

Annual Report

January 2017 to December 2017

Nijera Kori

7/8, Block- C, Lalmatia, Dhaka- 1207

Phone: 880-2- 58152623, 9144085, 9127639

Fax: 880-2-9133476

nijerakori@nijerakori.org

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Executive summary

Four decades into the birth of Nijera Kori, it remains committed to its values of empowering women, establishment of rights and fighting oppression whilst working with a broad spectrum of the population. The organisation works under the guiding principles of social mobilisation, gender equality and promotion of autonomy with a strong belief in partnership and democracy.

The annual report for January to December 2017 is a reflection of Nijera Kori's work-structure based on documentation, feedback and deliberation. The report firstly provides a history of Nijera Kori, its values and the principles it upholds, and a brief overview of its organisational structure. It outlines the decision making process and the working area of the organisation. The report proceeds to reflect on the activities of Nijera Kori during the reported period.

Nijera Kori covers 14 districts; 31 upazila, 147 unions and 1,168 villages. In these areas, there are 10,741 groups with 218,287 memberships, of whom 121,975 are women and 96,312 are male. If we compare this with the overall statistics on the number of poor in these villages, it appears that Nijera Kori has covered 10% of the target population.

Through data collection and comparison over the one-year period, the achievements of Nijera Kori were measured and evaluated in terms of social mobilisation, formation of committees, cultural activities, legal aid assistance, availing the right to information and it uses, role of watch committees, access to natural resources and government services, fight against corruption, representation in the UP standing committees, participation in shalish, involvement in economic and gender issues. The report also outlines the financial and administration accounts of Nijera Kori.

The organisation structure of Nijera Kori can be broadly described to be composed of groups and committees. The groups are formed, trained and organised to gradually increase the spectrum of activities that they can undertake from each working area, through basic social development courses. The core working structures of Nijera Kori are these landless groups which mobilise to fight for the collective demands of individual villages—from issues of violence against women (VAW) to access to Khas lands and water bodies.

The degree of success in implementing the targeted number of groups formed and meetings held at various levels. In total, 108 groups were formed against the planned 125—it was further found that in terms of gender, the percentage of women's group formation was 90%, while for men this was 81%. Of the total planned meetings (87,230), 88% were implemented.

In terms of social mobilisation and organisation building, the rate of achievement over the reporting period was 86%. The group development process secured enrolment of 2,106 new members. The activity is illustrated in the report based on the number of weekly/monthly meetings of the groups, 84 (w-53 and m-31) groups graduated from the primary to the secondary level, and 11 (w-5 and m-6) groups graduated from the secondary to the tertiary level. The number of various committees and its activities is presented in the report as well, inclusive of the leadership coverage in the working area. A total of 359 landless committees at various levels have been reported to be active through mobilisation, coordination and organisation of issue-based programmes.

The landless group build up their own capital through a monthly savings deposit to finance their collective activities and at times to support members during unforeseen crisis/emergencies. The report shows that landless groups invested BDT 17,107,596 out of their savings fund for collective economic activities, and this investment generated a profit of BDT 8,884,375.

Through the training structure of Nijera Kori, various capacity building exercises were undertaken. The achievement rate for the number of training programme was 72% of the targeted benchmark. The participation rate of women was high, with Khulna leading (78%). In the trainings, 53% of the participants were women—a clear sign of their interest in acquiring knowledge and taking leadership in initiating social change

Nijera Kori also undertook various cultural activities during the reporting period. From cultural meetings, drama performance to children's programmes—the success rate ranged from 94% to 111% of the planned outcome. The activities included 5 events encompassing two-three days of cultural long march, composition of 39 new dramas and 285 performances.

Landless groups faced 31 new legal cases, of which 28 were filed by the groups themselves. The key issue that emerged from the analysed data was that there was a 64% increase in the number of cases concerning VAW. Of 39 cases whose judgements were received, 33 were in favour of the landless groups, which is 85% of total judgements passed.

The utilisation of the Right to Information Act was a major area of focus for Nijera Kori. The report found 122 applications for information submitted during the period, of which in 105, the groups received the information. The application for information can be categorised as: safety-net programme-51; Khas land-13; local infrastructure development-19; education-8; health service-10; agricultural service-2; and environment-1.

In landless group initiated education programmes, the number of students enrolled was 14,215 where the rate of girl student's enrolment was 9% greater than that of male students.

The landless organisations arranged 1,315 issue based protests. Of these protests, 899 addressed VAW, 10 resisted fundamentalism, 260 concerned establishing rights to local resources, and 146 addressed local corruption and irregularities.

Outcome

The significant qualitative and quantitative changes in our working areas have been classified into the following broad themes: (I) Social action (II) Governance and accountability issues (III) Economic action (IV) Gender issues

Social action

Due to the activity of the landless organisation, a total of 57,452 were enrolled under the various SSNP programme—the economic value received by the beneficiaries standing at BDT 86,203,670. Through their actions against corruption and enrolment in student stipend programme, they were able to save BDT 10,004,525. *As a result of wage bargaining and prevention of corruption in development project, the amount recovered was BDT 1,220,550.*

Governance and accountability issues

The year also showed an increase of representation in various local committees. A total of 439 group members (w-145 and m-294) contested against the local powerful elite in the election of the UP, school, market and sluice gate management committees. Of the 439 candidates, 270

got elected of which 94 were women. These results show significant achievement in terms of women's representation in local bodies.

A total of 229 members were nominated and represent in the UP standing committees and others local committees. Of which 58 (W-28 and M-30) landless member *representation in the UP SC compared to the total working area of Nijera Kori, shows that the landless groups succeeded in securing positions in the SC in 31% (46 out of 147) of the Unions under the working area.*

The participation of landless members in local shalish —this achievement is amplified by their success in redirecting criminal matters to relevant courts. A total 2,982 members (w-898 and m-2,084) participated as judges in shalish during the period.

Economic action

Through the movement of the groups, 348 acres of Khas land and 16 acres of water bodies were recovered or freed from illegal occupation. A total of 1,402 landless families are benefited in terms of food security, and have access to or are regaining ownership of natural resources. The economic value of these resources is BDT 146,050,000. This in turn provided for economic sustainability; a total of 1,402 families were benefited by using Khas land and water bodies collectively and achieved economic empowerment.

A total of 308 (w-166 and m-142) groups have started collective economic activities with their savings. The groups invested BDT 5,122,216 for collective economic activities and made a profit of BDT 8,884,375 (w-3,191,341 and m-5,693,034). Its generated work for 5,394 (w-1,940 and m-3,454) members for a period of 6 months.

Gender issues

On more qualitative terms, changes were also seen regarding gender issues. A total of 10,948 landless male members reported on their participation in domestic work; 2,137 landless member families reported that presently family decisions are taken through mutual discussions; 506 women were elected in open posts of different committees.

In this time, 177 child marriages; 111 bigamy; 195 divorce; 284 dowry marriages; 334 harassment; and 971 case of domestic violence were brought to a halt. In addition to that, 168 women recovered maintenance allowance from their respective spouse.

Access to justice was a significant portion of the work of Nijera Kori during 2017. 71% of cases were related to women's rights and VAW. With regards to inheritance, the economic value of inheritance property recovered due to proper justice was found to be equivalent to BDT 23,645,000. This shows the economic value of awareness building and mobilisation activities.

The report, with relevant data explores the above factors in details—with explanations to the benchmarks set, what was achieved, and the reason behind the results. It details the activities of the organisation over the period and culminates with news of the recognition of the 42 women leaders of the landless groups through the awarding of the national Joyeeta awards.

With accompanying graphs, lists, annexes, case-studies, and analysis, the annual report has attempted to present a transparent, complete and detailed overview of Nijera Kori's commitment towards building a society free from oppression and deprivation through the establishment of the fundamental rights of people.

CHAPTER ONE

1. Background information

1.1 Birth of Nijera Kori

Nijera Kori started as a programme led by a group of Dhaka-based female social workers to protect the dignity of destitute rural women who migrated to Dhaka city in the aftermath of the 1974 devastating flood and severe famine. Nijera Kori's early work involved provision of shelter and food, imparting some skills such as jute works, knitting, making of handicrafts and that could give them some income earning opportunities to live on their own and eventually re-establish themselves in the society. Since the fundamental objective was to build them as change agents, through their own initiative, it was therefore decided to name the programme as Nijera Kori, a Bengali phrase which essentially means "we do it ourselves". This social initiative progressed for a few years, and in 1978 Nijera Kori was formally registered with the Department of Social Welfare, Government of Bangladesh as an NGO. In 1979, several staff of the CUSO's (Canadian University Service Overseas) women's programme joined Nijera Kori, and expanded Nijera Kori's programme particularly to cover CUSO's programmes with rural poor women in four districts: Chittagong, Noakhali, Jessore and Kushtia. In the early 1980s, another group of activists working with BRAC also joined Nijera Kori, due to their ideological discord with BRAC's approach to development via service delivery. Such inclusion of new staff had significant influence in shaping the direction and content of Nijera Kori's programmes. By mid-1980s, Nijera Kori introduced a fundamental change in its work approach and decided to focus on awareness raising of the rural poor and building their own organization to address the multiple economic, political and social constraints which prevent them from establishing their rights over the institutions that govern their lives and livelihoods. By then Nijera Kori also decided to get all legal clearance from the government to pursue its work. To this effect, on February 1981, Nijera Kori registered as an NGO under the Societies Registration Act and in April with the NGO Affairs Bureau, and subsequently secured government's approval for receiving "Foreign Contribution".

1.2 Nijera Kori's Mission, Goal and Objective

The mission of Nijera Kori is to empower the rural poor, both women and men to create independent democratic organization for taking up challenges within their own spheres for a better and more meaningful life for themselves and their immediate community, and establishing their rights over the institutions that decide on the allocation of resources and services for the poor.

Nijera Kori's overarching goal is a society free from oppression and deprivation through the establishment of the fundamental rights of people. Nijera Kori believes that the struggle to transform the underlying structures of inequality, injustice and exclusion must be conducted at different levels, starting with the individual and extending to the regional and national levels. In addition, it must encompass the various spheres; i.e. economic, social and political decision making processes, in which the poor are denied of their rights of participation.

Nijera Kori's objective is to raise awareness and unite the rural poor, who have long been the victims of exploitation and social exclusions to voice their opinions and to ensure it is being heard, and involving them in decision-making processes at village and local levels which affect their lives.

1.3 Whom Nijera Kori works with – the Target Population

Nijera Kori team based on a thorough analysis of the causes of poverty, inequality and social injustice, concluded to work with a broad spectrum of poor people who primarily depend on selling of labor as their main source of livelihood. They include wage laborers, sharecroppers, small and marginal farmers and people involved in various traditional trades and occupations. Furthermore, Nijera Kori makes it a priority to involve the ethnic communities of Bangladesh within its programme. In sum, Nijera Kori aims to work with those who live under extreme poverty and whose basic human rights and needs are largely ignored by the society.

The defined target population, according to Nijera Kori's analyses, is faced with multiple constraints such as economic, social and political. In terms of economic constraint, the poor i.e., the landless and asset-less rely on direct or indirect sale of their labor power to meet their basic needs. However, due to existing structure and organization of the labor market, the poor as a labor-seller have very little to no bargaining power. They must therefore accept wages which are often arbitrarily determined by the buyers and may not be sufficient to meet even their daily subsistence needs. In political terms, the poor rarely have any voice in local or national structures of decision-making. At the informal village level and/or local government institutions, the powerful landed sections of village society dominate the shalish (informal village court) which addresses disputes within village society and in the delivery of the government's programmes. In social terms, the poor are kept in their place by powerful norms and beliefs which legitimate their oppression and disenfranchisement and also prevent them from questioning the status quo. Due to their lack of exposure to any alternative set of values, and often reinforced by their lack of basic education, has left the poor unaware of their legally recognized rights, while absence of their own organization prevents them from claiming and establishing these rights. An additional set of cultural norms and practices further undermine the position of women.

1.4 Fundamental Principles of Nijera Kori:

Nijera Kori's overarching goal, as noted above, is a society free from oppression and deprivation through the establishment of the fundamental rights of people. It believes that the struggle to transform the underlying structures of inequality, injustice and exclusion must be conducted on a number of different levels, starting with the individual and extending to the village, regional and national levels. In addition, it must encompass the various spheres, economic, social and political, in which the poor are denied their rights. In realizing this goal, Nijera Kori follows a number of principles that it adheres to and they are:

Nijera Kori emphasizes on social mobilization: Nijera Kori believes that there is poverty, unemployment, concentration of wealth and power and various other injustices in the society. The majority of the poor are exploited by a handful of people, who own and control the means of production as well as political power. In this backdrop, Nijera Kori defined its role to act as a facilitator of a dialogical process, through which people would be equipped with the ability to analyze and assess their situation and to take action to redress the prevailing system. In this effort, Nijera Kori provides technical services to promote self-confidence and enhance people's organizational capacity so that they are able to claim and/or establish their rights through building their own organizations rather than depending on the agency such as Nijera Kori to act on their behalf.

Nijera Kori does not run any credit programme: Though Bangladesh has become famous for its innovation in the arena of microcredit, Nijera Kori continues with its principle of 'non delivery of credit'. Nijera Kori believes that micro-credit cannot and does not reach all sections of society - especially the neglected communities and people, who needs it the most. At the same time, Nijera Kori also believes that microcredit programme of NGOs, as an alternative financial institution, instead of making people self-reliant, succeeded in creating dependencies and vulnerabilities among the communities those have enlisted under the micro-credit programme.

Nijera Kori strongly believes in gender equality: For Nijera Kori, gender equality is one of the pillars of the organization and remains central to Nijera Kori's understanding of poverty and social injustice. Nijera Kori recognizes that patriarchy perpetuates the disadvantages of inequality, injustice and exclusion, which are intensified in relation to women and girls. In addition, they also suffer from gender-specific forms of discrimination and domestic violence within their household as well as face restrictions on their physical movements and discrimination within the labor market in the larger society. Nijera Kori also believes that male-female relations need not be inherently antagonistic and that men can become women's allies in the struggle against patriarchal oppression. Indeed, without active support and participation of the men from their families and from their class, poor women will find their own struggle for respect and recognition far more difficult.

Nijera Kori commits to promote autonomy: Nijera Kori's capacity-building strategy emanates from a fundamental belief that "power" should and must remain with the people. Hence, Nijera Kori's programmes and activities are structured to ensure that financial and organizational autonomy remains with the people. Nijera Kori emphasizes on promoting autonomous nature and structure of the working people's organizations so that the resource-poor members gradually decrease their dependency on Nijera Kori and finally rely on their own strength.

Nijera Kori values partnership: Nijera Kori believes in the enormous power of collective action, and consciously deploys its resources to strengthen bonds among the members of the poor people's organization. This process is supported by high frequency of meetings, for both staff and landless groups. This frequency of face-to-face meetings is important for promoting closer relationships, establishing trust and ensuring participatory decision-making and accountability.

Nijera Kori strongly believes in democracy: Participatory democracy is the core value that shapes Nijera Kori's management structure and decision-making process. Nijera Kori also aims to infuse the democratic principles in the management of the people's organization that they facilitate to develop. Nijera Kori strongly believes that democratic management is the key to successfully establish the rights of the poor

1.5 Organizational structure, decision making and work culture of Nijera Kori

The core value of Nijera Kori's management structure and decision-making system is guided by the philosophy of 'participatory democracy'. The overall governance of the organisation rests with the General Body, made up 39 members, which elects a Governing Body, every two years. The role of the Governing Body, who meets quarterly, is to ratify policies and programmes

proposed by Nijera Kori, to approve the audited account and budget for the coming year, as required by government legislation and to appoint the Co-ordinator who is responsible for coordinating the overall programmes and management of Nijera Kori on a regular basis.

Nijera Kori's organizational structure and culture demonstrate the basic organisational principles to which it is committed. Therefore, for linking the grassroots, each area office has 3-4 sub-centres, which are made up of female and male field staff. They, through living collectively in a centre in the field, manage the activities of Nijera Kori along with the landless people. The groups themselves have their own structure for group activities.

At present, Nijera Kori has 14 anchals (area), and 31 upa-kendras (sub-centre). In its headquarters, there is a central team which is made up of the coordinator, 3 central organizers and 3 central trainers. This team oversees organisation-wide coordination, administration overall programmes. The Dhaka office is also made up of the cultural team, accounts office, reporting and monitoring team, administrative and other support staff. Field level responsibility for these functions are decentralised to the divisional and anchal teams.

Programmatic Decision-making and reporting:

Democratic decision-making, based on documentation, feedback and deliberation, is a central organizational principle of Nijera Kori. All officials with decision-making responsibilities, with the exception of the Coordinator, are elected from amongst the staff to the relevant levels and committees. For instance, each division elects a Divisional Coordinator who works with a Divisional parishad (committee) to coordinate and provide overall supervision at the divisional level. The Divisional Coordinator also represents the division in the central executive council (nirbahi parishad) which has strategic executive powers. There is provision for an additional woman member if no woman is on any of the elected committees, but this was never required.

While there is a fixed percentage of women and men groups represented among elected members, election to specific posts is open to both women and men. Currently, there have been 5 women elected to open anchal posts out of 14, 4 into open divisional posts out of 12 and 2 into open central posts out of 3.

The entire staff at both field and central levels participate in strategic decision-making, both directly and through the elected representatives. Nijera Kori's decision-making, reporting and evaluation processes are closely intertwined. There is a great deal of emphasis on documenting these processes through written minutes, monitoring visits reports and programme reports, all of which are then synthesized into the annual report. Decisions are made and modified, and progress evaluated through open and participatory processes on the basis of these vertical (mainly staff) and horizontal (amongst staff and groups) flows of information. Importantly, staffs are informed by the self-reflection and learning process of groups. This is particularly important in the context of protests and struggles for physical occupation of Khas land, where decisions on how to act have to be made by groups themselves, and not staff.

A description of the process by which different levels of Nijera Kori staff perform their duties, share information, evaluate performance, take decisions and engage in forward planning will best help to illustrate how principles of democracy, accountability and transparency are built into its organizational culture. It will also help the internal and external audience to understand Nijera Kori's organizational strategy.

- Staff at the 31 different sub-centre meet on a weekly basis to reflect on their performance over the week, share problems they have encountered, evaluate each other and discuss plans for the coming period. These are minuted. Every staff member has to maintain a separate file for each of the groups which she or he is overseeing so that continuity is maintained in relationships with groups even if the staff member in question is changed.
- 2-3 day monthly area meetings are held each month at the 14 anchal (areas) level. Individual staff member in an anchal submits a written activity report for the month and provides a verbal self-evaluation of their performance for comments and questions. Individual and anchal-level activities are decided at these meetings.
- These meetings are minuted and a monthly report prepared. Administrative decisions regarding leave are taken here. One day is kept aside for study and learning, based on current newspaper articles, reports, books and periodicals which have been recommended by the trainers.
- 2 day divisional council meetings are held by the divisional parishad every second month. The anchal chair and office holders at the divisional level review the entire division's performance against the objectives and targets of the annual plan, evaluate its activities and make adjustments where necessary. Administrative decisions for the divisional level are also taken here. Recommendations which have implications beyond the division are sent on to the central team which either makes a decision itself or takes it up at the staff executive committee (nirbahi parishad). Proceedings are minuted and sent to the anchals and to the centre.
- 2-3 days quarterly meetings are held by the executive council (nirbahi parishad). Four divisional chairs and all central committee members, including the coordinator, meet to review the entire programme. The divisions give their reports, identify and discuss key issues and decide on new strategic directions. The entire administrative decisions for the organization are taken here. Proceedings are minuted and circulated among the divisions and anchals and read out at their respective meetings.
- Annual 2-3 day conventions are held at the divisional level. All staff of the division, including divisional accountants, conducts a review of divisional and area performance, check achievements against targets & prepare a report on divisional activities for the entire year.
- 3 day central convention meets every second year. All Nijera Kori staff members are present, including the accountants, administrative and support staff. During the convention, each division presents a report for the past year, reviews policies and guidelines in the light of any changed circumstances. An annual report, which synthesizes the quarterly reports of each division and hence provides an overview of the organization's activities and achievements over the past year, is presented for discussion at this convention. Staff members at the convention also elect representatives to different levels, either retaining or changing the previous representative on the basis of their performance over the past year. Thus, anchal staff elects the anchal chair; divisional staff elects divisional coordinator, the divisional organizer and divisional trainer. The entire bodies of staff elect the central organizers and the central trainers. The only non-elected members in the decision-making structure are the coordinator who is appointed by the Governing Body and has remained the same for the sake of continuity since 1980.

