

Annual Report 2008

Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK)

Annual Report 2008

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ASK

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This consolidated report draws upon individual reports provided by each unit. The activities of several units are included under three parts and annexures which design ASK's broad based strategies for creating awareness of human rights, providing legal aid and other forms of support and advocating for reform.

Annual reports are a process of making sense out of a million different activities and 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 commenting upon it needs to be recognized.

The final product of composing, formatting and lay out of the report was the responsibility of Anil Mandel. Other computer operators, who composed the first draft, were Mohsin Ali, Abedul Mowla, Mosharaf Hossain and Rehana Sultana. The Administration, Research and Publication Units assisted with its production.

Md. Asaduzzaman
Secretary General

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Acronyms

ADMIN	Administration Unit	MIS	Management Information System
ADR	Alternative Dispute Resolution	MRRU	Mediation and Rapid Response Unit
ADV	Advocacy Unit	NGO	Non-Government Organisation
A M	Area Manager	HRV	Human Rights Violations
ASK	Ain o Salish Kendra	HURIDOCS	Human Rights Information & Documentation System
BARD	Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development	OCD	Orientation Course on Democracy
BNAD	Biddaloy Nattya Dol (School Theatre Team)	OUT	Outreach Unit
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee	PIL	Public Interest Litigation
CAT	Convention Against Torture	PNGO	Partner Non-Government Organisation
CBO	Community based Organisation	PO	Programme Organiser
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women.	PP	Project Proposal
CHT	Chittagong Hill Tracts	PSH	Psycho-Social Help Component
CLAG	Legal Aid Groups	PWC	Protection of Working Children Unit
CO	Community Organiser	PME	Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit
COMM	Communication Unit	RBA	Rights Based Approach
CRC	Convention on the Rights of Children	RES	Research Unit
DD	Deputy Director	RM	Regional Manager
DIC	Drop-In Centres	RSS	Regional Sector Specialist
DOC	Documentation Unit	SAF	Staff Appraisal Format
EC	Executive Committee	SC	Study Circles
ED	Executive Director	SDA	Senior Documentation Assistant
FC	Foundation Course	SOL	Social Opinion Leader
FGD	Focus Group Discussion	SR	Service Rules
FIN	Finance Unit	SSHH	Support Services and Halfway Home Unit
FIR	First Information Report	STT	School Theatre Team
FO	Field Organiser	T A	Theatre Activist
FW	Field Worker	TOR	Terms of Reference
GD	General Diary	TOT	Training of Trainers
GLAF	Government Legal Aid Fund	TRNG	Training Unit
GSJ	Gender and Social Justice Unit	UMNP	Union Manobadhikar Nattya Porishod
GT	Guide Teacher	UN	United Nations
HR	Human Rights	UNO	Upozila Nirbahi Officer
HRA	Human Rights Awareness Unit	UZMNP	Upazilla Manobadhikar Nattya Porishod
HRD	Human Resources Development	VAW	Violence Against Women
HRDF	Human Rights Defenders' Forum	WLUML	Women Living Under Muslim Laws
IBDP	Issue-based Drama Presentation		
INV	Investigation Unit		
JDA	Junior Documentation Assistant		
LEB	Local Elected Body		
LIT	Litigation Unit		
LL	Literacy Learning		
MNP	Manobadhikar Nattya Parishod		
MSP	Manobadhikar Sangrakkhan Parishod		
MNS	Manobadhikar Nari Samaj		
MAP	Manobadhikar Ainjibi Parishod		



Glossary

CLAG	Community Legal Aid Groups (CLAG) are formed by local communities in several Unions in the districts of Habigonj, Chittagong and Barisal to monitor violations of women's rights and take redressal measures. They also act as pressure groups to ensure accountability of public authorities.	
Fatwa	Arabic for "opinion of a person knowledgeable in <i>Shariah</i> ". In Bangladeshi villages, <i>fatwas</i> are issued 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 <i>fatwa</i> giver. Increasingly, <i>fatwas</i> are used to order physical punishments on women who work with NGOs or outside their homes, or exercise choice in relationships. Punishments have included flogging, burying women up to the waist, stoning, beating with shoes, or social ostracization, etc.	
Government Legal Aid	<i>Ainoto Shahayata Prodan Ain, 2000</i> (Legal Support Fund includes) Act provides financial support (to the extent of taka 300,000 in each district) for legal aid for insolvent persons. The fund covers lawyers' fees, court expenditure and additional charges. The District Legal Aid Committee allocates funds and cases to lawyers. The District Judge is the President and the Secretary of the Bar Association is secretary of the Committee that includes District Magistrates, Police Supers, Public Prosecutors, representatives of Department of Women and Child Affairs, Department of Social Welfare, local NGOs and others. Lawyers have to submit quarterly reports on their cases to the Committee.	MNP Manobadhikar Nattya Porishods are Upazilla federations of union based theatre groups. MSP Manobadhikar Sangrakkhan Porishods are voluntary human rights monitors formed under the Gender and Social Justice Programme at the union and Upazilla levels. They include men and women. MNS Manobadhikar Nari Samaj was formed with women members of MSP. MAP Manobadhikar Ainjibi Porishod, is a lawyers' group which voluntarily provides advice to CBOs at legal camps, and files cases availing the Government Legal Aid Fund. The lawyers try to promote a human rights culture in the Courts. Shalish An informal, traditional system of mediation used to settle marital and land disputes outside the court. Shalishkar Mediators who conducted <i>shalish</i> . Generally, local elected representatives, village elders, school teachers, NGO workers, religious leaders, etc.
		Village Court A court constituted under the provisions of the Village Court Ordinance, 1976 (amended in 2006). Any party in a dispute may, in the prescribed manner and paying the prescribed fee, apply to the Village Court. The Chairman of the Union Porishod constitutes a Village Court for the trial of a case. Apart from the chairman, each party nominates two members. It has no power of imprisonment, but may order the accused to compensate the aggrieved, to an amount not exceeding Tk. 25,000. Thana Upazilla Police Station Sub-district (the lowest administrative unit of Bangladesh)
Hilla	Under <i>Shariah</i> , an intervening marriage is often imposed in cases when the husband pronounces an oral divorce on an impulse, repents later and wants to take her back. Although practiced in	

ASK at a Glance

Registration

Registrar of Joint Stock Companies and Firms under Societies Registration Act, 1860 since 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, 3 deceased) General members: 25 (16 women and 9 men) Executive Committee members: 9 (5 women and 4 men, 2 Founder Members and 7 General Members).

Staff

Total: 172 (including regular, contract, full time and part-time), Women: 114, Men: 58.

Geographic Coverage

ASK activities cover all of Bangladesh. Its public interest litigation and its media campaigns make a national impact. It carries out specific programmes at the grass roots in partnership with NGOs in 40 unions of 10 districts (4 unions of Sadar Upazilla of each district) to promote community activism for gender and social justice and human rights. ASK offers legal aid services in seven legal aid clinics in Dhaka and in its office, while the principles and methodology of its legal aid has been replicated in 61 rural clinics, which have been set up by BRAC with assistance from ASK. From April 2008, ASK extended its legal aid activities to Chittagong, Barisal and Hobigonj districts under three divisions, namely Chittagong, Barisal and Sylhet through partnerships with three local NGOs. ASK's Investigation Programme covers all of Bangladesh. It has formed a human rights defender's forum to carry out local investigations in 11 districts.

Legal Aid Clinics in Dhaka: 7

(1) Shah Ali Bagh, Mirpur; (2) Johnson Road; (3) Goran; (4) Kamrangichar; (5) Keraniganj, (6) Mohammadpur and (7) Dholpur at Jatrabari Police Station.

Drop-in Centres for Working Children: 6

Mohammadpur : 1
Goran : 1
Bashabo : 1
Mirpur : 1
Shantibag : 1
Johnson Road : 1

Drop-in Centres for Full-time Child Domestic

Workers: 9

Kolabagan : 1 (Full time)
Dhanmondi : 2 (Part time)
Kalyanpur : 4 (Part time)
Mohammadpur : 2 (Part time)

Partner NGOs: 13

Adarsha Shapla Unnayan Sangstha (ASUS), **Naogaon Sadar, Naogaon**

Bandhan Society, **Kishoreganj Sadar, Kishoreganj**
Gana Unnayan Kendra (GUK), **Gaibandha Sadar, Gaibandha**

Mukti Nari o Shishu Unnayan Shangstha, **Kushtia Sadar, Kushtia**

Pabna Prostiruti (PP), **Pabna Sadar, Pabna**
Shabolomby Unnayan Samity (SUS), **Netrakona Sadar, Netrakona**

Social Association For Rural Advancement (SARA), **Mymensingh Sadar, Mymensingh**

National Development Council (NDC), **Joypurhat Sadar, Joypurhat**

Welfare Efforts (WE), **Jhenaidah Sadar, Jhenaidah**
Sirajganj Uttaran Mohila Shangstha (SUMS), **Sirajganj Sadar, Sirajganj**

Organisation for Women's Development in Bangladesh (OWDEB), **Chittagong**

Hobigonj Unnayan Sangsta (HUS), **Habigonj**
Association of Voluntary Action for Society (AVAS), **Barisal**

Biddaloy Nattya Dol (BNAD) School Theatre Teams

Khanjanpur Mission Girls High School, Joypurhat Girls High School, Teghor High School, Teghor girls high school, **Joypurhat**

Central Girls High School, P.M. Girls High School, Chok Enayet High School, Jonokolayan Model High school **Noagaon**

Sadhinotar Rojot Joyonti Girls High School, Modern N.H. High School, Tulshighat Kashinath

High School, Rabeya Habib Girls High School **Gaibandha**

Victoria High School, Sobuj Kanon High School, Koumi Jute Mill High School, Hoimobala Girls High School, **Sirajganj**

Kolokakoli Secondary School, Mohini Mohon Biddyapith, Milpara Secondary School, Housing Estate Girls High School **Kushtia**

Arjot Atorjan High School, Ajimuddin High School, Kishoreganj Girls High School, Jila Smaroni Girls High School **Kishoregonj**

Shisukunja School & College, Fojoy Ali High School, Jhinaidah S.P. Secondary School, New Academy School, **Jhenaidah**

Mymensing Laboratory High School, Premier Ideal School, The Edward Institution, Police Line High school **Mymensing**

Jahanara Smrity Girls High School, Rajur Bazar Collegiate

School, Krisnogobindo High School, Netrakona Girls High School **Netrakona**

Jannat Bibi Jubily Girls High School, Central Girls High School, Selim Najir High School, Saheed Fajlul Haque High School **Pabna**

Manobadhikar Nattya Porishod (MNP): 10

Joypurhat, Noagaon, Gaibandha, Sirajganj, Kushtia, Kishorganj, Jhinaidah, Mymensing, Netrokona, and Pabna

Development Partners

Oxfam-Novib (Netherlands)

The Royal Norwegian Embassy, Dhaka

The Swedish Embassy, Dhaka (Consortium partner, which plans to renew funding in 2009)

NETZ-Germany

Save the Children Sweden-Denmark

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)

Concern Worldwide

National Networks

Bangladesh Shishu Adhikar Forum (BSAF): 170 member organisations to campaign for the implementation of the Child Rights Convention.

Beijing plus Five for Women's Rights: a large coalition of women's organisations to implement the Beijing Platform for Action, adopted by the Government of Bangladesh.

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

Citizen's Initiative on CEDAW: a network of 38 organisations formed in 2007 to prepare an alternative report to be submitted to the CEDAW Committee in 2009 and to campaign for implementation of CEDAW.

Citizen's Initiatives to Address Domestic Violence: a network of 40 organisations formed in 2007 for advocacy on legislation for Domestic Violence.

Sramik Nirapotta Forum: a network of 14 organisations concerned with workers' safety at the work place. Formed after the collapse of the Spectrum Sweater Industries building in Polashbari, Savar it has campaigned for workers' safety, and filed PILs to establish corporate responsibility for workers' deaths and injuries.

Samajik Protirodh Committee: a network of 52 women's groups formed to resist violence against women by both state and non-state actors, to campaign

for the participation of women in public decision-making and to resist the rise of religious extremism. The Secretariat is located at Bangladesh Mahila Parishad.

Human Rights Forum on Universal Periodic Review (UPR): a coalition of 17 human rights and development organisations of Bangladesh which prepared a joint stakeholders' report for the UPR and carried out advocacy activities.

International Networks

Asian NGO Network on National Human Rights Institutions (ANNI): a network of human rights NGOs in Asia engaged with NHRIs to strengthen domestic human rights protection mechanisms in accordance with international human rights standards.

Asia Pacific Forum for Women, Law and Development (APWLD) : formed after the Nairobi Conference; networks with legal and women's rights organisations across Asia and the Pacific to campaign for women's rights and draft recommendations for legal reform. Secretariat located in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and the Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes (ECPAT International) : works against commercial sexual exploitation of children. Member NGOs in 70 countries the secretariat is in Bangkok.

Forum Asia (FA): promotes training, education and awareness of international human rights standards amongst its constituent members. Secretariat based in Bangkok.

International Women's Rights Action Watch (IWRAP): promotes women's rights under CEDAW and other UN Conventions. It supports and trains organisations to prepare shadow reports for treaty bodies. Secretariat located in Kuala Lumpur.

Migrants' Forum in Asia (MFA): raises awareness about migrant workers' rights and fair working conditions and creates structures of support. Secretariat located in Manila.

