fixed assets at cost less accumulated depreciation	37,514,908	36,440,562
<b>Current assets:</b>		
	20,500,256	31,128,405
Fund receivable	1,709,862	14,382,200
Security deposit	28,000	28,000
Advance tax payment	46,607	215,634
Membership subscription	5,900	8,350
Stock of stationery	119,605	72,367
Cash in hand & at bank balances	18,182,287	16,421,854
Advance salary	407,995	-
<b>Less: Current Liabilities</b>	271,728	289,711
Refundable to donors	-	1,951
Liability for expenses	271,428	287,760
Advance membership fees	300	-
Net current assets	20,228,528	30,838,694
<b>Total</b>	<b>57,743,436</b>	<b>67,279,256</b>

# ASK Personnel

**Executive Director**  
Sultana Kamal

**Advisor (PWC, PSH, TRN, GSJ and PT)**  
Khursheed Erfan Ahmed

## Directors

Md. Nur Khan, Investigation and Documentation & Dissemination  
Suraiya Hanam, Finance (Part time), Faustina Pereira, Advocacy & Research

**Training Unit:** Shaheen Akhter (Coordinator), Tanvia Roseleen Sultana, Momy Monjury Chowdhury, Rafiq Ahmed Shirajee, Sadia Tasneem, Asma Khanom Ruba, Hasina Ferdous Shompa, Jahera Begum, Md. Moshin Ali, Setara Yeasmin Setu, Arifur Rahman, Shaila Parvin, Mamunur Rashid, Shamim Hossain.

**Gender and Social Justice Unit:** Sanaiyya Faheem Ansari (Sr. Coordinator), Taufiq Al Mannan, Gulsan Ara Parvin, Md. Arefuzzaman, Abu Sayed Sumon, Sitara Shamim, Hasina Momtuz Luna, Molla Md. Khalekuzzaman, Mozahidul Islam, Tushar Kanti Das, Nargish Akter Khan.

**Popular Theatre Unit:** Afsana Chowdhury, Md. Jahedul Alam, Md. Jahangir Alam, Lucy Tripti Gomez, Motahar Uddin Akand (Sr. Coordinator), Sabina Yasmin Saba, Zahirul Islam, Shahnaz Rahman, Joganmoy Paul, Md. Mubinur Rahman.

**Mediation Unit:** Ila Chanda (Deputy Director), Mahjabin Robbani, Nina Goswami, Nahid Shams, Shamsun Nahar, Shithi Rani Das, Selina Akhter, Shanina Ferdousi, Mosammat Monira Sultana, Umme Kulsum Akter Parvin, Sumita Bagchi, Kuheli Sultana.

**Litigation Unit:** Abedul Moula, Abdur Rashid, Ahsan Habib, Momtaj Begum, Farhana Afroz, Nilufar Akter, Monira Akter Ratna, Nasreen Akter, Salma Jabin (Coordinator), Topan Kumar Sarker, Mizanur Rahman, Zafrin Chowdhury.

**Outreach Unit:** Dilip Kumar Paul (Coordinator), Khokon Gomez, Mirza Shammi Akter, Roushan Jahan Parvin (Deputy Director), Rehana Sultana, Md. Monwar Hossain, Sheikh Shariful Islam, Khandaker Forhad Abedin, Mahbuba Jahan, Shashwati, Taufiqul Islam, Mirana Sabir.

**Support Service and Half Way Home Unit:** Anwara Begum, Ayesha Begum, Ayesha Islam, Arpita Das (Coordinator), Rajia Begum, Israt Jahan Mithila, Maleka Begum, Rokeya Begum, Syeda Parvez Khanam.

**Protection for Working Children (Consortium):** Ali Akram Tarafdar, Geeta Chakrabarty (Deputy Director), Jahanara Parvin, Kamrunnessa, Mehraj Jahan, Moqsud Maleque (Sr. Coordinator), Mina Sanyal, Md. Assadujjaman, Nargis Akter, Rashida Khanam, Rasheda

Akhter, Runa Khandakar, Shamsunnaher, Ferdousi, Nazma Akter, Nargis Aktar Mafia, Rehana Parvin, Shammi Akter Ruma, Shahana Sultana, Atia Afrin.