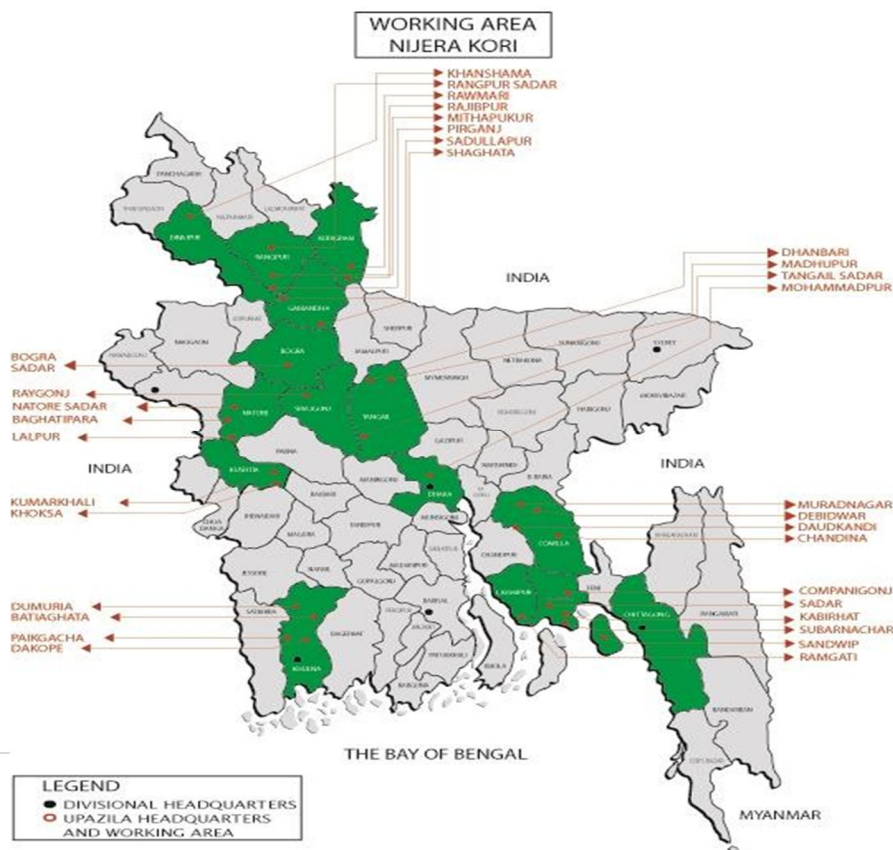
- o 3 day council meetings are held every alternate year. Here, every five NK staff members are represented by an elected councilor. This is thus a smaller forum than the biennial convention and allows for more in-depth analysis and evaluation than is possible in the larger forum. The annual report for the year in question is presented at this meeting. Any changes to decisions or policies taken at these biennial council meetings have to be approved at the next convention.

Finally, if specific issues need discussion, an extended meeting of the nirbahi parishad and all elected representatives is convened. This is to ensure that decisions taken on unanticipated issues or unplanned changes are also taken democratically and implemented at the relevant level. The outcomes of all meetings, at different levels, are transmitted back to lower level committees and groups after each meeting.

1.6 Nijera Kori's Working Area

Nijera Kori works in four divisions in Bangladesh: Dhaka, Rajshahi, Chittagong and Khulna. Its main criteria for selecting the areas is that the majority of the population in those areas belonged to its target group and their immediate issues. Nijera Kori plans to continue working in these four divisions in the foreseeable future, widening and deepening its coverage within them rather than expanding into other parts of Bangladesh. The critical constraint on the expansion of the activities of social mobilization like Nijera Kori is quality of staff and the fact that it is reluctant to expand into new areas, with the attendant start-up costs, unless it is sure of maintaining the quality of staff.

Currently in these four divisions, Nijera Kori covers 14 districts; 31 upazila, 147 unions and 1,168 villages (see map). In these areas, there are 10,741 groups with 218,287 memberships, of whom 121,975 are women and 96,312 are male. If we compare this with the overall statistics on the number of poor in these villages, the nit appears that Nijera Kori has covered 10% of the target population.



CHAPTER TWO

2. The Process of Developing Poor People's Organization

2.1 Group formation

The formation of groups at the village level is the starting point for Nijera Kori's activities in an area. When Nijera Kori decides to work in a new village, its programme organizers (PO) carry out participatory analysis to identify households which fall within its target group. Each PO takes responsibility for overseeing around 55-60 groups in a village area. They act as catalysts for group formation and training, and once groups have begun to function, households from neighboring areas or villages come forward themselves to form their own groups. Male and female groups are formed separately. Each group comprises of 16-30 members.

A group leader, secretary and cashier are elected in each group on the basis of perceived commitment or ability. They are responsible for the day-to-day running of the group and serve as the link between the group members and the local office called sub centre. Soon after selection, they are offered a basic training course in social development issues as well as group dynamics. As the group matures, further training is provided, usually to the elected members who are then responsible for facilitating the dissemination of information, skills and ideas which they receive, to the rest of the group.

Every week group members sit together to discuss group and village activities and formulate working plans for the coming weeks. In addition, group meetings are used as a forum to analyze a range of issues from their personal lives to broader political, social, cultural and economic issues. For most villagers, this is the first time they have been exposed to the idea that they might have rights, as citizens and human beings. In addition, it is also the first time that they learn about women's rights as human rights. In many groups, a written record is kept of the minutes of the group meetings and the cashier maintains written accounts. Workshops are organized at regular intervals at village level. There are two kinds. One deals with organizational matters while the other focuses on local issues and perceived needs of the area. These usually last for a day or two.

As the groups gain more experience, they take on a range of additional activities, for instance weekly group savings. This is intended to reduce members' vulnerability to emergency credit needs and dependence on professional money lenders. The amount contributed to savings fund and the utilization of funds is decided by each group, taking into account the ability of the poorest members of the group. Nijera Kori encourages its groups to save their money in a bank account, partly to familiarize them with bank procedures. As groups become more self-confident, they begin to take action around various problems which have been identified through group discussion, many of these entailing certain forms of social mobilization. While the savings mechanism is useful, for most groups it remains a small scale activity in relation to their financial needs.

Meetings held by landless groups at village, area and divisional levels are used to review their own achievements, to identify problems and decide future course of action. This process of reflection-action is an important part of the awareness-building process.

At their annual conventions, organizational positions, roles and responsibilities of the committees are evaluated and problems and weakness are identified. Members of the committee/landless representatives visit one village to another and one working area to another for a short period in exchange programme and evaluate their performance and exchange experiences.

2.2 Group federation and committee structures

Along with these new initiatives, Nijera Kori emphasizes the need to strengthen organizational capacity through a phased process of federation. The different levels of federation of Nijera Kori groups graduate by stages as coverage expands at each level. Committees are only established when groups reach a certain level of maturity that would make them relevant.

Village Committee

The Village Committee is made up of representatives of different groups in a village and is formed when at least two-thirds of the target population in the village have been organized. The groups meet at an annual conference to elect the committee which is made up of seven members including one president, one secretary, one treasurer, two male and two female group representatives. The village committee meets once a month. There are currently 302 village committees.

Area Committee

The Area committee is an interim committee which coordinates the activities of village committees in a specific area until the conditions for forming a union or upazila committee have been met. In certain cases, it may also be formed due to the specific needs of an area. It is made up of eleven members: a president, a vice-president, a secretary, a joint secretary, an organizing secretary, a finance secretary, a publicity secretary and representative of two male and two female groups. It's tasks include arranging meetings of representatives to organize campaigns on specific issues. There are currently 28 area committees

Union Committee

The Union committee is formed when two-thirds of the villages (if not village committees, at least groups in the village must exist) are covered in the union. It is made up of thirteen members. The structure includes one president, one vice-president, one secretary, one joint secretary, one organising secretary, one finance secretary, one publicity secretary and three male and three female members. There are currently 23 union committees.

Upazila Committee

The Upazila committee is formed when at least one third of the unions in an upazila have been covered. It is currently the highest federated committee in Nijera Kori. It is made up of twenty-one members including one president, one vice-president, one secretary, one joint secretary, one organizing secretary, one joint organizing secretary one finance secretary, one publicity secretary, one joint publicity secretary, one office secretary, one education and cultural

secretary, one women affairs secretary, one production secretary and four representatives each of male and female groups respectively. An annual convention is held at the upazila level to evaluate the preceding years' activities, discuss problems of a regional nature and elect representatives to Nijera Kori's decision-making bodies. There are currently Upazila 3 committees.

Common principles of committee structures

- All committees share the following common principles;
- They are democratically elected for the period of one year at the annual conference of the group members;
- Gender equity in representation and participation;
- The committees give leadership in social movements and lead the action programmes at local level;
- The committees are important forums for taking decisions which are relevant for members within the committee's jurisdiction;
- Learning and self-awareness through a process of review is used to inform decisions;
- Accountability among the committees is maintained through leadership structure, annual conference, and regular discussion;
- Committee's responsibilities include solving internal problems of the organization and co-ordination of Nijera Kori group activities;
- They seek to liaise with other organizations in order to have a more powerful impact.

2.3 Training – an important input to Group/Organization Development

Training constitutes a central aspect of Nijera Kori's organisational strategy. It fulfils a variety of different functions: providing group members with the opportunity to reflect and analyse their individual and collective problems as well as the larger political and economic situation; provision of information about rights and entitlements; practical skills for income-generating purposes; legal expertise; and finally leadership skills. Training occurs through a number of different channels. There are designated training courses, lasting between a day to 3 or 4 days; the weekly group meetings at which trained members disseminate what they have learnt to the rest of their group; refresher training to ensure retention of what is learnt and cultural programme which uses songs, theatre, role plays as means of communicating similar messages.

Members for training are selected by their groups on the basis of their commitment and aptitude. Usually, the same members tend to get selected and develop as the leaders of their groups. All members who are selected for training at different levels come together to form a training forum. The role of the forum is to provide village-based refresher courses to ensure the retention of the training received and to disseminate what has been internalised among group members on a regular basis.

Over time, the training becomes increasingly advanced in recognition of the growing self-confidence and experience of the selected leadership. Recognizing that groups also become increasingly self-confident and capable over time, Nijera Kori follows a strategy of classifying its groups as they mature over time:

- **Primary level:** *Groups at this level concentrate on becoming organized, developing basic awareness and ensuring regular attendance at meetings. Group savings and account-keeping are given importance in group activity. Currently there are 6,503 (women-3,920 and men-2,583) groups at this level.*
- **Secondary level:** *These groups have reached a level of social awareness when they can act on behalf of all members of their class within their area, irrespective of whether they are group members or not. They have developed accountability and leadership skills and begun to initiate collective action. There are currently 3,685 (women-1,978 and man-1,707) groups at this level.*
- **Higher level:** *Groups are able to analyse national issues and relate these to their own situation. They participate in national rallies and organize rallies in their own localities. Their savings are used for the benefit of the community. They also ensure access to local and national resources for collective production or use. Their leadership is established in the locality. There are 553 (women-315 and men-238) groups at this level.*

The third stage corresponds to a situation when groups become self-managing. They are able to initiate their own meetings and actions without the presence of Nijera Kori staff. While Nijera Kori's earlier experience with setting up an independent apex organisation of the landless has made it cautious about the idea of withdrawing its support entirely from its groups. As such, it has adopted a process for withdrawing partial support from its groups as they progress from primary to secondary and then to higher levels. However, it remains involved in planning and executing projects which involve larger areas. These areas require brokering resources and advocacy with public and private systems at local and national levels such as government administration, the elected bodies and the police.

Nijera Kori's capacity to mobilize the poor goes beyond the efforts of its staff alone. The growth of a 'critical mass' of organized groups in an area generates a mobilizing dynamic of its own so that staff no longer need to persuade the landless and poor people to organize; rather the people approach Nijera Kori staff for help in forming groups. In addition, the growing maturity and independence of many of Nijera Kori's groups also helps to reduce the workload of staff. Nijera Kori staff withdraws from the meetings of its more advanced groups who then become responsible for initiating their own meetings and planning their own strategy for their area. In addition, advanced groups also take on the role of motivating their fellow landless member in their own and neighboring villages to become members of Nijera Kori. Because these groups are able to take on some of the functions of Nijera Kori staff, the rate of expansion of Nijera Kori staff do not have to be as rapid as the rate of expansion of Nijera Kori groups.

2.4 Group voice within Nijera Kori

The nature of Nijera Kori's mandate requires close interaction with group members and the need for mechanisms to allow group priorities to influence its activities and group feedback on Nijera Kori's performance. Through the weekly meetings of groups as well as the various committee meetings, which are attended by Nijera Kori staff as well, group members are able to determine what their priorities for action are and hence the direction of Nijera Kori's activities within the area. Members of committees visit each other's villages and working areas for short periods to evaluate performance and exchange experiences. These are fed to Nijera Kori staff at their meetings with them at different levels.

The close relationship between group members and staff mean that staff at the sub-centres are accessible to members at all times. Nijera Kori staff does not have any fixed working hours. Male programme organizers often meet with their groups late into the evening as this is the only time the landless group are able to meet. Group members also visit the sub-centres whenever they need to. In addition, central and divisional staff pays regular visits to groups in which they are able to provide feedback on, or express dissatisfaction with, any aspect of Nijera Kori work.

2.5 Advocacy and alliances

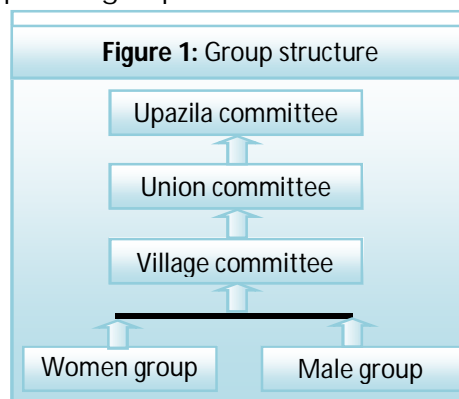
The processes by which landless women and men become confident enough to assert their rights tend to be slow and uneven. Consequently, while Nijera Kori groups have gained considerable strength at the local level, they have not yet become an organized presence in national policy forums and governance structures. Even at the local level, the more distant the struggle for justice becomes, the less confident are the poor and landless likely to feel due to the urban, bureaucratic and legalistic procedures. One strategy by which Nijera Kori sought to address this is through its own advocacy activities and by its alliances with like-minded NGOs in the field as well as with the more liberal and sympathetic sections of the bureaucracy, media and civil society in the areas in districts in which it works. In addition, it has also participated in broad-based people's organisations at the national level and helped to build national movements and campaigns around specific issues.

CHAPTER THREE

3. Nijera Kori's activities and achievements

3.1 Social mobilisation and organisation building

Primary landless groups (*Shamity*) are formed with a minimum of 16 and a maximum of 30 members. Male and female members are organised into separate groups to ensure that at the initial stage of group formation, the women get a safe space of their own to express their voice and concerns in the predominantly patriarchal society, which often exclude women from public spheres. At a later stage, when both women and men are more aware as well as receptive and able to work together as equals, committees are formed with both male and female representation. The committee is formed once group membership covers two-thirds of the target population of a particular village, union and upazila (See Figure-1)



However, at times, to give impetus to organisational activities, the members decide to form ad-hoc coordination committees called 'area committee' in areas where membership coverage is less than two-thirds. The formation and reorganization of the committees at every level is achieved through an annual convention of landless groups. This process gradually strengthens the landless groups, and the committee members gain credibility in their own communities, which ultimately helps the group to participate in the local decision making structures.

Achievement

Description	Plan	Achievement	%
Rajshahi	23	19	83
Dhaka	9	6	67
Chittagong	67	65	97
Khulna	26	19	73
Total	125	108	86

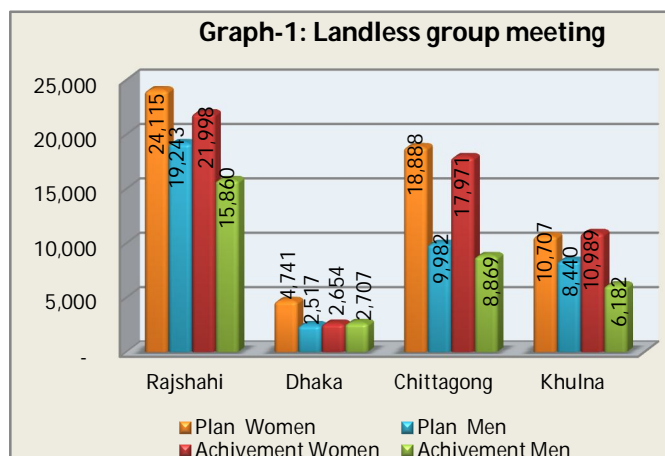
During the reporting period of January 2017 to December 2017 a total 108 groups (w-69 and m-39) have been formed against plan 125 (Table-1). The rate of achievement is 86%. However, this rate tends to vary due to variation in the number of groups across the division. Performance of Dhaka division is lowest with a 67% achievement rate. Khulna 73%, Rajshahi 83% and Chittagong divisions

achieved 97% out of their planned targets. Consistent political unrest around the country during the reporting period is the main reason of lower achievement against the overall target. For Dhaka division in particular, the previous plan had to be revised instead of the formation of new strategy. Efforts were made to make the members of previous group who were inactive in programme activities, active again. However, all inactive members of previous groups did not participate regularly in the programme activities. The group development process secured enrolment of 2,106 new members (w-1,344 and m-762).

Group meeting is the fundamental pillar of the awareness building process. The number of meetings organised stands at 87,230 (w-53,612 and m-33,618) against the planned target of

98,633 (see annex table-4). The rate of achievement is 88%. A detail of meetings against each divisional plan is portrayed in **Graph-1**.

On average, nearly 11 members attended each meeting and participated in the discussion. For women’s group, average number of attendance was 13 and for men it was 10. The group meetings contributed to building a sense of collective identity among the members. It also enhanced members’ ability to analyse and understand the basis of existing exploitative social and political systems. In addition, progress was made with regards to the potential of the poor to challenge the status quo, using their collective strength and establish their rights and entitlements.



In addition to regular weekly/monthly group meetings during the reporting period, 5,600 annual group meetings were held against the targeted 6,775, organised by the landless groups. In the meeting, all of the members review their activities, formulate plans and elect the group committee. The rate of achievement is 83%. These meetings helped elect 1,577 (w-880 and m-697) group leaders, who were selected by the members of the primary groups.

Through regular group meetings, the members continue to enhance their level of awareness and seek promotion from primary to secondary and tertiary levels. This process is supported by the collective training process. In the reporting year, 84 groups graduated from primary to secondary level, and 11 groups graduated from secondary to the tertiary level. It is important to note that once the group reaches tertiary level, they are capable of managing their activities independently, without the help of Nijera Kori’s staff.

In the reporting period, the landless groups organised a total of 667 representative meetings against the planned 645, and 1,073 joint meetings were held against the planned 1,059. The rate of achievement is 103% and 101% respectively (see annex table-5). It should be noted that, representatives from different groups participated in the representative meetings and three or four groups organised joint meetings.