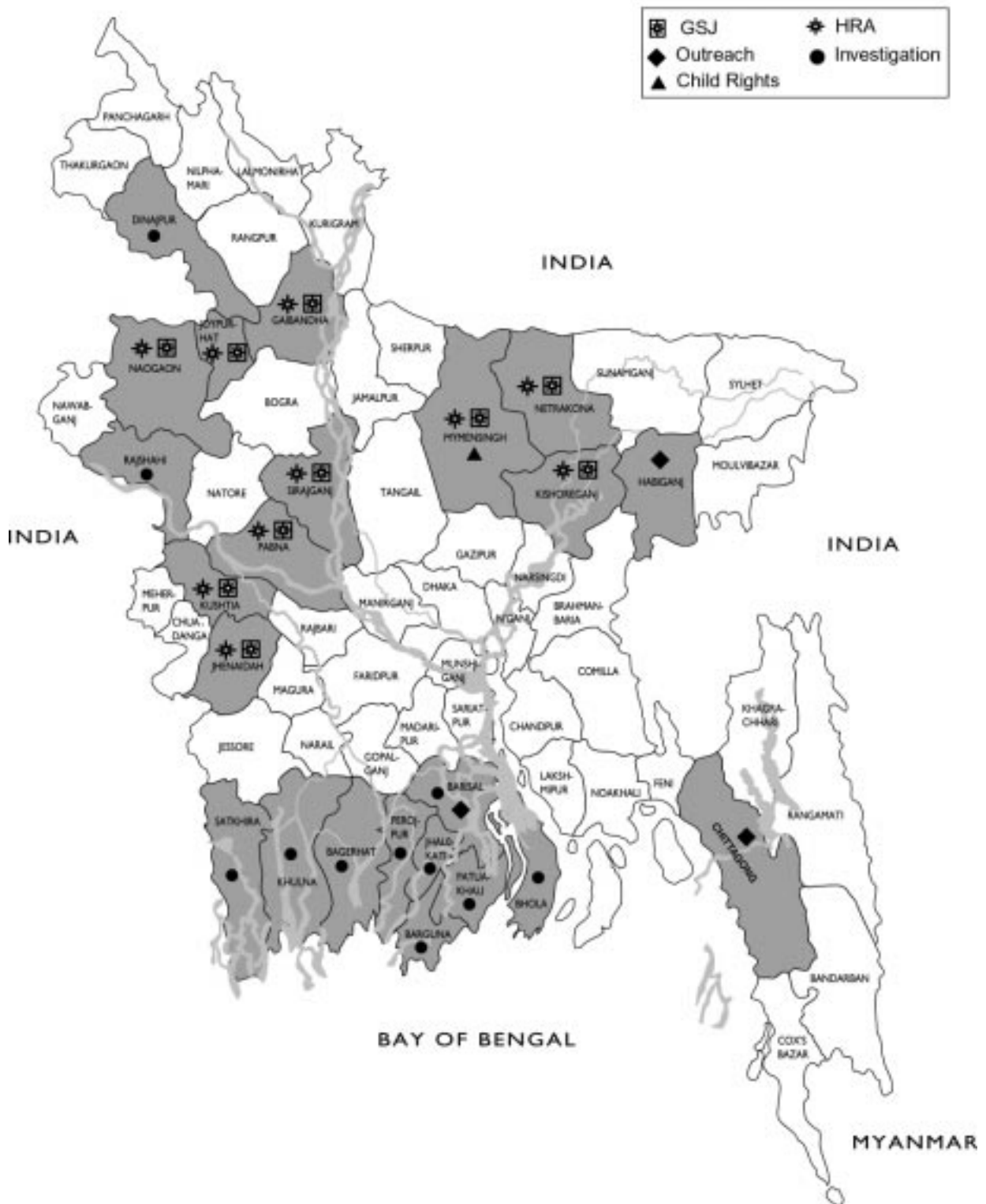
South Asians for Human Rights (SAHR): a network of human rights defenders and organisations in South Asia. The secretariat is in Colombo.

We Can End Violence against Women: an international campaign against domestic violence. Holds meetings, seminars, workshops and publishes materials to prevent gender-based violence. ASK is currently Chair of the national campaign committee.

Women Living under Muslim Laws (WLUML) : an international solidarity network that has engaged with problems faced by women in contending with Islamic laws. ASK has prepared several papers on how such laws affect women's lives in Bangladesh.

Working areas

Different Programmes of ASK Outside Dhaka



Preface

For the people of Bangladesh, the year 2008 was a time of mixed feelings of hope and anxiety for the future. Hope was in the air because people were anticipating the elections that were going to be held towards the end of the year. The people had given the caretaker government two years to organize and hold a smooth and convincing election. Not only that, this election bore much more importance than previous elections because the people were waiting for free, fair and transparent election in the true sense as never before. The people of the country wanted to be rid of any kind of undemocratic, unreliable and corrupt system of governance and hence they put immense faith and confidence in the caretaker government at the time.

In certain sectors the caretaker government has lived up to people's expectations by taking appropriate measures such as the rectification of certain institutions, establishing the fact that no individual is above the law, creating an acceptable voter list, in some cases ascertaining information about election candidates and by significantly liberating the mindsets of the people from any single party influence to thinking about the future development of the country - credit may be given to the government for these steps.

On the other hand, certain measures and dealings of the then caretaker government have also given rise to frustration among the people and have brought about doubt in their minds of the government's capabilities. For example - the prolonging of the state of emergency, creating obstacles to justice pertaining to fundamental human rights, evicting slums and hawkers, unnecessary arrests and the failure to produce clear evidence of crime against the list of suspects, interfering with the justice system, failure to control price hikes, using the university event as an excuse to harass students and teachers, in certain aspects compromising with vested interest groups and giving in to religious fanaticism by retreating from incorporating women's rights and other progressive laws into the justice system. These have weakened the government's position. The people have not accepted extra-judicial killings, torture of the arrested as in the past and control over civil administration easily. However, a point to note is the patience with which the people of the country have waited, for two years 2007-2008, for a democratic government to be restored; for those in politics, business or any field who have been corrupt to be brought to justice – but they have not endorsed any processes leading to 'de-politicization' of the society or implementation of the

'minus two formula'. The government's moves in these areas have also been highly questionable.

Even during this uncertain time, Ain o Shalish Kendra (ASK) has tried to protect the fundamental and civil rights of the people. For these two years ASK has fought against the violation of human rights. With legal advice and assistance ASK has come to the aid of those who have been deprived of human rights, those who have been oppressed. ASK was successful in getting a verdict in favor of an appeal for bail by filing a writ petition against a legal position that bail is not given to the accused when the country is in a state of emergency. ASK was also successful in stopping the eviction of slums and hawkers and ensuring their safety, in resisting appropriation of lands, homestead and properties either in the name of or by aid of the armed forces, helping create consensus against religious fanatics and to bring war criminals to justice, helping gain and protect the rights of indigenous people, people with disabilities and other underprivileged groups, organizing women at the grassroots level and involving university students in the defense of human rights, creating human rights forums in various districts. At the same time ASK has held onto and taken forward the spirit of the language movement, the liberation war and the struggles for democracy through its activities, which can be marked as its significant achievements for the year.

In the domain of publications ASK has consistently written about current issues. ASK has disseminated information widely both within the country and outside, through regular publications, books and website. To protect street children and child domestic workers, ASK has developed new agendas. ASK has been prompt in providing legal advice and to challenge social norms, which are unjust and discriminatory.

I am grateful to my colleagues for taking this journey with me and providing me with an active and promising time in office. I am grateful to the active administrative body and all other members for their openhearted cooperation. Those who have helped us from beyond ASK, by playing important roles whenever assistance was required in the fight for gaining and protecting human rights, will never be forgotten.

I end by wishing everyone a free, just and peaceful life. My only hope is that we can all live without fear or want, protect the rights of all, with dignity in our hearts; that we can all live like human beings.

Introduction

Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK), (literally, Law and Mediation Centre), a legal aid and human rights organisation, was started in 1986 with the purpose of providing free legal aid, particularly to women, workers and working children, and to promote and protect human rights. Founded by nine individuals, including lawyers, professionals, social workers and development workers, it began life in a small garage, loaned by a supporter. In 1989, ASK moved to a more central location. It has consultative status with UNECOSOC and continues its commitment to promoting human rights within a democratic framework. Its goal is to create a society based on equality, social justice and the rule of law with a special focus on gender equality.

ASK's strategies are: Generating human rights awareness and activating responses against human rights violations (HRVs); Promoting community activism for gender equity and social justice; Ensuring access to justice through legal aid; Providing emergency support service; Campaigning and advocacy for law and policy reforms; Ensuring transparency and accountability in public institutions; Enhancing capacity of human rights defenders; and Ensuring an effective institutional system.

These strategies are implemented by 17 units and one component. Independent programmes for awareness raising, legal aid, social support are carried out by each unit, and the outcome of each programme leads to further collective campaigns and advocacy by other units as well. For example, knowledge of human rights leads participants to seek legal aid or to build the capacity of human rights defenders. The experience gained through legal aid or with community voluntary groups enables ASK to identify issues for research, media campaigns and

advocacy. Similarly, monitoring and documenting human rights situation is used to check violations. Several units are clustered with the aim of promoting particular strategies. Two units for Human Rights Awareness and Gender and Social Justice carry out activities to create community consciousness and facilitate activism, five units provide access to justice and protection of rights. These are Mediation and Rapid Response, Litigation, Outreach, Child Rights, Support Service and Half Way Home Unit. Psycho-social help is not yet an independent Unit, but is a component of the Social Support Unit. Campaigns and advocacy within the country and internationally are carried out by four units namely Research, Publication and Communication, Legal Advocacy and Policy Reform, and Media and International Advocacy. The situation of human rights is monitored and documented by Investigation and Documentation Units. The Training Unit offers courses on human rights, legal rights, gender equality, etc. Administration, Finance, Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation provide structural support to all units and evaluated their results and outcomes.

ASK responds to violations of legal and human rights by assessing news reports or other complaints received directly at a daily Action Meeting, at which concerned units are allocated tasks.

This report covers ASK's activities from January to December 2008. During this time ASK, as a human rights and legal aid organisation, continued to act and respond to issues related to collective human rights, and at the same time provided legal assistance to individuals through both formal and informal mechanisms. ASK continues providing assistance to women, children and other vulnerable groups such as religious and ethnic minorities and industrial workers.

Some Cases Filed by Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK) in defense of legal and human rights

Ain o Salish has supported people's access to justice through mediation and litigation. While many of the cases are handled by its staff lawyers or panel lawyers, it has also expanded this access to rural areas by working with local organizations and voluntary citizen groups which call themselves Manobadhikar Sangrakhon Porishod. Some of the cases given below illustrate how a positive outcome was obtained through coordination between the work of different ASK Units or working in tandem with different organizations, or lawyers' panels.

ASK facilitates local voluntary human rights defenders to settle claims

· On 3 July 2008, a girl student of class VIII of Gaibandha Sadar was about to be abducted by a man and his group but they were seen by the thana CBO secretary. He stopped them and mobilized people on the street to help him. They were taken to the police station, but the police did not help because of pressure from a former MP. In the meantime other villagers came to support the girl, and they filed a case. Without informing the CBO Secretary, the victim's father and the man's family members settled the matter in the thana and withdrew the case. The father promised that his son will not do this again; the MP also obtained a written statement from his son promising not to harass a girl again.

It is difficult for the CBO to take action if the family does not want to continue the case. However, the CBO kept in touch with the student and found that the girl was not being harassed.

· On 15 July 2008 a *shalish* was arranged in the office of the thana MSP in Kushtia by the thana Committee to mediate in the complaint filed by a woman who had discovered after her marriage that her husband was already married. She continued living with him, but later, when he stopped giving her maintenance and became violent, she filed a complaint with the union MSP member. Upon receiving the complaint the thana MSP called both parties, where she clearly stated that she did not want to stay with her husband. It was decided that he would pay her taka 20,000 as dower, and a divorce would take place in accordance with Muslim Family Law Ordinance, 1961.

The MSP was able to obtain her dower money, which is rare in case of a village divorce, and the woman's decision to opt out of the marriage was respected.

· On 24 July 2008 RAB rescued a ten year old girl who had been tortured by her employer. They left her with an organization in Serajganj which is a partner of ASK. The PNGO took her in and filed a case with the police thana. She had to appear in Court on 26 July, and the Court directed that she be returned to her

parents. The latter came to the organization and thanked the PNGO for looking after her.

This intervention has persuaded the PNGO to become more active in preventing human rights violations and protecting the survivor, rather than waiting for a national organization to ask them to do something.

A legal battle against forced marriage

High Court ordered release of Dr Humayara Abedin from parent's confinement and her safe journey to rejoin her duties in London. On 14 December, the High Court Division Bench of Justices Syed Mahmud Hossain and Quamrul Islam Siddique directed the Police Commissioner to ensure safe arrival of Dr. Humayara Abedin at the British High Commission in Dhaka and for the latter to arrange her safe journey back to London. The Court issued these order in an *habeas corpus* writ petition filed by Dr. Shipra Chowdhury, cousin of Dr. Humayara Abedin and Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK) on grounds that Humayara was confined against her will and was forced to undergo a marriage.

Dr. Humayara Abedin, a medical doctor in a National Health hospital in London, had traveled to Dhaka from London in August 2008 in response to calls that her mother was desperately ill, but, following her arrival, was forcibly confined against her will by her parents. Since mid-August, Dr. Humayra had been held incommunicado, which had raised serious concern amongst her friends and well-wishers in Bangladesh and in the UK.

