

# Human Rights Education in Bangladeshi Schools

MADARIPUR LEGAL AID ASSOCIATION

The Madaripur Legal Aid Association (MLAA) evolved in 1978 as a pioneer non-governmental organization (NGO) in the legal sector of Bangladesh, with a vision for establishing peace, justice and harmony in the community.

MLAA started the Legal Aid Service as its initial program to help people, particularly women, exercise their legal rights (relating to family, property, and financial matters) in order to change their socio-economic status.

Based on its experience, MLAA sees the existing judicial system as hierarchical, not gender-friendly, expensive, complex, time-consuming and difficult for the disadvantaged people to access. In comparison with this formal judicial system, MLAA sees mediation as capable of achieving settlement of different disputes locally; involving minimum cost and providing maximum satisfaction to the disputing parties. MLAA developed a modern and professional approach to traditional Shalish (mediation system), otherwise known as Madaripur Model of Mediation (MMM). MMM has been largely effective in securing access to equitable justice by the disadvantaged people, particularly women.

MLAA has recently taken a special initiative of promoting justice at the grassroots level by activating and strengthening Village Courts (VCs) and Arbitration Councils (ACs) with the Union Parishads (UPs).<sup>1</sup>

It provides intensive training services to its employees, target population and NGO personnel. Such training contributes to the transfer of knowledge and skills related to dispute resolution, as developed in MLAA, to

the local community members as well as other organizations.

The replication of MMM by many other development NGOs in Bangladesh and other countries is a testimony to the efficiency and acceptability of the model.

## Goal, objectives, programs

MLAA has set the goal of improving the quality of life of the disadvantaged people through the exercise of their human and legal rights for peaceful coexistence. In pursuit of this goal, the MLAA objectives are the following:

- To make local and traditional justice system more effective
- To ensure access to formal judicial system for disadvantaged people
- To institutionalize and modernize the traditional mediation system
- To contribute in the establishment of the rule of law and promote human rights culture by raising awareness of people
- To pursue advocacy activities for law reform
- To strengthen the institutional capacity of MLAA.

It established a number of programs addressing different concerns such as the following:

- a) Local Level Justice System (Village

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- Court and Arbitration Council)
- b) Free Legal Aid (Judicial Courts)
  - c) Mediation (Alternative Dispute Resolution)
  - d) Human Rights Education
  - e) Advocacy and Policy Lobby
  - f) Capacity-building of MLAA.

The activities under each program are numerous. They invariably involve educational activities that facilitate the acquisition of knowledge and skills on using law to help people exercise their human rights. These activities are the following:

- a) Local Level Justice System
  - Refresher Training Courses for elected Union Parishad representatives;
  - Dispute Resolution through the VC
  - Dispute Resolution through the AC
  - Activating relevant stakeholders to strengthen the local justice system
  - Courtyard meeting for women on VC and AC.
- b) Free Legal Aid (Judicial Courts)
  - Provide support to cases in courts
  - Meet lawyers, clerks (moharars), members of judicial and law enforcement agencies.
- c) Mediation (Alternative Dispute Resolution)
  - Formation of community-based organization (CBO) to disseminate MMM
  - Training for CBO members on MMM and common laws
  - Training for civil society members and UP members on MMM and common laws
  - Mediation or Dispute Resolution through MMM.
- d) Human Rights Education (formal education system)
  - Selection of twenty schools and colleges to be involved in the project

- Formation of Human Rights Cells in the schools and colleges with students, teachers and guardians as members
  - Bi-monthly human rights workshops at schools and colleges
  - Observance of International Human Rights Day, Child Rights Day and Women's Rights Day
  - Holding of annual competition on human rights issues.
- e) Advocacy and Policy Lobby
- Initiatives towards policy change and reform of AC and VC laws and procedures
  - Discussion meetings with members of the civil society, journalists and UP representatives
  - Study on the limitation of AC and VC laws and procedures
  - National-level round-table conference with journalists and media people
  - Research on procedural complications and uncongenial environment in courts
  - Capacity-building of women leaders (gender development)
  - Publications on mediation and common laws
  - Bi-monthly newsletter (*Jugo Chetona*).
- f) Capacity-building within MLAA
- Establishment of human resource development (HRD) department
  - Strengthening of Training Cell and Staff Development program
  - Development of modules on gender and gender policy
  - Project management workshop
  - Strengthening of Monitoring & Evaluation Cell
  - Preparation of issue-based reports
  - External and internal training for staffmembers
  - Project development workshops for supervisors and field workers.

