

Convention

Leaving No One Behind

Land, Forest and Social Rights of the Marginal and Excluded Communities

16-17 November 2017

RDRS Bangladesh, Jail Road, Radhaballav, Rangpur



Organized by

Society for Environment and Human Development (SEHD), Power and Participation Research Centre (PPRC), Christian Commission for Development in Bangladesh (CCDB) and Gram Bikash Kendra (GBK)



Bangladesh has made commendable achievements in addressing the challenges of poverty. However, poverty is a multi-dimensional reality. One feature of this reality is exclusion and marginalization. While much progress has been made on overall poverty front, comparable progress for excluded and marginal communities is yet to reach desired levels. Bringing the challenge of exclusion and marginalization into national focus is thus a key priority in today's Bangladesh. With this goal in mind, we, four organizations—Power and Participation Research Centre (PPRC), Society for Environment and Human Development (SEHD), Christian Commission for Development in Bangladesh (CCDB) and Gram Bikash Kendra (GBK), with support from the European Union and ICCO Cooperation—have undertaken a multi-year initiative since February 2016 to make the marginal and excluded communities in Bangladesh visible and address the challenges they face.

In this connection we are organizing a convention and cultural festival on 16 and 17 November 2017 at RDRS Bangladesh in Rangpur to share findings of studies and analysis so far, think together about how to deal with exclusion challenges in Bangladesh and to celebrate cultural riches that the excluded groups offer. The theme of the convention is land, forest and social rights of the marginal and excluded communities.

Eminent economist, Professor Wahiduddin Mahmud, will be present as the chief guest. Mohammad Afzal, Dr. Harishankar Jaldas, Rabindranath Soren, Dr. Hameeda Hossain, Dr. Mohammad Abdul Wazed, Md. Robiul Islam and the Delegation of the European Union to Bangladesh will be present as special guests and distinguished speakers at the convention. The representatives of a large number of excluded communities, civil society, community-based organizations, state agencies, human rights organizations, cultural groups and the media will attend the convention and the cultural festival.

You are cordially invited to the convention.

Dr. Hossain Zillur Rahman
Executive Chairman, PPRC

Joyanta Adhikari
Executive Director, CCDB

Philip Gain
Director, SEHD

Moazzem Hossain
Chief Executive, GBK

Program

16 November 2017 (Thursday)

08:30 Registration

09:30 **Rally.** Inaugurator: Mohammad Afzal, Language Activist

10:30 Tea break

Inaugural Session

11:00 *Welcome address:* Moazzem Hossain, Chief Executive, GBK

11:05 Keynote on land, forest and social rights of the marginal and excluded communities
— Philip Gain, Director, SEHD

11:35 *Distinguished speakers*

Mohammad Afzal, Language Activist; Dr. Harishankar Jaldas, Writer; Rabindranath Soren, President, Jatiya Adivasi Parishad; and Joyanta Adhikari, Executive Director, CCDB

12:05 *Special guests*

Dr. Hameeda Hossain, Chairperson, Research Initiative, Bangladesh; Delegation of the European Union to Bangladesh; Dr. Mohammad Abdul Wazed, Former Director General, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics; and Md. Robiul Islam, ADC (Revenue) Rangpur

12:40 *Chief guest:* Prof. Wahiduddin Mahmud, eminent economist

12:55 *Chair:* Dr. Hossain Zillur Rahman, Executive Chairman, PPRC

01:15 Lunch

02:15 **Parallel session: one**

Rights to land and forest commons under threat (the cases of Northwest and North-centre)

Chair: Moazzem Hossain, Chief Executive, GBK

Facilitator: Philip Gain, Director, SEHD

Speakers: Bhupesh Roy, Head of Social and Economic Development, GBK and Eugin Nokrek, President, JAUP

Testimony and discussion: Korun Singh; Nilima Hembrom and Bichitra Tirki; and Md. Rafiquzzaman Shah, Divisional Forest Officer, Rangpur

Parallel session: two

Land and social rights of the urban marginalized communities (the cases of Harijans and Biharis)

Chair: Dr. Harishankar Jaldas, Writer

Facilitator: Sylvester Halder, Head of Special Programs and HRMD, CCDB

Presentation of reports on Harijan and Bihari: Debu Mallick and Mehedi Al-Amin

Testimony and discussion: Kalu Bashfor, General Secretary, Bangladesh Harijon Yokkha Parishad, Saidpur; Harun-ur-Rashid, Assistant General Secretary, SPGRC; Moyna Rishi, Activist and Sulekha Mrong, President, Achik Michik Society, Modhupur

5:00 **Cultural evening**

Introductory remarks: Chitta Ghosh, Journalist, Dinajpur

Guest speaker: Dr. Masudul Haque, Dinajpur Government College

Topic: Languages and cultures of marginal communities under threat

Cultural performance: Santals, Mushohor, Oraon and Garo Cultural Team

17 November 2017 (Friday)

9:00 **Parallel session three:** Problem tree analysis

Chair: Dr. Hossain Zillur Rahman, Executive Chairman, PPRC

Speaker: Anik Asad, Country Director, HEKS; Barrister Jyotirmoy Barua, Lawyer, Supreme Court; Lucas Kispotta, Freelance consultant; Babul Robidas, Advocate, Joypurhat Judge Court; and Lucky Marandi, Human Rights Activist

Parallel session four:

Topic: Developing strategies and mechanisms to scale up capacity to deal with land, forest and social and cultural issues of the excluded and marginalized groups

Chair: Joyanta Adhikari, Executive Director, CCDB

Facilitator: Dr. Tanzimuddin Khan, Associate Professor, University of Dhaka

Speakers: Bhupesh Roy, Head of SED, GBK; Philimon Baske, Vice President, Bagda Farm Bhumi Uddhar Shangram Committee; Sandhya Malo, Director, WCDB;

Richard Murmu, Dinajpur, Judge Court; and Md. Arafat Hossain, Assistant Commissioner (Land), Nawabganj, Dinajpur

11:00 Tea

11:30 **Plenary: Summing up parallel sessions reports**

Rapporteurs assigned for parallel sessions present reports and the participants participate in further discussions to refresh the outputs of the convention.

Facilitator: Dr. Hossain Zillur Rahman

1:30 Lunch

2:30 **Concluding session:** Declaration and thanksgiving

4:30 Tea

5:00 **Cultural Evening**

Introductory remark: Philip Gain

Guest speaker: Dr. Shashwata Bhattacharjee, Cultural Activist

Topic: The challenge to establish identities and cultures of the marginal and excluded communities

Performance session: Cultural groups from Santals, Mahle, Kora and Turi.

Contact

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