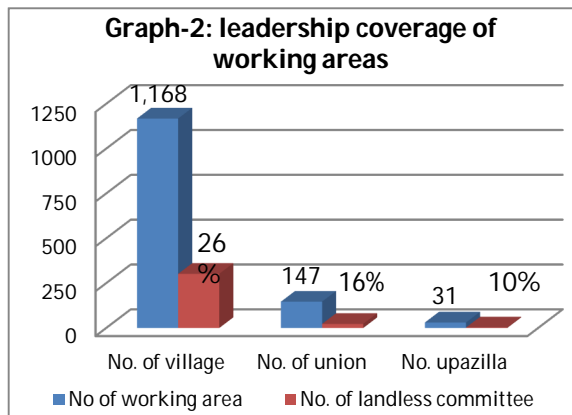
3.2 Formation of landless committee to enhance cohesion and building collective leadership

Committees are formed at the village, union and upazila levels when a **reasonable percentage** of the target population are enrolled as group members. For instance, when 66% of the target population in a village is organised, a village committee is formed with 7 members. Similarly, when 66% of the total villages of any union are covered under the programme, a union committee is formed with thirteen representatives. The same principle is also used for the formation of upazila committee, which is formed with twenty-one members. When it is not possible to form a committee at the union or upazila level, an area committee is often formed to support and coordinate activities, ensure accountability and organise rights-based movements. The organising committee in such cases is elected for one year through an open voting process during the annual group convention.

Achievement

A total of 359 landless committees at various levels have been reported to be active through mobilisation, coordination and organisation of issue-based programmes. As of December 2017, the distribution of the 359 Committees were as follows: 303 village committees, 23 at the union level, 3 at upazila level and 30 at area-level. Committees exist in 26% of the villages, 16% unions and 10% upazilas within the working area of Nijera Kori (see Graph 2). In the reporting period 1 landless committee was formed in Paikgacha area under Khulna division.

These committees are increasingly being recognised as a legitimate voice of the poor within the community. This is a positive opportunity for building linkage with the Union Parishad.



The committee members as reported above are elected through a democratic process. During the reporting period for the 288 Committees, 1,074 posts were open for election. For these seats there was a total of 1,798 (762 women and 1,036 men) member contestants. In the committee election, 442 women members got elected. This means 43% of the women members succeeded in getting into the committees by defeating their male counterparts through the electoral process. This is a very positive indication of women's empowerment in rural Bangladesh, where women are often the most vulnerable segment of society.

Table -2: Women elected in open post of committee

Description	No. of open post where women & men both contested	No. of open post where women contested	Contested Candidate		Elected
			Women	Male	Women
Rajshahi	489	299	314	340	158
Dhaka	112	81	84	137	57
Chittagong	271	201	210	289	133
Khulna	202	149	154	270	94
Total	1,074	730	762	1,036	442

During the reporting period, the landless committees at various levels organised 3,364 meetings against the planned target of 3,453. The rate of achievement is 97%. Of the committee meetings, 2,767 were organised by village committees, 269 meetings by union committees, 28 by the

upazila committees and 300 by the area committees. A total of 32,786 committee members attended these meetings. As a follow-up of the meetings' decisions, the landless groups organised 1,315 issue protests march/meetings; addressed 889 cases of VAW; and organised 10 marches to resist fundamentalism, 260 marches for establishing the rights of landless people over natural resources, and 146 against corruption and irregularities (annex table-22).

Additionally, the landless committees organised many annual conventions, namely 240 at the village level; 24 at the union level; 3 at upazila level and 21 conventions at area levels. The number of conventions organised at union and area levels have been below target but at village level have been above the planned target (village-216, union-28, upazila-3 and area-27).

3.3 Group savings and its utilisation

The landless group build up their own capital through a monthly savings deposit to finance their collective activities and at times to support members during unforeseen crisis/emergencies. The monthly contribution of members is kept in a collective group account with a bank.

In the reporting period, the landless groups mobilised BDT 17,107,596 (w-10,902,892 and m-6,204,704) as group savings. To manage these fund 43 collective bank accounts (w-31 and m-12) have been opened (see Annex table: 8 and 9). The landless group members who were involved in collective economic activities through awareness and mobilisation programmes, increase their group savings to continue their economic activity further.

Of the total amount mobilised, BDT 8,459,258 (9% of the total savings) was redistributed among the members (w-6,154,053 and m-2,305,205) to deal with personal immediate needs (production and consumption).

Mobilisation of group savings and its use to help members during crisis is a good testimony of the groups' awareness and commitments to support each other to overcome seasonal unemployment which is rather common in the rural agrarian society of Bangladesh. The group savings and its use substantially reduced members' dependency on the traditional money lending system practiced by the village *mahajans*, popularly known as *mahajanirin*, and/or micro credit lending programmes of the numerous NGOs.

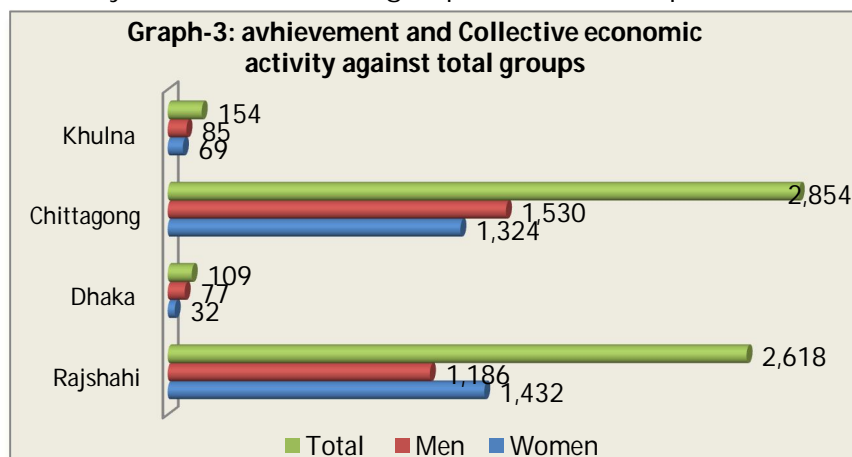
The group savings is not only used for mitigating unforeseen crises, but also for undertaking collective economic activities. Similarly, it is used for covering costs of various group activities such as organising local workshops as follow ups of trainings, group conventions, providing legal support, organising protest-movements and cultural activities.

For such collective activities, the landless groups have spent a total of BDT 1,197,802. This amount, though appears to be a large sum, is 16% lower than the amount spent last year for similar activities. In addition to the above activities, the landless organisations have implemented various local development and welfare activities namely, repairing of schools, clearing of drainage system; clearing of water bodies and canal; giving scholarships to meritorious students of the members; assistance for medical expenses; and celebrating dowry free marriages. The number of members benefited from various activities undertaken by group savings is 12,222 (see annex table: 17).

For these activities, the landless groups have spent BDT 1,250,170. This is 29% more than the amount spent last year for organising group activities mentioned above. This clearly demonstrates the growing awareness and commitment for collective ideology among the members, and contribute to strengthening the process of social mobilisation - the core focus of the work of Nijera Kori. In the reporting period, 308 (women-166 and men-142) groups have started collective economic activities with their savings.

In December 2017, the total number of landless groups was 10,741. Out of these groups, 53% were involved in collective economic activities. Number of groups engaged in collective economic activities is highest in Chittagong division, followed by Rajshahi and Khulna (**see**

Graph-3). Engagement of women's group is 26% and male 27% of total number of groups involved in collective economic activities. As of end December 2017, 5,735 (women-2,857 and men-2,878) groups were involved in collective economic activities. These groups are engaged in a variety of activities. 1,057 groups have taken up collective agricultural projects, 263 are in fishery, 709 in livestock rearing and 3,706 in small businesses and the operating/pulling of rickshaw van (See Annex Table-13). 214 groups (women-127 and men- 87) had to close down their collective enterprises, at least temporarily, for not being able to renew their lease of Khas Land and water-bodies, and/or

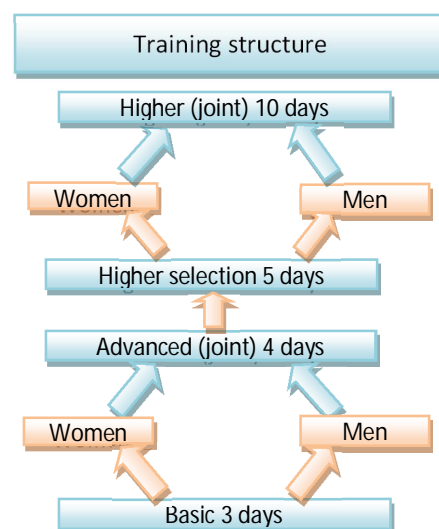


buying new livestock during the reporting period.

The landless groups invested BDT 5,122,216 out of their savings fund for various collective economic enterprises. This investment gave them a profit of BDT 8,884,375 (BDT 3,191,341 earned by the women groups and Take 5,693,034 by men). In terms of employment, the collective activities generated work for 5,394 (women-1,940 and men-3,454) members for a period of 6 months, meaning 970,920 labour days.

3.4 Awareness raising and capacity building activities

Nijera Kori on a regular basis organises various training sessions to enhance the analytical capabilities of the group members. Such trainings are normally organised with 20-25 participants. At the basic level, trainings are provided to female and male members separately; while at advanced level, both female and male members participate together in joint training sessions. Again, at the higher selection level training, the sessions are organised separately for women and men while at the advanced level of such training, the women and men sit in joint session. In recognition of the existing socio-religious values of the society, the gender disaggregated approach is followed, to create space for women so that they can express themselves freely and interact with fellow women at the initial stage of organisation building. Eventually as the groups continue to mature, joint sessions are organised at higher and/or advanced levels to create an environment of reciprocal interactions, to develop greater understanding and overcome gender bias.

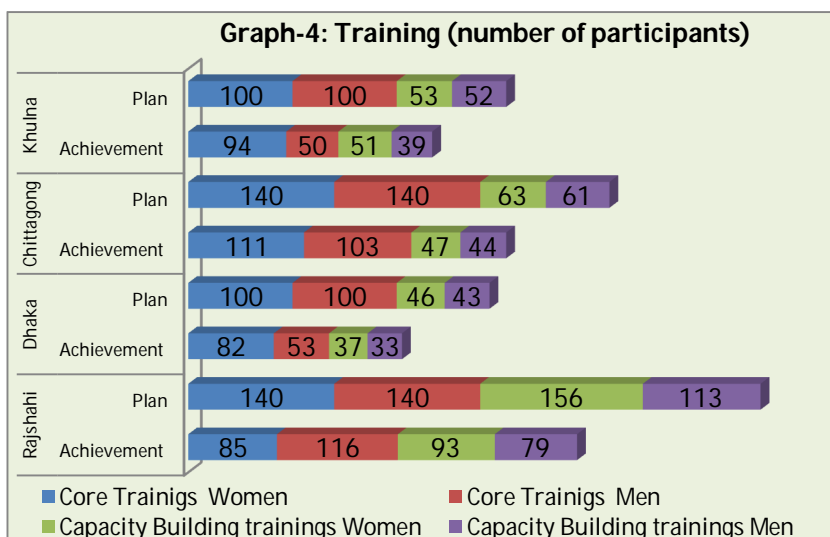


When special training sessions are organised at the request of the groups, they are normally organised as joint session. It is worth noting that cultural trainings, both at the basic and advanced levels, are organised jointly with female and male cultural group members.

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Achievement

During the reporting period, a total of 1,309 (women-691 and men-618) members participated in different training programmes against the total planned target of 1,738 (women-865 and men-873) member. This gives an accomplishment rate of 75%. Delay in obtaining NGOAB clearance, further compounded by natural calamities like floods have resulted in fewer training programmes. Noakhali and Ramgoti were areas to be covered in conjunction with MJF. However due to technical difficulties on their part, these areas were now under the Core



Programme which resulted in a budgetary constraint. Therefore, a few trainings sessions could not be organised, although all technical preparations were put in place.

Notwithstanding this lower success rate, one positive feature that needs to be acknowledged is the higher rate of women's participation in the training programmes. Among the participants 53%

were women. Details on training participants per division is presented in Graph 4, which shows that Khulna division has the highest achievement with 79% followed by Chittagong at 75%, Rajshahi division with 74% and Dhaka at 74%. In addition to the various trainings noted above, 70 follow-up trainings were conducted against the target 72. A total of 1,756 members (women-1,069 and men-687) participated in these training follow-up activities (see annex table: 11).

On the other hand, compared to the plan, the rate of achievement of forum meetings is 91%. It is to be noted that, each of the forum consists of higher level women and men leaders. At present, 28 forum activities have been conducted.

The trained members are now facilitating discussions on various thematic subjects of concern in regular group meetings. They are also taking the lead in ensuring more engaged participation of members in the discussion and follow-up activities. Consequently, the quality of discussion and level of participation in the group meetings have improved remarkably.

During the period, a series of thematic workshops were organised. The aim of such workshops was mainly to develop the analytical and planning skills of members to launch movements in

Description	Table-3: Participants in workshops						
	Plan			Achievement			Total %
	Women	Men	Total	Women	Men	Total	
Rajshahi	842	713	1,555	759	640	1,399	90
Dhaka	347	315	662	323	281	604	91
Chittagong	471	434	905	849	455	1,304	144
Khulna	545	517	1,062	556	444	1,000	94
Total	2,163	1,917	4,184	2,474	1,736	4,307	103

redressing injustices and improve their social position. 215 such workshops were organised against a planned target of 220. A total of 4,307 members (w-2,474 and m-1,736) participated in these workshops. Again, women's participation in the workshops was higher than that of men. This higher rate of

women's participation is a clear sign of their interest in acquiring knowledge and taking leadership in initiating social change. **Table-3** gives details on the number of workshops and men/women distribution of participants per Nijera Kori working division.

3.5 Cultural activity of the landless groups

Currently there are 54 cultural groups. Activities of the cultural groups mainly consisted of holding meetings, discussions on specific cultural issues, performing drama and organising musical

Table: 4-Cultural Activities			
Description	P	A	%
Meetings of cultural group	535	573	107
Cultural discussion	18	20	111
Drama performance	275	285	104
Padajatra/Drama festival	4	4	100
Cultural function by children	120	118	98
Cultural workshop	80	80	100
Cultural training (participants)	88	67	73
(P=Plan, A=Achievement)			

festivals. Detailed achievements of each activity against planned target are reported in **Table 4**. In the reporting period 67 (women-27 and men-40) participated in basic cultural trainings. In addition to that, 80 (women-24 and men-56) participated in drama-based workshops. During the training workshops, the participants composed 39 new dramas covering issues such as women's right (16); rights of agricultural workers (9); against fundamentalism (6); rights to Khas land and water bodies (8). In addition, four

2-3 days-long "Cultural Long March" were organised.

It is worth noting that this year, 31 women members performed for the first time in the drama and musical events that were held in public spaces such as local markets and school grounds. The participation of women members in the cultural activities is an indication of women's freedom, empowerment and decision-making.

Children of the landless group members formed cultural groups to stage 118 drama performances. The children's cultural group is becoming increasingly popular in all the activity areas of Nijera Kori. The children are the new generation activists who are expected to carry forward the work towards its desired goals.

3.6 Empowerment support initiative

3.6.1 Legal aid support activities

During the reporting period, the landless groups had to face 31 new legal cases. Of them, 28 cases were filed by the landless groups while for 3 cases they had to appear in the court as defendant where cases were lodged by the rich power holders. The highest number of new court cases is reported in Rajshahi division, while in Dhaka division maximum numbers of cases have been resolved.

Out of 28 cases lodged by the landless groups, 18 were seeking justice on account of VAW. The increased numbers of court cases are for a number of factors. Firstly, the landless groups got the strength to challenge the oppressors, and on the other hand, the fact that the rich and elite uses repression on women as a weapon to silence the groups. Independent of the reasons, the increased number of court cases in itself is a poor indication of social progress. In the reporting period, for 39 cases, judgements have been received. In 33 of these 39 cases, judgements were

in favour of the landless groups, which is 85% of total judgements passed.

Characteristics of cases	New cases	Resolved cases			
		T	I	Ag	A
Total	31	39	33	6	5
Criminal	7	25	22	3	2
Groups of the plaintiffs	4	14	13	1	0
Groups of the accused	3	11	9	2	2
Civil	6	6	5	1	1
Groups of the plaintiffs	6	4	4	0	0
Groups of the accused	0	2	1	1	1
Violence against Women	18	8	6	2	2
Groups of the plaintiffs	18	8	6	2	2
Groups of the accused	0	0	0	0	0
<i>T= Total , I = infavour, Ag= Against, A= Appeal</i>					

The highest number of cases resolved were that of criminal cases, second highest are of VAW and the lowest are civil cases. In 5 cases where the verdicts went against the landless group, the groups have appealed for review. As for the rest, preparations for submitting appeal are underway. Details have been presented in **Table-5**.

Due to the high costs associated with court cases, the landless groups have spent BDT 751,733 from their savings to support legal cases. Had it not been for the well-wishing lawyers providing legal support to the landless groups for minimal legal fees, the cost figure would have been much higher. At the end of the reporting period, 634 court cases are conducted by the landless groups. Nijera Kori is providing legal assistance in 151 cases for which the landless groups could not mobilise resources.

3.6.2 Right to Information Act and its use by the landless groups

Enactment of Right to Information Act (referred to as RTI hereafter) in Bangladesh is one of the major legal interventions in terms of strengthening the governance structure upholding the democratic value system of the country. The RTI was enacted in 2009. The Act makes provisions for ensuring free flow of information and people's right to information.

The freedom of thought, conscience and speech is recognised in the constitution as a fundamental right and the right to information is an inalienable part of it. Since all powers of the Republic belong to the people, it is necessary to ensure right to information for their empowerment. The right to information shall ensure that transparency and accountability in all public, autonomous and statutory organisations and in private organisations run on government or foreign funding shall increase, corruption shall decrease and good governance shall be established. It is expedient and necessary to make provisions for ensuring transparency and accountability.

Nijera Kori firmly believes that RTI is a very important mechanism available to the citizens to demand accountability from the state and ensure that the community's voice is heard for the effective implementation of the state policies.

Description	No. of RTI Applications		Total	Information Received			Total	On process	Rejected by Concerned Authorities
	Jan' to Dec' 2017	Pending Application Jan' to Dec' 2017		Jan' to Dec' 2017	From Pending Application	From Complain application			
Primary applications	116	6	122	104	0	0	104	18	0
Appeal applications	3	2	5	1	2	0	3	2	0
Complain application	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0

- Members of the landless group submitted 116 RTI applications to obtain information on government services and development projects in the reporting period. A total of 18 primary applications were pending in the administrative process last year. Therefore, the total number of primary RTI applications in December 2017, was 122.
- In 104 cases, the landless group members have received the information from the government and the development project authority. The application for information can be categorised as: safety-net programme-51; Khas land-13; local infrastructure development-19; education-8; health service-10; agricultural service-2; & environment-1.
- In the reporting period, the information officer at the local level did not provide required information according to 1 RTI primary applications. Therefore, the landless group members submitted a total of 3 RTI appeal applications to the district level appeal authority along with 2 from the previous year. Up to December 2017 the total number of RTI appeal applications was 5. In the reporting period, through appeal, a total of 3 landless group members received information against their applications regarding Khas land, local infrastructure development and cooperative association. It is to be noted that, in the reporting period RTI 2 appeal applications are in process.
- Sonaidngga river, characterised by law as an open water body in Raygonj upazila. Some of the powerful quarters have made attempts to occupy this river by illegal means. In this context the landless group have tried to collect information by using RTI Act. Therefore, landless members who are residents of the area submitted applications asking for information on ownership record of this water body. But the upazila land administration did not provide information within the mentioned time frame. Later, they applied to the District Commissioner and appeal authority rejected appeal applications for information. Therefore, the landless group members submitted RTI 1 complain application to the Right to Information Commission. In the reporting period, RTI 1 hearing sessions were held. The judgment for the hearings came out in favour of the applicants i.e. the landless members.