Through the years, MLAA obtained a significant number of achievements as well as lessons learned. They reflect the efforts exerted in implementing the program activities that evolved during the past three decades. These achievements are the following:

- MLAA created opportunities for the disadvantaged people, particularly women, to lodge cases in courts to assert their legal rights regarding family, property, and financial matters.
- People received counseling from MLAA on different legal issues and have become more aware of the legal and social systems. People know where to go when their rights are violated.
- The incidents of unlawful practice of polygamy (second marriage) have substantially declined as a result of different exemplary legal measures taken.
- In many cases, victims regained their properties, like land and other assets, which were unlawfully appropriated by powerful segments of society.
- Violence against women declined, due to exemplary cases filed against offenders.
- About 75% of court verdict of MLAA-supported cases went in favor of MLAA clients.
- People became more conscious about the complexity of litigation and advantage of mediation. As a result, 20% of MLAA-supported court cases were resolved with the assistance of local mediators and ADR assistants.
- About five thousand disputes are resolved each year through the mediation process. Women's participation in mediation committees has been increasing remarkably. As a consequence, rural women have become keener in approaching the mediation committees to resolve disputes.
- Through mediation, conflict between husbands and wives has been reduced to some extent. Many couples restored their conjugal lives in divorce cases. Women in the project

areas were able to receive their dower money (denmohor) and maintenance. Almost 80% of mediated disputes regarding different family affairs were settled amicably. Husbands and wives affected by disputes benefited through the process of mediation and continued to stay as 'couples'.

- About 20% of disputants received land, movable properties and other assets. The mediation process also saved money and time of the disputants.
- A working relationship has been established between MLAA and respective UP representatives. As a result, knowledge on AC and VC has increased among the local elected bodies (LEBs), some of them are seriously activating AC/VC as part of their major responsibilities. UP Chairpersons and Members recommend people to MLAA for free legal aid support. The participation of women members of UP is gradually increasing.

The lessons learned, on the other hand, are the following:

- For disadvantaged people, accessing the formal judicial system is not very common. The system itself is very complex and not pro-poor and pro-women because of the abnormally lengthy and time-consuming process. The legal process is influenced by corruption, and bribery is a common practice where most of the poor people get trapped. Lack of proper documentation and evidence does not create an enabling environment in obtaining favorable judgment, particularly due to non-cooperation from court officials and institutional authority (i.e. hospitals, land register office and tahsil [land tax] and land settlement office, etc.). To support and protect the disadvantaged people, MLAA felt it is its moral obligation and responsibility to take advocacy and lobbying initiatives at the policy level to reform the negative aspects of the existing legal system and the procedures of the judicial

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system, as a priority area.

- The level of awareness on different legal and human rights issues is comparatively lower among the disadvantaged community, especially the women. Women's participation in mediation process needs to be enhanced further. Women's mobility is limited due to social barrier. To raise women's awareness on different legal and human rights issues there is a greater need for their participation and mobilization.
- The exertion of influence by powerful class of the community in the mediation process is still not an exception. The creation of pressure groups advocating for the participation of community people is an urgent need to minimize biases and ensure effective implementation of the mediation system.
- Due to procedural complexity and lack of resources, UPs are unable to make the local judicial system functional and effective for the people. It is also essential for MLAA to take advocacy and lobbying initiatives at policy level to reform the hindering factors of existing law and procedures of the local judicial system.
- People still have to depend on the court since the ADR system cannot address the whole range of issues that the judicial system covers, and some of the exemplary court cases still require further legal aid support from MLAA for the disadvantaged people particularly women.

### **Human rights education**

Ideas and knowledge about human rights help people obtain justice. But due to limited information on ideas and practices of human rights in Bangladeshi society, particularly in the rural society, violations of human rights as well as injustices frequently occur. In this context, MLAA started a project named "Human Rights Education" with a view to educating and making the students, rural secondary school students

in particular, become aware of human rights concepts and principles.

The project aims to:

- a) Impart preliminary knowledge about the concepts and principles of human rights to school and college students
- b) Make them identify human rights violations cases in their localities and find ways of providing protection to victims.

Objective "a" is the primary task of the project. Objective "b" is the secondary one since the students should not be heavily occupied with extra-curricular activities.

The project activities are the following:

- a) Formation of six-member Human Rights Cells (HRCs), including teachers, students and guardians.
- b) Holding of bi-monthly, two-hour human rights workshops in twenty selected secondary schools and colleges. The workshop is the core activity of the project. Through the workshops, resource persons including teachers provide preliminary ideas and knowledge about human rights and fundamental rights under the Constitution in general, and the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights in particular.
- c) Monthly meeting of the HRCs in order to discuss human rights violations and possible ways of defending the victims.
- d) Observance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights Day (December 10) and Children Day.
- e) Annual competition on human rights (child rights and women's rights).

During the course of the project, several interesting events happened. In one human rights workshop, the students of a neighboring secondary school requested permission to be allowed to participate in the workshop. In another case, the female students of a secondary school, which participates in the project, put pressure

on a guardian in the local community to stop the early marriage of his minor daughter. And still in another case, the students of a secondary school started campaigns to request the local villagers to register births and deaths.

