

National Convention  
**Rethinking Identity, Geography and  
Rights of Tea Workers and Little-known  
Ethnic Communities**  
**17-18 April 2016**



*Venue:* CBCB Centre, DRIK Gallery and St. Joseph Higher Secondary School Premises

*Organized by:* **Society for Environment and Human Development (SEHD)**  
**1/1 Pallabi (5th Floor), Mirpur, Dhaka-1216**  
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*Partner:* Gram Bikash Kendra | *Associates:* Jatiyo Adivasi Parishad, Bagania,  
Moulvibazar Cha Janagoshthi Adivasi Front



Dear Sir/Madam,

We are pleased to invite you to the convention on the theme, 'Rethinking Identity, Geography and Rights of Tea Workers and Little-known Ethnic Communities of Bangladesh' on 17 and 18 April 2016. The key events of the convention include twin photography exhibitions, book launch, premiere screening of a documentary film on Adivasi land conflicts, cultural evening, discussion and analysis by experts in respective fields.

We intend to share the findings of the study, investigation and mapping of communities in the tea gardens and those in other parts of the country who remain largely invisible and solicit your reflections. The tea workers and their communities in 'tied' situation and little-known ethnic communities in other parts of Bangladesh are socially invisible, most marginalized and in many instances considered untouchables. They face systematic human rights abuses in terms of decent work condition, just wages, and access to land and other resources, which have led to their capability deprivation for generations. One important message that will be communicated through the convention is that their identity and culture are unique and enrich Bangladesh and therefore should be recognized and protected.

Professor Golam Rahman, Chief Information Commissioner; Dr. Rafiqul Islam, professor emeritus, University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh; Dr. Hossain Zillur Rahman, eminent economist; Selina Hossain, eminent writer; Pankaj Bhattacharya, politician; representative of European Union; Heleen van der Beek, country representative, ICCO COOPERATION; and M. Shah Alam, director, Duncan Brothers (Bangladesh) LTD. will grace different events as chief guests and special guests.

Representatives from at least 50 communities will participate at the convention. The participants will also include civil society leaders, academics, economists, lawyers, filmmakers and rights activists among others.

Please join us at different events of the convention on 17 and 18 April 2016.

Prof. Sakhawat Ali Khan  
Chairman, SEHD



Philip Gain  
Director, SEHD

## **Program**

**17 April 2016 (Sunday)**

### **Launching of Twin Photography Exhibitions and Convention**

*On the Margins: Images of Tea Workers and Ethnic Communities*

Venue: DRIK Gallery, House 58, Road 15A (New), Dhanmondi Residential Area, Dhaka-1209

2:30 Registration

3:00 Welcome address and Launching of the exhibitions

3:15 Presentation on photography exhibitions: Philip Gain, director, SEHD

*Chair:* Dr. Zakir Hossain Raju, professor of media and communication, Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB)

*Chief guest:* Professor Md. Golam Rahman, Chief Information Commissioner

*Special guests:* EU representative; Heleen van der Beek, country representative, ICCO COOPERATION, Bangladesh Office; and M. Shah Alam, director, Duncan Brothers (Bangladesh) LTD.

3:45 Discussion

*Guests of honour:* Pavel Rahman, eminent photographer; Rahnuma Ahmed, anthropologist, writer; Professor Shahidul Alam, head, media and communication, Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB); Rambhajan Kairi, general secretary, Bangladesh Cha Sramik Union (BCSU); Sandhya Malo, director, Women Commission for Development in Bangladesh (WCDB); and Chitta Ghosh, president, Dinajpur Press Club

5:20 *Vote of thanks:* Moazzem Hossain, chief executive, Gram Bikash Kendra

5:30 Refreshment

**18 April 2016 (Monday)**

*Launching of Book and Panel Discussion*

### **Rethinking Identity, Geography and Rights of Tea Workers and Little-known Ethnic Communities**

Venue: CBCB Centre, 24/C Asad Avenue, Mohammadpur, Dhaka-1207

9:00 Registration

9:30 Presentation of summary of findings of mapping of the tea and ethnic communities: Philip Gain, team leader

*Chair:* Professor Sakhawat Ali Khan, chairman, SEHD

*Chief guest:* Dr. Rafiqul Islam, professor emeritus, ULAB

*Special guests:* EU representative, Dr. Hossain Zillur Rahman, executive chairman, Power and Participation Research Centre (PPRC), Selina Hossain, eminent writer, Heleen van der Beek, country representative, ICCO COOPERATION.

- 10:10 Launching of the book: 'On the Margins: Images of Tea Workers and Ethnic Communities'
- 10:15 Remarks of the special guests, chief guest, and the chair
- 11:15 Tea Break
- 11:45 **Panel Discussion**  
*Chair:* Moazzem Hossain, chief executive, Gram Bikash Kendra  
 Guests of honour and designated speakers: Dr. Mohammad Rafi, director, Research and Evaluation Division, BRAC; Professor Amena Mohsin, Dhaka University; Dr. Tanzimuddin Khan, associate professor, Dhaka University; Sara Marandy, regional program coordinator, knowledge exchange, VSO; Moushumi Shabnam, anthropologist, North South University; Parimal Singh Baraik, president. Moulvibazar Cha Janagosthi Adivasi Front; Prakash Kanti Chowdhury, ADC (revenue), Moulvibazar; and Anik Asad, country director, HEKS.

12:45 Open discussion

1:30 Lunch Break

2:30 **Premiere screening of documentary film, Matir Maya (Elegy on Land) and discussion on land rights of tea and ethnic communities**

*Chair:* Rabindranath Soren, president, Jatiyo Adivasi Parishad

*Special guest:* Pankaj Bhattacharya, president, Oikkyo NAP

Guests of honour and designated speakers: Professor Zakir Hossain Raju, Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB); Manjare Hasin Murad, film maker; Barrister Jyotirmoy Barua, lawyer, Supreme Court; Shamsul Huda, executive director, Association for Land Reform and Development (ALRD); Swapon Santal, Chandpore Tea Estate; Bijoy Bunerjee, trade union leader; Babul Rabidas, lawyer, Joypurhat; Philimon Baske, vice president, Bagda Farm Bhumi Uddhar Shangram Committee.

**Date 18 April 2016**

**Cultural Evening: Our Identity Our Culture**

Venue: St. Joseph Higher Secondary School premises

5:30 Welcome music and dance

6:00 Introduction to ethnic communities of Bangladesh—Asha Ornal and Joseph Hasda

6:15 Open lecture on ethnic identity and cultural diversity of Bangladesh  
*Guest speakers:* Dr. Rafiqul Islam, professor emeritus, University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh and Mamunur Rashid, eminent actor and cultural personality

7:00 *Stage performance:* Cultural groups from tea gardens; Santal and Mahle from Northwest and Koch and Garos from North-center will perform their traditional dances and songs. The program is open for all.

**Information fair:** Organizations working with tea workers and adivasis will display and sell their books, posters, documentary films and other productions.