Result of RTI application

- Identifying Khas land in Raygonj, Modhupur and Pirgonj upazilas, through RTI application therefore 36 landless members have submitted application for Khas land distribution;
- Temporary suspension of land acquisition in Suborno Char upazila, hence eviction of landless people have stopped.
- Identifying irregularities in school committee election process by local UP chairman in Akobpur school, Mithapukur upazila. Thus the upazila education department suspended this committee and formed an ad hoc committee, where 3 landless members have been included.
- Identify mismanagement or irregularities in medicine distribution and formation of community clinic management committee in Mithapukur and Sandwip upazila. As a result, 125 poorest household received medicine from government clinic. In addition to that, in guptachara, 2 community clinic management committee have been reformed along with 6 landless members in Sandwip upazila.
- Identifying irregularities in selection process for social safety net programme (SSNP) in Raygonj, Ramgoti, Dhanbari, Daudkandhi, Subornochar, Debidwar, Rowmari upazilas. Due to collective pressure, 95 names have been omitted from the list of safety-net and these now include the names of the poorest landless members in its stead. which was proposed by landless organisation.
- Identifying irregularities in formation of Union Parishad Standing Committee in Chandina and Tangail Sadar. On the basis of information, landless organisation have submitted memorandum to Upazila Executive Officer. As a result, 2 Union Parishad Standing Committee reformed and includes 15 landless members.

3.6.3 Watch Committee and its activities

Nijera Kori believes that the poor and the ethnic minorities are being deprived of their constitutional and human rights. Lack of information, among others, is one of the major causes of this deprivation. Therefore, Nijera Kori considers it of crucial importance to build effective information dissemination and monitoring systems at the grass-root level to make people more aware of their rights and entitlements, and thereby mobilise their participation in building institutions to establish transparency, accountability and partnership in society.

The Watch Committee is formed at the union level with 30 members. In each union watch sub-committee, there are five members. The convenor of each sub-committee is a general member of the landless union level committee and reports back to the landless union committee about progress at scheduled monthly meetings. Decisions, if needed, are taken here involving the organisations of the landless. The other five members are selected from general members of the landless groups in the area who are willing and able to contribute their time voluntarily and have the capacity to undertake necessary actions on the issue. The Sub-Committees are formed to cover **(1)** Education **(2)** Health **(3)** Access to Natural Resources (*land and water*) **(4)** Local Development and Good Governance **(5)**

Fundamentalism, which includes religious intolerance and bigotry and **(6)** Gender Equality. **Box-1:** presented details coverage of Watch Committee.

SL	Box-1: Areas/Location of watch committees
1	Paiska union- Dhaka division, Tangail district, Dhanbariapazila- Dhanbari area;
2	Sahas union- Khulna division, Khulna district, Dumuriaupazila- Paikgacha area;
3	Char Jubelee union- Chittagong division, Noakhali district, Subarna Char upazila- Char Jabbar area;
4	Saghata union-Rajshahi division, Gaibandha district, Saghataupazila- Gaibandha area.
5	Mahammad union- Chittagong division, Comilla district, Daudkhandiapazila- Comilla area;
6	Pairabandha union-Rajshahi division, Rangpur district, Mithapukurupazila, Pairabandha area.

Key achievement of sub committees described below

As a result of Watch Committee monitoring and actions, there have been some achievements (*only in watch committee areas*)

Local governance

- As a result of collective initiative of watch committees, 2,090 excluded and most vulnerable families have received Social Safety Net cards. And 8 landless members received relief for the flash flood related sufferings.
- As result of advocacy, Local Government Engineering Department (LGED), has built a culvert, in Char Jublee. Also based on the demands of the landless organisation, the same department installed three pipes in Bagga embankment to remove water lodging in agricultural land.
- As a result of advocacy at union parishad and submission of alternative list to union parishad, a total of 520 landless members have revived government support such as blankets and food during Saghata, Pairabandh and Dhanbari working areas.
- As a result of advocacy and networking with LGED, a total of 13 landless households received sanitary latrine.

Accessibility to natural resources (land, agricultural and water)

- The sub-committee initiated awareness building activities such as discussion meeting, drama performance, cultural long march etc on organic agriculture inputs in Charjabbar. As a result, a total of 239 farmers have reduced their organic fertilizers and used this fertilizer in their production. In addition to that, 6 members produced vermicompost fertilizers and sold it in the market. Thus, the economic benefit attained was BDT 4,400, which promotes sustainable employment.
- As a result of linkage and relation, a total of 25 people received agricultural card Sagata Upazila.
- 3 members deposited 3kg seeds of pulse in the Saghata seed bank and distributed vegetable seeds among 70 households.

Education

- As a result of door to door campaigning, 4 girls previously studying in madrasa, were admitted to general education like Government Primary School.
- The sub-committee with the help of school management committee developed girls football team In Charjabber. (14 and 19 No. schools).

- c) Due to effective monitoring and collective pressure, the sub-committee stopped bribe in distribution of text book in Bashhata primary school. Around 350 students benefited.
- d) Due to advocacy and collective pressure, 20 students completed registration for SSC by paying only amount of Government registration fees in Dhanbari and Pairabandh high school.
- e) As a result of effective monitoring and collective pressure, the sub-committee ensured hosting the national flag and singing the national anthem in Amon Gram, Koyra and Dorichondro bari Government Primary School.

Fundamentalism

- a) As a result of regular monitoring and initiative of sub-committees, 10 students rejected madrasa education and were admitted in general education.
- b) The committees have successfully stopped activities of 6 Talim Kendros (Informal Islamic Teaching centres) conducted in different areas.
- c) A total 5 member families stopped financial contribution to mosques (Islamic prayer centre).
- d) Charjabber mosque took initiative to form a imam association for protection of Islam was stopped due to collective pressure.
- e) The committee initiate awareness building activities about Islamic insurance, hence, 2 women returned from this insurance scheme.
- f) Due to constant consultation religion and its politics, a total of 21 male members stopped Tabligh (advocacy for religion to make them more bias).

Health

- a) A total of 4 (w-3 and m-1) people have been nominated as members of the Community Clinic Management Committee.
- b) The committees successfully prevented 4 women from using Norplant as a contraceptive method.
- c) A total of 17 expecting mothers were admitted to hospitals during child births along with regular check-ups in the pre-delivery phase.
- d) Due to advocacy and collective pressure, 6 nutrition cards were issued during pregnancy. Hence they were benefited with BDT 3,000.
- e) A total of 3,127 (W-1,950, M-1,177) landless members received proper treatment and free of cost medicine in government hospitals. Thus they saved BDT 77,090.

Gender

- a) A total number of 3 child marriages were prevented by exerting collective pressure.
- b) Giving and taking of dowry was stopped in 1 marriages by exerting pressure.
- c) Approximately 27 male members have been participating in the regular domestic household work. In addition to that, landless members took more care with regards to ensuring health, medical treatment and nutrition of women.
- d) In addition to that, the sub-committees regularly monitored the issue of VAW. As a result, VAW was reduced in watch committee areas, particularly within landless group members' families. As a result, 59 cases of domestic violence have been stopped.

3.6.4 Educational activities run by the landless organisation

Due to lack of awareness and absence of public schools in many remote areas, children of the poor families mostly start working from a very early age. The phenomenon is particularly dominant in the *char* areas. The landless groups for some time were demanding to the government to establish schools closer to their homes, and were also active to make the parents aware of the importance of education and motivate them to send their children to schools. In several working areas of Nijera Kori, where the government response is yet to come, the landless organisations have taken the initiative to establish schools with their own resources.

Achievements

The landless organisations conduct their education programmes through **30** primary schools, **4** junior high schools and **1** high school in Charjabbar. **Table-6**, shows the number of

Description	Number of students		
	Girls	Boys	Total
Primary	7,512	6,703	14,215
Junior high schools	1,718	1,321	3,039
High schools	583	511	1,094
Total	9,813	8,535	18,348
Total No. of students with stipend	5,109	3,896	9,005

students enrolled-14,215 (Girl students-9,813 and Boy students-8,535)-in the reporting period. Girl's student's enrolment is 9% greater than male students. The rising enrolment of female students, particularly in the secondary and high schools in the remote areas, shows the positive impact of consciousness-raising on

the necessity of and right to women's education within the landless organisation.

In the reporting period, 9,005 (Girl students-5,109 and Boy students-3,896) new students received government education grants of BDT100 per month (given three times in a year). The landless groups also gave BDT 296,393 from their savings as scholarship for 2,917 students to purchase books and other academic materials.

On the other hand, a total of 80 students (Girl students-47 and Boy students-33) dropped-out from schools in the reporting period, as these students had to join their parents to work away from home and support their families.

The landless organisations monitor students' attendance in the schools on a regular basis. If a student stop coming to school or his/her absence from school is prolonged, the landless group members along with the school teachers organise home visits to know the situation, and if needed, to pursue the parents to send back their children to school. Assemblies are held in every school; most schools also organise sports, discussion meetings and cultural functions.

As a result of such active monitoring by both landless members and teachers, a qualitative change of school performance has been noticed. This is clearly reflected in the results. In Primary School Certificate (PCS) examination, 100% students have passed and were promoted to the Junior School Certificate (JSC) level. Also, 97% JSC students successfully passed and were promoted to the secondary education level from schools run by the landless organisation.

CHAPTER FOUR

Outcome

The key outcomes of Nijera Kori's work during 2017 can be categorised under four key areas:

1) Social action

Access to government services

Fighting against corruption

2) Governance and accountability issues

Representation in local level institutions

3) Economic action

Establishing rights over natural resource such as Khas land and open water bodies

4) Gender issues

Establishment of women's rights and empowerment

4.1 Social Action

4.1.1 Access to Government Services and wage bargaining

On the bright side, poverty rate is decreasing in our country. Now, annual national poverty rate and extreme poverty rate in our country are 23.2% and 12.9% respectively (HIES-2016). In 2010, national poverty rate was 31.5% and extreme poverty rate 18.5%. Gini coefficient shows income inequality between the rich and poor citizens of a country. Gini coefficient of 2016 is 0.39 in our country. In 2014, this coefficient of Bangladesh was 0.31. This shows that the Income distribution gap is increasing between rich and poor in the country. Due to unequal distribution of income, income gap is getting wider between the rich and poor. To lift the poor out of the poverty trap and address their vulnerabilities, the Bangladesh government along with regular public services including education and health has undertaken several programmes under a package called the "Social Safety Net Programme (SSNP)".

The government allocated BDT 54,206 cores, around 13.28% of the total budget, for the SSNP in fiscal year 2017. In total there are about 140 programmes under 5 types of social safety net programmes.

Available information shows these programmes include (i) food aid programme, (ii) cash support programme, (iii) special programme for poverty reduction, (iv) self-employment programme through micro-credit, and (v) some specific special programme for poverty alleviation. A set of criteria is used to select households to be enrolled under the SSNP.

Among others, these include those who are landless or own less than 10 decimal of land; families with destitute women and illiterate members; with a daily income of less than BDT 30 per head;

and debt amount is BDT 2,500 more than their savings as per financial profile. However, due to corruption, political influence, poor monitoring and lack of coordination, the selection process often gets distorted and the actual targeted families are denied access to the SSNP. It is reported that the poor and ultra-poor people are not getting the full benefits of the SSNP (The Financial Express, 18 June 2015). Poor people's access to these services is minimal and they are deprived of the benefits of these services. Access to safety-net and other government services could make a positive contribution in improving the quality of poor peoples' lives.

Nijera Kori, believes that enhanced access to social services could offer significant relief to the misery of the poor, and therefore provides assistance to the landless people to make them aware of their entitlements and strengthen their capacities to access the government services and establish their fundamental rights. In this pursuit, over the reporting period, Nijera Kori organised and supported a series of trainings, workshops, cultural programmes and the monitoring of the SSNP by the Watch Committee of the Landless Groups. These programmes significantly contributed in increasing transparency and accountability in the implementation of the SSNP. The landless organisation, in view of the RTI (Right to Information) Act, submitted 118 applications asking for detailed information regarding the selection of beneficiaries. The groups organised 250 protests and mass demonstrations against corruption and mismanagement of the SSNP. Due to such protests and demonstrations, the Union Parishad officials and other concerned authorities invited the landless group for dialogues and for submission of alternative list of beneficiaries to be included in the SSNP.

Table-7: Access to Government Safety-net and Economic Benefits

Description	Total Card	Women	Men	Disable	Single Women
Rajshahi	35,355	18,097	17,258	71	1,116
Dhaka	3,330	1,746	1,584	61	218
Chittagong	16,064	5,434	10,630	73	472
Khulna	2,703	2,125	578	37	164
Total	57,452	27,402	30,050	242	1,970
BDT	86,203,670	50,923,807	35,279,863	363,108	2,955,000

As presented in **Table-7**, during the reporting period, a total 57,452 (women: 27,402 and men: 30,050) were enrolled under the various SSNP. In total, 17,136 members received safety net benefit cards due to the groups' pressure, which is 31% of total. Of them

1,970 are single women and 242 people with disability. Furthermore, due to protest and demonstrations by the landless groups, 11,831 poor families who are not members of the landless groups were registered under the programme and another 21,728 ineligible names were deleted from the list of safety-net programme. This twin success gave the groups a huge moral boost and the enrolled families minimum food security for a limited period, as reflected in one single woman's words:

The economic value of the goods and services that is received by the beneficiaries under the SSNP is equivalent to BDT 86,203,670. Additionally, access to services and opportunities to participate in the local development activities empowered the landless group members. The above evidences clearly demonstrate the economic value of awareness building and mobilisation activities.

Across the various working divisions of Nijera Kori there, is a high degree of variance in terms of member enrolment under the SSNP. Highest number of beneficiaries is reported in the Rajshahi division, followed by Chittagong division (see Table-7 above). The reasons for the high degree of variance is because geographical coverage of Nijera Kori's work in Rajshahi and Chittagong

divisions are larger compared to the other divisions. In Rajshahi, Nijera Kori covers 13 upazilas and are working with 4,800 groups with 97,370 members. Additionally, both Rajshahi and Chittagong divisions are considered more disaster prone, with many char areas that mostly inhabited by the poor.

4.1.2 Fighting Against Corruption

In Bangladesh corruption is reported as an endemic problem. According to a report of Transparency International Bangladesh, on average, 42.1% of households stated that they had to pay bribe for receiving different services of the government. The highest incidence of corruption is reported in the education sector, where 72.2% households who interacted with educational institutions for the education of family members had to pay bribes. The issue of corruption has recently been acknowledged by the government; The Finance Minister Mr. A M A Muhit stated that corruption is responsible for 2-3% of GDP loss (BdNews24.com, 9 July 2015).

The poor are the casualties of this vicious cycle of corruption. The poor's inability to pay the required bribes lead to denial of access to services, which means deprivation from government food-support, access to medical services and education. Often the desperate families sell their assets such as cows, goats, poultry and furniture to get access to these services, and in the process their economic position gradually deteriorates further.

To redress the current situation, during the reporting period, the landless organisations mobilised communities to create public opinion in establishing their rights and access to various government services. The landless organisations organised 205 collective actions, which include street protest, dialogue with concerned authorities, signature campaigning, submission of memorandum, and demonstrations by forming human chains demanding end of corruption and irregularities in the implementation of various government social welfare programmes and development projects. By virtue of these public actions and close monitoring of the programme delivery by the Landless Watch Committees, the groups succeeded in stopping various irregularities and corruptions in three areas, those of health, education and local *shalish* (*Alternative Dispute Resolution*). As a result, the landless members were able to ensure access to services without undue expenditure. These successes significantly contributed in improving their economic condition. Some key success data are reported in **Table-8** below.

Division and description	Saved from prevention of corruption in education sector and student stipend		Increased wages		Saved from prevention of corruption in development project as wages	
	Girls	Boys	Women	Men	Women	Men
Rajshahi	3,262	2,960	1,705	976	800	767
Dhaka	250	206	24	0	1	2
Chittagong	3,536	2,638	297	10	0	0
Khulna	659	477	494	717	0	0
Beneficiary families	7,707	6,281	2,520	1703	801	769
Total BDT	5,574,279	4,430,246	837,918	224,632	80,610	77,390

Due to these initiatives, the landless members were benefited in two ways. Firstly, they have received government service without paying bribe, and secondly, they have

successfully recovered embezzled funds from various social services.

During the reporting period, the landless groups, through their actions against corruption, were able to save BDT 10,004,525 and also increase their wages by BDT 1,062,550 due to better

implementation of development projects. This success was shared by 19,781 landless households. Establishment of their rightful claims empowered the landless groups to continue raising their voices, undertake collective actions against irregularities and corruptions, and establish a more transparent and accountable society.

4.2 Governance and accountability issues

4.2.1 Governance, Accountability and Representation in Local Bodies/Committees

Presently, at the local level development administration, the Members of the Parliament (MPs) have an oversight role, but often this role extends beyond 'oversight' and almost all of the local committees are constituted in consultation with the MPs and/or individuals with strong political connections. Therefore, actual community representation is under challenge. This weakness is recognised and currently being addressed in the Seventh Five Year Plan of Bangladesh. It is anticipated that the plan will propose a fresh approach to decentralisation and local governance structure of Bangladesh.

There are a number of policy documents pertaining to the constitution of local government institutions and other relevant committees with representation of the people. For example, school committees are formed in accordance to 2009 notification of the Ministry of Education; market committee, per Hat-Bazar Nitimala, 2011; sluice/water management committees as per the Participatory Water Management Rules, 2014 of the Ministry of Water Resources. These Committees are mostly composed of 12-13 members who are elected annually.

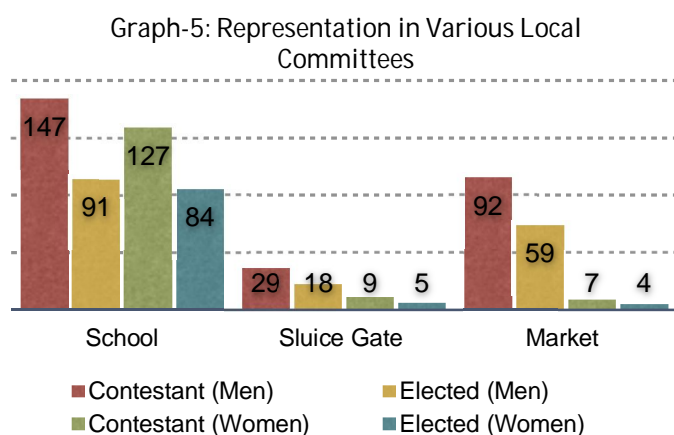
Engagement in these committees offers excellent opportunities to the landless organisations to establish their leadership and get trained in democratic participatory decision making processes. In view of this, during the reporting period, the landless organisation participated in the election of the local government institutions and other relevant committees such as school, market, sluice gate committees. Nijera Kori provided training and organised workshops to make the landless members aware of the existing policies and regulations for governing local government institutions and relevant committees and their functions. The landless cultural team played an important role in creating a strong public opinion for a transparent election system. The landless organisation in consultation with their local allies selected their candidates and participated in the election of different committees. A short account of these is presented below.

4.2.2 Participation in Election of Various Local Committees

During the reporting period, a total of 439 group members (145 women and 294 men) contested against the local powerful elite in the election of the school, market and sluice gate management committees (see **Annex Table 18.**) Of the 439 candidates from the landless groups, 270 got elected. Among the candidates who got elected 94 were women and 176 men. This gives a success rate of 62%; for women the, rate being 65% and for men, 60%.

Again, as reported in Graph 5, the electoral success of landless groups in terms of their representations in local committees varies. The highest number of representation is recorded for the School Committee followed by the Market Committee.

It is also evident from the data (See Graph-5) that in the School Committee election, the highest number of members who participated in Rajshahi division, the second highest in Chittagong division, the third, in Khulna, and lastly, Dhaka division.