### **Project evaluation**

The project has been evaluated several times. Four of the evaluations are reported below to show the various characteristics, results, observations, and suggestions for improvement of the project.

#### **I. Initial evaluation**

An initial evaluation of the project undertaken in February 2005 covering the period of January to December 2004 shows the following:

- In majority of cases, the students who received orientation from the human rights workshops were able to confidently explain some key rights of children and women. Their understanding was clear and concise although they need more refresher types of discussion on the same issues periodically.
- The students directly benefited from the orientation as their behavioral pattern to each other (especially boys to girls) changed due to their understanding about women's rights as well as child rights.
- The HRCs were effectively formed, and functioned properly. The suggestion by the HRC members to include more members would make the situation even better, and allow the few people currently providing training some flexibility in their core jobs. The relationship among the students and teachers in the HRC was excellent, despite the fact that they have just started working together as a team to orient the students.

- The guardians of the rural students under the project became aware of human rights violations and were found attempting to defend the rights of victims at the local level.

#### **II. Mid-term project review**

MLAA engaged the services of Mirza Hasan, PhD and Professor Shahidul Haque to review the human rights education project. The evaluation was done in November 2005 and covered the period of July 2004 to June 2005.

The review focused on the human rights workshops, the major activity of the project, at the twenty participating secondary schools and colleges (seven colleges and thirteen secondary schools). The workshops provided the students with preliminary and primary knowledge on human rights, fundamental rights under the Constitution, child rights and women's rights. Two designated teachers in a secondary school or college, with the support of their heads, hold workshops twice a month. Each workshop usually has twenty student-participants.

The review covered the human rights workshops held during the 2004-2005 period. Monitoring and evaluation were undertaken using three instruments, namely:

- 1) Written questionnaire - filled up by every student-participant at the concluding part of a workshop session.
- 2) Monitoring sheet - filled up by one personnel of MLAA for the project after observing a human rights workshop.
- 3) Short evaluation - done internally by MLAA to assess the outcome of human rights workshop.

#### **1. Results**

##### *a. Questionnaire*

The questionnaire is designed to assess the level of understanding of human rights by the students from the discussions during the

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workshops. Student-respondents had multiple choices to select an answer. The findings of the survey are the following:

### **College level**

- 1) 89% of the respondents correctly answered the question on the nature of activities of MLAA. Those who gave the wrong answer thought that MLAA has financial credit function. It is a commonly known in Bangladesh that NGOs provide financial credit as a regular activity, but MLAA does not do so.
- 2) 85% of the respondents gave correct answers on two characteristics of human rights, and such satisfactory results are expected. It needs to mention that at higher secondary education level, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) is included in the civics syllabus.
- 3) 68% of the respondents correctly answered the question on the nature of UDHR while 85% of them answered correctly the question on the nature of the UDHR articles. It appears that higher secondary students (junior college students) found it a bit hard to point out the nature of UDHR as a whole.
- 4) Most of the respondents (63%) failed to mention any United Nations convention on human rights. Perhaps they were not discussed in the workshops.
- 5) 91% of the respondents gave the correct answers on fundamental rights found in the Constitution, which were elaborately discussed in the workshops.
- 6) 43% of the respondents were able to answer what their duty is in case of any violation of human rights in their areas, though this percentage should have been much higher.
- 7) 86% of the respondents were correct in selecting the maximum age of being a child, but 81% of the respondents were

unable to identify the Convention on the Rights of the Child. It was learned that this document was not usually discussed in most of the workshops.

- 8) On the definition of discrimination against women and what to do to realize women's rights, 54% and 79% of the respondents gave the correct answers respectively. Many respondents could not mention clearly the definition of discrimination against women.
- 9) On the dates (year) of UDHR and other important United Nations human rights instruments, 74% of the respondents answered correctly.

The over-all average correct response is at 82%. On the basis of this percentage of correct answers, it appears that at the college level the teachers' teaching and students' learning of human rights in the workshops are satisfactory.

### **Secondary school level**

- 1) A good number of the respondents (68%) answered correctly about the activities of MLAA. It is in fact a well-known NGO in the Madaripur, Shariatpur, Gopalganj districts.
- 2) 58% of the respondents correctly mentioned the nature of human rights, though the percentage should have been higher. The school syllabus has a chapter on rights, but not on human rights.
- 3) 63% of the respondents answered correctly about fundamental rights found in the Constitution. Here also the percentage should have been higher.
- 4) 54% of the respondents gave the correct age-limit of being a child as internationally and nationally defined. There was some confusion among the respondents about the national maximum age limit of being a child.
- 5) 68% of the respondents correctly pointed out the child rights. Since child rights

- are really discussed in the workshops the percentage should have been higher.
- 6) 86% of the respondents correctly selected the year of the UDHR and other important international human rights instruments. Though it was hard to say if this percentage is satisfactory.