In August, after receiving an email complaint alleging that Dr Humayara was confined by her parents, ASK filed a GD with the Mohammadpur Police station. On 13 August ASK sent a request letter to the Mohammadpur Police Station to rescue Humaira, but the local police took no steps. When an ASK lawyer, accompanied by police, went to the parents' house they were not allowed to speak to her in private, despite her express wish to do so. The parents stated that they and Dr. Humayra would attend the ASK office the next day, but failed to do so.

On 10 October, ASK lawyers with a relative of Dr Humayara filed an *habeas corpus* petition. The Court

ordered the Inspector General of Police to ensure Dr. Humayra's appearance in Court by 17 November, but on 16 November the parent's lawyer appeared for the first time and sought two weeks time to appeal against the High Court's order.

On 24 November, the Chamber Judge of the Appellate Division refused an appeal from the parent's lawyers to stay the High Court's order to produce Dr. Humayra. After repeated failure by the parents to produce Dr Humayara, the Court issued *suo motu* contempt notices on the parents and uncle and directed them to appear in person on 3 December.

On 3 December, the parents and uncle appeared in Court without Dr Humayara and their lawyer again sought time. Finally after the fourth summons by the court the father, on 14 December, appeared with her before the Court and returned her passport, driving licence and plane ticket as per the Court's direction. The parents had claimed through their lawyers that Dr. Humayra, though an adult, should be kept in her parents' custody, first on the ground that she was 'unmarried' and later, because she was 'mentally ill'.

In the meantime another petition had been filed in London. The British High Court issued an order on her parents prohibiting them from forcing or attempting to force Humayara (a British Resident) to enter into a marriage without her consent.

In her interrogation by the Court, Humayara stated that her movement was severely restricted for the last five months and also complained of severe violence on her in her parents' custody. She expressed her will to go back to London to pursue her education.

Following the judgment Dr Humayara Abedin flew back to London on 17 December, 2008.

In support of their legal case for Humayara's release from parental custody and from a forced marriage, ASK conducted a strong media campaign, issuing press releases after every Court hearing, making sure that reporters attended the hearings and reported on it.

While the police were not active in carrying out Court orders to ensure her appearance, the High Court took up a very strong position in defence of her constitutional rights and Bangladesh's obligations under international treaties such as CEDAW and ICCPR. This landmark judgment could be a precedent for a woman's freedom of choice.

Amena's long struggle for dower and maintenance

The following case illustrates the problems faced in pursuing litigation due to length of the trial and the change of address by the defendant to escape the trial. Amena's marriage to Faruque was registered on 18 May 1991 in Dhaka. According to Muslim law, Taka 90,001.0 was fixed as dower money. They had a six year old daughter. After a few years of marriage,

Faruque demanded dowry from Amena, and because her family was unable to meet his demands Faruque beat Amena and forced her to leave his house.

Amena went back to stay with her parents. She first came to Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK) in November 1997 for legal assistance to recover dower and maintenance. ASK's lawyer received the matter and after ASK failed to resolve the dispute through mediation and negotiation, the Litigation Unit filed a case on 13 January 1998 in the Sixth Assistant Judge Court, Dhaka applying for dower and maintenance on behalf of Amena. In the mean time, Faruque sent a divorce letter to Amena. which came as a shock to her.

The Court passed a judgment on 31 March 1999 instructing Faruque to pay dower and maintenance. Faruque filed an Appeal against the judgment. After hearing both parties the Court dismissed the appeal. Then the plaintiff filed a decree for execution of the judgment against the defendant. After ten years (13 January, 1998-16 November, 2008) Amena received Taka 201,601.0 as her dower money, past maintenance and child maintenance.

Establishing a right to shelter for slum residents

On 18 December, 2008 a High Court Bench comprised of Mr. Justice Syed Mahamud Hossain and Mr. Justice Quamrul Islam Siddiqui issued a show cause to the Ministry of Housing and Public works as to why the notice for forceful eviction of the residents from Korail Bosti should not be declared without lawful authority and of no legal effect and directed them to maintain *status quo* in the *bosti* until disposal of the case. This rule was issued in a writ petition no. 9763/2008 filed by Ain o Salish Kendra. It has given saved the slum dwellers of Korail from immediate eviction.

Korail Bosti is situated on a land of about 90 acres in Banani, Dhaka, and houses about 100,000 people. Most of them are garment workers, rickshaw pullers, van pullers, bus and truck drivers, in small business, city cleaners, domestic workers, etc. They have been living here for about 30/35 years. Most of them have migrated from the villages because they were unable to find any work there. They struggle to survive with their families and have managed to gain some financial security and social stability. They contribute to economic production in the country and make city life easier for the middle class.

Article 15 (a) of the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh guarantees the right to shelter of all citizens. Earlier, in 1999, the High Court had directed the Government to ensure rehabilitation and resettlement of the slum dwellers before eviction. But unfortunately without any resettlement plan for the slum dwellers of Korail bosti, the Public Works Division of the Ministry of Housing and Public works issued ultimatums to the inhabitants to vacate the land immediately or face eviction.

Part One

Programmes and Activities

Human Rights Awareness

One of ASK's major strategies has been to create awareness of human rights, in order to generate a demand for rights and entitlements within the community and to make state institutions and duty bearers responsible for promotion, protection and prevention of human rights. A wide range of persons from the grass roots to state level institutions is included in ASK's awareness raising programmes.

Theatre is an important medium for creating awareness, stirring public conscience and encouraging a discourse on human rights' concerns. The Human Rights Awareness Unit works intensively with youth, students and cultural activists in high schools and local communities. It mobilizes local volunteers to form human rights' theatre teams known as *Manobadhikar Natya Porishod* (MNP); they perform plays that reflect human rights situation in their area and inspire the audience to take action to promote and protect.

Biddalaya Nattya Dol (BNAD)

40 BNADs of 25 to 30 students have been formed and re-formed in 40 secondary schools (four in each working district). The Unit staff members held formal and informal consultations with school teachers and students in ten working areas to explain the objectives and methodology of the programme. BNADs formed with students in selected schools, and at workshops and study circles organized by the HRA Unit, the members learned to perform dramas, publish wall magazines, participate in debates and cultural

competitions and celebrate significant days. One Guide Teacher (GT) was selected (by the school headmaster) in each school to supervise the work of the BNAD. The Guide Teachers were trained in theatre production, and informed about human rights, gender relations and personal laws. Forty BNADs in 2008, performed 251 dramas to an estimated audience of 62,345 secondary school students.

Manobadhikar Nattya Porishod (MNP)

A unit staff (Theatre Activist) with the help of local cultural activists after identifying volunteers interested in theatre, held several formal discussions with them on current social problems, their consequences, and probable remedies. A primary MNP group was formed, and after learning about legal and human rights, sources of gender discrimination, they were trained in theatre production at ASK workshops and trainings. They performed issue-based dramas regularly in their working areas. Each year at least 25 volunteers from amongst the MNP groups are trained as Local Facilitators at a residential training course. They then train more theatre activists in the working area.

In 2008, a Central Committee of MNP was formed at a national conference of Union and Upazilla based MNP representatives.

Besides, ten HR Theatre festivals were organized by MNPs in the districts, which encouraged local cultural groups. Colourful rallies, songs, traditional stick dance (*Bharatachari*), discussions on HR, democracy and gender relations were organized as well.

As the union level theatre groups increased in number, they decided to federate into UzMNP (*Manobadhikar Nattya Porishod*) at the Upazilla, district and central levels. The formation of Upazilla MNP has given more visibility to the Union *Manobadhikar Porishod* activities at the district level. They have involved the youth in social activism and in many places they were able to generate local funds. The UzMNP organized events on a large scale and published printed materials and calendars. They also supervised union level MNPs and participated in lobbying for human rights' cases with local police, lawyers and journalists.

All UzMNPs function more independently and have interacted with local cultural organisations as well as with the BNAD in secondary schools; this has enhanced their acceptance as theatre organisations in the locality. In some places, theatre workers use their own funds to continue and expand their programme. Progress is monitored at monthly meetings held between UzMNP, LCO and an ASK representative. The HRA Unit Coordinator/Senior Deputy Director monitors the process by attending some of the meetings.

Theatre Production

ASK's theatre activists show theatre groups how to identify human rights' concerns in the community, and how to develop a story line that illustrates the social, economic, political causes of discrimination. The plays provoke discussions on how power dynamics affect law and human rights. Each Theatre Activist conducts two to four workshops every year. In 2008, 555 plays were performed by UMNPs and BNADs on the subject of trial of war criminals, extra judicial killings, State of Emergency, dowry, domestic violence, etc. to very large audiences. The performances were followed by discussions.

Workshop on Issue-based Drama Production by Local Facilitator (LF)

A panel of Local Facilitators is formed from amongst the UMNP jointly by ASK and UzMNP so that they can train others in performing issue based plays. This is to reduce the dependency of the MNPs on ASK. Approximately 15-20 members from each UMNP participated in a workshop supervised by ASK and UzMNP. In 2008, local facilitators conducted 83 workshops in six working areas and produced 90 plays on different issues such as political terrorism, police torture, rape, dowry, etc. The group dramatizes a specific case and leaves it open-ended for the audience to discuss human rights implications and alternative solutions. Sometimes the drama triggers debates that last for hours in local tea stalls, bazars and other gatherings. Each team usually performs two issue-based dramas per month.

National Wall Magazine Festival

HRA unit organized the First National wall magazine festival from 13-14 January 2008 at Bangla Academy Dhaka, which received a wide media coverage. The Bangladesh Wall Magazine Council was constituted by 15 members on the concluding day of the festival. The festival featured displays of wall magazines and discussions on the liberation war, democracy, human rights, gender relations and the role of schools in making responsible citizens. More than 100 schools and organisations from different districts took part in the festival. Thousands of students, guardians, teachers, writers, journalists and other professionals visited and enjoyed the festival. Many creative stories, poems, articles, drawings and cartoons by upcoming writers and artists were displayed on the walls. Three awards were given for the best works. The editors and writers of the magazines along with the visitors gained a deeper understanding of human rights, gender relations and democracy by sharing their ideas and listening to the national scholars who spoke at the festival.

National Human Rights' Theatre Festival

In March 2008, HRA unit organised a three day long Second Human Rights' Theatre Festival to mark the 60th year of United Nation's Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). Twenty Theatre groups along with eleven MNPs from across the country participated in the festival on the theme of "Human Rights First". Eminent human rights' journalists, lawyers and educationists were invited as guest speakers to the festival. The Festival started with a colourful rally and ended by honouring three persons; eminent woman leader Hena Das, journalist Kamal Lohani and playwright Mamunur Rashid for their outstanding contribution in the respective fields of women's movements, liberation war and theatre. Six to seven groups performed plays every day. Most of the plays highlighted the issues of war crime trials, domestic violence, discrimination, degeneration of politics, etc. The audience was given an opportunity to discuss these issues after each performance. Guest speakers were also invited.

Cultural Events

MNPs and BNADs held 40 cultural events to commemorate significant national and international days related to human rights, which attracted large audiences. The purpose was to create awareness and tolerance of cultural and political diversity and to

enhance popular observance of human rights and democratic values.

Community activism for gender and social justice

The Gender and Social Justice Programme has been instrumental in developing and sustaining Community Based Organisations (CBOs) that promote and protect human rights. Significant among these are Manobadhikar Songrokkhan Porishod (MSP) and Manobadhikar Nari Samaj (MNS), both operating at the union level and Sadar thana level. Gender and Social Justice (GSJ) Unit promotes community activism for gender and social justice in the working areas. The Unit has assisted in the formation of Manobadhikar Ainjibi Porishod (MAP), a federation of lawyers in the districts, who offer legal advice and voluntary services to the disadvantaged.

These CBOs monitor incidents of domestic violence, *fatwas* that instigate violence, child marriage, and other violations of legal and human rights. They report such incidents to relevant authorities and demand deterrent action. As a result, members of the community have raised demands for justice, good governance and elimination of discrimination.

Enhancing capacity of the PNGOs

ASK makes every effort to enhance PNGO capacity and to sensitise them to human rights and women's rights and to evolve a rights based approach. The Unit updates the PNGO staff on contemporary developments and coordinates strategies with like-minded local organisations to promote human rights. The focus of ASK's strategy is on enhancing the capabilities of local NGOs to respond to incidences of HR violations.

Jatiyo Nari Unnayan Niti 2008 (National Policy for Women's Advancement)

PNGOs of ASK were the only NGOs who organized discussions with community members on Jatiyo Nari Unnayan Niti 2008. In 2008, GSJ held ten workshops in ten working areas with lawyers, journalists, other professionals, NGOs, CBOS, women's groups. About 95 per cent of the participants were ignorant of the principles underlying the policy, the Government's tolerance of protests by religious parties and formation of a Review Committee constituted by the religious leaders. At the workshop discussions, the participants made the following observations:

- The Policy must be implemented to eliminate discrimination against women.

- The Review Committee formed at the instigation of the religious parties and approved by the Government included no women.
- The Government should meet its obligation to implement CEDAW articles.
- The recommendations of the Review Committee formed by the Imams are regressive and will have a negative influence on gender relations.
- The Government's response to the illogical demands of the religious parties has been weak.
- The public should be made more aware of rights under the Constitution as they tend to be afraid of religious leaders and accept what they say.
- Religious leaders who are opposed to gender equality and women's rights should not be given responsibility to review the Policy.