The rate in total of those elected in Dhaka, was 88%; Khulna, 70%; Rajshahi 61%; and Chittagong, 55%. In the Market Management Committee election, the highest number of members contestant 48 in Chittagong, second in 42 in Rajshahi, third in 10 in Dhaka, and the lowest in 7 in Khulna.

The rate of elected in Dhaka, was 100%; Rajshahi 64%; Chittagong, 60%; and Khulna, 71%. Finally, in the Sluice Gate Management Committee election, the

highest number of members contestant in Khulna (18); (10) in Rajshahi; (8) in Chittagong; and (2) in Dhaka. The rate of elected in Dhaka was 100%; Khulna, 78%; Rajshahi 40%; and Chittagong, 38%. It is to be noted that, 4 (women: 1 and men: 3) landless members were nominated in the Sugarcane Sale Centre Management Committee in Natore district.

4.2.3 Representation in UP Standing Committee through Nomination as Members

An effective local governance mechanism plays a critical role in ensuring improved service delivery to citizens. The Union Parishad (UP) is the lowest level of local government institution. Recently the government decided to establish various standing committees (SCs) to enhance the UPs service delivery capacities, and to ensure transparency and people's participation in decision making. In the UP, there are 13 Standing Committees, all of them selected for one year. The Standing Committee composed of 5-7 members, is lead by an elected Councillor. The Standing Committee is empowered to co-opt additional members, but such members do not have voting rights. The SC meets once every two months, but emergency meetings can be arranged any time. The core functions of the SC consist of monitoring the activities of service providers and solicit feedback from the general masses to assess their needs and priorities; give planning support to the service delivery providers and monitor the implementation process, and provide regular reports to the UP about the activities of the committee (cf. *Local Government Division (2012), Union Parishad Operation Manual*).

But in reality, often representation of local communities in the UP Standing Committee is decided by the influence of power, which excludes the poor. The landless organisations closely monitor the functioning of the SCs and organises public advocacy to promote transparency through signature campaigning and submission of memorandum to the Upazila Nirbahi Officer (Upazila Executive Officer) on the roles and functioning of the different UP Standing Committees. As a result of this, during the reporting period, the Upazila administration has taken initiatives to reorganise several Standing Committees and included the landless members in the UP Standing Committees.

Due to the re-organisation of the UP Standing Committees and other Committees such as Community Clinic Management Committee, Policing Committees and Jonge (religious militances) protection committee etc. 229 landless members (102 women and 127 men) were nominated in 46 Union Parishad Standing Committees. This makes the women's participation rate 45% (see Table-9). Out of a total of 102 nominated women, 23 are single and women

Division	Table-9 Representation in local committees by nomination											
	Rajshahi			Dhaka			Chittagong			Khulna		
	W	M	T	W	M	T	W	M	T	W	M	T
UP standing committees	9	9	18	14	7	21	4	13	17	1	0	1
Community clinic management	10	10	20	4	4	8	8	16	24	6	4	10
Policing Committees	36	13	49	0	6	6	4	16	20	0	0	0
Jonge protect committee	6	28	34	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	61	60	121	18	17	35	16	45	61	7	4	11

hedded households. The highest numbers of landless members nominated in the various Local Committees were

in the Rajshahi division - amounting for 53% of the total nominated members. The second highest is reported in Chittagong division, 27% of the total, followed by Dhaka division with 15% and Khulna division with 5%.

When the data on the landless member representation in the UP SC is compared with the total working area of Nijera Kori, it appears that the landless groups succeeded in securing positions in the SC in 31% (46 out of 147) of the Unions under the working area.

The data clearly demonstrate the dynamic changes that are taking place in the management of the local government institutions, the acceptance of the leadership of landless groups, and their empowerment. This representation of the landless organisations in the local power structure has restored some degree of balance in the distribution of power. The representation of landless members also created an avenue through which the landless organisation can fight against corruption, the irregularities of government administration, and the traditional political and social power structure. Due to this change, the landless organisation can now articulate their opinions in the committees and also claim their rights. This marks an important indicator of the landless organisations' power, and the move towards transparency and accountability in running the affairs of the local government institutions.

4.2.4 Participation in Shalish as Judge and Observer

The *shalish* (Alternative Dispute Resolution) plays a very important role in resolving small-scale civil and criminal disputes and has now emerged as a social institution. Though *shalish* is recognised by the state as a mediation body, it has no legal standing, and its verdict with reference to criminal cases, marriage, and dowry disputes are not acknowledged by the Court of Law. Generally, a *shalish* is conducted by local leaders who command respect. But since 1990, *shalish* has been dominated and/or controlled by the local politically powerful groups. Consequently, in many cases the victims did not get justice.

Research report titled "Revisiting the Local Power Structure in Bangladesh: Economic Gain, Political Pain?" stated that, "we found in the earlier study that local political leaders, elders and civil society leaders were increasingly working together to produce outcomes that were generally viewed as fair within the community. Today the picture has changed and become

more politicised. The long standing shalish dispute settlement system remains central but has continued to evolve and change during the last decade.

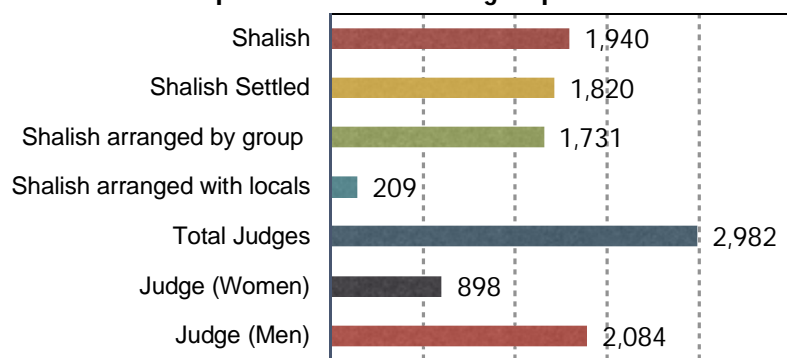
Ruling party leaders attend and dominate shalish and these days it is common for UP Chairs to be absent. There is no multi-party participation and less of a role for both the UP members and matbars. In the peri-urban village, for example, there were allegations that bribes must now usually be paid in order to receive favourable outcomes, and that as a result fewer people were seeking justice through the shalish”.

In view of the above, to ensure justice, the landless organisations are increasingly becoming more active within their working areas and started monitoring the shalish process and its outcomes. The landless members participate as observers in the shalish and when they notice irregularities or nepotism they create collective pressure on the judges.

In cases where criminal offences are negotiated through shalish, the landless groups intervene, call for the community’s participation to stop shalish, and take the matter to a formal court for ensuring justice. In several instances, the landless group members are also invited to join the shalish as judges along with the powerful people.

In the reporting period, landless group members participated in 1,940 shalises for resolution of different issues. Of the total 1,940, in 11% or 209 shalishes, the landless group members played the

Graph-6: Role of landless groups in Shalish



role of judges along with the local leaders, while the other 89% were conducted solely by the members. In the 1,940 shalish in which characterised that, 71% of cases were regarding VAW; 16% concerning land property disputes; 13% about illegal physical attacks; and only one on fundamentalist activities (see **Graph-6**).

In addition to their role as judges, the landless members played an important role in monitoring the cases. As reported in the **Table-10**, during the reporting period, 22,676 members (women: 8,529 and men: 14,147) were involved in monitoring and they were present as observers during the shalish. Participation of landless members as observers by division are as follows: Chittagong, 59%; Rajshahi, 29%; Khulna, 9%: and Dhaka, 3%. Due to active engagement of the landless members in the shalish, 73 criminal cases were not entertained by the shalish but referred to a formal Court of Law.

Table-10: Participation of landless members in shalish

Division	As observers			Meediator/judges		
	Women	Men	Total	Women	Men	Total
Rajshahi	2,809	3,680	6,489	353	630	983
Dhaka	342	490	832	112	305	417
Chittagong	4,643	8,694	13,337	224	629	853
Khulna	735	1,283	2,018	209	520	729
Total	8,529	14,147	22,676	898	2,084	2,982

A total 2,982 members (women: 898 and men: 2,084) participated as judges in shalish. Participation of landless members as mediator/judges by division is–Rajshahi, 33%, Dhaka, 14%; Chittagong, 29%; and Khulna, 24%; (see **Table-10**). As a result of participation of

landless group members, out of total (1,940), 1,820 shalishes were successfully settled in favour of the real victim. Through the *shalish*, the landless organisation could recover BDT 3,495,050; mainly on account of dowry payment; cost of family maintenance treatment cost; and wage compensation were resolved.

4.3 Economic Action

4.3.1 Access to Natural Resources (Khas land and Open Water Bodies Owned by the Government)

In Bangladesh, 47% of the labour force depends on agriculture for their primary source of livelihood (Bangladesh Economic Review, 2014). Thus, for rural population, access to land and open water bodies are of vital importance to ensure employment and living. However, Bangladesh is a land-scarce country, and a large number of people have no ownership or access of land which they could cultivate. In 2004, at the national level, a high-powered National Executive Committee was formed. (New Age July 15, 2016). The purpose of the formation of this committee was to take legal action against the landlords after receiving multiple complaints, monitoring and investigating illegal land grabbing. But officials of the cabinet division and the Ministry of Land said, “only two or three meetings were held after the formation of the national executive committee and no action was taken against land grabbing”.

Besides, they also said, “the government-owned Khas land and land which belongs to minority communities have also been occupied by influential groups”. The cabinet secretary said, “the Deputy Commissioner and other senior officials of the ministry are responsible for making the committees ineffective”.

Parliamentary Standing Committee on Land, on 27 July, 2016, disclosed information that 12 lakh 200 acres of Khas land are under illegal occupation. The Committee also recommended the recovery of the illegal possession of Khas land. However, after one year, on 4 October, 2017, in the 33rd meeting of the National Agriculture Khas land Management Executive Committee, the president stated that the Ministry of Land recovered Khas land and directed the concerned officials to distribute the land among the real landless people. He further stressed that despite the strong influence of the land-grabbers, the committees must take action to recover agricultural Khas land.

It is understood that the reason for not applying the principles of the policy from this position of the government. The amount of Khas land remains ambiguous. In response to a question in the Parliament, the Land Minister reported that, the current total amount of Khas land 41 lakh 21 thousand 775 acres in the country on 22 January, 2018,. Meanwhile, agricultural land is about 20 lakh 51 thousand 748 acres. The amount of non-agricultural Khas land is about 20 lakh 70 thousand 26 acres. On the other hand, According to the report "Bangladesh Land Status Report 2015", Association for Land Reform and Development (ALARD), about 50 lakh acres of land in the Khas land. However, 88 percent of the total land is illegally occupied by the rich and influential people.

In this backdrop, Nijera Kori is extending its services to the landless organisations to establish their rights over Khas land. During the reporting period, Nijera Kori conducted trainings and workshops to raise awareness and mobilise support for implementation of the laws in establishing rights of

the landless people over the Khas land. Such programmes also contributed in developing alliances with organisations and professional groups at the local, regional and national levels in support of the landless people’s demand for Khas land.

These greatly helped in launching strong collective movements. In the reporting period, 240 collective public demonstrations/marches were organised under the leadership of the landless organisations. The landless cultural groups performed during these marches. Additionally, 2,018 dialogues with relevant authorities and submission of memorandum were organised. The Right to Information Act and support from the media was sought for collecting information. All these actions contributed to create a positive enabling environment for the landless people to demand their rights over the Khas land. However, due to unwarranted political instability created by the opposition on the question of the 5th January parliamentary election, the process slowed down and the movement could not realise the results expected. In the section below some key outcomes of the movements are noted.

The landless members, through the movement, succeeded in obtaining information and eventually clearly demarcating 348 acres of Khas land. Of this amount, in the reporting period, the landless groups secured ownership over 96 acres, registered it in favour of 80 landless families, and took physical possession over the rest of the 252 acres pending registration. The groups also recovered 16 acres of water bodies from illegal occupation of powerful elites and made these water bodies open to all as common property resources (for details, see **Table-11**).

Table-11: Access and Control over Natural Resources and their Economic Value

	Khas Land and Water Bodies (Acres)							Economic Value		
	Reg. of Khas land	Posse .of Khas land	Poss. of W.B	Rec. land from Shrimp Farm	Rec. land of Farmers from illegal Occupiers	Rec. Inheritance Property in favour of women	Total	Bene. Household	BDT	USD
Rajshahi	15	6	14	0	1	5	41	944	17,100,000	
Dhaka	1	0	0	0	0	3	4	8	650,000	
Chittagong	80	244	2	0	0	4	330	371	114,100,000	
Khulna	0	1	0	14	3	1	19	79	14,200,000	
Total	96	252	16	14	4	13	395	1,402	146,050,000	

Reg-Registration, Posse- Possession, Rec- Recovering, Bene-Beneficiary, EV- Economic Value, WB- Water Bodies

Additionally, the landless organisation successfully recovered 31 acres of private agricultural land and water bodies, which were illegally occupied by individuals of vested groups. Among the recovered land, 14 acres were under occupation of shrimp-lords, and the rest were farmland. 4 acres of agricultural land recovered belongs to marginal farmers and 13 acres of land were inherited by women, but was under occupation of the male members of their families.

The economic value of these resources is equal to BDT 146,050,000. This gives the landless members some degree of empowerment in economic terms, opening up possibilities for them to use the land resources to ensure employment and earn extra income. From the data presented in **Table-11**, it is evident that the success was highest in Chittagong division. The division being the coastal belt of Bangladesh with large tracts of Khas *char* land – the success was expected.

On the other hand, the coastal belt of Khulna division, where commercial shrimp farming is in practice, and the illegal occupation of marginal and small farmers' land is a common story, recovery of land from illegal occupation remains an issue to protest against and organise movements for recovery.

As a result, of this movement for establishing land-rights, it can be stated that 1,402 landless families are benefited in terms of food security, and have access to or are regaining ownership of natural resources. This has also created possibilities for these households to contribute more in sustaining the organisations that gave them these opportunities.

4.3.2 Sustainable Economic Empowerment through Utilisation of Natural Resources

Through collective farming, landless families have secured control over possession on Khas land and water bodies and in turn increased their food security. In the reporting period, the landless group members cultivated rice, pulse and vegetables in the Khas land. They obtained necessary food for consumption and sold the excess amount of the production for extra income. As a result of successful recovery of open water bodies, not only the landless members but also the community were able to start fishing. This is a strong indication of increase food security and scope for extra income for landless families. This has been the direct result of these landless farmers being able to utilise the opportunities when they were able to achieve better access to natural resources (both Khasland and open water bodies).

Recovery of water bodies is an alternative source of income for landless families through fishing and vegetable cultivation in dry season. After meeting their own consumption needs, they sell the remaining fish and vegetables in the market. All of these activities significantly contribute to the sustainable economic empowerment through the gradual increase of income of the landless members and make them able to re-cultivate the land for agricultural production.

Table-10: Agricultural Production and Economic Value January to December 2017

Description	Rajshahi	Dhaka	Khulna	Chittagong	Total
Paddy production (mound)	4,865	0	180	11,596	16,641
Pulse production (mound)	59	0	15	190	264
Fish production (mound)	1,725	0	0	351	2,076
Economic value in BDT	12,923,200	0	177,500	13,335,850	26,436,550
Vegetables production (taka)	6,056,600	129,885	19,143,075	3,674,547	29,004,107
Total economic benefits	18,979,800	129,885	19,320,575	17,010,397	55,440,657
Beneficiary families	3,261	92	1,276	2,725	7,354

Table-10 shows that the economic value of agriculture produce such as paddy, pulse and vegetables is equal to Tk. 55,440,657. This way, a total of 7,354 families were benefited by using Khas land and water

bodies collectively and achieved economic empowerment. They also spent a smaller amount of money on buying food for their families since they could fulfil their daily food requirements with their own production. This indicates a sustainable economic empowerment and reduce their vulnerability induced by resource scarcity.

4.4 Gender issues

4.4.1 Women's Empowerment and Establishment of Women's Rights

Bangladesh has topped the South Asian countries in gender equality for the third consecutive year, ranking 47th among 144 nations according to Global Gender Gap Report 2017. The country was at the 72nd position among the same number of countries in last year's index.

Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) published the findings of the survey, Violence Against Women Survey 2015. According to the survey, the abuse rate has decreased in comparison to the previous survey conducted in 2011.

In 2011, we found violence rate against women was 87.1% but in 2015 it stands at 80.2%. The survey further stated that 34.2% of girls aged 10-14 years have been raped at least once. The rate for the age group of 15-19 years is 39.7%.

The survey also shows, of the victims, only 2.6% women in national level – 2.4% in rural and 3.3% in urban areas – have taken legal action. Although there is a government helpline to address such issues relating to VAW, only 2.4% women in national level, 1.9% in rural and 3.8% in urban areas knows about it.

According to a 2016 report, UNICEF finds that 52% of girls in Bangladesh are married before the age of 18. This is because in the rural areas of Bangladesh, be it poverty or superstition, a female child is considered to be a burden to her parents. Because marriages become expensive due to the established custom of dowry. Despite the country having a Dowry Prohibition Ordinance 1986, this practice is still rampant in many parts of Bangladesh. Parents encourage early marriage out of fear that the dowry price will increase as their daughter ages. Hence, a child bride becomes 'inexpensive', saving her parents from paying a huge amount to the groom's family. A helpless child becomes a pawn between two parties' greed.

Nijera Kori and the landless organisation recognise that gender inequalities are socially constructed. In the context of Bangladesh, women's empowerment requires transformation of current political and social relations, and control over economic resources. Nijera Kori's work therefore focuses to enhance women's dignity and to improve their access to and control over resources. The impact of Nijera Kori's work is assessed based on four indicators as discussed in the sections below.

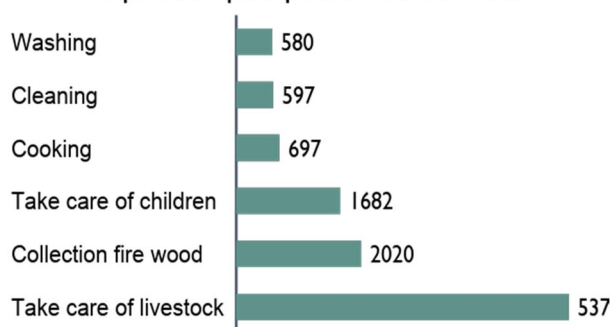
4.4.2 Changes Within the Household

According to a 2013 survey by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), women do five times more unpaid work in Bangladesh than men. A 2016 report showed that while women in Bangladesh do 8 hours of unpaid household work, men only worked for 1 hour and 20 minutes (Power, ActionAid). The research data shows that, 69 percent of the female respondents said that they had no one to help them, and 8.7 percent had their daughters to help them while 7.5 percent had the support of their husbands. The research also found that the cause of this is that women consider this work to be normally theirs—that they have to do these chores. Without involvement of men in the household chores, meaningful gender equality cannot be achieved and women's role in the decision-making sphere cannot be increased. For this reason, a change in the patriarchal notions of gender-segregated work and status of women need to be challenged.

Gender relations within the household is an important aspect to consider in order to change the patriarchal social values and norms. In this context, Nijera Kori and the landless organisation encourage women and men to work together, and carry out a structured programme of sensitising men’s groups alongside women’s group. This has created some space for women to establish better rights within the home. In many cases, women reported positive changes in their relationships with husbands in terms of increased mutual respect, caring and co-operation and a decline in domestic violence, and spoke of better participation in the household decision making process.

According to our data (see **Graph-7**), 10,948 landless male members reported on their participation in domestic work including; cooking: 6%; washing 5%; cleaning: 5%; collection of firewood 18%; taking care of children: 15%; taking care of livestock: 49%.