In sum, the human rights workshops at school-level are good since the students' percentage of correct answers is satisfactory.

*b. Monitoring sheet*

The results of the monitoring sheet entries are compiled in the following tables.

**Table 1. Participation of designated teachers at workshops**

Number of teachers	Workshop	%
02	31	74
01	09	26
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 2. Level of teachers' participation in workshops**

Participation level	Workshop	%
Equal	14	45
Slight difference	15	48
Big difference	02	07
<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 3. Presence of the head of the institution at workshops**

Presence	Workshop	%
Positive	23	58
Negative	17	42
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 4. Attendance of students**

Attendance	Workshop	%
10-20	07	17
21-30	33	83
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 5. Starting time of workshops**

Starting	Workshop	%
In time	30	65
Not in time	10	35
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 6. Ending time of workshops**

Ending	Workshop	%
Before schedule	03	07
In time	22	55
A bit late	15	38
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 7. Quality of tiffin (snack)**

Quality	Workshop	%
Good	21	53
Moderate	19	47
Bad	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 8. Overall quality of presentation of topics (by teachers)**

Quality	Workshop	%
Good	12	30
Moderate	24	60
Not good	04	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 9. Reasons for unsatisfactory presentations**

Reasons	Workshop	%
Subject matter explanation not good	06	25
No clear knowledge of topics	07	29
Presentation is monotonous	06	25
Factual presentation on human rights violations is poor	05	21
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 10. Standard of presentation of the two teachers**

Standard	Workshop	%
One is better than the other	13	32
The two are almost the same	27	68
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 11. Overall management of workshop**

Management	Workshop	%
Satisfactory	19	47
Moderate	21	53
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100</b>

The figures on these tables are simple and do not need much analysis or elaboration. However, Table 8 (overall quality of presentation of topics) and Table 11 (overall management of workshops) need attention. The presentation of topics in, and the management of, the workshops are found to be moderate (68% and 53% respectively) and good (32% and 47%) respectively. The project personnel should make efforts in improving to a considerable degree the percentage of “Good” (Table 8) and “Satisfactory” (Table 11) assessment.

### **III. Manusher Jonno evaluation**

Another evaluation of the project by an institution supporting it (Manusher Jonno [MJ]) revealed more aspects of the HRCs. This evaluation was done in July 2006 and covered the period of July 2005 to June 2006. MJ sent a Cluster Review Team to evaluate the project and reported the following findings and comments on the program:

#### **1. Strengths and achievements**

##### *a. Project design and implementation:*

- The vision and concept of HRC in selected institutions are good. The HRC has the potential of becoming sustainable sources of information and action on human rights in its community.
- The project is well-organized, -run and -structured. The enthusiasm of HRC members presumably reflects in part the effective work of MLAA in identifying appropriate secondary schools and colleges for the implementation of the project. The HRC members are highly motivated and by networking with members of other HRCs they can learn and develop their activities, and provide feedback to MLAA.
- The high level of participation by female students and the focus on women's rights issues in human rights session for students is commendable.
- The teacher-members of the HRCs effectively explain the core human rights concepts.

##### *b. Awareness Raising:*

- The project has drawn attention to a number of individual cases of human rights problems to which help has been provided. These cases included illegal divorce and early marriage.
- HRC members are enthusiastic and com-

- mitted. They clearly perceive the value of people being made aware of their rights and in a general sense understand where such awareness might lead in terms of a mobilized population able to defend human rights. The project staff reported particularly strong interest among women teachers.
- Large numbers of students have been provided with a basic understanding of human rights, while teachers developed training skills on human rights.

## 2. Suggestions

### a. *Strategy issues*

- The basic awareness of human rights principles provided to the students and the establishment of the HRCs are clearly valuable. However, it is useful at this stage to clarify the project strategy and objectives. The role, aims and responsibility of the HRCs can be defined in more detail, using feedback from HRC members as basis. MLAA can consider the HRCs working either to develop community human rights initiatives or to handle individual cases of abuse. The examples of work by other NGOs on human rights education can help define much more the vision of how HRCs will work.
- The objective of providing human rights awareness to the students can also be further defined. What role will they have after awareness has been provided? Will they be involved in advocacy on local issues? Will they be involved in advocacy for the inclusion of human rights in the national curriculum? Feedback from students are useful in considering these questions.
- MLAA has to provide appropriate support and facilitate the HRCs' and students' move from understanding to taking action. It can support the development of processes for identifying

priority human rights issues, deciding on actions to take, and working out plans for action such as local campaigns or advocacy. This may require training for MLAA staff on facilitation and capacity-building techniques. The plan for HRCs to work on particular issues (such as birth registration issues) may be reconsidered by adopting an alternative approach of supporting each HRC's decision on its own priorities for action, or by supporting ideas for action that participants in training sessions may raise.