Promotion of a Rights Based Approach

ASK's objective is to promote human rights through community activism. A workshop was held with 25 members of PNGO staff to explore the concepts of a Rights Based Approach (RBA) for the right to health, livelihood, education, etc., and their practical application.

Development of Independent Community based HR Organisations

Through exchanges at workshops, dialogues and conferences, GSJ Unit seeks to develop the competence of CBOs to monitor HRV and prevent their occurrence by improving coordination amongst local CBOs, raising awareness of legal and human rights, gender relations, and enhancing skills in techniques of mediation and advocacy. These activities resulted in:

- CBO members learning to monitor and document HR situation in their areas, and mobilising against violations;
- Lawyers giving advice to complainants at legal camps, filing cases with support from the Government Legal Aid Fund, and activating the Village Court;
- CBOs holding consultations with the (a) Marriage Registrar to ensure that they do not register under age marriage, do not over charge fees for registration; (b) Department of Social Welfare to convince the Department to register CBOs; (c) UNO to monitor Village Court cases, advise survivors on *shalish*, litigation etc.
- an Annual General Meetings to review their committees, activities and plans for 2009.
- the first national conference with 50 CBO members (20 female and 30 male) from ten districts, at which participants discussed on how to promote a democratic culture and respect for human rights. In particular they discussed

accountability and corruption in different sectors of local government, the education system and syllabus, use of Government Legal Aid Fund, communalism, MSP's role in promoting HR culture), CBO registration, role of *Shalishker* in mediating disputes, networking, future plans, participation of women in decision making processes, women in CBOs, and guidelines for collective strategies.

Development of Independent Community based Women's Organisations

The Manobadhikar Nari Samaj (MNS) reviewed women's rights situation and monitored violence against women. The Unit encouraged women leaders to participate in decision making processes and in Union Porishod activities such as *shalish*. The activities in 2008 included.

- MNP members mediated disputes after an orientation in legal rights under family laws and participation in ten workshops with local *shalishkers*;
- MNS members held consultations at six workshops with the Department of Women's Affairs, to discuss the inadequacies of the facilities provided by the Department to address the grievances of the village women who face discrimination or violence in their families and their communities. The MNS pointed out that women were not able to break their silence because of their economic and social dependence; further they were critical of nepotism in selection of women participants in Government training programmes and of the inadequate capacity of six Government shelter homes to meet demand. The MNS members recommended more proactive interventions by the Department.

Formation of Manobadhikar Ainjibi Porishod (MAP)

Manobadhikar Ainjibi Porishod (MAP) lawyers attended legal camps, where they offered legal advice to CBO members, filed cases under the Government Legal Aid Fund and attended MSP and MNS programmes. The Unit sensitized them to human rights' lawyering, to causes of gender inequality, so that they could effectively defend rights of the disadvantaged in a judicial system which is weak on human rights and largely inaccessible to the disadvantaged

MAP members were sensitized by the GSJ Unit so that they can promote a human rights culture in their profession, in court and in the community. The lawyers' groups gradually realized their benefits in providing voluntary legal support, or attending CBO programmes. In 2008, the following activities were organized for MAP lawyers.

Twenty five MAP members learnt about Gender Relations Analysis (GRA) and 25 members of the Central Committee reviewed earlier learning. The latter assessed that the GRA is essential for a lawyer to promote human rights. MAP members held workshops with District Judges and other legal aid providers to review the problems in utilization of the Government Legal Aid Fund. (See Table I.1 at page 32)

Access to justice

Access to justice through legal support and other related services beyond the ambit of legal services has been an overarching goal of ASK. Four units (Mediation and Rapid Response, Litigation, Outreach and Child Rights Unit) have adopted an interconnected and coordinated approach to provide access to justice. ASK's legal support system set up in Dhaka is replicated now in villages by ASK's partner NGOs such as BRAC. Disadvantaged women, workers, working children and economically well off yet vulnerable women have gained access to both the formal (court) and informal (*shalish*) systems of justice.

Mediation and Rapid Response

Women in Bangladesh prefer to settle family disputes through mediation, because the formal judicial system is time-consuming, expensive, and reported to be biased particularly towards women. Since 1986 legal aid services have been provided at the ASK office and gradually at seven on-site legal clinics in Mirpur, Goran, Johnson Road, Kamrangirchar, Mohammadpur, Keraniganj and Dhalpur Outfall Pora Bosti at Jatrabari in Dhaka and sometimes outside Dhaka.

Mediation and Rapid Response Unit (MRRU), as the name suggests, negotiates settlements amongst disputants and addresses emergencies. Complaints are brought by clients physically to ASK lawyers, who provide legal advice or mediate family disputes. The agreed terms of settlement are recorded and signed by the parties concerned. The woman client is visited by the Unit's field workers to ensure that the settlement is observed. If the complaint refers to a cognizable offence, the matter is sent to the Litigation Unit. The MRRU Unit remains in touch with the couple for six months after mediation to ensure that the agreement is observed. (See Table I.2 at page 33)

The Unit's Rapid Response to emergencies has been an effective method to rescue survivors of HR violations or violence. The Unit responds to incidents of violence reported in daily newspapers which are discussed at ASK's daily Action Meeting or complaints are brought directly. For example the Unit was able to rescue 26 infants from custody of their

fathers/father's relatives who were taken away forcibly from their mothers, and returned to their mother's custody. In 2008, a total of 453 survivors of violence were assisted by the Unit.

Since September 2006, the Mediation Unit has started giving legal assistance to women inmates in the Government Shelter Home. The Social Welfare Department in response to an appeal from ASK has made the client release procedure at Government shelters more flexible and friendly to women and children. It has circulated a notification on release procedures, which is being implemented. This could be the first step towards repeal of the Vagrancy Act. In 2008, a total of 191 inmates were released from the Government Shelter home in Mirpur and 450 inmates received psycho-social counseling.

Litigation

The Litigation Unit facilitates access to justice by conducting court cases free of charge. The Unit receives complaints of human rights violations as well as criminal offences such as rape, murder, torture, acid burns, dowry violence, polygamy, detention matters, civil revision, criminal appeal, etc. When mediation in family matters fails, the cases are referred by the Mediation Unit to the Litigation Unit for processing in the court. Panel lawyers mainly conducted cases in the High Court Division and Labour Court in Dhaka, while staff lawyers conducted district court cases inside and outside Dhaka and in some cases in the Labour Court. The Litigation Unit has facilitated women's access to the courts, especially in family disputes relating to dower, maintenance, guardianship, divorce, etc., and succeeded in providing protection and security to a number of women and children. The recovery of dower and maintenance money through the courts has enabled the women to invest in self-employment schemes that have made them self-reliant. (See Table 1.3 at page 33)

Outreach

The Outreach Unit has been able to extend ASK's legal aid services to rural areas through partnership with like minded local NGOs. Since 1998 the ASK-BRAC joint legal aid programme has provided legal aid services to disadvantaged rural women in 32 districts. After the completion of this programme in 2008, BRAC has continued to provide legal aid services in 61 districts, replicating the earlier experience. The Outreach Unit has carried out a similar programme of legal aid in partnership with three local NGOs in Chittagong, Barisal and Hobigonj districts from April 2008.

The Unit has organised workshops/dialogues on legal rights, human rights, gender relations to judges,



lawyers, local administrative officials, law enforcing agencies, journalists, community legal aid groups, to sensitize them to human rights lawyering, and mediation methodology. It has also interacted with local Bar Association members and judges to improve legal aid services and procedures, and to motivate them for speedy and effective remedies. The Unit has established a strong working relationship with local administration, police officials, DCs, Magistrates, assistant and public prosecutors, media, NGOs, etc. through a series of dialogues on the causes of gender and class discrimination, social injustice

Community Legal Aid Group (CLAG)

In 2008, the Unit formed 18 Community Legal Aid Groups (CLAG) in the unions of Habigonj, Chittagong and Barisal. Each group consisted of 25 members (Female-10, Male-15), who elected a Chairperson and a Secretary. Each CLAG was given orientation and familiarized with legal rights, gender relations and women rights. They monitored women's rights violations in their area and took some redressal measures. They also worked as pressure groups to demand accountability of public authorities. PNGOs maintained regular contact with CLAG groups and attended their meetings to provide guidance. In 2008, 51 workshops/meetings on laws and human rights were held with CLAG members in Barisal, Chittagong and Hobigonj districts for 1130 (Female-853 Male-277) participants. The process of facilitating access to justice in local unions was as follows:

Legal Aid Clinics

In collaboration with local PNGOs, the Unit set up three legal aid clinics in 2008, where women's access to justice was enhanced through legal and counseling advice to women in the above three districts. The PNGO staff ran the clinics under regular supervision and monitoring by ASK staff lawyers. This included examining mediation files, case files, reports and

registers followed by necessary suggestions. Organisation of Women Development in Bangladesh (OWDEB) established two legal aid clinics in their working areas in Chittagong on their own initiative.

Training of Para legals

In 2008, the unit held courses for 15 paralegals from three partner NGOs on legal and human rights, gender relations as well as mediation and advocacy techniques. ASK lawyers talked with the clients personally, to understand their problems, to negotiate legal settlement and help them to resolve their problems.

Free Legal aid is provided by the PNGOs

Legal aid is provided by PNGOs free of charge after the paralegal worker registers the complaint under ASK's supervision. In 2008, 26 out of 85 complainants obtained relief through mediation (ADR) at the legal aid clinics outside Dhaka and 10 cases were filed in three district courts.

Lawyers Forum for Human Rights Lawyering

The Unit formed three district level Lawyers' Groups at Habigonj, Chittagong and Barisal to file cases and discuss the progress of VAW cases and their effect on reducing VAW and protecting women's rights. In 2008 seven meetings were held with Lawyers' Groups at Habigonj, Chittagong and Barisal where 95 participants were present (F 27 M 68).

Baseline Survey

The Unit began the programme by conducting a baseline survey with the help of PRDS (Participatory Research & Development Society) on the social status of women, human rights situation, discrimination against women, VAW incidents (trend, pattern, incidence) etc. The survey findings enabled ASK to design the training content, and other motivational and sensitization activities and to evaluate the outcome. (See Table 1.4 at page 34)

Child rights

The Child Rights Unit has developed a flexible system of non-formal education for working children in drop-in centres. The Unit provided health and legal support to 1600 working children in 2008. ASK has also sensitized local communities to the need for protection of the rights of the child and about negative consequences of child labour.

In response to demands from the local government and families with poor resources, the Child Rights Unit has started a new programme in Mymensingh Sadar to provide support in education, vocational training for children under risk. The purpose was to create opportunities for them locally so that they do not migrate to cities and enter into

risky occupations such as domestic work. The project aims to reduce rural-urban children's migration in project areas by developing appropriate livelihood alternatives for parents and children.

Non-formal Education for Working Children

The Child Rights Unit runs seven full time and eight part time drop-in centres in Dhaka city, where children can learn literacy, numeracy, nutrition. They are given health care and legal support when needed. Educators who run drop-in centres monitor the children's interests in and aptitude for learning. Flexible approaches are used to provide basic general and continued education. In 2008, 1,131 children continued their education at drop-in centres. The following methods are used:

Basic Education

Children discover how to read and write through learner-centered methods. They are able to read words in simple sentences, do simple arithmetic sums, write short sentences and read story books, newspapers, learn about cleanliness, etc. In 2008, 1,131 (Boys-691, Girls-440) working children completed one year's education in drop-in centres.

General Education

Workshops, based on a 12-unit syllabus¹ are conducted by trained facilitators. During 2008, 19 workshops were held inside and outside the classroom with 884 (Boys-365, Girls-483) children. Using a structured communication strategy, these workshops have generated keen interest in general knowledge and increased children's awareness, thereby contributing to the development of their personalities.

Continued Education

Working children continue their education by enrolling in government primary schools, in NGO schools or in vocational institutions. 286 children are continuing their education in formal schools which creates a tremendous change in their life. Twenty one child domestic workers (Boys-5 Girls-16) have been receiving skill training in tailoring, block printing and batik. Vocational training increases the self-esteem of child domestic workers. Through newspapers they were informed about the social, political and cultural situation of the country and rest of the world. Mini libraries have been set up in each DIC and children are encouraged to learn about the social, political and cultural situation in the country and abroad by reading the daily newspapers.

Health Support

ASK provides health support to working children, which includes first aid, routine checkups, psycho-



social help, medical treatment and referrals to hospitals. 866 working children (Boys-300; Girls-466) received health support. Psycho-social help is an essential need for working children who are stressed, whose self-esteem is low, or who show undesirable behavior. 134 working children (Boys- 71; Girls-63) received active listening from the educator and psycho-social helper at ASK.

Legal Protection

The MRRU unit provided legal aid services for nine working children (one boy and eight girls) in 2008. Each month MRRU unit organizes legal clinics in ASK's working areas, where working children and their parents can seek legal advice and help.

Community Responsibilities

The Unit arranged 35 meetings/workshops with parents, employers, ward commissioners, child rights organisations, on the negative effect of child labour and the need to protect the rights of children. Some employers of domestic workers in Mirpur, Mohammadpur, Dhanmondi, who participated in the meetings responded positively by contributing eight places for learning centers free of cost, starting savings schemes, allowing child domestic workers to phone their parents, paying for their medical treatment, and letting them off regularly to attend the drop-in centre. The owners of Pink City promised to provide space for a drop-in centre for child domestic workers after completion of the construction.

ASK arranged day long workshops, film festivals, cartoon shows and art competitions.