Graph-7: Male participation in Household Chores



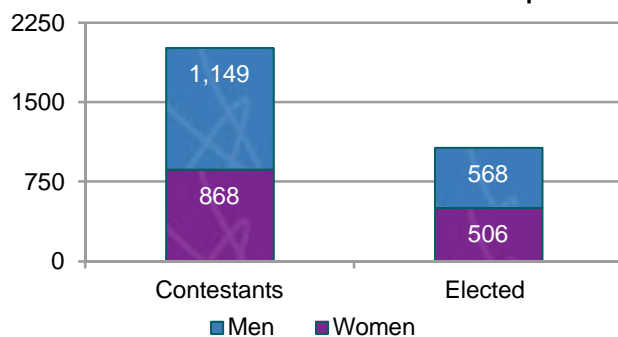
In addition to that, 2,137 landless member families reported that presently family decisions are taken through mutual discussions between the men and women. This indicates an increasing level of respect and acceptance of women in the society. This is a much desired healthy change of the

societal norms. Over the last 3 years, a total of 26,511 male member have engaged in household chores, which is 28% of total male members.

4.4.3 Women Leadership Within Landless Organisation

Nijera Kori and the landless organisations recognise that developing collective leadership of women and men within the organisation is a challenge which needs to be addressed seriously. Participation of women in mobilisation, meetings and all other activities demonstrate active participation of women, but their voice is still not heard as expected and their leadership is undermined. Therefore, to encourage women’s leadership, landless organisations and Nijera Kori adopted a two-pronged strategy. Firstly, in both women and men group meetings, women’s issues were given high priority in the discussions. Secondly, trainings and workshops on leadership development were organised particularly on women issues. Issues and concepts such as gender, patriarchy, women’s right, VAW etc. were included in the cultural activities and legal trainings.

Graph-8: Men and Women’s Leadership



Furthermore, in the membership of committees at various levels (village, union, upazila, anchal etc.) 50% seats are kept reserved for women, but to be elected by both female and male members’ votes. For the rest of the seats, women members are encouraged to contest as well.

Graph-8 shows that, during the reporting period, in the election of the committee’s

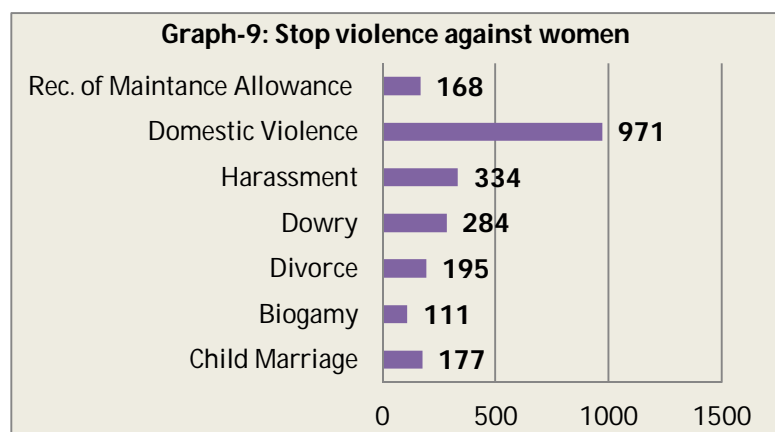
open seats (posts for which both women and men members are eligible to contest), 762 women members contested against 1,036 male members for the open post 1,074. A total of 442 women were elected in 442 open posts. The rate of women's success in the election to the committee is 58% against women contestants. The highest number of women's participation in the election and success was in Rajshahi division, followed by Chittagong division. The higher rates of women's participation in the election is a testimony of value changes within the landless organisation in terms of acceptance of women's leadership.

This is another milestone of enhanced women's leadership. It is worth noting that among the elected women members, 12 are from the indigenous communities. Acceptance of ethnic minorities in the leadership position is another signal of positive change.

4.4.4 Raising Collective Voice and Encouraging Participation of Men in Movements to Stop Violence Against Women

The landless organisation, through regular group meetings, monitor incidents of VAW within the landless groups and the society. Furthermore, the landless 'Watch Sub-committee on Gender' carries out its own monitoring within the working area. The cultural activities play a crucial role to address the issue of VAW. Consequently, an increasing number of women now raise their voices and stand their ground against violence. This break in the culture of silence is a positive change. In the reporting period, the landless group has actively resisted VAW in two ways—firstly, by organising collective mobilisation to stop violence on women; and secondly, by monitoring and participating in the *shalish* to ensure justice and establish women's rights through legal actions.

Analysis of data presented in the **Annex Table-22** shows that, in the reporting period, a total of 899 collective mobilisations on VAW were organised. Among these, in 877 of the movements (98%), the landless organisations were successful in achieving their demands. It is worth noting



that out of the total movements, 302 movements were initially started by male groups.

Due to these mobilisations and *shalish* es (as illustrated in **Graph-9**), 177 child marriages were stopped; 111 diogamy were stopped; 195 divorce were stopped; 284 dowry marriages were avoided; 334 harassment were stopped; and 971 case of domestic violence were stopped.

In addition to that, 168 women were recovered maintenance allowance from husband side.

4.4.5 Ensuring Justice and Access to Inheritance Property

Unequal social and economic structures (based on class and gender) is one of the major obstacles towards ensuring women's right and empowerment. On the other hand, political use of religion often undermines women's rights. Therefore, violation of women's rights in rural

Bangladesh seems to be on the increasing trend. To redress this, Nijera Kori and the landless organisation emphasise on the power of collective mobilisation describes above. In the reporting period, the landless organisations devoted specific attention to ensuring justice and the establishment of the right inheritance of property. A total of 113 collective mobilisations were organised for realising inheritance property rights. As result of these, 71 women got the title of 13 acres of land which was till then under the possession of their male family members.

Additionally, during the reporting period, the landless organisation has conducted 1,940 *shalish*, (*Alternative Dispute Resolution*) of which 1,368 were related to women’s rights and violence on women. Of the 1,368 *shalish* related to women’s right and VAW, 1,297 cases were resolved in favour of the women.

Further 45 salishes were stopped as a result of the active role of the group members when adjudication of the involved criminal cases did not fall within the scope of salishe system. Out of these, 31 cases were filed in a formal court. The rate of legal action taken by the landless groups is 69%. Due to the support and cooperation given by the landless groups, women victims were able to file cases against the culprits in the formal court and thus, were able to access justice.

Description	Taka	USD	Beneficiary
Recover treatment cost, dowry and maintenance allowances	695,000		917
Value of inheritance property	23,645,000		65
Total	24,340,000		982

Table 11: shows that, the economic value of inheritance property recovered due to proper justice is equivalent to BDT 24,340,000. This shows the economic value of awareness

building and mobilisation activities.

4.4.6 State Recognition of Contribution Made by Women Landless Members and Recognition of Leadership

The ‘Joyeeta Onneshone Bangladesh’ is a national programme initiated by the Women Affairs Department of the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, Government of Bangladesh. The programme awards five women in five categories from each of the seven administrative divisions of Bangladesh. The five categories are: successful mothers; education and service; overcoming repression; role in social development; and becoming economically self-reliant. Joyeeta Onneshone Bangladesh, has had a tremendous impact on the society. Grassroots women have responded well to the initiative, and the programme is considered as a positive indicator of women’s empowerment. Recognition via the Joyeeta award further encourages women to face various challenges more confidently and become role models for society.

In the reporting period, 42 women landless members were selected for the Joyeeta award. 9 of them were recognised in the category for development in society; 8 in the successful mother category; 9 for economic success; 7 for erasing the trauma of violence against women and starting a new life; and finally 9 in the education and service category. All of them were honoured by the government through an official ceremony. This recognition of landless women members by the family, society and the government is extremely positive and encourages more women to take part in the development process.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. Advocacy and Networking

5.1 Events of advocacy at National level

5.1.1 Seminar on Agriculture and Environment

ALRD, BELA and Nijera Kori jointly organised a seminar titled "Spread of brick kilns: farmlands, forests, hills and people's rights endangered". In the seminar, Chief Executive of BELA and the Director of Housing and Building Research Institute presented two papers.

Main facts:

- Total number of brick kilns: 6,900 (Department of Environment);
- Annual demand of bricks: 7 billion;
- Yearly production: 17.2 billion (World Bank 2011);
- Soil requirement for brick production: Around 1270 million CFT. As fertile soil of farmlands is used for brick production, the fertility of agricultural land is being destroyed at a very high rate.
- The demand for bricks is growing annually at the rate of 2-3%, but the sector contributes only 1% to the GDP.
- It was also found that on average, agricultural land is being reduced by 1% every year. Brick kilns are responsible for 17% of this. As a result, there is a growing threat to food security and sufficiency.
- Use of ferro-cement instead of brick was identified as a solution.
- It was also found that despite there being several laws relating to brick production, they are not being followed. Government initiative in this regard is also lacking.

5.1.2 Seminar on Land and Agriculture

ALRD, BELA and Nijera Kori jointly organised a seminar on land grabbing and the diversity of methods employed in doing so on July 17, 2017. Economist and researcher Swapan Adnan presented the keynote paper in the seminar. The issues that came up in discussion were:

- Can the different processes of land grabbing seen in contemporary Bangladesh be sorted into a table for analysis?
- Is it necessary to use force for grabbing land or are there other ways of achieving this same goal?
- In addition to the direct efforts to grab land, can the same thing be done indirectly through other processes?

- Which government, non-governmental organisations and other forces are involved in the process of land grabbing? What are the methods employed by them in the land grabbing process?

In answer to these four questions, it was possible to clearly analyse the process of land grabbing the historical use of force to the changes brought about because of today's market-oriented and neo-liberal policies. In today's context in Bangladesh, both the new and old methods can be seen simultaneously.

5.1.3 Seminar on Women's Access to Resources

In collaboration with the International Land Coalition (ILC), ALRD, Nijera Kori and SANGAT organised a workshop titled "Women's Access to Resources" on September 28, 2017. Although the right to property is a fundamental right, most women in Bangladesh are deprived of this, and in many cases, they are victims of discrimination. Even though according to the laws, the wages of men and women should be equal, there is no reflection of this in the labour market. In the paper presented in the workshop, 21 recommendations were put forward regarding laws and policies for establishing women's access to resources, political will and implementation. Workshop chairperson Khushi Kabir voiced the demand for establishing an effective monitoring system to prevent corruption in agricultural loans for women. She also said, "Women's social position also has to be given priority alongside the movement for rights. Everyone has to come forward to eliminate the current forms of discrimination including wage discrimination."

5.1.4 Public Hearing: How Are Our Women Migrant Workers Faring?

A Public Hearing was held on "How Are Our Women Migrant Workers Faring?" at November 18, 2017. Returnee migrant workers gave testimonies on their experiences dealing with deception from recruitment agencies and violations of their human and labour rights at their respective jobs abroad. Afterwards, a panel of experts shared their findings and professional opinions on the issue. Finally, a panel of judges gave their verdict, as well as recommendations on further actions and remedies necessary. 8 women Migrant Workers presented their testimony to the audience and panel of judges. Note that, the panel of judges comprised of 3 members namely Nazmun Ara (Retired Judge, Appellate Division), Nizamul Huq (Retired Judge, Appellate Division) and Dr. Hameeda Hossain (Human rights expert).

Recommendations:

- The aim of today's programme is to ensure that the interests and rights of female migrant workers are maintained and asserted.
- Females in Bangladesh want to thrive and earn more. They know that their access to education and pay is limited here, which is why they want to go abroad. Realistically, closing off this option completely is not practical. We need a way for it to be safe and fair for the migrant workers, so we will not recommend that we stop sending them completely.

- There needs to be conditions and restrictions on the recruiting agencies and accountability for the government and embassies to follow through on this.
- We also feel that NGOs do great work and also play an important role in this and should continue to do so.
- There needs to be standards and guarantees when sending workers from here such as safe working environments, no harassment policies, no exploitation, etc. The government must enforce this and demand the same from destination countries.
- Language is an important aspect and workers need to be able to speak and communicate when they are sent abroad.
- Training and certificates should be mandatory to prepare migrant workers beforehand. Workers going abroad should be made aware of the potential dangers and educated on what to expect when they get there.
- There are many private or phony recruitment agencies. Recruiting agencies need to be held accountable and the government should monitor them.
- Embassies should be capable of protecting migrant workers, but corruption in embassies make them ineffective in stopping these cases from happening.

5.1.5 Women rights

The Coordinator participated as a speaker in a round table discussion organised by the National Human Rights Commission titled "The invisible contribution of women in development and the story behind it". She presented, along with facts and data, the various ways in which women in the country, including the female members of Nijera Kori's landless organisation, are contributing to the development of the country. At the same time, she discussed the patriarchal attitudes behind this invisibility and non-recognition of women's contribution. She also said that recognition of this invisible contribution is a key aspect in ensuring the dignity, identity and empowerment of women. For this reason, she said, collective effort is needed to achieve social and state recognition of women's contribution.

5.1.6 Fact-finding team and its activities

A writ was filed in response to the attacks and forced-evictions by land grabbers and police in the Santal village in Gobindhandganj upazila of Gaibandha district. In review of the writ petition, the High Court directed the government to recompense and rehabilitate the victims. A fact-finding team was formed jointly by ALRD, BLAST, BELA, Bangladesh Adivasi Forum and Nijera Kori to monitor whether the rehabilitation process is being conducted as per the High Court directive. The team conducted follow-up activities from April 18-20, 2017. The team found that the government had made a list for rehabilitation without consulting with professionals, indigenous representatives or indigenous community. As a result, a scope for violation of the rights of the indigenous community has been created. In this context, the Santal community demanded rehabilitation to their ancestral land, from which they were evicted.

5.1.7 Kuliarchar shrimp farm: Technical Review Audit Monitoring

Bureau Veritas declared that the technical audit of Kuliarchar shrimp farm in Chakoria, Cox's Bazar, would be carried out in January 9-10, 2017. Nijera Kori along with Green Cox's Bazar as well as with local and national journalists formed a team that observed the Technical Review Audit process from 8-10 January 2017.

Analysis findings

- During the audit, the Technical Audit Review Team stayed at the Kuliarchar farm's guesthouse, which the observation team pointed out was a conflict of interest that jeopardised transparency, neutrality and accountability of the process. In response to our questions regarding the issue, the audit team could not provide any answer.
- Talking with the local community it was found that they had no involvement with the shrimp production and transportation process of the farm and had whatsoever no information regarding this.
- Using the Water Development Board's embankments, the Kuliarchar shrimp farm multiple sluice gates for the shrimp farm. According to the Water Development Board's law and the Water Act, 2013, this is illegal. When the issue of illegal embankments was raised, the audit team replied that this was a matter for the Water Development Board.
- Regarding the ownership and use of the land, the contracts by both parties were not registered with the registry office according to the legal requirements as per The Transfer of Property Act 1882. Thus, there is no legal basis for this agreement.
- Our observation: According to Principal 1 of the Aquaculture Stewardship Council, the representatives of the Technical Audit Review Team of Bureau Veritas did not follow the laws and policy of Bangladesh in auditing Kuliarchar shrimp farm. For this reason, we as citizens of Bangladesh are not accepting this legally flawed audit. We presented our position against this review audit in writing to the Aquaculture Stewardship Council.

5.1.8 International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples, 2017

Through the initiative of ALRD, Nijera Kori and 10 other like-minded organisations, a seminar on the land rights of indigenous communities was organised. At the seminar, Jyotirmoy Barua and Sanjib Drang presented the keynote speeches. The issue of the Peace Accord and demands for its implementation were highlighted. Khushi Kabir along with other staff also participated in a meeting and discussion event organised by Bangladesh Adivasi Forum at the Central Shaheed Minar on August 9, 2017 marking the day.

5.1.9 Right to Information Day 2017

The International Right to Know Day was celebrated on September 28, 2017 at the initiative of the Information Commission. Activities organised included day-long rallies, discussions, meetings, cultural shows, information fairs and various documentaries about the right to information. Nijera Kori, TIB, MRDI, DNet Bangladesh, RIB, DISA Bangladesh, Nagorik Uddyog, SUPRO, Democracy Watch, BRAC, Article 19 and Ain o Salish Kendra participated in the events. The day was also celebrated through rallies, discussions, meetings and cultural events in all working areas of Nijera Kori.

CHAPTER SIX

6.1 Administration and Finance

The core value of Nijera Kori's management structure and decision-making system is guided by the philosophy of 'participatory democracy'. The overall governance of the organisation rests with the 'General Body,' which elects the 'Governing Body' for two years. The 'Governing Body' meets regularly every three months while the 'General Body' holds its General Meeting annually. The 'Governing Body' appoints the Coordinator who is responsible for coordinating the overall programmes and management of Nijera Kori.

However, the main operational decision-making body of the organisation is the Central Staff Convention, which is held every alternate year and attended by all staff of Nijera Kori. Here they constitute a three-tier council for two years for overall management and coordination by electing their representatives (except the coordinator) from among the staff. These councils are **1) Anchal Parishad (Area Council), 2) Bibhagiya Parishad (Divisional Council) and 3) Nirbahi Parishad (Executive Council)**. The overall activities of Nijera Kori are planned and monitored through weekly sub-centre meeting, monthly anchal parishad meeting, bi-monthly divisional parishad meeting, quarterly nirbahi parishad meeting, annual divisional staff convention and finally at central staff convention/council. On behalf of the above councils the Coordinator regularly consults the Governing Body.

For linking the grassroots, on the other hand, each area office has 3-4 sub-centres, which are made up of female and male field staff. They, through living collectively in a centre in the field, manage the activities of Nijera Kori along with the landless people. The groups themselves have their own structure for group activities.

Nijera Kori ensures that all staff and target group members have equal participation in the planning, monitoring and implementation of its activities.

According to group structure, the groups, through annual group meetings, village, union, Upazila and area committee meetings, annual group conventions and groups' representative meetings, evaluate their previous activities, discuss problems and remedial measures and formulate their next plans of action. Nijera Kori staff become part of the decision making process, by participating in these meetings. Later on, they share experiences in Nijera Kori's internal meetings/forums as per the organisational structure. This process of synthesizing opinions from group level to central staff convention/council and its subsequent reflection in the formulation of a concrete plan shapes the participatory management system of Nijera Kori.

6.1.1 Staff strength

a) A total of 28 (w-13 and men-15) staff joined the organisation in the reporting period. On the other hand, a total number of 37 employees (w-13 and m-24) left the organisation. The total number of staff working in Nijera Kori in December 2017 was 214 (w-82 & m-132). It should be mentioned that 62 employees (w-10 and m-52) are performing their duties as service staff.