- The government obligation to act on human rights issues has to be emphasized and brought into the work of the project. Students and HRC members can develop their capacity to raise issues of concern with local governments, for example, and raise awareness on government human rights obligation.
- A strategy can be developed regarding individual cases of human rights abuse that come to the attention of students or HRC members, and the appropriate action to take.

### b. *Human rights lecture content and teaching methodology*

- It may be useful to review the amount of lecture time and information provided to students. A course of several lectures, for a smaller number of students, may be considered in order to provide sufficient information and understanding for students. The current lecture time (two and half to three hours of teaching plus a possible second session to review the first session) is not sufficient to provide students with the understanding they require. Additional session allows the discussion of other aspects of human rights, and facilitates understanding with greater depth.
- Efforts to encourage teachers to use participatory methodology need to con-

- tinue. This is clearly a challenge but it is important to have discussion, feedback and answers to questions that students ask. The sessions aim to inspire and empower and the methodology should effect this. The use of visual materials, videos, case studies or role-play can be considered in the future. MJ linkages can help identify NGOs that can provide materials already designed and tested. It may be worth considering translating additional materials if they would be valuable to more than one MJ project. Approaches to taking action on human rights issues, such as campaigning and lobbying, can be included in the human rights sessions for students.
- Perhaps with MJ help, the project staff can review the way government human rights obligation is addressed in the session. While it is covered in principle, expanding the discussion on this issue is useful. It can be clarified that even in cases of abuses by members of the community or family, such as violence against women, the government has an obligation to take action to prevent abuse and to protect victims.
  - MJ can identify NGOs that can assist in teachers' training. Support to teachers who deliver the human rights sessions to students has to be sustained and carefully planned. Opportunities for them to attend trainings and seminars of other NGOs has to be considered. Individual teachers can develop particular specializations in theme areas such as child rights or women's rights and teach in other schools. MLAA has to ensure that heads of institutions involved in the project monitor its implementation to ensure that lessons are learned effectively.

*c. MLAA advocacy on the inclusion of human rights education in national curriculums:*

- MLAA needs to ensure it develops a clear

strategy plan for carrying out advocacy to persuade the government to include human rights education in the national curriculums. A stakeholders analysis is useful in identifying interest groups and stakeholders who can work alongside MLAA and the relevant government offices for the advocacy work. Since MLAA already networks with MJ partners, it can network with other NGOs as well which can provide information on education policy issues.

- Careful documentation and qualitative evaluation of the project, including its teaching methodology and levels of understanding created by the human rights sessions, are needed. It is particularly important to document the implementation of the project in order that it provides a basis for the argument that human rights education should be included in school curriculums. MLAA has to develop sound recommendations on the nature and extent of teaching required and how to train teachers, etc.

#### ***IV. Internal evaluation***

At the end of the 2004-2005 period, a short evaluation was done internally by MLAA on the outcome of the project with respect to workshop objectives. Another objective of the evaluation was to find out whether or not the students participating in the workshops in the scheduled schools and colleges have obtained preliminary knowledge about human rights and women's rights, and could identify human rights violations cases in their areas.

Data and information have been collected from primary sources or from the field by interviewing the students of the scheduled schools and colleges and also the HRC members who include headmasters/principals, designated teachers and other members. Fifty student respondents (five students from each of the ten schools and colleges) participated in the human

rights workshops. In addition, ten students from three educational institutions, outside the scheduled list, were interviewed in order to make a comparative study. Designated teachers and headmasters/principals (for a total of 20 teachers and headmasters) and HRC members (10) of the selected ten schools and colleges also participated as respondents in the evaluation.

## Results

**Table 1. Participation at monthly workshop**

How many times	Students (under project) N = 50	%
One time	10	20
Two times	36	72
Three times	04	08

**Table 2. What is taught in workshop**

Learning	Students (under project) N = 50	%
Human rights	22	44
Fundamental rights	17	34
Women's rights	23	46
Legal rights	07	14
Means to solve disputes	03	06
Child rights	25	50
Others	08	16

**Table 3. Who declared UDHR**

Declared by	Project School & College			
	In N=50	%	Out N=10	%
Bangladesh government	04	08	02	20
Madripur Legal Aid Association	09	18	-	-
UNO	37	74	04	40
Supreme Court	-	-	-	-
Does not know	-	-	04	40

**Table 4. Idea on fundamental rights**

Fundamental Rights	Project School & College			
	In N=50	%	Out N=10	%
Security of life	16	32	-	-
Education rights	23	46	02	20
Voting assembly right	09	18	02	20
Legal aid right	27	54	-	-
Service, religion, culture right	12	24	-	-
Property right	06	12	-	-
Others	-	-	06	60

**Table 5. Women's rights**

Women's Rights	Project School & College			
	In N=50	%	Out N=10	%
Child marriage	27	58	08	80
Dowry	19	38	07	70
Human rights violation	08	16	02	20
Others	02	04	-	-