High school students and teachers requested that workshops be held with middle class children so that they are conscious about treating the child domestic workers humanely. Parents of working children appreciated the importance of education for their children. Ward Commissioners too tried to raise awareness in the community to prevent violence against working children. (See Table 1.5 at page 35)

Emergency Support Service

ASK has set up an emergency support system to provide shelter and protection to survivors of violence, particularly women and children during court proceedings. Those who are unable to return to their own community because of fear of recurrent violence or social stigma need long term shelter and psycho-social counseling. They also need to hone their skills and adapt to their situation. In ASK's Half Way Home clients can stay for 10-15 days, but for a longer period ASK arranges their stay in other homes run by network partners, and maintains regular contact with them. If a client's security cannot be ensured in any other networking organisation or shelter home, ASK allows them to stay in its Half Way Home for six to twelve months with special permission. Ten persons can be accommodated in the home at a time. At least 30 per cent of legal aid seekers are provided with shelter, medical help and counseling. The Unit also provides support to clients, for skill development, basic literacy learning, etc.

ASK has formed a voluntary advisory committee² to support the Halfway Home. The Committee members have visited the Home regularly in 2008 and discussed clients' concerns and problems, so as to suggest remedial action. One of the members also arranged a three half-day orientation on 'My Self', 'personal caring' and 'participation' to facilitate client's personal growth. Sometimes the members provide food on special festivals.

The Support Service and Half Way Home networks with PNGOs and in 2008 it arranged 18 awareness raising sessions for their group leaders and members on family laws, women's rights, violence against women, child rights, 25 workshops for clients (per workshop) to help them understand their rights, legal procedures and ASK's mediation and litigation process. After a settlement is reached through mediation at the ASK office or at the seven clinics, field workers of the Support Unit, follow-up the cases for six months and monitor the implementation of agreements. They also assist clients to lodge GD or FIR at the police station.

The need for psycho-social counseling cuts across age, class, gender and profession. The psycho-social help component has broken new ground in rehabilitating survivors of violence and emphasizing the importance of emotional well being. A senior helper in counseling attends the clients referred by MRRU, Half Way Home and DICs. A part time Advisor supervises the work of the counselor and gives necessary advice. Psycho-social counseling was provided to 137 clients during the year by the counselor. Since 1998, ASK has arranged courses, with qualified experts from other countries, to conduct courses in Certified Professional Development in

Counseling. Forty five professionals participated in courses this year. ASK also organised Basic Counseling training/orientation for 135 participants (including 15 staff from ASK and the rest from Care Bangladesh, Save the Children Sweden-Denmark and Acid Survivors Foundation, etc.

ASK has formed a professional association named "Counselor Association" where psycho-social support providers from different organisations meet bi-monthly to share their experiences and learning. During the year eight new members were selected as regular members of the Association. In 2008, the total number of regular members was 60 (Male-4, Female-56). Clients are encouraged to seek psycho-social help from ASK's counselors. (See Table 1.6 at page 35)

Advocacy Initiatives for Law and Policy Reform

ASK's campaigns and advocacy for law and policy reform to promote and protect human rights of all, irrespective of class, caste, sex, sexual orientation, religion, language, age, marital orientation have been carried out through:

- Research to identify the gaps between the law and its implementation (Research Unit);
- Publications, periodicals and commissioned articles in the print media to mobilise public opinion and stimulate discussions on the need for new laws, amendments or policy reform (Publication and Communication Unit);
- Legal advocacy through public interest litigation or lobbying with policy makers (Legal Advocacy and Policy Reform Unit);
- Advocacy initiatives using the mass media (print and electronic), alternative media (website, blogs) and engaging with international forums (Media and International Advocacy Unit).

Research

Human Rights in Bangladesh 2007

Since 1996 ASK has published an annual report on the situation of human rights in Bangladesh, which has been an important source of information for researchers, academics, policy makers and activists. The 2008 report includes chapters on Legislative and Institutional Development, Judgments on Fundamental Rights, Impunity, Right to Life and Livelihood, Right to Liberty, Right to Fair Trial, Right to Freedom from torture, Right to Freedom of Expression, Right to Freedom of Religion, Right to Shelter, Prisoners' Rights, Workers' Right, Women's Rights, Rights of *Adibashis*, Children's Rights, Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Based on information collected from official documents, court judgments and newspapers, each

chapter identifies the nature of violations and interventions by the state as well as the state's enforcement of international and constitutional obligations.

Research related to Law and Policies

In 2008, Research Unit staff conducted two studies and another two research studies were carried out by external researchers. The subjects of research were:

- Situation of prisoners in Bangladesh.
- Emergency Powers and Human Rights: Emergency rules that violate international human rights instruments and constitutional rights.
- Laws, Policies and Practices related to Child Domestic Workers' in Bangladesh.

Research findings and reports were used for advocacy with policy makers, as well as to mobilize public opinion for law and policy reform.

Study Circles on Issues of Current Concern for Policy Advocacy

Research Unit arranged and facilitated three study circles this year to discuss policy advocacy issues and issues of emerging and urgent concern. The topics were HIV & AIDS related laws and policies in Bangladesh, 'Twelve Box Model' which is an assessment tool and 'Absence of protective laws for Child Domestic Workers' in Bangladesh.

Publication and Communication

ASK's publications have raised issues of public interest, particularly relating to rule of law, democracy and human rights. In its publications, contributors have also discussed governance, non-discrimination and social justice. Its publications include the following:

Bulletin

A quarterly publication in Bangla, that focuses on contemporary law and policy issues. Four issues were published during the year, with a total print number of 20,000 copies.

The cover story in March was a discussion on treaties, international laws, conventions on genocide and their application. Other articles included an abridged version of a discussion with Amnesty International General Secretary Irene Khan, Human Rights Commission, Supreme Judicial Commission, review of three judgments given by the apex courts of Bangladesh, India and Nepal on arsenic free drinking water, in-service disability and LGBT rights respectively, worker accidents in demolition of Rangs Bhaban, violence against women, etc.

In the June issue, the cover story was on the food crisis and bio-fuel, interview with the economist Dr.

Q. K. Ahmed. Other articles included citizenship of Biharis, review of Arifur Rahman's (cartoonists) case, Truth Commission, anti-terrorism ordinance, the new *Nikahnama* (marriage contract) proposed by the Indian Government for Muslim citizens, three investigative reports, National Women's Development Policy 2008, ship breaking, etc.

In the September issue, the lead story was on sexual harassment in Jahangirnagar University campus. Other issues covered Consumer Rights Act, arrest of Serbian war criminal Radobhan Karazdic, local government election, etc.

In the December issue the cover story was on international war crime tribunals, mass graves during the 1971 war of independence. Other issues included election and human rights, important laws and judgments, cyber pornography, press conference on Korail slum eviction, investigative report on the death of a drug victim in a rehabilitation center at Norshingdi etc.

Ainer Kotha

Three issues were published on Muslim inheritance laws (*Muslim Uttarodhikar Ain*), Family Court Ordinance (*Paribarik Adalot Odhadesh*) and (Suppression of Violence on Women and Children Act) *Nari O Shishu Nirjaton Daman Ain*.

Chikitshai Obohela (Medical Negligence)

A new edition was published (the first having been published in 2001) containing 33 analytical articles, investigative reports, interviews, statistics and recommended laws.

Newspaper Articles

Eighteen articles written by ASK staff on trial of war criminals, Human Rights Commission, in-service disabilities, National Policy for the Advancement of Women, early marriage, maintenance for sick husbands, torture of Partha in police custody, gender discrimination in national identity cards, new marriage contract under Muslim law in India, wall magazine festival, etc. were published in national newspapers.



Other Activities

Book Launch: The publication of *Juddhaporadh* (War Crimes) was launched during the Bangla Academy book fair in February.

Reader Response: The Unit organized two meetings in Chittagong and Sylhet with journalists/*Bulletin* readers/law students/lawyers for an intensive feedback on issues raised in the *Bulletin*, and to identify potential contributors. Two meetings were held in Sylhet and Chittagong respectively.

Legal Advocacy and Policy Reform

Legal Advocacy and Policy Reform Unit seeks to protect fundamental rights of citizens through public interest litigation. The Unit also participates in out of court advocacy programmes with other like-minded groups for the promotion and protection of human rights. It also submits drafts for legal reform to the Law Commission and policy recommendations to relevant forums and monitors domestic application of international instruments. ASK monitors implementation of positive judgments given in some PILs.

Public Interest Litigation

Right to Recreation (Writ Petition No. 1859/2008 filed with BELA)

To challenge the legality of the Government in allotting 25 acres of land in the Suhrawardi Uddyan to Dhaka Club Ltd. for a golf course, the petition argued that this site was of historical importance as the Pakistan army had surrendered here on 16 December 1971 to the Joint India-Bangladesh Command, and the allotment was contrary to the Master Plan of Dhaka City. It is also a national park and is used daily by the public.

The Court issued Rule Nisi as to why the allocation of 25 acres of land of Suhrawardi Uddyan to the Dhaka Club Ltd. should not be declared illegal and also directed the Government not to transfer the land to the Dhaka Club Ltd. till disposal of the case.

Right to Shelter (Writ Petition No. 1167/2008)

To challenge the eviction of 2,500 residents from Mohakhali Taltola Bosti without prior legal notice because the *bosti* dwellers have been living here for about 30/35 years and the Government had made no plan for plans for their resettlement. The writ petition was filed against the forcible, illegal eviction without notice, and without planning for the rehabilitation of the residents.

The High Court issued Rule Nisi as to why the eviction should not be declared without lawful authority and why the Government should not be directed to comply with the principles/guidelines of the Committee regarding resettlement/rehabilitation of slum dwellers and directed it to maintain status

quo in the *bosti* till disposal of the case. The case is pending. 2,500 people were saved from illegal eviction.

Right to Safe Migration (Writ petition No.6409/ 2008)
Continued failure of the Government to ensure security of job contract and wages of migrant workers.

A writ petition was filed in the High Court Division as to why the concerned department should not be directed to perform their legal duties for safety of migrant workers. The case is now pending. The Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training (BMET) sent notices to concerned recruiting agencies to recover the amounts owed to the migrant workers.

Illegal detention (Writ Petition No.7894/ 2008)
Illegal arrest by RAB without charges and for an indefinite period without producing the arrestee before the court.

Filed writ petition challenging illegal arrest without charges and detention without producing the arrested before the Court and to know his whereabouts. The High Court issued Rule *Nisi* to RAB Director General to produce the arrested before the court. The case is pending.

Criminal Miscellaneous Case No. 5949/07
Arrest in case of mistaken identity. Md. Alam was convicted in absentia for ten years rigorous imprisonment in May 2005 for a dacoity but in 2006 police arrested Md. Jahangir Alam Sarker instead of the convicted Md. Alam and sent him to jail.

Filed case against illegal detention of Md Jahangir Alam and the High Court Division passed a judgment directing the Government to release him.

Out of Court Advocacy

Protection of National Heritage

The Department of Archaeology has listed only 22 buildings in Dhaka for preservation, because they are of historical and archeological importance, whereas art historians have identified at least 200 such buildings for preservation. In the absence of a law on preservation of heritage sites there has been a wide demolition of ancient buildings in Dhaka City, and lucrative use of land for commercial or high rise buildings. Laws need to be enacted and policies formulated for conservation, preservation, and protection of these historical buildings.

ASK served legal notice on 1. Secretary, Ministry of Cultural Affairs 2. Director, Department of Archeology 3. Chairman, Rajdhani Unnayan Kartipokkho (RAJUK) 4. Chief Executive Officer, Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) and 5. Police

Commissioner, Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) to stop demolition of the buildings and to take immediate steps for the protection of the ancient buildings of Dhaka City as prescribed by law and also requested to prepare a list of heritage buildings. In response to the legal notice Urban Development Authority called an urgent meeting and formed a Committee to prepare a list and also directed the concerned authorities to take immediate steps for the protection of such buildings.

The Government halted demolition of ancient buildings, which are part of Dhaka's heritage. A high powered committee was set up to prepare the list of ancient buildings.

Detention of Trafficked Victim

A Bangladeshi woman (age 16 years), was trafficked to India from Thakurgaon district. The Indian police rescued her from a brothel and arresting her for unlawful entry into India, sent her to a jail in India.

After hearing about this incident, ASK contacted her family, collected her father's affidavit, a certificate from the Union Parishad Chairman verifying her citizenship and the UNO's report, and sent these documents to the Ministries of Home and Foreign Affairs. Finally she was sent back to Bangladesh.

Land Allotment

In Rajpur Union of Lalmonirhat district about 5,000 acres of land dilluvated in the river Teesta later elluviated in 2000, and were declared as *khas* land. The district administration did not allot the lands to the original owners nor to local, landless families as given in the law. In the meantime an influential person occupied 400 acres of land and used forged documents with the help of the administration to prove his claim. Local police implicated the poor peasants in false cases and also patronized a group of miscreants to act against them.

A team lead by the Executive Director of ASK along with Khushi Kabir, Chairperson of ALRD visited Rajpur and met the DC and local police officers. The DC assured that they would allot the lands to the original owners and local landless families according to law and would recover 400 acres of land from the land grabber.

Review of Laws and Policies

- The Unit reviewed the draft of the proposed Police Ordinance, 2007 and submitted recommendations on legal procedures and protection of human rights to the Police Headquarters. Most of the recommendations that were accepted would contribute to greater accountability of the Police Department.
- The Unit submitted recommendations on the draft of Anti-Sexual Harassment Policy to the University Grant Commission, which were accepted. The

adoption of the policy was a milestone to address sexual harassment in public institutions as it would establish a gender sensitive environment in higher education institutions and the guidelines could be a yardstick in framing similar policies with regard to other sectors.