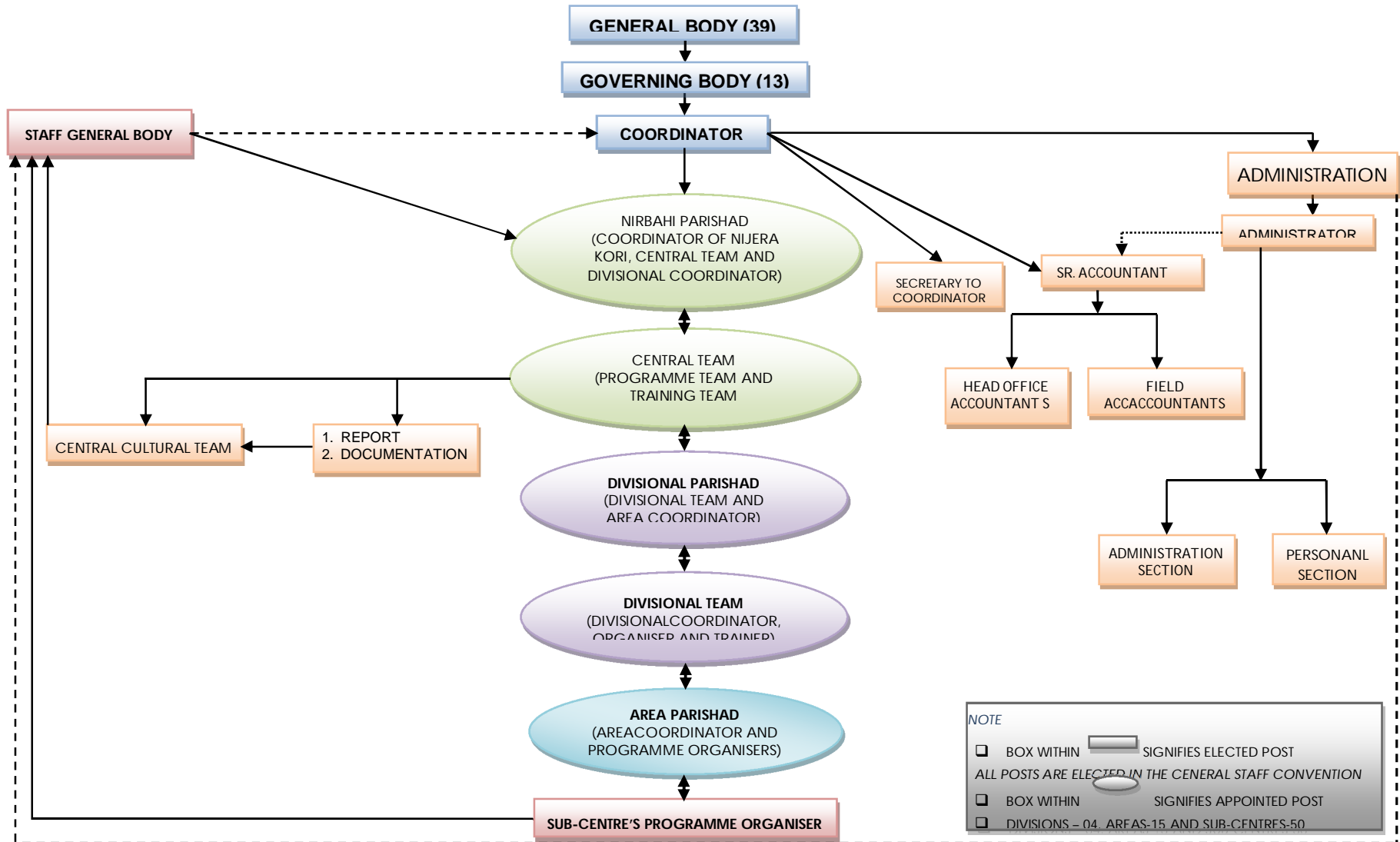
6.1.2 Statement of Financial Accounts

During the reporting January to December 2017 Nijera Kori received financial assistance totaling BDT 89,052,273.00 from different partner organisations. The total amount of the money spent during the reporting period was BDT 69,808,133.00.

6.1.3 Annexes

List of Governing body Members 2017		
1.	Kazi Madina	Chairperson
2.	Dr. Rowshan Ara Firoz	Vice Chairperson
3.	Khushi Kabir	Secretary
4.	Ira Rahman	Treasurer
5.	Dil Monowora Monu	Assistant. Treasurer
6.	Mohammad Shahid Hossain Talukder	Member
7.	Abdul Majid Mallik	Member
8.	Shaheen Islam	Member
9.	Biren Shome	Member
10.	Syed Abul Barq Alvi	Member
11.	Afzalun Nessa Chowdhury	Member
12.	Salma A Shafi	Member
13.	Masuma Khanam	Member

ORGANOGRAM OF NIJERA KORI



Annex table from – 1 to 23

Table – 1: Geographical Location of Programmes of Nijera Kori

Sl. No	Division	District	Upazila	Area	Sub-center	Total up to December 2016		Expansion		Total up to Dec' 2017		Village Coverage		
						U	V	U	V	U	V	Up to Dec' 2016	New	Up to Dec' 2017
1	Chittagong	Comilla	Chandina	Comilla	3	24	110	0	0	24	110	21	0	21
			Daudkandi											
			Debidwar											
			Muradnagar											
		Noakhali	Sudharam	Charjabbar	5	9	45	0	0	9	45	6	0	6
			Companigonj											
			Kabirhat											
Lakshmipur	Ramgoti	Ramgoti	1	6	28	0	0	6	28	5	0	5		
Chittagong	Sandwip	Sandwip	2	14	28	0	0	14	28	-	0	0		
Sub total	1	4	9	4	11	53	211	0	0	53	211	32	0	32
2	Dhaka	Tangail	TangailSadar	Tangail	1	4	22	0	0	4	22	5	0	5
			Madhupur	Madhupur	2	12	127	0	0	12	127	20	0	20
				Dhanbari										
Sub total	1	1	3	2	3	16	149	0	0	16	149	25	0	25
3	Khulna	Kushtia	Kumarkhali	Kumarkhali	1	7	51	0	0	7	51	14	0	14
			khoksa											
		Khulna	Paikgacha	Paikgacha	6	19	171	0	0	19	171	41	1	42
			Dumuria											
			Batiaghata											
Dakope														
Sub total	1	2	6	2	7	26	222	0	0	26	222	55	1	56
4	Rajshahi	Sirajgonj	Raygonj	Raygonj	2	5	82	0	0	5	82	13	0	13
			Bogra											
		Rangpur	Rangpur Sadar	Rangpur	2	9	81	0	0	9	81	24	0	24
			Mithapukur											
		Dinajpur	Khanshama	Dinajpur	1	4	22	0	0	4	22	5	0	5
		Kurigram	Rowmari	Rowmari	1	8	84	0	0	8	84	21	0	21
			Rajibpur											
		Gaibandha	Saghata	Gaibandha	2	16	147	0	0	16	147	64	0	64
			Sadullapur											
		Rangpur	Pirgonj											
Natore	Bagatipara	Bagatipara	1	10	170	0	0	10	170	42	0	42		
	Lalpur													
	NatoreSadar													
Sub total	1	7	13	6	9	52	586	0	0	52	586	169	0	169
Total	4	14	31	14	30	147	1,168	0	0	147	1,168	281	1	282

Table-2: Formation of Landless Group

Description	Dec-16			Plan			Achievement			Total up to December 2017		
	W	M	T	W	M	T	W	M	T	W	M	T
Rajshahi	2,659	2,122	4,781	14	9	23	12	7	19	2,671	2,129	4,800
Dhaka	435	327	762	5	4	9	3	3	6	438	330	768
Chittagong	2,226	1,569	3,795	44	23	67	43	22	65	2,269	1,591	3,860
Khulna	824	471	1,295	14	12	26	11	7	18	835	478	1,313
Total	6,144	4,489	10,633	77	48	125	69	39	108	6,213	4,528	10,741

Table-3: Group Members

Description	Dec-16			Plan			Achievement			Total up to December 2017		
	W	M	T	W	M	T	W	M	T	W	M	T
Rajshahi	52,178	44,818	96,996	252	162	414	233	141	374	52,411	44,959	97,370
Dhaka	8,358	7,450	15,808	90	72	162	66	58	124	8,424	7,508	15,932
Khulna	16,626	9,991	26,617	792	414	1,206	193	129	322	16,819	10,120	26,939
Chittagong	43,469	33,291	76,760	252	216	468	852	434	1,286	44,321	33,725	78,046
Total	120,631	95,550	216,181	1,386	864	2,250	1,344	762	2,106	121,975	96,312	218,287

Table-4, Group Meeting, Attended by Staff, Group Annual General Meeting

Description	Plan for Group Meeting									Achievement of landless groups Meeting								
	Attended by Staff			Meeting Initiated by Group			Total plan			Meeting Attended by Staff			Meeting Initiated by Group			Total Achievement		Total
	W	M	T	W	M	T	W	M	T	W	M	T	W	M	T	W	M	
Rajshahi	7,707	5,341	13,048	16,408	13,902	30,310	24,115	19,243	43,358	9,953	5,886	15,839	12,045	9,974	22,019	21,998	15,860	37,858
Dhaka	1,237	296	1,533	3,504	2,221	5,725	4,741	2,517	7,258	521	1,330	1,851	2,133	1,377	3,510	2,654	2,707	5,361
Chittagong	10,808	4,207	15,015	8,080	5,775	13,855	18,888	9,982	28,870	11,367	4,547	15,914	6,604	4,322	10,926	17,971	8,869	26,840
Khulna	5,360	4,796	10,156	5,347	3,644	8,991	10,707	8,440	19,147	6,618	3,330	9,948	4,371	2,852	7,223	10,989	6,182	17,171
Total	25,112	14,640	39,752	33,339	25,542	58,881	58,451	40,182	98,633	28,459	15,093	43,552	25,153	18,525	43,678	53,612	33,618	87,230

Table-5, Representative and Joint Group meeting and Annual Group Meeting

Description	Representative Meeting		Joint Group Meeting		Annual group Meeting Plan			Achievement		
	Plan	Achievement	Plan	Achievement	Women	Male	Total	Women	Male	Total
Rajshahi	243	276	790	748	1,448	888	2,336	1,262	777	2,039
Dhaka	42	36	10	14	235	166	401	226	144	370
Chittagong	213	239	126	163	1,778	1075	2,853	1,410	797	2,207
Khulna	147	116	133	148	760	425	1,185	637	347	984
Total	645	667	1,059	1,073	4,221	2,554	6,775	3,535	2,065	5,600

Table-6, Description of Workshops

Description of workshops	Rajshahi						Dhaka						Chittagong						Khulna						Total											
	Plan for Participants			Achievement			Plan for Participants			Achievement			Plan for Participants			Achievement			Plan for Participants			Achievement			Plan for Participants			Achievement								
Gender	W	M	T	W	M	T	W	M	T	W	M	T	W	M	T	W	M	T	W	M	T	W	M	T	W	M	T	W	M	T	W	M	T	W	M	T
Right to Information Act & its use	117	108	225	83	61	144	39	36	75	43	34	77	65	60	125	136	76	212	78	72	150	71	54	125	299	276	575	333	225	558						
Ethnic and Land rights	52	48	100	40	35	75			0			0			0			0			0			0	52	48	100	40	35	75						
Household work and mane role	117	108	225	111	85	196	39	36	75	42	39	81	65	60	125	120	64	184	78	72	150	76	49	125	299	276	575	349	237	586						
Impact of Patriarchy and Fundamentalisms	52	48	100	52	62	114	36	46	82	40	50	90	33	42	75	40	42	82	42	70	112	65	85	150	159	176	369	194	211	436						
Market and Women	65	60	125	64	50	114	26	24	50	32	23	55	39	36	75	69	33	102	39	36	75	28	22	50	169	156	325	183	78	321						
Agriculture and Women role	117	108	225	106	81	187	39	36	75	32	23	55	65	60	125	155	90	245	78	72	150	92	58	150	299	276	575	385	252	637						
Kashland distribution & women rights	25	25	50	40	30	70	25	25	50	19	11	30	25	25	50	86	49	135	25	25	50	24	26	50	100	100	200	169	116	285						
Leadership Development of Women	88	12	100	64	37	101	38	12	50	36	16	52	48	27	75	54	21	75	51	24	75	63	12	75	225	75	300	217	86	303						
Management of Collective Production	117	108	225	113	101	214	39	36	75	41	42	83	65	60	125	131	50	181	78	72	150	84	66	150	299	276	575	369	253	628						
Outcome based workshops	40	40	80	44	43	87	40	40	80	38	43	81	40	40	80	58	30	88	50	50	100	53	72	125	210	210	340	193	188	381						
Land use Policy and procedure	52	48	100	42	55	97	26	24	50			0	26	24	50			0	26	24	50			0	52	48	250	42	55	97						
Total	842	713	1,555	759	640	1,399	347	315	662	323	281	604	471	434	905	849	455	1,304	545	517	1,062	556	444	1,000	2,163	1,917	4,184	2,474	1,736	4,307						

Table- 7, Formation of structural committee, Committee Meeting and Group Convention

Division	Total No. of Committee up to December 2017				Committee Meetings								Group Convention							
					Plan				Achievement				Plan				Achievement			
	Name of the Committee				Name of the Committee				Name of the Committee				Name of the Committee				Name of the Committee			
	Village	Union	Upazila	Area	Village	Union	Upazila	Area	Village	Union	Upazila	Area	Village	Union	Upazila	Area	Village	Union	Upazila	Area
Rajshahi	167	11	1	8	1342	126	12	45	1336	130	12	45	99	12	1	5	126	11	1	3
Dhaka	28	6	1	1	305	70	11	12	295	69	10	11	19	8	1		19	6	1	0
Chittagong	58	3	1	13	681	36	6	154	679	36	6	153	52	6	1	13	51	5	1	10
Khulna	50	3	0	8	524	36	0	93	457	34	0	91	46	2	0	9	44	2	0	8
Total	303	23	3	30	2,852	268	29	304	2,767	269	28	300	216	28	3	27	240	24	3	21

Table-8, Group Saving

Division	Total up to March 2016			Plan			Implementation			Distribution			Total up to December 2017		
	W	M	Total	W	M	Total	W	M	Total	W	M	Total	W	M	Total
Rajshahi	13,799,952	13,607,397	27,407,349	2,875,110	1,682,710	4,557,820	2,777,977	1,540,139	4,318,116	1,890,298	781,940	2,672,238	14,687,631	14,365,596	29,053,227
Dhaka	995,837	502,221	1,498,058	858,477	485,552	1,344,029	803,431	371,640	1,175,071	240,360	24,000	264,360	1,558,908	849,861	2,408,769
Chittagong	24,789,687	19,476,996	44,266,683	5,629,321	4,480,245	10,109,566	5,456,714	3,308,770	8,765,484	2,641,740	1,301,665	3,943,405	27,604,661	21,484,101	49,088,762
Khulna	6,681,220	5,563,794	12,245,014	1,853,386	785,594	2,638,980	1,864,770	984,155	2,848,925	1,381,655	197,600	1,579,255	7,164,335	6,350,349	13,514,684
Total	46,266,696	39,150,408	85,417,104	11,216,294	7,434,101	18,650,395	10,902,892	6,204,704	17,107,596	6,154,053	2,305,205	8,459,258	51,015,535	43,049,907	94,065,442

Table-9, Bank Account

Description	Up to March 2016			Plan			Increases in 2017			Total up to December 2017		
	Women	Male	Total	Women	Male	Total	Women	Male	Total	Women	Male	Total
Rajshahi	838	366	1,204	6	2	8	16	5	21	854	371	1,225
Dhaka	269	208	477	17	11	28	7	5	12	276	213	489
Chittagong	610	324	934	7	5	12	6	1	7	616	325	941
Khulna	590	159	749	3	2	5	2	1	3	592	160	752
Total	2307	1057	3,364	33	20	53	31	12	43	2,338	1,069	3,407

Table- 10, Landless groups Trainings

Description of Trainings	Rajshahi						Dhaka						Chittagong						Khulna						Total							
	Plan			Achievement			Plan			Achievement			Plan			Achievement			Plan			Achievement			Plan			Achievement				
	W	M	T	W	M	T	W	M	T	W	M	T	W	M	T	W	M	T	W	M	T	W	M	T	W	M	T	W	M	T	W	M
Basic	80	80	160	41	81	122	60	60	120	51	40	91	80	80	160	65	85	150	60	60	120	64	40	104	280	280	560	221	246	467		
Advance	30	30	60	24	16	40	10	10	20	12	13	25	30	30	60	24	18	42	10	10	20	10	10	20	80	80	160	70	57	127		
Higher Selection	20	20	40	20	19	39	20	20	40	19	0	19	20	20	40	22	0	22	20	20	40	20	0	20	80	80	160	81	19	100		
Higher	10	10	20	0	0	0	10	10	20	0	0	0	10	10	20	0	0	0	10	10	20	0	0	0	40	40	80	0	0	0		
Total Core	140	140	280	85	116	201	100	100	200	82	53	135	140	140	280	111	103	214	100	100	200	94	50	144	480	480	960	372	322	694		
Land use and policy support	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Khasland distribution law, policy	42	38	80	31	29	60	10	10	20	11	9	20	13	12	25	13	12	25	8	12	20	9	11	20	73	72	145	64	61	125		
Leadership Development	20	20	40	24	21	45	10	10	20	10	9	19	10	10	20	10	10	20	10	10	20	10	10	20	50	50	100	54	50	104		
Impact of fundamentalisms	10	10	20	12	8	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	10	20	12	8	20		
Family Law, Policy & Women rights	20	20	40	12	8	20	10	10	20	11	11	22	10	10	20	0	0	0	10	10	20	13	7	20	50	50	100	36	26	62		
Government service policy	20	20	40	11	9	20	10	10	20				0	20	20	40	24	23	47	20	20	40	13	7	20	70	70	140	48	39		
Gender planning methodology	20	20	40	10	10	20	10	10	20	10	10	20	10	10	20	0	0	0	10	10	20	12	13	25	50	50	100	32	33	65		
Citizen rights, secularism and constitutional guarantee	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	9	20	11	9	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	9	20	11	9	20		
Agriculture, market and its impact	10	10	20	10	10	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	10	20	10	10	20		
Capacity building on Advocacy	10	10	20	10	10	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	10	20	10	10	20		
Gender, Patriarchy	4	3	7	4	3	7	6	3	9	6	3	9	2	2	4	2	2	4	3	2	5	3	2	5	15	10	25	15	10	25		
Cultural training	8	12	20	6	13	19	4	6	10	4	6	10	18	26	44	11	13	24	6	8	14	6	8	14	36	52	88	27	40	67		
Sub Total	164	125	247	99	92	191	50	49	99	41	39	80	81	87	168	58	57	115	59	60	119	57	47	104	276	269	545	228	195	423		
Total Nijera Kori	304	265	569	184	208	392	150	149	299	123	92	215	221	227	448	169	160	329	159	160	319	151	97	248	756	749	1,505	600	517	1,117		

Table- 11, Refresher Training and Forum Meeting

Division	Refresher Training									Forum and its Meetings		
	Number	Plan			Number	Achievement			Up to December 2017	Plan	Achievement	
		Participants				Participants						
		Women	Male	Total		Women	Male	Total				
Rajshahi	24	313	291	604	21	276	222	498	15	125	125	
Dhaka	13	178	164	342	13	183	171	354	3	30	24	
Chittagong	20	295	205	500	20	355	149	504	0	107	102	
Khulna	15	206	184	390	16	255	145	400	10	128	103	
Total	72	992	844	1836	70	1069	687	1756	28	390	354	

Table- 12, Cultural Activities

Description	Number of Cultural Group	Cultural Workshop				Cultural Activity											
		Plan		Achievement		Plan						Achievement					
		N	P	N	P	C.G. Meeting	Cultural Discussion	Drama Performance	D.F./ Padajatra	People Song	Children C.P	C.G. Meeting	Cultural Discussion	Drama Performance	D.F./ Padajatra	People Song	Children Drama
Rajshahi	20	7	145	7	144	128	6	100	1	57	47	170	5	91	1	46	47
Dhaka	9	5	105	5	97	91	5	55	1	42	37	91	5	49	1	33	36
Chittagong	14	3	60	3	63	161	3	65	1	141	8	165	6	87	2	142	5
Khulna	11	4	80	4	80	155	4	55	1	57	28	147	4	58	1	59	30
Total	54	19	390	19	384	535	18	275	4	297	120	573	20	285	5	280	118