**Table 6. Child rights**

Child Rights	Project School & College			
	In N=50	%	Out N=10	%
Right to live	18	36	06	60
Right to develop	08	16	02	20
Right to education	19	38	07	70
Right to protection	05	10	-	-
Right to opine freely	08	16	-	-
Right to nationality	06	12	-	-
Does not know	-	-	05	50

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**Table 7. Police torture**

Police torture	Project School & College			
	In N=50	%	Out N=10	%
Human rights violation	12	24	02	20
No torture out of suspicion	36	72	07	70
Child rights violation	19	38	04	40
No answer	-	-	01	10

**Table 8. Necessity of the Human Rights Education Project**

Necessity	Answer N=20	%
To know child rights	13	65
To know human rights	08	40
To become good citizen	11	55
Others will be encouraged to support human rights protection measures	05	25
Interest to establish just society	09	45

**Table 9. Problems in Human Rights Education Project**

Necessity	Answer N=20	%
Regular classes disturbed	08	40
Delay to get tiffin money	08	40
Delay to get stationery	05	25
Tiffin money not sufficient	04	20
Stationery not so good	06	30

**Table 12. Importance of child rights**

Importance of child rights	Answer N=20	%
To create good citizen	18	90
For good education	17	85
To say Yes	05	25
Child interest first	03	15

**Table 13 & 14. HRC members' awareness**

Awareness	Answer N=10	%	%	Answer N=10	Suggestion
To resist women's rights	05	50	80	08	Meeting occasionally
To protect child rights	05	50	60	06	To call at workshop
Awareness	03	30	30	03	To give training

**Tables 10 & 11. What to do in case of human rights violation**

In case of HR violation	Answer N=20	%	%	Answer N=20	In case of women's rights violation
Send cases to legal aid office	08	40	55	11	Send cases to legal aid office
Protect HRC members	03	15	-	-	
Write to newspapers	12	60	50	10	Write to newspapers
Seek legal assistance	07	35	40	08	Seek legal assistance
Talk with guardians	08	40	20	04	Talk to guardians
Social awareness	05	25	55	11	Social awareness

## Findings

### *Respondent: Students:*

N=50 (*In*) & N=10 (*Out*)

- a) Fair majority of the students (72%) of scheduled schools and colleges attended human rights workshops two times (Table 1)
- b) More students have learned child rights (50%), women's rights (46%), and human rights (44%). (Table 2)
- c) Fair majority of the students (74%) of scheduled schools and colleges correctly pointed out the name of the authority that adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Only 40% of the students of non-scheduled schools could answer correctly. (Table 3)
- d) Majority of students (54%) gave a good idea about the fundamental rights in Bangladesh. But students outside the scheduled schools failed to respond correctly. (Table 4)
- e) The students disapproved child marriage and dowry and favored women's rights. Non-scheduled school-students also replied the same. (Table 5)
- f) All the students in scheduled schools and colleges supported the child rights concept while non-scheduled school students also expressed the same ideas in favor of child rights. (Table 6).
- g) Scheduled and non-scheduled students strongly opposed torture by the police or arrest of a boy based on suspicion. (Table 7)

## Comment on these results

The students of the scheduled secondary schools and colleges mentioned primary knowledge on human rights including child rights and women's rights. They also have ideas on what to do in case of human rights violations.

### *Respondents: Designated teachers and headmasters/principals of scheduled secondary schools and colleges: (N=20)*

- a) The teachers opined that since students are the leaders of the future they should have some knowledge about rights, human rights and just society by participating in the human rights workshops. (Table 8)
- b) They mentioned that the problems they face in holding workshops included the failure to receive the tiffin money of the students in due time and sometimes the holding of regular classes was hampered due to workshops. (Table 9)
- c) They said that students informed them of human rights violations in their areas and also tried to refer some cases to the nearby MLAA office for legal aid. They added that they advised the students to write letters to the newspapers when they get to know of human rights violation cases. (Tables 10 & 11).
- d) They also pointed out the special importance of child rights, though they were completely correct about child rights prescribed by the United Nations and the child policy of the Bangladeshi government. (Table 12)

### *Respondents: HRC members (N=10)*

The HRC members (who were generally student-guardians) mentioned that they were not so involved with the human rights workshops, though they expressed their interest in them. They suggested that regular meetings should be held with the members of HRCs. (Tables 13 & 14).

## General comments on the basis of the above findings

- The students of the scheduled secondary schools and colleges maintained primary knowledge on human rights including child rights and women's rights and have some

ideas on what to do in case of human rights violations in their areas

- The teachers expressed the necessity of holding human rights workshops, though they mentioned some problems in holding the workshops.
- The HRC members who are indirectly involved in human rights workshops expressed their interest in involving themselves in society.
- The students of non-scheduled secondary schools who did not participate in any workshops answered poorly on the concept of human rights.