**Protection for full-time Child Domestic Workers from Abuse and Exploitation (SC-Sweden project):** Ambika Roy, Anwara Begum, Luna Sarker, Mizanur Rahman, Monika Rani Dey, Mabilia Akter, Parvin Akter Baby, Rita Parvin, Sabila Moktader, Shaheen Mahbub, Shilpi Shaha, Shahnaz Begum, Farzana Khanam, Amena Khanam, Rokeya Begum, Lutfun Nessa, Selina Akhter Seli, Reshma Akhter, Mohsina Begum, Fatema Hoque, Farhana Nasim, Rabeya Akhter, Mahmuda Khanam.

**Psycho-Social Help:** Abeda Sultana (Counselor).

**Investigation Unit:** Md. Nur Khan (Director), Mohammed Tipu Sultan (Sr. Coordinator), John Asit Das, Sheikh Nasir Ahmed, Shah Alam Faruk, Abu Ahmed Faijul Kabir.

**Documentation Unit:** Fahmida Zaman, Fatema Zannati, Khorshed Alam, Md. Sekandar Ali, Nargis Akhter, Zafreen Sattar (Coordinator), Jharna Khanam.

**Media and Communication Unit:** Mosharaf Hossain, Mariam Begum, Shaheen Akhtar (Editor), Sayeed Ahmed (Coordinator), Kaniz Khadija Surovy, Anirban Saha, Amirul Haque Tuhin, Millat Hossain, Qumrunnessa Nazly.

**Research Unit:** Salma Chaudhury, Lovely Rani Talukdar, Anil Chandra Mandal, A.T.M. Morshed Alam.

**Advocacy Unit:** Abu Obaidur Rahman (Coordinator), Jannat Sultana, Abantee Nurul, Umme Wara Mishu, Fazlul Bari, Kaiyum Hossain Hawlader, Tapos Bondhu Das.

**Administration Unit:** Amena Begum, Fazila Begum, Fatema Begum, Laila Begum, Md. Haider Ali, Mintu Barua, Majeda Begum, Mahmuda Sultana, Naseema Akhter Banu (Asstt. Director), Nurun Nahar Rekha, Shirin Aktar, Sabina Yeasmin, Tahsina Ahmed, Laily Ara Begum, Mahbub Alam.

**Finance Unit:** Hosnara Begum, Md. Shahidullah (Deputy Director, Accounts), Nur E. Alam, Philip Arnold, Suraiya Hanam (Director Finance), Tahera Begum.

## ASK Members

### Founder Members

Abdul Khaleque  
Aminul Haq (Late)  
Amirul Islam  
Fazle Hasan Abed  
Hameeda Hossain  
Khursheed Erfan Ahmed  
K.M. Subhan  
Salma Sobhan (Late)  
Taherunnessa Abdullah

### Executive Committee Members

Md. Asaduzzaman, *Secretary General*  
Fazle Hasan Abed, *Chairperson*  
Faustina Pereira, *Member*  
Nizamul Huq Nasim, *Member*  
Md. Nur Khan, *Member*  
Roushan Jahan, *Treasurer*  
Shamim Akhter, *Member*  
Sultana Kamal (*Ex-Officio*), *Member*  
Sara Hossain, *Member*

### General Members

Adilur Rahman Khan  
Afsana Wahab  
Dilruba Shahana  
Faustina Pereira  
Fatema Rashid Hasan  
Isaac Robinson  
Khurshid Alam  
Karunamoy Chakma  
Meghna Guha Thakurta  
Md. Asaduzzaman  
Md. Nur Khan  
Nizamul Huq Nasim  
Nihad Kabir  
Neela Matin  
Roushan Jahan Parvin  
Roksana Khondokar  
Roushan Jahan  
Sultana Kamal  
Sara Hossain  
Saira Rahman Khan  
Syed Refaat Ahmed  
Shamim Akhter  
Syed Mahbubar Rahman  
Tahmina Rahman  
Tanzina Huq Tiru  
Z.I. Khan Panna  
Zaved Hasan Mahmood

## Sponsors of Working Children 2006

Sponsor	Name of Children
Dr. Faustina Pereira	: Rahmatullah
Dr. Markus Litz	: Monir Hossain & Apu
Peter Haaze	: Sayeda Akhter and Ashraf Hossain
Salma Chowdhury	: Sajeda Akhter
Sarah Leigh	: Rabeya, Al-Amin, Monir, Rashedul Islam & * Asma
Waltraud Haase	: Hosne Ara & Shameem Hossain
Mr. & Mrs. Giselher Brand	: Golapi
Mr. & Mrs. Albert Dutsch	: Rashida
Zafrin Sattar	: * Asma

\* Zafrin Sattar provided support up to June 2006 & Sarah Leigh is providing support from July 2006 for Asma.