Table- 13, Collective Economic Activities

Description	Agriculture				Fishery				livestock				Small business/rickshaw van				Total					
	Rajshahi	Dhaka	Chitta	Khulna	Rajshahi	Dhaka	Chitta	Khulna	Rajshahi	Dhaka	Chitta	Khulna	Rajshahi	Dhaka	Chitta	Khulna	Rajshahi	Dhaka	Chitta	Khulna	Nijera Kori	
Up to Dec' 16	W	321	8	177	33	34	5	10	12	158	2	139	5	884	19	949	62	1,397	34	1,275	112	2,818
Group	M	270	34	152	38	78	17	91	19	203	15	163	3	615	9	1,067	49	1,166	75	1,473	109	2,823
	T	591	42	329	71	112	22	101	31	361	17	302	8	1,499	28	2,016	111	2,563	109	2,748	221	5,641
	W	4,500	115	3,541	591	610	327	1,882	363	4,058	277	2,507	81	24,055	349	16,829	1,351	33,223	1,068	24,759	2,386	61,436
Member	M	7,265	693	3,058	740	1,973	425	2,115	603	8,006	334	2,649	56	15,218	1,022	20,881	851	32,462	2,474	28,703	2,250	65,889
	T	11,851	842	6,599	1,371	2,745	752	3,997	966	12,142	611	5,508	137	39,273	1,449	38,070	2,202	66,011	3,654	54,174	4,676	128,515
	W	220	3	29	64	225	3	16	18	234	0	92	1	492	0	438	17	1,171	6	575	100	1,852
Employment	M	896	11	165	89	338	7	130	85	151	5	118	0	810	8	538	13	2,195	31	951	187	3,364
	T	1,116	14	194	153	563	10	146	103	385	5	210	1	1,302	8	976	4	3,366	37	1,526	261	5,190
	Investment in Tk	43,000	20,000	0	75,000	60,000	0	203,000	0	519,120	130,000	304,860	0	163,970	20,190	663,517	407,177	786,090	170,190	1,171,377	482,177	2,609,834
Increased 2017							0										0	0	0	0	0	0
Group	W	9	1	7	2	0	0	0		15	0	9		21	0	57	45	45	1	73	47	166
	M	3	2	3	2	3	0	1		7	1	18	1	11	1	60	29	24	4	82	32	142
	T	12	3	10	4	3	0	1	0	22	1	27	1	32	1	117	74	69	5	155	79	308
Member	W	190	18	139	46	0	0	0		378	0	181		346	0	1132	809	914	18	1,452	855	3,239
	M	80	38	60	50	74	0	20		192	19	329	20	156	25	578	517	502	82	987	587	2,158
	T	270	56	199	96	74	0	20	0	570	19	510	20	502	25	1710	1326	1,416	100	2,439	1,442	5,397
Employment	W	23	0	0	1	0	0	0		19	0	6	0	7	0	22	3	49	0	28	4	81
	M	8	0	2	1	0	0	2		12	1	16	0	1	0	14	2	21	1	34	3	59
	T	31	0	2	2	0	0	2	0	31	1	22	0	8	0	36	5	70	1	62	7	140
Investment in Tk	686,500	220,000	221,840	138,000	263,100	0	85,530	0	424,166	20,000	554,285	33,000	413,875	6,300	2,019,620	2,475,795	1,787,641	246,300	2,881,275	2,646,795	7,562,011	
Decreased 2017							0				0			0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Group	W	2	1	0	1	4	0	0	0	4	0	11	0	0	2	13	89	10	3	24	90	127
	M	0	0	0	1	1	0	2	0	2	2	11	0	1	0	12	55	4	2	25	56	87
	T	2	1	0	2	5	0	2	0	6	2	22	0	1	2	25	144	14	5	49	146	214
Member	W	43	17	0	20	81	0	0	0	39	0	176	0	0	39	180	1602	163	56	356	1,622	2,197
	M	0	0	0	18	19	0	40	0	48	38	122	0	19	0	164	991	86	38	326	1,009	1,459
	T	43	17	0	38	100	0	40	0	87	38	298	0	19	39	344	2593	249	94	682	2,631	3,656
Employment	W	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	43	2	0	2	43	2	47
	M	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	5	0	1	0	0	0	3	24	5	0	6	24	35
	T	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	5	0	3	0	0	0	3	67	7	0	8	67	82
Investment in Tk	43,000	20,000	0	75,000	60,000	0	203,000	0	519,120	130,000	304,860	0	163,970	20,190	663,517	2,846,972	786,090	170,190	1,171,377	2,921,972	5,049,629	
up to Dec' 2017																						
Group	W	328	8	184	34	30	5	10	12	169	2	137	5	905	17	993	18	1,432	32	1,324	69	2,857
	M	273	36	155	39	80	17	90	19	208	14	170	4	625	10	1,115	23	1,186	77	1,530	85	2,878
	T	601	44	339	73	110	22	100	31	377	16	307	9	1,530	27	2,108	41	2,618	109	2,854	154	5,735
Member	W	4,733	150	3,680	657	691	327	1,882	363	4,475	277	2,864	81	24,401	388	18,141	558	34,300	1,142	26,567	1,659	63,668
	M	7,345	731	3,118	772	2,028	425	2,095	603	8,150	315	2,856	76	15,355	1,047	21,295	377	32,878	2,518	29,364	1,828	66,588
	T	12,078	881	6,798	1,429	2,719	752	3,977	966	12,625	592	5,720	157	39,756	1,435	39,436	935	67,178	3,660	55,931	3,487	130,256
Employment	W	245	3	29	65	225	3	16	18	253	0	100	1	499		460	23	1,222	6	605	107	1,940
	M	904	11	167	90	338	7	134	85	168	6	135	0	811	8	555	35	2,221	32	991	210	3,454
	T	1,149	14	196	155	563	10	150	103	421	6	235	1	1,310	8	1,015	58	3,443	38	1,596	317	5,394
Investment in Tk	686,500	220,000	221,840	138,000	263,100	0	85,530	0	424,166	20,000	554,285	33,000	413,875	6,300	2,019,620	36,000	1,787,641	246,300	2,881,275	207,000	5,122,216	
Profit in cash 2017	W	737,300	21,038	33,375	40,136	102,140	480	5,900	65840	98,600	312	105,340	0	570,194	15,411	390,010	1,005,265	1,508,234	37,241	534,625	1,111,241	3,191,341
	M	1,785,415	84,781	130,325	11,489	1,133,970	8,640	540,100	119,275	135,000	29,481	76,600	0	374,027	21,247	413,870	828,814	3,428,412	144,149	1,160,895	959,578	5,693,034
Total	T	2,522,715	105,819	163,700	51,625	1,236,110	9,120	546,000	185,115	233,600	29,793	181,940	0	944,221	36,658	803,880	1,834,079	4,936,646	181,390	1,695,520	2,070,819	8,884,375

Table- 14- Access to Government Services (Safety net Programme)

Division	Total			Krishi Card				VGF Card				VGD Card				Ration card					Elder/Widow Allowances/ Disability/				Maternity Allowances	100 Days Employment Generation Programme					Fisherman card					
	W	M	Total Card	W	M	D	SW	Total Card	W	M	D	SW	Total Card	W	D	SW	Total Card	W	M	D	SW	Total Card	W	M	D	SW	W	Total Card	W	M	D	SW	Total Card	W	M	SW
Rajshahi	18,097	17,258	35,355	0	57			31,907	16,030	15,877	68	863	977	977	0	90	538	241	297	0	64	6	3	3	2	0	98	1,772	748	1,024	1	99	0	0	0	0
Dhaka	1,746	1,584	3,330	0				2,659	1,379	1,280	60	181	25	25	2	17	384	230	154	0	0	35	20	15	0	0	19	188	73	115	1	20	20	0	20	0
Chittagong	5,434	10,630	16,064	14	81	0	3	11,104	4,332	6,772	45	342	477	477	0	66	2,353	294	2,059	28	61	75	48	27	0	0	77	175	97	78	0	51	1,708	95	1,613	42
Khulna	2,125	578	2,703	0	0	0	0	1,352	981	371	8	34	689	689	0	70	379	256	123	29	58	8	3	5	0	2	81	194	115	79	0	0	0	0	0	
Total	27,402	30,050	57,452	14	138	0	3	47,022	22,722	24,300	181	1,420	2,168	2,168	2	243	3,654	1,021	2,633	57	183	124	74	50	2	275	2,329	1,033	1,296	2	170	1,728	95	1,633	42	

W- Women; M- men D- Disable IP-Indigenous peoples and SW- Single Women

Table- 15, Legal aid Activity

Characteristics of cases	Up to Dec-16	New cases	Rajshahi				New cases	Dhaka				New cases	Chittagong				New cases	Khulna				New cases	Total				Till Dec,17
			T	I	Ag	A		T	I	Ag	A		T	I	Ag	A		T	I	Ag	A		T	I	Ag	A	
			Total	642	15	13		11	2	0	14		13	1	0	8		7	5	2	0		8	5	4	1	
Criminal	280	0	8	8	0	0	11	10	1	0	4	4	3	1	0	3	2	1	1	0	7	25	22	3	0	262	
Groups of the plaintiffs	129	0	4	4	0	0	8	7	1	0	2	2	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	4	14	13	1	0	119	
Groups of the accused	151	0	4	4	0	0	3	3	0	0	2	2	1	1	0	1	2	1	1	0	3	11	9	2	0	143	
Civil	171	3	3	2	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	3	1	1	0	0	6	6	5	1	0	171	
Groups of the plaintiffs	98	3	2	2	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	6	4	4	0	0	100	
Groups of the accused	72	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	1	1	0	70	
Violence against women	192	12	2	1	1	0	0	2	2	0	0	4	2	1	1	0	2	2	0	0	18	8	6	2	0	202	
Groups of the plaintiffs	166	12	2	1	1	0	2	2	0	0	4	2	1	1	0	2	2	2	0	0	18	8	6	2	0	176	
Groups of the accused	26	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	26	

T= Total, I= Infavor, Ag= Against and A= Appeal

Table -16: Level of Group Consciousness

Description	Rajshahi			Dhaka			Chittagong			Khulna			Total		
	W	M	T	W	M	T	W	M	T	W	M	T	W	M	T
Secondary Level															
Up to December 2016	553	487	1,040	99	81	180	346	294	640	927	814	1,741	1,925	1,676	3,601
Plan	13	17	30	9	8	17	24	14	38	8	4	12	54	43	97
Achievement	14	8	22	3	3	6	29	17	46	7	3	10	53	31	84
Total up to December 2017	567	495	1062	102	84	186	375	311	686	934	817	1751	1,978	1,707	3,685
Third Level			0			0			0			0	0	0	0
Up to December 2017	107	93	200	7	2	9	45	24	69	151	113	264	310	232	542
Plan	2	4	6	0	0	0	8	8	16	1	1	2	11	13	24
Achievement	2	0	2	0	0	0	3	5	8	0	1	1	5	6	11
Total up to December 2017	109	93	202	7	2	9	48	29	77	151	114	265	315	238	553

Table- 17: Various Activities undertaken from Group Saving and Voluntary Services Provided by Group Members

Description	Contribution (In Taka)	Organisational activities								Cooperation and Support Activities					Beneficiary	
		Workshops	Refresher Trainings	Movement	Landless group Convention	Cultural Programme	Day Celebration	Conducting Case	Assistance to Family of arrested Member	Total	Medical Support	Educational Support	Contribution in marriage without Dowry	Total		Total Nijera Kori
Rajshahi	Within Group	10,837	4,126	550	55,552	4,230	32,265	28,000	400	135,960	57,595	18,100	55,030	130,725	266,685	1613
	Outside Group									0	3,900	7,800	14,255	25,955	25,955	30
Dhaka	Within Group	4035	1972	0	31,975	12950	1,250	9200	0	61,382	7,120	4,500	14,900	26,520	87,902	1020
	Outside Group									0	41300	15000	6000	62,300	62,300	986
Chittangong	Within Group	23,400	8,721	10,700	79,560	50,330	49,180	616,601	2000	840,492	255,655	218,050	142,834	616,539	1,457,031	3,198
	Outside Group									0	21,770	11,450	23,750	56,970	56,970	1883
Khulna	Within Group	15,595	3,945	400	17,110	13,000	63,754	97,932	600	212,336	163,600	17500	68,500	249,600	461,936	1,751
	Outside Group									0	14,200	3,993	11,000	29,193	29,193	1,741
Total	Within Group	53,867	18,764	11,650	184,197	80,510	146,449	751,733	3,000	1,250,170	483,970	258,150	281,264	1,023,384	2,273,554	7,582
	Outside Group	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	81,170	38,243	55,005	174,418	174,418	4,640
	Total	53,867	18,764	11,650	184,197	80,510	146,449	751,733	3,000	1,250,170	565,140	296,393	336,269	1,197,802	2,447,972	12,222

Table-18: A, Representation in Different Institutional Committees

Description (January to December 2017)	Gender	Rajshahi	Dhaka	Chittagong	Khulna	Total
Number of Contested in Union Parishad election				2		2
Number of Elected Union Parishad				1		1
UP election Contested Member	Women			3		3
	Men			9		9
	Total	0	0	12	0	12
UP election Elected member	Women			1		1
	Men			0		0
	Total	0	0	1	0	1
School Management Committee (Contested candidate)	Women	82	3	25	19	129
	Men	88	9	44	12	153
	Total	170	12	69	31	282
School Management Committee (Elected)	Women	53	2	17	12	84
	Men	51	7	25	8	91
	Total	104	9	42	20	175
Market Management Committee (Contested candidate)	Women	0	0	4	0	4
	Men	42	10	44	7	103
	Total	42	10	48	7	107
Market Management Committee (Elected)	Women	0	0	4	0	4
	Men	27	10	25	5	67
	Total	27	10	29	5	71
Sluice Gate Management Committee (Contested candidate)	Women	2	0	2	5	9
	Men	8	2	6	13	29
	Total	10	2	8	18	38
Sluice Gate Management Committee (Elected)	Women	0	0	1	4	5
	Men	4	2	2	10	18
	Total	4	2	3	14	23
Number of Contested Committee		81	24	57	17	179
Number of Committee in Elected		72	19	55	22	168
Total Contested candidate	Women	84	3	34	24	145
	Men	138	21	103	32	294
	Total	222	24	137	56	439
Total Elected	Women	53	2	23	16	94
	Men	82	19	52	23	176
	Total	135	21	75	39	270

Table- 19-Participation in local shalish

Division and issues	No. of shalish	Observer			Judge			Arranged by		Result			On process	Recover Tk. as punishment	
		W	M	Total	W	M	Total	Group	Group and local leader	Settled	Stopped	Cases			
Violence against Women : (dowry, divorce, polygamy, rape, physical assault, fundamentalism indictment)															
Rajshahi	356	2,408	2,996	5404	311	530	841	327	29	353	3	3	0	1,960,700	
Dhaka	63	208	313	521	69	166	235	53	10	50	11	1	2	92,700	
Chittagong	882	3,157	5,570	8727			0	801	81	833	25	21	24	798,400	
Khulna	67	320	406	726	83	157	240	64	3	61	6	6		509,000	
Total	1,368	6,093	9,285	15378	463	853	1316	1,245	123	1,297	45	31	26	3,360,800	
Illegal Possession of Property from the Landless															
Rajshahi	25	185	318	503	14	47	61	22	3	22	2	1	1	3000	
Dhaka	6	8	19	27	3	10	13	4	2	5	1			0	
Chittagong	220	945	1990	2935	170	470	640	193	27	212	3	2	5	20000	
Khulna	61	198	436	634	61	168	229	53	8	43	10	8	8	0	
Total	312	1336	2763	4099	248	695	943	272	40	282	16	11	14	23000	
Fundamentalist activities															
Rajshahi	1	6	8	14	3	3	6	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	
Dhaka	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Chittagong	2	8	23	31	2	10	12	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	
Khulna	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Total	3	14	31	45	5	13	18	2	1	3	0	0	0	0	
Issue of Injustice and oppression															
Rajshahi	38	210	358	568	25	50	75	30	8	33	1	1	4	51000	
Dhaka	71	126	158	284	40	129	169	57	14	63	6	1	2	15,000	
Chittagong	81	533	1111	1644	52	149	201	69	12	81	0	0	0	5000	
Khulna	67	217	441	658	65	195	260	56	11	61	5	0	6	40,250	
Total	257	1086	2068	3154	182	523	705	212	45	238	12	2	12	111250	
Rajshahi	420	2809	3680	6489	353	630	983	380	40	409	6	5	5	2014700	
Dhaka	140	342	490	832	112	305	417	114	26	118	18	2	4	107700	
Chittagong	1185	4643	8694	13337	224	629	853	1064	121	1128	28	23	29	823400	
Khulna	195	735	1,283	2,018	209	520	729	173	22	165	21	14	14	549,250	
Total	1,940	8,529	14,147	22,676	898	2,084	2,982	1,731	209	1,820	73	44	52	3,495,050	

Table- 20- Registration, Lease and Possession of Khasland and Water

Subject		Khasland (Acre)						Water Body (Acre)			Total (Acre)			
		Land Registered		Land Possession		DCR		Water Body Leased			Amount of land	Beneficiary	Amount of water body	Beneficiary
		No of member	Amount of land	No of member	Amount of land	No of group member	Amount of land	No of member	Amount of water body	Amount of water body opened				
Up to December 2016	Rajshahi	7,317	5,381	1,802	449	2	0	18	22	151	5,830	9,121	173	7,342
	Dhaka	8	11	24	3	0	0	551	1	67	14	32	68	29,342
	Chittagong	14,343	12,793	5,508	16,530	0	0	21	12	137	29,323	19,851	149	29,283
	Khulna	1,227	3,359	856	390	23	12	2,485	42	308	3,761	2,106	350	22,637
	Total	22,895	21,544	8,190	17,372	25	12	3,075	77	663	38,928	31,110	740	88,604
Increase in January to December 2016	Rajshahi	66	15	12	6.4	0	0	829	14.53	0	15	78	14.53	829
	Dhaka	1	0.05	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
	Chittagong	136	80	188	244.35	0	0	18	1.66	2	80	324	3.66	18
	Khulna	0	0	4	1	0	0	60	0	1	0	4	1	60
	Total	203	96	204	252	0	0	907	16	3	96	407	19	907
Total December 2017	Rajshahi	7,383	5,396	1,814	455	2	0	847	37	151	5,845	9,199	188	8,171
	Dhaka	9	1.1.05	24	3	0	0	551	1	67	14.05	33	68	29,342
	Chittagong	14,479	12,873	5,696	16,774	0	0	39	14	139	29,403	20,175	153	29,301
	Khulna	1,227	3,359	860	391	23	12	2,545	42	309	3,761	2,110	351	22,697
	Total	23,098	21,640	8,394	17,624	25	12	3,982	93	666	39,024	31,517	759	89,511

Table- 21, Regaining of Properties of the Landless and Marginal Farmers from Illegal Possessors

Description		Won in the Movement for Own Land and Quantity of Regained Land		Beneficiary	Won in the Movement against Commercial Shrimp and Quantity of Regained Land			Beneficiary	Recover Inheritance Property		
		No. of Movement	Amount of land (Acre)		No. of Movement	Amount of land (Acre)	Amount of Water Bodies (Acre)		No. of Movement	Amount of land (Acre)	Beneficiary
Up to December 2016	Rajshahi	9	262	612	0	0	0	0	37	6.96	33
	Dhaka	4	19	461	0	0	0	0	2	1	3
	Chittagong	16	887	1,058	0	0	0	0	10	2.1	18
	Khulna	11	133	241	53	1,162	1,122	8,017	12	1.19	17
	Total	40	1301	2372	53	1162	1122	8017	61	11.25	71
Increased establishing of rights	Rajshahi	4	0.78	3	0	0	0	0	58	4.82	34
	Dhaka	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2.7	7
	Chittagong	6	5	5	0	0	0	0	47	4.06	24
	Khulna	7	2.27	9	6	14	0	11	6	1.16	6
	Total	17	8.05	17	6	14	0	11	113	12.74	71
Total December 2017	Rajshahi	13	262.78	615	0	0	0	0	95	11.78	67
	Dhaka	4	19	461	0	0	0	0	4	3.7	10
	Chittagong	22	892	1063	0	0	0	0	57	6.16	42
	Khulna	18	135.27	250	59	1176	1122	8028	18	2.35	23
	Total	57	1309.05	2389	59	1176	1122	8028	174	23.99	142