Memoranda/Appeals

- To the Election Commission regarding gender discriminating information for Voter ID card.
- To the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to facilitate repatriation of 21 Bangladeshi fisherfolk rescued by Indian Police during a storm. Later they were repatriated to Bangladesh. (Letter dated 13.04.2008)
- To the Secretary, Ministry of Health on the death of 21 patients at Sylhet Osmani Medical College Hospital as a result of a strike by Internee doctors. (Letter dated 07.04.2008)
- To the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to repatriate 6,000 Bangladeshi nationals from Oman who were awaiting repatriation. (Letter dated 28.04.2008)
- To the Director General, Secondary and Higher Secondary Education Directorate to include People's Jute Mills High School, Khulna under Monthly Pay Order (M.P.O.), so that the school, which had an enrolment of 800 students, could compensate for loss of funds which they had been receiving from the Mill until its closure. (Letter dated 03.04.2008)
- To the Chief Advisor of the Caretaker Government for rehabilitation of slum dwellers who were evicted from different slums in Dhaka City. (Letter dated 20.08.2008)

Media and International Advocacy

Media and International Advocacy (MIA) Unit takes ASK's advocacy forward through media campaigns and at international forums. ASK uses both the mainstream and alternative media channels for its media campaigns in the country and engages with UN Human Rights Mechanisms and the global human rights community in international campaigns.

Media Advocacy

ASK considers media an important means for advocacy on law and policy reform. It made the following inputs in 2008.

Press Statements

Thirty press statements were issued, on workers' rights, murder by a police official, death in army custody, trial of war criminals, mass arrests, concern over Chevron's seismic survey, Anti-Terrorism Ordinance, participation of war criminals in the

parliamentary elections, exploitation of migrant workers in the Middle East, sexual harassment at Jahangirnagar University, activities of the religious extremists, forced marriage, etc.

Op eds in Prothom alo

The Unit prepared three write-ups detailing ASK's observations on the Government's announcement of the "National Women's Development Policy (NWDP), 2008" and the negative responses of the religious parties who demanded withdrawal of the policy.

Press Conferences

- On 26 February, ASK together with other human rights organisations organized a press conference to express concern regarding the National Human Rights Commission Ordinance, 2007 because it did not ensure independence, transparency, accountability and effectiveness of the institution.
- On 18 March, ASK (jointly with ALRD, BLAST, BELA and Nijera Kori) held a press conference, on the anniversary of the custodial death of the Adibashi leader Cholesh Richil to demand publication of the Judicial Inquiry Committee Report on the cause of his death in custody of the Joint Forces.
- On 22 December 2008, ASK, CUP, BLAST, BELA and CUS collectively urged the Government to refrain from further eviction of slum dwellers from Korail *Bosti*, contrary to High Court directions and without providing alternative rehabilitation for the slum dwellers.

Dialogue with Journalists

On January 8, 2008, ASK representatives organized a dialogue with Irene Khan, Secretary General of Amnesty International on trial of war criminals and role of international community at which senior journalists and civil society members were present.

Web-based Campaign

ASK website was redesigned and made more informative, attractive and user friendly.



International Advocacy

During the year, ASK's engagement with UN Human Rights Mechanisms increased considerably and ASK became a national focal point for advocacy on human rights at the international level.

Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Process

In view of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) by the Human Rights Council on implementation of human rights in Bangladesh in February 2009, ASK in collaboration with 17 member organisations formed a network 'Human Rights Forum on UPR, Bangladesh'. The MIA Unit operated as the secretariat and facilitated preparation of an alternative report on the human rights situation in Bangladesh. The report was found by the OHCHR, Geneva to be useful in assessing the situation and it was included in the compilation of Stakeholders' Report. The UPR Alternative Report was disseminated to several national and international organisations and to the missions in Geneva. The Unit coordinated the participation of UPR forum members in a diplomatic briefing hosted by the Swiss Embassy in Dhaka.

CEDAW Alternative Report

The Unit prepared two thematic reports on Access to Justice, and Extremism and Women's Rights for the CEDAW Alternative Report, being prepared by the Citizens' Initiative on CEDAW, a network of 38 organisations formed for the purpose of reporting to the CEDAW Committee.

The Unit prepared a brief report to IWRAW-AP on the advocacy initiatives of NGOs on implementation of CEDAW in Bangladesh. In collaboration with ASK's Outreach Unit, it conducted discussions with lawyers of Hobigonj Bar Association on CEDAW and state obligations to implementing women's rights.

International Dissemination of Information on HR Violations

The MIA unit disseminated information to Human Rights Watch (HRW) on investigations into the death of Fakir Chan in police custody; to Amnesty International (AI), Human Rights Watch (HRW) and the Commonwealth Secretariat on the National Human Rights Commission Ordinance, 2007; it sent ASK's position paper on the National Women's Development Policy to Al-Jazeera.

Solidarity Notes, Urgent Appeals, Memoranda sent to protest hr violations by other states

MIA unit sent two urgent appeals (a) to the Prime Minister of India with copies to several other authorities to conduct impartial investigation into the incidents of ill treatment and gang rape of Ms. Radharani Ari and Ms. Malati Jana in Nandigram; (b)

to the President of Bougainville to reinstate the Women's Minister Magdalene Toroansi.

The Unit sent a condolence letter to the High Commissioner of India to Bangladesh on the attack in Mumbai on 30 November 2008.

The unit also facilitated the process of ASK's endorsement to the statement issued by Asian Network on National Institutions (ANNI) for the withdrawal of the Presidential Transition Committee's proposal which compromises the independence of the National Human Rights Commission of Korea in January 2008.

Sixtieth Anniversary of the UDHR

The MIA Unit organised a three day 'Human Rights Film Festival 2008', which show cased human rights films and included a seminar.

Dialogue with Kalpalata Dutta

The Unit arranged a dialogue with Kalpalata Dutta, Director of Asian Institute for Human Rights (AIHR) on the human rights discourse, which was participated by ASK staff members and human rights defenders from other organisations.

Transparency and Accountability of Public Institutions

The Investigation and Documentation Units, through field investigation and compilation of data from the print media on human rights violations draw attention to the role of public institutions in promoting human rights and preventing violations. These fact finding reports were used by the Legal Aid Unit for legal action, they were published in ASK's quarterly *Bulletin* or in national newspapers.

The importance of mobilizing local communities to respect human rights has prompted ASK to build links with human rights defenders in different regions. As accountability and transparency in public institutions are important preconditions for good governance and for redressing discrimination and social injustice, these two units monitor HR violations, document and disseminate information, maintain a resource centre, and provide fact-finding training to network members and human rights defenders.

Fact-finding investigations and documentation are used to press for accountability and transparency of public institutions. Information also creates a demand for recognition of rights by both the survivors of violations and the local community. District level Human Rights Defenders Forum (HRDF) monitors the hr situation and mobilizes the community to campaign for action by the authority.

Investigation

Investigations

In 2008, the Investigation Unit conducted fact-finding into 93 incidents of human rights violations. Investigators visited sites of occurrence, interviewed witnesses, victims, suspects, police, government officials, local witnesses, to collect relevant information/evidence and documents for redressal/follow up action. (See Table I.7 at page 36)

HR Defenders

During the year, staff of Investigation unit visited eleven districts and discussed about HR issues and situation with district HRDF members. These meetings made HRDF members more aware, and motivated them to protect human rights locally.

The Unit also initiated investigation into and collected reports of 48 incidents of hr violations by Forum members in different districts who had monitored, investigated and documented human rights violations in their respective areas. HRDF also mobilized community responses against such incidents so as to create a pressure for action by the relevant authority. HRF activities made a positive impact on the human rights situation both locally and nationally.

Field Visits

To create pressure on local public institutions, to take deterrent action against HR violations, the Unit visited 39 survivors/victim families of human rights violations, to find out about the latest situation. (their cases had been previously investigated).

Appeals to Public Authority

The Unit sent appeals to relevant authorities including Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs, IGP, DC, SP, OC, on 145 incidents (including 38 investigation reports) to initiate proper action for legal redress. (See Table I.8 at page 36)



Legal Redress

Investigation reports of 48 cases were forwarded for legal action/redressal to MRRU Unit.

Lobbying and Campaign

The Unit used their investigation reports to campaign for protection of HR in seminars or discussions with HR defenders, with police officers, local and national NGOs working on human rights.

Reports and Articles

Eight investigative reports were published in ASK's quarterly *Bulletin* and one article was published in *The Daily Star* to create public awareness against HR violations.

Fact-finding Training

The Investigation Unit conducted orientation/trainings on fact-finding methodologies in Pirojpur for 26 participants (Male-19, Female 5) from seven HR Defender Forums of seven districts, in Kaligonj, Shatkhira for 25 journalists and other professionals (Male-23, Female-2) from four upazillas of Satkhira. This increased the capabilities of local investigators and was an effective means of alerting the administration, in providing legal redress and increasing public demand for transparency and accountability of public institutions at both local and national levels.

Documentation

The Documentation Unit maintains a library of print, audio and visual materials. It collects, compiles and archives news clipping from ten national dailies, three weeklies, one monthly and two quarterlies on situation of human rights, legislative changes and governance issues for dissemination to the media, researchers, lawyers, students, ASK staff and members. The clippings are used as sources for redressal, by ASK and other organisations, as evidence in court, or for research, advocacy, campaign whenever necessary. A total number 432 persons used the materials at the Documentation Unit.

The Documentation Resource Centre has a collection of 8,600 law books, human rights reports. All books, reports, photographs and audio visual materials are catalogued, and classified by subject on a data base with CDS/ISIS.

Newspaper clippings in both English and Bengali are maintained on 35 subjects. The Unit prepared 107 statistical charts on hr violations from newspaper reports. A total of 1,026 news clippings on 35 human rights violation were submitted for consideration at ASK's daily action meeting, and necessary steps were taken by different units. Maps identifying

locations where *fatwas* were issued against women were prepared for research and other purposes.

Enhancing Capacity of Human Rights Defenders

ASK used to conduct courses to generate awareness on legal and human rights to members/staff of different organisations. Today its focus has shifted to imparting knowledge on legal and human rights that can strengthen community activism and enhance the capacity of human rights defenders to protect human rights. In 2008, the Training Unit conducted 32 planned courses for staff and members of PNGOs and CBOs and 40 courses in response to requests from organisations. The courses aim to (a) raise awareness of legal and human rights and gender relations amongst participants from grass roots to state institutions; (b) enhance their activism for justice particularly to prevent incidents of domestic violence, torture, etc; (c) identify sources of discrimination against women in the law and their powerless in society; (d) discuss patriarchal relations; (e) discuss strategies to address the culture of violence; (f) enhance skills for mediating disputes in a *shalish*, without imposing customary punishments; (g) information on availability of emergency support such as Government Legal Aid Fund, shelters, etc.; (h) build leadership and management skills in institutions; (i) create awareness of responsibilities of duty bearers, government agencies, right holders, human rights defenders.

It is expected that the organisations' enhanced capacity will improve their strategies for promoting and protecting human rights, practicing democracy and ensuring justice. The course modules and materials are user-friendly and have been replicated by several other organisations.

In addition to a Training of Trainers on rights based approach and Organisational Development for ASK staff, the Unit conducted the following courses in 2008:

Legal and Human Rights

Twenty five MNS members of SUS (ASK's partner organisation) participated in a course in Netrokona in August 2008 on Muslim Family Laws on marriage, divorce, dower, polygamy, child marriage, maintenance, guardianship, Legal Aid Act 2000, Nari o Shishu Nirjaton Damon Ain, 2000 and 2003 and other relevant laws. The participants understood about what they can do to prevent violation of rights. After learning about mediating disputes in a *shalish*, the participants expressed their determination to prevent imposition of punishments that violate human rights. Participants

also realised that HR defenders need to be more aware of obligations of duty bearers/service providers.

Paralegal Training

In May, 15 staff of three partners NGOs (AVAS, HUS, OWDEB) of ASK participated in a course which oriented them to (a) the inter-relation between fundamental needs, human rights and fundamental rights; (b) discrimination against women in law, culture and customary practice; (c) CEDAW and its reporting procedure, analyses of gender relations and women's rights; (d) laws on violence against women and personal laws; (e) conducting a fair *shalish*. Afterwards the course participants were confident to take necessary steps on HRVs with help from legal aid organisations. They realized that laws are not sufficient to prevent VAW, there is a need to develop a culture of zero tolerance.

Analysis of Gender Relations

In July, 25 (11 female and 14 male) group members of MSP associated with WE (Jhenaidah), ASK's partner organisation participated in a conceptual course on patriarchy and discrimination; gender and sex; subordination of women; and five components of gender relation analyses. After the training, the participants expressed their views that they would not discriminate between their boy and girl child.

CEDAW

Two three day training courses were conducted in March and April for 48 members of Nari Pokkhyo (13 male and 35 female) partner organisations. They had collected information on violence against women and children from thanas, courts and hospitals in different districts. The objective of the course was to inform the participants of the legal and social status of women and children, and rights under UDHR, CEDAW so that they could maintain more accurate records of violence and discrimination.