It can therefore be concluded that the human rights workshop, the main and major activity of human rights education project, has proved to be a success to a considerable degree.

### **Recommendations:**

On the basis of the monitoring and evaluation report the following recommendations are offered:

- a) At least many more educational institutions in the MLAA work area (geographical coverage) should be included in the Human Rights Education Project. Several heads of educational institutions particularly from Madaripur district headquarters expressed interest to involve their institutions in the project.
- b) Increase the number of target students in the scheduled schools under the project by including classes VI and VII.
- c) Use attractive, colorful pictures and informative printed materials on human rights in general, and women's rights and child rights in particular.
- d) The two designated teachers in each secondary school/college should present their lectures with practical examples using current issues at home and abroad. Arrangement may be made so that they could read daily

newspapers regularly.

- e) Students and members of the HRC of a scheduled secondary school/college may meet twice a month to identify human rights violation cases and take the necessary step to address them.
- f) For better management and intense monitoring, one project personnel should be posted at Shariatpur and also at Gopalgonj districts.
- g) Arrangement should be made for video display at workshops on human rights or women's rights or child rights.
- h) International human rights day, child rights or women's rights day should be observed with the participation of the students of scheduled secondary schools/colleges.

### **Conclusion**

The overall findings of the evaluations show that the project has significantly achieved the desired immediate results. The stakeholders were spontaneous in participating in the project and learned human rights as expected due to several project activities. The evaluations also found human rights education as a unique approach of MLAA as far as raising the awareness on human rights issues among the students. They found the strategy of raising awareness through HRCs innovative as well as very effective idea.

The students were oriented on human rights through the project, including the rights of the children and women. Their understanding was clear and concise although they need more refresher courses on the emerging human rights issues periodically. The HRCs under the project were formed effectively and were functioning nicely. The relationship among members of the HRC was good, and the members worked as a team for the first time in orienting the students on human rights.

But, as the evaluation results show, there is room still for improvement. And MLAA is determined to address this need.

**ANNEX A****Schools and Colleges Involved in the Human Rights Education Project**

Serial Number	Name of Educational Institution	Thana	District
College - 08			
1	Government Bangabandhu College	Gopalgonj Sadar	Gopalgonj
2	Kalkini Syed Abul Hossain College	Kalkini	Madaripur
3	Lalmia City College	Gopalgonj Sadar	Gopalgonj
4	Shahid Smrity College, Sasikar	Kalkini	Madaripur
5	Rajoir Degree College	Rajoir	Madaripur
6	AMA Khalek Degree College	Kasiani	Gopalgonj
7	East Madaripur Degree College	Damudya	Shariatpur
8	Muksudpur College	Muksudpur	Gopalgonj
School (Secondary) -12			
1	Mostafarpur Bahumukhi High School	Sadar	Madaripur
2	Rajoir Girls High School	Rajoir	Madaripur
3	Shahid Sardar Sahjahan Girls High School	Rajoir	Madaripur
4	Kalkini Pilot High School	Kalkini	Madaripur
5	Charmugoria Marchant High School	Sadar	Madaripur
6	Takerhat Popular High School	Rajoir	Madaripur
7	Sarmakoli High School	Gopalgonj Sadar	Gopalgonj
8	Damudya Pilot Girls High School	Damudya	Shariatpur
9	Jajira Girls High School & College	Jajira	Shariatpur
10	Shariatpur Government Girls High School	Palong	Shariatpur
11	Bejari Uposhi TP High School	Noria	Shariatpur
12	Bedargonj Head Quarter High School	Bedargonj	Shariatpur

**ANNEX B**  
**Workshop Evaluation Sheet: College Level**

*(Students fill up the sheets on their own)*

1. Mention two activities of Madaripur Legal Aid Association:
  - a)
  - b)
2. Mention two characteristics of human rights:
  - a)
  - b)
3. Basic natures of Universal Declaration of Human Rights are: (tick at appropriate places)
  - a) Every man is free by birth
  - b) Every man has no equal right by birth
  - c) Man by nature does not have a spirit of brotherhood
  - d) Every man by nature is endowed with conscience
4. It is mentioned in the articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that (tick appropriate places).
  - a) All are equal before law
  - b) No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest
  - c) Everybody has freedom of religion
  - d) There will be no peaceful assembly always
  - e) Everybody has right to education.
5. Mention two important human rights conventions of UNO
  - a)
  - b)
6. Which is appropriate?
  - a) All human rights are fundamental rights,
  - b) All fundamental rights are human rights.
7. In which book are the fundamental rights of our country written?
8. What is to be done in case of any human rights violation in your area?
9. A child is
  - a) Below \_\_\_\_ years of age internationally
  - b) Below \_\_\_\_ years of age in the national policy.
10. What is the definition of discrimination against women?
11. What is the duty of a student for the realization of women's rights?
12. UDHR was declared in the year \_\_\_1942/\_\_\_1948/\_\_\_1989

*(Every student before leaving class should deposit the filled-up sheet to the proper teacher.)*

Name of student: \_\_\_\_\_

Roll no. \_\_\_\_\_

Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of College: \_\_\_\_\_

**ANNEX C**  
**Workshop Evaluation Sheet: Secondary School Level**

*(Students fill up evaluation sheet on their own)*

1. What are the activities of Madaripur Legal Aid Association (tick)
  - a) Distributes books to the poor students free of cost
  - b) Conducts litigation of the poor free of cost
  - c) Arranges mediation to settle minor disputes
  - d) Distributes housing-loan to the poor
  - e) Promotes awareness of students on human rights
2. Which rights are human rights (tick)
  - a) Everyone has the right to appear for S.S.C examination
  - b) Right to seek legal protection
  - c) Right to buy sweets from the market
  - d) Right to enjoy freedom of religion
  - e) Right to get admission in primary school.
3. Where Fundamental Rights are noted (tick)
  - a) In Bangladesh Constitution
  - b) In geography syllabus book
  - c) In Bangla syllabus book
4. A child is below the age of (tick)
  - a) 16/18 in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
  - b) 17/14 in the national child policy.
5. Which are correct in UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (tick)
  - a) Rights are not equal between a poor child and a rich child
  - b) Death penalty can be given to a child below 18 years of age.
  - c) Disabled child has the same rights like other children
  - d) Free primary education is compulsory
  - e) Birth registration is compulsory.
6. Tick at appropriate place:
  - a) UDHR was declared in the year 1945, 1951, 1948
  - b) UN Convention on the Rights of the Child was declared in the year 1965, 1989,  
1979
  - c) UDHR was declared by Bangladesh, USA, UNO
  - d) The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child has been signed/not signed by Bangladesh.

Students name: \_\_\_\_\_

Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Roll no. \_\_\_\_\_

Name of school \_\_\_\_\_

**ANNEX D**

**Questionnaire: College Level**

1. Have you attended a human rights education workshop?  
 Yes     No  
If Yes/how many times? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What have you learned from the human rights education workshop? (Write a few lines)
3. Who declared the UDHR?  
 Bangladesh Government  
 Madaripur Legal Aid Association  
 UNO  
 Supreme Court
4. Mention two rights under the Fundamental Rights of the Bangladesh Constitution.
5. Abbas is a university student and his father is poor. Of his three sisters his eldest sister is black in complexion and her marriage has been fixed with a doctor and a son of a rich family. But on the cost of dowry, Abbas's father sought his opinion through a letter. Should Abbas give his consent affirmatively?  
 Yes     No  
If no, why? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What are the rights a child should enjoy? (Mention 2 rights)
7. A police out of suspicion caught a pick-pocket on a bus, beat him and took him to the police station. Is the police correct in beating the person?
8. Mention two examples of women's rights violation in your area.

Respondent:

Class:

Date:

**Questionnaire: Secondary School Students**

1. Have you attended a HR education workshop ?  
 Yes     No  
If Yes/how many times? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What have you learned from the HR Education workshop?(write a few lines)
3. Who declared the UDHR?  
 Bangladesh Government  
 Madaripur Legal Aid Association  
 UNO  
 Supreme Court
4. Mention two rights under the Fundamental Rights of the Bangladesh Constitution.
5. Abbas is a university student and his father is poor. Of his three sisters his eldest sister is black in complexion and her marriage has been fixed with a doctor and a son of a rich family. But on the cost of dowry, Abbas's father sought his opinion through a letter. Should Abbas give his

consent affirmatively?

Yes     No

If no, why? \_\_\_\_\_

6. What are the rights that a child should enjoy? (Mention 2 rights)
7. A police out of suspicion caught a pick-pocket on a bus, beat him and took him to the police station. Is the police correct in beating the person?
8. Mention two examples of women's rights violation in your area.

Respondent:

Class:

Date:

#### **Questionnaire: Teachers**

1. Should the Human Right Education Project of MLAA continue for the years to come? (Mention two points)
2. What are the problems you face in conducting Human Rights Education?
3. What are the duties of your students in case of any human rights violation?
4. What are duties of your students in case of women's rights violation?
5. Child rights come first – why ? Write two sentences.

Name:

School/college name:

Date:

#### **Questionnaire: HRC members**

1. What are the topics that students learn from human rights education ?
2. What service do you provide in the project ?
3. How will you be involved more in the project?
4. Mention two incidents of human rights violation in your area.
5. Are you aware of the monthly human rights workshop in your school/college ?

Name:

School/college name:

Date:

#### **Endnote**

<sup>1</sup> A Union Parishad (UP) is the lowest administrative unit existing in Bangladeshi communities.