Legal and Human Rights, Gender Justice and Fact Finding

In April and May, two six-day training courses were conducted for 35 staff lawyers in BRAC's Legal Aid programme to enhance knowledge of international



human rights, gender relations and gender application of law in seven areas of law (Land law, Constitutional law, Criminal law, Hindu & Muslim law, inheritance law). The course focused on mediation skills in *shalish* and on conducting fact finding and investigative reports in cases of human rights violations from a gender and human rights perspectives. After the course, the lawyers used a gender sensitive approach in providing legal aid so as to ensure social and legal justice. The Training Unit conducted sessions on laws for the first four days and the Investigation Unit conducted the course on fact finding and investigative reporting.

Rights Based Approach

Four courses were held for 98 staff (24 were female and 74 were male) of RDRS (working in different projects and working areas) on concepts of a Rights Based Approach. The participants were members of newly formed Upazilla Rights Based Approach Committee. They gained (a) a clear conception of human rights, fundamental rights, relationship between HR and fundamental rights, constitutional rights, key words in development discourse, state obligations, HR advocacy framework, Rights based Approach and practice; subsequently they were able to identify the gaps in the programmes or project from HR perspective and to include the rights based approach into their ongoing institutional programmes. (See Table 1.9 at page 37)

Institutional Support

For efficient implementation of programmes and other related activities, three units of ASK (Administration, Finance and Accounts, Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation) work together to strengthen its institutional capacity and to implement the programmes.

The Administration Unit provided administrative and logistic back up, information, human resources development for implementation of ASK's programmes. The Finance and Accounts Unit was responsible for all organisational and programme

finances. The Unit monitored programme expenditure and provided orientation to staff on budgeting and financial management. The Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (PME) Unit prepared project proposals; coordinated plans; maintained liaison with donors; compiled and prepared reports; analyzed data to monitor progress/trends; provided monitoring feedback, developed format for programme monitoring and supervised and implemented management information system. In 2008, the institutional system was improved by:

- Developing human resource management and accounting software;
- Amending ASK's Service Rules;
- Arranging ASK staff's participation in 65 national and 30 international trainings/workshops/seminars/meetings/study circles, and two trainings on basic computer skills;
- Finalizing ASK's Gender Policy;
- Completing the Annual Audit for the year 2007;
- Drafting ASK's Annual Report for 2007 and Half yearly Report for 2008 which was submitted to the consortium partners, the NGOAB and concerned persons;
- Submitting project proposals to MJF (approved and work to commence from January 2009), the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), (approved and work to commence from July 2008), and Danida for Matching Grants.
- Preparing and submitting Operational Plan and Budget for 2009 and Revolving Work Plan for 2007-2011;
- Appointing a Data Analyst in March 2008 for implementation of PME activities;
- Completing 50 per cent of MIS development;
- Installing a Server, Operating System for server and Virus Guard for smooth running of MIS.
- Monitoring by PMEU of different programmes in working areas.
- Providing technical support by PMEU for Baseline Survey of Outreach unit (conducted by external consulting firm).

Notes

- 1 *My World* by Khurshed Erfan Ahmed
- 2 Khurshed Erfan Ahmed, Nurjehan Bose, Nargis Jaffar, Khadija Sultana, and two members of staff Gita Chakravorty, Nargis Akhter.



Part Two

Challenges and Lessons Learnt

Human Rights Awareness Unit

- MNPs have gained acceptance in the community but they may lack leadership ability and experience.
- MNPs use a lot of time and money to perform issue based dramas but for lack of time they are not based on accurate research or sufficient rehearsal. So the portrayals may not reflect in-depth analysis of gender relations, human rights, and justice, which may create misunderstanding and confusion in the audience.
- Movement of the more experienced MNP members from their area for employment or study.
- Guide Teachers are the focal point of BNAD activity but when they are transferred new teachers have to be inducted.
- In some cases, it has been difficult to organize an event in the school, due to differences between the school Governing Committee and the teachers.
- Political extremism and militancy has threatened the MNP members.
- Former PNGOs and other NGOs have adopted similar theatre programmes, but as they pay them for each performance, the MNP members are discouraged from voluntary work and collecting financial contributions for their performances and other events. Some members left MNP and joined other teams.
- In some cases of litigation in violence against women cases, the victim/her family settles or reconciles outside court.
- In some cases, where the applicant sees the opposite party in the Legal Camp, they feel discouraged to proceed.
- The UP is reluctant to form village court as well as Shalishi Parishad because of losing popularity.
- In some of the areas COs are not that sincere to run the programme.
- The Government Legal Aid Fund in some of the areas is difficult to access.
- The victim wants to avail the GLAF but their insolvency creates a hindrance.

Internal Problem

- Staff turnovers adds to work load of other staff and reduces efficiency.
- Congestion of physical space is not conducive to efficiency.
- Crisis for members and their families due to sudden price hike affected their work.

Lessons Learnt

- ASK works in 40 unions directly with PNGOs and CBOs, and the latter work in 20 more unions. Both PNGOs and CBOs would like to expand the programmes to the entire district, but the PNGOs have a fund constraint, and do not want ASK to phase out now.
- The Unit is unable to meet the increasing demand for training from women's group.

Gender and Social Justice Unit

External Problems

- Monsoon weather prevents CBO mobility and activity in the villages.
- The programme budget was inadequate and could not be adjusted with the sudden price hike.
- The CBOs are unable to maintain an office because of high rents.

Mediation and Rapid Response Unit

- Due to the declaration of Emergency Powers in 2007 and 2008, the MRR Unit was not able to defend cases of violation of fundamental rights.
- In some cases, the police did not perform their responsibilities.

Outreach Unit

In a traditional society such as rural Bangladesh, there is a bias against women, and the judiciary, law enforcement agencies, administration, local political persons and other professionals do not respond sensitively to complaints of discrimination or violence against women. There is a need therefore to have more intensive exchanges with local functionaries, to sensitize them and to build strong networks to ensure the promotion and protection of human rights and women's rights.

Child Rights Unit

- Due to the Emergency most of the Ward Commissioners became unavailable, therefore the Unit could not maintain liaison with them to ensure that they monitored the situation of child workers.
- Non-application of laws on child work and tolerance of exploitation of child workers.
- Since child domestic workers work in homes, their conditions cannot be monitored by Government inspectors, statisticians, NGO workers, local Government officials, nor are they able to complain to neighbours or passers by. The abuse of child domestic workers remains undetected and unreported and concerned Government departments do not effectively monitor their conditions or provide redress.
- Child domestic workers are exposed to gross exploitation, and are under total control of their employers, which allows for arbitrary exercise of authority.
- Gender insensitivity of the Ward Commissioners, employers and parents has hampered the programme.

Lessons learnt

- Emotional well being of the families increases if child domestic workers can maintain contact with their parents.
- Orientation on counseling strategies is necessary for working children and their employers.
- Most of the employers of child domestic workers recommended training in technical skills, such as sewing, for the children, since they can use this skill in villages and towns.
- Network is essential with those organisations who have previous experience of working with the DCC.
- Community members should involve themselves with implementation of ASK's programmes for protection of working children.

Legal Advocacy and Policy Reform Unit

External Problem

- The PILs on fundamental rights could not be filed during Emergency as fundamental rights were suspended. Nor could the hearings be held.
- Mobilisation for law and policy reform was adversely affected as the legislative process was suspended for two years.

Lessons Learnt

The Unit applied existing laws to protect fundamental rights. Positive results were obtained by seeking compliance with existing laws. It was important to learn that human rights could be protected by use of other available legislation.

Media and International Advocacy

We have realized that visual media is very important for Human Rights Advocacy. Though ASK has some experience of using this medium, we need to plan how to use this media more effectively.

Investigation Unit

- Imposition of emergency and deployment of military has hindered proper investigations into incidents of human rights violations such as 'death in crossfire', custodial torture/death by law enforcing agencies and security forces. Direct/indirect threats to investigators, to victims and also non-cooperation from Government officers created a barrier for investigation.
- Restrictions imposed by police and courts restricted access to Police Stations and made it difficult to obtain information on cases of illegal arrest, custodial torture or death.
- Shortage of staff (specially female staff), lack of transport and communication facilities has hampered timely investigation, which indirectly hinders project implementation.

Training Unit

- Because of low budget allocations, the Training Unit was not utilized fully.
- Frequent staff turn over throughout the year led to a slowing down or reduction of human rights courses.
- The Training Unit has been unable to monitor implementation or application of training by organisations, because the latter do not cooperate. For instance, partners of HURIDOCs project were supposed to develop a data base on human rights violations using Winevsys software which has been used only by ASK and not by other partners.

Part Three

Looking Ahead

Ain o Salish Kendra is looking forward to a better governed Bangladesh where the rule of law will be established on principles of gender equality, democracy, human rights, social and economic justice.

ASK will contribute towards these goals by harnessing the potential of all its activities and partners, build synergy between them, continue to link with relevant networks and together embark on a movement towards ensuring the promotion and protection of human rights within a democratic framework.

In the near future, ASK will continue to work through different programmes in the following ways:

Human Rights Awareness

- Ten Human Rights theatre festivals will be organized in different districts and one Human Rights theatre festival and theatre activists' conference will be organized with all the theatre groups.
- 1,725 persons will participate in 85 workshops from MNPs and other Local Cultural Organisations (LCOs) in the Union as well as produce and perform 170 dramas.
- 500 drama performances will be staged on different issues and in 10 Upazilla MNPs will celebrate international human rights day.
- Ten Debates & Cultural competitions, 10 performance awards for students, 40 study sessions and 20 commemorations of special days will be organized in high schools in 10 districts.

Gender and Social Justice

- Interaction of MAP with the CBOs will be intensified by attending legal camps, filing of cases and utilization of Government Legal Aid Fund.

- At least three or four CBOs will be registered.
- Capacity of the PNGOs will be enhanced to take more systematic measures for protection of human rights.
- All the local NGOs in ten working areas will work collectively and adopt a common platform to commemorate Women' Rights' Day and Human Rights, and will together adopt strategies to prevent human rights abuses. Their members will evolve into human rights defenders.
- Women's groups (MNS) will hold their first national conference.

Mediation and Rapid Response

- Rapid response and mediation process will be emphasized in cases of violence and family disputes.
- Vulnerable people's access to justice system will be expanded by increasing the number of clinics to eight.
- Sex workers will be informed about their rights and will be supported in claiming their rights.
- ASK will press the Government to pass a new law on Domestic Violence within 2009.

Litigation

- Egregious cases of human rights violations and violence against women such as rape, acid burns will be conducted in the courts.
- Legal aid will be provided outside Dhaka.
- Defence of minor offenders and victims of rape who are confined in safe custody will be taken up.

Child Rights Unit

- Child protection groups will be formed with children, their parents and employers.
- 2,000 working children will be provided with health education and legal protection per year.
- 250 working children will be admitted to primary and secondary education.
- Focus will be expanded to include wider community, including Ward Commissioners, Union Parishod members and other local elite
- Good practices of employers towards working children will be published and one video documentary will be made on child rights activities.
- In cooperation with Drishtipat (a network organisation), ASK will live cast messages on Cable TV to protect child domestic workers.

Outreach

From January 2009, the Outreach unit will expand its programmes for legal aid services with six local non-government organisations as partners in Bogra, Rajshahi, Tangail and Satkhira.

Emergency Support Service

- From January 2009, ASK will expand its provision for protection to survivors of violence, by establishing a second Half Way Home for 20 adolescents, who need safety during the course of legal trials. The present Home currently houses 20 women and their children. ASK will provide more effective services of counseling, literacy, skill training and medicare.
- Psycho-social help component will create awareness on mental health and the need for psychological intervention and support to set up similar programmes in GO, NGOs, educational institutes and hospitals.

Legal Advocacy and Policy Reform

- Preparation is on going to file PIL to protect the prisoners from torture in jail and also to ensure

the rights of the prisoners under The Prisons Act, 1894 and The Bengal Jail Code.

- Legal research on Impact of Separation of Judiciary and on corporate accountability will be conducted and recommendations prepared for changes in relevant laws and policies.

Media and International Advocacy

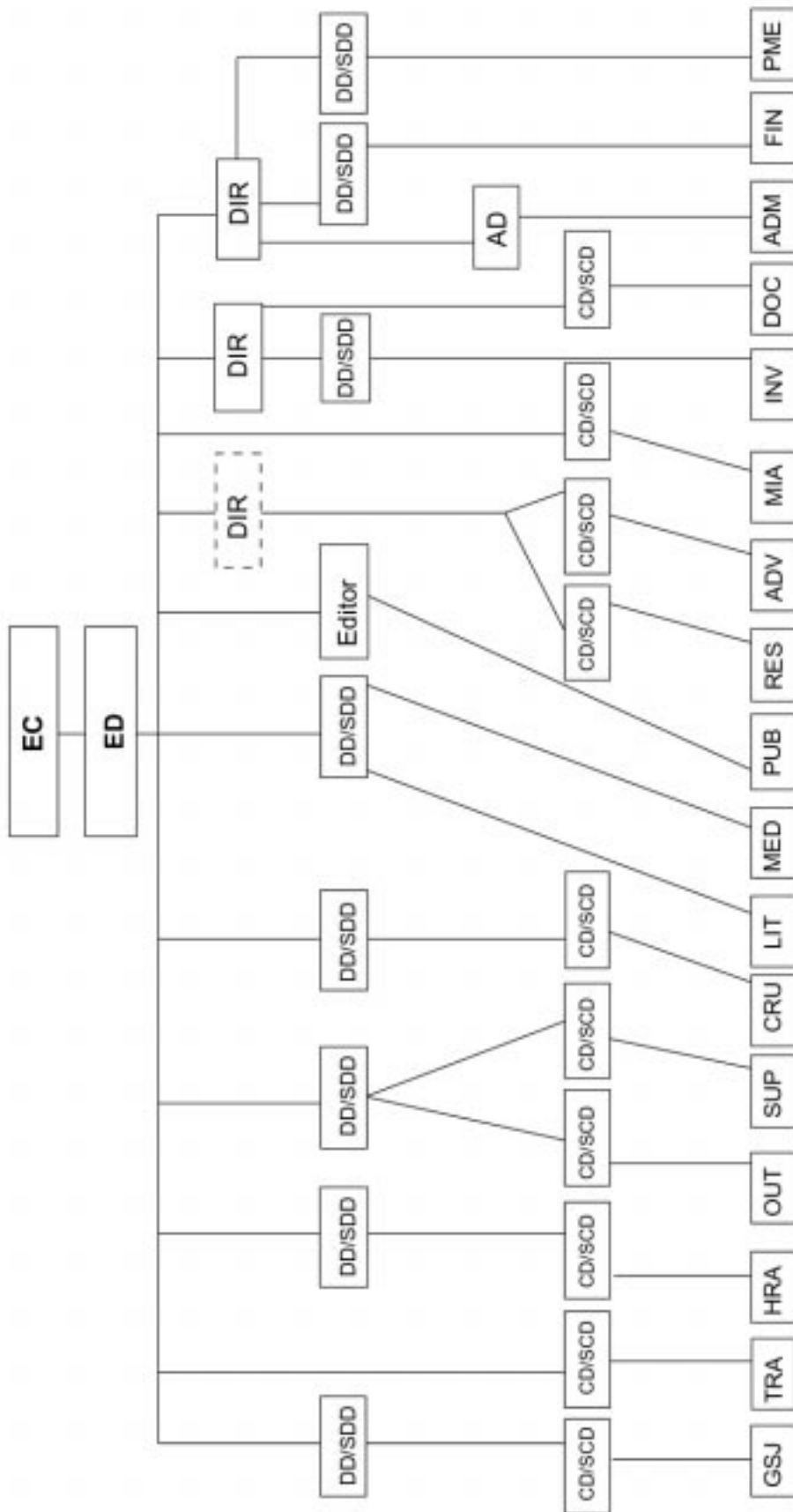
- Since Bangladesh will be under the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) in February 2009, the unit is planning for a comprehensive advocacy strategy to get specific and time bound commitment from the Government of Bangladesh and then initiate a continuous follow up mechanism to hold the Government accountable to their commitments.
- Bangladesh will submit its Sixth and Seventh Periodic Report to the UNCEDAW committee by December 2009. Since ASK is an important contributor to the alternative report, the Unit will be closely engaged with advocacy work related to CEDAW.
- As part of the observation of 60 years of the UDHR, the unit will organize debate competitions for school student in five districts.
- The unit will strengthen efforts for branding ASK website (www.askbd.org)

Training

Training Unit plans to conduct 36 courses on laws and advocacy skills for MNS and MSP members; particular attention is paid to developing para-legal skills, learning about family laws, laws relating to violence against women, human rights, etc. for PNGO staff and group members. By enhancing their knowledge on legal rights and Government Legal Aid Fund the PNGOs can plan to replicate legal aid programmes and build leadership of local CBOs. The Unit plans to organize a TOT for ASK staff to enhance their knowledge of UDHR. The Unit will continue to offer courses to different organisations.



ASK Structure in 2008



GSJ: Gender and Social Justice, **TRA:** Training, **HRA:** Human Rights Awareness, **OUT:** Out Reach, **SUP:** Support Service, **CRU:** Child Rights Unit, **LIT:** Litigation, **MED:** Mediation, **COM:** Publication & Communication, **RES:** Research, **ADV:** Legal Advocacy & Policy Reform, **MIA:** Media & International Advocacy, **INV:** Investigation, **DOC:** Documentation, **ADM:** Administration, **FIN:** Finance, **PME:** Planning monitoring and Evaluation.
NB: Post mentioned in dotted box is vacant

Annexure IV

Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK)

Balance Sheet

As of 31 December 2008

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOW FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2008

Cash & Bank Balances		
at the beginning of the year (1.1.2008)	BDT	46,427,873
Add: (a) Receipts during the year		74,311,508
RNE-	13,263,916	
Oxfam Novib	29,425,031	
NETZ	14,333,704	
SCS-D	4,136,188	
INSEC	623,721	
HURIDOCS	234,787	
SDC	1,575,000	
Others	10,719,161	
AA: Total flow of cash available	BDT	<u>120,739,381</u>
Less: (B) Payments during the year		
(1) Investment Activities	2,849,085	
(2) Operating Activities	61,753,968	
(3) Financing Activities	-	
BB. Total Payments		64,603,053
Cash & Bank Balances		
at the end of the year (AA-BB)		<u>56,136,328</u>

SUMMARY OF CUMULATIVE STATEMENT OF BUDGET & UTILIZATION 2008

Name of the Project and Donors	Budget	Utilization	Utilization (%)
1. Promoting Gender Equity, Human Rights Democracy and Social Justice funded by RNE and Oxfam Novib	47,463,407	40,912,669	86%
2. Project: Promoting Community Activism for Gender Equity, Social Justice & Human Rights Funded by: NET Z-Germany.	13,884,037	12,332,580	89%
3. Protection of Fulltime Child Domestic Workers from Abuse and Exploitation funded by Save The Children Sweden-Denmark.	4,357,000	3,698,778	85%
4. SDPP - Vagrant Home Project funded by CONCERN-Bangladesh	935,050	815,354	87%
5. Fredskorpest Staff Exchange Project Phase-IV	698,690	280,681	40%
6. Capacity Building of Human Rights Organisation in Bangladesh funded by HURIDOCS	1,352,999	1,097,529	81%
7. Reclaiming People's Rights: Advocacy to Promote International Human Rights Standard in Bangladesh	1,941,817	1,036,804	53%
8. ASK General Fund	6,130,000	4,428,658	72%
Total BDT	76,763,000	64,603,053	84%

ASK Members

Founder Members

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

Executive Committee Members

Fazle Hasan Abed (*Chairperson*)
Md. Asaduzzaman (*Secretary General*)
Nizamul Hoq Nasim *Member*
Md. Nur Khan, *Member*
Nihad Kabir (*Treasurer*)
Sara Hossain *Member*
Shamim Akhtar *Member*
Sultana Kamal (*Ex-Officio*) *Member*
Taherunnessa Abdullah *Member*

General Members

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
Roxana Khondokar
Roushan Jahan
Sultana Kamal
Sara Hossain
Shameem Akhtar
Syed Mahbubar Rahman
Tahmina Rahman
Tanzina Huq Tiru
Z.I. Khan Panna
Zaved Hasan Mahmood



ASK Personnel

Executive Director

Sultana Kamal

Directors

Md. Nur Khan, Investigation and Documentation

Syed Zaful Islam, Finance & Administration

Human Rights Awareness Unit: Anichcha Parvin, Koyela Sharmin, Md. Jahedul Alam (Coordinator), Md. Jahangir Alam, Joganmoy Paul, Motahar Uddin Akand (Sr. Deputy Director), Md. Mubinur Rahman, Shahnaz Rahman, Mohammad Ashar Kaleel (non paid volunteer).

Gender and Social Justice Unit: Ashraf Islam, Abdur Rob, Pavel Chakma, Laila Sharmin, Shanjit Kumar Shaha, Md. Abu Sayed Sumon, Gulsan Ara Parvin, Mozahidul Islam, Md. Masud Parvez, Sanaiyya Faheem Ansari (Sr. Deputy Director), Sitara Shamim, Taufiq Al Mannan (Coordinator).

Mediation & Rapid Response Unit: Kuheli Sultana, Mahjabin Robbani, Mosammat Monira Sultana, Nina Goswami (Deputy Director), Nahid Shams, Nafiza Hoque (non paid volunteer), Rezwana Afzal (non paid volunteer), Selina Akhter, Shithi Rani Das, Shanina Ferdousi, Shamsun Nahar, Sharmin Sultana, Shohela Akter Dana, Sumita Bagchi, Sushmita Paik, Umme Kulsum Akter Parvin.

ASK-Concern Project: Sabetun Nahar, Mirana Sabir.

Litigation Unit: Abdur Rashid, Farhana Afroz, Mizanur Rahman, Momtaj Begum, Monira Akter, Nasreen Akter, Nilufa Akter, Salma Jabin (Deputy Director), Snigtha Shaha, Topan Kumar Sarker.

Outreach Unit: Dilip Kumar Paul (Sr. Coordinator), Kazal Basu, Liton Ahmed, Mehedi Pavel, Mirza Shammi Akter, Rehana Sultana, Rahat Uddin, Sheikh Shariful Islam, Roushan Jahan Parvin (Sr. Deputy Director), Shahinuzzaman, Taufiqul Islam.

Support Service and Half Way Home Unit: Arpita Rani Das (Coordinator), Ayesha Begum, Ayesha Arshad, Dilara Momtaz, Israt Jahan Mithila, Maleka Begum, Rijia Begum, Rokeya Begum, Syeda Parvez Khanam.

Child Rights Unit: Ali Akram Tarafdar, Ferdousi, Geeta Chakrabarty (Sr. Deputy Director), Jahanara Parvin, Kamrunnessa, Mehraj Jahan, Moqsud Maleque (Sr. Coordinator), Mina Sanyal, Nabila Ikram, Nargis Akter, Nazma Akter, Nargis Aktar Mafia, Rashida Khanam, Rasheda Akhter, Runa Khandakar, Rehana Parvin, Shamsunnaher, Shammi Akter Ruma, Shahana Sultana.

Protection for full-time Child Domestic Workers from Abuse and Exploitation: Ambika Roy, Amena Khanam, Anwara Begum, Atia Afrin, Farzana Khanam, Farhana Nasim, Fatema Hoque, Luna Sarker, Lutfun Nessa, Md. Assadujjaman, Mizanur Rahman, Monika Rani Dey, Mabia Akter, Mohsina Begum, Mahmuda Khanam Parvin Akter Baby, Padmabati Debi, Rita Parvin, Rabeya Akhter, Reshma Akhter, Rokeya Begum, Sabila Moktader, Shaheen Mahbub, Shilpi Shaha, Shahnaz Begum, Shanaz Akter, Selina Akhter.

Psycho-Social Help (Component): Kohinur Begum (Sr. Helper in Counseling), Shahin Islam (Advisor).

Investigation Unit: Abu Ahmed Faijul Kabir, Anirban Saha, John Asit Das, Khorshed Alam, Mohammed Tipu Sultan (Deputy Director), Sheikh Nasir Ahmed, Shah Alam Faruk.

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

Publication & Communication Unit: Kaniz Khadija Surovy, Millat Hossain, Mabruk Mohammad, Shaheen Akhter (Editor).

Media & International Advocacy Unit: Dilara Hossain, Lucy Tripti Gomez, Qumrunnessa Nazly, Syeed Ahmed (Sr. Coordinator).

Research Unit: A.T.M. Morshed Alam, Lubana Rashid (non paid volunteer), Salma Chaudhury (Coordinator), Shah Afrodity Panna, Tasmin Tarannum (non paid volunteer).

Legal Advocacy and Policy Reform Unit: Abu Obaidur Rahman (Sr. Coordinator), Jannat Sultana, Abantee Nurul, Kamruzzahan Flora, Md. Sarwar Hossain, Tapos Bondhu Das.

Training Unit: Md. Zahidul Azad, Md. Nasir Uddin, Md. Nazrul Islam, Mashfiqul Hoque, Momy Monjury Chowdhury, Md. Parvez, Rafiq Ahmed Shirajee, Shaheen Akhter (Sr. Coordinator), Sadia Tasneem, Shimul Kumar Biswas, Sarker Kabir Uddin, Samaresh Seal, Tanvia Roseleen Sultana.

HURIDOCS Project: A.F.M. Nurur Rahman.

Administration Unit: Abu Musa, Abedul Moula, Amena Begum, Anil Chandra Mandal, Fazila Begum, Fatema Begum, Laila Begum, Laily Ara Begum, Md. Haider Ali, Khokon Gomez, Mahmuda Sultana, Mariam Begum, Mintu Barua, Majeda Begum, Mahbub Alam, Mosharaf Hossain, Md. Moshin Ali, Naseema Akhter Banu (Asst. Director), Nur E. Alam, Nurun Nahar Rekha, Rizwanul Hoque, Sabina Yeasmin, Shamim Hossain, Shirin Aktar, Tahsina Ahmed, Zahera Begum.

Finance Unit: Hosne Ara Begum, Ishtiaque Ahmed, Md. Shahidullah (Deputy Director), Philip Arnold, Tahera Begum.

Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit: AM Rasheduzzaman Khan, Fatema Mahmuda (Deputy Director).

Sponsors of Working Children in 2008

Sponsors

Dr. Faustina Pereira

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Waltraud Haase

Sarah Leigh

Mr. & Mrs. Giselher Brand

Sanayya Faheem Ansari

Patrizia Heidegger
(STRASSENVOGELI-

Fuer Kinder in Bangladesh)

Names of Children

Bikash Ghosh

Monir Hossain and Apu

Sayed Akhter and Ashraf Hossain

Hosne Ara and Shameem Hossain

Rabeya, Al-Amin, Monir, Rashedul Islam and Asma

Golapi

Nasima Akhter

Zakir Hossain, Sonia, Farid & Shanta Islam